



# Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015–19

## CZECHIA



Cedefop monitoring of vocational education and training policies and systems

Progress towards the medium-term deliverables of the Riga conclusions

**Country chapter**

**Czechia**

Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015-19

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# Introduction

In June 2015, the ministers in charge of vocational education and training in the EU Member States, the candidate countries and the European Economic Area countries, convened in Riga, agreed on objectives for vocational education and training (VET) policies for 2015-20 <sup>(1)</sup>.

Cedefop has been entrusted with monitoring the countries' policies implemented towards reaching these objectives.

This country chapter is part of the monitoring process. It was drafted based on input from the national ReferNet team. It presents an overview of the major policy developments that have taken place in the country in 2015-19, in the areas covered by the Riga medium-term deliverables (MTDs).

The country chapter is structured as follows:

- (a) the introductory section Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015 briefly sketches the VET context in the country in 2015, highlighting selected figures and major policy initiatives that were just being adopted or started at that time. This introductory section is targeted at setting a baseline to put in perspective the policy choices and developments that have taken place since the beginning of the Riga cycle;
- (b) five thematic chapters then follow, devoted to the five respective MTDs outlined in the Riga conclusions. Each thematic chapter also begins with a 2015 baseline, more specifically addressing the MTD-related topics. The baseline is followed by the presentation of the major policy developments in the MTD since 2015;
- (c) the country chapter ends with a conclusion summarising the main lines of the 2015-19 policy developments and highlighting possible priorities for the future.

This country chapter is part of the information which the European Commission used to prepare the European Semester exercises <sup>(2)</sup> in 2017-19. The chapter also informs the work of Cedefop and the European Training Foundation (ETF) in preparing a joint monitoring report on the implementation of the Riga conclusions. Both the joint report and the country chapter are aimed at

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<sup>(1)</sup> Riga conclusions 2015 on a new set of medium-term deliverables in the field of VET for the period 2015-20, as a result of the review of short-term deliverables defined in the 2010 Bruges communiqué:

[https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/RigaConclusions\\_2015.pdf](https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/RigaConclusions_2015.pdf)

<sup>(2)</sup> European Semester: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester_en)

informing the work of EU Member States' Directors General for Vocational Training (DGVTS) and Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT) on taking stock of the outcomes of the Riga conclusions and preparing the next steps for the EU VET policy for the next few years.

## Aspects of VET context in 2015

The demand for workers with vocational qualifications was high. In 2015, the employment rate of recent VET graduates (81.5 %) was above the EU average (73 %) (European Commission, 2016). Yet, in recent past, Czechia has been facing a disaffection towards VET: the number of VET students at upper secondary level has reduced by 24 % over the last decade (European Commission, 2015). However, the share of upper secondary students in VET programmes remained above the EU average: 73.8 % compared to 49.8 % in the EU in 2013 (European Commission, 2015); 73.4 % against 48 % in the EU in 2014 (see framework data in Table 1); 73 % compared to 47 % in the EU in 2015 <sup>(3)</sup>. On the adult side, participation in learning was below the EU average (8.5 % compared to 10.7 % in 2015; see framework data in Table 1.).

At the beginning of the reporting period, the country was therefore faced with the challenges of tackling the erosion in VET participation, restoring VET attractiveness, enhancing work-based learning, and boosting participation in adult learning. Ways for action were being considered and experimented, e.g. in terms of bringing employers closer to VET (including through funding) and reforming secondary education programmes to put more emphasis on practical training in a real work environment. Also, as a promotional initiative, 2015 was declared the Year of Industry and STEM Education.

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<sup>(3)</sup> Eurostat table educ\_uae\_enrs04 (2015 data).



Table 1. Framework data: score on VET indicators in Czechia and in the EU, 2010-15

Indicator label	2010		2015 (*)			Trend in 2011-15 (per year)			
	CZ	EU	Yr	CZ	EU	Range	CZ	EU	
<b>Access, attractiveness and flexibility</b>									
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	A	A	'14	73.4 <sup>b</sup>	48.0 <sup>b</sup>	E1	'13-'14	-0.3	-0.9
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	A	A	'14	8.8 <sup>b</sup>	34.0 <sup>b</sup>	E2	'13-'14	0.0	0.1
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET			'14	67.9	69.2	E3	'13-'14	-0.8	-1.4
Employees participating in CVT courses (%)	61.0	38.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	61.0	38.0	e			
Employees participating in on-the-job training (%)	31.0	20.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	31.0	20.0	e			
Adults in lifelong learning (%)			'15	8.5 <sup>b</sup>	10.7	b	'13-'15	-0.8	0.0
Enterprises providing training (%)	72.0	66.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	72.0	66.0	e			
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	A	A	'14	67.9 <sup>b</sup>	42.7 <sup>b</sup>	E1	'13-'14	-0.4	-1.0
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	46.0	25.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	46.0	25.0	e			
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)			'15	38.8 <sup>b</sup>	33.0	b	'14-'15	-2.1	-0.3
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)		5.3	'15	4.9 <sup>b</sup>	6.9	b	'13-'15	-0.4	0.1
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)			'15	1.9 <sup>b</sup>	4.3 <sup>b</sup>	b	'13-'15	-0.3	-0.1
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)			'15	3.8 <sup>b</sup>	9.5	b	'13-'15	-0.8	-0.4
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)	4.8 <sup>B</sup>	9.5 <sup>eB</sup>	'11	4.8	9.5	e			
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)	82.5 <sup>B</sup>	80.2 <sup>eB</sup>	'11	82.5	80.2	e			
<b>Skill development and labour market relevance</b>									
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)			'13	0.75 <sup>b</sup>	0.56 <sup>b</sup>	E4	'12-'13	0.05	0.03
IVET public expenditure per student (1000 PPS units)			'13	5.2 <sup>b</sup>	6.4	b	'12-'13	0.0	0.0
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.6	0.8 <sup>e</sup>	'10	0.6	0.8	e			
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET			'14	1.3 <sup>b</sup>	1.0	b	'13-'14	0.0	0.0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	A	A	'14	34.2 <sup>b</sup>	30.0 <sup>b</sup>	E7	'13-'14	1.8	-0.4
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates			'14	0.6	9.3	E8	'13-'14	0.0	0.4
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)	47.1	41.5 <sup>E9</sup>	'12	51.4	41.6	E9	'10-'12	2.2	0.0
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds)			'15	81.2 <sup>b</sup>	77.2	b	'14-'15	2.3	0.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)			'15	5.4 <sup>b</sup>	5.3	b	'14-'15	5.1	-1.0
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)			'15	42.5 <sup>b</sup>	23.7	b	'14-'15	5.7	-0.1

Indicator label	2010		2015 (*)		Trend in 2011-15 (per year)			
	CZ <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Yr	CZ <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Range	CZ	EU
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)			'15	85.5	83.7			
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	61.4	55.2	'15	57.9	57.3	'10-'15	-0.7	-0.4
<b>Overall transitions and labour market trends</b>								
Early leavers from education and training (%)		13.9	'15	6.2 <sup>b</sup>	11.0 <sup>c</sup>	'13-'15	↗ 0.4	↘ -0.5
30-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)		33.8	'15	30.1 <sup>b</sup>	38.7 <sup>c</sup>	'11-'15	↗ 1.5	↗ 1.0
NEET rate for 18-24 year-olds (%)		16.6	'15	9.7 <sup>b</sup>	15.8	'13-'15	↘ -1.1	↘ -0.7
Unemployment rate for 20-34 year-olds (%)		13.1	'15	7.2 <sup>b</sup>	12.9	'11-'15	↘ -0.4	↘ -0.1
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)		77.4	'15	82.2 <sup>b</sup>	76.9 <sup>c</sup>	'13-'15	↗ 0.9	↗ 0.7
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)		27.3	'15	6.8 <sup>b</sup>	23.5 <sup>c</sup>	'11-'15	↘ -0.2	↘ -0.8
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds (%)		68.6	'15	74.8 <sup>b</sup>	70.0 <sup>c</sup>	'11-'15	↗ 1.0	↗ 0.4
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)		53.4	'15	40.2 <sup>b</sup>	52.6 <sup>c</sup>	'11-'15	↗ 0.3	↘ -0.1
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2020 (% of total)			'16	96.1 <sup>d</sup>	82.8 <sup>d</sup>			

(\*) The data in this column are the data available in 2016. Where 2015 data were not available, data from previous years were used.

(<sup>f</sup>) UOE (UNESCO OECD Eurostat) back reconstruction of 2010 values based on ISCED (international standard classification of education) 2011 not yet available.

(<sup>b</sup>) AES (adult education survey) 2011, used as proxy for 2010 baseline.

(<sup>c</sup>) 2014 b flags in Eurostat online tables ignored on the basis of other relevant Eurostat metadata.

(<sup>d</sup>) Forecast made in 2016.

(<sup>E1</sup>) Based on 28 countries; partial information for NL.

(<sup>E2</sup>) Based on 25 countries (missing: ES, PL, RO); partial information for NL.

(<sup>E3</sup>) Based on 27 countries (missing: NL); partial information for EL, IT.

(<sup>E4</sup>) Based on 19 countries (missing: BE, DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT, SK).

(<sup>E5</sup>) Based on 21 countries (missing: DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT).

(<sup>E6</sup>) Partial information for NL.

