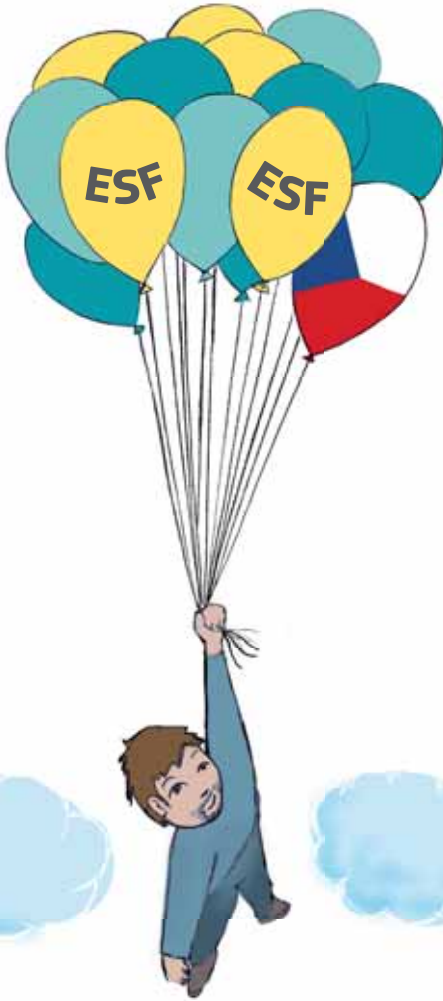




European  
Commission



# CZECH REPUBLIC

## AND THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

ESF funding is helping Czech workers to take an active part in their country's future growth through improved education and training opportunities, better adaptation of training to the needs of the market, and better job opportunities for all. And improvements to the education system are under way that will equip Czech graduates with the high-level skills needed to thrive in an innovative, competitive economy.

*Social  
Europe*

**CZECH REPUBLIC**

# INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND JOBS: THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CZECH REPUBLIC

With ESF support, the Czech Republic is putting in place measures to help open up the job market to make it easier for anyone who wants a job to get one. This includes removing barriers to work that presently exist, in particular for families with young children, low-skilled workers, young people and older workers. Initiatives have also been set up to help integrate the disabled and allow them to play a greater role in society. The aim is to get 75% of the working-age population into jobs by 2020.

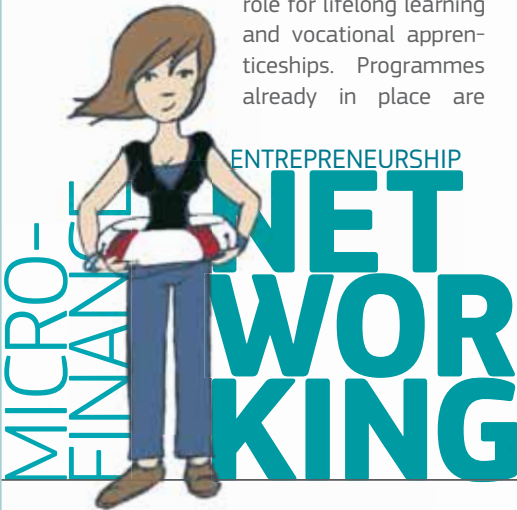
*“Improving teaching  
at the highest levels”*

Steps are also being taken to improve the education system and help it adapt to the dynamic social and economic changes both within the country and globally. This involves not only addressing the quality of schools and colleges, but also establishing a closer association between the educational system and the types of jobs that will be on offer in the future. This includes a greater role for lifelong learning and vocational apprenticeships. Programmes already in place are

encouraging young people to stay in school longer, particularly among disadvantaged sections of the population such as the Roma. They are also encouraging greater participation in higher education and improving the quality of teaching at the highest levels, in order to ensure that the Czech Republic has the highly skilled human resources it needs to lead in innovation and research for the future.

## ESF spending in the Czech Republic

Each Member State manages its ESF funding according to its particular needs and priorities. For 2007-2013, the Czech Republic is receiving over EUR 3.7 billion of ESF funds. With national co-funding, this brings the total ESF spending on jobs to over EUR 4.4 billion. ESF activities comprise three programmes: the first is improving education at all levels and boosting its relevance to the employment market. The second is bringing as many people as possible into the job market, with particular attention to the disadvantaged; and the third focuses specifically on building the competitiveness of the Prague region.



# THE CZECH REPUBLIC'S ESF PRIORITIES

## Releasing people's full potential

The Czech Republic is using ESF funding to reach people who, for one reason or another, face obstacles to getting a job. This includes, for example, mothers with young children who find it difficult to return to work, older people who no longer have the skills required, and disabled or disadvantaged groups, such as the Roma or those with little or no professional skills. An example is the 'Training Flat' project in Rychnov nad Kněžnou that helps mentally disabled people enjoy more independent lives. Many ESF projects across the country are making access to training far easier and reducing various practical obstacles to work. In turn, this is having a positive impact by lifting people and families out of poverty. Other projects are reducing the impacts of the economic crisis on jobs, such as the 'Restart' project in Česká Lípa which helped 200 recently unemployed people to find new jobs in its first year of operation.

*“Encouraging family life as the cornerstone of society”*

Projects that are improving childcare services, for example, help both to encourage many women back into work and to provide employment for older women who

have been away from the job market for some time. And older people are also being helped to increase their skills and retrain, making them more attractive to employers. Projects such as the 'Family and Employment Audit' and the online database of childcare services are making it easier for families to combine work and family life and to motivate and encourage employers to take pro-family measures.

## Training for the future

The quality of education and training is a key factor for more productive employees and the country's competitiveness. So ESF funding is helping to improve the quality of education overall, by monitoring standards, by investing more in teachers, and by ensuring that the knowledge and skills taught are those needed by job-seekers and employers. Investment is being made at all levels – primary, secondary and higher – but also in vocational training, company apprenticeships and ad hoc company training programmes. And students are being encouraged to consider careers in science and technology, for example, through events such as a science documentary film festival and meetings with leading Czech scientists. The aim of all these actions is to train a better-qualified workforce able to support the country's competitiveness through innovation and R&D.

# THE ESF IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC: SOME EXAMPLES

## A helping hand with ‘second hand’

The ‘There are ways’ organisation in Pilsen set up a project to help people with disabilities enjoy the social interaction and sense of independence that work brings. The ‘Second Hand, SECOND HELP’ project gives people with mental disabilities the opportunity to enjoy paid work in a suitable environment. Used clothes are received, cleaned, repaired and put up for sale in a second-hand clothes shop situated on Pilsen’s main square. The shop employs around 15 workers with disabilities alongside three other assistants.

## The training ‘EFEKT’

Like many countries, the Czech Republic is struggling with the problem of unemployment, especially among job-seekers outside ‘peak’ employment ages. The ESF-funded ‘EFEKT’ project is helping such people to find jobs in the South Bohemia Region. Focusing on people under 25 and over 50, as well as recent university graduates and parents with young children, the project offers motivational sessions, training in computer skills and specific courses in trade and industry, project management and other business skills – followed by company work placements.

### Do you want to...?

- ...learn more about the ESF in the Czech Republic?
- ...understand better how the ESF works?
- ...see video clips on projects from across the EU?

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