

Czech Republic

Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System

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Title: Czech Republic: overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2005

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Author: ReferNet Czech Republic

Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in the Czech Republic. Information is presented according to the following themes:

1. General policy context - framework for the knowledge society;
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities;
3. Institutional framework - provision of learning opportunities;
4. Initial education and training - pathways and transition;
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults;
6. Training VET teachers and trainers;
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy;
8. Validation of learning - recognition and mobility;
9. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment;
10. Financing: investment in human resources;
11. European and international dimensions: towards an open area of lifelong learning.

This overview is part of a series produced for each EU Member State (plus Norway and Iceland). Each report is prepared by Cedefop's national network member (ReferNet) and is updated on an annual basis: this one is valid for 2005. Later editions can be viewed at http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/ where more detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can be found.

Keywords:

training system; training policy, initial training, continuing vocational training, training of trainers, skill development, vocational guidance, recognition of competences, validation of non formal learning; financing of training

Geographic term:

Czech Republic

THEMATIC OVERVIEWS



01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

0101 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL/ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The Czech Republic (CR) came into being in 1993, as a result of a split of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic. The CR is a parliamentary democracy and the head of the country is the president. In 2004 the CR became a member of the European Union. It is a member of the North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). As regards its administrative system, the CR has since 2000 been divided into fourteen administrative units called regions (NUTS 3). They are governed by regional self-administrative authorities headed by regional governors.

0102 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The Czech Republic covers an area of 78,900 km² and the population was 10.2 million in 2003. Following the change of social and economic system in 1989, there was a steep decline in the birth rate, which since the mid-1990s has hovered at a minimum level in European as well as global terms. The low number of births has resulted in a natural population decline since 1994, which is only partially set off by migration.

In terms of long-term development trends, the mean variant of a demographic prognosis envisages a change in the population structure showing a relative fall in the younger age groups. The result will be an ageing population accompanied by grave social and economic implications. Population ageing is evident in the age index (the ratio of population aged 65+ to 0-14-year-olds), which is expected to rise from 89 in 2003 to 163 in 2025. At the same time, the burden on the economically active population expressed by the dependency index (the ratio of population aged 65+ and 0-14 to the 15-64 age group) is expected to rise from 42 in 2003 to 53 in 2025.

Population structure by age groups				
AGE GROUP	POPULATION		POPULATION STRUCTURE (%)	
	2003	2025	2003	2025
0 – 24	2 958 575	2 319 205	29.0	22.7
25 – 59	5 281 655	5 044 361	51.7	49.4
60 +	1 971 225	2 853 634	19.3	27.9
TOTAL	10 211 455	10 217 200	100.0	100.0

Source: Age Structure of the Population of the Czech Republic in Terms of Gender and Age Groups in 2002; Projection of the CR's Population (mean variant including migration), CSO 2004, own calculations.

0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

The structure of the Czech economy changed considerably after 1989. The proportion of agriculture and industry has decreased and, conversely, the proportion of services has grown. However, as compared to the EU-25, Czech Republic (CR) still shows lasting structural disproportions. The proportion of industry and construction in terms of gross value added and employment is significantly higher in the CR than in the EU-25. On the other hand, the figures for the service sector are lower in the CR. The importance of the service sector has been growing constantly, particularly thanks to the growing proportion of business services. The importance of construction is decreasing. However, the importance of industry has risen slightly in recent years, mainly due to the manufacturing industries where foreign companies operate.

Structure of gross value added (in current prices) and employment (%)

	GROSS VALUE ADDED				EMPLOYMENT			
	EU-25	CR			EU-25	CR		
	2003	1995	2000	2003	2003	1995	2000	2003
AGRICULTURE	2.1	4.6	3.9	2.8	5.8	6.0	4.7	3.9
INDUSTRY AND CONSTRUCTION	26.8	39.9	38.5	38.0	25.3	39.9	38.5	38.6
SERVICES	71.1	55.5	57.6	59.2	68.9	54.1	56.8	57.5

Source: EUROSTAT – New Cronos database (National Accounts, Labour Force Survey), Structural indicators (Employment); Labour Force Survey – Labour Market in the Czech Republic 1993 - 2003, CSO 2004, own calculations.

The rate of employment in the CR is still higher than in the EU-25, but it has been declining, with slight variations, since 1989. Since the 2nd half of the 1990s this decline has been combined with increasing unemployment (the rate of unemployment grew from 4 % in 1995 to 7.8 % in 2003) and a growing number of economically inactive people (the rate of economic participation of the population decreased from 61.5 % in 1995 to 59.4 % in 2003). Compared to the EU-25 the CR shows a larger difference between the rate of employment of men and women, and this difference has been ranged at a stable level.

Employment rate (15-64 age group, %)

	EU-25	CR		
	2003	1995	2000	2003
TOTAL	62.9	69.4	65.0	64.7
MEN	70.8	77.9	73.2	73.1
WOMEN	55.1	61.0	56.9	56.3

Source: EUROSTAT – New Cronos database (Labour Force Survey), Structural indicators (Employment); Labour Force Survey – Labour Market in the Czech Republic 1993 - 2003, CSO 2004, own calculations.

The development of **unemployment** in the CR in the transformation period differed considerably from that in other countries in transition. The rate of unemployment in the CR started to grow considerably only as late as 1997 (until then it was around 4 %). Unemployment reached the highest level (according to the ILO definition) in 2000 (8.7 %). The rate of registered unemployment slightly exceeded 9 % in 2004 (according to a new methodology valid since 2004). There is growing unemployment in the CR in the age group up to 25 – it exceeded the EU-25 level in 2003.

Unemployment rate (% , ILO/EUROSTAT definition)

	EU-25	CR		
	2003	1995	2000	2003
TOTAL	9.1	4.0	8.7	7.8
MEN	8.3	3.4	7.3	6.2
WOMEN	10.0	4.8	10.4	9.9
< 25 YEARS	18.4	..	17.8	18.6

Source: EUROSTAT – New Cronos database (Labour Force Survey), Structural indicators (Employment); Labour Force Survey – Labour Market in the Czech Republic 1993 - 2003, CSO 2004, own calculations.

Public expenditure on education as a proportion of GDP decreased in the CR from 4.62 % in 1995 to 4.16 % in 2001 (in the EU-25 the proportion is higher – 5.09 %). There is a considerable imbalance as regards expenditure per student in tertiary education. While the index of student number increase was 162 compared to 1995, the index of expenditure increase was only 103. The proportion of public expenditure on education in total public expenditure in the CR grew slightly from 7.7 % in 1995 to 8.3 % in 2001. However, it remains low compared to the EU-25 (10.9 %).

0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

The education structure of the Czech population (aged 25-64) shows a low proportion of the group with only basic education and a low proportion of the population with tertiary education. On the other hand, there is a very high proportion of the population with secondary education. (See Annex, Table 1). The low share of those with tertiary qualifications is attributed mainly to the still insufficient provision of tertiary education, particularly short study programmes at ISCED 5B and 5A levels.

Population structure by educational attainment (25-64 years, %)

	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-
EU-25	34	42	21
CR	12	76	12

Source: EUROSTAT – New Cronos database (Labour Force Survey).

Compared to the rest of the EU, very few people in the Czech Republic have only basic or lower secondary education. (See Annex, Table 2). Despite a slight increase in their number, it is still only half of the European average.

The proportion of the population aged 18-24 with basic or lower education and not participating in either initial or continuing education (%)

	2002	2003
EU-25	18.5	18.0
CR	5.5	6.0

Source: EUROSTAT – New Cronos database (Labour Force Survey).

02 - POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

In 1999 an Outline of Policy in the Area of Education and the Development of the Education System was presented for public discussion (see chart of the education system in Theme 4.1). This resulted in the **National Programme for the Development of Education** followed by the **Long-Term Plan of Education and Development of Education System**, in 2002. This was a key strategic document, setting out plans for the development of the education system supported by the state. It is an instrument for ensuring a coherence between state and regional policies in a situation where major responsibilities for governance and decision-making have been delegated from the state to regions. Following the Long-Term Plan at state level, **Regional Long-Term Plans for the Development of Education** were drawn up by the regions (14) in 2003. The School Act commands the MoEYS (as well as regions) to develop long-term plans once every two years when the progress made is assessed and the plans may be adjusted or complemented. The Long-Term Plan published in 2004 focused on education policy in the European context, taking particular account of the Lisbon objectives. In line with the new School Act (effective from 2005) Long-Term Plans for the CR will be discussed in Parliament.

In the 1990s experts discussed and tested new schemes in order to improve the content of education and the quality of educational outcomes. Many of their conclusions found their way into the **new School Act**, which was passed in 2004. At the same time a **Principle proposal for a new act on CVET** was drafted, which should provide a legal framework for lifelong learning.

The aforementioned policy documents and legislative materials covering the entire education system set out the main developmental priorities and directions. They include the following:

CURRICULAR REFORM

This is primarily based on a shift from memorising facts to the development of key competencies, such as work with information and information technologies, foreign language, communication skills and other skills, and on contacts between schools and the labour market. This will be reflected in development of two-level curricula, where framework educational programmes (curricula) will be binding nation-wide for a specific level and field of education. School-based curricula will allow schools to shape their distinct profiles, and to meet the needs of students and regional labour markets (see Theme 7).

REFORMING COMPLETION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Final examinations in educational programmes with a vocational certificate (ISCED 3C) will be enhanced by rendering all their parts more objective (this concerns the written, oral and particularly the practical part, in which social partners should co-operate extensively). Evaluation standards will be established for individual fields of education and linked to the development of a uniform content of final examinations. The new final examinations will be developed and tested on a pilot basis by the end of 2008.

Reform of the “maturita” examination (ISCED 3A) will consist of a national, centrally administered and evaluated exam (in 2008) in general subjects (the mother tongue, a foreign language and an optional general subject – the student will be able to choose from mathematics, civic and social education, the basics of science and technology and the basics of information technology). The vocational part of “maturita” will be set by individual schools, which will also be responsible for its implementation and evaluation (see Theme 8);

ENSURING QUALITY, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

The relatively extensive autonomy of schools will be balanced by a systematic external evaluation of educational outcomes (see Theme 8);

DEVELOPMENT OF INTEGRATED DIAGNOSTIC, INFORMATION AND COUNSELLING SYSTEM IN EDUCATION

This should integrate the present systems of pedagogical-psychological counselling and centres for career guidance, and expand the scope of services by covering the services of school psychologists. (see Theme 9);

OPTIMISATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROVISION AND THE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE OF IVET

The provision of IVET will be brought more into line with the needs of regional labour markets and the anticipated employment opportunities for school leavers. Special emphasis will be placed on strengthening the provision of IVET completed by “maturita”. The primary task, particularly at regional level, is to increase the size of schools, to create multi-functional schools and to introduce programmes with a broad professional profile;

SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TERTIARY EDUCATION, PARTICULARLY BACHELOR STUDIES

The further development of higher professional schools as providers of short-cycle professional tertiary education (ISCED 5B) will be addressed. Their position and links to higher education (HE) institutions (ISCED 5A) must be

fostered and their distribution across the country must be spread evenly. A small number of these schools will form a basis for the establishment of new public HE institutions of a non-university type, which will provide mainly Bachelor study programmes;

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CVET AS PART OF LIFELONG LEARNING

As there is no coherent legislation regulating this sector, the priority is to prepare Principle proposals for an act on CVET.

Many of the priorities mentioned above are being implemented. Some framework educational programmes are being tested, and so is the national (common) part of the "maturita" examination and the more objective final examinations in some vocational programmes. Regional long-term plans set out the priority of optimising the network of schools, which the regions are implementing following their needs. Methods of ensuring the quality of education and the development of the information and counselling system have been designed already, and implementation is being planned via systemic projects supported by the European Social Fund. However, Bachelor studies are only developing thanks to private initiatives, and the development of CVET has been stagnant.

03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

0301 - ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

The governance and administration of VET were strongly affected by public administration reform launched in the area of education in 2001. The major principles of the reform included decentralisation, strengthening the role of regional administration and support for school autonomy. The system of funding shows similar trends. All schools providing initial VET (except higher education institutions), are funded by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) via regional authorities, which allocate the resources to individual schools, and by regional budgets. Higher education institutions are funded directly by the MoEYS. Private schools included in the schools network are funded in a similar manner from public resources, and only a smaller part of their revenues comes from private sources (see Theme 10).

Until 2000 major powers in the VET area were concentrated in the MoEYS. In January 2001, as part of public administration reform, the powers were taken over by newly established regional administrative bodies. The MoEYS thus lost its responsibility for establishing secondary and higher professional schools, as it has been delegated to regions. The main responsibilities of the MoEYS currently include:

- development of national education policy and strategy, primarily in the form of the Long-Term Plan for the Development of Education and the Education System, and provision of methodology for and coordination of Long-Term Plans for the Development of Education in Regions;
- development of curricular policy and care for the quality of education on the basis of the objectives and content of education, set as part of an approved system of fields of education and framework curricula; operation of a system for monitoring and evaluation of student and school performance;
- coordination of public administration and funding in the area of education, including communication with social partners at national level; issuing decrees regulating educational conditions in schools; initiation of developmental and innovative schemes, etc.

At regional level **self-governing bodies – regional assembly and regional council** - were set up based on the election in 2000. The regional assembly, which has decision-making powers, is obliged to form a commission for education and employment, which has its say on e.g. the structure of the schools network and educational provision, the quality of schools, the funding of education in the regions, etc. The regional council (9-11 members) is elected by the assembly and holds executive powers. It forms expert commissions in various areas that have an advisory function. One of the commissions is normally concerned with young people and education. Regional self-governing bodies are directly responsible for establishing and closing down VET schools and school facilities. Established schools must be approved by the MoEYS and ranged into the "framework of schools" for being eligible for funding from public sources. Regional bodies administer the schools and cover their capital and operational costs. They appoint directors of the schools set up by them based on appointment procedures and upon ministerial approval.

A regional body of state administration is a **regional authority**. One of its departments deals with education, youth and sports. The authority is responsible for the execution of state administration in the region. The main tasks in the area of education include, above all, the development of a Regional Long-Term Plan for the development of education and the education system, and a report about the situation in education in the region. Moreover, the regional authority allocates resources from the state budget to schools to cover pedagogical and non-pedagogical staffs' wages and direct educational costs, and checks upon their use. The regional authority performs also the administrative tasks of the self-government bodies.

As schools' autonomy has been extended, school directors hold significant powers. They are responsible for implementation of approved curricula, for the quality of pedagogical work and human resources policy, for educational management and efficient use of financial resources. A School Council as a self-governing body is established at schools. Its members include representatives of the school founding body, pedagogical staff and parents (possibly pupils of age).

0302 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Initial vocational education and training (IVET) up to the level of higher professional schools is governed by the Act on pre-school, basic, secondary, higher professional and other education (the **School Act**). From 1 January 2005 a new School Act came into effect. It replaces the existing law and other scattered, incoherent and many times

amended legal regulations. The new act stipulates the conditions under which education takes place in schools and school facilities, defines the rights of individuals and legal entities in education, and establishes the responsibilities of bodies executing state administration and self-administration in education. At the same time ministerial decrees and other regulations entered into force which elaborate on the stipulations in the law in more detail.

Higher education (HE) institutions are governed by the **Act on higher education institutions** of 1998 which provides for the establishment of private HE institutions and which has changed the legal status of state HE institutions. They have become so-called public HE institutions, while the amendment of 2001 provides them with the opportunity to pursue business activities using their own property and collect tuition fees for courses within the framework of lifelong learning.