(<sup>E7</sup>) Based on 25 countries (missing: HR, IT, UK).

(<sup>E8</sup>) Based on 23 countries (missing: BE, IE, FR, CY, UK).

(<sup>E9</sup>) Based on 22 countries (missing: DE, IE, EL, NL, SI, UK).

(<sup>b</sup>) Break after 2010, therefore baseline data not included.

(<sup>u</sup>) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.

(<sup>z</sup>) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.

(<sup>e</sup>) Eurostat: 'estimated'.

NB: EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified. Arrows ↗ or ↘ signal a positive or negative trend based on more than two data points and of magnitude 0.1 per year or more. Trends based on more than two data points but of smaller magnitude are indicated by →; trends based on two points only are marked •. Trends are estimated by means of regression models.

Source: Cedefop, 2017a, p. 41.

## CHAPTER 1.

# MTD 1 – All forms of work-based learning with special attention to apprenticeships

### 1.1. Baseline 2015

The School system is governed by the School Act defining the rules for preschool, primary, secondary, and higher education, including VET <sup>(4)</sup>. Under the School Act, the education provided by secondary schools contains two parts, theoretical and practical education.

At the beginning of the reporting period, all IVET programmes were school-based, although they included a mandatory part of practical training and work placement, which were an integral part of curricula. Practical training would take place either in school (e.g. practicum in labs) or in a real work environment. There was no formal apprenticeship programme however, and no contract was concluded between the learner and the company. Primary responsibility for education and training rested with schools. They concluded agreements with companies for practical training.

Cooperation with employers was being reinforced. The Long-term plan for education and development of the educational system (2011-15) had been an important milestone to emphasise the intention to increase the proportion of work placements as well as employer's involvement in VET. Financial incentives had been set to promote internships in companies. Internship providers were required to offer appropriate work conditions as well as mentors for trainees. Trainees received allowances for subsistence and travel (and accommodation in some cases). In addition, the *Pospolu* project (2012-15) had designed and tested models for school-employer cooperation <sup>(5)</sup>. Also, the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAFA) Commitment was set up mid-2015, putting the focus on objectives in terms of:

- (a) increasing employers' involvement in initial VET;
- (b) increasing the quantity of workplace training in three/four-year vocational programmes; and

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<sup>(4)</sup> Act No. 561/2004 on preschool, primary, secondary, higher and other education (Education Act).  
[http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p\\_lang=en&p\\_isn=71366&p\\_country=CZ&p\\_count=261](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=71366&p_country=CZ&p_count=261)

<sup>(5)</sup> The project recommendations were later on implemented in 2016-17:  
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/czech-republic-project-pospolu-together-fosters-cooperation-between-schools-and>

- (c) developing workplace training standards.

## 1.2. Policy priorities for 2016-20

For the 2016-20 period, the country's priorities in this area, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, are two-fold:

- (a) revision of the national curricula of IVET programmes, in particular the work-based learning elements in school-based VET programmes, with the aim to:
  - (i) guarantee the interconnection of the curricula with the qualifications and their assessment standards as mentioned in the national register of qualifications;
  - (ii) adapt to labour market needs;
  - (iii) introduce some flexibility for schools regarding the volume of practical training.
- (b) increase the quality of graduates' competences to meet employers' needs. To that end, the content of general education in VET programmes will be modernised and strengthened in applied sciences and general subjects, also with a view to better linking IVET and CVET qualifications.

## 1.3. Main actions taken in 2015-19

### 1.3.1. Piloting dual training

A memorandum on piloting elements of dual training was signed by the Ministry of Education, Moravia-Silesia Region and the Confederation of Industry in October 2017. The piloting phase started in September 2018 in cooperation with four upper secondary VET schools and three companies. The aim is to pilot how the obligatory practical training in the company work site should look like and what agreements are needed for the relationship between the student, company and school. The pilot also examines whether companies can apply tax deductions for investments in education and whether company scholarships can be awarded.

An analysis was prepared by the Confederation of Industry on a sample of 79 schools and 31 companies from across the country, with the aim of identifying current legislative barriers to broader cooperation between schools and companies. Several conferences and round tables were organised in different regions of Czechia. Interest was expressed in three regions so far.

### 1.3.2. Intensifying cooperation between schools and employers

Following the results of the 2012-15 *Pospolu* project (see introduction to Section 1), several steps were taken to intensify the cooperation between VET schools and employers:

- (a) proposal for legislative and institutional changes aiming to improve the transition from school to labour market by extending the duration of in-company training; in EQF 4 programmes, workplace internship is usually only two weeks, hence a proposal for extension to eight weeks. Some schools, especially those offering hospitality and tourism programmes, have already extended the length of practical training in their curricula;
- (b) proposals for legislative and institutional changes were brought forward to improve the match between graduate competences and employer needs by modernising the general education part of VET and developing teacher internships in companies. The vocational education part of framework educational programmes (national curricula) was updated in 271 of 281 VET programmes in 2018. Analysis of labour market needs (e.g. the use of new technologies, new materials and processes, as well as changes in relevant legislation) was carried out as support for the curriculum update process. In the general education part of VET curricula, the number of lessons was increased in mathematics (one of the mandatory subjects for the state part of the *Maturita* examination) and suggestions for changes were proposed in economics and entrepreneurship (including the standard of financial literacy) and in digital competences (in coherence with the Strategy for digital education until 2020). At the beginning of 2019, the updated programmes were still in the approval process;
- (c) employer commitment to cooperate with schools. In October 2016, key representatives of employers <sup>(6)</sup> agreed on strengthening cooperation between all VET stakeholders, with a special focus on communication with schools. In December 2017, a meeting was held to support involvement of employers in the revision of the Framework educational programmes (RVP) <sup>(7)</sup>. The process aims to ensure better representation of 'field groups' <sup>(8)</sup>. In January 2018, all umbrella organisations of national employers were given

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<sup>(6)</sup> Chamber of Commerce, Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic, Czech Agrarian Chamber and Confederation of Employers' and Entrepreneurs' Associations of the Czech Republic on allocation of responsibility for individual sectors (areas) of IVET.

<sup>(7)</sup> The framework educational programmes for upper secondary level represent the national curriculum in the area of initial vocational education.

<sup>(8)</sup> Groups of external experts involved in the upper secondary VET curriculum development. These groups are organised by the National Institute for Education.

- the opportunity to complement existing field groups with their representatives or to strengthen the mandate of selected experts in these groups with the aim of strengthening relevant involvement of employers' representatives in this process. At the beginning of 2018 there were 270 external experts involved in 25 field groups; 94 were experts representing the world of work;
- (d) an amendment to the School Act, which came into force in September 2017, obliges schools to develop, with regard to the field of study, efforts to foster cooperation with employers towards joint fulfilment of the objectives of secondary education. According to the amendment, schools shall involve employers in the education process particularly through:
- (i) consulting with employers about drafts of school curricula;
  - (ii) engaging employers in the shaping of conceptual plans for school development;
  - (iii) ensuring that practical training takes place at authorised workplaces;
  - (iv) allowing for participation of experts from practice in theoretical training at school;
  - (v) allowing for participation of experts from practice in the *Maturita* examination <sup>(9)</sup>;
  - (vi) securing, in cooperation with employers, continuing education and internships for teaching staff.

In reality, most schools and employers were already applying these lines before the amendment, but these measures are now more systematic;

- (e) introduction of coordinators to facilitate cooperation between schools and employers. There were two rounds of calls for proposals to apply for funding, in December 2016 and in December 2018 <sup>(10)</sup>. Secondary and tertiary professional schools could apply with a view to recruiting coordinators in charge of facilitating the cooperation between schools and companies. The coordinator is responsible for getting in contact with relevant employers and discussing with them their interest in possible cooperation with schools, and the conditions for cooperation. The coordinator also evaluates the cooperation, implements the feedback received from companies, involves schools into new forms of cooperation, organises internships of teachers in companies, and keeps close contact with relevant stakeholders, such as

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<sup>(9)</sup> It is obligatory for school directors to ensure the participation of the expert from practice at the final examination board (for study programmes at the EQF2 and 3 level leading to vocational certificate); participation of the expert at the EQF 4 level – *Maturita* examination is only recommended, not obligatory.

<sup>(10)</sup> In the framework of a new Operational programme science, research, innovation jointly funded by the European Social Fund both secondary and tertiary professional schools can apply for two-year simple grant schemes that minimise administrative requirements.

representatives of chambers of commerce and sector councils. 383 schools applied for this scheme in 2016.

#### **1.3.3. Recommendations for contracts between employers, students and schools**

In April 2016, the Ministry of Education prepared recommendations on contractual relationships including a template for the Agreement between employers and schools on the content, terms and conditions of practical training. The aim is to unify procedures and practices regarding workplace-based practical training, and to motivate employers to cooperate with schools. Companies should ensure that the tasks assigned to students are closely related to their respective fields of education to prevent students being used for helping with elementary chores and not gaining proper training related to their vocation. The responsibility for provision of both theoretical and practical education at the workplace rests with the school headmaster. The existence of such an agreement is one of the conditions that employers have to fulfil when applying for tax incentives.

#### **1.3.4. Promoting the introduction of practical education in basic education**

The year 2016 was declared the Year of crafts by the association of SMEs. The intention was to improve the image of manual work and crafts, and push for the introduction of practical education in basic education (also see Section **Error! Reference source not found.** below).

