

Achieving the Lisbon Goal:
The Contribution of Vocational Education and Training Systems

Country Report: Czech Republic

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1. Strategies and barriers for improving the status, flexibility and attractiveness of initial VET

What strategies are being used to by government, social partners and providers etc. to achieve objectives?:

a) **Raise the status of IVET**

The status of vocational education in the CR is **traditionally high**. Before 1989 it was supported by official education policy, which curtailed general secondary education and placed equal emphasis on upper secondary and tertiary qualifications. This means that incentives were in place to motivate young people to achieve a vocational qualification from as early as secondary level¹. The status of IVET was also enhanced as a consequence of larger investors entering the CR (particularly in the auto and related industries where a number of new jobs with good prospects were created in engineering fields – mostly requiring secondary vocational qualifications).

In spite of this there are differences in viewing various vocational programmes. Secondary technical and vocational education completed by a “maturita” examination is highly valued. Secondary vocational programmes without “maturita” are viewed less favourably by students and their parents. This is apparent from the decline in interest expressed in vocational training without “maturita” and the increase in the proportion of students entering “maturita” programmes². This development was, in the later 1990s, speeded up by liberalisation in education and legislative changes, which facilitated the establishment of private schools. It turned out that parents are even willing to pay for attractive vocational courses with “maturita”.

The status of education completed by “maturita”, and particularly of higher education, has increased since 1989 – in this period the link between educational attainment and remuneration has been strengthening. Before transformation, the average wage of an employee with a full secondary qualification (with “maturita”) accounted for a mere 111% of the average wage of an employee with basic education. Currently it is 153%. Even more intensive differentiation occurred in favour of individuals with university degrees. The ratio increased from 150% to 260% compared to employees with basic education. This is the ratio common in European countries with a developed market economy.

Strategic educational documents at national level – i.e. the White Paper and the Long-Term Plan for education and the Development of the Education System in the CR – set out, inter alia, objectives in the form of increasing the standards of

¹ Students at technical and vocational schools accounted for approx. 85% of all secondary school students

² The ratio (%) between students in “maturita” programmes and those without “maturita” changed from 40:60 to 54:46 in 2003.

vocational education: (i) the **proportion of “maturita” programmes** should **increase**. This will place higher demand on students, but the opportunity to study at tertiary level will be enlarged. There is support for transformation of traditional vocational programmes to “lyceum” type programmes which provide a broad base of general education and prepare students better for studies at tertiary level. (ii) A general-vocational component should be strengthened in vocational curricula. A broader theoretical base will make it possible for young people to adjust better to changes in professional developments and improve their employability. (iii) The structure of programmes within IVET should be changed so as to respond better to labour market needs. The structure of technical and vocational schools has, since 2001 when deregulation of education took place, been formed by regional self-administering authorities which better understand the requirements of regional labour markets. The proportion of vocational programmes with “maturita” differs significantly region by region.

In order to support its strategic plans the Ministry initiates and funds so-called development programmes. The programmes planned for 2003-2005 also include one entitled “Vocational Education and Training”. The programme is used to fund projects promoted by schools concerning, for example, the setting up of centres for technical education, implementation of changes in the structure of educational provision, providing for the relevant facilities for practical training, etc.

Strategic educational documents at regional level – i.e. Regional Long-Term Plans – set out objectives focusing on strengthening vocational and technical programmes completed with “maturita”. Regions establish the conditions for upgrading three-year programmes to four-year ones with “maturita”. Along with this, follow-up courses are also promoted which make it possible for those who complete a three-year programme to take “maturita”. There are initial efforts to increase the status of those who complete programmes in various crafts. Training for master craftsman’s examinations has been introduced with a considerable involvement on the part of enterprises.

It is necessary to understand the VET developments as an important part of a broadly conceived state policy responding to the globalisation and competitiveness challenges. In 2003, the Czech Government accepted the **Strategy of Human Resources Development**. The main idea is to create a co-ordinated cross sectional HR platform which will interlink the issues of employment, vocational education and training, skills and entrepreneurship. The Government Council for HRD³ established in 2003 is a tripartite body responsible for selection of priorities and co-ordination of their implementation.

b) Improve the attractiveness of IVET

IVET is traditionally regarded highly by individuals – i.e. students and parents. The developments in the structure of students entering initial years of secondary schools suggest that the proportion of VET has stabilised, after a slight decline in the mid-1990s, at around 80%, while the proportion of general education (*gymnázia*) is still lower than 20%⁴. (see Graph 1B-1 in Annex).

³ wtd.vlada.cz/eng/vybory.htm

⁴ The interest on the part of parents in placing children in general programmes is higher at basic school level (six- and eight-year *gymnázia*) as compared to secondary level. The reasons include higher standards of instruction and a better school environment, as these schools are only attended by

Apart from certificates awarded upon completion of VET programmes which are recognized by the labour market, VET routes in the CR show another important advantage (both in “maturita” and “non-maturita” programmes). This is the possibility of **following these routes through to tertiary education**⁵.

The attractiveness of IVET and the choice of an educational route are, in general terms, also affected by the **information and counselling system**. Career counselling began to develop in the CR as late as the 1990s. It has complemented and influenced traditional educational-psychological guidance services. Methods for individual and group counselling have been developed, including professional diagnostics, and counselling-information instruments have been designed. They include, for example, the “Guide to the World of Occupations”, the “Integrated System of Standard Job Positions”, and databases of schools and continuing training programmes. Considerable progress has been made in this area. However, some regions should improve the links between the two counselling subsystems, as well as the quality of the services.

In order to support integration of the counselling system there is work underway to set up a national working group for the development of career counselling which should operate under the aegis of the Government Council for Human Resources Development. The group should concentrate, above all, on providing support for career counselling at school level – i.e. methodological, information and training support for career (educational) counsellors at schools⁶. In addition to classic forms of education, an e-learning programme will be developed⁷. As part of the “Start” project within the Phare 2000 programme⁸ websites focused on career counselling in schools have been designed.

Schools have gradually been introducing subjects that prepare students for **the choice of a career** and for understanding the labour market. Basic schools have introduced a subject called “Career Choice”, and a similar subject at secondary schools is entitled “Introduction to the World of Labour”. Special training programmes for teachers teaching the two subjects are envisaged by teacher training faculties. Schools should co-operate closely with labour offices.

The process of students’ identification with an occupation may be stimulated by **knowledge of the actual working environment** and the tasks involved. Students should acquire this knowledge in practical training classes and as part of work placements (for details see question 8). However, in reality work placements are inappropriate, or students only get their “hands dirty” in school workshops⁹. Privatised companies have lost interest in organising work placements for students and consider them to be ineffective.

pupils who passed demanding admission proceedings (which is a guarantee of fewer educational problems).

⁵ VET programmes completed by “maturita” facilitate direct access to tertiary education. As for those who complete three-year programmes without “maturita”, they may take “maturita” after a two-year follow-up course.

⁶ They are normally teachers who have a reduced teaching load.

⁷ The programmes will be prepared by the NITVE in co-operation with the Institute for Pedagogical-Psychological Counselling

⁸ www.nuov.cz

⁹ Some 65% of students in vocational courses without “maturita” do not, while at school, enter a real working environment. Approx. 92% of secondary technical school students undergo work placements in a real working environment, but often for too short a period. 29% of students spend a maximum of 3 weeks on a placement, which is insufficient.

c) Increase the flexibility of IVET

During the transformation process post-1989, the VET system has shown flexibility particularly in meeting students' interests, and, to a degree, employers' requirements. This has been made possible primarily by the liberalisation of the education system where 90% of programmes have been innovated. Most changes, however, were designed to meet short-term requirements of the labour market. The CR lacks a system for **medium- and long-term forecasts** of labour market developments, although various projects have already been initiated in this area (for details see question 12.b).

In addition to the spontaneous adjustment of educational programmes to labour market needs, **reform of VET curricula** is currently under way as part of overall curricular reform. The new curricula consist of two levels. A framework curriculum sets forth the basic requirements, a school-based curriculum reflects the requirements of the regional labour market (see question 7). What is seen as a problem is the still insufficient involvement of social partners in the design of school-based curricula, and the control of the quality of educational outcomes on the part of employers (also see question 12 a).

Only partial progress has been made as regard the **organisation of study programmes**. There are still only linear study programmes that merely provide a limited opportunity for changing educational path or transferring to a different programme during studies. Modular approaches have been tested on an experimental basis (as part of the Phare programme VET Reform in 1999), but further progress in this area is hindered by legislative and organisational drawbacks¹⁰. The bill for the new education act¹¹ stipulates that modular and subject-based organisation of the school-based curriculum are on an equal footing, but it is unclear whether schools will overcome the aforementioned obstacles and switch to a modular curriculum. Another drawback is that certification cannot be given merely to a section of studies completed.

The flexibility of educational paths will be promoted after the new education act is passed. The act will make it possible to introduce shortened courses leading to the award of a vocational qualification certificate and a "maturita" certificate. Those who complete programmes (general and vocational) with "maturita" will be able to get a vocational qualification without the need to complete a full programme lasting several years. Although this measure cannot make up for the flexibility of modular courses, it will contribute to a higher level of individualisation of educational paths and a flexible response to labour market needs. The new education act will give school directors the power to recognise prior education (also informal) of students transferring from one programme to another.

Summary:

The status and attractiveness of IVET are relatively high, thanks to its tradition and the possibility of following vertical educational routes through VET to tertiary education. In IVET there has been growing interest in "maturita" courses to the detriment of vocational courses without "maturita". National and regional education

¹⁰ Legislative barriers include a clearly defined teaching load (21 periods per week) and a number of classes students must undertake in one week. This hampers a flexible distribution of classes within a modular structure. Moreover, the use of modular arrangements is hindered by student assessment regulations which are subject-focused and the interval is either one year or a semester.

¹¹ It is currently being discussed by Parliament.

policies support the quality of VET. The general-vocational component of the educational content is being promoted, and new vocational programmes of the “lyceum” type with a high proportion of general education are being introduced.

The status of IVET is lowered by the so-far meagre level of co-operation between schools and enterprises in assessing VET outcomes, inappropriate acquaintance on the part of students with a real working environment and a slow pace of adjusting IVET to labour market needs. Progress in this is slowed down primarily by the fact that schools (with some exceptions) do not monitor the situation of their former students in the labour market, and that this criterion is not included in school assessment schemes. One negative feature is the lack of interest on the part of social partners in involvement in IVET (they believe that IVET is the responsibility of the state), which is intensified by negligible financial incentives for this co-operation.

There is inappropriate flexibility of study programmes in terms of individual approaches to structuring educational routes. The changes proposed, which are stipulated in the new education bill, provide only partial solutions. The flexibility of study programmes in terms of educational content is fostered within the ongoing curricular reform. However, in practice it will depend on the quality of school-based curricula.

A curricular reform is preparing and testing. Partial improvements increasing VET flexibility are laid down in the new education bill. The Further education bill is under preparation. Activities of the newly established Government Council for HRD are expected to support the VET quality enhancement.

2. Reducing the number of early school leavers

How does your country relate to other countries in terms of the contribution to increasing or reducing the number of young people?:

In terms of the proportion of early school leavers the Czech Republic ranks among the countries with the lowest figures both in EU-15 and the new members. The proportion of young people aged 18-24 who only achieved basic education and do not continue studying was 5.4% in 2002. This means that the CR has already met the EU objective set for 2010.

Proportion of the population aged 18-24 with only lower secondary education and not in education and training, 2002, (in %)

	EU	ACC	CZ	benchmark EU 2010
Total	18,8	8,4	5,4	10,0
Females	16,2	6,9	5,5	
Males	21,4	10,0	5,2	

Source: Data source Eurostat, LFS, in “Education and Training 2010“ The success of the Lisbon strategy hinges on urgent reforms, EC, SEC(2003) 1250, Brussels, 2003

However, this figure does not cover all those who leave the education system with basic qualifications. There is a group of young people who failed to complete all nine years of basic schools and therefore has not even achieved basic education. There are also people who, upon successful completion of basic school, do not continue studying and, finally, those who fail to complete upper secondary school and leave the education system without a recognised qualification. The proportion of early school leavers has gone up slightly in recent years.

a) Who leaves education or training at the earliest opportunity and with few or no recognised qualifications?