The administrative framework of IVET was also considerably affected by the **Act on the establishment of higher-level administrative units (regions)** which came into effect on 1 January 2000. This comprehensive reform of public administration has had major effects on the system of governance of IVET. It was designed to eliminate major shortcomings concerning, above all, too extensive powers on the part of state administration and a high degree of centralisation of state administration in central administrative bodies. The public administration reform has provided for the setting up of the so far non-existent regional self-government bodies.

As at 1 January 2005 an **Act on pedagogical staff** entered into force which stipulate a new definition of the position of pedagogical staff and lay down requirements for the performance of their occupation, their continuing training and career system.

There is no comprehensive legislation regulating continuing vocational education and training (CVET). There are single regulations covering its parts. (see Theme 5) For example, retraining of job seekers is subject to the **Act on employment**, adult education in the education sector falls within the purview of the School Act, and continuing training in specific professions (e.g. physicians, electricians, teachers) is governed by the relevant legal regulations mostly by ministerial decrees. This is why **principle propositions for an Act on continuing education and training** have been put forward. The act should, in a comprehensive and coherent manner, foster the issues of initial and continuing VET and recognition of non-formal and informal learning. It should define legal obligations of the main players involved, identify the conditions for funding, introduce a uniform system for evaluation of the quality of CVET courses, introduce incentives for all entities involved (trainers, learners, employers), and stipulate rules for the operation of an information-counselling system which would facilitate understanding of the CVET provision. Although the propositions do not provide a comprehensive coverage of lifelong learning, it is still – in view of the current situation – a major step forward which, if the bill is passed, could encourage the development of CVET in Czech Republic. (see Theme 8)

IVET Governance and Administration

FUNCTION LEVEL	DECISION-MAKING	EXECUTIVE	CONSULTATIVE
NATIONAL	Parliament	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	Government Council for Human Resources Development
REGIONAL	Regional Assembly	Regional Council (self-government) Regional authority – Department for education, youth and sports (delegated state administration)	Education Commission Regional Council for Human Resources Development
SCHOOL	Director School Council	Director of school or school facility	School Council

[Notes](#)

0303 - ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

The involvement of social partners in VET is voluntary and depends on the initiative of the parties concerned. There are no legal regulations fostering this involvement and the roles of social partners in this respect. The positions provided by social partners are mostly of a consultative nature.

At **national** level a platform for social dialogue is provided by the Council for Economic and Social Agreement. Apart from other issues, it also covers education – it is the responsibility of a “working team for education and human resources”. At this level, social partners as members of this Council contribute to the formulation of legal regulations and government papers and provide their comments. A comprehensive approach to human resources development (HRD) is promoted by the Government Council for Human Resources Development (established in 2003). It is composed on a tripartite principle and its task is to take part in the development of strategic national documents and

decisions inter-linking the areas of employment, VET, qualifications and entrepreneurship. Establishment of similar bodies for strategic HRD management has been initiated at regional level as well.

In general, as regards the **regional** level, social partners are represented in Regional Councils for Social and Economic Agreement and Councils for HRD. However, the situation varies region by region. In practice social partners are involved in changes to the structure of VET provision.

At **sectoral** level there are some examples of cooperation between social partners and VET schools. This cooperation is usually initiated by professional organisations (economic chambers) – i.e. not by employers nor trade unions. The level of cooperation depends on the importance of the relevant industry for the regional economy.

At **enterprise** level cooperation occurs mainly between schools and companies which employ graduates. Education in VET schools is not designed so as to prepare an individual for a specific position. On-the-job introductory training is entirely up to companies. One reason for this is the fact that the business sector often uses state-of-the-art technologies, whereas schools do not have human, teaching and technical resources to cover the latest developments.

Social partnership also involves the process of collective bargaining both at ministerial level and at corporate and institutional levels. This process is provided for in the Czech legal system (Act on collective bargaining). At present the agreements include a few examples that affect participation in lifelong learning.

The pursuit of harmony between the content of VET and labour market needs is supported by the representation of social partners on so-called “field groups”. The formation of the groups in 1998 was authorised by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and they contribute to the identification of objectives and the content of VET. There are currently 25 “field groups” covering the entire spectrum of occupations which those who complete secondary VET schools and higher professional schools may perform. Another important step embedded in the new School Act is that social partners have to be involved in the examination board for final examinations in vocational certificate programmes.

The involvement of social partners in the development of VET takes the form of projects within various programmes which may serve as examples of good practices (mainly the Leonardo da Vinci programme). In project implementation the aforementioned problems occur that relate to social dialogue and, most importantly, to low levels of motivation on the part of social partners and missing legislation.

LEVEL	RESPONSIBILITIES OF SOCIAL PARTNERS IN VET	TYPE OF ROLE (ADVISORY/DECISION-MAKING)
NATIONAL	Formulation of and comments on legal regulations and government documents	advisory
REGIONAL	Formulation of, recommendations to and comments on strategic documents at regional level Recommendations for optimisation of the network of schools	advisory
SECTORAL	Formulation of general frameworks for the provision of continuing training in companies (in sporadic cases this is implemented as part of collective bargaining at a higher level) Co-operation in the development of framework curricula	advisory/decision-making
ENTERPRISE	Planning and implementation of training in companies (collective agreements) Co-operation between schools and companies	advisory/decision-making

04 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

0401 - BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM

Initial vocational education and training begins following the completion of 9 years of compulsory education (at the age of 15). It lasts 3 or 4 years depending on the length of the programme. Only small part of programmes lasts 1–2 years. The typical age of students at secondary schools is 15-18/19. Graduates who have passed the “maturita” examination may continue studies at tertiary level. These studies last 3-3.5 years at higher professional schools (ISCED 5B) where the typical age of students is 19-21. The length of studies at higher education institutions (ISCED 5A) is 3-6 years and the typical age of students is 19-24.

Vocational education and training at upper secondary level (ISCED 3) differs from general education both in terms of curricula and providers. At tertiary level educational programmes are not divided into general (academic) and vocational ones. Studies at tertiary level (both at higher professional schools and at higher education

institutions) are considered to be vocational. However, curricula also contain general education – particularly foreign languages and ICT.

General education at ISCED 3 level in the Czech Republic is provided, in line with the Central European tradition, by *gymnázia*. A *gymnázium* provides secondary education with a "maturita" examination (ISCED 3A) and prepares the students primarily for studies at the full range of higher education institutions, or for studies at higher professional schools. Moreover, it prepares them for the performance of certain activities in administration, culture and other areas which require broad general education and no special vocational training.

Vocational education at ISCED 3 level is provided in three-year programmes leading to the acquisition of a vocational certificate (ISCED 3C), or in four-year programmes completed by the "maturita" examination (ISCED 3A). However, vocational education and training comprise a broad spectrum of general subjects. The curriculum of three-year programmes is designed so that at least 30% of instruction is devoted to general education, while in four-year programmes it is at least 45%. All major subject areas are included: language training (Czech, a foreign language), social sciences, natural sciences, aesthetics, physical education – the scope differs depending on the field of education).

Vocational programmes at ISCED 3A level have the advantage of being recognised as **equal to general programmes at gymnázia**. Graduates of these programmes may continue studying at tertiary level. This increases the attractiveness of vocation-focused educational pathways.

Schools providing IVET at secondary and tertiary levels are distinguished by the level and the field of education:

Secondary technical school (*střední odborná škola*) provides secondary technical education in four-year programmes completed by a "maturita" examination (ISCED 3A), which entitles graduates to apply for higher education and to perform mid-level technical, business and other similar jobs. In 2003 secondary technical school graduates accounted for **35.6 %** of all secondary school leavers.

Secondary vocational school (*střední odborné učiliště*) provides a vocational qualification in two- and three-year programmes, entitling those who acquire it to perform manual work and similar occupations (ISCED 3C). In 2003 the proportion of those who completed these programmes was some **38 %**. Secondary vocational schools also provide a small number of four-year programmes completed by "maturita" (ISCED 3A), providing a qualification to perform demanding manual work and technical occupations and opening up the path to higher education. In 2003 the graduates of these programmes accounted for **5.4 %** of all secondary school leavers. Secondary vocational schools may also provide one- and two-year programmes (ISCED 2C). In these programmes there are admitting pupils who completed compulsory education but failed to complete all nine years of basic school, young people with special learning needs, and pupils who completed remedial (*zvláštní*) or auxiliary (*pomocné*) programmes of basic school. In 2003 those who completed ISCED 2C programmes accounted for less than **1 %** of all secondary school leavers.

Conservatoires (*konzervatoře*) - Conservatoires represent a specific educational path at upper secondary and tertiary levels. They normally provide six-year programmes (with the exception of the eight-year dance programme which also covers the lower secondary part of compulsory education - ISCED 2). Conservatoires develop artistic talents and the knowledge and skills acquired by pupils in basic art education, provide general education and prepare pupils for the performance of demanding artistic activities in music, dance, singing and drama. In the course of studies pupils take a "maturita" examination and acquire secondary education with "maturita" (ISCED 3B). Upon successful completion of the entire programme and absolutorium examination pupils acquire higher professional education with "absolutorium" (ISCED 5B).

Higher professional schools (*vyšší odborné školy*) have been introduced into the education system in 1996. They prepare students for a qualified performance of demanding professional tasks. They provide higher professional education (ISCED 5B) completed by "absolutorium".

Higher education (HE) institutions (*vysoké školy*) provide education in three types of programme: *Bachelor* (ISCED 5A), *Master* (ISCED 5A) and *Doctoral* (ISCED 6) following on from Master programmes. Until the end of 1998 all existing HE institutions had university status. Since 1999 there has been an opportunity for establishing HE institutions of a non-university type that provide only Bachelor programmes.

[Education system of the Czech Republic](#)

0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

The scope of vocational education at lower secondary level in the CR is very limited. This education includes short IVET programmes (ISCED 2C) which may be undertaken upon completion of compulsory schooling.

These are one- and two-year programmes where mostly graduates of remedial and auxiliary programmes at basic schools are admitted, as well as pupils who completed compulsory schooling but failed to complete all nine years of basic school and are not capable of meeting the requirements of upper secondary education (ISCED 3). Their typical age is 15–16/17.

IVET at ISCED 2C level is mostly provided by one- and two-year practical school programmes. A very small number of these programmes are also provided by secondary vocational schools – in separate classes where the pupils are trained to perform simple occupations (ISCED 2C). Practical school programmes do not lead to the acquisition of a vocational qualification. The training is focused on the development and strengthening of manual skills and working habits and for the performance of simple auxiliary tasks in the area of services or production.

The main objective of this training is to achieve the highest possible level of **socialisation of disadvantaged pupils** which facilitates their integration into the work process in line with their interests and capacities.

The number of pupils who acquire vocational education at lower secondary level (ISCED 2C) is very low. The proportion of pupils in first years of these programmes out of the overall number of pupils in first year of VET schools was some 0.3 % in 2003/04.

CURRICULUM

Vocational education at lower secondary level (ISCED 2C) is implemented in line with an approved curriculum. The curricula are designed depending on the demands and length of the training and with regard to the pupils' disadvantage and prior education. There is a high proportion of practical training in school workshops.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The graduates acquire a certificate of a final examination or only a certificate, and achieve secondary education (without a vocational certificate and "maturita"). The final examination consists of a practical and theoretical examination in vocational subjects. The certificate of a final examination does not entitle its holder to continue studying at post-secondary or tertiary level. Graduates of these programmes perform less demanding manual jobs.

Graduates who only receive a certificate most often work in so-called sheltered workshops.

0403 - IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)

The ratio of students in vocational programmes to those in general programmes was about 80 % to 20 % in 2000 (see Annex, Table 3). This is primarily due to the fact that graduates of vocational programmes acquire a qualification that is relatively well accepted in the labour market, and at the same time have access to tertiary education. Those who have completed a study programme with "maturita" may seek admission to a higher education institution or a higher professional school. Those who have completed a vocational programme with a "vocational certificate" can take a two-year follow-up courses and pass "maturita". Following this they may seek admission to tertiary education. However, there is also the aspect of demand for general education exceeding supply. Unsuccessful applicants for general programmes go for vocational programmes.

Admission to upper secondary education is conditional upon completion of compulsory education (15-year-old applicants), or upon successful completion of basic education (9 years) before completing compulsory education. The applicants must also meet admission criteria.

The admission criteria and the form and content of the entrance examination are set by the school director depending on the type and level of education. This means that admission proceedings differ depending on the field of education and school. The main criterion is the applicant's performance at basic school or in another type of school attended before. An **entrance examination** (written or oral) is usually part of the admission proceedings and it is designed to test the knowledge and skills of the applicant in the Czech language, mathematics and, possibly, a foreign language (at the level of basic education). There is often no entrance examination – particularly when vocational programmes (ISCED 3C) are concerned. In some programmes (particularly in arts) a test of aptitude is an obligatory component of admission proceedings (taken before the entrance examination). Applicants are also obliged to meet health requirements for the relevant programme as set by the Ministry of Health in the form of a government ruling. An applicant may be admitted to a higher than the first year – class. The school director may request a specific examination as part of the admission proceedings.

The length of educational programmes is related to the form of their completion. If a programme is completed by the award of a vocational certificate it lasts mostly 3 years (daily attendance), only small part of programmes lasts 2 years. If it is completed by "maturita", it lasts 4 years (daily attendance). Educational programmes which take other forms (evening courses, self-study with consultations, distance or combined courses) may exceed the daily studies by a maximum of 1 year.

The principal curricula document with nationwide validity is the **Standard of Secondary Vocational and Technical Education**. It is divided into three parts: 1) general education, 2) key competencies, 3) basic vocational and technical education. The requirements set out in the Standard are differentiated for:

- individual educational level – i.e. secondary education with a vocational certificate (ISCED 3C) and secondary education with "maturita" (ISCED 3A),
- various field of education (i.e. 21 thematic areas – e.g. mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, agriculture, etc.).

Initial vocational education and training at upper secondary level is provided in compliance with curricular documents approved by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. However, school directors can adjust these documents. The study plan may be changed in line with regulations in place – normally up to 10 % of the overall number of teaching periods. Subject syllabi may be modified to the extent of up to 30 % of the teaching periods allocated to each subject (the adjustment is due to new technologies, modernisation of the field, regional conditions and the requirements of social partners). Schools may also develop their own curricula, but their application is subject to approval by the MoEYS.

Study plans include general subjects (Czech language and literature, a foreign language, mathematics, natural sciences, civic education, history and physical education), and vocational subjects, depending on the relevant programme. Vocational subjects include practical exercises, laboratory work, etc. The study plans also include work placements in companies and other institutions. The length of these placements depends on the nature of the programme.

From 2006/2007 the existing curricula will be gradually replaced by framework curricula and school-based curricula developed on their basis (see Theme 7.3).

Vocational and technical programmes at upper secondary level are provided by the following types of school:

- secondary technical schools,
- secondary vocational schools,
- conservatoires.

Secondary technical schools (STS) may be public, private or church owned. Education at public schools is provided for free, while private and denominational schools may collect tuition fees. In 2003/04 there were 815 secondary technical schools in the CR, of which 598 were public, 201 private and 16 church owned.

The proportions of general and vocational subjects vary depending on the fields of study and years. The ratio is around 45:55 in favour of vocational subjects. The teaching takes place in classrooms, or in special rooms and

laboratories. Work placements (on average 6-8 weeks altogether), during which students experience the feel of a real workplace, facilitate contacts between the students and employers.

STSs carry out both continuous and final assessment of students. The "maturita" examination consists of Czech language and literature, an optional general subject and vocational subjects. The examination in vocational subjects is composed of a theoretical and practical part. Upon successful passing of "maturita" students are awarded a "maturita" certificate. Employers acknowledge this certificate without any reservations as a certificate of a vocational qualification.