## CHAPTER 2.

# MTD 2 – Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to IVET and CVET

### 2.1. **Baseline 2015**

In 2015, the Czech School Inspectorate (CSI) was serving as the Quality assurance national reference point (QANRP). It had been appointed in 2010. Its tasks were in line with the EQAVET recommendation. It supported EQF and ECVET-related work in cooperation with the key partner National Institute for Education (NUV), representing the NCP EQF and the ECVET coordination centre.

External evaluation of the school system was under the responsibility of CSI. The inspectorate published, on a yearly basis, criteria for the evaluation of educational institutions, educational programmes and the management of the educational process. These criteria could also be used for the self-evaluation of providers.

The national approach to quality assurance was in its preliminary stage. The approach was intended to cover IVET and related work-based learning as well as CVET.

Regional authorities, social partners, companies and VET schools participated in the quality assurance process. Regional authorities and VET schools were involved in the development of IVET programmes and the definition of qualification standards in the National Register of Qualifications. Social partners had an advisory role in national policy making on VET. Cooperation between VET schools and companies along the lines of the EQAVET framework was encouraged in 2012-15 through the ESF-funded *Pospolu* project (Chapter 1), implemented by the National Institute for Education.

CVET in Czechia was fragmented and so was its quality assurance as well. Only publicly funded CVET and training relating to regulated professions was structured. In most cases, quality assurance was ensured through accreditation of programmes by commissions appointed by the responsible ministry. There were no quality assurance requirements or guidelines on privately funded CVET.

Information on VET graduates' entry into the labour market and on their employability was collected. Based on data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (unemployment data), from the Czech Statistical Office (Labour Force Survey), and from a triennial survey, the National Institute for Education



traced graduates after graduation. Some VET providers also collected data on the destination of VET learners, for self-evaluation purposes. Data were anonymised as data protection rules did not allow for following educational and career paths.

By 2015 there was no coherent system for identifying and forecasting skill needs. Only scattered initiatives were at play (EEPO, 2015). The National Institute for Education published reports on opinions of employers on the type of skills they lacked. It also provided aggregate statistics on the match of qualifications and jobs by type of studies for secondary education graduates. In 2015, the ministry of labour piloted selected approaches to build a stable national system of skill needs forecasting.

## 2.2. Quality assurance mechanisms in line with the EQAVET recommendation in 2015-19

For the 2016-20 period, the country's priority in this matter, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, is to implement modern methods of school evaluation.

In January 2016 the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports appointed the National Institute for Education as the quality assurance national reference point (NRP EQAVET CZ). The Institute now works in close cooperation with the Czech School Inspectorate, CSI (the former NRP EQAVET CZ) to fulfil the tasks of the national reference point as defined in the EQAVET recommendation.

In July 2016, the Ministry of Education approved the Quality school model which defines six areas <sup>(11)</sup> for school evaluation. The model was developed by CSI and allows for external and internal school evaluation in line with the EQAVET.

Also in 2016, the national project Support of regional action planning, jointly financed by the European Social Fund, was launched. It focuses on support and development of strategic management at the level of regional school authorities, secondary schools and tertiary professional schools. Before the start of the project, a nationwide survey was undertaken on school management, quality of education and training provision, and long-term school planning. The second round of the nationwide survey took place in October/November 2018 and the final third round has been planned for 2022 to measure improvement and

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<sup>(11)</sup> School concept and framework; school pedagogical leadership; quality of the pedagogical staff; learning and teaching (educational process); educational outcomes and needs of pupils/students; support provided to pupils/students (equal opportunities).

progress in related areas <sup>(12)</sup>. High response rates (more than 96%) have been achieved. Based on needs analysis, the National Institute for Education developed a methodology for school action plans. The outputs of surveys in the form of aggregated data provided to each region are an important feedback for regional education policy. The project also creates a space for harmonisation of regional needs with state policy. At the provider level, it was one of the sources for developing so-called school strategic action plans (supporting the feedback loops).

The same year, the National Institute for Education prepared the KVALITA DV (Quality in continuing education) project, aimed at assessing the quality of CVET providers. However, in 2017, based on an agreement between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the activities of the KVALITA DV project were transferred to the KVASAR project (Section 3.3.3.2).

In 2017, after two years of piloting, a centralised / unified entry exam was introduced for the access to four-year secondary programmes in general education and VET leading to the *Maturita* exam, with the aim of harmonising the benchmarking approach (Section 4.4.1.2).

In 2017, the Ministry of Education approved a proposal for revising the national curriculum for upper secondary education (RVP) and the educational programmes of individual schools (ŠVP). The revision of the curricular documents is among the national priorities until 2020. The guiding principles for the revision process are permeability, quality, flexibility, and being learner-oriented. The new curricula will have to be in coherence with the Strategy for education until 2030 which is under preparation. Revision of the national curricula of IVET programmes, in particular the work-based learning elements in school-based VET programmes, will have to:

- (a) guarantee the link of the curricula to the qualifications and their assessment standards as mentioned in the national register of qualifications;
- (b) adapt to labour market needs;
- (c) introduce higher flexibility for schools regarding the volume of practical training. National public debate started in 2018.

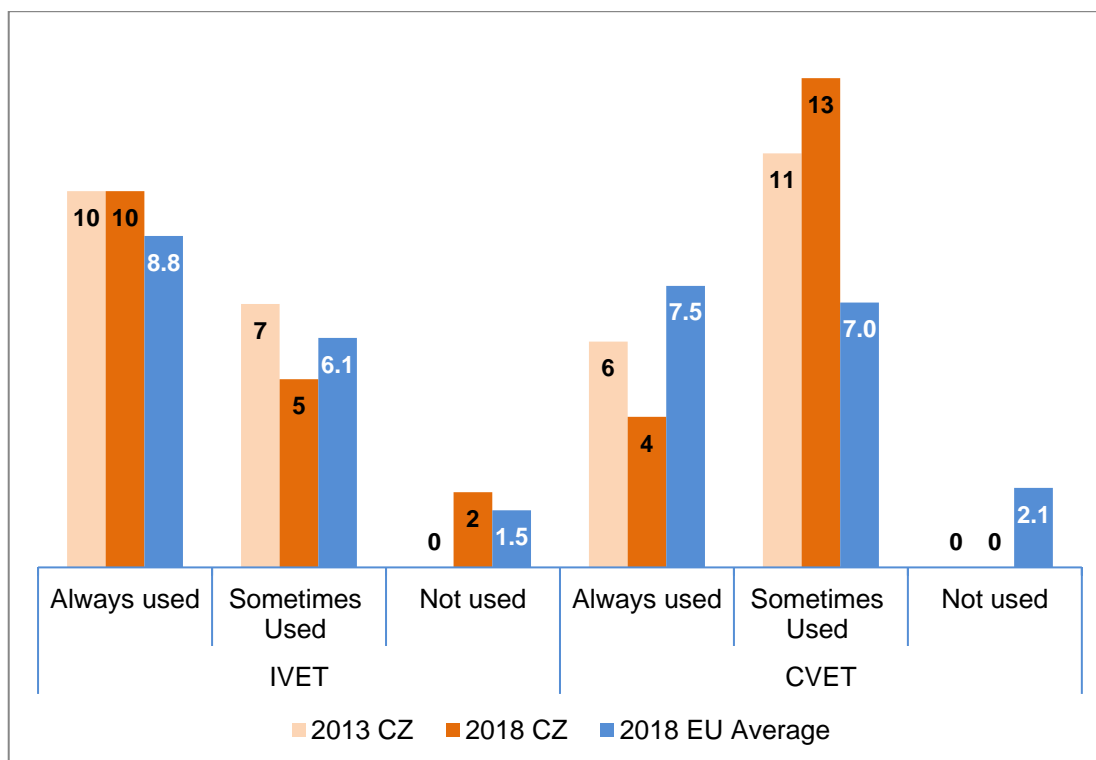
Concerning the systematic use of EQAVET indicators to monitor the VET system ('always used' item in Figure 1), Czechia is above the EU average in

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<sup>(12)</sup> Seven areas of intervention, according to the Operational plan for research, development, and education (OP RDE) are: VET and cooperation between schools and employers; polytechnic education; innovativeness, creativity and entrepreneurship; career counselling including early leaving from school; networks of lifelong learning schools; inclusive education; infrastructure. There are also three optional topics: language education; digital competences including infrastructure needs; and literacy and numeracy. Schools can also use financial sources in the form of simple grant schemes to support the above described areas.

IVET and below in CVET in 2018. Compared to 2013, the EQAVET indicators reported to be used in 2018 remained unchanged.

Figure 1. Use of EQAVET indicators



NB: Of the 17 indicators suggested by the 2009 EQAVET recommendation, ten were 'always used' in IVET in 2013 and 2018 in Czechia, compared to 8.8 in the EU on average in 2018.

EU average was calculated based on available information for 31 out of 35 VET systems.

Source: Cedefop calculations based on EQAVET Secretarial Surveys for 2013 and 2018 data.