There are no statistics covering young people leaving upper secondary schools according to their type. Estimates hover at between 2 and 10% for various school types¹². Dropping out from school need not necessarily mean leaving the education system. Some students (at *gymnázia* or secondary technical schools) may transfer to less demanding programmes offered by other schools. However, students who drop out from less demanding programmes (i.e. secondary vocational schools and training centres) mostly do not complete their vocational training. As regards transfers between programmes, there is the problem of **insufficient** opportunities for “**horizontal transferability**” of education¹³. Another problem is the non-existence of **modular educational programmes**, which means that if a student completes a four-year programme at upper secondary level and fails in the final examination and is not awarded the relevant certificate, there is no way of recognizing the four years of studying.

Those most at risk of dropping out from school without a recognized qualification include bad achievers and children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. If these children leave school, they normally drop out from the education system for good. On the other hand, a disability normally is not a reason for dropping out of education. The standards of care for disabled children are traditionally high, and even in the past the CR had a well developed system of special schooling and follow-up services, including counselling. In the course of the 1990s special education underwent qualitative changes consisting in integrating disabled children into mainstream schools. The problem is the relevant qualifications of teachers in mainstream schools and the necessary facilities, although various teacher training projects have already got under way.

The system of counselling plays an important role in preventing drop-outs from school through those of its components that are part of the education system¹⁴. This system is relatively coherent as it includes educational counsellors at schools, school psychologists, regional pedagogical-psychological guidance centres, diagnostic institutes, special pedagogy centres). One of its weaknesses is the position of counsellors at schools. Although they are closest to young people, they are busy performing other duties and their assistance is often rather formal. In some cases they co-ordinate and arrange for counselling services. The newly introduced position of school psychologist constitutes an effective form of support. However, only very few schools can afford it.

Labour market measures. The system of social and unemployment benefits does not stimulate socially disadvantaged individuals to achieve a qualification. The first step towards disrupting this vicious circle consists in systemic pressure exerted on unemployed school leavers. From May 2003 they will not be entitled to

¹²Estimates are based on the difference between the number of enrolled students and the number of school leavers. According to the estimates the proportion of students who dropped out from *gymnázia* is 2-3%, while it is 5% from secondary technical schools and 10% from secondary vocational schools. (Source: Country Monograph).

¹³ The system for recognizing previous education is not uniform and the decision is up to the school director. In practice, years spent studying at a different, albeit more demanding school are not recognized when enrolling in another programme.

¹⁴ There are two counselling subsystems – one is part of the education sector, the other is part of employment services.

unemployment benefits¹⁵, and labour offices will employ a more individualised approach to them. The objective of individual counselling is either to place the person in the labour market, in a retraining course or back at school. Pilot testing of this approach has produced good results, although there are signs that standard individual action plans are less effective among unskilled young people, and that complementary instruments will have to be employed to mobilise this group of young people.

Retraining courses organised by labour offices, including those promoting socialisation and motivation, provide a wide variety of opportunities for acquiring vocational and specific skills. However, recognition of certificates from retraining is a problem, as they are not universally accepted and lack a formal link to certificates issued by schools.

b) Who leaves formal education with low levels of basic skills at the age of 15?

The first opportunity for leaving the education system is upon completion of compulsory schooling, normally at the age of 15. Estimates reveal that the proportion of children who do not progress to upper secondary schooling is very low (around 2.3%). A survey implemented via questionnaires¹⁶ has shown that 50% of those leaving education might be influenced by counselling and individual work to think again. Basic schools should devote far more attention to these pupils.

Before 2000 children who failed to complete basic¹⁷ could not apply for upper secondary programmes. This group included 60% of Roma children. From 2000 this opportunity has existed, but is conditional upon meeting the admission requirements. Those concerned can at least get a lower vocational qualification. In view of the fact that the proportion of children with incomplete basic education has been growing in recent years and is now at 7.5%¹⁸, this measure constitutes an important step towards enhancing access to education. However, these children lack the necessary knowledge to be admitted to more demanding programmes. Improvements in this respect have been brought about by the new education bill which makes it possible to remain in basic education up to the age of 18 and acquire the respective knowledge. Basic education may also be completed in courses provided by special and upper secondary schools¹⁹.

There are also schools which concentrate “under one roof” schools of various type and standards, and various educational facilities (e.g. secondary vocational school,

¹⁵ If they do spend 12 months in employment in the past three years, they are only entitled to social benefits.

¹⁶ Burda, V. at al.: P_ístup mlad_ch lidí ke vzd_lávání a jejich profesní uplatn_í (Access of Young People to Education and their Professional Careers), research for state administration, MoEYS, NITVE, 2003.

¹⁷ Children who completed compulsory education at basic school, but failed to complete successfully all nine years. This group also includes children who completed compulsory education at remedial school.

¹⁸ The proportion of children with incomplete basic education is also growing as a consequence of integration of children with special learning needs into mainstream schooling.

¹⁹ These courses were most in demand in 1993-1996 with between 5 and 8.5 thousand students per year. Source: Towards the Knowledge Society, Annual Report of the MoEYS on the state and development of the education system in 2002, MoEYS, IIE, 2004.

practical school, training centre, training facility)²⁰. This arrangement facilitates smooth transfers between schools of various types for students facing study-related difficulties. With the exception of practical school which trains pupils in performing simple tasks, the schools provide vocational education completed by the award of a vocational training certificate.

Support for the education of Roma young people.

A large majority of Roma young people leave education at the age of 15 and many of them attend remedial schools where they do not complete basic education. Since 1995 more systematic attention has been paid to the support of Roma children with the aim of placing them in mainstream schools. This attention focuses on basic education, as initial problems occur there which then hinder access to more advanced levels of education. Preparatory classrooms have been set up at basic schools, the position of Roma assistant has been introduced, the curricula have been adjusted and other measures taken to meet the needs of Roma children. However, the same focused attention is not devoted to Roma pupils in terms of stimulating and preparing them to enter secondary schooling. There is only one scheme within which the Ministry of Education provide subsidies to schools in order to cover the costs associated with the studies of Roma students (for details see question 11.a).

3. Increasing VET at tertiary level

In 1992 the Czech and Slovak Federation was dissolved and each republic became independent. In both republics the same higher education reform was passed in 1991. The new law abolished central planning by the ministries and re-established institutional autonomy, including the authority to establish curricula, regulate student numbers and create new faculties. The reforms also introduced the bachelor degree and an independent accreditation system. Student enrolments increased rapidly after 1991 — doubling in the first eight years. By 1998, the Czech system of higher education consisted of 27 universities and other more specialized institutions offering degrees after four to six years of study. The system did not include a recognized non-university sector. The Higher Education Act of 1998 and its amendment of 2001 allowed for more sweeping reforms, including the creation of a **binary system** of university and non-university education, the establishment of private institutions, the creation of a two-tiered system — bachelor's and master's — alongside the traditional four-to-six year integrated programs, and the increased importance of the independently run Accreditation Commission in the validation of study programs. Under the 1998 Higher Education Act, **higher vocational schools** can apply for accreditation to award degrees at the bachelor's level (or higher), either in their own name or under the umbrella of a university. Currently the Czech Republic has 57 institutions of higher education: 24 public, 4 state (military and police), and 29 private institutions of higher education.

Short master's programs, of the kind that build on a first university degree, were formally added to the traditional one-tiered programs in 1990 and described in more

²⁰ Training centre provides vocational qualifications to pupils who failed to complete remedial school. Training facility provides vocational qualifications to pupils who failed to complete all nine years of basic school.

detail in the Higher Education Act of 1998 and the 2001 amendment. The amended law of 2001 makes it compulsory to complete undergraduate studies before beginning postgraduate studies. Only over the last five years have a majority of Czech higher education institutions begun to introduce “short” master’s programs. The delay in the implementation of bachelor programs was a result of the realization by higher education institutions that simply dividing the existing curricula would not meet the criteria of a genuine two-tiered system defined by learning outcomes. Early scepticism from institutions, students and the labour market over the adoption of the two-tiered system is waning. Hence, more and more short-cycle master’s programs are replacing the one-tiered programs, especially after they were more clearly defined in the 2001 amendment to the Higher Education Act (one –to three years compared to two –to three previously) and have been promoted and supported by the **Transformation and Development Programme** since 2000. Non-university higher education institutions continue to offer bachelor’s programs, and only a few have been accredited to offer master’s programs. They may not, however, offer doctoral programs. All private institutions are currently of the non-university type.

The 1998 Higher Education Act states that higher education institutions may provide **lifelong learning** programmes within the framework of their educational activity, either free of charge or in return for payment. Lifelong learning may be either vocationally oriented or follow personal interests. The detailed conditions to which it is subject are stipulated in internal regulations which must be provided in advance to all prospective participants. Higher education institutions issue certificates to all those who graduate from lifelong learning programmes. Those who receive lifelong learning forms of provision are not students under the 1998 Act, which means that they cannot be awarded any academic degree. However, Amendment No. 147/2001 to the Act enables lifelong learning programmes to be provided in accredited study programmes. If those who graduate from lifelong learning programmes of this kind become students under the Act, a higher education institution may recognize up to 60 % of the credits they have already obtained as a result of such provision.

Post-secondary technical schools were introduced in the 1992/93 school year on an experimental basis. Their position and status were then strengthened by the June 1995 amendment to the Education Act (for basic, upper secondary and tertiary technical education), which made them a recognized part of the country’s education system. These schools mostly developed out of secondary technical schools and form a single legal entity with them. Their aim is to provide pupils with a technical qualification at tertiary level, appropriate for middle or higher-level management positions, or to improve qualifications already obtained. These schools offer courses lasting between 2 and 3.5 years. The longest courses involve practical training in the form of work placements of more than 3 months in length. Studies can be offered on a full-time or part-time basis. Each school prepares its own curriculum, which must be approved by the Ministry of Education. The law lays down rules for the allocation of time between general subjects, basic vocational subjects and specific vocational subjects at a ratio of roughly 20:40:30. The problem of a pathway through the system of education is currently being discussed, mainly in terms of the permeability between higher vocational schools and higher education institutions offering bachelor and master programmes.

As to the **science and engineering fields**, the share of students (at ISCED levels 5-6) is fairly high in the Czech Republic within EU-25. In 2000/2001, the share of

students in science and engineering fields reached 31 % (males 47 %, females 16 %), of which the figures for science, mathematics and computing are 15 % (males 22 %, females 7 %), and in engineering, manufacturing and construction 17 % (males 25 %, females 9 %). These relatively high figures, however, must be partly ascribed to the still low tertiary enrolment rates in the CR, i.e. to the limited accessibility of tertiary education in humanities. Consequently, the position of the Czech Republic looks quite unfavourable, when the proportions are expressed of graduates in science and engineering fields per 10 000 of the population aged 25-34 - these were 4 in 2000/2001 (males 5, females 2).²¹

4. Incentives for updating knowledge & skills

What initiatives and measures are the following taking to motivate employees to update knowledge and skills?

a) Government

The rights and obligations of employees and employers concerning CVT are governed by the Labour Code. It lays down the obligation for employees to upgrade systematically the skills that are necessary for their job. Accordingly, employers must establish favourable conditions for this.

An employer is obliged to facilitate the acquisition of a qualification for unskilled employees, by either practical or theoretical on-the-job instruction. The amount of support for involvement of an employee in training or part-time studies depends on whether the acquisition or updating of a qualification is concerned. In the event of an employee updating a qualification that is necessary to perform the job stipulated in the employment contract, he/she is entitled to a leave and to remuneration identical to that while at work. If acquisition of a new qualification is concerned, there is no entitlement to a leave or material support. The terms governing leave and material support are stipulated either in the collective agreement or in the form of the business organisation's internal regulations. The allowances granted may be the same as in the case of qualification upgrading.

For the employer to be certain that the expenditure on the training of his/her employees will, at least partially, gain a return, he/she may conclude a special agreement with the employee. There he/she undertakes to provide a particular support to the employee, and the employee undertakes to stay with the employer for a certain period of time or to pay back the training costs. The Labour Code also stipulates that the employer must not ask the employee to stay with him/her more than five years.