Secondary vocational schools (SVS) may be public (453 - some 90 % of students), private (90 - about 10 % of students) and church (a negligible number). Education in public SVSs is provided for free, whereas private and church schools may collect tuition fees. A typical feature of vocational training at this level is the high number of students who are not trained for the work in a specific company or organisation.

The study plans include general subjects, vocational subjects the selection of which depends on the field of study, and practical training. The proportions of general and vocational subjects and practical training vary depending on the programme and year. In three-year programmes, which are the most common, general subjects are allocated 30-35 % of the instruction time, vocational subjects get 20-30 % of the time and practical training 35-45 %. In four-year programmes the ratio is about 40:30:30. In follow-up courses for graduates of three-year vocational programmes at SVS, the study plans only include general subjects and vocational theory. The ratio is about 45:55.

Theoretical instruction takes place in classrooms; practical training takes place mostly at specially designed training facilities or workshops. In view of the nature of the programmes, practical training may also be held in laboratories or specially equipped classrooms.

SVSs carry out both continuous and final assessment. This vocational training (two years or mostly three years) is completed with a final examination where the students demonstrate their preparedness for the performance of the relevant tasks and occupations. It consists of a practical and a theoretical examination in vocational subjects. Upon a successful passing of the final examination students get a final examination record and a vocational certificate (*výucní list*). The final examination does not allow for entering tertiary education. Graduates leave directly for the labour market. They may continue studying on the condition that they undergo a two-year follow-up programme and pass "maturita" examination.

SVS may train students "in programmes designed for the performance of certain more demanding manual occupations and some tasks of an operational and technical nature". In this case the studies take four years. As at STSs, continuous assessment is applied and the final assessment takes the form of a "maturita" examination. "Maturita" opens up the possibility of studying at a higher education institution or a higher professional school.

Conservatoires are a specific type of secondary school with a different regime. Applicants who complete the 9th year of basic school are admitted to six-year music and drama programmes. The eight-year dance programme is designed for those who complete the 5th year of basic school, and in the lower years implement their compulsory schooling. Upon successful completion of a conservatoire programme the graduate acquires either secondary education with "maturita" (ISCED 3B) or higher professional education (ISCED 5B).

Secondary education with "maturita" is acquired upon successful completion of the relevant part of the programme. In six-year programmes it is after at least 4 years of education, in eight-year programmes after 8 years of education (daily attendance).

Higher professional education is acquired upon successful passing of "absolutorium". "Absolutorium" is a comprehensive professional examination consisting of an exam in the theoretical component of vocational subjects and in a foreign language, the defence of a thesis, a graduate performance in one or two main subjects, and, possible an examination in artistic-pedagogical disciplines. "Absolutorium" may be taken provided that the student has passed "maturita" (ISCED 3B) or similar examinations in front of an examination board. The graduates get a certificate of "absolutorium" and a diploma. Conservatoire graduates have the title "specialist with a diploma" (*"diplomovaný specialista"*, abbreviated as "DiS" – behind the name).

0404 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

"Apprenticeship training" as specified in a definition used in the European Union does not exist in the Czech Republic. Vocational qualifications that are partially comparable with this type of vocational training may be acquired in 3 year vocational programmes at secondary vocational schools. Upon successful completion of these programmes pupils acquire secondary education with a vocational certificate (ISCED 3C) – see Theme 0403.

0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

Young people may also acquire vocational skills outside the system of formal education provided by schools. This type of learning includes, above all, education as a leisure activity, "post-maturita" courses and retraining programmes.

Various forms of **education as a leisure activity** are provided, for example, by language schools. Other private and public institutions and organisations deliver programmes designed to develop talents (artistic, sporting, etc.).

Language schools offer one-year "**post-maturita**" **language courses** for students who completed secondary education with "maturita". Most schools providing these courses make it possible for applicants to choose one of two main languages (English and German). In addition to this they may choose another language and/or other subjects. The main language is taught some 20 hours a week. Upon completion of the course the student obtains a certificate of completion, or may even take some of the examinations leading to internationally recognised certificates. Courses at language schools must be accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS).

RETRAINING PROGRAMMES

Young people who have left the education system without a qualification or who cannot find employment have an opportunity of undergoing retraining. Retraining programmes constitute one of the measures of an active employment policy and they are organised by labour offices under the conditions stipulated in the Act on employment and the relevant decree. Young people take part in regular retraining courses, but receive more attention as part of counselling. Some courses may be tailored to meet the needs of a particular group of young people (see Theme 5.6).

Graduates of accredited retraining courses acquire a certificate of qualification that is formally recognised and valid nationwide. However, it is not equal to certificates acquired in the formal education system. Recognition of these certificates on the part of employers depends on the employer's willingness and on the quality of the retraining course.

0406 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL

At present, the only form of vocational education at post-secondary level is the so-called follow-up studies (ISCED 4). The studies are designed for graduates of three-year programmes who hold a vocational certificate and make it possible for them to acquire secondary education with "maturita". This provides access to tertiary education and broader employment opportunities (in positions requiring secondary education with "maturita").

Follow-up studies last 2 years (daily attendance). Apart from daily attendance, there may be evening courses, self-study with consultations, distance or combined courses. The typical age of students is 19-20.

Admission to follow-up studies is conditional upon completion of a three-year programme and the acquisition of a vocational certificate. Admission requirements are similar to those at secondary schools. The school director may decide that an entrance examination will be part of admission proceedings. One of the principal admission criteria is performance in prior education. Applicants for follow-up courses are required to have completed a programme in the same or related field.

Follow up courses **are provided** only by secondary schools providing programmes completed by "maturita" in a particular field.

The content of education in follow-up courses follows from that in the three-year programme in the relevant field and it is designed to complement it so that it corresponds to education with "maturita". The curriculum includes both vocational and general education (the ratio is 55:45). The vocational component contains more theory as compared to the three-year programme, places more emphasis on intellectual rather than on manual skills, and develops organisational and management skills, and business and ICT knowledge.

Follow-up courses are completed by a "maturita" examination and the graduate receives a "maturita" certificate. Apart from a level of education (secondary education with "maturita") the graduates acquire a qualification to perform middle-level technical and business occupations or demanding manual occupations in the relevant field. Most graduates enter the labour market directly. They may also seek admission to studies at tertiary level (at higher professional schools or higher education institutions).

0407 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

Education at tertiary level in the CR is not divided into vocational (professional) and general education. Tertiary education makes it possible for graduates of its programmes at various levels either to enter the labour market or to continue studying at another level – either immediately after graduation or after some time. Access to tertiary programmes is conditional upon meeting the relevant admission requirements. Tertiary education is provided by **higher professional schools** (ISCED 5B), **conservatoires** (ISCED 5B – see Theme 4.7) and **higher education institutions** (ISCED 5A, 6).

Since 1996 **higher professional schools** (HPS) have been operating in this sector. The objective of HPSs is to offer students the opportunity of obtaining a vocational qualification for the performance of demanding professional activities, or of enhancing the qualification they have already achieved.

HPSs provide study programmes lasting 3 to 3.5 years. Applicants must have completed upper secondary education with "maturita" (normally 19 and older). The school director may decide whether an entrance examination should be part of admission proceedings, and what its content should be. The programmes may be studied full-time or part-time.

The curricula are designed by individual schools. However, they must be approved by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) based on a recommendation issued by the Accreditation Commission for higher professional education. The ratio between general, general vocational and specific vocational subjects is roughly 20:40:40. Practical training in a specific field constitutes an important component of this type of study. It may last up to one year during which students work on a paper or project which is then evaluated jointly by the school and the relevant company or institution. The instruction consists of lectures and seminars, practicals, laboratory exercises and work placements.

The assessment of learning outcomes and marking are fostered by assessment regulations designed by each school, which must be in line with the relevant legislation and approved by the MoEYS. The assessment regulations provide for a marking scale (mostly four grades), and assessment methods. It is also stipulated in the regulations which of these methods will be applied to particular subjects. The school also regulates the organisational details concerning examination retakes, including the deadlines for fulfilling school duties due for one term or academic year.

The studies are completed by "absolutorium". "Absolutorium" is a vocational examination consisting of an examination in the theory of vocational subjects, a foreign language, a graduate thesis and its defence. The composition and number of vocational subjects in which the exam is taken are determined by the relevant curricula. The defence of the graduate thesis may include a test of practical skills. Upon a successful passing of "absolutorium", the student of the HPS attains higher professional education and the title of specialist with a diploma ("diplomovaný specialista"), abbreviated as DiS. and stated behind the name.

Graduates from higher professional schools find employment in various fields of economy and are required to master qualified activities of an advanced nature. They may further enhance their qualification by studying at higher education institutions on the same conditions as apply to secondary school leavers who hold a "maturita" certificate.

Higher education institutions provide accredited Bachelor, Master and Doctoral study programmes and lifelong learning programmes.

Bachelor study programmes are designed to prepare students for the performance of an occupation and for further studies in a Master study programme. They last 3-4 years (ISCED 5A). **Master study programmes** focus on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge in line with modern science, research and development, on mastering its practical application, and on nurturing creative activities. In arts disciplines it is focused on demanding artistic

training and the development of talents. Master study programmes follow on from Bachelor programmes. The standard length is 1-3 years (ISCED 5A). If the nature of the study programme so requires, accreditation may be awarded to a Master programme which does not follow from a Bachelor programme. In this case it lasts 4-6 years. A **Doctoral study programme** may follow only after the completion of a Master programme. These programmes focus on research and independent creative activities concerned with research and development, or on independent theoretical or creative work in arts. The standard length is 3 years (ISCED 6).

A minimum requirement for admission to a university is the completion of secondary education with "maturita", or "absolutorium" in the case of conservatoires. (Arts disciplines at universities may constitute an exception in this respect. However, the subsequent passing of a "maturita" examination is a condition for the award of a university degree). Admission to Master studies following on from a Bachelor programme is conditional upon due completion of the Bachelor programme. Admission to Doctoral programmes is conditional upon due completion of a Master programme. A higher education institution may set additional admission requirements concerning, for example, particular knowledge, capacities or aptitudes. There is normally an entry examination which tests whether the applicant meets the requirements.

A study programme is designed and submitted for accreditation by the HE institution, or by an institution that seeks to deliver it in co-operation with the HE institution. The nature of the programme is determined by its type (Bachelor, Master, Doctoral), and the form of study (full-time, distance or a combination of the two). Study programmes are subject to accreditation issued by the MoEYS based on a recommendation of the Accreditation Commission, which is set up by the government. Bachelor and Master programmes are based on two major methods of instruction – lecturers and practicals. Doctoral study programmes are implemented in line with an individual study plan under the guidance of a supervisor.

The studies in Bachelor and Master programmes are completed by state final examinations and the defence of a Bachelor or Master thesis. The graduates are awarded an academic degree in line with the level and field of education. The studies in Doctoral programmes are completed by a doctoral examination and the defence of a dissertation. Upon successful passing of the examination the degree of Doctor (Ph.D.) is awarded.

05 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

0501 - BACKGROUND AND MAIN TYPES OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

Continuing education and training (CVET) began to develop more extensively as late as the 1990s. The development was marked by the predominance of market impulses and spontaneity without appropriate co-ordination and systemic approaches. Adult education in schools has a longer tradition, and so does the training of employees in certain professions and areas.

DOCUMENTS

The main intentions as regards adult education in the Czech Republic (CR) are contained in a number of documents prepared at national level (**National Programme for the Development of Education in the CR** approved by the government in 2001, **Strategy for Human Resources Development in the CR** adopted by the Czech government in 2003). These documents cover also a lifelong learning development strategy.

Continuing education is also touched upon in various policy papers which set out objectives in other areas, particularly employment and social development. These are: National Employment Action Plans (NEAPs), The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion for 2004 – 2006, The National Programme concerned with Preparation for Population Ageing for 2003 – 2007, State Information and Communication Policy - e-Cesko 2006.

However, although the ambitions of the CR in the area of CVET are high, most measures that have been proposed are only slowly and often only partially being put into practice.

TYPES OF CVET

At present, **CVET takes the following forms:**

- adult education in schools leading to the acquisition of a formal level of education,
- training of employees in enterprises and other organisations,
- specific training of employees in certain occupations and industries (including the so-called "normative" education),
- retraining of job seekers,
- education as a leisure activity.

Adult education in schools leading to the acquisition of a formal qualification has been developing mainly over the last five decades. This type of education at secondary schools and higher education (HE) institutions reached its peak in the 1960s. The proportion of adults educated at secondary schools was almost 22 % of the total number of students. Nowadays the proportion is less than 6 %. Adults undertaking HE in the 1960s accounted for almost 37 % of all students. At present, adults at HE institutions and higher professional schools in programmes leading to a formal qualification account for approximately 16 % of the total number of students.

The training of employees in enterprises and other organisations has, in most cases, developed over the last 15 years. Only one (smaller) part of this training has a longer tradition – i.e. the compulsory training of employees performing specific occupations, which is stipulated in the relevant legal regulations. At the outset of economic transformation the training activities of enterprises were reduced for several years as a result of their restructuring and insolvency. A gradual change occurred as late as after 1994 – mainly in connection with the inflow of foreign capital which has brought about progressive concepts of human resources development. The shortage of advanced

qualifications and some professions in the labour market forced enterprises to set about their staff development in a more intensive manner.

Decisions as to the main characteristics of the training of employees – e.g. the content, focus, training providers or funding, take place at company level. Most training courses are provided by external training organisations, only a portion of the courses are organised by training facilities of the companies. Private training organisations are the most frequent providers of in-service training, while secondary schools and HE institutions rank among the providers showing the lowest figures in this respect (1.4 % and 3.7 %).

Specific training of employees in certain occupations or industries is usually regulated by the law (e.g. in healthcare), decrees or other regulations issued by the relevant ministerial or professional body. Ministerial training institutes are established and governed directly by the relevant ministries. The main tasks of these institutes include the administration and implementation of the training of employees (specialists) in specialisation courses at selected workplaces, the development of study plans for the vocational training, and the relevant methodological guidance and supervision. The specific training of employees is traditionally implemented in healthcare, energy, public administration, transport, the interior and defence. (see Theme 8.1)

The retraining of job seekers, or other individuals, began to develop after 1990, in parallel with the formation of employment services. It is one of the instruments of an active employment policy. The proportion of job seekers involved in retraining is only slightly increasing and currently reaches some 8 %.

ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

In most cases access to continuing education is not conditional upon prior acquisition of a specific level of education. One exception is education in schools that leads to the acquisition of a formal qualification where admission requirements similar to those in IVET must be met (see Theme 4.3). Admission to the training of specific professions according to the law requirements or training of staff within ministries' administrative areas may also be conditional upon a specific level of prior education.

[Notes](#)

0502 - PLANNING AND ORGANISATION OF LEARNING RESPONSIBILITY

The overall responsibility for education has the **Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS)**. The education of adults provided by secondary schools, higher professional schools and school institutions is the responsibility of the relevant ministerial departments. Adult education provided by higher education (HE) institutions – i.e. distance and lifelong learning including the "Third Age University" – fall within the purview of HE institutions.

The responsibility for retraining is borne by the **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA)** which determines the conditions under which training organisations providing retraining courses operate (the courses must be accredited by the MoEYS). Retraining is organised by **labour offices** which determine the types and nature of the courses depending on the needs and requirements of regional labour markets, or possibly employers.

The systems of specific continuing training administered by ministries are subject to the law, regulations and decrees of the relevant ministries (e.g. the Ministry of Health). The situation is similar as regard the training of specific occupations provided by organisations with nationwide operations (e.g. in energy). The regulations are binding for all employers.