The National Institute for Education has worked until 2019 on the revision of qualification and assessment standards in the national register of qualifications. The Institute has also used Erasmus+ funding in 2016-17 to develop a methodology and an on-line tool for the assessment of practical skills for vocational school programmes (corresponding to EQF 3 level). This work will be further developed by the new national project *Modernizace odborného vzdělávání*, MOV (2017-20), targeted at improving the quality of VET through modernising initial VET. The MOV project was launched on 1 May 2017 <sup>(13)</sup>. It focuses on the vocational and general components of secondary vocational education in order to promote the employability of graduates. It emphasises supporting students' key competences for employability, lifelong learning, linking IVET to CVET through the National Register of Qualifications, and cooperation

<sup>(13)</sup><http://www.nuv.cz/projekty/mov>

with employers. The initiative includes a digital platform for the development of, and innovation in, school educational programmes (ŠVP) and sharing methodological and teaching materials. ECVET and EQAVET principles will be applied, in particular to make the description of workplace-based practical education more precise and transparent. Implementation will continue until April 2020. The project has undergone ex-ante evaluation. More than 300 educational modules have been developed. Schools can use these modules directly or as an inspiration for updating their programmes. The project also started to pilot units of learning outcomes (based on ECVET principles), plans of cooperation, a questionnaire for quality assurance in coherence with EQAVET principles and a student portfolio.

### 2.3. Continuous information and feedback loops in IVET and CVET in 2015-19

A new project, *Compass*, was launched by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in 2017, aiming at establishing by 2020 a permanent system of labour market forecasting with a strong regional focus. The system will collect the available statistical data as well as qualitative information on future regional and national developments, important changes and technology trends. The outcomes of the system are expected to inform education providers and counsellors (IVET as well as CVET), the public employment service (responsible for retraining), regional authorities (responsible for IVET), employers, central bodies (Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education) as well as the general public, via a comprehensive website. By 2018, a network of regional expert teams had prepared regional profile studies for each region to summarise regional specifics and conditions influencing labour market development. At the national level, several sectoral trend studies were elaborated that use a dominantly qualitative approach to describe the current situation and main prospects of the given sectors. A system of statistical forecasting models (national as well as regional) is being developed. In 2019, a first working version of quantitative forecast is being prepared and provided to regional and national experts for review. Following their feedback, the methodology for the quantitative forecasting model will be further elaborated.

## CHAPTER 3.

# MTD 3 – Access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible/permeable systems, guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning

### 3.1. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, vocational education and training up to the level of tertiary professional schools was governed by the Act on pre-school, basic, secondary, tertiary professional and other education – School Act (2004). Training provided within the public employment service was regulated by the Employment Act (2004) <sup>(14)</sup>.

Czechia had in place two main guidance systems, organised respectively by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour. On the education side, the position of career counsellor was not embedded in the law yet. In the system supervised by the Ministry of Labour, online services for youth and adults were offered. Following legislative changes in 2011, the guidance and counselling provision of the PES had been reorganised.

Upper secondary VET comprised three-year and four-year VET programmes. Three-year programmes were intended mainly for direct entry into the labour market and led to vocational certificates. However, graduates from these programmes could enrol in a two-year follow-up programme to pass the *Maturita* examination and continue to higher education. Standardised contents for each three-year study programme (e.g. bricklayer, toolmaker, baker, hairdresser, etc.) were being developed jointly by vocational school teachers and experts with practical experience. Standardised final examination assignments had been under development since 2009. In 2014/15, the use of standardised assignments became compulsory. Four-year programmes led to taking the *Maturita* examination and enabled graduates to continue towards higher education or perform mid-level technical, business, service, health and other similar jobs (such as civil engineering technician, travel agent). Since 2012/13, a new four-year VET programme was piloted, allowing learners to acquire both the vocational certificate and the *Maturita*. Learners could take vocational examination after three years of studies and the *Maturita* examination after the fourth (and final) year of studies. Those who would not pass the *Maturita* examination already had

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<sup>(14)</sup> *Zákon č. 435/2004 Sb. o zaměstnanosti.*

a vocational certificate recognised in the labour market. The main aim was to prevent drop out and early leaves from education.

The *Maturita* system itself had been reformed in 2010/11 with the introduction of a standardised State *Maturita* system. The reform ended the former practice of schools preparing their own *Maturita* exams, thus making exams more objective, comparable across schools/programmes and increasing their role as a reference tool. On the other hand, it resulted in slightly higher drop-out rate, as the standardised exam is more challenging for many students than were the previous school-developed exams.

Adult education programmes were offered by VET school networks operating as regional lifelong learning centres. However, participation of adults in these programmes was low.

Retraining courses for the unemployed, those at risk of unemployment, and employees were offered both by the Labour Office and by private and public providers (including schools) accredited by the education ministry. Since 2009, a condition for accreditation was the linkage to the national register of qualifications (Kaňáková et al., 2016).

### 3.2. Policy priorities for 2016-20

For the 2016-20 period, the country's priorities in this area, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, are threefold:

- (a) for young people,
  - (i) implement the national register of qualifications in close connection with IVET programmes;
  - (ii) support the implementation and sustainable development of the system of recognition and validation, based on the register.
- (b) for adults,
  - (i) support and extend the activities of schools, other educational institutions and libraries in the field of lifelong learning, encourage schools to offer further education services in addition to initial education for pupils and students;
  - (ii) encourage CVET to relate to the needs of the labour market and to allow for interaction with the Active employment policy (retraining courses), along with ensuring financing of new qualifications from the state budget.
- (c) Introduce the master craftsman qualification for graduates of craft industries with vocational certificate as a part of national register of qualifications.

### 3.3. Main actions taken in 2015-19

#### 3.3.1. Promoting equal opportunity

An amendment to the School Act came into force in September 2016, which legally guarantees targeted support for children with special needs. Schools (including VET schools) are now legally entitled to additional funding for the measures required for teaching children with special needs. This amendment covers all children with special educational needs which are based on their health as well as on their cultural and social environment (including such as Roma children). The amendment also covers talented children.

#### 3.3.2. Guidance

The JOBHUB project was launched in 2016. It aims at ensuring better availability of career guidance and, as a result, better access to continuing education and employment. The project is carried out by the Further Education Fund (in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the General Directorate of the Labour Office). It will develop an integrated information system as support to career guidance. The system will provide professional guidance, diagnostic tools and labour market intelligence, and will create a shared online platform for career counsellors. This is expected to improve the services provided by career counsellors and improve access to their services for all citizens in every stage of their educational and professional path. The end date of the project is June 2019.

#### 3.3.3. Permeability and flexibility

##### 3.3.3.1. *Master craftsman examination*

The project *Mistrovská zkouška systém* (master craftsman examination system) was launched in November 2017 and will continue until 2021. The project will set the overall master craftsman examination model and prepare comprehensive expertise for its implementation. Elements of the master exam system will be developed and reviewed. For the different master qualifications, these elements comprise both qualification and assessment standards, frameworks for the assignments of the master exams, curricula of training programmes and their textbooks. The project will develop the necessary methodologies and design the processes for organising the exams. The master craftsman represents a new type of qualification as well as a new tool for CVET and recognition of advanced craftsmanship in vocational fields. While graduates of four-year secondary VET programmes (ISCED 354) can continue to develop their professional skills in tertiary professional schools or in higher education, craftsmen do not have such a possibility. Typically, they are graduates from three-year VET programmes with a vocational certificate (ISCED 353, EQF 3) which does not directly lead to tertiary

education. The master craftsman qualification opens new perspectives as it represents the EQF 5 level. The aim is also to increase several characteristics: the overall quality of craftsmanship; the prestige of crafts in the perception of society; the interest of young people (and their parents) in education in craft industries; and holders' chances to succeed abroad as the qualification will be made compatible within the EU. By 2019, 32 standards of master qualification and 10 test frameworks for the master craftsman examination have been developed. Work on textbooks has begun. Piloting involving a sample of 20 qualifications and 60 candidates is under way.

#### 3.3.3.2. *KVASAR project*

The KVASAR project was prepared during 2016-17 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and was launched in October 2017. It will pilot the modularisation of retraining courses. The aim is to allow for taking into account the previously learned skills of participants in retraining courses, and training the learner only for those skills that s/he needs. The project will also test solutions for funding the modular system of retraining, and will propose guidelines for employers' participation in the whole process. In 2018, a public tender procedure was launched to contract a partner who will carry out practical activities of the project (suggesting participants, identification of their skill needs, outline and piloting of the system). In the beginning of 2019, the proposals were being evaluated.

### 3.3.4. **Transparency, recognition, validation**

#### 3.3.4.1. *National qualifications framework* <sup>(15)</sup>

Czechia has not yet developed a comprehensive national qualification framework. The national register of qualifications (*Národní soustava kvalifikací, NSK*) <sup>(16)</sup> functions as a qualifications framework for the system of validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) and CVET qualifications. The NSK was referenced to the EQF in 2011. All qualifications awarded in secondary education, higher education, and the qualifications included in the NSK are linked to EQF levels. In 2015, a higher education framework was proposed and discussed with higher education institutions, but the plan to introduce it into the national legislation was not successful. The framework was finally approved by the ministry in 2018, but has not been included in the Higher Education Act so far.

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<sup>(15)</sup> Source: Cedefop (2017b).