The Labour Code does not distinguish between acquisition and upgrading of a qualification. This distinction is made possible by varying approaches of enterprises to the amount of support they provide to their employees in this respect.

Stimuli for the development of CVT are set forth in the **Long-Term Plan for Education and the Development of the Education System in the CR**. They include a clear definition of responsibilities for CVT by means of a law on the division of responsibilities, and the development of a law on CVT. Attention should also be

²¹ Education across Europe. Chapter G: Mathematics, science and technology. EUROSTAT 2004.

paid to the introduction of modular programmes and quality assurance in CVT via an accreditation and certification system. These priorities have also been projected to regional long-term plans for education and the development of the education system. In line with the particular labour market situation, regions intend to set up regional CVT centres – usually at secondary and post-secondary technical schools of high standards. This will allow for the use of their human resources and material capacity for retraining and continuing training in selected professions.²²

The **Government Council for Human Resources Development** should also play an important role in the development of CVT. The Council was set up in 2003 as a standing consultative body to the Czech government, which also has an initiating and co-ordinating role. The government assigned the Council chairman to submit, by the end of March 2004, a draft programme for the implementation of the Strategy for Human Resources Development.²³

There are regional councils for human resources development in nearly all regions of the Czech Republic. They are involved in the development of strategic regional documents concerning HRD. One of their key activities is to organise research into and estimates of the future demand for a skilled labour force and the related optimisation of CVT in the region.

Employers' demand for CVT is stimulated within **active employment policy**. Labour offices may co-finance the costs employers incur in relation to the retraining of their employees for other jobs.

A partial coverage of costs of CVT is also available as part of the set of **investment incentives** for foreign and Czech investors, which was introduced in 1998. Upon meeting specific statutory requirements, material support for the training and retraining of employees may be obtained as one of the investment incentives available.

b) Employers

Most decision-making powers concerning resources for human resources development and lifelong learning in the business sector are in the hands of companies which decide on their internal continuing and practical training programmes. However, surveys have revealed considerable differences among companies in relation to the industry in which they operate, their size (number of employees), skill intensity of the jobs, ownership (foreign or Czech owner), etc.

An employer plays a dominant role in stimulating employees to get involved in CVT. His/her requirement or recommendation is in most cases an incentive for such involvement. Moreover, it is also a strong incentive if the employee sees the need or even necessity for training. However, promotion and increased pay still constitute the strongest incentive in this respect. Over one quarter of Czech companies (26,2 %) state that training will be factored into the level of remuneration. On the other hand, a nearly identical proportion of companies say that training has no such influence (24,1 %).²⁴

²² The development of education and schooling in regions of the CR – long-term plans for education and the development of education systems in regions (a report for a government meeting). MoEYS, February 2004. (<http://www.msmt.cz/files/html/JKZPRAVA%20.htm>)

²³ Government of the CR, Council for Human Resources Development (<http://www.vlada.cz/>)

²⁴ A survey among employers. National Observatory of Employment and Training and Median, 2002.

Some state administration sectors, such as healthcare and energy, have their own CVT systems which are governed by the relevant decrees. The decree is binding for all employers. (see question 10)

c) Other stakeholders

Social partners in the CR are actively involved in the development and evaluation of key documents concerning CVT. However, their role is limited more to consultations, as they have no decision-making or executive powers.

Trade unions consider systematic lifelong learning to be one of the major conditions for maintaining employment. However, their objectives are very general and they propose no specific measures. If training is mentioned in collective agreements, it is largely on a marginal and not very specific note.

d) Please provide examples (if any) of the contribution of VET to successfully promoting inclusion

Since 1991 a programme entitled Chance²⁵ has been implemented. It assists clients of labour offices in their integration into society and the labour market. The programme was initially implemented in one district. Currently, over 60% of districts across the Czech Republic are participating. The programme may be credited for its individual and comprehensive approach to the clients. The client who takes part in the programme on the basis of his/her own decision and recommendation of the relevant labour office normally goes through three interlinking stages. As the clients are mostly individuals who have not been very successful in school and employment, their awareness of the need for self-fulfilment must be encouraged. After this stage professional diagnostic testing is carried out²⁶, whereby the client's personality is mapped and his/her professional orientation is established. Then a one-month motivation course follows, during which the client's suitability for the chosen profession is tested in a working environment in his/her place of residence. This stage is finalised by assessment of the overall suitability of the client for the profession. This is followed by a retraining course or search for an alternative solution. Retraining courses are modularised and consist of theory and practical training. Theoretical education is provided by Republikove vzdělávací centrum, s.r.o. (RVC) or regional training centres. Practical training is organised in small and medium-sized companies, again in the client's place of residence, in line with the relevant curricula and agreements concluded between the enterprise and RVC. Upon passing a final examination the participant obtains a certificate. Approximately 600 clients of labour offices are trained in 40 professions within the _ance programme each year. The resulting rate of success in the labour market is high and hovers around 80%²⁷.

Summary:

The Czech government is fully aware of insufficient motivation on the part of individuals and employers for improving and updating knowledge and skills. This concerns particularly low-skilled individuals and small and medium-sized enterprises. A solution may consist in the introduction of financial incentives and effective

²⁵ The programme was developed with the support of the MoLSA, the MoEYS and Phare.

²⁶ Professional diagnostics is carried out with the support of COMDI computer diagnostics.

²⁷ Success rate is determined in terms of finding employment within one month of the course completion. Clients usually find employment in the enterprises where they underwent practical training.

information support.²⁸ Although these instruments have been described in major policy documents, no steps to put them into practice have been taken so far. Neither has work on the law on CVT progressed any further.

Motivation of individuals, both employed and unemployed, to invest in further development of their capacities by targeted training is rather low due to factors such as lack of incentives, and to a certain degree also to the existing social assistance scheme in the Czech Republic.²⁹

5. Meeting the challenges of an ageing population

In 2002 the government adopted the *National Programme for the Preparation for Ageing for 2003 – 2007* which is based on a number of supra-national documents and recommendations. One of the objectives of the Programme is to support economic activity among the older generation and their capacity to retain employment. The following measures articulated in the Programme concern the training of elderly people:

- Providing older employees with the same opportunities of changing their qualifications as younger employees have;
- Ensuring respect for the needs of older employees in relation to the modernisation of the training and qualifications systems, particularly by means of recognizing their previous experience;
- Giving higher preference to disadvantaged individuals – i.e. also elderly people – as regards placement in retraining;
- Providing for retraining, via labour offices, of elderly people made redundant as a result of restructuring of the national economy; introducing special training courses focused on changing their professional orientation;
- Enhancing measures facilitating the return of elderly people to the education system.

Implementation of these measures is the responsibility of the relevant ministries.

Some measures are being implemented as part of the National Employment Action Plan. The plan assigns labour offices with the task of increasing the proportion of elderly people placed in active employment policy schemes. Their previous work experience, qualification and personal qualities must be respected. Moreover, the plan sets out, in co-operation with social partners, to seek such ways of restructuring

²⁸ Long-Term Plan for Education and the Development of the Education System in the Czech Republic (for pre-school, basic, secondary, post-secondary technical and continuing education). MoEYS, March 2002.

([http://www.msmt.cz/ DOMEK/Default.asp?ARI=101547&CAI=2802&EXPS="DLOUHODOB **"%20A ND%20"ZÁM_R*](http://www.msmt.cz/ DOMEK/Default.asp?ARI=101547&CAI=2802&EXPS=))

²⁹ Monographs candidate countries – Vocational education and training and employment services in the Czech Republic. ETF, 2002

the economy that help older employees retain their position in the labour market.³⁰ A Phare programme should also focus on this issue.

More specific assistance in relation to training is provided to elderly people by labour offices, in the form of placing them in retraining courses. However, the actual results are unsatisfactory. Analyses as well as day-to-day experience show that it is difficult to increase involvement of older persons in retraining courses³¹. The reasons for this include a low level of motivation on the part of these people and a limited range of suitable active employment policy schemes. A scheme that may help the older generation remain economically active is the ongoing *National Programme for Computer Literacy*³². The scheme is designed for the general public and its objective is to ensure that, by 2006, 50% of the population acquires basic computer skills. The courses are in great demand. In 2003 30 thousand people participated. Most applicants are over 40.

Important welfare measures have been taken in recent years that support economic activity on the part of the older generation. The retirement age limit has been increased twice. From 2013 men will be able to retire at the age of 63 and women at 59-63 depending on the number of children they have had. The possibility of premature retirement with temporarily cut income has been abolished. Premature retirement is now only possible with permanently cut income. On the other hand, the opportunities for pensioners to earn have been improved. The previous regulation made it only possible to collect a limited (low) level of income from work together with a retirement pension in the first two years of retirement. Now there is no limit on the amount they can earn without losing their retirement pension.

Summary:

Policy documents form the basic framework for addressing the issue of an ageing population.

CVT is viewed as the main instrument for the older population to retain employment. However, it is necessary to enhance the motivation on the part of older people to take part in CVT, and to design courses that would meet the specific requirements of this group. Attention must also be paid to the observance of the ban on age-related discrimination. The conclusions and recommendations contained in the OECD study "Ageing and Employment Policies" concerning ways to retain employability and employment levels among older sections of the population may be put into practice.

6. Effectiveness and efficiency of VET

a) In the current the national debate, how effective is the system of VET perceived to be?

The effectiveness of the VET system may be assessed on the basis of **functional literacy** (i.e. the capacity to take part in the world of information), which is necessary for success in working as well as personal life. Its levels were measured in the CR as

³⁰ Retraining and retraining specifically focusing on transferring to a different production process.

³¹ Over 60 % of people who undergo retraining are over 35.

³² The programme is implemented by the Ministry of Informatics as part of state information and communication policy. Applicants may undertake two-hour courses at three levels. The participants may choose a specific course or undergo all three courses. 78% of the costs are covered by the stated, 22% by the participant.

part of the IALS international project in 1998³³. A characteristic feature of functional literacy among Czechs as compared to other developed countries is a relatively lower proportion of people who scored very low levels (1 and 2), a large proportion of those in the middle (level 3) and a relative low proportion of individuals with the highest levels of functional literacy (4 and 5). The functional literacy of the Czech population has certain specific features. Firstly, there is a large disproportion between three major categories: **prose, document and quantitative literacy**. Czechs scored below average results in prose literacy – i.e. the capacity to work actively with information which is contained in a common text (an article, statement, essay, etc.). In this respect the CR ranks among countries with a relatively large disadvantage. This is particularly apparent from the low proportion of those who achieved high levels. Czechs attained slightly above average levels in document literacy – i.e. the capacity to work with documents (questionnaires, forms etc.). As regards quantitative literacy, Czechs rank among the top achievers. Quantitative literacy is the capacity to work with numbers, to apply arithmetic operations to data contained in materials of varying complexity, such as graphs, tables, reports, etc.

Analysis of the results in terms of the level of educational attainment shows that people with vocational qualifications without “maturita” have an insufficient level of functional literacy. In this respect they do not differ much from those who only have basic education. This is evidence of the low effectiveness of this educational route in terms of the development of capacities facilitating participation in the world of information.

Similar outcomes were generated as part of the PISA international project (*Programme for International Student Assessment*) which is focused on 15-year-old students.³⁴ In this research three dimensions of functional literacy were explored – **reading, mathematical and scientific**. The achievement of Czech pupils in terms of mathematical literacy does not differ from the OECD average. As regards scientific literacy, Czech students scored above average. In terms of reading literacy, students in the CR are weaker compared to the OECD average. In terms of comparison, the CR shows smaller differences between the highest and the lowest achievers than other countries. One of the major conclusions of the study is that Czechs are, on the whole, very bad at extracting information from a text – 9% of Czech 15-year-old students even failed to show the very basic skills (in the PISA study) and 14% presented only the most simple skills.

Employers' evaluation of the skills of school leavers³⁵ is not clear-cut. So far as industrial companies and manual jobs are concerned, specialisation is preferred. However, other employers tend to appreciate more a broad (i.e. more flexible) profile of a school leaver. According to a survey entitled **MEDIAN – NOZV (2002)**³⁶,

³³ Literacy in the Information Age, Final Report of the International Adult Literacy Survey, Paris OECD and Statistics Canada (2000). The measuring of functional literacy within the OECD IALS and SIALS studies took place in selected OECD countries in 1994 and 1998/9 (in the CR only in 1998/9).