The provision of **training services on a commercial basis** is not governed by any regulatory body. One exception is institutions which want to have the right to award certificates of CVET with nationwide validity (they ask the relevant ministerial body for accreditation), and institutions providing language education (they ask the MoEYS for accreditation).

In early 2003 the **Government Council for Human Resources Development** was set up as a body of the government of the Czech Republic (CR) with consultative, initiation and co-ordination functions in the area of strategic management of human resources development, including adult education. (see Theme 3)

Social partners have only been involved in education for a short time – roughly since 1996. There are three major institutions: The Confederation of Industry of the CR, the Economic Chamber of the CR, and the Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions. Their main focus is vocational training. They are pursuing a change in economic rules which should provide incentives for enterprises to provide more training for their employees, to become more involved in initial education and to co-operate more with schools. They are actively involved in the development and evaluation of key documents concerning education and training. However, their role is somewhat restricted to consultations, and they do not have any decision-making or executive power. (see Theme 3.3)

LEGISLATION

So far there is no law in the CR that would deal with adult education, nor has there been any such law in the past. In 2004 the drafting of an act on continuing education was launched. At present, the principal propositions of such an act exist. The law will follow from existing legal regulations, particularly the School Act. The bill should be finalised in 2005.

The legislation in place that affects continuing education consists of regulations fostering other areas, but touches upon various aspects of CVET. Three types of regulations may be distinguished:

- **Laws covering initial education and training** which lay down the ways in which, at every level, schools may provide adult education (including the completion of basic education);
- **Regulations concerning labour and employment:** the Labour Code, the Act on employment and the binding Decree on retraining of job seekers and employees; the Act on investment incentives and changes to other acts and Government regulation on material support for the creation of new jobs and the retraining of employees;

- **Other laws and decrees** (e.g. the Act on pedagogical staff; the Act on technical standards and the Act on state expert supervision; the Act on the conditions concerning the acquisition and recognition of professional and specialised competencies to perform the occupation of physician, dentist and pharmacist; the Act on trades, etc.).

CERTIFICATION

In the CR, there is no integrated system for evaluation and certification of the knowledge and skills acquired in CVET. Several types of certificate are used. Successful graduates mostly obtain a certificate stating that the participant has undergone the relevant course.

Some certificates are generally recognised. Upon completion of CVET leading to a formal qualification, the graduate obtains a certificate of the same validity as the certificate awarded upon completion of IVET (a vocational certificate, a "maturita" certificate, an absolutorium, a university degree). Upon completion of compulsory CVET, the graduate obtains a certificate allowing the holder to perform specific professional activities (the certificate is valid nationwide). Certain types of certificate are issued based on the completion of a generally recognised type of continuing education – these certificates may only be issued by accredited institutions. They are valid nationwide and in many cases are recognised internationally (see Theme 8).

[Notes](#)

0503 - DELIVERY MECHANISMS AND PROVIDERS

Adult education is provided by:

- schools – primarily secondary schools, higher professional schools and higher education (HE) institutions;
Other institutions:
- commercial training organisations (schools may also provide retraining on a commercial basis).
- non-profit organisations: foundations, churches, trade unions, political parties;
- training facilities in: enterprises, state administration bodies, etc.;

SECONDARY AND HIGHER PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS

Schools provide various forms of part-time adult education leading to the **acquisition of a formal qualification**. There are programmes at secondary and higher professional level in some fields where the schools also provide full-time programmes. Basic and secondary schools may also organise courses for those who fulfilled their compulsory education, but did not complete basic education.

Adult education at schools which leads to the acquisition of a formal qualification has a number of characteristic features. Firstly, the curricula are derived from the curricula for full-time programmes for children and young people. On the one hand, this facilitates comparability of outcomes and certificates. On the other hand, the different professional and personal experience of adults is not sufficiently taken into consideration. Secondly, typical of this type of adult education are long programmes lasting several years, which are in line with educational standards, but which cannot respond to the development of learning needs in a flexible manner. Graduates of adult education programmes at secondary or higher professional schools obtain, after passing the prescribed examinations, a certificate or a title of the same validity as in full-time studies.

Secondary technical schools and secondary vocational schools may also organise various **continuing training courses** including retraining. This education is provided on a commercial basis.

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Higher education (HE) institutions also provide adults with the opportunity of studying some programmes in a distance form or combination of full-time and distance form. Upon passing the prescribed examinations, graduates achieve a degree of the same validity as in regular full-time studies.

As part of its educational activities HE institution may provide, either for free or for a fee, lifelong learning programmes outside the framework of its study programmes. They may be focused on professional development or conceived as a leisure activity (e.g. the "Third Age University"). Detailed conditions concerning lifelong learning are stipulated in the institution's internal regulations.

Centres for Distance Education have been set up at some universities with support from the Phare programme. The centres have facilities connected to the Internet and a library with publications about distance learning techniques, and examples of distance learning programmes both in the CR and abroad.

INSTITUTIONS PROVIDING ADULT EDUCATION (COMMERCIAL AND NON-PROFIT)

Education provided by commercial and non-profit organisations varies in terms of type, focus, level and length of courses. It is organised according to supply and demand, and therefore there are no fixed admission requirements, educational objectives, course content, learning methods, and evaluation and certification procedures. In general, the courses are most frequently focused on foreign languages, the use of computers, management and accountancy.

TRAINING FACILITIES IN ENTERPRISES

Training facilities operated by enterprises are primarily designed to meet the company's training needs. Most training activities are performed to meet legal requirements or company guidelines. Many certificates of such training are only valid in the particular company.

In recent years it has been common to take out the training facilities from the company structure – as part of outsourcing - and enable the facility to obtain an independent status. Training is then provided on an external basis.

MINISTERIAL AND OTHER TRAINING INSTITUTES AND CENTRES

There are training or similar institutes within the administrative areas of certain ministries which provide systematic training for the employees in that area. The ways of administrating and operating these institutes vary. In some cases they are institutions directly governed by the relevant ministry, in other cases they are consultative and training centres providing services on a commercial basis. The most important of them are:

Public administration institutes: Institute for Public Administration at the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic (CR). It provides training courses for civil servants at central level. Institute for Local Administration set up by the Ministry of Interior which provides the training of officers in regional and local administrative bodies in line with the Act on regional and local administration officers.

Ministerial training institutes: For example, Institute for Post-Graduate Education in Healthcare, which is a research and training institution governed by the Ministry of Health; Pedagogical Centre Prague directly governed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports – it has branches in regions and provides for the training of pedagogical staff primarily at basic and secondary schools. Some of the branches also deliver training courses for individuals with other than teaching qualifications.

Other institutes which serve as training centres in energy, transport, etc. For example, the Institute of the Confederation of Industry is focused on the provision of education and training, counselling services and consultations for members of the Confederation (which is a voluntary association of employers and entrepreneurs in industry and transport). Economic chambers design their training activities for entrepreneur-beginners, and for businessmen operating small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Regional Counselling and Information Centres (RPIC) – there is a network of 36 of these centres offering programmes for entrepreneurs operating small and medium-sized enterprises. Business and Innovation Centres (BIC), which provide services for SMEs. Some BICs organise seminars and training for entrepreneurs.

INFORMATION ABOUT EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

In the CR, there is no comprehensive system in providing information for potential students about the provisions of adult education. There are only partial information systems and isolated sources.

Information about distance, evening and external studies at secondary schools, higher professional schools and HE institutions is part of the information system “Schools Network Registry” which is regularly updated by the Institute for Information on Education. This information database is available on-line, and both facilitate criteria-based searches and provides for links to the websites of the schools listed.

Information about the provision of retraining courses is provided by labour offices and their information and counselling centres.

Information about courses provided on a commercial basis is rather scattered and often incomplete. A list of institutions providing accredited programmes is maintained at the MoEYS. In 2001 an internet database of continuing education entitled DAT was developed (www.eu-dat.com). The data is entered in the database by the providers. Those interested in training may search the information according to selected criteria. The database is also used by labour offices in relation to the organisation of retraining. Besides this, there is the internet database Ucení online (Learning Online – www.uceni-online.cz), which covers primarily language courses (in the CR and abroad), and, to a lesser degree, courses in informatics and other fields.

[Notes](#)

0504 - ACCESS TO LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND PROGRAMMES

FUNDING

One important aspect of access to education is its financing. The situation varies according to the provider and type of education. Courses may be provided for free, or for a fee required from the participant, covering the training costs in full or in part.

The financial conditions of the various forms of part-time programmes provided by schools and leading to the acquisition of a formal qualification are similar to those applying to full-time studies (see Themes 10.2 and 10.3) – i.e. education at public basic and secondary schools and public higher education (HE) institutions is provided for free. Private schools collect tuition fees. The level of tuition fees varies from school to school and totals on average 600 EUR per year in private secondary and higher professional schools, and some 1,500 EUR in higher education institutions. Public higher professional schools may also collect tuition fees. Their level is regulated by law and it is around 100 EUR per year.

Retraining courses are funded from various sources. Job seekers and people interested in changing a career are entitled to the full coverage of course fees (by the labour offices from the state budget). If retraining is organised by a company for its employees, the costs are shared between the company and the labour office.

Continuing training in enterprises is the responsibility of the employer. The employer normally finances the training in full and gives the employee paid leave, provided that the qualification-enhancing training is in line with the company's needs (or the employer may agree a co-funding scheme with the employee).

The funding of **other types of adult education** (e.g. the “Third Age University”, the training provided by civic associations, foundations, etc.) is shared between non-state organisations that usually apply for public grants and individuals. The data about financial resources and costs of these types of continuing education and training are not available. However, it is estimated that they account for a very low proportion of the total financial resources spent on CVET in the Czech Republic (CR).

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES TO PROMOTE PARTICIPATION IN CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

There are no or very weak incentives for individuals. There is only the advantage of a 10 percentage points increase in unemployment benefits provided that the job seeker takes a retraining course. Neither the incentives for employers are very effective. **Enterprises** may include their training costs in deductible costs. As part of active employment policy measures, employers may get a contribution from the labour office to organise retraining for employees to retain them in the company. As part of investment incentives for employers and entrepreneurs, large investors may be granted a subsidy for the training or retraining of their employees (see Theme 5.2 Legislation). Small investors may obtain a similar subsidy (limited in amount) as part of the programme for the support for the creation of new jobs in regions most afflicted with unemployment (see Theme 10.3). In the future there could be a

more extensive support for continuing training in enterprises, since, as the CR has joined the EU, the opportunity has opened up of drawing resources for specific training from the European Social Fund.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Prior learning is only recognised in some cases. In general, education provided by schools that leads to a formal qualification is recognised. Prior learning acquired in continuing training courses is not generally recognised. In the CR there is no system for accreditation and recognition of non-formal learning. In some cases institutions providing continuing education test the prior knowledge of course participants. As regards admission to schools, the school director may recognise prior learning, including non-formal, and place the applicant in a higher class. (see Theme 5.5 and Theme 8)

ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

Socially disadvantaged groups normally suffer from an insufficient level of educational attainment, and a lack of motivation to increase it. Moreover, they often have financial, health or family problems. The non-existence of a legal/institutional framework for continuing education also has an impact on disadvantaged groups of adults. There is no comprehensive government policy focusing on these groups as regards their education, not to mention a policy interlinking social and educational aspects. There are only partial measures under different policies.

There are courses provided by basic schools for adults who failed to complete all years of basic school or those who attended a special school (the completion of which is not recognised as full basic education).

A broadly-conceived scheme for the training of the population in information and communication skills was launched by the Ministry of Informatics in 2003 – the **National Computer Literacy Programme**. The objective is to ensure the acquisition of basic computer and Internet skills. The scheme involves short practical courses for a minimum fee, which are primarily focused on disadvantaged groups.

The Act on employment sets out a list of individuals who are given special care when they seek job – due to their health condition, age, the fact that they look after a child, or for other serious reasons. These individuals may be placed in all types of retraining courses, including courses specifically focusing on motivation and re-socialisation. Moreover, the labour office may develop a so-called **individual action plan (IAP)** for them in order to increase their employability. Labour offices are obliged to offer an IAP to young people up to 25 and graduates of HE institutions up to 30 (within two years of the completion of studies) – this is part of the programme “First Chance” that has been implemented nationwide since 2004. An IAP is a form of counselling where a written agreement is concluded between the job seeker and the labour office (normally after 3-4 months of unemployment) in which the two parties jointly set out all steps and measures to be taken. The agreement usually also includes a training plan adjusted to the personal and professional potential of the individual (balance diagnostics are often used to assess this potential).

Counselling and balance diagnostics for disadvantaged adults has begun to develop as part of active employment policy schemes since 1999. Centres were established in all NUTS 2 regions which, in cooperation with labour offices, provide services aimed at the testing of individual capacities and aptitudes in relation to employability, and at recommending suitable training courses.

The access of individuals with physical disabilities to continuing education must be addressed in a systematic manner. After many years when these issues were not properly tackled, the government approved in 2003 **Propositions for integrated rehabilitation of individuals with physical disabilities**. The drafting of an act has followed which, if passed, should enter into force in 2006. The act should address, apart from other things, the training of the disabled for suitable jobs following medical, social and pedagogical rehabilitation. People with physical disabilities are entitled to take part in active employment policy measures implemented by labour offices which provide extensive opportunities for their integration into the labour market.

[Notes](#)

0505 - BRIDGING INITIAL AND POST INITIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The opportunities for transfers between continuing and initial education are so far limited. One of the reasons for this is the fact that certificates issued by institutions providing continuing education outside the schools system are not generally recognised. There is no transparent national system of qualifications that would facilitate the assessment and recognition of competencies acquired in various training programmes, including the competencies acquired via non-formal learning. The education provided by schools has not been modularised so as to allow for a more flexible combination of initial and continuing education programmes, or for the completion of a missing part of education as a prerequisite for admission to schools at more advanced levels.

The new School Act, which came into effect in 2005, does not provide a solution to these issues. However, it contains certain provisions that facilitate links between the two systems. One novelty is the possibility of taking shortened programmes to obtain a vocational certificate and a “maturita” certificate. Young people and adults who complete upper secondary education with “maturita” will be able to get a second vocational qualification without the need to undergo the programme at its standard length. In admission proceedings, school directors will be able to recognise prior formal as well as non-formal education. Although the recognition of education acquired elsewhere is not based on objective criteria, a credit system etc., it may be expected that this approach will at least partially facilitate transfers between continuing and initial education.

A national system of qualifications does not exist. The Integrated System of Typical Working Positions (ISTP), which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and which contains information about occupations in the labour market, could constitute a foundation for such a system. At present the system is designed to identify the characteristics of suitable initial education, and the experience and certificates required for the performance of the relevant occupation and job. In the future it should also include information concerning continuing education. In its final version the system should interlink the requirements for education and training in various fields of initial and continuing education with labour market requirements.

0506 - RE-EDUCATION AND RE-TRAINING NEEDS DUE TO LABOUR MARKET DEVELOPMENTS AND MOBILITY

Labour offices organise retraining as part of an active employment policy. To retrain means to change or complement the existing qualification of a job seeker, and to acquire new knowledge and skills facilitating his/her performance of a suitable job. Studies at secondary schools and higher education (HE) institutions, and follow-up

courses are not considered to be retraining. Retraining is carried out based on a written agreement between the labour office and a job seeker which stipulates the conditions under which the retraining will take place (decree no. 519/2004).