<sup>(16)</sup> National Register of Qualifications (NSK): <http://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/en-us/>



#### 3.3.4.2. *Validation*

The Czech system of validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) is regulated by the Act 179/2006 on the verification and recognition of further education results, amended in 2012. Validation and recognition procedures are in place for qualifications included in the national register of qualifications (NSK) and are aimed at mitigating skill shortages on the labour market. The register addresses further learning results and vocational competences (CVET), with adults as a main target group. It currently contains 1269 vocational qualifications (standards) in 29 different sectors, ranging between EQF levels 2 to 7, with most on levels 3 and 4 (data from February 2019). The VNFIL system operates more or less in parallel to the formal education system, with some connections between the two. The concept of 'vocational qualification' is the central principle of the VNFIL system. Qualifications are developed by sector councils, where representatives of employers, employees, qualification authorities, VET and the academic sector are involved in identifying current skills needs and shortages. Validation and recognition procedures are based on assessment of knowledge, skills and competences gained by prior learning and work experience, and are carried out according to the qualifications and assessment standards included in the NSK. Each qualification standard – based on occupational standards – is defined in competences. The assessment is also competence-based, usually consisting of an oral examination, written part and practical demonstration of skills and competences. Over the past 10 years, 203 000 adult learners have passed exams and were awarded a certificate of vocational qualification (data from February 2019). Certain vocational qualifications can be combined and, after a comprehensive final exam, can lead to a full VET qualification at NSK/EQF level 3 or 4. This makes final exams a bridge between the formal and the VNFIL systems. The main strengths of the VNFIL system in Czechia are the existing legal basis, information accessibility, quality assurance arrangements, and close collaboration with employers in the development of vocational qualifications. The national policy of VNFIL, supported by the NSK, has also been incorporated in the national Active Policy for Employment (APE), the framework of measures stipulated by the Act 435/2004 on Employment, which links retraining offers to existing vocational qualifications. Accessibility of guidance and counselling services is seen as an aspect that could be improved. While disadvantaged groups have access to validation through public employment services, validation services are typically subject to fees (Cedefop, 2017b; Valenta, 2016).

### **3.3.5. Training, reskilling and upskilling vulnerable groups, jobseekers and employees**

#### *3.3.5.1. The Education through practice project*

This project runs from 2016 to 2019 and is aimed at providing an opportunity to undergo an internship in an enterprise. Eligible target groups include jobseekers registered at the Labour Office, parents on (or after) parental leave, persons over 50 years, and persons with no qualification or having only a low level of vocational qualification (up to two years of vocational training). Since May 2017, graduates have also been included in the eligible target group. The interested eligible individuals may apply for an internship as there are companies who have expressed their interest in interns. The Further Education Fund mediates the internships by pairing the right intern with the right company and provides related guidance to both parties. The internships last from one to six months. The company assigns a mentor to the intern. The mentors must first undergo an e-learning mentoring course, and then support the interns during the whole process, providing them with the knowledge and skills related to the assigned job. The training costs of the company are refunded. The trainees get their travel and accommodation costs refunded as well. In the end, the company may offer a job to the intern.

#### *3.3.5.2. The Path for youth project*

This project is similar to Education through practice and was originally planned for 2016-20. It specifically targets last grade students in higher education, tertiary professional schools and secondary schools. Since 2017 the target group has been expanded to students of two last grades. On top of in-company practical training, participants benefit from soft skills courses and guidance interviews with HR specialists. The soft skills courses offer specific training in communication skills, stress management, time management and information processing. The guidance interview helps students to update their CV and gives hints about trends and requirements of recruitment procedures. In 2018, the ministry of labour decided to end the project because of the current labour market situation of extremely low unemployment. As the graduates can get jobs very easily, there is almost no demand for support tools offered by the project.

### **3.3.6. Promoting VET participation through increased attractiveness**

The year 2016 was declared the Year of crafts by the association of SMEs. The intention was to improve the image of manual work and crafts, make learners more aware of their talents, motivate them to take up crafts, and push for the introduction of practical education in basic education. One of the practical

impacts was the creation of a platform <sup>(17)</sup> developed in cooperation with the Association of small and medium-sized companies and other professional unions. The platform user receives unique information support for the choice of craftsmen, products and services. The added value of this portal is also support of professional associations to solve individual complaints. The Year also supported the importance of launching the master craftsman examination.

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<sup>(17)</sup> [www.mistiremesel.cz](http://www.mistiremesel.cz)

## CHAPTER 4.

# MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET

### 4.1. Baseline 2015

In 2015, key competences were present in VET curricula (national framework curricula) as intended learning outcomes both in stand-alone subjects and integrated in other subjects or student projects. They were not monitored centrally, however were partly assessed through final and *Maturita* examinations<sup>(18)</sup>.

The 2015-20 long term development plan by the Ministry of Education launched a new cycle of adjusting the national secondary education framework curricula, including those for VET. It emphasised the importance of foreign language learning and universally applicable competences that help people to be flexible and adapt to changing social, economic and environmental circumstances.

In 2015, key competences were perceived as important for learners' personality development, their employability, personal and civic life and further learning. Their importance had been emphasised in strategic documents such as:

- (a) the lifelong learning strategy 2009-15, that had outlined the role of key competences in initial and continuing education;
- (b) the 2014-20 education strategy, that supported the acquisition of skills and knowledge (including basic skills) by all upper secondary VET learners at a level allowing them to pursue a career and continue learning;
- (c) the 2013 policy document on new VET measures until 2020, that promoted in particular key competences in career management, problem solving, communication, and ability to work in team<sup>(19)</sup>.

A recent survey<sup>(20)</sup> showed that, compared with general education graduates, those who completed VET programmes felt they had stronger (ranged by priority):

- (a) sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- (b) ability to work with others;

and weaker:

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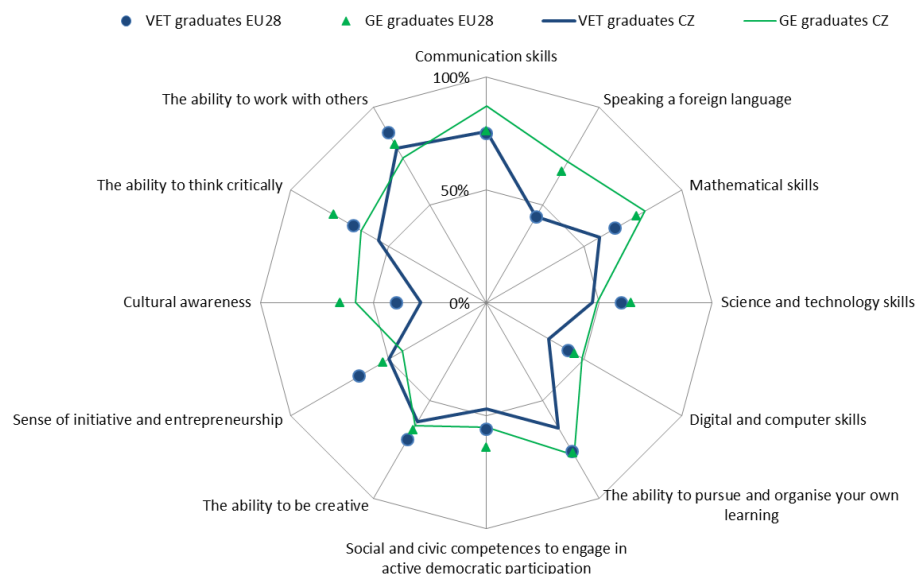
<sup>(18)</sup> For more information see Kašparová (2016).

<sup>(19)</sup> For more information see Kašparová (2016).

<sup>(20)</sup> See Cedefop (2017c).

- (a) cultural awareness;
- (b) foreign language knowledge;
- (c) mathematical skills (Figure 2).

Figure 2. **Self-evaluation of acquired skills in general education (GE) and VET in 2016**

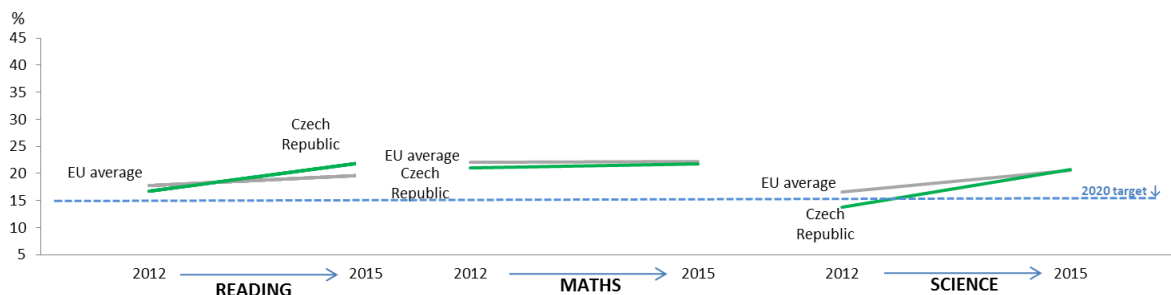


NB: Respondents who attended upper secondary education. Interviewees were asked in summer 2016 about their overall experience in upper secondary education. Aggregated data do not take account of different types and sectors of VET and age groups of respondents.

Source: Cedefop (2017c).

The context of key competences in 2015 was mainly characterised by an increasing share of young low achievers in reading, maths and science compared with 2012 (Figure 3).

Figure 3. **Share of 15 year-olds with low achievement in reading, maths and science**



NB: Low achievement means failing Level 2 on the PISA scale.

Source: OECD (PISA 2012 and 2015).

As VET enrolled 73% of all upper secondary learners in the country <sup>(21)</sup>, this trend was likely to be reflected in the key competences trained for in VET programmes.