³⁴ Straková et al. *V_domosti a dovednosti pro _ivot* (Knowledge and Skills for Life). Reading, mathematical and scientific literacy of fifteen-year-old pupils on OECD countries, IIE, Prague 2002..

³⁵ __astnová, P.: *Pot_eby zam_stnavatel_ a p_ipravenost absolvent_ na vstup na trh práce* (Employers' needs and the readiness of school leavers to enter the labour market), working material for the project *Uplatn_ní absolvent_ kol: anal_za a v_hled* (The Situation of School Leavers in the Labour Market: analysis and outlook), Prague, IIE, 2000.

³⁶ Labour Force Survey. Final Report. Prague Median, 2003.

employers mention the following deficits classified according to the level of educational attainment:

- university graduates: language competencies;
- secondary school leavers with “maturita”: language competencies, computer skills, problem solving capacities;
- individuals with vocational qualification without “maturita”: language competencies, computer skills, willingness to work overtime and flexible working hours, reliability and accuracy, honesty, integrity and loyalty.

In terms of international comparison **the rate of failure** in the labour market on the part of school leavers and the young generation in the Czech Republic as expressed by their **rate of unemployment** is about average. The rate of unemployment among young people is roughly double the rate of unemployment of the economically active population as a whole³⁷. Moreover, the rate of unemployment is very closely linked to educational attainment. Those with the highest levels of educational attainment are the highest achievers in the labour market and vice versa. In 2002 the rate of unemployment of individuals with vocational qualifications without “maturita” was 23.8%, those with secondary education with “maturita” showed 20.8%, those with post-secondary technical education 9.9% and university degree holders 6.3%.

Interesting data about the position of school leavers in the labour market may be obtained when monitoring the **match or mismatch between educational attainment and the job performed**³⁸. According to a survey examining access to education and professional careers of young people³⁹ it is clear that only about a half of young people perform a job in the field they studied, and 30% work in positions which are not at all related to their qualification. School leavers often work in positions for which they are overqualified. The survey has revealed that some 75% of young people (gender not specified) aged 20 – 29 perform jobs that correspond to their qualification levels. However, a relatively high proportion of young people with advanced levels of education (secondary technical with “maturita” – 23%, tertiary – 19%) are overqualified for the jobs they do.

b) + c) In the current national debate, is the VET system seen as offering efficiency/ good value for money? What are the main trends in terms of investment in VET?

VET resources and capacity are not developing evenly and show certain internal disproportions. Although virtually all political parties describe education as a priority, these political proclamations fail to get through to decisions on the structure of public expenditure. Strategic aims set out in the White Paper envisage an increase in public spending on education up to 6% of GDP in 2005. Contrary to this objective, *the*

³⁷ Burda, V.: P_ıpravenost mláde_e a absolvent_ _kol pro vstup do sv_ıta práce (Readiness of young people and school leavers to enter the labour market). In Lidské zdroje v _R 2003 (Human resources in the CR 2003). Prague: NTF 2003, s. 50-77.

³⁸ Vojt_ch,J.- Festová,J.: Uplatn_ıní absolvent_ _st_edních _kol ve sf_ıe práce: Shoda dosa_eného vzd_ılání a vykonávaného zam_ıstnání (The position of secondary school leavers in the labour market: a match between qualifications achieved and jobs performed), National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education, Prague, 2002

³⁹ Burda, V. at al.: P_ıstup mlad_ch lidí ke vzd_ılávání a jejich profesní uplatn_ıní (kód LS02G) programu LS V_zkum pro státnı správu Ministerstva _kolství, mláde_e a t_ılov_chovy (see footnote 12) MoEYS, NITVE 2003.

proportion of public expenditure on education (as % of GDP) decreased in the past ten years (1993-2002)⁴⁰ and totalled a mere 4.7% in 2002.

The situation in education due to the overall lack of financial resources is further complicated by uneven distribution of the resources within the system. Although there is a decrease in the number of secondary school students and an increase at the tertiary level, these changes have not been properly reflected in funding. This has resulted in growing real unit costs⁴¹ at secondary vocational schools (by 33% in 1997-2002), while unit costs at universities decreased (by 10% in the same period). It is apparent that there is a substantial lack of funding in tertiary education, although a decrease in unit costs may also be influenced by student distribution (the proportion of students in so-called “cheaper” programmes is increasing). Financial drawbacks constrain the development of the tertiary sector. In spite of this, proposals for the introduction of tuition fees have not as yet been politically acceptable..

The development of **public expenditure on initial vocational education and training** was slightly more favourable compared to the overall expenditure on education. In the seven years from 1997-2002⁴² public expenditure on education expressed in constant prices increased by 10%, while expenditure on IVET increased by 12%. However, the use of these resources was not always efficient. Inefficient use of resources in secondary IVET results, above all, from the fragmentation of the network of secondary schools in the CR. Schools have few students⁴³ and provide too many programmes. This makes it difficult to use human and material resources efficiently and maintain their quality at appropriate levels. Limited financial resources make it impossible to pay teachers appropriate wages, which is becoming one of the most severe problems in education. Moreover, technical facilities at schools are becoming outdated.

Public administration reform has brought about a change in financial flows. The funding of IVET (with the exception of universities) have been taken over by new regional authorities. However, the financing methodology is still determined by the MoEYS.

As regards **expenditure on continuing education and training**, there is no comprehensive statistical data on its levels. There is only partial information concerning some amounts of public spending – particularly concerning part-time programmes and retraining. Part-time studies (while in employment) at public schools is free of charge and the costs are covered from the MoEYS budget. Expenditure on retraining is also statistically monitored. The data show that, although the overall expenditure on retraining programmes has increased considerably in recent years, there are still only about 8% of registered job seekers undergoing retraining. Based on some surveys it may be estimated that Czech enterprises allocate approximately

⁴⁰ In 1993 public investment in education was 5.3 % of GDP, in 2002 it was only 4.7 %. In 1998, 2000 and 2001 it even dropped to 4.4%.

⁴¹ See Annex 2: Real unit costs expressed as the level of current expenditure in constant prices per pupil/student

⁴² See Annex I: Expenditure on VET may be followed in more detail from as late as 1997.

⁴³ An average secondary technical schools has approx. 200 students, an average secondary vocational school may have 300 students. In the course of the 1990s the size of SVSs decreased, particularly due to the departure of students to STSs. The size of STSs decreased (by 40%) due to the establishment of a large number of mostly private schools.

1.12% of labour costs for CVT of their employees, which is roughly half of what the business sector in more developed countries pays⁴⁴.

Household expenditure on education does not show clear-cut trends. Expenditure on education as a proportion of total household expenditure fluctuated over the years under review and the average figure was 0.55 %⁴⁵. This is considerably less than in most EU countries⁴⁶.

7. Improvements in learning processes and contents

Innovations to the existing VET programmes have been focused on the content rather than on a radical change in teaching methodology. In the 1990s the content of some programmes changed fundamentally, but most schools have retained traditional teaching approaches. Schools which attempt to innovate them often face resentment on the part of teachers, doubts expressed by some parents, lack of support on the part of the relevant education authorities and legislative barriers. Efforts to introduce modular arrangements and increase the flexibility of study programmes in order to facilitate individualised routes through education have not met with a widely positive response (see question 1c).

Extensive curricula reform is currently underway. In 2001 the process of developing so-called **framework educational programmes (FEP)** (curricula) was launched. This constitutes a major shift towards a curriculum based on competencies. In addition to the content of education, the programmes also set out the desired final competencies of school leavers. By the end of 2003 over 20 FEPs had been designed covering approx. 70% of VET students⁴⁷. They will form a foundation for the development of school-based curricula, and have already been tested on a pilot basis as part of the POSUN⁴⁸ project in a number of schools. Another project called MEGAPOSUN⁴⁹ envisages more extensive testing (in several regions) of the competencies of vocational and technical schools to develop school-based programmes on the basis of FEPs. Key competencies form an important part of the FEPs. They involve communication skills, work with information, teamwork and the capacity to learn. FEPs should come into force upon the passage of the new education bill (currently being debated by the Parliament).

The need for increased mobility and flexibility of the labour force has led to the expansion of the general component in secondary VET curricula. The scope of general education in VET curricula has traditionally been quite extensive, which makes it easier for students to continue studying. Another important development was the adoption of a **new system of fields of education**⁵⁰ (2003), which rests on the principle of broadly conceived subject areas to increase school leavers' employability. The number of subject areas has been cut from the original 756 to 268.

⁴⁴ Expenditure on VET of employees in Czech enterprises as a proportion of labour costs was 1.13%, the EU average was 2.3%.

⁴⁵ Source: CSO. The figure is for 1995 – 2003. The highest proportion was seen in 1995 (0.66 %), the lowest in 1999 (0.42 %)

⁴⁶ Source EUROSTAT. The EU 15 average in 2001 was 0.99 %

⁴⁷ Obejdeme se i bez rámcov_ch program_ (We will do without framework curricula). U_ itelské noviny, 106, no. 44 2003. p 11

⁴⁸ www.nuov.cz

⁴⁹ It is planned that the project will be implemented as part of the Operational Programme – Human Resources Development co-funded from the European Social Fund.

⁵⁰ Proposal for a System of Fields of Education. Prague : NITVE, 2003

A high number of new programmes with a **broad profile**⁵¹ were designed particularly at “maturita” level (ISCED 3A) which accommodate many students. New programmes with a **general profile** have been launched, such as the technical or business lyceum. However, there are still many programmes training for a narrow range of jobs, most of them being three-year programmes without “maturita” (ISCED 3C). The **proportion of general education** in “maturita” programmes (ISCED A) is set to be at least 45%, in “non-maturita” programmes (ISCED 3C) it is 30%. The general component has been enlarged to the detriment of the practical component, which earlier accounted for 50% of the provision, while now it should only be 35%⁵².

For the purpose of improving information literacy levels, an **Outline of State Information Policy in Education**⁵³ was established in 2000. The objectives of Stage I of its implementation (until 2005) include the following: to establish conditions facilitating effective and efficient implementation of ICT in school instruction and, consequently, achieve appropriate levels of information literacy in school leavers; to facilitate the use of ICT as a common instrument by 75% of teachers; to create conditions for the involvement of schools in the system of lifelong learning in ICT. The **“Internet to Schools”** scheme, which should provide schools with appropriate ICT facilities, has, since its launch, been dogged by financial and organisational problems. Currently 96% of schools and school facilities are connected to the Internet.

Instruction in **foreign languages** is a compulsory part of the curricula for “maturita” as well as “non-maturita” programmes. However, the standards of the instruction are often low due to inadequate qualifications of teachers.⁵⁴ Nearly one third of the young population (20-29) are not able to speak any foreign language, an over two fifths of the population only know one foreign language. The most widely used languages are English, German and Russian. The use of other languages including French is negligible. The fact that a half of young people with vocational qualification without “maturita” cannot command any language of the EU suggests the scope of the problem language training is facing.

Since the 1990s **entrepreneurial skills** have gradually been incorporated into curricula. A new subject has been introduced which covers topics such as setting up a business or a company, and the development of managerial and business skills. Three-year programmes cover basic skills, while “maturita” programmes provide a broader scope of business competencies which often include work in “fictitious” or student companies. An analysis of curricula⁵⁵ has shown that approximately 30% of programmes approved after 1990 cover the topic of business skills. Employers contribute to the development of business skills by organising work placements for students. Labour offices organise so-called non-specific retraining courses where the

⁵¹ e.g. mechanical and electrical engineering, business academies, agro-business etc.

⁵² Kofro_ová, O. – Vojt_ch,J.: Anal_za vzd_lávacích program_ z hlediska zam_stnatelnosti absolvent_ (Analysis of study programmes in term of the employability of school leavers). Prague, Tauris, 2000.

FEP for bricklayers, upholsterers, tailors, electricians, carpenters. Prague: NITVE, 2002.