Two basic types of retraining have been gradually developed:

- **specific (targeted)** – i.e. a change of the existing qualification focusing on the acquisition of specific theoretical knowledge and practical skills for a suitable job. It is mostly based on existing or anticipated labour market needs, and often related to a specific job offer;
- **non-specific** - i.e. focusing on enhancing the employability of individuals, particularly graduates of secondary schools and HE institutions, by means of the acquisition of knowledge commonly required by the labour market.

Most people take part in specific retraining (over 50 %) – i.e. retraining designed to fulfil skills shortages in the labour market. On the other hand, the proportion of non-specific and complementary retraining courses has been rising (some 30 %). They are particularly designed for school leavers who are not sufficiently prepared for entering the labour market.

The average length of retraining courses is about 2 months. Most of those who undergo retraining find jobs within 3 months of their completion (63.2 %), and 19.5 % find jobs within 6 months of the completion of retraining. This means that the overall success rate is 82.7 %.

Various ways of providing retraining courses have also been developed. The legislation distinguishes the following ways of course delivery as part of:

- continuing vocational training programmes;
- special programmes leading to the acquisition of a specific skill;
- educational activities within international programmes;
- educational programmes designed for job seekers who receive special attention in line with the act on employment;
- school programmes for upper secondary education (that fall within the system of fields of education);
- other educational activities leading to the acquisition of a new qualification or the improvement of the existing qualification.

In addition to retraining courses for the unemployed there is retraining designed for employees of companies which are switching to a new production programme or a new technology, and the employees do not have the required qualification to perform their new job. As part of retraining organised by their employer with assistance from a labour office they acquire new skills and need not be dismissed.

Another impulse for the development of retraining is the provision of investment incentives for new investors, and the implementation of special governmental programmes supporting job creation. In line with the law, they may receive a contribution to cover staff training and retraining costs. Employees who do not have the required skills and whom the investor accepts for newly created jobs may be trained in line with his/her requirements. This type of training is implemented particularly when there is a shortage of the relevant skills in the labour market and also when employees must be trained to work with new technologies. Investment incentives are targeted at districts with an average and above-average rate of unemployment. Retraining may only be provided by institutions that are accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. In 2002, there were 1,124 institutions with accredited training programmes.

Retraining providers are mostly private training organisations, secondary vocational schools and training facilities in companies. According to a survey carried out by the Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs, about two thirds of retraining providers are private training organisations. The bodies within employment services organise the retraining in most manual occupations in company training facilities and in secondary vocational schools. The retraining of technical and administrative workers and particularly secondary school leavers is organised in private training organisations and partly also at secondary technical schools.

[Notes](#)

06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

0601 - GENERAL BACKGROUND

In the VET area in the Czech Republic there are **teachers of general subjects, teachers of vocational subjects, practical subjects teachers** (*učitelé praktického vyučování*), and **practical training supervisors** (*učitelé odborného výcviku*).

Practical subjects teachers teach practical subjects in workshops at secondary technical schools. **Practical training supervisors** are responsible for the practical component of training at secondary vocational schools. Outside the education system there are **practical training instructors** (*instruktori praktického výcviku*) who are in charge of the practical training of secondary vocational school pupils in the workplace.

The **training of all pedagogical staff** (including those mentioned above) is regulated by the new law on pedagogical staff which came into effect at the beginning of 2005. The previous legal regulations contained in the schools law and the relevant decrees were inappropriate. The new law identifies requirements for the practice of the teaching profession, including vocational qualifications required by various types of educational institution. It provides for the continuing training of pedagogical staff and introduces a system of career development. It stipulates that pedagogical staff is obliged to pursue continuing training and school directors are assigned the duty to organise continuing training in line with the relevant school plan. Certificates testifying to participation in various educational events organised by institutions accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) will be relevant for the career development of pedagogical staff. A more detailed specification of the conditions for classification of teachers and trainers in career categories will be provided in a decree that is currently under development.

A school director is appointed by the school's founding body. Schools are legal entities and therefore hold powers in industrial relations – they are the employers of teachers and practical training supervisors. Teachers and trainers at VET schools are employed based on open recruitment procedures that are not standardised. In line with the Labour Code, an employment contract is concluded between the teacher/trainer and the school director. School directors may hire qualified teachers at their discretion. In the event that there is a shortage of qualified teachers, a school director may employ an applicant without the required vocational or teaching qualification.

The low attractiveness of the teaching profession and inadequate remuneration of teachers/trainers is negatively reflected in the quality of pedagogical staffs and the teaching process. Only a small number of graduates of teacher training programmes enter the education sector and if they do, they tend to leave during their initial years on the job. Many men and good teachers leave the profession for financial reasons. In consequence of this pedagogical staffs are ageing. Policy documents set out objectives in terms of enhancing the professional standards of pedagogical staff, improving the quality of their initial as well as continuing education, and redressing their remuneration.

The introduction of ICT into teaching is conditional upon computer literacy on the part of teachers, and availability of the relevant facilities. The objective of the State ICT Policy in Education (for more details see Theme 7) is to make sure that 75 % of teachers use ICT as a regular teaching tool, and that schools are equipped with the ICT facilities. The training of teachers in ICT is financed by the state and it is provided by accredited training centres (e.g. Pedagogical Centre in Prague). This makes it possible for teachers to acquire ICT competencies from the beginner level up to advanced level, and take a specialisation following the completion of various modules.

The existing teacher training methodology is not undergoing any major changes. There are some partial innovations such as the use of e-learning (e.g. the subject "Introduction to the World of Labour", a training programme for school directors), or some modifications regarding work placements as part of teacher training, which focus on a more extensive use of feedback in further studies.

0602 - TRAINING OF TEACHERS/TRAINERS IN EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

INITIAL TRAINING OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

There are two models of initial teacher/trainer training.

The **integrative model** is characteristic of the initial training of **teachers of general subjects**. In this model all components of teacher training – i.e. vocational subjects, pedagogical-psychological disciplines and practical training – are integrated into one study programme. At the end of the studies students take final examinations in the subjects they will teach and their didactics, and in pedagogical and psychological disciplines. In this way they meet the requirements for vocational and pedagogical competencies.

Teachers-to-be who are trained within the integrative model take accredited Master study programmes at public higher education institutions. Most teachers of general subjects study at the teacher training faculties of universities. The curricula are developed by individual faculties. Each study programme is subject to accreditation awarded by the Ministry of Education (MoEYS) for a period at most twice as long as the standard length of the relevant programme.

The consecutive model is characteristic of the initial training of **teachers of vocational subjects**. The student is first trained to become an expert in the chosen field. Therefore the choice of subject matter and teaching methods correspond to this objective. After passing the relevant state examinations, the student achieves a master degree qualification in the specific vocational field (mechanical or chemical engineering, economics, agriculture, etc.). If he/she opts for the teaching profession, the requirements for so-called "pedagogical competence" must be fulfilled. This competence is achieved through complementary pedagogical studies which may run either in parallel with pre-graduate training in the specialised disciplines, or after completion of pre-graduate studies.

In the event that there is not a master study programme in the relevant field (e.g. hairdresser, waiter, dental technician, etc.), applicants who have completed secondary education with "maturita" are admitted to pedagogical studies.

The consecutive model is currently the only way for teachers of vocational subjects to acquire vocational as well as pedagogical competencies. There is also a portion of teachers of general subjects who follow this model to achieve a pedagogical competence.

With the exception of parallel studies, pedagogical studies are provided on a part-time basis. Students mostly work as teachers of vocational subjects during their studies. Some schools provide their teachers with leave for studying, others compress their teaching load into four days per week. At some schools teachers must take regular holidays for their studies.

The curriculum of complementary pedagogical studies is developed by each faculty (department or institute) responsible for their implementation. The length of complementary pedagogical studies is 3 to 4 semesters. Pedagogical studies are completed by a **final examination** which normally includes pedagogical and psychological disciplines and didactics of vocational subjects. The defence of a final paper is also part of the final examination.

INITIAL TRAINING OF HIGHER PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS

Teachers of general or vocational subjects at higher professional schools obtain a professional qualification upon completion of an accredited Master study programme that corresponds with the nature of the relevant general or vocational subject. Teachers at this level are not required to have obtained a pedagogical qualification and their vocational qualification suffices.

INITIAL TRAINING OF PRACTICAL TRAINING SUPERVISORS AND PRACTICAL SUBJECTS TEACHERS

The initial training of supervisors is similar to the initial training of teachers of vocational subjects. **Practical training supervisors** obtain their **vocational qualification** upon completion of a Master or Bachelor programme at an HE institution, a higher professional school or upon passing a secondary school leaving examination ("maturita") and a final examination in the relevant subject area. In practice supervisors with "maturita" and a vocational training certificate at secondary level predominate. Supervisors acquire a **pedagogical qualification** upon completion of the complementary pedagogical studies described above. The curriculum of pedagogical studies for supervisors is similar to that for teachers of vocational subjects. The only difference is that, apart from didactics of vocational subjects (the scope of which is less extensive as compared to teachers of vocational subjects), didactics of practical training is also taught. Admission and completion requirements are the same for supervisors and for teachers of vocational subjects.

The initial training of **practical subjects teachers** is close to the training of practical training supervisors as described above.

Cooperation among HE institutions which provide pedagogical studies for teachers of vocational subjects or practical training supervisors and practical subjects teachers had until recently been incoherent and haphazard. At present the MoEYS is initiating, with the support of Cedefop, the development of a partner network of providers of training for teachers of vocational subjects, practical training supervisors and practical training instructors in companies – a so-called TTnet in the Czech Republic. The network was launched in January 2005.

CONTINUING TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND SUPERVISORS

The most general provisions concerning the obligation on the part of employees to undertake continuing training are set out in the Labour Code. The new Act on pedagogical staff stipulates this **continuing training obligation** very clearly. The MoEYS annually allocates a certain amount to schools that must be spent on continuing training. From these resources schools may finance continuing training programmes for pedagogical staff that are accredited by the Accreditation Commission of the MoEYS. Some schools already have professional development plans. Schools may choose continuing training programmes based on their needs and the training needs of individual teachers and supervisors.

Continuing training programmes may be provided by HE institutions within the framework of lifelong learning. Moreover, they may be provided by the **Prague Pedagogical Centre** and other institutions and organisations, including schools whose charter contains the provision of continuing education. The Prague Pedagogical Centre is financed from the budget of the MoEYS. It has branches in all regions and their exclusive focus is the continuing training of pedagogical staff. Continuing training is always provided for a fee.

These continuing training programmes are developed by the staff of the aforementioned institutions and accredited by the MoEYS commission. They are primarily focused on the development of pedagogical competencies, and less on the content of the vocational subjects taught. There are only few continuing training programmes for teachers of vocational subjects and practical training supervisors. This is because the spectrum of vocational subjects is very broad, while the number of teachers of individual vocational subjects is low as compared to the numbers in other teaching sub-categories. There is also a **shortage of experts** concerned with didactics of vocational subjects and practical training. Moreover, there is insufficient attention paid to continuing training of vocational subjects' teachers in research.

Apart from educational institutions, companies may also be involved in the training of teachers (particularly continuing training). Such training is most often provided by companies whose technologies and products are getting established in the market (e.g. plasterboard systems, cars). However, there is no relevant information about the scope of this type of training that could facilitate comparison of any kind. The training of teachers in companies is rather sporadic and is not governed by any systemic regulations. Its provision is up to the initiative of schools and companies and depends on the quality of the relationship between the school and the potential employers of its graduates.

0603 - TRAINING OF TRAINERS/TEACHERS AT THE WORKPLACE (APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING AND CVET IN ENTERPRISES)

Practical training of pupils at secondary vocational schools and training centres (*odborná učiliště*) takes place in companies under the leadership of so-called instructors. They are employees of the company providing for the practical training based on a contract with the relevant training institution. The contract stipulates powers and responsibilities and deals with the VET school, company and the instructor as contractual parties. Instructors get an agreed fee for their work.

Pedagogical training of instructors is not governed by any regulations and it is not provided on a systematic basis. It depends on the agreement concluded between the school and the relevant practical training facility.

Instructors may acquire a so-called "pedagogical minimum" in short courses (approx. 40 hours) focused on psychological and pedagogical disciplines. The courses are provided by some schools and should be accredited by MoEYS.

0604 - TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING (OUTSIDE ENTERPRISES)

There are no specific regulations in the CR concerning the work of trainers in continuing training programmes. Nor is the training of these trainers and teachers provided for in a consistent manner. There are currently two institutions in the Czech educational market that provide training for trainers leading to a certificate. The Association of Adult Education Providers (AIVD) offers training courses combining distance and regular skills training. The trainers in management education are trained by the Association of Management Trainers and Consultants (ATKM).

07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

The need for forecasting future skills needs on the labour market is set out in major government papers as one of their priorities (Human Resources Development Strategy, Long-Term Plan for the Development of Education and the Education System, National Employment Action Plan).

The Czech Republic (CR) lacks a coherent system for forecasting skill needs. However, for a number of years various initiatives have been developed that aim at creating a solid system for early identification of skill needs. They take the form of single projects that are not inter-related, and their results do not serve as a regular source of information on which users at various levels could rely.

So-called “**field groups**” operating within the purview of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) focus on qualitative changes in the content of skilled labour. These groups consist of experts in vocational programmes development, representatives of vocational and technical schools and employers. On the basis of available sources of information about the developments in various industries they follow **development trends in groups of related occupations**. The activities of the field groups cover virtually all employment opportunities available to graduates of secondary VET schools and higher professional schools. One partial outcome of the work of the groups is 25 industry-focused studies which constituted a basis for the development of a comprehensive study published in 1999. The monitoring of development trends in groups of related occupations will be repeated periodically. The results of this exercise directly influence the development of Framework Educational Programmes for VET (curricula documents at national level). (see Theme 7.3.)

A mostly quantitative approach is applied in the project **Information System on the Situation of School Leavers in the Labour Market (ISA)**, which is also implemented within the remit of the MoEYS. The objective of this project is to develop information services so that in the career choice process all the capacities and interests of a job applicant can be taken into consideration, as well as all risks related to the situation in the labour market and employment opportunities. ISA provides up-to-date information about the factors that affect employment opportunities for school leavers (economic development, demographic changes, the development of unemployment and of the education system, etc.). This information is then made available to groups of users via the Internet, publications, the media, etc. The main users include applicants for studies at VET schools, school graduates, employers, counselling centres (e.g. information-counselling centres at labour offices), schools, regional education authorities. The **RISA project – Regional Information System on the Situation of School Leavers in the Labour Market** is an ISA variant at regional level. It was completed in 2004 for the Moravia-Silesia region. It makes it possible to collect, process and analyse information concerning the development of supply and demand in the regional labour market, the needs of regional employers and the educational provision of schools and other training organisations in the region.

In 2001 a combined qualitative/quantitative methodology for forecasting skill needs was developed as part of a project financed from the Leonardo da Vinci programme. It is based on experience gained in selected Western European countries and adjusted to the conditions in the CR. The methodology includes a quantitative forecasting model which provides information about employment prospects in the labour market throughout the CR over a five-year period for particular qualifications, and information about employers' chances of finding prospective employees with such qualifications. There is also a methodology for the development of sectoral and regional studies which aim at complement the quantitative information in the model by the qualitative aspects of the changes in sectoral/regional demand for qualifications. The methodology is being developed further and used in projects supported by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA).

This means that there are various approaches employed in forecasting qualification and skill needs in the CR. They are usually further developed within various projects which have had growing effects both on the design of VET curricula and on decisions about quantitative aspects of the structure of the VET system (e.g. the number of applicants admitted to various VET programmes).