In 2015, according to the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training <sup>(22)</sup>, the challenge was to implement changes in VET curricula to support key competences. The 2015 country specific recommendation <sup>(23)</sup> for Czechia particularly emphasised the need for taking on board disadvantaged children, including Roma.

## 4.2. Key competences addressed in the reporting period

Table 2 outlines key competences in initial and continuing VET that were addressed in the reporting period. A description of policies is provided in the following sections.

Table 2. **Key competences addressed in 2015-19**

	IVET	CVET
Country language(s) and literacy	YES	
Foreign languages	YES	
Digital competence	YES	YES
Maths	YES	
Science		
Technology		
Social and civic competences	YES	
Learning to learn		
Financial literacy		YES
Entrepreneurship competence		
Cultural awareness and expression		
Key competences as a package		YES

NB: The list derives from the 2006 EU key competences framework for lifelong learning; it has been restructured and expanded with additional competences that can be considered key.

Source: Cedefop, based on ReferNet input.

<sup>(21)</sup> Calculated from Eurostat table educ\_uoe\_enrs04; 2015 data.

<sup>(22)</sup> Cedefop (2014). *ACVT survey on progress towards the Bruges objectives and future priorities* [unpublished].

<sup>(23)</sup> Council of the European Union (2015). *European Semester: country-specific recommendations*. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2015-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-council-recommendations\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2015-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-council-recommendations_en)

### 4.3. Policy priorities for 2016-20

For the 2016-20 period, the country's priority in this area, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, is to revise the key competences in the current 286 national curricula for initial VET programmes.

### 4.4. Main actions taken in 2015-19

#### 4.4.1. Key competences in initial VET

##### 4.4.1.1. *Key competences in the Education strategy*

The 2014 Education strategy for 2015-20 supports upper secondary VET learners acquiring skills and knowledge (including basic skills) at a level allowing them to pursue a career and to continue learning. The subsequent 2015-20 long-term plan for education promotes foreign language learning and development of transversal competences that help people be flexible and adapt to changing social, economic and environmental conditions. The plan also promotes civic education based on democratic principles, education towards active citizenship and respect for human rights. In 2015, a concept for developing civic education in schools initiated support for civic education in VET. In 2017, a schedule for the revision of key competences up to 2020 was approved <sup>(24)</sup>.

##### 4.4.1.2. *Improving the monitoring of key competences*

In 2017, a centralised/unified entry exam was introduced. It verifies knowledge and skills in mathematics, the Czech language and literature, and allows successful learners to be admitted to four-year secondary education (general and VET) programmes leading to the *Maturita* exam. Admission scores, however, are set independently by schools which can also add other (programme specific) entry exams and criteria, within the limit of 40 % of the overall applicant evaluation. The aim of the measure is to increase the quality of education by setting up a unified benchmarking tool.

##### 4.4.1.3. *Curriculum changes*

In 2018, changes were made to the general parts of curricula. In mathematics – one of the mandatory subjects for the state part of the *Maturita* examination – the number of lessons was increased. Suggestions have also been made for changes in economics and entrepreneurship (such as introducing a standard for

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<sup>(24)</sup> Expected learning outcomes will be defined in all educational areas, as both specific and transversal (key) competences. Although key competences are linked to one educational area, they are acquired in all areas. This approach allows for vocational and key competences to be evaluated separately.

financial literacy) and in digital education <sup>(25)</sup>, in coherence with the Strategy for digital education until 2020.

#### **4.4.2. Key competences in continuing VET**

In the reporting period, the focus has been on digital skills and transferable skills for groups at risk.

##### *4.4.2.1. Digital literacy strategy 2015-20*

Czechia has in place a Digital literacy strategy for 2015-20 aimed at supporting digital literacy of adults through continuing education and lifelong learning. The action plan for the strategy was adopted in 2016. The measures are specified by target group <sup>(26)</sup>. The first implementation step was taken in mid-2016 by launching the DigiStrategie 2020 project. The goal of the project is to provide support tools that will improve the effectiveness of and accessibility to continuing education in the field of digital literacy. An online portal was set as a platform for sharing information relevant to digital education, in particular better understanding new technologies and their use for private and working life. From October 2017 till June 2020, a series of roadshows and workshops will be held in all regions. Current digital trends will be presented to experts as well as the general public with an aim to increase motivation to engage in these trends and to support digital literacy in general. All these events will be free of charge.

In October 2017 a new project DigiKatalog was launched, planned to run up until 2021. It will create an online tool called smart online system (SOS) that will enable users to assess their transferable digital skills and will recommend them suitable further education programmes in this field. The tool will include a catalogue of transferable digital skills for 500 key occupations. Tests of the first module for adult digital skills assessment was planned for 2019.

The updated policy *Digital Czech Republic v. 2.0* (originally in place since 2013) was approved by the government of Czechia in October 2018. It implements two strategic frameworks: the *Strategy for digital education* (SDV) and the *Digital literacy strategy* (SDG). SDV is targeted at basic and secondary

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<sup>(25)</sup> Among the seven areas of intervention supported by the Operational plan for research, development, and education (OP RDE) are two mandatory areas (polytechnic education, consisting of technical, science, and environmental education; and innovativeness, creativity and entrepreneurship) and three optional areas (language education; digital competences, including infrastructure needs; and literacy). Schools may also use financial sources in the form of simple grant schemes to support curricula developments in these areas. By December 2018, 1 293 secondary and 818 tertiary professional schools had developed action plans including optional topics: digital competences (54% of schools), literacy and numeracy (37% of schools) and foreign languages (55.6% of schools).

<sup>(26)</sup> Employees, the self-employed, unemployed, people at risk of digital and social exclusion and families.



schools and entails measures addressing teacher training, pedagogical research, support for headmasters, school infrastructure and connectivity issues, innovation in modern methods of education and teaching, priorities in communicating the need for change to the public, and the need for opening education through digital technologies to everyone. SDG focuses on measures aiming to enhance digital literacy in adults (15+) and related topics such as digital skills in small and medium-sized businesses, support to teleworking, digital exclusion, and open education.

#### 4.4.2.2. *Digital jobs coalition*

In October 2016, a National coalition for digital jobs was established by the Ministries of Education, Labour and Social Affairs, Industry and Trade, the Office of the Government, and the Czech ICT Alliance, as part of the digital education strategy. Employers, academia, NGOs, schools and various associations also participate. The main tasks of the coalition include activating stakeholders (public administrations, local authorities, employers, trade unions, educators) to help increase the number of qualified ICT professionals by means of initial and continuing education and training, and raising awareness about the forthcoming digital changes.

#### 4.4.2.3. *National training projects*

Training projects jointly funded by the European Social Fund and contributing to key competences have been developed during the reporting period:

- (a) the *Prokop project* (2016-19) supplements the training offer of the public employment service with continuing training in financial literacy, citizenship skills and soft skills for inactive people and those at risk of unemployment. For selected beneficiaries, training is supplemented by individual guidance;
- (b) the *Support for foreigners* project (2016-18) provided individual guidance and training (soft skills, financial literacy and citizenship skills) to foreigners to help them find a job;
- (c) the *Path for youth* project (2016-18) offered learners of the last two grades internships in companies including soft skills training, especially in communication, stress management, time management and information processing (Section **Error! Reference source not found.**).

## CHAPTER 5.

# MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuing professional development of VET teachers and trainers

### 5.1. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, upper secondary and post-secondary IVET were provided by vocational schools (SOU) and technical schools (SOŠ). At the tertiary level, IVET was provided by professional schools (VOŠ) and higher education institutions. A 2004 law <sup>(27)</sup> regulated qualification and competence requirements for all teaching professionals, including their working hours, conditions for continuing professional development (CPD), and career scheme.

The implementation of the curricular reform placed increased demands on teaching professionals, concerning their involvement in the design of school curricula, handling the learning outcomes approach, and improving their teaching methods. According to the European Commission (2015), measures to support teacher assessment (including formative assessment) were also lacking. A Country specific recommendation in 2015 was to ‘ensure adequate training for teachers’.

Challenges <sup>(28)</sup> that VET teaching was facing were:

- (a) relatively low social prestige of the teaching profession;
- (b) relatively low teacher wages;
- (c) lack of attractiveness of the teaching profession in the eyes of talented young people;
- (d) limited opportunities for career development and growth;
- (e) ageing of teaching professionals; and
- (f) increasing gender imbalance in teaching staff in favour of women.

The three key priorities, stipulated in the Strategy for Education Policy of the Czech Republic until 2020 (education ministry, 2014), included: modernising pre-service teacher training; improving teacher working conditions <sup>(29)</sup>; and promoting the quality of teaching and teachers by launching a career scheme for teachers. It was also necessary to promote effective methods of experience sharing, good

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<sup>(27)</sup> Act No. 563/2004 Coll.

<sup>(28)</sup> Challenges are also mentioned by the European Commission (2015).

<sup>(29)</sup> This objective was finally achieved by increasing the salaries of teachers, stabilising the curriculum and gradually planning its review.

practices and mentoring. According to a 2015 report (Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, 2015), measures in preparation comprised financial incentives for teachers working in challenging schools or classes, a new career system, and the development of school counselling centres bringing together specialists such as teaching assistants, school psychologists, and special needs teachers.