⁵³ Outline of State Information Policy in Education. Prague: MoEYS, 2000

⁵⁴ According to the results of the project P_ístup mlad_ch lidí ke vzd_lávání a jejich profesní uplatn_í (Access of Young People to Education and their Professional Careers) (LS02G) of the LS programme Research for state administration of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. MoEYS, NITVE (2003)

⁵⁵ Kofro_ová, O. - Vojt_ch, J.: Anal_za vzd_lávacích program_ z hlediska zam_stnatelnosti absolvent_. Pracovní materiály pro projekt „Uplatn_í absolvent_ _kol: Anal_za a v_hled“, Prague, IIE, RITVĚ, CHES 2000, 67 pages. (see footnote 42)

participants can acquire, inter alia, the skills they need to set up and operate their own business or company.

Entrepreneurial skills are often part of courses provided by private training organisations⁵⁶: Supply is modified to meet demand, but only some of these programmes are able to prove high standards based on the know-how of leading foreign companies. In the 1990s a **network of 21 regional information centres for entrepreneurship** was set up. The centres provide the relevant information to prospective and existing entrepreneurs in the given region. Their operations also involve organisation of training and seminars. These activities are co-funded by the state.

In the past, inappropriate attention was devoted to the development of **skills related to the labour market** in the Czech education system. Students obtain basic information about the labour market as part of services provided by information and counselling centres at labour offices. However, visits to counselling centres cannot make up for a systematic development of skills necessary for the employment process, which should be fostered by the education system. Methodology related to the subject entitled “**Career Choice**” at basic schools has been prepared, as well as for “**Introduction to the World of Labour**” for secondary schools. However, integration of these subjects into instruction is not binding and is entirely at the discretion of school directors.

8. Improving the integration of different learning sites; integration of formal and informal learning

Students at secondary vocational and secondary technical schools acquire **practical experience in a real working environment**. *Gymnazia* students do not undergo this experience. Schools are not obliged to organise work placements, and approx. 65% of students in vocational programmes without “maturita” do not enter a real working environment during their training.⁵⁷ The reasons for this unfavourable situation include the low level of motivation on the part of some school directors and insufficient willingness of employers to co-operate with schools. A certain inertia in the perception of VET in the Czech Republic also plays an important role – practical training often takes place in facilities that are part of schools. This promotes the trend of preferring training and school and underestimating practical experience in a real working environment. The situation is different so far as STSs are concerned. These schools are more active in arranging for work placements for their students. A total of 92% of students undergo a placement in a working environment. The drawback is

⁵⁶ Most frequently organised programmes include accountancy, management, marketing, trade etc. Source: Palán, Zdeněk: *Mini-průzkum současných trendů v dalším odborném vzdělávání* (Mini-survey of current trends in CVET). Prague: National Observatory of Training and Employment. 2001.

⁵⁷ Kofroňová, O. -Vojtěch, J.: *Účast na realizaci odborného vyučování ve 3letých učebních a 4letých studijních oborech SOU* (A survey concerning the implementation of practical training in three- and four-year courses at SVSs). RITVE, Prague 2000

that the placements are often too short (29% of students spend a maximum of 3 weeks on a placement, which is insufficient)⁵⁸.

The National Programme for the Development of Education in the CR (White Paper) sets out as one of the measures addressing the transition of pupils from school to employment “to enact legislation so as to ensure that a part of training takes place in a real business environment – be it practical training as part of vocational programmes without “maturita”, or work placements as part of other VET programmes”. The existing legislation fails to commit schools and to stimulate employers to facilitate practical experience in a real working environment.

There has not been any progress in the CR as regards **integration of formal and non-formal education**. Certification in initial education lacks links to continuing education outside the schooling system. The issue of certification of competencies acquired in a non-formal manner has yet been addressed systematically. School directors may only recognise, on the basis of documents presented, the applicant’s qualifications acquired in the formal system⁵⁹. Although the new education bill provides more opportunities of recognising non-formal qualifications, the decision is still at the discretion of the relevant school director (see question 1c).

So-called “balance-diagnostic” centres have been established at labour offices. Their task is to assess the overall potential and competencies of an individual and recommend what job or training opportunities should be offered to him/her. However, labour offices normally fail to make further use of the work of these centres, which is of a very high standard. Still, the centre could provide valuable experience and play an important role in recognizing the outcomes of non-formal learning.

A **law on lifelong (continuing) learning** is currently in the making. It should address, in a coherent manner, the issue of recognising non-formal education as part of acquiring qualifications at various levels. The foundation for this should be provided by a system of evaluation standards for various disciplines, which should be applied both in examinations within the formal education system and for the purpose of recognising competencies acquired in a non-formal manner.

9. Evaluation and quality assurance of VET provision

a) for the individual (evaluation of competencies and knowledge)

⁵⁸ Kofro_ová,O.-Vojt_ch,J.:– _et_ení k realizaci praxe _ák_ studijních obor_ SO_ v reálném pracovním prostředí (A survey concerning work placements of STS students in a real working environment), NITVĚ, Prague, 2001

⁵⁹ The following may be recognised: (i) successfully completed studies at upper secondary school with no time limitation, (ii) as regards individual subjects and incomplete studies at upper secondary level – years successfully completed no longer than within ten years of their completion may be recognised, (iii) in higher education –examinations passed in those subjects that correspond, in terms of content, to the subjects taught at the relevant institution no longer than ten years ago.

The assessment of student knowledge at **secondary schools** is carried out on a continuous basis, and in the middle and at the end of each year. Programmes are completed by a final or “maturita” examination. Increased decision-making powers for schools have resulted in larger differentiation between schools at the same level in terms of the demands placed on students. This is why the “**maturita**” **examination reform** has been launched, which aims to provide for more objective assessment and for unification of requirements concerning general education, regardless of the vocational specification of the school⁶⁰. The reform should provide an impetus for positive changes in the content, forms and methods of education so as to ensure that education is focused on key competencies, as opposed to the passive acquisition of encyclopaedic facts.

The **Centre for Evaluation of Educational Results** (CERMAT)⁶¹ plays an important role in the development of an evaluation environment. Its main task is to develop instruments for external evaluation and interpretation of its results. It also organises teacher training in the area of evaluation and provides expertise in relation to surveys that are part of international programmes focused on evaluation of learning outcomes.

Assessment of student knowledge and competencies in **tertiary education** is carried out regularly after each semester on the basis of either a written or oral performance. Each subject difficulty is expressed by the relevant number of credits. Upon completion of a particular stage (Bachelor, Master, Doctoral) comprehensive examinations are taken and a dissertation is defended.

Assessment of learner competencies and knowledge in continuing education and training depends on the respective form of CVET. If it is provided by initial education providers (at secondary and tertiary levels), CVET is considered to be equal to initial education and student assessment is identical. In the event of CVET being required by law for the performance of specific professions, the relevant law also lays down the form of assessment⁶². Assessment of the knowledge acquired in courses provided by employers or in courses undertaken at the participant’s will is subject to the employer’s wish, or subject to the procedures used by the training organization.

b) for the institution (internal and external assessment)

Evaluation of **secondary and post-secondary technical schools** is regulated by the law on state administration and self-government in education⁶³. So far⁶⁴ the law does not commit school facilities directly to carry out **internal evaluation**, but the local authority on the territory of which the school is located discusses reports about

⁶⁰ A so-called *common part* of the „maturita“ examination will ensure uniformity of requirements. Its content, form and assessment criteria will be set by the Centre for Evaluation of Educational Results. A so-called “profile” part of “maturita” will be used to test the knowledge and skills in the subjects the school considers to be the most important in view of its specialisation. Its content and form will be determined by the school director. Students may also take non-obligatory examinations in line with his/her employment or educational plans.

⁶¹ CERMAT was set up on 1.1. 2004 by means of transforming the Centre for the “Maturita” Examination Reform – this means that the expertise built in previous years may be made use of. CERMAT is one of the divisions of the Institute for Information on Education (IIE).

⁶² For example Law no.312/2002, as amended, on regional and local government officers

⁶³ Law no. 564/1990, as amended, on state administration and self-government in education

⁶⁴ The new education bill contains provisions (§12) concerning internal evaluation (self-evaluation) of schools, which will serve as a basis for developing an annual report on the school’s activities and as a basis for external evaluation carried out by CSI. The framework structure, rules and timetables will be set in a specific implementation document.

educational results with the school director. This induces schools to develop such evaluation reports. There is no uniform methodology available to schools. The only requirement is that the annual report on the school's operations must contain data about the learning results, the results of final and "maturita" examinations and data about out-of-school activities. This places internal evaluation fully within the purview of individual schools, while local authorities may influence the content of the reports by means of their requirements. Post-secondary technical schools may also follow the non-state scheme entitled EVOS (Evaluation of post-secondary technical education), which has been developed using foreign evaluation models and is very similar to that used by the Accreditation Commission when evaluating HE institutions. As participation in the scheme is voluntary and must be paid for by the school, the use of the scheme is limited.

External evaluation is carried out by the Czech School Inspectorate which seeks to identify and assess the educational process and its results against curricula and syllabi in place. It is up to the initiatives of local authorities to provide a follow-up to external evaluation of schools and articulate requirements for enhancing the quality of educational activities. The law entitles them to discuss these requirements with schools. Local authorities may set up commissions for education and schools may set up school councils. As the members of both bodies include teachers from the particular school, this is a point of connection between internal and external evaluation. External evaluation of post-secondary technical schools which pursue the Bachelor status for their programmes is carried out by the Accreditation Commission (as in the case of HE institutions).

Evaluation of the quality of both **public and private HE institutions** is governed by the Higher Education Act⁶⁵, which commands HE institutions to evaluate, on a regular basis, their activities and to publish the results in their annual reports. Detailed terms of reference for **internal evaluation**, i. e. the content, terms and conditions and frequency, must be set out in the HE institutions' statutes. The issue of further development of internal as well as external evaluation must be addressed in long-term plans⁶⁶ which HE institutions prepare for five-year periods, update annually and discuss with the MoEYS. There are differences between schools as regards the quality of internal evaluation schemes. Some HE institutions also use rector's guidelines to develop their evaluation methodologies. They may have specific schemes for evaluating the quality of all study programmes, may set up commissions for specific programmes, and carry out regular anonymous surveys among students and graduates by means of questionnaires.

External evaluation is the responsibility of the *Accreditation Commission*⁶⁷ (AC), whose members are appointed by the government. All study programmes are subject to accreditation, which is awarded for a certain period by the MoEYS on the basis of a positive statement of the AC. The AC also carries out evaluation of the activities of HE institutions, which is normally concentrated on individual faculties providing

⁶⁵ Law no. 111/1998, as amended, on higher education institutions

⁶⁶ The full name is long-term plans for education, science, research, development, artistic and other creative activities of HE institutions

⁶⁷ The Accreditation Commission is a member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), Central and Eastern European Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEEN), European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

programmes in the same or a similar field⁶⁸. This evaluation is primarily based on quantitative indicators (the structure of academic staff, resources obtained in the form of grants, etc.). HE institutions are also interested in external evaluation done by foreign and Czech experts and evaluation required for admission to prestigious associations⁶⁹. The implementation of this type of evaluation on a larger scale is hindered by the fact that the relevant financial resources must be raised. Some HE institutions also monitor the press and evaluate the articles published. The MoEYS's plan⁷⁰ is to improve co-ordination between external and internal evaluation of HE institutions, and to increase the involvement of students in internal evaluation. Moreover the involvement of the professional public in external evaluation should be increased (public evaluation of theses and dissertations as part of associate professorship proceedings) and the involvement of other relevant entities (employers, professional associations, etc.). The overall evaluation environment would be improved if one of the existing research institutions would be assigned the task of developing evaluation methodologies.

Evaluation of **continuing vocational education** is affected by the lack of legislation in this area⁷¹. *Internal evaluation* is the responsibility of training organisations. They normally use questionnaires which the participants in various courses are asked to fill in, and the organisations assess the level of their satisfaction.

External evaluation is only carried out as part of accreditation proceedings concerning an institution or a study programme. The application is assessed by the AC and accreditation may be awarded by the relevant ministry for a limited period of time. Checks on compliance with obligations related to accreditation are not common.