The fact that the process of early identification of skill needs is very demanding in terms of information sources, the need for ensuring cooperation between a wide range of institutions and experts at various levels (national, regional, sectoral), and financial resources, has led to a proposal for the development of a system for regular forecasting of skill needs in the CR. The proposal, drafted in 2003 for the MoLSA, contains an overview of activities performed, a list of institutions bound by an agreement on cooperation, financial estimates and prospective sources of funding. This systemic approach should establish conditions for regular prognostic work that would be independent of the approval given to isolated projects. The system is not yet in operation.

The CR has joined a new Cedefop initiative entitled **SkillsNet** which is focused on the creation and operation of an international network concerned with early identification of skill needs. The sharing of information, methodological approaches and methods of organisation related to the identification of skill needs produces valuable information and inspiration for further development of prognostic activities.

[Notes](#)

0702 - BRIDGING PATHWAYS AND NEW EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

As regards the overcoming of barriers between various types and levels of education in the Czech Republic (CR), a strategy entailing co-operation and integration of various programmes within one educational institution is being implemented.

One example is so-called “**follow-up courses**” which make it possible for those who complete vocational programmes at ISCED 3C level to continue their studies and achieve a qualification at ISCED 4A level which enables access to tertiary education. The admission requirement is completion of a vocational programme within the same or a similar study field. Follow-up courses last two years and are completed by a “maturita” examination. Optimally, the student may, in five years, obtain a vocational qualification (certificate) as well as a “maturita” certificate without the need for interrupting studies and transferring to a different school.

There have been rather sporadic cases where general and vocational education was integrated by means of integration of a *gymnázium* and a secondary technical school. *Gymnázia* always promoted their profile as schools preparing for studies at tertiary level and were afraid to merge with secondary technical schools. In view of these secondary technical schools introduced, in the 1990s, general/vocational programmes of a *lyceum* type (technical, economic, natural science, pedagogy) which have a general focus and are designed for students who aspire to study at higher education (HE) institutions of a technical and economic nature. In the academic year 2003/2004 first year students at *lycea* accounted for 5.7 % of students in first years at secondary technical schools (ISCED 3A). There are very good prospects mainly for technical *lycea* due to their cooperation with HE institutions. Moreover, the establishment of *lycea* is supported by regional self-governing bodies. In view of the low number of *gymnázia*, *lycea* may constitute an alternative way of increasing the number of students with general as well as vocational education at ISCED 3A levels who, at the same time, will have the necessary preparation for HE.

Modularisation did not facilitate better transferability between educational paths in the CR, since due to legislative barriers modular curricula could only be implemented as part of the existing educational pathways. It is only now that a national system of qualifications is being developed with the prospect of facilitating links between initial and continuing education, as well as between formal and non-formal learning.

0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA

The task of developing VET curricula has been assigned by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) to the National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education (NÚOV). Information collected by the so-called "field groups" operating at NÚOV is used for this purpose. The field groups are composed of representatives of schools, social partners and, most importantly, employers. There are currently 25 field groups making use of the work of some 270 experts. They cover all fields of vocational education and training. The work of each field group is managed by a member of NÚOV staff who is responsible for the relevant area. A draft curriculum is submitted to the MoEYS for approval. Curricula may also be developed by schools (possibly in co-operation with social partners in their locality) and presented to the MoEYS for approval. (see Theme 7.1.)

The need for increased mobility and flexibility of the labour force has resulted in changes in VET curricula towards generalisation. The scope of the general component in educational programmes is traditionally relatively large, and it makes it easier for graduates to continue studying. The proportion of general education is set to be at least 45 % and 30 % in "maturita" programmes (ISCED 3A) and programmes with vocational certificate (ISCED 3C) respectively. The increase in the general component in vocational courses occurred mainly at the expense of the practical component which formerly accounted for up to 50 % of instruction, while now it should only be some 35 %.

The teaching of foreign languages is an obligatory part of the curricula of both "maturita" and vocational certificate programmes. However, the standards of foreign language teaching are often very low, one of the reasons being insufficient qualifications on the part of teachers. English, German and Russian are the most common languages taught. The teaching of other languages, including French, is virtually negligible.

Since the 1990s VET curricula have been gradually set to encompass support for entrepreneurial skills. A new subject was introduced covering issues such as the setting up of a trade or a company, and the development of management and business skills. In three-year vocational programmes the subject covers the basics of entrepreneurship, in "maturita" programmes the range is wider and often includes work in "fictitious" or student companies. Employers take part in the development of business skills by means of work placements for students.

The skills facilitating the understanding of labour market issues are also gradually finding their way into VET curricula. Students get basic information about the labour market as part of the services provided by Information and guidance centres at Labour offices. A methodology for a subject dealing with the **Introduction to the world of work** has been developed including an e-learning programme for teacher training. However, the integration of these topics into teaching is not binding for schools and it is entirely at the discretion of school directors.

It is clear from the above that, as regards curricula innovation, major changes occurred in the curricular content and new skill requirements. A fundamental change in favour of innovative teaching methods is expected in relation to the implementation of the new School Act.

The School Act passed in 2004 enacts changes in curricular policy. At central level, **Framework Educational Programmes** (curricula - FEPs) will be developed which reflect the efforts made towards curricula based on competencies and, in addition to the content of education, also set out the required targeted competencies of graduates. Before the end of 2003 over 20 FEPs had been developed covering approximately 70 % of VET students, and they have been and will be tested on a pilot basis. The development of FEPs is co-ordinated by the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education, who co-operate with the relevant "field group". The development of FEPs is a demanding process involving several rounds of consultations with all stakeholders (teachers, school associations, social partners, professional associations, regional education authorities, etc.), until they are finally approved by the MoEYS.

Key competencies form an important part of FEPs. They cover the communication and information skills, teamwork, problem-solving and the capacity to learn. They are conceived as transferable competencies which each individual needs in his/her personal as well as working life. Methodological recommendations concerning how to integrate the key competencies into a curriculum are focused primarily on project teaching. This has been so since the mid-1990s when the Phare VET Reform project was implemented.

Schools will design their school-based educational programmes based on FEPs. They will take account of both the objectives of national policies, and the plans and requirements for education resulting from a specific regional environment and the needs of social partners. Methodological materials are being developed to assist curricula designers at schools.

Great attention is being paid to improving information literacy. Therefore in 2000 an **Outline of State IT Policy in Education** was adopted. The objective of Stage 1 of implementation (until 2005) is to establish conditions facilitating an effective and efficient introduction of ICT in teaching at school and, consequently, achieve high levels of information literacy among school leavers; to make sure that ICT is used as a common instrument by 75 % of teachers; and to create conditions for the involvement of schools in the system of lifelong learning of citizens in ICT.

[Notes](#)

08 - ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING

0801 - VALIDATION OF FORMAL LEARNING: GENERAL CONCEPTS AND SCHEMES

At present, only the following educational results are recognised at national level in the Czech Republic: the outputs of **formal IVET** and the corresponding outputs of the so-called "second chance" education within the framework of adult education provided by schools; the outputs of so-called "normative" education leading to the acquisition and updating of special professional competencies which constitute a prerequisite for the performance of certain activities (e.g. driving licences for certain vehicles, welding licences, judicial and other experts' licences, etc.); and the outputs of accredited retraining courses offered, above all, to registered job seekers and others who seek employment opportunities.

FORMAL IVET

Certificates issued in formal education are governed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) legislation. Apart from other things, these regulations stipulate evaluation procedures for the relevant programmes and rules for issuing certificates of their successful completion.

In other than regulated professions, certificates of formal IVET do not constitute a legally binding requirement for the performance of a specific profession – the requirements concerning the level and type of education of employees are decided upon by employers. Nevertheless, formal education in the relevant discipline and at the appropriate level is normally required in the labour market.

General and vocational formal education at “maturita” level are equal in legal terms (all programmes completed by “maturita” fall in the ISCED 3A category). Certificates of vocational training acquired at this level perform a qualification function (not formally binding) and an educational function (formally binding) – they are a prerequisite for entering tertiary education.

Final examinations and certification are currently performed by schools and take the form of public examinations in front of an examination board in line with central regulations providing for their content and implementation. Social partners have not so far been required to be members of the examination boards. The new School Act effective from 2005 stipulates an obligation for social partners to be represented on examination boards at VET schools.

At “maturita” and lower levels a five-grade scale is used to assess student performance (1 = excellent; 5 = fail). In the tertiary sector a four-grade scale is used (1 = excellent; 4 = fail). A final examination is considered to be passed if none of its components is assessed by the “fail” mark. The following are common features of student assessment at secondary vocational and secondary technical schools:

- formative as well as summative evaluation is applied during studies;
- there is no general description of student performance in relation to marking;
- there are no student assessment standards to be used in the course of studies;
- at the end of studies students take comprehensive final examinations. The law stipulates that the performance of the student during the examinations should be assessed with no regard to his/her previous performance;
- final examinations are not standardised (see below);
- assessment is therefore very subjective (a difference of 2 grades is estimated as possible – i.e. the performance of a student who at school A gets the mark “good” (3) may get “very good” (2) at school B and “sufficient” (4) at school C).

Student assessment at higher professional schools corresponds in principle to that at universities. At the end of their studies students take the so-called “absolutorium” (see Theme 4).

All final **examinations** carried out within VET programmes are either entirely (final examinations in ISCED 3C vocational certificate programmes) or predominantly focused on testing student knowledge in the vocational component of the programme. The “maturita” examination (ISCED 3A) contains also a component designed to test the knowledge of the students in general subjects (the compulsory “maturita” subjects at the moment are the Czech language and either mathematics or a foreign language depending on the student’s decision). “Absolutorium” (ISCED 5B) contains a compulsory examination in a foreign language.

In view of the aforementioned drawbacks of certification – particularly the non-existence of student performance assessment standards – **new regulations for the completion of VET studies** have been prepared: final examinations (in vocational certificate programmes) and “maturita” examinations. A nationwide introduction of reformed “maturita” is envisaged for 2007.

A comprehensive approach to the issue of completion of training in vocational certificate programmes (3C) is supported by a systemic project entitled “QUALITY – Development of a Comprehensive System for Monitoring and Evaluation, including Establishment of a Centre for Identification of Educational Results”. The project will be implemented by the MoEYS and its partners with the support of the European Social Fund. The starting point for the project is evaluation standards which set professional competencies for various programmes and criteria for their evaluation. In the project evaluation standards will be combined with the development of the uniform final examinations. By the end of 2008 they will be drafted and tested on a pilot basis at all ISCED 3C level programmes.

“NORMATIVE” EDUCATION

The non-existence of a generally valid legal regulation fostering the recognition of non-formal education has resulted in the development of a number of specific sub-regulations within decrees issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and other ministries (agriculture, industry and trade, health, the interior, and defence) which govern various specific types of CVET or qualification testing. These partial regulations are abundant and they concern, for example, the recognition of the professional competence of individuals working in electrical engineering, crews of ships, railways and railway transport operators, healthcare workers, etc. In line with the relevant regulations they are required either to have obtained the respective certificate, or to have passed the relevant examinations. It is impossible to perform the respective activity unless the individual holds the relevant formal certificate.

RETRAINING

The responsibility for retraining is divided between the MoLSA and MoEYS. The MoLSA jointly with labour offices (which fall within its purview) generate retraining programmes offer, while the Accreditation Commission at the MoEYS accredits them, and also decides on the nature, function and legal validity of certificates issued.

Graduates of accredited retraining courses acquire formally recognised national certificates of qualification, which, however, are not equivalent to the certificates obtained in the formal education system. So far it has not been possible to ensure formal recognition of single skills that, when accumulated, could constitute an equivalent to the relevant certificate recognised in formal education (applying the principle of formal recognition of non-formal or informal learning outcomes). Whether or not these certificates are recognised in the labour market is therefore not clear, and depends on the specific provider and the quality of the course and of course on the employer.

[Notes](#)

0802 - VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

In the Czech Republic (CR) there is no comprehensive legislation governing the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. This situation restricts as a result participation in lifelong learning. Although formal certificates do not, with some exceptions, constitute a binding qualification requirement, this situation leads to deterioration both in transparency for employers in selecting and hiring new staff, and occupational mobility of individuals.

In adult education – and particularly in “second chance” education - adult learners, in order to acquire the relevant certificate of education, must undergo the same comprehensive programmes as in initial education (only the form of studies differs). No account is taken either to the diversity of prior formal education or the actual personal competencies of the learner or the learner’s ambitions which he/she pursues by re-entering the education system.

Those who do not meet qualification requirements for the performance of a trade in line with the Act on trades have a chance to undergo a so-called “qualification examination”. Based on a successful passing of this qualification examination in front of an examination board composed of representatives of the Trade Licensing Office, the relevant secondary technical or vocational school, the missing professional qualification may be acquired.

The objectives that are currently most topical are as follows:

- to provide for an appropriate diversity in the paths along which adults may achieve the relevant certificates (particularly the “maturita” certificate as a formal requirement for entering tertiary education);
- to provide for the recognition of their actual personal competencies regardless of where and how they have been acquired.

Ways of implementing these objectives will be addressed in a law on continuing education which is under development.

Currently, in initial education, the recognition of the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning is the responsibility of the school director. The director may admit the applicant in a higher class or issue a document certifying the completion of formal education at a specific level. The director may also determine which additional examinations the applicant must pass to acquire the relevant qualification.

[Notes](#)

09 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

0901 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION

At present, most guidance and counselling services are provided within two parallel systems. The first falls within the purview of the **Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS)**, the other one is administered by the **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA)**. Both systems share one objective – the provision of services facilitating optimal solutions to career-related issues (the choice of an optimal professional orientation, educational pathway and career, and the related specific situations in the personal lives of individuals).

Counselling services provided at schools and school counselling facilities, which are the responsibility of the MoEYS, are primarily focused on solutions to problems children and young people face during their studies and in the process of choosing or changing their educational paths.

The MoLSA (Public Employment Services Administration) system of counselling services is aimed at resolving problems related to the transfer from school to employment, and at supporting active and independent decisions on optimal employment.

In addition to these two systems there is a number of other providers of counselling services, particularly private providers, employers’ associations and counselling organisations which fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MIT), and other bodies.

The **National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance (NRCVG)**, which is part of the Europe-wide network Euroguidance within the Leonardo da Vinci programme, has been set up in 1998. One of the main objectives of the NRCVG is to support a European dimension to cooperation in the area of counselling. It also promotes cooperation between various national counselling systems.

In 2004 the MoEYS developed a proposal for a National policy for the development of career counselling in the Czech Republic (CR). The policy sees the role of career counselling in the context of lifelong learning and prevention of unemployment. The policy sets out strategic goals and ways of implementing them – e.g. enhancing the efficiency and the scope of career services, providing for horizontal (between ministries and between central and regional levels) and vertical (all clients are guaranteed access to all parts of the system) links within the system of career counselling. Other objectives include the development of career counselling at school level, establishing links between education and counselling at schools, implementation of an information system about employment of school leavers, etc. Some objectives will be implemented with the support of the European Social Fund.

THE MoEYS COUNSELLING SYSTEM

The following bodies are part of the current career services system of the MoEYS: ministerial bodies, schools and school counselling facilities.

The MoEYS bodies are mainly responsible for issues related to policy, methodology and coordination as regards the development of the education system – i.e. also for career counselling. The **Institute of Pedagogical-Psychological Counselling** methodologically supports the career services in schools, and attending to the quality and efficiency of their provision. The Institute also provides specific training focused on counselling services and the development and introduction of new methods of diagnostics in the area of psychology, special pedagogy and pedagogy. The **National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education (NÚOV)** focuses, apart from the development VET policies and strategies for their implementation, on research, methodology and information related to career counselling, and supports the teaching of subjects dealing with labour market issues. One unit of the Institute is the **Career Counselling Centre** which provides information about programmes offered by secondary VET schools and higher professional schools. The Institute also pursues the development of an integrated information system concerning the situation of school leavers in the labour market (ISA), and provides information to various users about employment opportunities for school leavers.

