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WORK PROGRAMME

2005 Progress Report

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National Contact Persons:

Ms Jarmila Kalousková (jarmila.kalouskova@msmt.cz)

Mr Jan Koucký (jan.koucky@pedf.cuni.cz)

Commission Contact Persons:

Ms Luce Pépin (Luce.Pepin@cec.eu.int)

Mr Sebastian Volkers (Sebastian.Volkers@cec.eu.int)

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AND SPORTS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

National Report on Implementation of the Joint European Programme

EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2010

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Introduction

The Czech Republic's National Report on implementation of the joint European programme "Education and Training 2010" was developed as agreed by education ministers of the European Union member states in 2004. The ministers have committed themselves to presenting biennial national reports as background material for the development of joint interim reports (2006, 2008, 2010). The reports shall assess the development of, and progress in, education and training in the European Union and the implementation of the joint European programme "Education and Training 2010".

The Czech national report has been developed in line with the recommendations of the European Commission of 30 November 2004 and the conclusions of the meeting of co-ordinators of national reports with representatives of the European Commission on 2 March 2005. In essence, the proposed structure has been respected. There are chapters as recommended, and the detailed breakdown into subject areas and specific issues has also been observed. However, the report contains some additional sections explaining Czech specificities in relation to certain issues. Some additional information, graphs and tables presented in annexes are important particularly for a non-Czech reader, as they complement the text of the report and facilitate comprehension.

A draft of the CR's national report was commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports from the Centre of Education Policy of the Pedagogical Faculty of Charles University in Prague, which co-operated with the relevant ministerial departments and organisations directly governed by the Ministry (primarily NÚOV – National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education, and CSVŠ – Centre for Higher Education Studies). The draft was widely discussed, commented upon and consulted upon with a number of specialist organisations and other partners. It was approved at a meeting of senior staff of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports on 26 April 2005.

1 Czech Education Policy and the Lisbon Strategy

1.1 The development of Czech education policy

The principal document in terms of the development of Czech education policy is the *National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic* (the so-called White Paper) adopted by the government in February 2001. It was commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) and developed using a number of preparatory studies. They included the 1996 OECD report on the state of Czech education and a study entitled *Czech Education and Europe – Strategy for Human Resources Development before the CR's Accession to the EU* (the so-called Green Paper) of 1998 (both studies were supported from the Phare programme). The work on the White Paper was accompanied by a broadly conceived professional and public debate project entitled "Challenge for Ten Million". The National Programme set out strategic objectives of Czech education policy for a period of 5-10 years, as well as specific priority actions. It covered all areas and sectors of the education system – not only schooling (from primary to upper secondary), but also tertiary and adult education. It formulated the following six major strategic aims:

- *Implementation of lifelong learning for all*
- *Adjustment of educational programmes to the needs of a knowledge society*

- *Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of education*
- *Support for internal transformation and openness of educational institutions*
- *Transformation of the role and career perspectives of pedagogical and academic staff*
- *Transition from centralised governance to responsible participation in decision-making*

(The National Programme is available at www.msmt.cz both in Czech and English).

The National Programme is gradually being implemented. In the immediate future it is therefore necessary to concentrate on those key measures where financial, human and material resources are accessible. So-called long-term development plans play an important role in this respect. They are prepared separately for higher education institutions (Long-Term Plan for Educational, Research, Development, Artistic and Other Creative Activities for Higher Education Institutions – DZ VŠ¹), and for schools at lower levels from kindergartens to other tertiary education providers (Long-Term Plan for Education and the Development of the Education System). They constitute a mechanism the main objective of which is to ensure implementation of national education policy under the conditions set by the recent de-centralisation of public administration in the Czech Republic (the establishment of 14 self-administering regions), ensuring extensive autonomy on the part of educational institutions at all levels.

The Long-Term Plan for Education and the Development of the Education System is developed at two levels. At national level (the Czech acronym is DZ ČR) it is prepared by the MoEYS in co-operation with regions and social partners and presented to the government for approval (the government puts it forward to both chambers of Parliament to discuss). The following year regions prepare their own plans (DZ krajů²) and discuss them with the MoEYS. In line with the new schools law of 2004 this process takes place every two years (see Chapter 2).

This procedure combines long-standing continuity of efforts with the opportunity of responding to changed conditions (mainly availability of resources) and results achieved. In this way a limited number of priorities are highlighted as the subject of the main implementation efforts. For the immediate period specific feasible actions are set out, and an appropriate outline is drawn for the more distant future. The objective is coherence and links between individual measures as well as between the central and regional level.

The National Programme was one of the points of departure in the drafting of new laws – the schools law (no. 561/2004 on pre-school basic, secondary, higher professional and other education), and the law on pedagogical staff (no. 563/2004) – which came into effect on 1.1. 2005. Following from these the relevant decrees and by-laws were prepared and approved. As regards continuing education, the new schools law only addresses some partial issues and therefore a law on continuing education is under development. It will also cover the relationship between initial and continuing education.

¹ Czech acronym

² Long-term plan of regions

As the law on higher education institutions (no. 111/1998) stipulates, DZ VŠ is also developed by the MoEYS. The second level in this case is the long-term plans of individual HE institutions. DZ VŠ may be viewed as the main instrument for the governance of HE institutions and implementation of state policy. The obligation on the part of the MoEYS to discuss the plans of HE institutions with their senior officials should facilitate mutual understanding, as the Ministry may explain the state's expectations from HE institutions which, in turn, may describe their problems and specific goals. The plans are public documents and they are discussed by boards of trustees of HE institutions. The opportunity of making suggestions as regards further activities of HE Institutions contributes to the opening up of the system and individual institutions and facilitates wider co-operation among all parties involved. Harmonisation of the state's plans and those of HE institutions is, according to the law, the decisive criterion for determining the level of state subsidies to individual institutions – i.e. an indirect governance instrument.

One important document following from the National Programme (White Paper) and covering tertiary education as a whole was the Strategy for the Development of Tertiary Education 2000-2005. Information about the new DZ VŠ which is being developed for the 2006-2010 period and about another principal document entitled *An Outline of Reform of Higher Education Institutions* is presented in Chapter 4.

Policy papers of the MoEYS are prepared in co-operation with other ministries and take account of national employment policy, economic growth strategy and human resources development strategy (see part 3). Implementation of reforms will be gradual, depending on the availability of financial resources. The professional public (particularly so-called “pedagogical initiatives”) is largely involved in the development of national education policy. Major issues are discussed with social partners as part of tripartite negotiations (i.e. in the Council for Economic and Social Accord which has a special commission for education). Important background data for the making of education policy is provided by the outcomes of various analyses, research studies and so-called quick surveys into topical issues. The MoEYS issues annual reports where the relevant data sources are mentioned. One important source of data is the Institute for Information on Education (www.uiv.cz).

Assistance provided as part of the Tempus and Phare programmes has also played a positive role in the formulation of Czech education policy. It is necessary to mention the programme *Renewal of Czech Education* implemented in 1992-1996 and *Vocational Education and Training Reform* implemented in 1994-1997 (see the final publication *From Pilot Schools to Reform Strategy, Prague 1997*), and to stress the benefits of Czech participation in European mobility programmes (Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth). At present the objectives for further development of education systems adopted as part of the Lisbon strategy and the Bologna and Copenhagen processes are taken account of in the development of long-term plans.

Co-operation with the OECD also constituted an important contribution. As part of this co-operation two OECD reports on Czech (Czechoslovak) education were developed: the 1992 Report on Higher Education in the CSFR and the 1996 Report on Czech Education (see the final publication *Reviews of National Policies for Education: Czech Republic. OECD, 1996*). In addition to this, the Czech Republic was involved in a number of so-called thematic studies (e.g. concerning the transfer from school to employment, the funding of lifelong learning). Background material is being developed at the moment for

a study on tertiary education. The importance of co-operation with the OECD also lies in participation in the development of the system of INES indicators, and the publication of regular overviews entitled *Education at a Glance*. Participation in the OECD international comparative studies such as SIALS and PISA is also important. The Czech Republic has also taken part in various IEA studies.

(We consider international activities of this kind to be important for the development and adjustment of national education policies. However, it is necessary that there is thorough preparatory work by both parties and that they should become part of political processes in the given country.)

1.2 Links to the priorities of the Education and Training 2010 programme

The working programme Education and Training 2010 was one of the background materials used in the development of the updated DZ ČR (approved by the Czech government in March 2005). In its preamble the new long-term plan states that „*accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union means not only a commitment to the pursuit of the objective of long-term development of the European Union, but also a requirement to change the education system as one of the principal preconditions for economic and social development. At the same time, this has enhanced the actual funding opportunities*”. The long-term plan summarises the main objectives of Education and Training 2010, and states that „*the objectives of the European Union related to education and training and the implementation of lifelong learning are fully compatible with the objectives of Czech education policy and the development to date. In this respect they do not place new or different demands and are derived from global economic, social and political development. Every individual must face them in order to exist as a partner equal to others*”. However, the long-term plan takes account of the fact that “*(the objectives) will place fairly significant demands on our capacity to make use of new opportunities*” in terms of developing sufficient absorption capacity for effective presentation and implementation of projects, co-operation with foreign partners, making use of mobility opportunities, etc.

2 Higher and More Efficient Investment: Focusing Reforms on Key Areas

2.1 Priority related to reforms and investment

2.1.1 Current top priorities for streamlining and reforming the education system

The priorities for the development of the education system were set out in the first DZ ČR prepared in 2002, which launched the implementation of the National Programme (White Paper). It pursued changes at several levels: those related to the objectives and content of education as a basis for lifelong learning; further expansion of educational opportunities and access to education – i.e. meeting the educational needs of the entire population; and new relationships within schools and between various elements and levels of the education system.

The new, updated version of DZ ČR was approved by the government in March 2005. The key priorities, which are essentially the same as those set out in the previous version of the long-term plan, include: enhancing and streamlining education (curricular reform); quality assurance, monitoring and assessing educational outcomes; providing for equal opportunities in education; the development of an integrated counselling system in schools; increasing the professional standards and social status of teachers; support for

continuing education. Again, the priorities are derived from the National Programme (White Paper) and are conceived as a follow-up to the existing activities and initiatives. The difference is the degree of their advancement. In some cases they are at an initial stage of implementation, in other cases the activities are being intensified and promoted to constitute a key priority. These top priorities are set out in various national and systemic ESF projects which fall within the remit of the MoEYS (see 2.1.3 and Annex 3).

Enhancing and streamlining education (curricular reform) follows several objectives. Educational objectives have been formulated anew and the content of education responds flexibly to specific needs of students, society and the labour market. The building of a school ethos closely linked to the life of local communities is supported. New curricular concepts are pursued with a shift from memorising the subject matter to the acquisition of key competencies as a balanced body of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values important for the personal development of each member of society. The reform is also focused on some specific areas where the CR lags behind European and other countries in terms of employability of graduates and economic competitiveness. These include, above all, language learning and information literacy. Moreover, in order to promote equal educational opportunities it is necessary to enhance the quality of teaching and learning processes in the 2nd cycle of basic school (i.e. lower secondary education) so as to gradually achieve the standards of the lower years of selective *gymnázia*.

As part of curricular reform a two-level development of curricula has been introduced. Nationally binding “framework curricula” for specific levels and branches of education only set out targeted personal qualities of the student (educational objectives and outcomes, key, vocational and civic competencies), and subject areas. Schools themselves decide on the specific nature of education by means of developing “school-based curricula”. Their own curricula will help shape the school’s profile, take account of the needs of students and regional labour markets. The new curricular model has been introduced to kindergartens and it is being implemented in basic schools. In years to come it will be introduced to all types of secondary school (i.e. not higher professional schools).

Quality assurance, monitoring and assessing educational outcomes. Another priority closely related to curricular reform which offsets the large degree of school autonomy is the building of a system of evaluation and monitoring. This requirement is stipulated in the new schools law. A comprehensive evaluation system covers three levels: assessment and examination at student level (evaluation at key points on the educational pathway, completion of secondary studies, employment of graduates); evaluation at school level (self-evaluation has been introduced and linked to external evaluation by the Czech School Inspectorate – this expands the provision of objective evaluation tools); evaluation of the education system as a whole and its components (e.g. types of school or regions) and international comparison. Various forms of evaluation will be inter-related and new criteria and instruments will be added. Reform of the *maturita* examination has been in progress since 1999. It introduces a so-called common part which is administered centrally and ensures full comparability. It will be launched nationwide in 2008, but in recent years over one half of schools have been involved in a preparatory scheme entitled “An Attempt at *Maturita*” (www.ceremat.cz). Reform of final examinations in vocational programmes without *maturita* has also been launched. This is only a beginning of implementation of this priority: the Ministry approved an overall framework policy based on which two projects have been proposed within the European Social Fund.

Providing for equal opportunities in education. Ensuring equal access to education regardless of the type of disadvantage (e.g. physical, economic, social, cultural, ethnic,

gender-related) is one of the important factors in social cohesion. This also involves prevention of socio-pathological disorders in school and the closely related care for children and young people in their free time – particularly as regards leisure activities in school facilities. There are new approaches to the education of children with exceptional talents. In previous years the number of students integrated into mainstream education increased, and a number of special schools will be transformed into support specialist centres. As for the education of students with socio-cultural disadvantages, special attention was devoted to the Roma population. Preparatory classes for children from disadvantaged socio-cultural backgrounds have been established. Assistants to teachers have also proved helpful as they help prevent problems related to adaptation and communication, as well as other problems experienced by the Roma students, and considerably benefit co-operation between the school and the family. An Outline for a Roma Integration Policy is being developed, setting out the following priorities: to improve social standards, to facilitate the development of the Roma language and cultures, and to build a tolerant and safe environment. The programme for the integration of foreign nationals into the Czech Republic supports projects dealing with multicultural education of children and young people, the teaching of Czech as a foreign language and the education of migrating foreigners. This priority follows from a number of existing activities and initiatives – it interlinks and underlines them as one of the main objectives of the further development of education.

The development of an integrated counselling system in schools covers two areas which have so far operated more or less independently. *Pedagogical-psychological* and *special pedagogical counselling* is designed not only for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with specific learning and behavioural disorders, but recently also for students with exceptional talents, and for the prevention and treatment of socio-pathological disorders, aggressive behaviour in schools, racism and xenophobia. *Career counselling* is becoming an important tool in preventing unemployment in an increasingly tough competitive environment in the labour market. It may also help prevent premature departure from the education system. At the next stage it is important to inter-link these two systems and enlarge them. Counselling centres employing qualified experts (psychologists or special pedagogues) should be set up in schools, and an integrated information system about the employment of graduates should be established to assist schools, their founding bodies and labour offices.

Increasing the professional standards and social status of teachers. As a result of implementation of lifelong learning, increased autonomy of schools and a greater focus on differentiated student needs, the demands placed on teachers and their workload has been increasing. The range of personal qualities, knowledge and skills teachers should have is widening and the requirements for their initial as well as continuing training are growing. There are many problems due to the development in previous decades (remuneration, excessive feminisation, low attractiveness of the profession and the very definition of the role of teacher). The key change has been the adoption of a new law (no. 563/2004) which provides a more precise definition of pedagogical staff, lays down more detailed conditions for the acquisition of professional qualifications for various categories of pedagogical staff, and establishes a system of continuing training linked to a career system which facilitates professional growth at so-called career levels. It is necessary to define basic competencies for the performance of the teaching profession and the ways of acquiring them (the so-called professional standard). Furthermore, the basics of teaching ethics must be formulated and codified. The links between initial training of teachers at HE institutions and practical teaching experience, innovation and research will be supported. Continuing training will focus, above all, on the implementation of curricular reform, the reform of *maturita* and final examination, on a

comprehensive evaluation system, and on enhancing the competencies of teachers in pedagogical-psychological work.