Five main groups of teachers and trainers were at play in VET programmes:

- (a) teachers of general subjects;
- (b) teachers of vocational theoretical subjects;
- (c) teachers of vocational training;
- (d) teachers of practicum (teaching only in schools, in EQF 4 study programmes leading to the *Maturita* exam); and
- (e) in-company trainers (nationally referred as instructors of practical training, who were not considered pedagogical staff. They were employees of companies where practical training for students was provided).

#### **5.1.1. Access to VET school teaching: entry requirements and initial training**

Teachers of general subjects were required to hold an accredited pedagogical master degree from a higher education institution.

Teachers of vocational theoretical subjects were required to hold an accredited master degree from a higher education institution.

Teachers of vocational training were required to complete an accredited study programme at a higher education level; or an accredited educational programme at a tertiary professional school; or a vocational certificate.

Teachers of practicum were required to have completed at least an upper secondary accredited educational programme with *Maturita*.

All these professionals had also to hold an accredited tertiary-education bachelor degree in pedagogical sciences or complete studies in the field of pedagogical sciences (within the accredited lifelong learning programme provided by a higher education institution for at least 250 hours of instruction). The number of hours was at least 120 for teachers of vocational theoretical subjects at secondary schools; teachers of practicum at secondary schools; teachers of vocational training at secondary schools; teachers of artistic vocational subjects at elementary artistic schools, secondary schools and conservatoires; and teachers at language schools authorised to organise state language examinations. The studies could be provided by a higher education institution or by a facility for continuing education of teachers.

According to an amendment of the Act on pedagogical staff (Parliament of the Czech Republic, 2014), all teachers <sup>(30)</sup> who did not hold teaching qualifications had until the end of 2014 to start attending an appropriate course leading to a teaching qualification.

There was no structured induction programme in place for new teachers.

#### **5.1.2. In-company trainers: entry requirements and initial training**

There were no legal requirements regarding the training of in-company trainers, i.e. instructors of practical training. This was the responsibility of the company.

#### **5.1.3. VET school teachers: main lines for CPD**

A 2005 decree <sup>(31)</sup> identified three types of teacher CPD:

- (a) studies leading to the fulfilment of qualification requirements. Areas covered included pedagogical science (250 teaching hours); pedagogy (120 teaching hours); the ability to teach at different types of schools or at different levels of education (200 hours of instruction); the ability to teach additional subjects (250 hours of instruction); and special needs pedagogy;
- (b) studies meeting additional qualification requirements. Areas covered included coordination activities in the field of IT and communication technologies; development of school-based curricula and educational programmes of tertiary professional schools; and prevention of socio-pathological phenomena. Training duration was of at least 250 hours;
- (c) studies enhancing professional qualifications focusing on theoretical and practical issues related to general pedagogy; pedagogical and didactical psychology; theory of education; training in foreign languages.

The contents or the training topic were determined by:

- (a) recommendations of the Czech School Inspectorate (ČŠI) based on the assessment of schools;
- (b) various guidelines set by the education ministry, e.g. regarding the education of learners from disadvantaged background.

Further education of pedagogical staff was realised in the framework of formal and non-formal education. It was usually provided by:

- (a) universities and higher education institutions;

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<sup>(30)</sup> Apart from those above 55 years of age with at least 20 years of teaching experience.

<sup>(31)</sup> No 317/2005 Coll.

- (b) the National Institute for Further Education and the National Institute for Education;
- (c) regional institutions for further education of pedagogical staff;
- (d) accredited companies allowing teachers to become familiarised with in-practice innovations;
- (e) teacher organisations and associations.

The 2004 Act on pedagogical staff explicitly stipulated the duty of public-school headmasters to organise teacher CPD in line with the school's CPD plan. Headmasters were also responsible for ensuring, monitoring and assessing the whole CPD process. According to the same act, teachers had the right to educational leave up to 12 days per academic year. The most commonly used method in teacher continuing training was blended learning. Teachers were widely using a methodological portal <sup>(32)</sup> developed in the framework of an ESF project, allowing them to share experience, get teaching materials, create their own digital educational materials, record video-observations and follow web-seminars on various topics.

Teachers of vocational theoretical subjects and of vocational training particularly benefited from in-company internships allowing them to familiarise with new technologies, materials and work organisation. It was subsequently easier for them to transfer the acquired knowledge into teaching.

## 5.2. Initial training for teaching / training staff in VET schools 2015-19

For the 2016-20 period, the country's priorities in this area, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, are to:

- (a) modernise the initial training of teachers and headmasters;
- (b) complete and implement a career system for teachers and improve conditions for their work; interconnect the career system for teachers with the system of initial and further teacher training.

A 2015 amendment to the 2004 Act on pedagogical staff came into force in 2016. It stipulates qualification and competence requirements for all teaching staff; terms of temporary contracts for teachers promoting more job security; working hours, CPD and a career scheme. The amendment applies to all teaching staff, including those in VET.

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<sup>(32)</sup> <http://rvp.cz/>

### 5.3. CPD for teaching/training staff in VET schools 2015-19

For the 2016-20 period, the country's priorities in this area, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, are to:

- (a) strengthen further education and methodological support for teachers and headmasters;
- (b) define the criteria for mentors in all types of schools and create a scheme for developing mentor skills.

#### 5.3.1. Preparing a new career scheme 2015-19

The 2015 amendment to the Pedagogical Staff Act (see Section 5.2) also addressed CPD issues and a new career scheme. The proposed scheme, developed in cooperation between the education ministry and the National Institute for Further Education, complemented the existing opportunities with a new path helping staff acquire the relevant skills for specific positions: participative leadership skills; needs-based and individualised teaching and formative assessment to develop young people's potential; and fostering key competence development. It links traditional and new paths with the teacher qualification standard. With the new path, the proposal also introduces a new position, that of 'mentors'. The proposal was further developed within the SYPO project <sup>(33)</sup> launched in January 2018. SYPO is carried out in cooperation with a range of stakeholders <sup>(34)</sup>. It responds to the current situation, which lacks a comprehensive system of professional support for teachers and directors. Further education of these two target groups is, to some extent, unsystematic, lacking conceptual support for different phases of the career path. SYPO will prepare a new concept that will systematically and comprehensively support professional growth with emphasis on quality, using methodical cabinets <sup>(35)</sup> at national,

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<sup>(33)</sup> SYPO stands for System for the support of professional development of teachers and directors. This project partially replaced the former project IMCA, the prior aim of which was to design a career system for teachers. The draft IMCA project was not approved by the Parliament. The implementation of IMCA was consequently stopped. Sources: [www.nidv.cz](http://www.nidv.cz) and [www.projektsypo.cz](http://www.projektsypo.cz)

<sup>(34)</sup> Including representatives of the Czech School Inspectorate, the National Institute for Education, higher education institutions, the Association of School Directors, and representatives of regions.

<sup>(35)</sup> Methodical cabinets are platforms where teachers can exchange schooling experiences. Based on the areas of the framework educational programmes, a total of 12 methodical cabinets will be established. In the first phase of the project (the first two years), three methodical cabinets will be piloted (Czech language and literature, mathematics and its applications, and informatics and ICT). Piloting will help verify how the concept can be beneficial for practice; whether it will bring the desired effects in terms of career development; and whether it is financially sustainable.

regional and selected regional level, as well as a Permanent Conference of Directors <sup>(36)</sup>.

Linked to this is a change in the education funding system approved by Parliament in 2017 and planned to come into force in January 2020. The current per capita funding, built on regional and national budgets, does not take into account seniority or expertise. Among other issues, the new approach is to take account of these parameters and the planned career scheme: the ministry will allocate funding from the national budget, based on information from schools on the number of teaching staff, salary categories/scales and related supplements. It will apply to schools governed by regions and municipalities, including public VET schools (ReferNet Czechia (2017)). An ESF jointly funded pilot was carried out in 2016-17 to test parameters and processes.

### **5.3.2. Internships and tandem teaching 2015-19**

In December 2016 the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports announced calls for ESF jointly funded project proposals. Topics included support to cooperation between schools and companies, in particular through internships of pedagogical staff in companies (in the range of 60 hours), and tandem teaching (expert from company together with the teacher of vocational subject). A second round of calls was announced by the Ministry of Education in December 2018.

The Digital jobs coalition (Section 4.4.2.2.) is also focused on promoting teacher training and pedagogical research on the use of digital technologies in teaching. The education ministry has announced ESF projects, with the participation of faculties of pedagogy, to develop teaching materials with a view to the updating of curricula. In 2017, the ministry also provided support to tertiary professional schools that will be engaged in the development of digital teaching material for foreign languages and vocational subjects and the creation of massive open online courses (MOOC) (ReferNet Czechia, 2018).

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<sup>(36)</sup> The Permanent Conference of Directors was established in February 2019. It is a committee, divided at the national level into sections by type of school: kindergartens, basic schools, secondary schools and basic art schools. Its members are school directors, deputy directors and representatives of the Ministry of Education, higher education institutions and universities, school founders and professional associations. The role of the Conference is to participate in the creation of a comprehensive model for the professional development of school management; set priorities for the professional development of school management; and identify appropriate forms of support by priority.

#### 5.4. CPD for trainers in enterprises 2015-19

For the 2016-20 period, the country's priority in this area, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, is to implement the recommendations for the CPD of in-company trainers (instructors of practical training) in enterprises involved in mandatory practical training of VET school pupils/learners.