Educational counsellors are coordinators of counselling services in schools. All basic and secondary schools are obliged by law to establish the position of educational counsellor. The counsellors also work as teachers. The teaching load of teachers-counsellors is decreased in line with the number of students at the school. They are subject to methodological guidance by the relevant pedagogical-psychological guidance centre, and address, in cooperation with other teachers, the school director, parents and specialised counselling facilities, the issues related to education and professional orientation of the students. Each school also employs a school methodologist concerned with the prevention of socio-pathological disorders, and there might also be school psychologists and special pedagogues.

From the academic year 2000/2001 the curricula for secondary schools has included subject matter concerned with an introduction to the world of work. It comprises a set of thematic areas designed to develop personal capacities as regards the understanding of labour market issues and flexibility. The thematic areas are supposed to be taught coupled with the provision of career services at schools. However, there are limitations as regards the teaching of this subject, as teachers lack appropriate training. This is why a Methodological Instruction for Teachers and Methodology for Teaching the Introduction to the World of Work have been developed. The labour market topics are incorporated into the newly developed framework educational programmes for secondary VET which will be gradually introduced in the form of a cross-sectional theme – Man and the World of Work.

From the academic year 2000/2001 **lower secondary education has involved subject “Career choice”**. The objective is to prepare pupils for transfer from compulsory education to upper secondary schools and to the labour market. The subject is focused on developing the skills that improve employability and help the pupils understand various items of important career-related information. The thematic area “Man and the World of Work” is an integral part of the framework educational programme for lower secondary education.

Counselling services provided by schools are linked to the activities of different counselling facilities in the education sector - i.e. pedagogical-psychological counselling centres, special pedagogy centres, educational care centres and information centres for youth.

Pedagogical-psychological counselling centres are located in all districts and provide services aiming at solving study-related, psychological and behavioural problems of pupils and students. Their main activity is work with children, pupils and their parents – both individually, and in groups. Career services provided by these centres are derived from a pedagogical-psychological diagnosis of the pupil’s capacities, personal qualities, interests and other personal characteristics.

Special pedagogy centres provide counselling to children and young people with sight, hearing, physical, mental or combined disabilities, and with communication disorders.

Educational care centres provide career services as part of preventive care for children and young people who show or are at risk of developing behavioural and social development disorders.

Information centres for youth collect exhaustive information about educational opportunities for all age categories. They are grouped in an association of information and counselling centres for young people (www.icm.cz).

THE MOLSA COUNSELLING SYSTEM

The provision of career services within the purview of the MoLSA began to develop systematically as late as the early 1990s when labour offices were set up. The body superior to labour offices is the MoLSA’s Public Employment Services Administration. Labour offices provide counselling services to citizens that are related to job seeking and job brokering, career choice or change, vocational training, retraining and industrial relations. A total of 77 labour offices were established (in each former district town), and 182 branches – i.e. 259 contact points for clients.

Counselling at labour offices (LO) may be distinguished as follows:

- **basic** – pervading all activities of the LO where there is a contact between the client and the staff;
- **professional** – provided mostly by Information and guidance centres of LOs
This concerns counselling related to career selection or change;
- **specific** – designed to assess the degree to which a career is suitable for an individual in terms of his/her capacities, needs, aspirations and overall orientation including social background and health condition. It is provided by professional counsellors, psychologists and a network of organisations dealing with diagnostics.

There is Information and guidance centre at each LO and its main task is to provide assistance as regards career choice by young people and adults. There is a wide range of information materials and media available for this purpose – mainly used on a “self-service” basis (descriptions of occupations and leaflets on educational provision). There are also software products (particularly career choice programmes and programmes presenting educational courses available), and videotapes (films on occupations and vocational fields). Each centre employs a career counsellor who is ready to attend to clients’ needs.

In 2000 there was established a principal network bringing together **Centres for “balance diagnostics”** operating at those labour offices which had been providing psychological services of the kind that form part of specialised counselling (and therefore the offices had the necessary personnel). As personnel numbers at LOs are limited, the provision of “balance diagnostics” services has been expanded by means of the setting up of external centres (there are 25 of them at the moment). LOs may cooperate with the external centres (which have been authorised by the MoLSA) on a contractual basis and, in this way, secure their services for their clients. The external centres are obliged to observe a uniform methodology for employment services and comply with a Quality Charter.

Following the CR's accession to the EU, the **EURES information and counselling network** also launched its operations at LOs. It provides services to citizens who are interested in seeking employment in EU member countries. The EURES counsellors provide individual counselling and tailor-made services.

[The system of guidance and counselling services](#)

0902 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The current state of affairs is the result of a gradual development of the counselling system operated by schools, the main long-term priority of which was prevention and elimination of educational and study-related problems in children and young people. Only over the last two years has emphasis also been placed on career issues. The most frequent **methods of career counselling** at basic and secondary schools include individual and group counselling. In addition to this pupils may attend various educational fairs, open door days at schools, job brokering events, etc. There are **additional sources of information** available either at schools or at specialised counselling centres.

TARGET GROUP	PROFESSIONAL CARE PRIORITIES
<p>BASIC SCHOOL PUPILS</p>	<p>Counselling services in education sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comprehensive diagnostics of learning disorders and educational problems, • individual and group interviews designed to establish professional orientation followed by individual consultations, • socio-metric examinations of groups of schoolmates, • prevention of socio-pathological disorders and drop-outs, • actions (mostly individual psychotherapy) are taken following the establishment of a diagnosis in justified cases • special counselling services for youth with disabilities and special needs <p>Counselling services in labour market sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-service databases for searching educational opportunities • self-service instruments for identification of aptitudes for and interest in an occupation • career guidance for groups • individual counselling and “balance” diagnostics
<p>SECONDARY AND HIGHER PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL STUDENTS</p>	<p>Counselling services in education sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • testing study-related aptitudes and assistance in study and professional orientation, prevention of drop-outs, • prevention of socio-pathological disorders

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • special counselling services for youth with disabilities and special needs <p style="text-align: center;">Counselling services in labour market sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-service databases for searching educational and employment opportunities • self-service instruments for identification of aptitudes for and interest in an occupation • career guidance for groups • group counselling and job clubs for securing employment • individual counselling on employment and "balance" diagnostics
STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION	<p style="text-align: center;">Counselling services in education sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pedagogical-psychological services, educational and career counselling <p style="text-align: center;">Counselling services in labour market sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-service databases for searching further educational and employment opportunities • group counselling and job clubs for securing employment • individual counselling on employment and "balance" diagnostics

SERVICES FOR ADULTS

The provision of counselling services to adults in the CR is not yet satisfactory, as it falls primarily within the purview of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA). Counselling services for adults are not provided within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS). There are exceptions such as counselling centres operated by some MoEYS's organisations (Centre for Career Counselling at the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education; Client Centre at the Institute for Information on Education, Centre for Higher Education Studies) – these also provide information about continuing education opportunities. At present the MoEYS, as one of the institutions responsible for the implementation of state ICT policy in education and lifelong learning, pursues the task of developing a system covering general, relevant and reliable information about educational activities for young people and adults. Support for the development of this system is one of the policy priorities of the Ministry.

Within the purview of the MoLSA services to adult clients as well as young people are provided by labour offices – particularly by their job brokering, counselling and retraining departments, Information and guidance centres, Job clubs, and, since recently, Centres for "balance diagnostics". As regards the employment policy of the MoLSA, **the main target group** of these centres is **job seekers**. Another category includes people who seek alternative employment (they have a job but want to change it for various reasons or are at risk of redundancy). One important category is school leavers (within two years of successful completion of school at any level). Attention is also paid to the categories of citizens who have limited access to labour market for some reason (e.g. the disabled, ethnic minorities, citizens at pre-retirement age, etc.).

Adults may also use a number of **information sources on the Internet**. There are systems developed with state support, such as the DAT database of continuing education (www.dat.cz), the Integrated System of Typical Working Positions – ISTP (containing comprehensive information about occupations and related requirements, including a possible analysis of the client's suitability – www.istp.cz), the Registry of schools and school facilities (www.uiv.cz), the Career Counselling Centre – www.nuov.cz, and others. There are also commercial systems available. Counselling services focusing mostly on adults are also provided by **private consultancies** (e.g. recruitment agencies).

0903 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

The category of employees in the area of career services

SCHOOLS (BASIC AND SECONDARY)	educational counsellors school psychologists teachers of careers and labour market related subjects at basic and secondary schools respectively
PEDAGOGICAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL GUIDANCE CENTRES CENTRES FOR SPECIAL PEDAGOGY	psychologists special pedagogues
INFORMATION AND COUNSELLING CENTRES AT HE INSTITUTIONS	professional counsellors
LABOUR OFFICES (JOB BROKERING AND COUNSELLING DEPARTMENTS)	job brokers professional job brokers
INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE CENTRES	professional counsellors for carrier guidance
CENTRES FOR "BALANCE DIAGNOSTICS"	psychologists professional counsellors
RECRUITMENT AGENCIES, REGIONAL INFORMATION AND COUNSELLING CENTRES AND OTHERS	usually private entities with a varying structure and personnel

BASIC QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES OF COUNSELLORS (MOEYS SECTOR)

- **Educational counsellor** – also works as a teacher. A master degree is complemented by post-graduate qualification studies focused on educational counselling. A requirement has recently arisen that educational counsellors should also undertake training in career counselling (many have already done so) to meet the demands associated with the career choice process.
- **School psychologist** – a four-semester post-graduate study (there are suggestions to make this programme part of undergraduate education). Psychological counselling may only be provided by an individual with a degree in psychology or in the combination of psychology and pedagogy. Independent diagnostic and therapeutic work may only be performed by an individual with at least one year of experience in counselling.
- **Psychologist** – a master degree at teacher training or philosophical faculties in accredited study programmes.
- **Special pedagogue** - a master degree at teacher training faculties in the relevant specialisation. Independent diagnostic and therapeutic work may only be performed by an individual with at least one year of experience in counselling at school.
- **Teacher of career choice / introduction to the world of work** – is a teacher with a qualification in other subjects. Studies with this focus have not yet been included in the initial training of teachers-to-be. Special courses are organised and methodological instruments developed to support the teaching of these subjects.

There are various seminars organised as part of the **continuing education of the above mentioned professionals**, focusing on various topics. They are organised by the Institute for Pedagogical-Psychological Counselling, pedagogical-psychological counselling centres, labour offices, pedagogical centres, etc. One of the

objectives set out in the draft of the National Policy for the Development of Career Counselling is that of developing professional standards for educational-career counsellors, and of testing a new approach to their training in initial education and lifelong learning programmes.

BASIC QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES OF COUNSELLORS (MoLSA SECTOR)

- **Job brokers** - secondary education with "maturita".
- **Professional job brokers** - tertiary education at higher professional or bachelor level. Recommended fields of programmes: social policy, law, social work, business, public administration.
- **Professional counsellors for carrier guidance** – tertiary education at higher professional or bachelor level. Recommended fields of programmes: social policy, pedagogy, law, social work.
- **Psychologists** – higher education at master level in psychology.

The system for the **further training of job brokers and counsellors at labour offices** has a modular structure and consists of three levels:

- **introductory** - acquisition of common competencies (basic socio-psychological training, a legal minimum, basic awareness of employment services issues);
- **functional** - acquisition of the knowledge and skills necessary for the performance of counselling;
- **specialisation** - acquisition of the knowledge and skills facilitating further professional development and improvement of the quality of the services provided.

10 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

1001 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING

The system of funding IVET is derived from the system of state administration and self-administration in education. There are also differences depending on whether the institution is private or public. In 2001, as a result of decentralisation of public administration and the strengthening of regional and local self-administration, the responsibility for founding secondary and higher professional schools was delegated to regions (regional authorities). Regions administer approximately 76 % of secondary vocational and technical schools and some 66 % of higher professional schools.

The responsibility for funding is shared between the founding body and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS). The funding of secondary VET schools and higher professional schools is governed by the School Act.

The funding of higher education (HE) institutions is regulated by the Act on higher education institutions. Based on this law HE institutions have acquired the status of public HE institutions. State-owned assets necessary for teaching, research and public activities carried out by HE institutions have been transferred into their ownership. A management board, which must be established at each public HE institution, sees to the efficient use of these assets.

Tuition fees are the source of revenues for private HE institutions. If a private HE institution has the status of a public benefit organisation, it may receive a subsidy from the MoEYS. The subsidy must be used to fund the teaching of accredited study programmes and lifelong learning programmes (see Theme 5.3) and to support creative activities associated with these programmes.

Staff training is financed by employers, employees, or by both. Upon meeting certain conditions the employer may obtain a certain amount of resources from the state budget as part of active employment policy schemes, or on the basis of the Act on investment incentives, or within the framework of various programmes.

The retraining of job seekers is financed from the state budget (the budget of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) as part of an active employment policy. Retraining is organised by labour offices and the courses are delivered to participants for free.

[The structure of schools providing secondary VET according to the founding body](#)

[Notes](#)

1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Pursuant to the School Act **the revenues of a school legal entity** are structured as follows:

- financial resources from the state budget;
- financial resources from the budgets of regional and local administration;
- revenues from main and complementary activities;

- financial resources received from the founding body;
- fees for education and school services;
- revenues from property owned by the school legal entity;
- donations and inheritance.

PUBLIC SECONDARY VET SCHOOLS AND HIGHER PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS

The expenditure of public schools set up by regions is covered from the state budget via the budget of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) and from the relevant regional budget.

The resources from the state budget are allocated to schools to cover their expenditure related to:

- industrial relations (wages and salaries, including social security and health insurance contributions, and a contribution for state employment policy),
- teaching tools, textbooks (which are provided for free),
- the continuing training of teachers and trainers.

Resources from **regional budgets** are allocated to schools for operational and capital costs. If a municipality is the school's founding body, operational and capital costs are covered from the municipal budget. In line with its priorities and financial situation, a municipality may contribute resources for any costs incurred by schools in its administrative area. As regards schools set up by a ministry, the costs of teaching and operational and capital costs are covered by the ministry's budget.

The funding from public budgets to which schools are entitled is based on so-called "normatives" (normative rates). **National normative rates** are set by the MoEYS as a level of costs related to education and school services per one pupil/student and calendar year. The "normative" level per one student depends on the type of school (secondary vocational school, secondary technical school, higher professional school), and on the relevant field of education. Resources are provided according to the actual number of pupils/students up to a permitted number set by the MoEYS. Financial resources are provided in the form of a subsidy to a regional budget (on a special account).

Regions set so-called regional normative rates by means of which they distribute the overall amount of resources received from the state budget to individual schools in the relevant region. The regional normative rates are set taking account, above all of;

- the regional long-term plan for of education and development of education system,
- framework educational programmes (curricula),
- the scope of teaching,
- the number of pupils in classrooms.

The region must observe a methodology developed by the MoEYS. The levels of national as well as regional normative rates are made public.

Schools may also receive resources from the state budget for experimental testing and development programmes. These are not mandatory expenditures and depend on which programmes the MoEYS initiates for the given period. In addition to this, subsidies may be determined pursuant to the act on the state budget for partial coverage of operational costs incurred by schools set up by regions.

Private resources constitute a very limited source of the funding of public secondary VET schools. These are resources earned by the school from renting its property, from the provision of services for a payment and from complementary business activities. These activities may only be carried out provided that the main function of the school is not disrupted. Schools may also accept donations from individuals and enterprises. **Individuals** (students or more precisely their parents) purchase textbooks and teaching tools which are not provided for free.