Various forms of certification have been gradually developing in the CR⁷² and educational institutions can make use of them. However, the proportion of certified institutions providing adult education in the overall number of continuing training providers is still negligible⁷³.

c) for the system (monitoring and evaluation)

Monitoring of the education system is the responsibility of the Institute for Information on Education (IIV). The Institute collects, administers and updates statistical data about education which cover the overall formal education system. It issues statistical yearbooks on education containing basic data about schools, pupils/students and pedagogical staff and about public expenditure on education. Apart from this the IIE provides, as part of the SET programme, comparable information⁷⁴ about secondary schools which are designed primarily for prospective

⁶⁸ For example in 1998 all business faculties were evaluated, 1999 this concerned all medical faculties and in 2004 there is ongoing evaluation of theology faculties.

⁶⁹ For example evaluation was carried out in 1998 at the University of Economics, and based on the results the university was admitted to a prestigious association of European business schools (CEMS).

⁷⁰ Tertiary Education Development Strategy (2000 – 2005)

⁷¹ One exception is the training of regional and local government officers

⁷² Training organisations may get a certificate within the ISO 9000 scheme from a certification body accredited at the Czech Institute for Accreditation, or the Q FOR certificate, which is awarded by the DAHA agency (a member of the Q FOR European Association of Economic Interests).

⁷³ Modern Society and Its Changes, MS-07-03 Education, research and development as key factors of the development of society and the economy, component 1 – system of continuing vocational education, MoLSA, 2003

⁷⁴ The SAT programme has been in progress since 1996. It includes information, for example, about ICT facilities in schools and their accessibility, the number of study places, the ratio between the

students. The IIE also monitors what programmes secondary schools offer in the particular year, what is the demand for secondary schooling, and collect information about the content, form and dates of entry examinations and aptitude tests.

Monitoring of continuing education and training, except that part of adult education that is considered to be equal to initial education, is carried out irregularly as part of exercises funded from international or national grants. It is only participation in continuing education that is monitored regularly as part of the Labour Force Survey conducted by the Czech Statistical Office.

Evaluation of the education system takes place at regional and national level by means of reports on the state and development of the education system. At national level the reports are developed by the MoEYS (annual reports) and the Czech School Inspectorate. At regional level the reports are the responsibility of regional authorities. The annual reports of the MoEYS are submitted to Parliament and the government.

Summary

The development of objective evaluation instruments and a comprehensive system of evaluation is an objective that is contained in all policy papers concerning education. The newly set up Centre for Evaluation of Educational Results will contribute to its implementation. Traditional monitoring and assessment methods are being expanded by means of more objective and efficient methods, and regions as well as schools have expressed more positive approaches to evaluation. The focus in evaluation is gradually being shifted from the educational process to the knowledge and competencies acquired. The Czech Republic is involved in various international surveys and comparative studies⁷⁵. However, the findings identified are not sufficiently linked to the governance and further development of the education system⁷⁶. It is necessary to expand the participation of potential employers in the evaluation of the knowledge and skills acquired in various parts of vocational education. The system of evaluation of post-secondary technical schools should, in line with the MoEYS plan⁷⁷ be similar to that applied to HE institutions and not secondary vocational schools, as has so far been the case.

10. Professional development and status of teachers and trainers

The formal qualification structure and professional competence of teachers in vocational education is of a high standard. Professional qualification requirements from teachers are established by law. Most teachers have the appropriate university degrees and teachers of vocational subjects have a “pedagogical qualification” acquired at teacher training departments of some HE institutions in full-time or post-graduate courses.

number of applicants and those enrolled in a previous year, success of secondary school leavers in admission proceedings to HE institutions, etc.

⁷⁵ These are mostly surveys and research organised by the IEA and the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development).

⁷⁶ Towards the Knowledge Society – Annual report of the MoEYS on the state and development of the education system in 2002, MoEYS, IIE, Prague

⁷⁷ Tertiary Education Development Strategy (2000 – 2005) considers two alternatives: either set up a special commission for accreditation at the MoEYS, or to expand the powers of the existing Accreditation Commission to cover the entire tertiary sector.

Trainers and workshop supervisors mostly have secondary vocational qualifications and a “maturita” certificate. They are required to undertake complementary pedagogical studies. Some technically demanding fields require that the trainer should have a university degree. Instructors normally have a vocational qualification, some have “maturita”. Regulations in place require a so-called “pedagogical minimum”.

Continuing training of teachers and trainers is formally administered by the MoEYS, founding bodies of schools and other bodies in line with the relevant regulations. The law stipulates an obligation of in-service training of teachers, but does not prescribe any particular format. Teachers may prefer the option of self-study and participation in training is voluntary.

In the course of the 1990s continuing teacher training underwent various changes. The network of CTT institutions built under the previous regime was abolished after 1990. CTT was implemented at district or regional level without worthwhile support from the MoEYS and with no coherent policy. The responsibility, including financing, was given over to schools. Some progress has been made in 2000 by unifying the fragmented structure of establishments providing continuing teacher training (CTT), and establishing a network of pedagogical centres in the 14 newly established regions at the initiative of the Ministry of Education. The centres have certain innovative elements (training courses in European integration, exchange of best practice between schools, support for the development of school curricula, etc.). Their priority is the provision of general pedagogical support. Continuing training for teachers of vocational subjects, which could help them to keep abreast of current technology and new applications, is not provided by these centres. At present, re-organisation of pedagogical centres is underway, and it is envisaged that the responsibility will be divided between the MoEYS and regions (national CTT programmes will be run by MoEYS and specific regional programmes will be run by pedagogical centres established by regions).

A legislative framework for CTT is provided by the **law on teachers and trainers**, which is ready for discussion. It commands the MoEYS to set out the details concerning CTT in a decree. The law should be in place from the following academic year and should contribute to the development of an integrated CTT system.

In-service training of academic staff it is not explicitly formulated in the Higher Education Act. It is not obligatory and depends on the personal motivation of each individual and is associated with the development of their academic career. The basic requirements for the professional profiles of a docent and professor which all universities share in common are set out in the Higher Education Act.

The continuing training of trainers is not implemented in a systemic way. However some training programmes are provided by the Association of Institutions of Adult Education. Management lecturers are also being trained by the association of Management Trainers and Consultants.

The social status of the teaching profession has been decreasing, although, in general, the profession is considered to be very demanding and undervalued. This is why a high proportion (around 30%) of trained teachers do not work within the education system. The outflow of young teachers is most alarming. The main reasons for this include dissatisfaction with the financial remuneration of teachers, particularly the salary level on first employment. The average pay of secondary

school teachers is less than 20% higher than the national average pay, which is worse than in the mid-1990s⁷⁸ (for details see Annex 10-1 cz). The *National Programme for the Development of Education* (White Paper) contains an objective “to increase salaries of teachers to 37% above the Czech national average”. Although in recent years the average pay in secondary schooling and at universities has been growing faster than the average pay in the CR, it would be unrealistic to expect that this objective will be implemented before 2007. One consequence of the decreasing attractiveness of the teaching profession is a high degree of feminisation (see Annex 10-2), a growing average age of teachers and a lack of good teachers of certain subjects (e.g. languages).

The draft law on teachers and trainers mentioned above also contains a proposal for the as yet unestablished career system, which stipulates career progression rules for the teaching profession, which depend on the meeting of requirements concerning qualifications and other professional requirements. These rules should improve the professional prospects of teachers and, as a result, enhance the attractiveness of the profession.

The professional standards of teachers are also being raised as a result of the implementation of the state information policy in education, which was approved by the government in 2000 (for details see question 7). The policy includes a nationwide scheme for the training of teachers in ICT so as to ensure that ICT becomes a common working instrument in teaching at 75% of basic, secondary technical and secondary vocational schools by 2005.

Summary:

Continuing teacher training is undergoing changes, but maintains relatively good standards. One problem consists in updating the knowledge of teachers of vocational, particularly technical subjects. The pay of teachers is low. Young teachers often leave for other professions. A high level of feminisation persists and teaching staffs are ageing.

11. Challenges & policies in relation to the Lisbon employment strategy

Kok’s report identifies two problematic areas in VET, to which attention should be paid in order to increase occupational and territorial mobility and to include the most disadvantaged groups of the population in the labour market. Firstly, the scope of training of low-skilled individuals and the Roma population should be increased – particularly outside Prague. Secondly, participation in tertiary education should be increased.

a) Policies and strategies aimed at promoting the education and training of low-skilled individuals and the Roma population

⁷⁸ In 2002 the average pay in the CR was 17, 445⁷⁸ CZK v r. 2003, the average pay of an individual with a university degree (both in the private and public sectors) 31, 835⁷⁸ CZK. In 2003 teachers at secondary technical schools were paid 20,786⁷⁸ CZK per month, teachers at secondary vocational schools 20, 885⁷⁸ CZK. University teachers were paid on average 24, 116⁷⁸ CZK in 2003. Source: IIE

Measures aimed at increasing participation in education and training are part of **employment** policies and strategies. These measures are focused generally on the unemployed, of whom approx. 26% are those with low qualifications⁷⁹. Unemployed individuals are motivated by financial incentives to take part in retraining⁸⁰. However, the incentives are weak and there is still a small difference between the level of social benefits and the minimum wage. Low-skilled persons are therefore little interested in retraining and improving their qualifications.

The implementation of National Action Employment Plans should result in increased participation in education and training. These plans envisage that the proportion of financial resources allocated for retraining and the overall amount for active employment policy should increase, which should be accompanied by an increase in the number of persons placed in retraining courses. Individual action plans are also expected to bring positive results⁸¹. They include a proposal for training/retraining (after the pilot stage the plans were introduced in 2004).

Continuing education and training must play an important role. The need for its development is mentioned in all strategic papers concerning **education** (the National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic – White Paper, the Long-Term Plan for Education and the Development of the Education System in the Czech Republic, Human Resources Development Strategy). They not only identify major problems⁸² hampering the development of continuing education, but also propose alternatives for their solution. However, there is a lack of political will to implement any major practical measures. The situation is further exacerbated by the unclear division of responsibility for the governance over this area of education between ministries. A move forward in this respect is expected in terms of the workings of the Council of the Czech government for Human Resources (set up in 2003 as an consultative body to the government), and, particularly, in terms of the new law on CVET, which is under preparation.

Increasing the level of education among the Roma population is part of the policy focused on **social inclusion** (Roma integration policy – proposed ways of overcoming the education handicap)⁸³. The plans announced are being implemented by means of national programmes and programmes co-funded from EU resources. For example, Roma adults can complete their basic education in **courses** organised by basic and secondary schools (see also question 2B). A higher level of participation in these courses is conditional upon active promotion and focus on skills applicable in the labour market. By means of the **Programme of Support for Roma students at secondary schools**⁸⁴ those families are supported for whom the studies of their

⁷⁹ Individuals who failed to achieve “maturita” account for 70% of the unemployed.

⁸⁰ If an individual undergoes retraining, his/her unemployment benefits account for 60% of the previous income, if not, the proportion is 50% in the first three months, and 40% in the following three months.

⁸¹ The “První příležitost” (First Chance) programme for young job seekers up to 25 within the first 6 months of unemployment, and the “Nový start” (New Start) programme for adults over 25 within 12 months of their becoming unemployed.

⁸² There is no legislation that would define the powers and responsibility of the major players, financial and non-financial incentives for employers and individuals, quality assurance mechanisms, and accreditation and certification systems.

⁸³ When implementing this objective, synergy between the MoEYS and the MoLSA in particular is necessary. It is ensured by the Council of the Czech Government for Roma Community Issues.

⁸⁴ Approx. 900 applications were granted in 2000. It was 1,531 in 2001 and some 2,500 applications were granted in 2002.

children at secondary or post-secondary levels constitute a considerable financial burden. The resources are designed for schools to cover, in full or in part, the costs directly linked to the studies (tuition fees, meals, accommodation, travel costs, working requisites). Specific training and retraining courses are designed for the Roma, where they can acquire the necessary knowledge and skills for securing a job in state administration (Roma assistance or advisors), or in the Czech Police. The education of the Roma population is negatively affected by the fact that the Roma community assigns a low value to education.

b) Policies and strategies concerned with increasing participation in tertiary education

The objective of raising participation in tertiary education is contained in all relevant policy papers⁸⁵. According to the Outline of the Development of Education, the proportion of those enrolled in tertiary education should, by 2005, account for 50% of the 19-year-old age group. The objective should be achieved gradually through a 10% increase every year. The plan to increase the proportion of shorter programmes is also important. By 2005 approx. one half of graduates from Bachelor programmes should enter the labour market⁸⁶. The MoEYS will also support transformation of post-secondary technical schools that meet the relevant criteria into public HE institutions of non-university type, so as to ensure that there is at the most one public HE institution providing non-university type of education in each region.