Support for continuing education. In the DZ ČR there are three main areas as regards the development of continuing education: improving the legal framework, developing and introducing a system of financial and non-financial incentives, and establishing mechanisms for the systemic development of adult education. The MoEYS has opened discussion about the principal propositions for a bill on continuing education which had been submitted to the government for discussion. This clears a path to the solution of key problems in continuing education: its links to initial education and the possibility of acquiring education and qualifications outside the traditional schooling system. The propositions envisage the development of a national system of qualifications, implementation of a new mechanism for testing and evaluating of acquired professional competencies, and for the use of the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning. The propositions also envisage a gradual building of necessary support mechanisms (an information system, a counselling system, a system for evaluation of educational outcomes in continuing training courses), and of a funding system (a proposal for setting up a training fund, or tax allowances). Apart from legislative adjustment, there is support for the provision of continuing education by existing schools (additional information – see Chapter 3).

An Outline of Higher Education Reform is a principal document which sets out priorities concerning support for higher education. It envisages increased funding from the state budget and its more efficient allocation. For further detailed information about the Outline and about the DZ VŠ currently under development – see 4.2.

2.1.2 Investment as a key factor in reforms; progress made and difficulties

All the priority areas mentioned above require fairly large investment in development programmes and support systems. However, the possibilities of increased funding are limited as the government seeks to reduce the public finance deficit gradually over the long term. The proportion of national, regional and local expenditure on education in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) has, after a decrease in 2000, been increased. Since 2002 it has been hovering at around 4.8% of GDP. In view of GDP increases this represents a growth in absolute terms which tends to be directed as a priority towards higher education and towards increasing the pay of pedagogical staff.

2.1.3 The role of European funds in support for reforms

In terms of funding certain developmental and innovative tasks set out in the DZ ČR, a considerable role has been increasingly played by the European Social Fund. The priority tasks take the form of projects funded jointly from the state budget and the ESF. There are two types of project. Firstly, implementation of MoEYS's measures is supported by national and systemic projects (i.e. "top-down support"). They include, for example, the introduction of framework curricula, the development and testing of school-based curricula, support for the development of key competencies in teachers, the design of external evaluation instruments and the introduction of self-evaluation, improvement of the conditions for the training of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and ethnic minorities, enhancement of the integrated counselling system, development of networks of innovative schools, the development of a national system of qualifications, and the development of a system for recognition of the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning in schools providing adult education. Secondly, the initiative of schools is supported by grant schemes through which schools may obtain additional funding to expand their activities (i.e. "bottom-up approach"). They include, for example, projects

aimed at developing key competencies, the training of students with special learning needs, improvement of the quality of education and the continuing training of teachers. The implementation of DZ VŠ is funded by grant schemes.

The overall level of financial resources allocated to these projects in 2004-2006 is over 3 billion CZK (around 3% of the annual budgetary chapter 333 of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports).

Other projects (and the relevant ESF resources) are governed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA). They are primarily focused on systemic support for continuing vocational education and the introduction of key systemic mechanisms in this area. The volume of funding for these projects is some 1.4 billion CZK.

Annex 3 contains an overview of projects funded from the European Social Fund in the area of lifelong learning in the period 2004-2006 (both those within the purview of the MoEYS and those administered by the MoLSA and regions).

2.2 Match between joint European objectives and national priorities

2.2.1 Education system reforms

The reforms already implemented (extensive decentralisation in particular) were described in part 1.1. The proposed measures (particularly further extension of school autonomy, support for evaluation, focus on disadvantaged individuals) were described in part 2.1. This points to a considerable level of agreement between the joint European objectives and the Czech Republic's priorities.

2.2.2 Increasing motivation to invest in and improve the effectiveness and attractiveness of the education system

- Proposals have been formulated as part of the development of a new law on continuing education concerning the modification of the existing tax allowance so as to increase motivation to take part in continuing education. In particular, this concerns the removal of continuing training courses from activities that are subject to value added tax, and assistance to socially weaker individuals. There is also a proposal for the establishment of a continuing training fund.
- Some new laws (e.g. the law on pedagogical staff) and measures under preparation (e.g. a comprehensive evaluation system) will no doubt result in increased quality, efficiency and attractiveness of the education system.

2.2.3 Increasing private investment

- There are also proposals to be included in the new law on continuing education aiming to increase the incentives to invest in education, and to change the relevant laws. According to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms basic and secondary education provided by public institutions is free of charge. Tuition fees are only collected by tertiary education providers who do not fall within the higher education sphere, by continuing training providers, and, of course, by private institutions. Proposals to introduce tuition fees in public HE institutions were repeatedly rejected by the government and Parliament (students in HE institutions must pay for their studies if their lengths of studies exceeds the standard length by one year). Public-private partnerships come in when state information policy in education is implemented and in relation to some large investments that are under preparation.

2.3 Monitoring and evaluation of education policy

Firstly, the mechanisms for developing long-term plans (described in Chapter 1) include continuous and systematic evaluation of the plans and results achieved. Secondly, one of the major priorities is to build a comprehensive system for evaluation and monitoring (see 2.1) covering three levels: in addition to student assessment and school evaluation this concerns the evaluation of the education system (as a whole and in terms of its components – specific types of school or specific region). This priority also involves comparison from international and, possibly, national perspectives. International comparative studies of the OECD have played an important role in this respect since the 1990s.

3 Implementation of a Coherent and Comprehensive Lifelong Learning Strategy

3.1 Key measures

3.1.1 The state of preparedness for a coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategy

The joint European programme Education and Training 2010 requires that member states should, in 2006, develop coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategies. Lifelong learning has already been the principal concept penetrating strategic documents of the Ministry (National Programme, DZ ČR 2002, DZ ČR 2005). These documents were designed from the perspective of lifelong learning implementation. The MoEYS also held a number of conferences and discussions on the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, the Czech translation of which it published.

Lifelong learning also formed a basic starting point for several development papers prepared by other ministries. They include the *Strategy for Human Resources Development in the Czech Republic* (2000), which was adopted by the government in 2003 after it had been agreed by the tripartite bodies. Continuing education is reflected in other national policy papers, such as National Employment Action Plans, the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion for 2004-2006 (approved by the government in 2004), the National Programme for Preparations for Population Ageing for 2003 – 2007 (approved by the government in 2002), State Information and Communication Policy - e-Česko 2006 (approved in 2004), National Innovation Strategy (2004), Strategy for Sustainable Development (2004), and Strategy for Regional Development (2002, it is now being drafted for 2007-2013). A number of studies have been carried out with support from the Phare programme (namely AFPA – see the final report *Adult Education Policy and Programmes*, Prague 1994) and as part of the OECD projects (e.g. participation of the Czech Republic in a thematic study on the funding of lifelong learning). Comprehensive information on this topic is available in yearbooks *Human Resources in the Czech Republic* (1999, 2003) in Czech and English versions at www.nvf.cz/observatory/publikace/htm.

Key contacts: www.vlada.cz, www.msmt.cz, www.nuov.cz, www.uiv.cz, www.vup.cz, www.nvf.cz, www.mpsv.cz.

3.1.2 Overall approach

In approaching the strategy for lifelong learning two areas must be taken into account: initial and continuing education and training. Initial education provides a basis for lifelong learning. It should provide the necessary instruments, incite the relevant motivation and offer enough variety of educational opportunity to cover the interests of all students. Putting these requirements into practice is conditional on a number of changes in various areas of the Czech education system (see 3.1.3).

Continuing education constitutes opportunities for those who have left initial education – both in educational institutions (public and private) and in other environments, particularly companies. Continuing education may be targeted towards personal development, citizenship or professional development. Attention is devoted primarily to continuing professional education and not so much to leisure and civic education. Continuing professional education largely takes one of the following three forms: adult education in schools, education of company employees, and retraining of job seekers.

At present the main challenge is to integrate the existing continuing education initiatives and form a comprehensive sector involving other ministries (mainly the MoLSA) and social partners. It is necessary to link initial and continuing education and to provide for the principle condition for lifelong learning implementation: the opportunity to acquire education and a qualification using various pathways throughout one's life. This approach has already found its way into the new schools law (no. 561/2004) which provides some opportunities to achieve a qualification without having to attend the relevant school (secondary or higher professional). The new approach will be fully reflected in the law on continuing education which is in the making. The principal propositions have been submitted to the government, the bill should be completed this year.

3.1.3 Priority reforms

- Laying the foundations for lifelong learning at the lowest possible levels of the education system:

The objectives of initial education include the nurturing of a positive attitude to learning, motivation to learn and mastering lifelong learning instruments – learning to learn and manage one's learning. The existing measures aimed at alleviating social and cultural inequalities are paramount in this respect as regards children from disadvantaged backgrounds. They include support for pre-primary education in the form of free kindergarten attendance one year before compulsory education, support for leisure activities at basic school, and an extended provision of extracurricular activities in specialised leisure facilities. The MoYES, MoLSA and the Ministry of Health are jointly developing a system for early care for children at pre-primary age with socio-cultural disadvantages, which should be designed both for children and their parents.

- Acquisition of key competencies at various level from pre-primary to upper secondary education:

Curricular reform has been launched (see 2.1) and concerns all levels of initial education from pre-school to upper secondary level. One of its objectives is a shift from subject matter memorising to the development of key competencies (such as work with information and information technologies, foreign languages, communication skills).

- Support for innovation in the content, forms and methods of education:

Implementation of curricular reform requires intensive activity and initiative on the part of schools. There will therefore be support programmes (for the development of key competencies, school-based curricula, and the introduction of new forms and methods), as well as development programmes (designed to enlarge co-operation between schools and support their projects). Resources primarily from the European Social Fund will be used.

- Support for the training of teachers for their new role in a knowledge society:

The key aspect of implementation of lifelong learning, curricular reform and more extensive school autonomy is support for continuing training of pedagogical staff. One important motivation instrument in this respect should be the law on pedagogical staff (no. 563/2004) and changes to pay regulations. The career system which is being introduced is based on a greater differentiation of the work of teachers and it supports continuous qualification enhancement. Moreover, changes to the initial training of teachers are being prepared in co-operation with HE institutions. The training of teachers in ICT skills is also important. IT is supported via the State ICT Policy in Education scheme and via the Czech Republic's involvement in the *eLearning Programme*.

- Transferability of the education system:

Facilitating transfer through the education system is primarily about eliminating dead ends, providing for correction of wrong decisions and reducing early selectiveness. The opportunity to achieve the highest levels of education is virtually unlimited: there is universal access to upper secondary education (94% of young people take one of the secondary routes available), and completion of upper secondary programmes (both general and vocational) opens up a path to more advanced education with no limitations in terms of the branch of studies. Those who complete vocational programmes without *maturita* may undergo so-called follow-up programmes to obtain a full upper secondary qualification. On the other hand, some types of school (upper secondary) and tertiary education providers (i.e. higher professional schools and higher education institutions) organise entry examinations, and the number of places in many branches is far lower than the level of demand. One important step towards overcoming barriers between various types and levels of education was the adoption of the new schools law (no. 561/2004). Educational programme, not educational institution, has become the main policy focus of curricular reform. Each institution may provide various types of educational programme. The new schools law also provided the opportunity of undergoing "shortened" studies to obtain a vocational certificate and a full secondary education with *maturita*. Young people and adults who have completed secondary education with *maturita* can, as a result, acquire a second vocational qualification without having to complete the entire programme lasting several years. When admitting applicants school directors may, while observing specific requirements laid down by the schools law, recognise the outcomes of previous learning provided that they are properly documented and no more than 10 years have elapsed since the prior learning was completed. It is also possible to take partial examinations (in individual subjects) and acquire an official level of education without having to study at a secondary or higher professional school (the relevant conditions are stipulated in the schools law).

- Opening up various educational pathways; recognition and certification of non-formal and informal learning:

The new law on continuing education which is under development will provide for the opening of various educational pathways, links between initial and continuing education and recognition of non-formal and informal learning. The starting point in this respect is the National System of Qualifications (prepared with the support of the MoLSA and

social partners including employers). The acquisition of a full qualification (i.e. professional competence to perform an occupation) will still only be possible in the traditional education system. However, by means of recognition of previous work experience it will be possible to acquire partial qualifications (professional competencies to perform various tasks) and based on these the individual can be admitted to take a final examination in the relevant educational institution. The final examination, *maturita* examination or *absolutorium* will be governed by rules stipulated in the schools law. This approach should be piloted as part of projects funded from the European Social Fund. The objective is to develop the relevant scheme and launch a gradual implementation of the system for recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes in line with joint European principles (so far only at the ISCED 3C level). The Czech Republic was involved in the OECD project *The Role of National Qualifications Systems in Support for Lifelong Learning* (www.nuov.cz). One of the systemic projects is concerned with the development of the National Qualifications System.

- Development of counselling systems:

Work is underway concerning both horizontal integration of the counselling systems (those of the MoEYS and MoLSA), and vertical integration (for all stages of lifelong learning). Vocational and career counselling is covered by Information and Counselling Centres at labour offices (within the purview of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs). So-called “balance diagnostics” services, provided by labour offices, are designed to assess the capacities of an individual in order to identify an optimal job. Apart from the unemployed, counselling services may also be made use of by all job seekers and individuals who are not clear about their preferences in terms of employment, business activities or career development. These services are provided for free. In schools career counselling is provided by educational counsellors (teachers with specialised training) and school psychologists who closely co-operate with labour offices. In 2004 senior officials at the MoEYS adopted a draft of a National Policy for the Development of Career Counselling in the CR. The main pillars of this national policy include the development of career counselling at school level, the building of a system for information, educational and methodological support for career services, and the establishment of links between counselling and educational activities in schools (education for career decisions – the subjects Career Choice at basic schools and Introduction to the World of Labour at secondary schools). The systemic ESF project Education-Information-Counselling-Career aims to develop an information system about the situation of graduates in the labour market, and to set up school facilities to provide for implementation of the pillars mentioned above. Apart from career counselling, schools also operate pedagogical-psychological counselling centres. They offer mainly comprehensive diagnostic services to identify developmental learning and behavioural disorders, the level of cognitive capacities, and offer psychological examinations of personality and supporting educational events.

- Partnership and involvement of main players:

The division of responsibilities for the governance and administration of education has resulted in the mechanism for the development of DZ ČR and DZ of regions. This mechanism ensures links and close co-operation between the centre and regions. The main platform for co-operation of partners in business and social issues is provided by the Council for Economic and Social Accord which exists at government level. At this level there is also the Council for Human Resources Development, but some regional councils have already been set up.

One of the means of forming partnerships supporting lifelong learning is projects within the Leonardo da Vinci programme. Some 100 organisations have been involved in the programme every year in recent years.

3.1.4 Use of outcomes of the European working programme (specific objectives, the Copenhagen process)

As we mentioned previously, the objectives of the Lisbon strategy and the Bologna and Copenhagen processes are reflected in the principal strategic documents of the Czech Republic. These include particularly the *National Employment Action Plan, the National Programme for the Development of Education, the Strategy for Human Resources Development in the CR and the long-term plans – DZ ČR and DZ VŠ*.