PRIVATE SECONDARY VET SCHOOLS AND HIGHER PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS (HPS)

The state budget also provides financial resources for the activities of private schools and schools set up by registered churches or religious societies which are included in the schools network. The resources are provided on the basis of a contract between the school and the relevant regional authority. The contract specifies the activities for which the subsidy is provided – in general non-capital costs related to education are covered. The subsidy is set as a percentage of the "normative" per one pupil/student for a comparable programme and form of study provided within public education. The school may ask the region to increase the subsidy subject to the fulfilment of specific conditions. These conditions are stipulated in the Act on the Provision of Subsidies to Private Schools. The percentage of the normative and the level of the subsidy are illustrated in the following table. The proportions have been valid since 2000/2001.

The funding of private schools from the state budget

TYPE OF SCHOOL	% OF THE NORMATIVE	INCREASED % OF THE NORMATIVE
SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOL	80	100
SECONDARY TECHNICAL SCHOOL AND HPS	60	90

Source: The act on the provision of subsidies to private schools, pre-school and school facilities

One partial source of the funding of private secondary VET schools, and also public higher professional schools, is the fees these institutions collect for the provision of education or school services. The rules governing the level of the **fees** and a maximum fee for public HPSs are set out in a MoEYS regulation. The level of tuition fees collected by private schools is fully at their discretion.

PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) INSTITUTIONS

The funding of HE institutions is governed by the Act on HE institutions. The revenues of **public HE institutions** primarily consist of:

- subsidies from the state budget (hereinafter "subsidies");
- study-related fees;
- other revenues from the state budget, state funds and municipal budgets;
- revenues from complementary activities;
- donations and inheritance.

Each public HE institution is **entitled** to a **basic subsidy**. This subsidy is used to cover the costs related to the implementation of accredited study programmes and lifelong learning programmes, the costs associated with research, scientific, developmental, artistic and other creative activities (this activity must follow from accredited study programmes and lifelong learning programmes), and the costs of institutional development. The level of the basic subsidy is derived from the long-term plan of the HE institution, the MoEYS's long-term plan for the development of HE institutions, the type and financial demands of accredited study programmes and lifelong learning programmes, the number of students, the achievements in educational and creative activities and their demands.

Apart from the basic subsidy, public HE institutions may be allocated a subsidy for students'accommodation and meals. This subsidy is set by the MoEYS for each HE institution based on how extensive are the services related to accommodation and meals which the institution provides for its students.

The rules concerning the provision of subsidies to public HE institutions, which cover the calculation formula, as well as the level of subsidies provided to individual HE institutions are published in the MoEYS' Bulletin and on the Ministry's websites.

A public HE institution may collect study-related fees. Their level is derived from a "basic fee", which is set by the MoEYS for each academic year. The basic fee for 2004-2005 is 2,561 CZK (about 85 EUR). Fees may be collected for:

- participation in admission proceedings at 20% of the basic fee;
- exceeding the standard length of studies by more than one year at the level of at least 25% of the basic fee for each started month of the extended period;
- taking another bachelor or master programme, if the student has already completed one study programme – a maximum up to the basic fee level;
- studying in a foreign language.

The level of fees is announced publicly by the HE institution before the deadline for filing applications for studies. The fees (with the exception of the fee listed under (d)) constitute an income to the scholarship fund. The rector may exempt fees (b) through to (d), or defer their due dates taking into consideration the student's performance and social situation.

As part of its complementary activities HE institution may perform paid activities which follow from its educational and creative activities, or ensure a more efficient use of human resources and property. These complementary activities cannot endanger the quality, scope and availability of the main activities.

PRIVATE HE INSTITUTIONS

In line with the Act on HE institutions, private HE institutions must secure, by their own means, financial resources for the implementation of the activities for which they have received authorisation. Study-related fees are set by the institution in line with its internal regulations. The MoEYS may provide a subsidy to private HE institutions for the implementation of accredited study programmes and lifelong learning programmes, and for creative activities following from these. The subsidy is provided in compliance with the MoEYS's Rules for the provision of subsidies to private HE institutions. There is no legal entitlement to the subsidies and their level is calculated in line with the aforementioned Rules.

THE PROPORTION OF RESOURCES PROVIDED BY INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FUNDING OF IVET IN THE TOTAL EXPENDITURE ON VET

In the Czech Republic (CR) the overall expenditure on IVET is not monitored regularly. It is mainly data about private expenditure that are missing. The revenues of schools from complementary business activities are not accounted for either, but they are assumed to constitute a negligible proportion of the overall amount of resources. Public expenditure is not distinguished according to whether it is on initial education or on continuing education of adults provided by schools (distance, evening, external or combined forms of studies).

Public resources spent on higher education in 2003(source: data of the MoEYS.) (subsidies from the state and local budget for educational activities, accommodation and meals for students, research and development, capital spending) accounted for some 78.5 % of the overall annual budget of HE institutions (this concerns both public and private HE institutions). Revenues from the institutions' own activities (student services, accommodation fees, payments for student and staff meals, donations, renting, revenues from sales of own products, sales of property, fees for various training courses, symposia, etc.) account for 21.5 % of the HE institutions' budget. Based on the data available it is impossible to distinguish between resources related to initial and continuing education provided by HE institutions.

[A chart of financial flows in secondary IVET](#)

[A chart of financial flows in public HE institutions](#)

[A chart of financial flows in higher professional schools](#)

[Notes](#)

1003 - FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING PUBLICLY PROVIDED CVET

The funding of CVET that is provided by secondary and higher professional schools or higher education (HE) institutions on a part-time basis (evening, distance or external studies), and completed in the same way as full-time studies, is subject to the same regulations as those in place for initial education. It is funded almost exclusively from public resources (the national and regional budgets). Schools' own revenues (e.g. rent, subsidiary business activities, and tuition fees in the case of HPSs and private institutions) represent a very limited source of funding (see Theme 1002).

HE institutions may provide, as part of their educational activities, lifelong learning programmes (focusing on professional development or taken as a leisure activity) either for a fee or for free. The detailed terms are set out in the institution's internal regulations.

A survey of institutions providing accredited retraining courses has shown that, on average between 2000-2002, the costs of these courses were covered by the participants (42 %), labour offices (40 %), enterprises (15 %) and from other sources (3 %).

ENTERPRISE-BASED CVET

The training of employees is largely financed by employers, and the resources spent are accounted for as company costs. There are no legal regulations stipulating the level of expenditure for this purpose. One exception is the obligatory training of the staff performing specific occupations which the employer is obliged to arrange for. There are no nationwide financial incentives which would stimulate employers to spend more on staff development, and promote more extensive participation on the part of employees.

Companies may obtain contributions for the training of their employees. Companies may, as part of an active employment policy, get a refund for some of their retraining from the labour office. Following the CR's accession to the EU it is also possible to draw resources for specific training from the **European Social Fund**.

Large investors (this concerns investment in manufacturing exceeding 100 million CZK in regions with an above-average rate of unemployment) may, as part of investment incentive schemes, get a subsidy of up to 35 % of their training or retraining costs. Smaller investors (investments exceeding 10 million CZK in regions most afflicted with unemployment) may obtain a similar subsidy of up to 30 thousand CZK (1 thousand EUR) per one employee participating in training or retraining. These subsidies are provided within the **Programme for the support for the creation of new jobs in regions most afflicted with unemployment**.

In the CR there is no regular monitoring of the data on employers' spending on the training of employees. However, one-off surveys have shown that, in the 1990s, this expenditure accounted for less than 1 % of total gross wages (investments exceeding 10 million CZK in regions most afflicted with unemployment). In 1999 this indicator was 1.2 % - i.e. there has been a slight increase. This data only covers direct training costs. If we add the cost of the wages of the trainees, the proportion of the overall costs of training which companies pay is around 1.9 % of total labour costs. This figure is the highest of the 10 new EU member states, but still fails to reach the EU-15 average (2.3 %). (see Annex, Table 4).

The average level of direct training costs hides the differences between companies of varying size and operating in different branches. The largest proportion of direct training costs in total gross labour costs occurs in companies in the electricity, gas and water supply branches (5.8 %). However, in these branches there is a high proportion of compulsory continuing training. An above-average level proportion of training costs is also shown by the financial intermediation (3.4 %). On the other hand, the lowest proportions occur in companies in mining and quarrying,

woodworking and furniture manufacturing (0.3 %), and manufacturing in textile and leather (0.4 %). In terms of company size, the smallest companies (up to 50 employees) spent the least level of resources on training (1.1 %). The largest proportions of training costs in total costs occurred in medium-sized companies (250-499 employees – 2.6 %). There are also differences according to company ownership. Surveys show that foreign-owned companies pay more attention to the training of their staff than Czech companies.

[Notes](#)

1004 - FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

The retraining of job seekers is funded exclusively from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) budget. The financial resources are distributed to individual labour offices (LOs) via the Employment Services Administration of the MoLSA. The amounts are derived from calculations of the costs of various active employment policy measures developed by LOs. LOs cover course fees, but may also contribute to other retraining-related costs. Full or partial coverage of travel and accommodation expenses and meals depends on the financial resources available to the relevant LOs.

In the longer term, there is a marked trend of increasing the proportion of retraining costs in the overall costs of an active employment policy. It may be expected that this trend will continue in view of the fact that the Czech Republic (CR) shows a very low rate of participation in retraining compared to other developed countries. On the other hand, the burden of the growth in the proportion of spending on retraining financed by LOs will be mitigated by the fact that there is an increasing proportion of funding from other sources (projects co-funded from ESF), and that there is a growing proportion of short-term (cheaper) courses. These resources from the ESF will be used to co-fund various activities in line with the relevant measures of the Operational Programme – Human Resources Development, and the Single Programming Document – Objective 3, Prague. Expenditure on retraining has risen from 73 thousand CZK (2.4 thousand EUR) in 1993 to 406 thousand CZK (13.5 thousand EUR) in 2003 in current prices.

1005 - PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES: FROM FUNDING TO INVESTING IN HUMAN RESOURCES

The MoEYS is working on changes in the funding of higher education. These changes are in line with the government's commitment to maintain public higher education free of charge. The funding of public HE institutions from the state budget is to be based on a medium-term outlook, while reducing the weight attributed to quantitative aspects and increasing the weight attributed to qualitative aspects (research and development, cooperation with industry and regions, the quality of education, etc.). Legislative changes are under development that will promote co-funding schemes. A change in regulations on financial support for student accommodation is also envisaged.

As part of the propositions for the act on CVET (for details see Theme 5.2), financial measures have been proposed that should promote interest – both on the part of learners and providers - in continuing education leading to a partial qualification.

11 - EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS, TOWARDS AN OPEN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING

1101 - NATIONAL STRATEGIES RELATED TO POLICY PRIORITIES, PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES AT EU LEVEL

The Czech Republic (CR) embarked on implementation of the objectives of the European education and employment strategy in the first half of the 1990s. The **Lisbon strategy objectives** are reflected in major **strategic documents and policies** developed by the CR before its joining the EU: the National Employment Action Plan, National Programme for the Development of Education (2001), Strategy for Human Resources Development in the CR (2003), Long-Term Plan for the Development of Education and the Education System in the CR (2002) and an updated version of the Long-Term Plan for 2004-2008.

As part of **pre-structural assistance** for candidate countries, the CR had an opportunity of using resources within the Phare programme from as early as 1993. In 1993-2001 the Phare resources which the CR drew amounted to 632 million EUR. The funds were also targeted to the area of human resources development. The resources were used, among other things, to co-fund, in 1994-1998, a major Phare programme entitled Vocational Education and Training Reform. The project triggered transformation and innovation of initial vocational education in the CR. Since 2002 the CR has been involved in the activities of the working groups of the European Commission which have been set up to pursue the efficient implementation of Lisbon objectives in vocational education and training. The work of the groups has already affected the activities of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) and organisations under its direct governance.

The Long-Term Plan of 2002 and its updated version for 2004-2008 set out the following **development priorities**: 1. Modernisation of the objectives and content of education (including the introduction of a two-level curricula development process); 2. Quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation of education; 3. Support for pupils with special learning needs; 4. Development of counselling and information systems; 5. Enhancing the professional standards and social status of teachers; 6. Support for continuing education as part of lifelong learning for all. It is also expected that most of these priorities will be implemented with financial assistance from the European Social Fund (ESF).

The **Operational Programme – Human Resources Development** will be implemented in a shortened programming period 2004-2006 with financial support from the **ESF** (for the entire CR except Prague, which will draw ESF funds based on Single Programming Document, Prague, Objective 3). Overall responsibility of ESF programmes has Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA). One of the OP HRD priorities is directly focused on the development of lifelong learning. Under this priority, the MoEYS is responsible, among other things, for implementation of the measure designed to improve the quality of education and for setting up systems promoting links between education and labour market. The MoLSA will implement the measure aiming to develop continuing professional training. The measures promoting lifelong learning will be put into practice via systemic projects (development of national policies and systems), national projects (implementation of national policies) and grant schemes (to complement national policies to cover target groups at regional and national levels).

1102 - IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION/INTERNATIONALISATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In addition to pre-structural assistance within Phare, the Czech Republic (CR) also had an opportunity, as early as from 1996, to take part in **Community programmes** designed to promote European cooperation in education.

Within the Leonardo da Vinci programme a total of 473 **mobility projects** have been approved and implemented, involving 5,131 participants. Of these 77 % were students at all types of vocational and technical schools and 7 % of teachers at these schools. Through participation in mobility projects the students' vocational and language competencies are improved, and this has a positive effect on their employability. The programme helps VET schools expand their international cooperation, improve their skills related to preparation and management of trans-national educational projects, and enhance the quality of their educational provision. Multi-year **pilot projects** within Leonardo da Vinci facilitate innovation in the objectives and content of vocational education. In 2000-2003 the European Commission approved 27 projects promoted by Czech organisations. Apart from this, some 80 Czech organisations take part annually in pilot projects and language competencies projects as partners of foreign organisations.

So far, 327 secondary and post-secondary technical schools have participated in projects within the **Socrates programme** in which the CR has been involved since 1997 (in only 4 % of cases as project-coordinators). The total number of participants amounts to over ten thousand students, of which 786 spent a period of time at a foreign partner institution. Vocational training abroad has so far been undertaken by 1,960 teachers, trainers and managers of the aforementioned institutions.

Student mobility in higher education (HE) is supported by the Erasmus sub-programme. A total of 39 Czech tertiary education providers are involved in Erasmus. The number of participants in mobility schemes tends to grow (from 1998 until 2004 over 10 thousand students were involved). Primary focus in the upcoming period will be on the quality of mobility, not only on its quantity, on extending the lengths of the visits and on involving more private HE institutions in mobility schemes.

In addition to Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes, Czech students may undertake education abroad as part of various international cultural agreements. In such cases the visits are mostly financed by the hosting country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and applicants compete for grants. Other educational opportunities abroad are rather exceptional and they are the initiative of individual students or schools. The largest obstacles in this respect include lack of resources for fees and accommodation abroad, and the fact that the studies might not be recognised in the CR.

In the future the **Europass National Centre** in the CR will play an important part in promoting a European dimension in education. Its task will consist in promoting in the CR the use of documents facilitating the educational and occupational mobility of young people in the EU, and in providing information about Europass and mobility opportunities in the EU. The Europass National Agency in the CR was set up on 1 October 2004 at the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education.

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<http://www.nuov.cz> (NÚOV - National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education)
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<http://www.nvf.cz/enindex.htm> (NVF – National Training Fund)
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