Although demand for tertiary education still exceeds supply⁸⁷, the number of students in tertiary programmes has doubled over the last fourteen years (1989/90 – 2002/03). In 1989/90 the number of new enrolments in full-time programmes accounted for 19% of 18-year-olds, in 2002/03 it was as high as 36.5% of 19-year-olds⁸⁸. This positive development has been affected by expansion of educational opportunities and, since the mid-1990s, also by a declining population of the relevant age. The numbers of new enrolments have increased both in public and private HE institutions (the latter have operated in the CR since 1999 providing mostly Bachelor programmes). Since 1996/97 public and private post-secondary technical schools have been set up, which provide more practically focused tertiary education.

Summary:

It is clear from the policies and strategies above that the issue to which Kok's report draws attention receives appropriate attention. However, the implementation of practical measures must be strengthened so as to ensure that the objectives set forth in the policy documents are gradually met.

12. Involving stakeholders – Czech Republic

⁸⁵ The Long-Term Plan for Education, Science, Research, Development, Artistic and Other Activities of HE institutions (Long-Term Plan of the Ministry), 2000; National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic (White Paper), Tertiary Education Development Strategy

⁸⁶ Updated Long-Term Plan of the Ministry until 2005

⁸⁷ Every other applicant is successful in admission proceedings to HE institutions and post-secondary technical schools. Source: V_vojová ro_enka _kolství v _R 1989/90-2002/03 (Education Development Yearbook for the CR), IIE, 2003, p. 128

⁸⁸ In 1995/96 nine-year long compulsory schooling was introduced. This is why since 2001/02 19-year-olds are taken as a basis. The number of enrolments includes all those admitted regardless of their age. The actual proportion in the age group is therefore lower (some 32% according to estimates).

a) *The role of stakeholders or social partners in the planning of VET at national, sectoral and company level*

The involvement of social partners in vocational education and training is voluntary and depends on the initiative of the individual players. There is no legislation fostering this involvement and defining the role of the social partners. Their opinions are of a consultative nature. Public pressure has been growing to increase the involvement of social partners in the design of the content of vocational education in terms of defining future labour market needs. However, in reality there is insufficient motivation on the part of social partners for taking part in this process.

The *national* platform for social debate is constituted by the Council for Economic and Social Accord. Its remit also includes education. The Council is mostly involved in formulating and commenting upon legal regulations and government papers.

At *sectoral* level, there are some examples of good co-operation between social partners and VET schools. The co-operation is usually initiated by professional associations – i.e. not employers or trade unions.

Enterprises also co-operate with schools, particularly those which “receive” school leavers. However, in no way can this practice form a basis for VET planning in general.

The activities of so-called “branch groups” at the NITVE constitute a positive step towards matching the content of VET with labour market needs. The groups contribute to the design of VET content. Their establishment was authorised by the MoEYS six years ago. There are currently 23 “branch groups” covering the entire range of qualifications at secondary and post-secondary technical levels⁸⁹. The Government Council for Human Resources Development, which was set up in 2003, also plays an important role in supporting a comprehensive approach to HRD. It has “tripartite” representation and its main task is to contribute to the development of national strategic papers and to influence decisions inter-linking the issues of employment, VET, qualifications and support for entrepreneurship. Similar bodies for strategic management of HRD at regional level have been set up over the last two years.

Social partners are involved in the development of VET as part of specific projects within various programmes, which may serve as examples of good practice (Leonardo da Vinci in particular). In 2002-03 the Czech-Dutch project Social Partnership in Vocational Education and Training was implemented. In the course of project implementation the aforementioned problems came to light concerning social dialogue – particularly lack of motivation on the part of social partners and missing legislation.

Summary:

The involvement of social partners in the development of VET programmes is a topical issue, which is only slowly being addressed in a comprehensive manner. There are individual examples of good co-operation.

⁸⁹ The groups have 8-20 members – experts in labour market and curricula development issues. The membership is voluntary and not remunerated. It is therefore sometimes difficult to ensure their co-operation.

b) Actions to anticipate and recognise skills and qualifications needs (at national, sectoral or regional level) for your country do the European social partners identify as important in their recent report

Analysis and forecasting of skills needs on the labour market were mentioned as one of the priorities in the Long-Term Plan for the Development of Education and the Education System, and in the National Action Employment Plan. The latter also devoted special importance to establishing mechanisms for identification and monitoring of skills shortages on the labour market.

The *econometric forecasting model*, created in 2001 within the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci project in cooperation with a number of European partner institutions, was handed over to the Research Institute of Labour and Social Affairs (RILSA) for further tuning and regular projections at *national* level. RILSA started to produce updated forecasts in terms of occupation clusters and types of education. The results have not yet been used in practice. It is necessary to provide verification steps with the help of qualitative methods (expert opinions, company surveys).

The National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education (NITVE) developed an *Information System concerning the Position of School Leavers in the Labour Market (ISA)*. It intends to provide the relevant information, among others, to career guidance counsellors. The system is designed to be open, and to have of links to other existing information systems.

Activities at *regional* level are driven by decentralisation of state and public administration. Regions - responsible for educational policy at regional level need analytical background information for educational policy design and decision making. The capacities for analysis and recognition of skills needs vary across regions and depend on financial means available to regions.

There are some examples of good practice. For instance, a structured information system, similar to ISA (see above) but at regional level, was developed within the Phare 2000 programme (Regional Information System on School Leavers – RISA) in the Moravia-Silesia region. The testing of the Moravia-Silesia regional system will allow for implementation of similar systems in other regions. Next there are some promising attempts to elaborate the methodology of forecasting at regional level. The Council for Human Resources Development of the Zlín region established a working group on qualification needs analysis. This group, in cooperation with labour offices and a private research agency, provided a forecast of future supply and demand for individual qualifications in the regional labour market.

In 2003 the Czech Republic joined the Cedefop Skillsnet project, which seeks to develop an international network concerned with an early recognition of skills needs.

Summary:

There has been some progress in the development of an assessment and forecasting mechanism at national level. First draft projections have been produced. Although the interest in forecasting skills needs has been declared in national policy papers, conditions for systematic forecasting work have not been established. The ongoing activities have so far been part of isolated projects and initiatives.

13. Transparency, recognition & mobility

a) Credit Framework

The **European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)** is generally accepted. Most Czech universities use their own credit system, as there is no unified system at the national level. Credit systems are less common in non-university institutions of higher education. No legal provisions oblige institutions to use credit systems and there is no general rule as to how to allocate credits. Notwithstanding the lack of legal provisions, all higher education institutions have ECTS or ECTS-compatible credit systems. Since October 1997, the Czech Republic has been successfully participating in the Socrates, Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci programs. The ECTS system was established at most higher education institutions as an instrument for international mobility through the SOCRATES-ERASMUS programs and the transfer of foreign-earned credits. All universities use ECTS for transfer. Some non-university higher education institutions (colleges and polytechnics) also use ECTS for transfer. As a rule, institutions that wish to participate in the Socrates international mobility programs have introduced ECTS for transfer. Traditionally, credits have been used as a means of measuring student workload while their utilization as an accumulation tool has been minimal.⁹⁰ The use of ECTS for accumulation is especially popular at technical universities, whereas in the non-university sector programs tend to be less adaptable. A national team has been established by the Council of Higher Education Institutions and since the beginning of the current academic year (2003/2004) has been providing consultative services nationally and internationally regarding the implementation of ECTS.

The Czech organisations are also involved in the Leonardo da Vinci pilot projects and language competence projects. In the second period of the programme (2000 – 2006) 5 – 9 projects managed by the Czech organisations are launched every year and 50 – 90 Czech organisations participate in the projects managed by foreign organisations as partners. These projects contribute to strengthen the European dimension in the Czech vocational education and training system. They are focused on specific themes of vocational training incl. credit transfer system or qualification frameworks. For example the National Institute of Vocational Education and Training is involved in the project focused on the ECTS at secondary vocational education level. The Association of Employers in Energy Sector managed the project dealing with training, examination and recognition of qualifications in the electricity production and distribution sector at European level.

b) Qualifications Framework

Quality Assurance

By April 2002, most university faculties had undergone the accreditation procedures of the new three-level model. Thus, as of 2002/03 and especially 2003/04 most faculties will adopt the three-tier model for most of their programs. The Czech quality assurance system includes self-evaluation, external evaluation, peer review and accreditation (based on previous evaluation). The Higher Education Act determines

⁹⁰ The latest Bologna report from the Ministry states “the number of institutions, namely university-type institutions, which use the accumulative function to enable their students more flexible paths within a respective study programme has been growing.”

that higher education institutions have to regularly provide internal quality assurance and to specify details of the process in their internal regulations. External evaluation is conducted by the Accreditation Commission and its working committee. Accreditation is awarded by the Ministry of Education on the basis of positive assessment from the Accreditation Commission. All study programs must have accreditation to be permitted to award academic degrees. Programmes are re-evaluated at least once every ten years, or twice the nominal length of the programme. Any private institution wishing to offer study programs in the Czech Republic can only do so once it has gained accreditation from the Accreditation Committee. Various other scientific or educational institutions may apply, in co-operation with a higher education institution, for accreditation of their study programs. In connection with these developments the importance of the Accreditation Commission, which is an independent expert institution, has been increasing since its inception in 1990. The Accreditation Commission has been a member of the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) since May 2002. The Czech Republic is also a member of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and founder of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education.

Diploma Supplement

The Czech Republic has signed and ratified the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Degrees, the provisions of which legally came into force in 2000. The **diploma supplement** was introduced into the Czech system under the Higher Education Act of 1998, which states that the supplement must be issued upon student request. The language of the diploma supplement is not prescribed. The European model of the diploma supplement was promoted during two NARIC seminars in 1999 and 2000. Feedback from institutions suggests that they have not had much experience with the supplement and the number of applications for it has not been too high. Ultimately, they intend to issue it to every student automatically in Czech or English. The Centre for Higher Education Studies operates as the Czech ENIC/NARIC offering consulting and advisory services for institutions of higher education and the Ministry of Education in the recognition and evaluation of academic credentials.

Mobility

Most academic mobility is realized through international programs or on the basis of direct bilateral cooperation organized by the individual higher education institutions. Today, all public institutions of higher education are involved in **Socrates** programmes, and some of the newly established private institutions are also beginning to participate. About three –to four percent of Czech students study for at least a period/semester abroad and the foreign students constitute approximately three percent of the student body at Czech universities (to meet Bologna and Sorbonne goals, the rate of outgoing students should be closer to 13 percent.) The ministry cites funding as the main obstacle to increased mobility of Czech students and staff. From the 1998/99 academic year to 2001/02 academic year the number of outgoing students participating in the Erasmus program has risen from 879 to 2533, and for incoming students the number has risen from 290 to 800. The ministry attributes the rapid increase in numbers to the introduction of the national co-funding scheme in 2000.

Mobility projects under Leonardo da Vinci programme have been implemented in the Czech Republic already for eight years. They contribute to enhancing the quality of the Czech VET by cooperation with the EU countries. The total number of Czech participants in placements and exchanges in the period 1997 – 2003 reached 3000⁹¹, in the following years planned numbers are more than 1000 each year. Most promoters are upper secondary vocational schools however the participation of universities has been increasing as well as of other training institutions, social partners and labour offices. The quality of mobility projects is gradually increasing also thanks to quality competition and the Quality Award handed over each year in the CR to 10 best mobility projects.

b) To establish or reform a qualifications framework

The CR lacks a comprehensive qualifications framework that would include all levels of education and qualifications. Recognition of qualifications is based on an academic certificates acquired in the formal schooling system. Certificates awarded as part of continuing education are not officially considered to be of equal value. One area that is specifically defined in legislation is retraining of job seekers. Those who complete accredited retraining courses are awarded a nationally valid certificate of retraining. No mechanism has so far been designed to facilitate certification of skills acquired through non-formal learning – e.g. based on work experience.