3.2 Obstacles and the focus of further development

The development of continuing education carries major importance for the Czech economy and society in view of the insufficient level of qualifications particularly at secondary and higher levels (over one half of the Czech labour force has only attained a vocational certificate – i.e. does not have “maturita”). In terms of the profile and structure of the Czech economy – if measured by qualification levels in advanced EU countries – there is a shortage of people with tertiary qualifications amounting to some 400 thousand. Alleviating this deficit by merely waiting for the relevant graduates from initial education in schools would take too long. This is why strategic support for effective continuing education is so important.

Qualifications and professional competencies are not only important at tertiary level, but also at lower levels. They directly affect the innovative potential of the economy and the introduction of new technologies. The low rate of participation in continuing education on the part of the Czech labour force compared to developed countries is another reason why systematic support is a must. While some 6% of the 25-64 population in the CR took part in some form of continuing education (2004), it was twice to three times more in Austria, the Netherlands and Slovenia, and four to five times more in the UK, Finland and Sweden. In the CR, more than in other countries, those with higher qualifications undertake more continuing education compared to those with lower qualifications. In terms of inequalities in access to continuing education depending on the level of educational attainment the CR occupies the worst position in the EU.

Only a negligible proportion of people aged over 35 take part in formal education leading to the acquisition of an official qualification (see Annex 2). It is also true that only 50% of people with *maturita* work for employers who support their continuing education, and that only 50% of employers organise continuing training for their employees who have upper secondary education both with and without *maturita*. The situation is not much better among the unemployed, as the proportion of the unemployed who undergo continuing education is far lower as compared to employed individuals.

This is why further development is focused on both areas of lifelong learning – on systematic development of continuing education and a gradual transformation of initial education – and on mutual links between the two areas. So far there has not been a coherent system which would facilitate the acquisition of education and qualifications in alternative ways (in the traditional schools system and after entering employment – e.g. in companies), and, at the same time, provide for recognition of the outcomes and non-formal and informal learning. The first steps in this direction are contained in the new schools act which covers – of course - only the formal education system. A coherent and

systemic solution to this issue will be provided by the law on continuing education: both areas – initial and continuing education – will be inter-related.

In terms of comparison, continuing education is not so developed as initial education and the population does not view it as a proper alternative educational route. The relevant legal framework is still missing and so are some necessary systemic mechanisms (quality assurance, evaluation and accreditation, information system). Motivation for continuing learning is low, particularly among those groups that need it most, such as people with inappropriate or low qualifications and various disadvantages. Financial incentives for individuals do not exist or are very weak. There are only higher unemployment benefits for participants in retraining, but the difference compared to what non-participating job seekers get is only 10%. Motivation is also low on the part of employers. Companies can include their training costs within their eligible costs, but this does not motivate them sufficiently to spend more on training. Although the data on continuing training in companies is almost comparable to the EU-15, the expenditure of Czech companies on the continuing training of employees (measured as a proportion of total labour costs) is about half that of the EU-15. Specific schemes (e.g. for investors to get subsidies for the training of their staff) exist, but these only concern a limited number of employers.

Not only the demand for but also the supply of continuing education must be stimulated (by financial and non-financial incentives). The supply of training programmes provided by private training organisations is abundant, but the certificates issued are not generally recognised. Training programmes offered by schools (secondary, higher professional and HE institutions) are almost exclusively focused on initial education, normally last several years and fail to meet the diverse spectrum of needs of learners. There is a shortage of short modular programmes which would make it possible to complement and enhance qualifications according to the specific needs and situation of an individual. However, schools (particularly vocational and technical) are beginning to realise that, in view of considerable demographic decline, they must enlarge their provision and design short continuing training courses for adults, and not only provide long programmes for initial learners which are not attractive for adults. Mutual co-operation between secondary and higher professional schools is beneficial in terms of expanding the range of continuing training programmes on offer and developing regional networks (they already exist in some regions and facilitate accessible training opportunities). A systemic ESF project aims to develop such networks in other regions. Pilot testing of a scheme for recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes is also part of the project. It respects common European principles and takes place in about half of the 14 regions of the Czech Republic.

The development of the National Qualifications System constitutes a comprehensive solution that is under preparation. It will build on the so-called “Integrated System of Standard Working Positions” which is operated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and contains information about jobs in the labour market and the related requirements for education and qualifications.

The second major issue is the gradual transformation of initial education. Its main objective is to establish appropriate foundations for lifelong learning. Most changes envisaged constitute a second stage of two long-term processes – decentralisation of the education system and school autonomy, and modernisation of the content and forms of education – both are combined into curricular reform which is already underway. For it to be successful, it must be supported by follow-up changes in evaluation and counselling systems and student support. What it requires most, however, is massive and comprehensive support for schools and teachers concerning the acquisition of

competencies, initiative and creativeness of schools, more thorough understanding of the meaning and focus of school transformation, and the development of a new common school ethos.

4. Reform of Higher (Tertiary) Education

The transformation of Czech higher education after 1989 took place in two stages which correspond to the enactment of new legislation – the laws on higher education institutions of 1990 and 1998. Both laws brought about fundamental changes. The 1990 law restored the traditional legal status of HE institutions (academic freedoms, autonomy and self-administration) and brought scientific research back to this domain (in the totalitarian regime research was largely conducted by the Academy of Sciences and HE institutions performed primarily an educational function). It also opened up room for diversification of studies by introducing short bachelor programmes which had not existed before. According to the law of 1998 HE institutions became public legal entities and the state has transferred to their ownership the property they had been using. Diversification efforts were promoted in two ways: the possibility of establishing private HE institutions and the establishment of a new type of institution – so-called non-university HE institution focusing primarily on bachelor programmes (details on the structure and organisation – see 4.1.1 and 4.1.4). The public university sector includes 24 HE institutions. They were attended by over 270 thousand students in 2003/0 (this figure includes students at two state HE institutions). Private HE institutions began to operate in the CR in 1999. In early 2005 there were 38 of them, but in terms of student numbers they only represent a fraction of the students attending public HE institutions. In 2003/04 they were attended by over 14 thousand students mostly in business disciplines (55%), humanities (18%) and law (10%).

Higher education institutions form a predominating part of the tertiary sector. This sector in the Czech Republic also includes so-called “higher professional schools” which are currently attended by some 10% of the total number of students in tertiary education. The first higher professional schools came into existence in 1996 in line with the schools law. They were set up as independent entities or as part of secondary technical schools. They may be public (their founding body is the relevant regional authority), or private, possibly denominational. Their number is fairly stable and hovers around 168, of which 56 schools are private. In 2003/04 they were attended by 30,600 students. Study programmes provided by higher professional schools are primarily designed to meet labour market requirements and include practical training. They lead to a diploma which is not equal in terms of academic value to a bachelor degree. The objective is to build a transparent, transferable tertiary system which will facilitate, as much as possible, recognition of previous learning in line with the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications of 1997 (see 4.1.6).

4.1 Key measures

4.1.1 European compatibility

The structure and organisation of the system of higher education in the Czech Republic corresponds to the structure that is being introduced in 40 countries, including the member states of the European Union, as part of the building of a European higher education area (the Bologna process) which it is planned to complete by 2010. Czech legislation defines three levels of higher education – bachelor, master and doctoral. The standard length of a bachelor study programme is 3-4 years (180-240 ECTS credits), and

the total number of credits in bachelor and master programmes together is normally 300 ECTS credits. The credit structure and coverage are in line with the recommendations formulated at seminars on the Bologna process (Helsinki 2001 and 2003). Exceptionally, there are traditional “long” master programmes parallel to the structured studies, provided that the Accreditation Commission agrees to this. These concern, above all, medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry and pharmacy (those whose content and standard length of study are, to a large degree, prescribed by European directives). Study programmes in teacher training and law are still being discussed in this respect. Doctoral study programmes have a standard length of three years, and a necessary condition for admission to a doctoral study programme is a master degree.

The law on higher education institutions makes no distinction between “professional” and “academic” programmes (in line with the perception of study programmes in the Bologna process – they should facilitate access to the labour market, but also continuation of studies). Study programmes vary in terms of focus and profile from the rather general to the specialised. Some amount of research, development or other creative activities is part of programmes at all levels (including bachelor). Graduates at any level may enter the labour market or continue studying at a higher level.

The ECTS system (European Credit Transfer System) has been introduced into all public HE institutions. The situation is less favourable at private HE institutions, mainly because they were set up only recently. The diploma supplement is, according to the law on HE institutions, considered to be a study document and from 2005 it will be issued for graduates automatically (in the standard format agreed by UNESCO, Council of Europe and the European Commission). To ensure that the document contributes as much as possible to professional as well as academic recognition in the CR and abroad, it was recommended that HE institutions issue it in a bilingual version.

4.1.2 Better competitiveness and attractiveness

As has been mentioned in Chapter 2, work is underway on the DZ VŠ for 2006-10, the development of which is required by the law. It is based on the principles of the European higher education area (the Bologna process). Its objective is to enhance the competitiveness of the Czech HE system in Europe and in the rest of the world. It is being developed hand in hand with another principal document – *An Outline of Reform of Higher Education in the Czech Republic* which was approved by the government in December 2004 (see 4.2). We expect that the results of the OECD project *Thematic Review of Tertiary Education*, in which the CR has been involved since this year, will provide suggestions for the DZ VŠ and its annual updating, as well as for the implementation of reform. There are several approaches that should increase the system’s attractiveness and competitiveness: new funding rules which will promote motivation on the part of HE institutions, the development of private HE institutions, diversification of educational provision and improvement of the system of internal evaluation.

In 2005 the new schools law came into force which governs, inter alia, higher professional education. The relevant stipulations aim to increase its quality: all study programmes must be accredited by the MoYES (based on agreement of a special Accreditation Commission for higher professional education), while the process of recognition of higher professional education for the purpose of continuing studies at HE institutions is being simplified (i.e. this improves transferability between this and the

higher education part of the tertiary sector). This also aims to increase the attractiveness of higher professional studies.

Recognition of the results of higher professional studies (i.e. largely professionally oriented studies at tertiary level but not part of higher education institutions), for the purpose of admission to bachelor studies with a similar focus, depends on agreement between the two partners – i.e. the HE institution and the higher professional school. Comparison between the two specific programmes on an individual basis is a possibility. (However, as distinct from the existing practices, rather than aiming for equivalence in terms of the study content, the objective is to establish whether there are substantial differences.) In general this problem is not being addressed, but legal regulations do not pose obstacles to this. Problems related to recognition are rooted more in history and somewhat conservative attitudes. However, the level of co-operation between HE institutions and higher professional schools has been expanding.

4.1.3 Support for partnership, excellence and innovations

Czech national research and development policy takes account of the Lisbon process and the needs of a knowledge economy. The principal objectives support the development of partnerships between HE institutions and other organisations involved in research and development and the business sector. Moreover, the aim is to promote the development of regions and facilitate international co-operation, particularly involvement in the research programmes of the European Union. The development of excellence in the sense of its comprehensive and multi-dimensional nature is supported by diversified mechanisms for allocation of public resources for research and development. This particularly concerns institutional financing of research plans and purpose-linked resources for the development of research centres.

Co-operation between higher education institutions and industrial companies and service organisations is the subject of research projects, the results of which are used both by state administration and higher education institutions. At the top ministerial level an advisory body has been set up dealing with the issues of technical higher education and its possible promotion on the part of industrial companies.

4.1.4 Structural changes

Structural changes at the level of the higher education system were made possible by the law on HE institutions of 1998. Differences between HE institutions are derived from the type of programme (bachelor, master, and doctoral) the institution provides. An HE institution of a university type may provide all types of study programme. Non-university HE institutions provide predominantly bachelor study programmes and are not authorised to provide doctoral programmes. Both types of HE institution may be public, private or state (only the University of Defence and the Police Academy are state institutions). Diversification of study programmes and institutions ensures a broad range of programmes on offer and supports the use of various capacities and talents of applicants while maintaining the required quality of outputs – graduates. Moreover, teaching must be linked to research, development and creative activities in line with the focus and level of the relevant programme. Students may either attend classes in the traditional way, or take a distance form of studies. A combination of the two is also a possibility. The introduction of distance studies and ICT into the daily form of studies enhances the instructional process and supports various types of innovation.

The law on higher education institutions of 1998 brought about a major change in the governance of public HE institutions. Apart from traditional governance by self-administering academic bodies (rector, vice-rectors, dean, vice-deans, the academic senate, which is an elected body with a large student representation – one third to one half of the members - and the academic council consisting of internal and external experts, the law introduced an administrative board. The administrative board, which only consists of external experts appointed by the Minister of Education, holds powers particularly as regards the management of property of the HE institution. However, according to the law it is also obliged to comment on policy documents of the institution and initiate innovation and change. The existence of the administrative board contributes to better openness of the HE institution towards the external environment. Serious discussion is underway about the need for professional management of higher education institutions.

4.1.5 Quality assurance and accreditation

The system for quality assurance in the Czech Republic meets the requirements of the Bologna process as formulated in the Berlin Communication of Ministers (September 2003). It covers both internal and external evaluation of quality and accreditation based on previous evaluation. The law obliges each HE institution (public, private, state) to carry out internal evaluation. Its organisation and mechanisms are a full responsibility of the institution and are specified in its internal regulations. The results are published in the relevant annual report.

External evaluation is primarily the responsibility of the Accreditation Commission (AK) which is composed of renowned experts appointed by the government. AK members are independent in their evaluation function. The purpose of external evaluation is two-fold: in the first place evaluation which forms the basis of an expert judgment (AK position) is necessary for accreditation, and in the second place evaluation is carried out in order to “improve” the operations of the HE institution, resulting in recommendations in this respect. Every study programme (delivered either by public, private or state institutions) must be accredited. If it is not, students may not be admitted, lectures delivered, examinations performed and nor may academic degrees be awarded. The Ministry only grants accreditation if the expert assessment of the AK is positive. Accreditation is granted for a temporary period which is a maximum of double the standard length of studies, and in the case of doctoral programmes 10 years at the most. Accreditation is also required for the running of associate professorship and professorship proceedings, and the mechanism is similar. A positive statement of the AK is also required for granting state approval and a licence for the setting up of a private HE institution. Moreover, the AK issues statements on the establishment, closing down and merger of the faculties of public HE institutions, and on the type of HE institution (university/non-university).

The evaluation of overall quality mentioned above which is focused on improvement constitutes one very important task of the AK. Since 1992 it has revolved mainly around the evaluation of faculties providing education in related fields of study. At present the AK evaluates private HE institutions in order to establish whether they meet the conditions based on which state approval was granted to them fairly recently.

Czech higher education institutions also quite frequently undergo international evaluation. In the past the most important and prestigious one was that carried out by the EUA (European Association of Universities). The results of these studies are viewed as

important and useful, but the high price the institution must pay remains a disadvantage and problem.

4.1.6 Meeting the requirements of lifelong learning and non-traditional students

HE institutions provide not only programmes leading to an academic degree, but also courses leading to various certificates – either as part of professional education or as a leisure activity. The law on HE institutions describes them as lifelong learning programmes and they may be provided either for free or for a payment. In line with the objective of building an open and transferable system of tertiary education, the law provides HE institutions with the opportunity of recognising lifelong learning programmes as part of their study programmes leading to academic degrees (up to 60% of credits necessary for due completion of the study programme).

Lifelong learning programmes provide room for distance forms of learning. So far there has not been sufficient co-ordination between HE institutions in this area, and these forms of study are not yet used effectively, nor does supply meet demand. The three-level structure of study programmes which envisages student mobility between bachelor and follow-up master studies will probably, in the near future, require the creation of opportunities for learners to undergo the relevant missing parts of studies in order to enter a follow-up programme. This will challenge HE institutions to innovate lifelong learning courses accordingly.