Recommendations issued by the education ministry in 2016 on agreements between VET schools and enterprises for in-company training of learners stipulate that requirements about professional qualification and necessary experience are mandatory features of these contracts. Qualification requirements are, for instance, completed VET in the relevant field, or a vocational qualification included in the national qualifications register, or completed training courses. Ensuring staff training in pedagogy, psychology and safety at work is one of the schools' contractual obligations. A 40-hour training course for in-company trainers was designed and piloted in 2015 within the ESF-supported *Pospolu* project (see Section 1 above). It focused on: familiarising them with the relevant VET programmes; pedagogy and teaching methods; psychology and learner guidance; training organisation and work with curricula; health and safety requirements during workplace training; and legislation/regulations. This course is still available on demand, but is based on the idea of training the trainer: teachers from VET schools are trained to become trainers (course lecturers) to educate trainers from cooperating companies respecting the specific requirements of the sector or area. This would give those who intend to become, or already work as, trainers the opportunity to have their competences recognised by taking an exam, in line with the 2006 legislation on validation and recognition of continuing training outcomes. In April 2017, the qualification designed with the *Pospolu* project was approved under the title Instructor of practical training at a work-site; it was referenced to the EQF level 5.

An online platform <sup>(37)</sup> for CVET professionals has been put in place. It addresses staff from public administration, employment services as well as other educators, employers and NGOs. It provides an overview of CVET offers, relevant legislation, main actors and instruments, as well as statistical data and analyses. It promotes networking, sharing know-how and cooperation among professionals. Completed at the end of 2015, it is the result of a project (*Kooperace*) developed by the Further Education Fund under the auspices of the labour ministry (ReferNet Czechia, 2016). By 2019, the portal was in use as an information providing platform for experts in the field of CVET.

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<sup>(37)</sup> <http://www.koopolis.cz>



# Statistical overview: 2019 update

Table 3 updates the figures that were provided in Table 1. Although Table 1 may contain data for 2015, these are not systematically repeated here. In some cases, not repeating is due to breaks in time series, which prevent comparability. In other cases, values differ due to methodological changes.

Table 3. **Score on VET indicators in Czechia and in the EU: 2015, last available year and recent change**

Indicator label	2015				Last available year				Recent change			
	CZ	f	EU	f	Yr	CZ	f	EU	f	Range	CZ	EU
<b>Access, attractiveness and flexibility</b>												
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	73.2		47.3	ce	'17	72.4		47.8	ce	'15-'17	-0.8	0.5
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	8.8		28.3	ce	'17		z	27.9	ce	'15-'17		-0.5
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET	67.6		68.1	ce	'17	68.1		68.6	ce	'15-'17	0.5	0.4
Workers participating in CVT courses (%)	83.7	b	40.8		'15	83.7	b	40.8				
Workers participating in on-the-job training (%)	35		34		'15	35		34				
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	8.5		10.7		'18	8.5		11.1		'15-'18		0.4
Enterprises providing training (%)	90.6		72.6		'15	90.6		72.6				
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	67.6		42	ce	'17	66.7		42.7	ce	'15-'17	-0.8	0.7
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	80.9	b	30		'15	80.9	b	30				
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)	38.8		33		'18	38.5		33		'15-'18	-0.3	0
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	4.9		6.9		'18	5.2		7.3		'15-'18	0.3	0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)	1.9		4.3		'18	2.4		4.3		'15-'18	0.5	0
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	3.8		9.5		'18	5.1		10.7		'15-'18	1.3	1.2
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)					'16	5.6		11.4				
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)					'16	85.6		79.4				

Indicator label	2015				Last available year				Recent change			
	CZ	f	EU	f	Yr	CZ	f	EU	f	Range	CZ	EU
<b>Skill development and labour market relevance</b>												
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)	0.7		0.5	ce	'16			0.5	ce	'15-'16		0
IVET public expenditure per student (1000 PPS units)	5.9		7.1	ce	'16			7.4	ce	'15-'16		0.3
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.7		0.9		'15	0.7	d	0.9				
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET	1.3		1	ce	'17	1.3		1	ce	'15-'17		0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	35.7		29.2	ce	'17	37.7		29.1	ce	'15-'17	2.1	0
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates	0.7				'17	0.8		14.3	b ce	'15-'17	0.1	
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)					'16	56.5		37.7				
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds)	81.2		77.2		'18	83.5		80.5		'15-'18	2.3	3.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)	5.4		5.4		'18	1.1		6.6		'15-'18	-4.3	1.2
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)	42.5		23.7		'18	26.8		23.3		'15-'18	-16	-0.4
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)	85.5		83.7		'15	85.5		83.7				
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	58		57		'15	58		57				
<b>Overall transitions and labour market trends</b>												
Early leavers from education and training (%)	6.2		11		'18	6.2		10.6		'15-'18	0	-0.4
30-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	30.1		38.7		'18	33.7		40.7		'15-'18	3.6	2
NEET rate for 18-24 year-olds (%)	9.7		15.8		'18	7.6		13.7		'15-'18	-2.1	-2.1
Unemployment rate for 20-34 year-olds (%)	7.2		12.9		'18	3.3		9.4		'15-'18	-3.9	-3.5
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)	82		75.9		'18	89.6		80.6		'15-'18	7.6	4.7
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	6.8		23.5		'18	6.1		21.9		'15-'18	-0.7	-1.6
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds (%)	74.8		70		'18	79.9		73.1		'15-'18	5.1	3.1
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)	40.2		52.6		'18	50.9		56.1		'15-'18	10.7	3.5
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2030 (% of total)					'18	96.2	D	85.8	D			

EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified.  
(D) Forecast made in 2018.  
(ce) Cedefop estimate based on available country data  
(b) Eurostat: 'break in time series'.

(u) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.  
(z) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.  
(e) Eurostat: 'estimated'.  
(d) Eurostat: 'definition differs'.

Source: Cedefop, 2020.

In 2017, 72.4% of all upper secondary students in Czechia were enrolled in IVET. This percentage is 24.6 points above the EU average. It appears, however, that the percentage of upper secondary students in IVET is lower by 0.8 points compared to the situation in the country in 2015.

In 2018, 8.5% of adults participated in lifelong learning activities, the same percentage as in 2015. The EU average is 11.1%.

In 2018, the employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 years old) was 83.5%. It appears that the employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 years old) is higher by 2.3 points compared to the situation in the country in 2015. The EU average is 80.5%.

# Conclusion

Since 2015, Czechia has taken strong initiatives to promote work-based VET through streamlining and strengthening the relationships between VET institutions and employers. Measures have been taken to enhance quality assurance mechanisms and the information system to guide the development of initial and continuing VET. Access for all to VET and qualifications has been ensured through further opening up to special educational needs students, modularisation and increased permeability, reinforcing guidance, and providing groups in need with training opportunities. Initiatives have also been taken to support further developments of key competences. Measures have been adopted and are being implemented to (re)organise and reinforce the initial training of VET school teachers, and the continuing professional development of teachers and in-company trainers.

The main changes in 2017 had taken place in MTDs 1, 2 and 4. In the area of work-based learning, a memorandum on piloting dual training as of September 2018 was signed in October 2017 <sup>(38)</sup>. On quality assurance, an approach was designed for the revision of VET upper secondary national curriculum and school programmes until 2020 <sup>(39)</sup>. A new initiative targeted at improving the quality of VET through modernising initial VET was also launched on 1 May 2017. It focuses on supporting students' key competences for employability, lifelong learning, linking IVET to CVET, and cooperation with employers <sup>(40)</sup>. Regarding key competences, a new project (DigiKatalog) was launched in October 2017 to create an online tool (Smart online system, SOS) that will enable the assessment of users' transferable digital skills and guide them to further training <sup>(41)</sup>.

Compared to 2015-17, the main changes in 2018 have taken place in MTD 5. A new project (SYPO) has been launched to support the professional development of teachers and school directors (Section 5.3.1).

The actions carried out show that the main lines of the Riga conclusions and the country's policy priorities for the 2016-20 period are being addressed. Yet, information currently available to Cedefop suggests that some issues could deserve further consideration in future: making more systematic the use of EQAVET indicators to monitor VET developments; finalising the construction of a comprehensive national qualifications framework; and structuring the access to the role of in-company trainer.

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<sup>(38)</sup> See Section 1.3.1.

<sup>(39)</sup> See Section 2.2.

<sup>(40)</sup> See Section 2.2.

<sup>(41)</sup> See Section 4.4.2.1.

# Acronyms

APE	Active Policy for Employment
ACVT	Advisory Committee for Vocational Training
CDP	continuing professional development
(CSI)	Czech School Inspectorate
CVET	continuing vocational education and training
DGVTs	Directors General for Vocational Training
ECVET	European credit system for vocational education and training
EAFA	European Alliance for Apprenticeships.
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
EQF	European qualifications framework
GE	general education
IVET	initial vocation education and training
MOOC	massive open online courses
MTD	medium term delivery
NRP	national representation point
PES	public employment service
QANRP	Quality assurance national reference point
SDG	Digital literacy strategy
SDV	Strategy for digital education
STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics
ŠVP	school educational programmes
UOE	UNESCO, OECD and Eurostat
VET	vocational education and training
VNFIL	validation of non-formal and informal learning

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