Lifelong learning also covers various study programmes accredited by bodies other than the MoEYS, for example programmes provided by foreign institutions, national and international professional organisations, etc. The so-called “Third-Age University” (i.e. education of elderly citizens) is also part of lifelong learning. It works very well at most HE institutions.

The idea of the Bologna process pursuing recognition of education acquired outside the formal education system is not yet being applied, although there is no obstacle in this respect in terms of binding legal regulations. Even the practical implementation of the Lisbon Convention on Recognition, which rather than strict equivalence of study programmes requires assessment of possible differences, remains a problem. Gradual elimination of these setbacks is being pursued through all the activities within the Bologna process, as well as by means of expanding international co-operation in education.

At national level lifelong learning, its co-ordination and the use of new methods of instruction, as well as support for better transferability of the tertiary system and recognition of credits acquired at higher professional schools – is all part of DZ VŠ priorities to which financial resources for so-called development programmes are linked. Lifelong learning programmes are also co-ordinated and funded at national level by the MoLSA.

4.1.7 Co-operation with companies and regional functions

The importance of co-operation between HE institutions and the employers of their graduates is highlighted by both parties involved (also see 4.1.3). In reality there are large differences in the forms of co-operation, its content, frequency and applicable outcomes. They concern both HE institutions and employers, and primarily students and graduates (i.e. in terms of their qualifications and employability).

The standing advisory team of the MoEYS concerned with the development of higher technical studies and co-operation between industry and HE institutions, which was set

up in October 2004 (also see 4.1.3), has noted the activities of several major business organisations. It is expected that these activities will largely contribute to the overall development of co-operation between higher technical studies and industry, which will include the formation of a foundation that the business entities involved should support. Co-operation at the top level should complement and boost existing co-operation at lower levels (HE institutions, faculties, departments, institutes). It is necessary to expand these activities to cover other disciplines including humanities in terms of co-operation with all business and public organisations which are major contributors to the development of innovation and competitiveness.

The key problems to be solved in order to develop co-operation between HE institutions and industrial companies include: indirect support for research and development (i.e. tax deductions, etc.), support for innovation and transfer of technologies where the key problem is slow access to financial resources available within public-private partnership projects, insufficient infrastructure for small and medium-sized companies, low accessibility/limited volume of specialist data, and the still insufficient level of co-operation of institutions in R&D supported from public resources.

4.2 Focus of further development and obstacles

In late 2004 the government approved an important document entitled *An Outline of Reform of Higher Education*, which should be finalised by the end of June this year. The reform is primarily based on a change in the mechanism for allocation of resources from the central budget. Firstly, it will take more account of learning outcomes and *formula funding* (per capita funding) will rest not only on the number of students, but also on the number of graduates. Secondly, formula funding will be complemented by contracted funding which will facilitate long-term development of HE institutions (in line with the European Commission's document *The Role of the Universities in the Europe of Knowledge*).

The main objective of the reform is to motivate HE institutions to develop their strength to achieve excellence and to alleviate their weaknesses, improve the quality of education, research and development, and to enhance the employability of graduates. Moreover, the tertiary sector should open up to a larger number of students and support their mobility – at national and international levels. The R&D funding mechanisms will still be based on project quality evaluation and improved using the experience gained. Planning the use of resources for longer periods (5 years and more) will be pursued in relation to all components of funding in order to facilitate medium-term planning and efficient use of the resources allocated.

At the same time (as mentioned in 4.1.2) a DZ VŠ is being drafted for 2006-2010 which respects all major documents of the European Union and builds on the Bologna process. It also takes account of the proposed reform of higher education in the Czech Republic and the objectives, tasks and instruments of the economic growth strategy. The proposed priorities which should enhance the competitiveness of HE institutions concern three interlinked areas – internationalisation, quality (excellence) of academic activities, and quality and ethos of academic life.

5. Higher Quality and Attractiveness of Vocational Education and Training

Vocational education and training (VET) in the CR enjoys a long tradition of over a hundred years. Some 82% of the population undergo VET at upper secondary level. It provides not only a vocational qualification, but also a certain level of general education, and enables access to tertiary education with no formal obstacles. Traditionally there were three types of school: *gymnázia* providing general education, completed by *maturita* and preparing for tertiary education; secondary technical schools also completed by *maturita* but preparing mainly for middle and higher level qualification jobs, and secondary vocational schools completed by the award of a vocational certificate (and a *maturita* certificate in more demanding programmes as well) preparing for manual occupations. During the last decade various “transfer” types of school and programmes have been set up (i.e. follow-up programmes) which eliminated dead ends and provided for transferability between general and vocational education. A number of VET schools produce graduates at both technical and vocational (with and without *maturita*) levels, and new programmes have come into existence on the border between vocational and general education (*lyceum*).

The level of educational attainment in the Czech Republic has a major impact on the situation of the population in the labour market (measured in terms of employability and wages) – the impact is higher as compared to most members of the European Union (see Annex 2). The rate of unemployment among people with tertiary education is more than twice as low compared to *maturita* certificate holders, and their average wage is 80% higher. Similarly, the unemployment rate among people with *maturita* is 5.3% compared to 9.4% among people with upper secondary qualifications without *maturita*. Their wages are higher by about one third. Naturally, people without secondary education are the worst off. There are also differences in unemployment between various types of secondary school with *maturita*. *Gymnázia* graduates who do not continue their studies at tertiary level face more difficulties in the labour market as compared to graduates of VET programmes with *maturita*. This is understandable as they are not professionally oriented and have not acquired a vocational qualification.

The overall lack of education in the Czech labour market also shows up in terms of indicators related to the transfer of young people from education to economic activity. The rate of unemployment among young people up to 24 is roughly double the overall rate of unemployment, which corresponds to the situation in other developed countries (see Annex 2). However, the employability of graduates in the Czech Republic is affected – more than in other EU countries – by their educational attainment. According to labour force surveys unemployment among young people without secondary education is the highest and hovers at around 50%. It is 20% among people with secondary vocational education without *maturita*, 10% among *maturita* certificate holders, and only some 7-8% among graduates of higher professional schools and some 3-4% among graduates of HE institutions.

5.1 Key measures

5.1.1 Implementation of instruments prepared as part of the Copenhagen process

- The following European instruments of qualifications transparency are being used in the CR: the *European CV*, *Diploma Supplement* issued by HE institutions, and the *European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)*. (The *European CV* and *Diploma Supplement* are among the five documents of the new Europass – see below). The

National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) has been operating in the Czech Republic since 1997. At the end of 2004 the National Europass Centre (NEC) was set up at the National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education. The NEC is responsible for providing information about Europass and promoting its use in the CR, and for administering the relevant documents and co-ordinating all activities that facilitate the educational and occupational mobility of young people in the European labour market. The NEC is also involved in the information activities of the European network of Europass national centres. (Recognition of non-formal education and counselling – see Chapter 3). One important contribution to a better transparency of qualifications (and their comparability) will consist in the changes in the completion of secondary (i.e. upper secondary – ISCED 3A,C) education. A new final examination for ISCED 3C programmes is being developed and a common part of the “maturita” examination (ISCED 3A).

5.1.2 The needs of disadvantaged individuals and those with low qualifications

Students with special learning needs (i.e. with physical, mental or social disabilities) are educated both at lower secondary level (ISCED 2C) and upper secondary level (ISCED 3A or 3C). There are either on the one hand special classrooms or schools for them, or on the other hand, as the new schools law stipulates, their disadvantages must be offset by compensatory aids paid for by the state and the school's founding body. Talented disabled students may acquire tertiary education. The main objective is to achieve the highest possible level of socialisation so that the students may enter the labour market and find a proper position in society in line with their interests and capacities. Great attention is devoted to the development of key competencies taking account of the students' personal qualities (namely communication, personal and interpersonal skills, the capacity to assess one's own strengths and set appropriate goals), and to support of manual skills and the building of appropriate social interactions.

It is possible to change a qualification in retraining courses which, for the unemployed, are paid for by labour offices. A systemic solution opening up alternative pathways to the acquisition, enhancement and change of a qualification will be provided by the new law on continuing education (see Chapter 3). A pilot project is being implemented as part of the Equal programme which is testing the possibility of acquiring a qualification for those workers who do not have one. An Internet database entitled DAT CZ was developed within the remit of the MoLSA, which offers a wide range of continuing vocational education activities. (see www.eu-dat.cz).

5.1.3 The prestige and attractiveness of vocational education and training

The attractiveness of VET mainly consists in the fact that it provides a vocational qualification as well as a level of general education, and provides access to tertiary education with no formal limitations. In traditional secondary technical schools the ratio of vocational to general subjects is roughly one to one, and new programmes with a higher proportion of general education (*lyceum*) emerge. As part of the curricular reforms schools are developing their own curricula and may draw on the specific school environment, social partners and the regions. This provides enough room for increasing the attractiveness of VET both in terms of its design and implementation.

- The situation in tertiary education is less satisfactory. Applicants show a considerably higher demand for humanities and a much lower demand for traditional technical fields – mechanical and electrical engineering, civil engineering. The demanding nature of these studies is the reason why many students drop out and the labour

market shows a shortage of highly qualified specialists. The MoEYS therefore supports training for technical occupations both in terms of resources and in the media.

5.1.4 Links between VET and the labour market

Co-operation between the VET sector and the labour market takes place at two levels. Representatives of employers and, to a certain degree, also employees (trade unions) contribute to the VET content design primarily through their involvement in so-called “branch groups” set up by the MoEYS at the National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education. Via the introduction of school-based curricula the influence of employers at regional and local levels will be significantly increased. This development is also promoted in the new schools act which introduces participation by an expert from industry in final examinations leading to a vocational certificate. Employers are also involved in the development of curricula at higher professional schools and industry representatives are members of the newly set up Accreditation Commission for higher professional education.

- The other level of co-operation between VET and the labour market entails systematic analyses of employers’ requirements and their view of the preparedness of graduates for economic activity. The results are also used in career counselling to inform young people about labour market needs. (However, as the economy is still undergoing transformation and structural changes, the employers’ requirements are not always addressed sufficiently in advance.)

5.1.5 The development of the skills of elderly individuals

As part of the national programme concerning preparations for population ageing the MoEYS intends to introduce a number of measures for the training of elderly citizens. These include support for their access to continuing education regardless of their level of educational attainment, implementation of a relevant information system, the design of specialised training programmes for the elderly and programmes pursuing inter-generational co-operation, and the development of a specialised form of continuing education in co-operation with secondary schools – the so-called Third Age Academy.

5.1.6 Alleviating barriers between vocational and general education; enlarged access to tertiary education

There are no formal barriers between vocational and general education in the Czech Republic. The division into general and vocational educational pathways occurs after completion of compulsory schooling at upper secondary level (ISCED 3). Even some 10 years ago there were still three fairly distinct types of school at this level (general *gymnázia*, secondary technical schools and secondary vocational schools). In the last decade various types of integrated school or programme have been designed. A number of secondary technical schools prepare students for middle-level and manual qualifications, and there is a new type of programme as a cross between a general and a vocational orientation (lyceum). There is a gradual shift towards increasing the proportion of general and theoretical education in various vocational subjects, including the development of transferable, so-called key competencies. (see Annex 2).

There is virtually no return to general education after the completion of secondary vocational education, as graduates of vocational programmes with “maturita” (ISCED 3A) have direct access to tertiary education (all branches). Secondary VET was originally perceived as final (direct entry into employment with middle-level

qualifications was expected). However, over a half of graduates go on to the tertiary sector. Graduates of vocational programmes leading to a vocational certificate (ISCED 3C) can undergo two-year follow-up studies (ISCED 4A), achieve “maturita” and continue studying at tertiary level.

Programmes at tertiary level are not divided into general (academic) and vocational. They are considered to be vocational (both at higher professional schools and HE institutions). However, the programmes also contain general education (particularly foreign languages and ICT).

5.1.7 Learning needs and the changing role of teachers in vocational education and training

Until recently co-operation with higher education institutions which provide training programmes for future teachers of vocational subjects and trainers was incoherent and haphazard. At present a partner network of providers of training programmes for teachers of vocational subjects, trainers and instructors in companies is being developed as an initiative of the MoEYS and with support from CEDEFOP (Teacher Training Net CR). In the CR it was set up in January 2005.

Continuing training programmes for teachers and training may be provided by HE institutions as part of lifelong learning, the National Institute for Continuing Education and other institutions including schools. Companies may also take part in the training (particularly continuing) of teachers and trainers. The training of teachers in companies is sporadic and depends on the initiative of schools and companies and on the quality of the relationship between the school and the prospective employers of its graduates. There are no formal requirements concerning the work of trainers in continuing education, nor is there a systematic approach to the continuing training of trainers and lecturers who then provide continuing training. At present there are two institutions providing training programmes for trainers leading to a certificate – the Association of Adult Education Providers (AIVD) and the Association of Management Trainers and Consultants (ATKM).

- The low attractiveness of the teaching profession and inadequate financial remuneration of teachers has negative effects on the quality of teaching staff and on instruction as such. The relevant programme documents set out objectives towards increasing the professional standards of teachers’ work, enhancing the quality of their initial and continuing training, and redressing teachers’ pay conditions.

– 5.1.8 Qualification requirements and the provision of VET

One of the main problems with VET is the relevance of its content. It turns out that the traditional approach involving a lengthy process of developing and approving curricular documents does not allow for an appropriate response to technological advancement (and the related skills needs). There are currently two policy approaches to VET: firstly, there is the two-level curricular development which makes it possible and even necessary for schools to identify and modify the educational content according to the actual needs of the labour market. Secondly, there is an increased focus on key competencies such as learning to learn, the use of information technologies, and the pursuit of a broader professional profile with emphasis on basic vocational skills. This establishes preconditions for up-to-date on-the-job training.

- Vocational education and training must follow the development of labour market needs and identify the needs for new skills and techniques in a timely manner. In this respect the work of “branch groups” (see above) is important in terms of flexible design of new programmes, and so is the project “ISA – Information System on the Employment of Graduates” (www.nuov.cz), which explores the development of labour force distribution, employers’ needs and technological advancement. In the region Moravskoslezský the RISA project was implemented within the Phare programme (Regional Information System on the Employment of Graduates – www.risa.cz). There is now information on the Internet about the situation on the regional labour market and employment opportunities for graduates.

5.2 Focus of further development and obstacles

Vocational education and training in the CR has been experiencing dramatic development since 1989. Firstly, the earlier rigid system had to be made more flexible as it separated the two types of upper secondary education (the training for technical and manual occupations) from one another and from general education as well. Nowadays the barriers are being cleared, while the provision of various types of educational programme is expanding and facilitates a better response to the needs of individuals and the labour market. The range of branches is also expanding. Other trends include a partial shift from the traditional VET provision in terms of place and level (from upper secondary to tertiary and continuing education). This is a response to the constantly increasing qualification requirements and the need for flexibility (employability) of the labour force, and is also one of the most important demonstrations of lifelong learning implementation.

The only obstacles include the gradual shift in the perception of traditional vocational education on the part of all major players (students, schools, employers), and the demanding nature of new objectives (building a comprehensive sector of continuing education, providing for its links to the traditional education system, motivation and focus of the existing VET providers at secondary level, enlargement of support systems primarily to cover education and career choice, and links between the activities of various ministries and social partners). One important step in the process of interlinking initial and continuing VET will be the introduction of the National Qualifications System which is in the making.

6 The European Dimension of Education and Training

6.1 Support for mobility

The Czech Republic has been successfully involved in educational programmes of the European Union. There has been a growing interest on the part of students and teachers, primarily in the mobility parts of these programmes, and the knowledge and experience gained abroad provide a major contribution to the quality of higher education institutions and their competitiveness. The state supports student and teacher mobility in the form of subsidies from the national budget, and in the form of complementary funding for projects within various sub-programmes.

Mobility in Czech vocational education and training is supported, above all, from Community programmes Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates and Youth. For example in 2003

upper secondary and higher professional schools implemented over 70% of all mobility projects. Some 2,000 people take part in mobility projects within the Leonardo da Vinci programme every year, while the total number is almost 7,000. The Czech National Agency of the programme annually awards a certificate of quality to the best promoters of mobility projects. As part of the Socrates-Erasmus programme, the number of outgoing students and teachers and the number of incoming students has risen almost fourfold in the last six years to nearly 6,000 individuals, primarily thanks to support for the programme from state resources which has increased more than four times.

One important contribution to the development of the educational and occupational mobility of young people in the European Union countries will be the newly set up National Europass Centre (NEC) which, in 2005, became part of the European NEC network (see 5.1.1.).

The main obstacle at present to mobility comes in the form of the various restrictions to the free movement of persons which are planned for a transitional period of seven years after the CR's accession to the European Union (with the exception of Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom). Mobility is also supported through the EURES information network which provides information about labour markets and working conditions. It is accessible from all labour offices, and so is the assistance that is provided by professional counsellors.

Even after the restrictions on free movement are lifted, the occupational mobility of Czech citizens will be limited by the level of their knowledge of foreign languages, particularly English and German, and, to a degree, by their low level of willingness to work abroad. This will be most apparent in workers with lower educational attainment (secondary education).

6.2 Developing the European dimension

Implementation of curricular reform building on framework curricula appears to be the most important measure in terms of developing the European dimension of education. The curricula highlight the European dimension explicitly within their educational objectives and cross-curricular subject areas. Moreover, they underline competencies and values and focus on the personal development of, and an individualised approach to, students. The European dimension is promoted not only by means of the curricula (formal and hidden aspects), but also through school projects involving out-of-classroom and extracurricular activities, co-operation with the local community and participation in projects within European and mobility programmes.

In order to promote the European dimension in the curricula and in teacher training, the MoEYS initiated in 1995 the establishment of the Centre for European Studies at the Pedagogical Faculty of Charles University in Prague. In addition to its own research work and the organisation of educational events, the Centre develops models for the introduction of the European dimension into teacher training and school-based curricula, and is responsible for the continuing training of teachers in European issues. It has also designed a one-semester compulsory-optional course entitled European Studies for Teachers which is part of undergraduate teacher training programmes, and a course in European studies for doctoral students.

One obstacle to further development, and a major setback teachers face in their training, is their lack of knowledge of foreign languages – most teachers cannot communicate in a foreign language, nor can they work with specialist literature. Some senior staff also have weak language skills and a low level of European awareness. In order to support the European dimension it is necessary to promote direct contacts with partner schools

abroad – i.e. direct personal involvement of teachers. Innovative and progressive schools in particular pursue participation in European projects implemented in co-operation with Czech and foreign schools.

Annex 1 Selected data

Basic data of the Czech education system

Diagram of education system of the Czech Republic

Numbers of pupils (students) at various levels of the education system (1995-2005)

The structure of upper secondary education in CR

School expectancy: EU and CR

Unit costs: CR and EU-15

Performance and costs

Society, economy and education

Education level attained by adult population

Satisfaction with education attained

Participation of adults in education and training in EU

Lifelong learning in CR

Performance and the impact of socio-economic background

The impact of family background on access to education

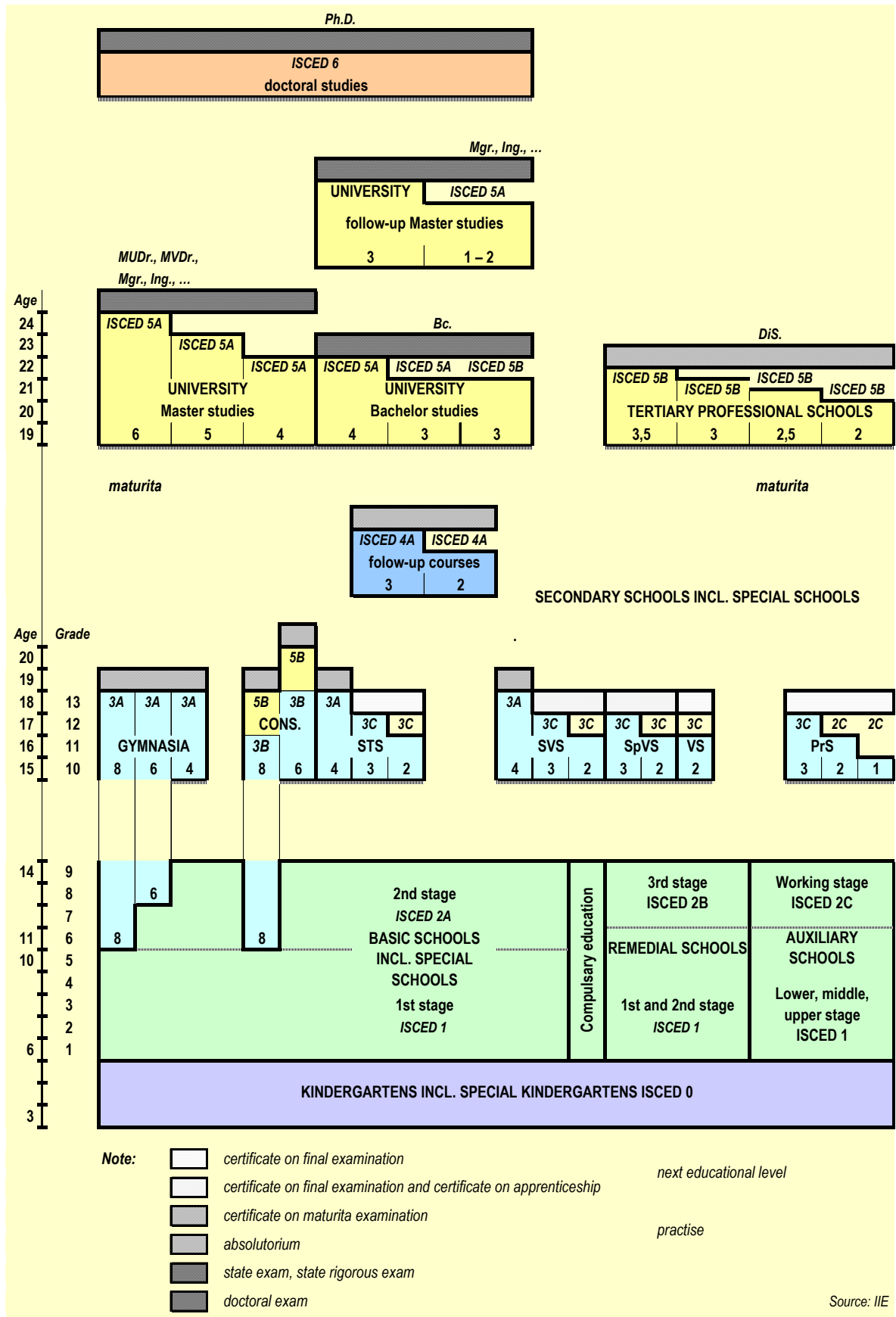
Competitiveness of education

Rate of employment with tertiary education

Education and the labour market

Total unemployment and the unemployment of graduates

Diagram of education system of the Czech Republic



Numbers of pupils (students) at various levels of the education system (1995-2005)

	1995/96	2000/01	2002/03	2004/05
Pre-primary education	333, 383	279, 838	278, 859	280, 487
Basic education	1, 097, 792	1, 144, 324	1, 078, 274	1, 001, 371
of which the lower level of six- and eight-year <i>gymnázia</i>	45, 372	44, 064	41, 841	42, 447
of which special schools	47, 543	43, 777	41, 895	40, 807
Upper secondary education	614, 201	504, 538	517, 864	525, 662
Gymnázia	86, 956	93, 713	100, 228	100, 791
Secondary technical schools	228, 095	208, 098	209, 958	221, 866
Secondary vocational schools	289, 567	190, 186	196, 015	193, 389
Programmes with <i>maturita</i>	329, 576	314, 540	324, 128	337, 696
Without <i>maturita</i>	207, 553	141, 455	136, 017	125, 633
Special secondary schools	18, 518	20, 014	19, 045	17, 426
Follow-up programmes	58, 554	28,529	38, 674	44, 907
Tertiary education	151, 450	228, 423	259, 289	318, 879
Higher professional schools	6, 302	26, 605	27, 584	29, 674
Higher education institutions	145, 148	201, 818	231, 705	289, 205
Bachelor programmes	34, 414	36, 335	61, 843	129, 766
Master programmes	102, 475	149, 253	150, 617	134, 913
Doctoral programmes	8, 259	16, 230	19, 245	24, 526

Pre-primary education:

Kindergartens are designed for children aged 3-6. It is also possible to admit 2-year-old children, and about 20% of children have their compulsory education deferred and stay in kindergarten one more year.

Basic education

Basic education consists of primary and lower secondary education. This corresponds to the division of nine-year basic schooling into the first level (6-11) and second level (11-15). Basic school covers compulsory education (but some 10% of pupils undergo the final four or two years of basic school in eight- or six-year *gymnázia* respectively).

Upper secondary education

There are traditionally three types of school at this level of education depending on the kind of education they provide (although the differences between them are getting smaller, some types merge and “integrated” schools result). General education is provided by *gymnázia* – mostly lasting four years, but one third of them provide eight-year programmes – covering the entire lower secondary education, or six-year bilingual programmes covering two final years of compulsory education. Secondary technical schools provide four-year programmes at middle technical level, and vocational qualifications for manual occupations are provided by secondary vocational schools providing two-to-four-year programmes.

In terms of lifelong learning, a more important distinction is whether upper secondary education leads to a *maturita* examination (providing access to tertiary education), or whether it is

completed by a final vocational examination (a need to undergo a so-called “follow-up” programme making it possible to proceed to tertiary education). *Maturita* programmes are provided not only by *gymnázia* and secondary technical schools, but also by secondary vocational schools in their four-year programmes (the graduates get a *maturita* certificate plus a vocational certificate). Follow-up programmes are also completed by *maturita*.

Tertiary education

Higher professional schools were set up as a new type of tertiary (but not higher) education as early as 1995. (These new institutions also covered the earlier “post-*maturita*” studies abolished in 1998; in 1995/96 they were attended by 22,495 students). The development of student numbers in higher education points to two major trends: an increasingly steeper growth in student numbers and a growing proportion of Bachelor programmes (as a result of the Bologna process pursuing diversification of tertiary education).

The structure of upper secondary education in CR

ISCED level 3, situation as in 2004

	Percentage of students	Percentage of curricular content		
		general	vocational	"optional"
Secondary vocational schools (leading to vocational certificate only)	32	31	65	4
Secondary vocational schools (leading to <i>maturita</i> as well)	7	44	51	5
Secondary technical schools	38	51	39	10
<i>Lycea</i>	3	66	18	16
<i>Gymnázia</i>	20	75	0	25

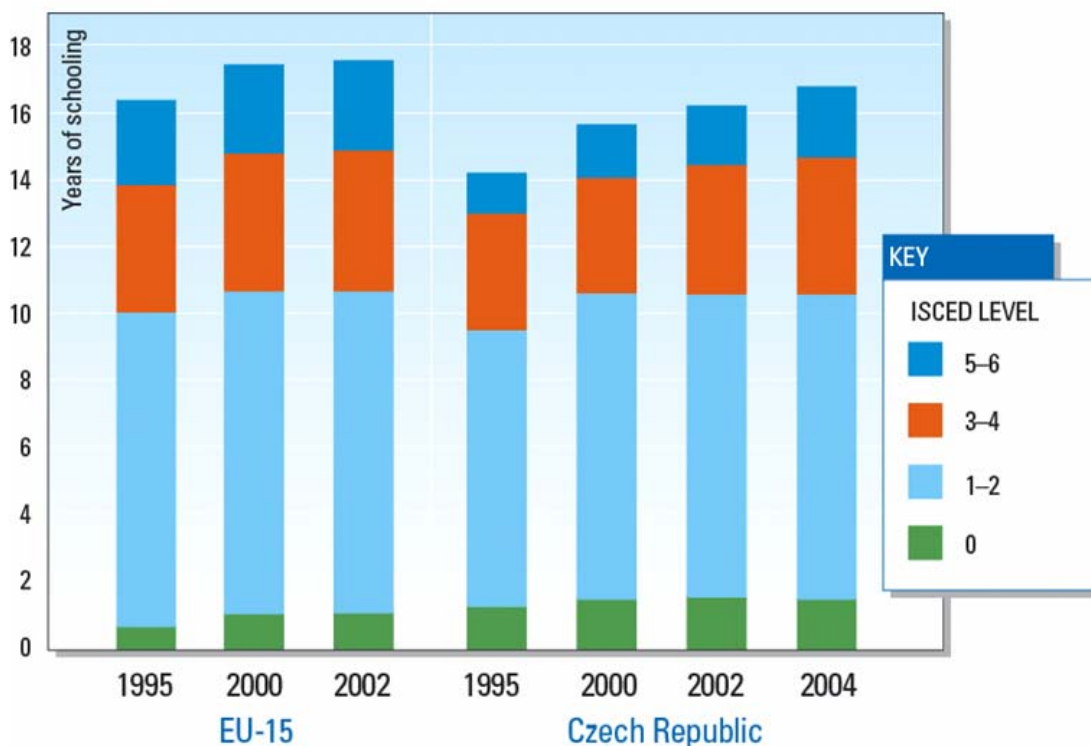
The data show the numbers of students admitted to upper secondary schools (ISCED 3) in 2004/05. Traditional types of upper secondary school are presented: *gymnázia* and (upper) secondary technical schools which both lead to *maturita*, and (upper) secondary vocational schools where a distinction is made between programmes only leading to a vocational qualification (certificate) and those leading to *maturita* as well. A new type of school (with good prospects) is presented separately: the so-called *lyceum* which is a cross between vocational and general education. For each type there is a proportion of students admitted out of the age group, and the shares of general, vocational and "optional" education (at the discretion of the head of the school depending on local needs and circumstances).

The strong position of technical and vocational schools at upper secondary level is one of the specific features of Czech education which sets it apart from education systems in most developed countries. On the other hand, most VET schools (and programmes) show a large proportion of general education and provide access to tertiary education. The table comparing the curricula of various types of school illustrates the differences between them and documents some current trends: *lycea* (as a new type of school) expand the choice of educational pathways while providing a relatively large amount of room for shaping the school's own profile (this is even more so for *gymnázia*).

(Source: National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education, Prague)

School Expectancy: EU and CR

Expected years of schooling for 5-years-olds

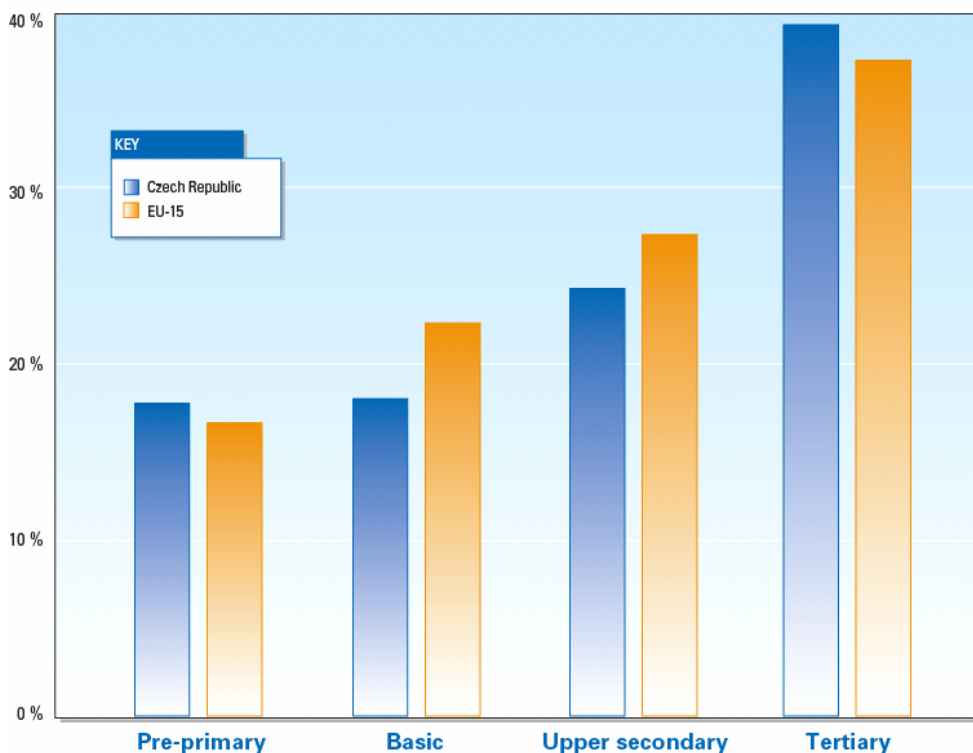


School expectancy is the average duration of formal education in which a five-year old child can expect to enrol over his or her lifetime. It is calculated by adding the net enrolment percentages for each single year of age from the age of five onwards. The graph indicates duration of education at various levels according to the ISCED international classification (0 / pre-primary, 1-2 / primary and lower secondary, 3-4 / upper secondary and post-secondary, 5-6 / tertiary). The EU-15 figures constitute a non-weighted average of the 15 EU countries before enlargement.

School expectancy in the Czech Republic is increasing dramatically. At present this is particularly true of tertiary education where from a less favourable starting position the average duration of tertiary education has increased considerably (the increase in basic education between 1995 and 2001 occurred due to the extension of basic school by one year in 1996). Participation in pre-primary education is also growing.

(Source: OECD Education Database; own calculations)

Unit costs: CR and EU-15



Average costs per student by education level, relative to GDP per capita, 2001

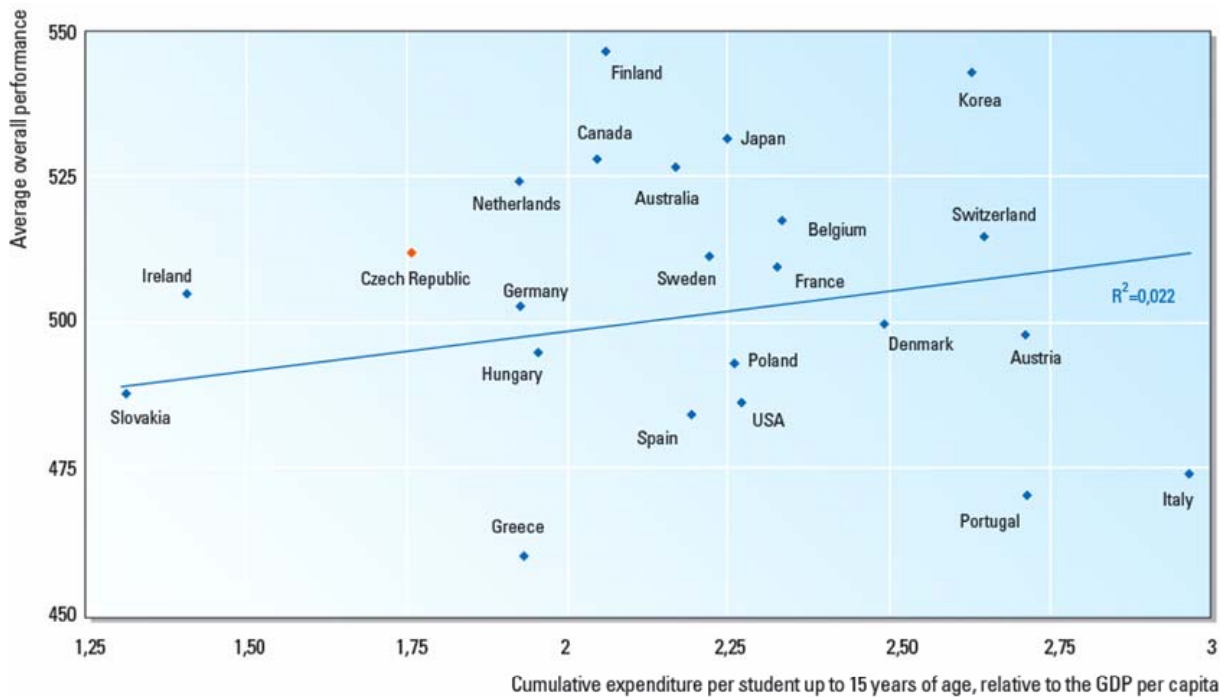
Unit costs per pupil (student) which are set for each education level are related to GDP per capita and expressed as a percentage. The EU data concern the EU-15 before enlargement. Basic education includes primary and lower secondary education.

The distribution of expenditure in terms of levels of education in the Czech Republic is roughly the same as the average of EU member states before enlargement. The figures are relative to GDP per capita and therefore do not state absolute levels.

(Source: OECD Education Database; own calculations)

Performance and costs

Results from PISA 2003



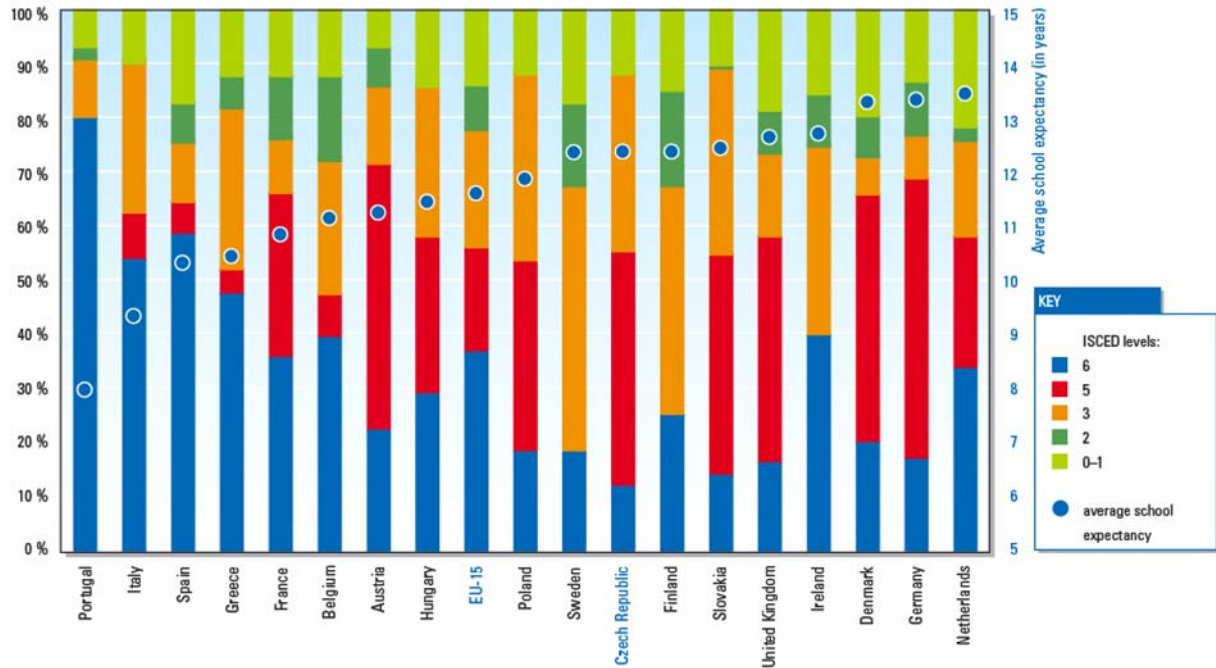
The graph illustrating the relationship between the expenditure per pupil and educational outcomes makes use of data ascertained during the PISA 2003 international survey. The vertical axis shows the average results in all domains of the survey, the horizontal axis shows accumulated expenditure per pupil up to 15 years of age related to GDP per capita (in percent). The R coefficient states the extent to which the differences in educational results may explain the differences in expenditure.

The existing dependency (the blue line) is fairly weak, the variance in performance can be explained by variance in expenditure only in the order of 2%. An increase in expenditure on education does not automatically result in better educational outcomes. The position of individual countries in the graph provides a measure of evidence of cost effectiveness: countries above the line (which include the CR) show increasing effectiveness as their distance from the line increases.

(Source: Learning for Tomorrow's World, First Results from PISA 2003, OECD Paris 2004; own calculations)

Education level attained by adult population

25-64 years of age, EU 2002



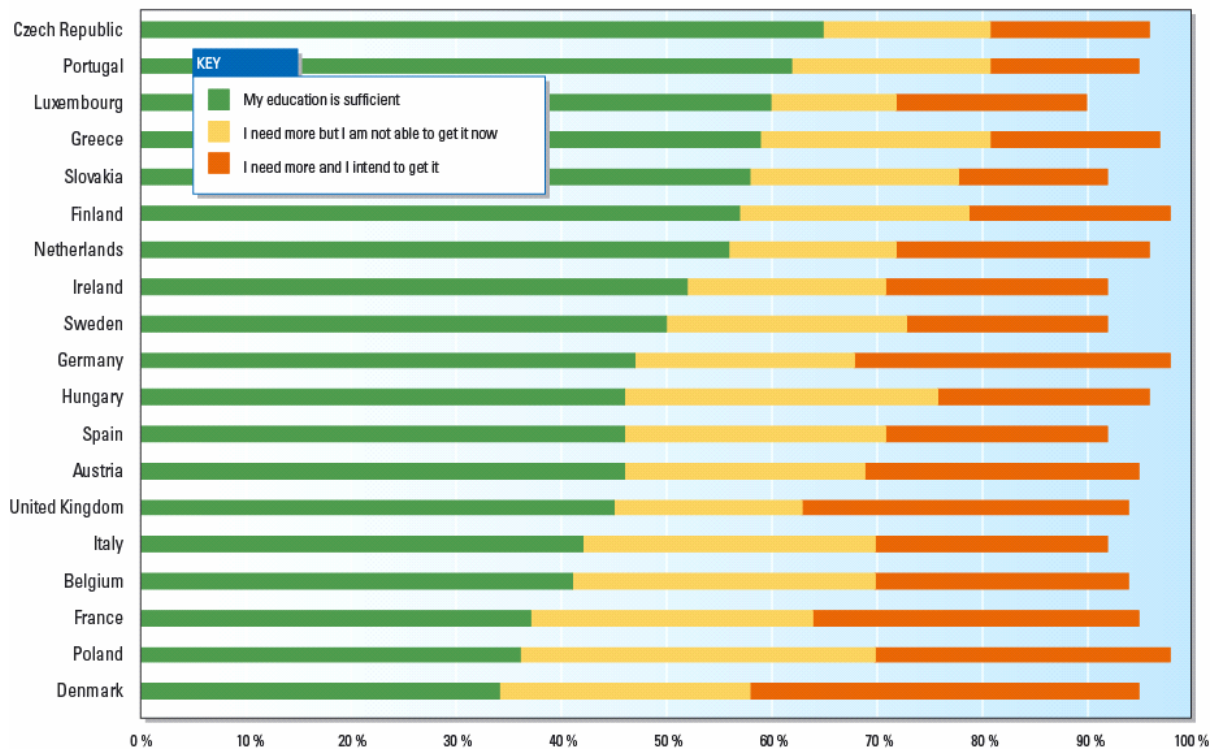
The graph provides two sets of data about the education of adult population (25-64) in the EU. The first set concerns distribution of the population (in %) according to the level of educational attainment, the second concerns the average length of education (in years).

The CR, as compared to the EU countries before enlargement (i.e. EU-15), shows the lowest proportion of individuals who have not even attained basic education. The proportion of those who attained higher than basic education in the CR corresponds to the EU-15 average, but mostly consists of people with upper secondary education. The average length of education in the CR is higher than the EU-15 average.

(Source: Education at a Glance; own calculations)

Satisfaction with education attained

Respondents currently working (2004)

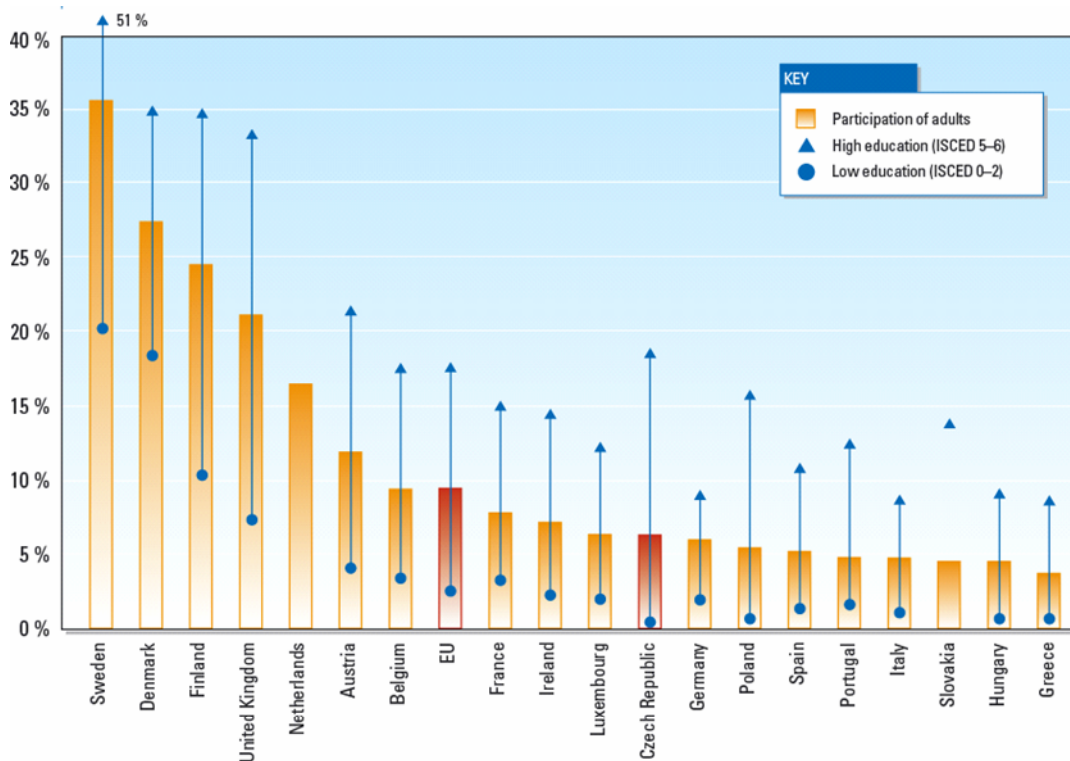


The Eurobarometer surveys cover all countries of the EU; special survey no. 215 sought to identify the progress made in implementation of the Lisbon strategy. The questionnaires used were also focused on whether the respondents (in this case people who are employed) consider their level of education and training as sufficient for their further professional career and, if they were to enhance their qualifications, whether they are willing to do it or whether they cannot.

In the CR almost two thirds of respondents (the largest proportion of all countries) were satisfied with the education and training they achieved. The proportion of those who stated that they could not enhance their education and training was among the lowest in the CR.

(Source: Special Eurobarometer No. 215, 2005)

Participation of adults in education and training in EU



Overall percentage, and by education level attained (2004)

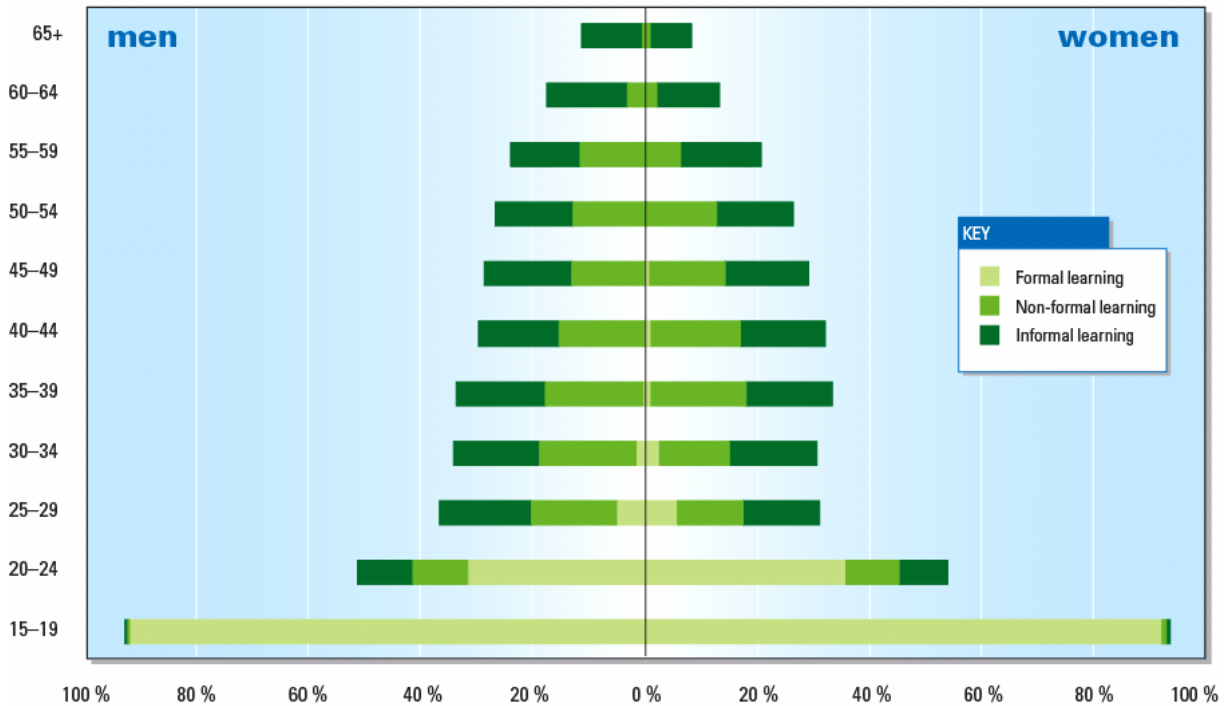
The graph illustrates participation in continuing education and training during 4 weeks before the survey in all 25 EU countries. Three sets of data are indicated: the overall rate of participation of adult population aged 25-64 (the full column), the rate of participation of adults with basic and lower education (ISCED 0-2, the arrow base), and the rate of participation of adults with higher education levels (ISCED 5-6, the arrow top). The difference between the two previous figures (the arrow length) illustrates imbalances in participation in continuing education depending on the level of education attained, while their ratio is a relative imbalance factor.

The overall participation of Czech adult population in continuing education is roughly one third lower than the EU average. The imbalances in participation depending on education achieved are somewhat more favourable. However, the participation of individuals with basic and lower education is extremely low, which means that the relative imbalance factor is the highest.

(Source: Progress towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training, 2005 Report)

Lifelong Learning in CR

Participation in various forms of LLL by age (2003)

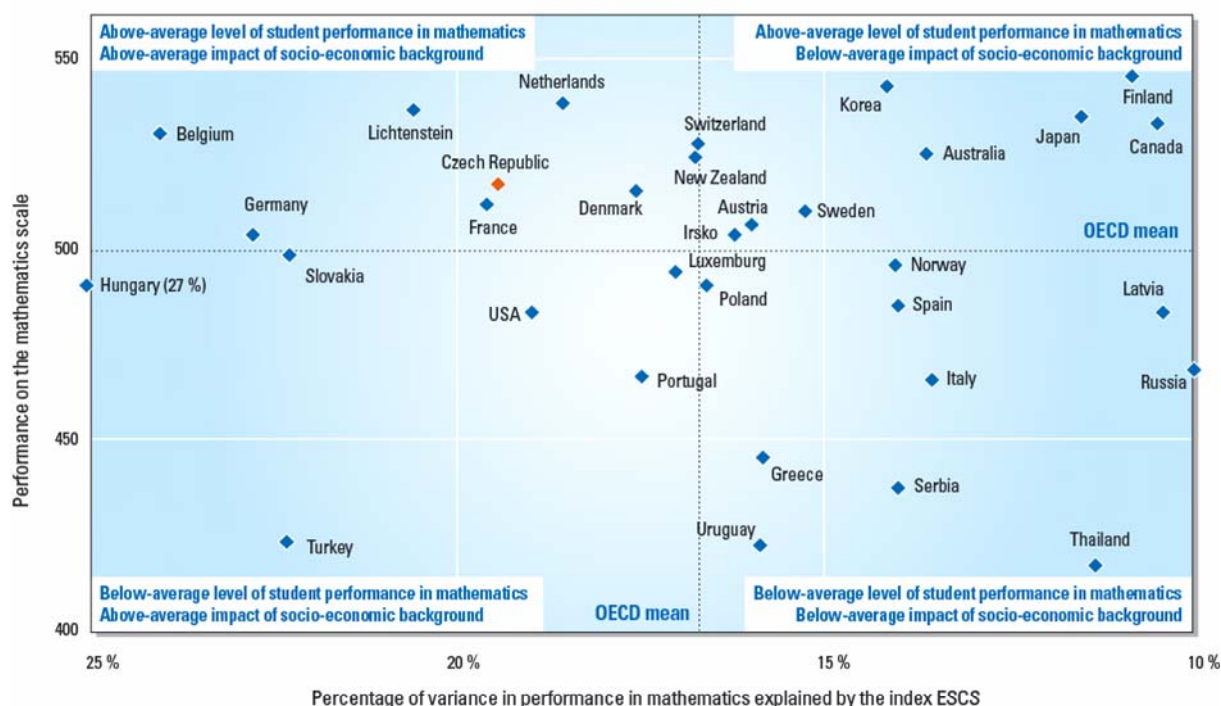


The graph illustrates the present rates of participation in three basic forms of lifelong learning (formal, non-formal and informal) by age and gender. It demonstrates that the opportunities for adults to acquire a level of education in the traditional schooling system are very limited from as early as middle age. Then continuing education plays a decisive role with about an even representation of non-formal and informal learning. It is therefore necessary to increase participation in continuing education and to provide for recognition of non-formal and informal learning (including work experience).

(Source: Czech Statistical Office – labour force surveys / Ad Hoc Module 2003)

Performance and the impact of socio-economic background

Results from PISA 2003



The PISA international survey uses a series of test items to measure the results of fifteen-year-old pupils in reading, mathematics and science, and to assess their cross-curricular skills. It also uses questionnaires to identify broader contexts of education, particularly the pupils' family backgrounds and the overall school environment. A comparative analysis of an extensive set of data makes it possible to discover various links and to open the path towards better quality in education for all pupils.

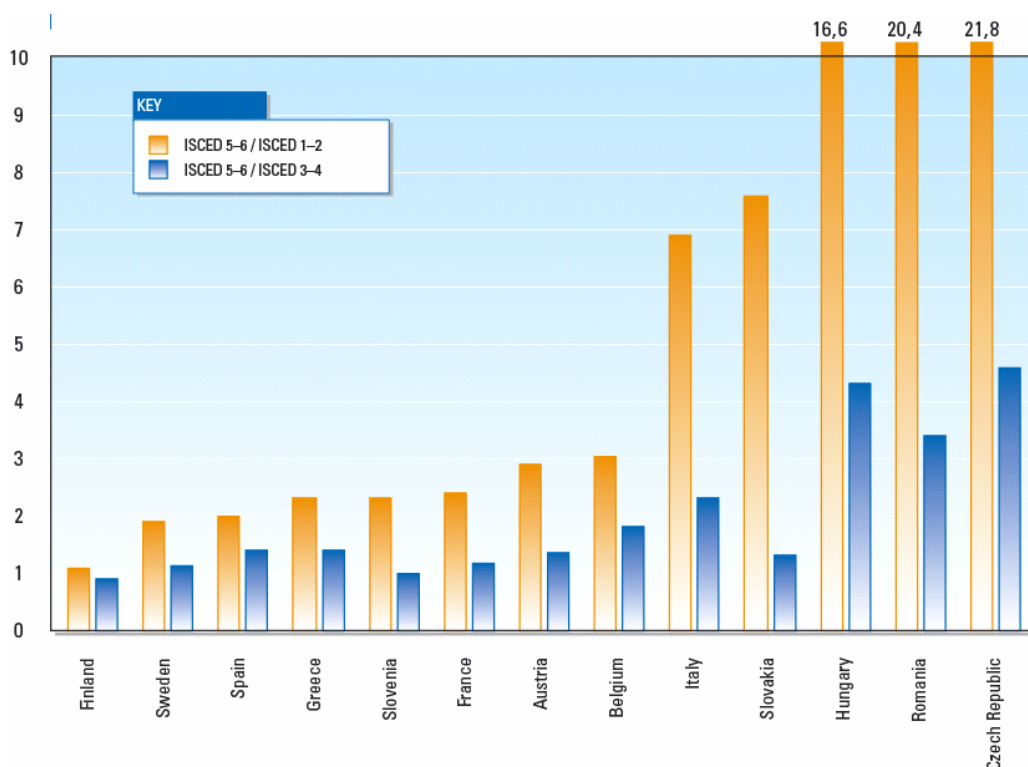
One of the most important findings is the intensity of effects of family background on educational outcomes. The vertical axis indicates the performance on the mathematics scale (the main domain of PISA 2003), while the horizontal axis indicates what percentage of variance in performance in mathematics can be explained by the index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS). The upper right-hand quadrant contains countries which at the same time achieve high performance while reducing the influence of family background. A high quality of education and equity of are in no way mutually exclusive.

The Czech Republic achieves above-average levels (but not the highest) both in terms of results and in terms of the impact of family background. Czech schools should therefore alleviate more efficiently the negative effects of less stimulating family backgrounds, mitigate the effects of social and cultural inequalities.

(Source: Learning for Tomorrow's World, First Results from PISA 2003, OECD Paris 2004)

The impact of family background on access to education

Selected European countries, 2000



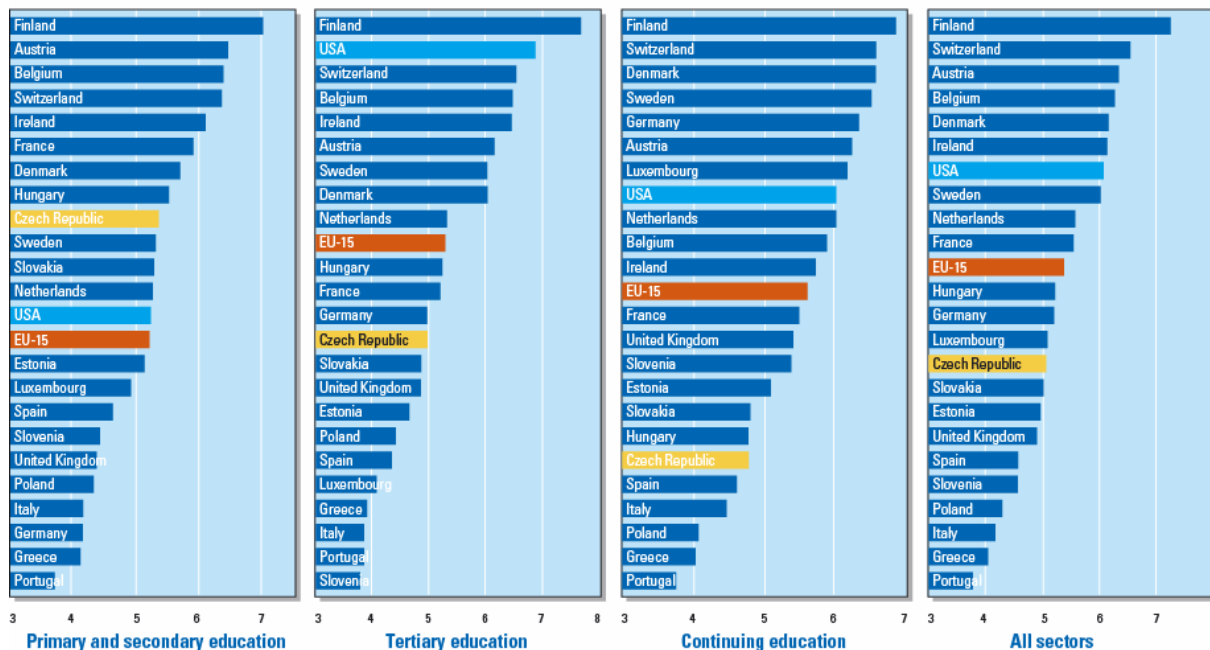
The chance of achieving tertiary education is expressed in terms of comparing the proportions (i.e. percentage) of children from varying family backgrounds who continue studying. This comparison is made at two levels: firstly, the proportion of children whose parents have upper secondary education is compared with the proportion of children whose parents only have basic education; and secondly, the proportion of children whose parents have tertiary education is again compared with the proportion of children whose parents have basic qualifications (basic education means primary plus lower secondary).

There are differences as regards the chances in almost all countries (except Finland) and in some countries they are considerably larger. The Czech Republic is in an extreme position. Children whose parents have basic education are 22 times less likely to acquire tertiary education compared to children whose parents have tertiary degrees. With children whose parents have upper secondary education this figure is 4.5 - they are 4.5 times less likely to achieve tertiary education compared to the children of parents with tertiary education). (These extreme figures are perhaps the result of the fact that, in the CR, the proportions of people with basic and tertiary education are relatively small, while the proportion of the population with upper secondary education is far larger – the difference in chances held by children whose parents have tertiary degrees and by those whose parents have upper secondary education corresponds to this. As regards the former, the difference is disproportionately large, and as for the latter, it is - even if the largest of all - proportionate to other countries.

(Source: Analyses of the EU LFS Ad Hoc Module 2000, University of Mannheim 2003; results for the CR – own calculations)

Competitiveness of education

European countries and the USA, 2002 – 2003

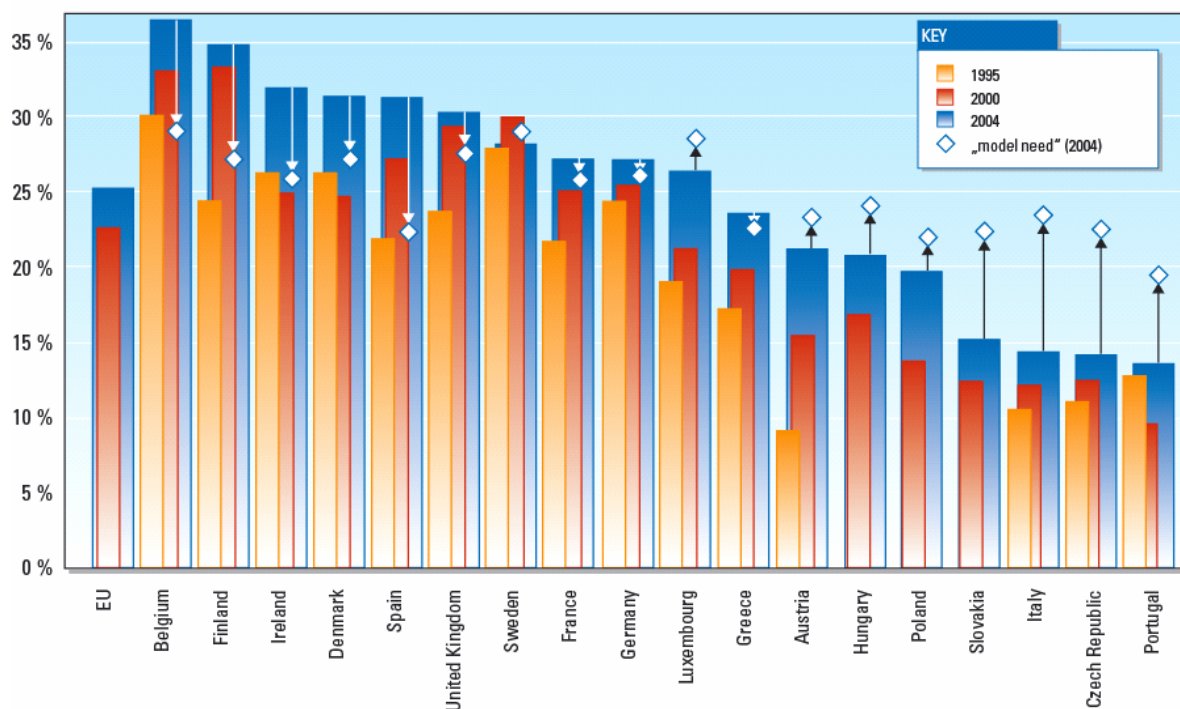


Periodical competitiveness surveys are carried out by two leading organisations – IMD in Lausanne and World Economic Forum in Geneva. They seek to identify, among other things, how managers in various countries evaluate the competitiveness of their education systems (using an eight-degree scale).

The ratings of the Czech education system more or less hover around the EU-15 average (before enlargement) with differences up to a third of a degree on the evaluation scale. What is considerably lower (almost by one degree) is the figures for continuing education.

(Source: World Competitiveness Yearbook a Global Competitiveness Report, 2002-2003)

Rate of Employment with Tertiary Education



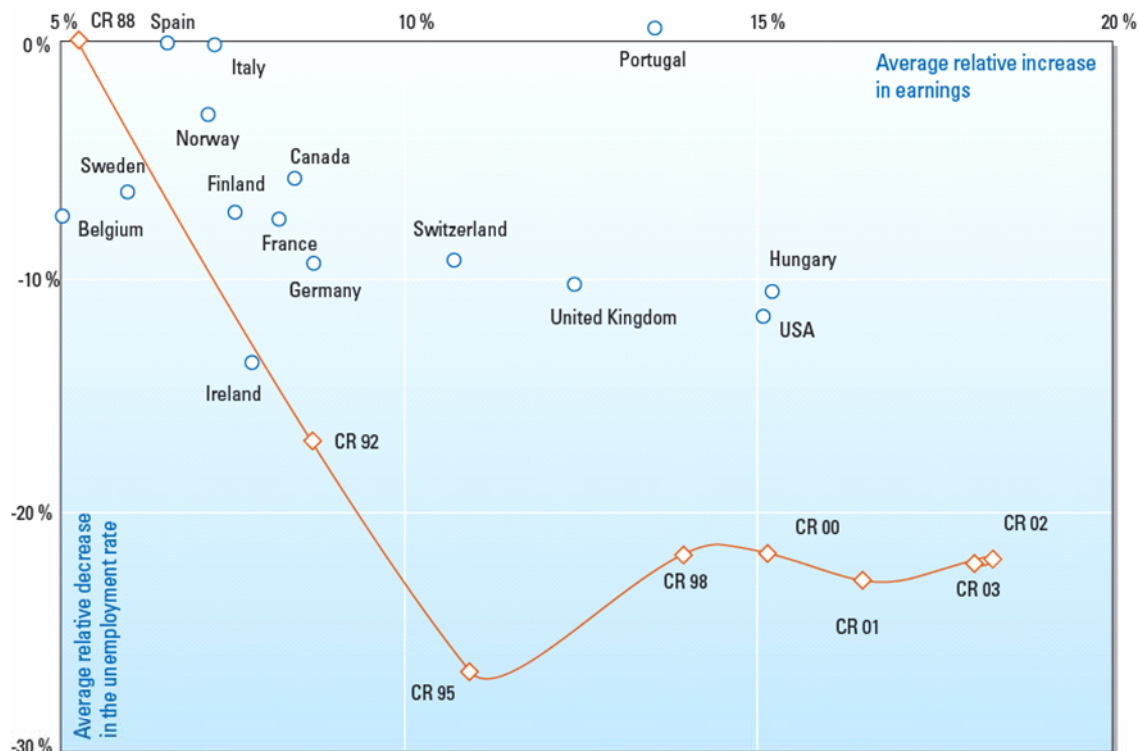
EU 1995, 2000 and 2004

The graph illustrates the proportion of individuals with tertiary education (ISCED 5-6) in the overall number of persons in employment, and its development in 1995-2004. It is therefore possible to mutually compare the situation and the development in various countries and also to make a comparison with the EU-14 average (before enlargement and excluding the Netherlands). Additionally, the graph contains the so-called model need for individuals with tertiary education which has been set for each country based on its industry and occupational structure (i.e. taking account of the size of 24 industries of the economy, the representation of 55 groups of occupations and their qualification requirements). It is calculated on the basis of a hypothetical European model providing a further insight into the different situation in each country.

In the CR there is a considerable shortage of people with tertiary education and the position of education in the labour market corresponds to this (see the graph below).

(Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey; own calculations)

Education and the labour market



The impact on average earnings and the rate of unemployment

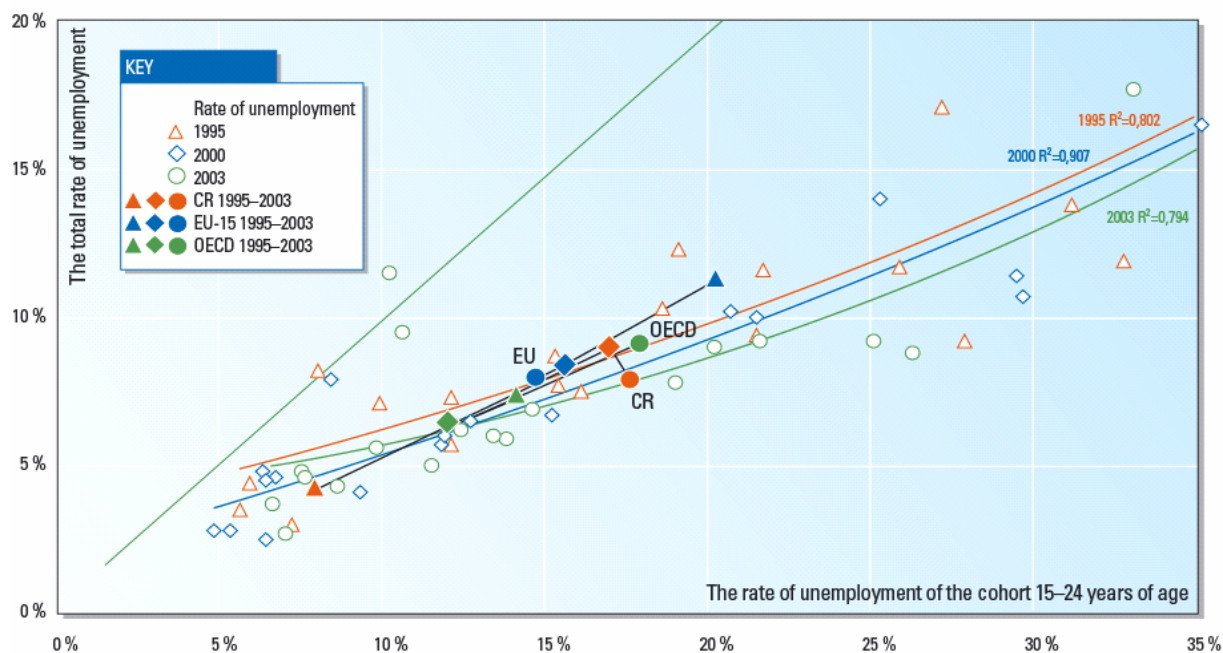
The graph shows the impact of each additional year of education on a relative decrease in the rate of unemployment (in percent) and on relative wage increases (in percent) in some EU and OECD countries (last available); the data for the CR cover the situation from 1988 (planned economy, no official unemployment) until 2002.

Each additional year of education increases the relative wage levels and decreases the rate of unemployment. In most countries the impact is more pronounced on the rate of unemployment (although there are countries where this influence is zero or even negative – eg. Portugal). Development in the Czech Republic after transition to a market economy in 1989 was very dynamic. Nowadays, more years spent in education in the CR provide a considerable personal benefit, perhaps the largest among the countries under review, and even extreme in terms of the relative wage increase.

(Source: OECD Education Database; own calculations)

Total unemployment and the unemployment of graduates

EU-15, OECD and CR (1995, 2000 and 2003)



The graph illustrates the relationship between overall unemployment and the unemployment in the 15-24 age group. The figures concern individual EU countries, the EU average and the OECD average in 1995-2003. The rate of unemployment in this age group is roughly double. The relationship has been fairly constant during the period, the situation in individual countries is fairly consistent with only a few deviations.

The position of the Czech Republic is similar to that of other countries, and it corresponds to averages both of the EU and the OECD.

(Source: OECD Employment Database; own calculations)

Projects within the MoEYS' remit

The priorities of the DZ ČR 2005 are supported by means of ESF projects funded as part of Measure 3.1. – Improvement of the Quality of Education in Schools and School Facilities and the Development of Support Systems in Education through the Operational Programme – Human Resources Development. The projects are listed according to priorities; a distinction is made between grant schemes (GS) – i.e. projects supporting school initiatives – and national and systemic projects supporting MoEYS measures.

Curricular reform:

Koordinátor – Practical implementation of framework curriculum for basic education

Pilot Z – Development and testing of pilot school-based curricula at 2nd level of selected basic schools

Pilot G – Development and testing of pilot school-based curricula at selected *gymnázia*

Pilot S – Development and testing of pilot school-based curricula at selected secondary technical and secondary vocational schools

Hodina – Modification of curricula for 7th year of basic school with a view to developing key competencies in students

Metodika – System for methodological support for teachers in nurturing and developing key competencies in students

GS / Support Programme D – Modernisation of school-based curricula focused on the development of key competencies

Quality assurance::

Kvalita I – Development of an external system for monitoring and evaluation, including the establishment of a Centre for the Identification of Educational Outcomes (including information and counselling activities)

Kvalita II – Development of a self-evaluation system (including information and counselling activities)

Ensuring equality of educational opportunities:

Minority I (research and pilot testing) – Improving the conditions for the education of students from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds and minorities in mainstream basic schooling

Minority II (implementation) - Improving the conditions for the education of students from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds and minorities in mainstream basic schooling

GS / Improving the conditions for the education of students with special learning needs

Development of an integrated counselling system in the schools sector:

VIP Kariéra – Developing and improving an integrated diagnostic, information and counselling system in the area of education and career choice

Improving professional standards and social status of pedagogical staff:

Učitelé – Development of specific competencies of pedagogical staff and specialists in education for the purpose of improving the quality of education at basic, secondary and higher professional schools and enhancing their adaptability in the labour market.

Úspěšný ředitel – An educational model for senior staff at schools and school facilities

Sít' – Development of a network of schools focusing on innovation in pedagogical work.

Support for continuing education:

Kvalifikace – Development of a national system of qualifications promoting links between initial and continuing education

Univ – Recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes in the network of schools providing adult education

GS / Support programme B – Development of the continuing training of teachers and school employees

GS / Support programme C – Development of continuing education at secondary and higher professional schools

The priorities set out in the DZ VŠ are supported by a grant scheme funded as part of Measure 3.2 – Support for Tertiary Education, Research and Development of the Operational Programme – Human Resources Development:

GS / Support programme A – Improving the quality of education at HE institutions

GS / Support programme B – Development of teacher training programmes
GS / Support programme C – Development of continuing education at HE institutions
GS / Support programme D – Human resources development in the area of research and development

The resources earmarked for national and systemic projects (measure 3.1) total 1,251 million CZK, while for grant schemes (measure 3.1. and 3.2) the figure is 1,769 million CZK. The overall amount is 3,020 million CZK.

Projects within the MoLSA's remit

Systemic projects within measure 3.3 – the Development of Continuing Professional Education – are focused on a systemic development of the provision of continuing professional education and the introduction of key systemic mechanisms in this area. Project implementation will contribute to the building of a system of recognised qualifications which would interlink education and employment, motivate employers and other social partners to get involved in the design of the content and methods of education, and certification requirements. Instruments and methodologies will be drawn up for continuing professional education in relation to regional labour market needs. The measure will also contribute to the system of verification of qualifications achieved in continuing education, which will be linked to the system of initial education.

The final beneficiaries (i.e. bodies responsible for the commissioning and implementation of projects) are the MoLSA's Employment Services Administration (ESA) and regions:

- Final beneficiary - ESA MoLSA (financial resources: approx. 550,000 million CZK)

This part of measure 3.3 will be implemented through systemic projects:

Regional education centre - establishing basic conditions for the development of a network of regional education centres for lifelong learning, particularly in vocational and professional areas, with the objective of increasing the level of educational attainment (qualifications) of the region's population.

A system of training for small and medium-sized enterprises – developing a system for continuing professional and vocational education with a view to increasing the level of qualifications (education) in small and medium-sized enterprises while respecting their specificities.

National qualifications system – developing a vital environment for the creation of a national system of qualifications including the methodology for defining qualification, evaluation and educational standards and its pilot testing in the area of continuing professional education.

Recognition of non-formal and informal learning – developing a national system for modularisation of educational programmes and a national system for recognition of competencies acquired in non-formal and informal learning.

Recognition of work experience – developing a system for recognition of work experience as part of industry-specific continuing training.

Quality in continuing professional education – ensuring the quality of educational activities by means of interlinking the certification and accreditation processes.

Information and counselling system – developing sustainable support mechanisms for continuing professional and vocational education (information, counselling, motivation, finance, etc.).

- Final beneficiary - regions (financial resources: approx. 850,000 million CZK)

This part of the measure will be implemented via grant schemes (GS – Development of Capacity for Continuing Professional Education) which are divided into support programmes:

GS / Development and improvement of the existing provision of continuing professional education and related services

GS / The training of lecturers, consultants, teachers, methodologists and managers who are active in continuing professional education

GS / The development of continuing professional education as a follow-up to the outcomes of systemic projects

The resources earmarked for measure 3.3 projects for 2004-2006 are approx. 1,400 million CZK.