Nevertheless, there is debate underway on the creation of a coherent qualifications framework and a system of recognised qualifications. This issue is also the topic of a project supported by the MoLSA entitled “Development of a National Qualifications System”⁹². Its objective is to promote communication about qualifications between all players involved, and to inter-link partial initiatives aimed at various aspects of qualifications (description, definition, development or acquisition). As regards occupations the project is concerned with the design of an **Integrated System of Standard Working Positions**, which describes working activities performed in a specific job position, the required work experience and certificates. It is expected that the system will form a foundation for the development of a national system of qualifications, which should create links between the requirements concerning training in various fields of initial and continuing education and labour market needs all the way to the requirements for specific occupations. Following on from the Integrated System a new **system of fields of education** has been proposed for the schooling sector. Each field is characterised by means of professional profile and, in the case of initial VET, by means of framework curricula. So called **professional profiles** are being developed in the schooling sector in co-operation with social partners. They describe qualifications which are seen as a recognised outcome of training. They serve as a basis for identification of professional competencies necessary for the performance of various occupations, and allow for their projection into VE programmes.

⁹¹ 66% of participants have been students from apprentice schools and upper secondary vocational schools, 9% university students, 8% young workers and fresh graduates and 17% trainers, HR managers and guidance specialists.

⁹² Rozvoj národní soustavy kvalifikací (The Development of a National System of Qualifications). Prague: NITVE, 2003

Discussion and partial activities seeking to develop a coherent qualifications framework are under way. The MoLSA supports the project “**Development of a National System of Qualifications**”, which aims at developing communication between all partners concerned and to inter-link various initiatives, such as:

(i) **Integrated System of Standard Working Positions** – an information system containing description of working activities, work experience and certificates required for the performance of a particular job. It is expected that the system will form a foundation for the development of a national system of qualifications (by inter-relating training requirements in IVET and CVT programmes and labour market needs down to the level of individual occupations); (ii) a new **system of fields of education**, which has been proposed in the schools sector in co-operation with social partners. Each field is characterised by a professional profile and basic curricular documents have been designed for fields within IVET – framework curricula; (iii) **professional profiles** are being developed in the schooling sector in co-operation with social partners. They describe qualifications that are viewed as a recognised learning outcome. They constitute a basis for identification of professional competencies necessary to perform specific occupations, and facilitate their projection into VET programmes.

There are plans to tighten the links between the aforementioned activities as part of a comprehensive project co-funded from ESF resources. The project will seek to develop a transparent qualifications framework at national level. This would considerably increase the transparency, comparability and transferability of Czech qualifications within the EU.

c) Europass

The Czech Republic is ready to implement the Europass initiatives. At present, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is approving a proposal for an implementation unit – a so-called National Contact Point (or National Europass Centre) – including its tasks. The document should be approved in the 1st week of June 2004.

List of abbreviations

AC	Accreditation Commission
ACC	Acceding Countries
CEMS	Community of European Management Schools
CERMAT	Centre for the Maturita Examination Reform
CHES	Centre for Higher Education Studies
CR	Czech Republic
CSO	Czech Statistical Office
CTT	Continuing Teacher Training
CVET	Continuing Vocational Education and Training
CVT	Continuing Vocational Training
CZ	Czech Republic
CZK	Czech Koruna (Crown), Currency
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
ENIC	European Network of Information Centres
ENQA	European Network for Quality Assurance
EU	European Union
EVOS	Evaluation of Post-secondary Technical Education
FEP	Framework Educational Programmes
HE	Higher Education
HR	Human Resources
HRD	Human Resources Development
IALS	International Adult Literacy Survey
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IEA	International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement
IIE	Institute for Information on Education
INQAAHE	International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
IVET	Initial Vocational Education and Training
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centres
NITV	National Institute of Technical and Vocational Training
NOZV	(NOET) National Observatory of Employment and Training
NTF	National Training Fund
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
RILSA	Research Institute of Labour and Social Affairs
SET	Segmental Evaluation and Typology
SIALS	Second International Adult Literacy Survey
STS	Secondary Technical School
SVS	Secondary Vocational School
VET	Vocational Education and Training

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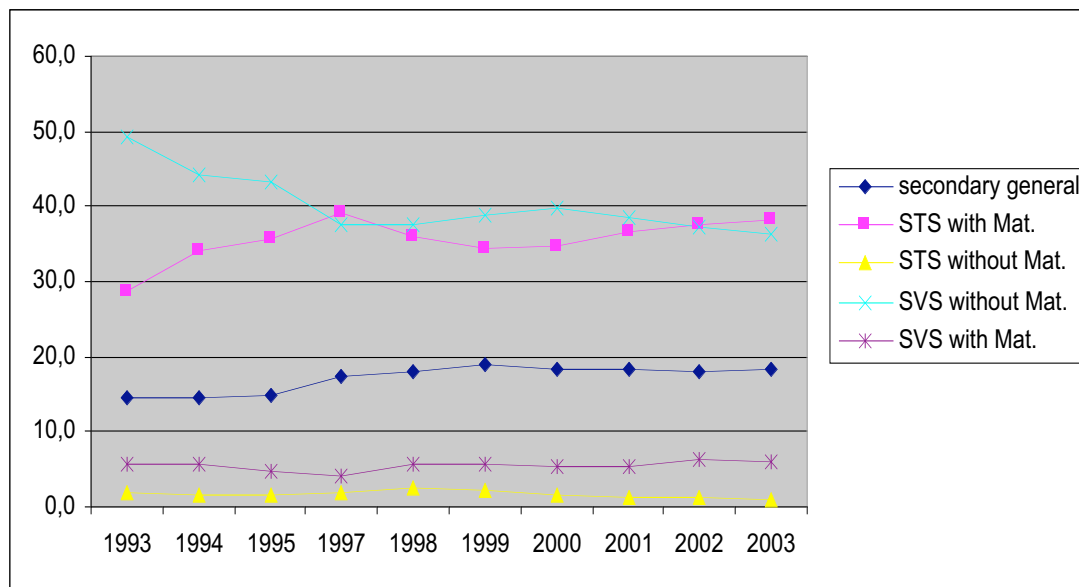
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Annex to question 1b

Graph 1B-1: Proportions of Students Entering First Years of ISCED 3 Courses (%)

Source: Vojtěch, J.; Festová, J.; Sukup, R. *Vvoj vzdělávací a oborové struktury žáků ve středním a vyšším vzdělávání v ČR a v krajích ČR* (The Development of Education and Field Structure in Secondary and Higher Professional Education in CR and in Regions), NITVE 2004

Note: the year 1996 is not included, since the data are not comparable to other years due to systemic adjustment

Key: STS with M = secondary technical schools with “maturita”
 STS without M = secondary technical schools without “maturita”
 SVS with M = secondary vocational schools with “maturita”
 SVS without M = secondary vocational schools without “maturita”

Annex to question 6c

Development of public expenditure on education (in thousand CZK, constant prices 2000)

	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Education (total)	101 813 048,35	93 539 189,42	87 763 719,13	90 541 418,65	85 566 569,01	92 805 481,06
Vocational Education (total)	38 156 714,24	34 420 208,74	33 878 866,70	32 694 859,48	31 672 617,74	34 040 756,65
- Secondary Vocational Education	20 149 679,12	18 083 963,00	17 339 835,95	17 854 768,84	17 545 710,10	19 828 540,34
- Tertiary Education	18 007 035,12	16 336 245,74	16 539 030,75	14 840 090,64	14 126 907,64	14 212 216,31

Source: Calculations based on data from ÚIV (Institute for information on education)

Development of public expenditure on education – annual growth (in %)

	2002/01	2001/00	2000/99	1999/98	1998/97	2002/97
Education (total)	108,8	106,6	96,9	105,8	92,2	109,7
Vocational Education (total)	110,9	101,6	103,6	103,2	93,0	112,1
- Secondary Vocational Education	111,4	104,3	97,1	101,8	88,5	101,6
- Tertiary Education	110,2	98,8	111,4	105,0	99,4	126,7

Source: Calculations based on previous table

Expenditure on pupil/student (in CZK, constant prices 2000)

	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Secondary vocational schools	41 586	37 291	37 204	31 840	30 028	31 208
Secondary technical and higher professional schools	35 558	33 041	32 125	34 736	31 981	37 533
Higher education institutions	70 292	69 359	68 155	71 976	71 730	78 451

Source: ÚIV – Developmental yearbook of education in CR 1989/90-2002/03, Tab.1.10

Development of expenditure on pupil/student – annual growth (in %)

	2002/00	2001/00	2000/99	1999/98	1998/97	2002/97
Secondary vocational schools	111,5	100,2	116,8	106,0	96,2	133,3
Secondary technical and higher professional schools	107,6	102,9	92,5	108,6	85,2	94,7
Higher education institutions	101,3	101,8	94,7	100,3	91,4	89,6

Source: Calculations based on previous table

Annex to question 10-1**Average monthly wages of teachers in years 1995–2003 according to type of schools (in CZK)**

No.	Indicator	Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
No.	Indicator	Category									
1	CR in total (full-time)	Employees	8 366	9 873	11 029	12 055	13 042	13 914	15 122	16 335	17 445
	Development in CR (total in %)			18	12	9	8	7	9	8	7
2a	Secondary education in total (incl. higher professional schools - HPS)	Teachers		12 286	13 255	13 912	15 522	15 516	17 379	18 761	20 810
	Development – secondary education in total incl. HPS in %				8	5	12	0	12	8	11
2b	Secondary education in total (without HPS)	Teachers	.	.	13 249	13 888	15 481	15 483	17 347	18 738	20 794
	Development – secondary education in total without HPS in %					5		0	12	8	11
3a	Secondary technical schools in total (incl. HPS)	Teachers	.	12 356	13 280	13 946	15 624	15 604	17 468	18 796	20 820
	Development – secondary technical schools in total incl. HPS				7	5	12	0	12	8	11
3b	Secondary technical schools in total (without HPS)	Teachers	.	.	13 269	13 897	15 547	15 541	17 407	18 748	20 786
	Development – secondary technical schools in total without HPS					5		0	12	8	11
4	Secondary vocational schools incl. centres of practical training in total	Teachers	.	12 033	13 058	13 807	15 484	15 549	17 335	18 856	20 885
		Develop.in %			9	6	12	0	11	9	11
		Trainers of vocational training	.	9 743	10 531	11 026	12 117	12 335	13 976	15 098	16 783
		Develop.in %			8	5	10	2	13	8	11
5	Public higher education institutions	Employees	9 641	11 688	12 253	12 994	14 616	15 248	16 723	18 609	19 969
		Develop.in %		21	5	6	12	4	10	11	7
		Teachers	12 259	14 751	15 229	16 020	18 045	18 004	19 954	22 571	24 116
		Develop.in %		20	3	5	13	0	11	13	7

Source: ÚIV, _SU, own calculations

Annex to question 10-2

Schools and school facilities –number of employees (persons), 31. 12.

Year	Schools and school facilities in total			Basic schools			Secondary schools			Higher professional schools			Higher education institutions		
	Total	Women	Share of women (%)	Total	Women	Share of women (%)	Total	Women	Share of women (%)	Total	Women	Share of women (%)	Total	Women	Share of women (%)
1996	286651	223815	78,08	89717	73839	82,30	43338	27355	63,12	Incl. in data on sec. schools			29944	14365	47,97
1997	303844	233396	76,81	84897	70495	83,04	62827	38351	61,04	1887	1213	64,28	29907	14384	48,10
1998	304696	236139	77,50	84731	70650	83,38	62148	39817	64,07	2434	1571	64,54	30725	14691	47,81
1999	319189	250639	78,52	85819	71549	83,37	56690	34784	61,36	3340	2264	67,78	31303	14905	47,62
2000	299311	229882	76,80	85873	71549	83,32	58861	36321	61,71	2888	1862	64,47	31287	14956	47,80
2001	306345	233350	76,17	85505	71146	83,21	64665	39250	60,70	2788	1816	65,14	32279	15304	47,41
2002	304 762	231463	75,95	84 335	70260	83,31	64860	39582	61,03	2803	1844	65,79	32906	15536	47,21

Source: UIV – Statistical yearbook of education (selected years)

Part: Employees and labour expenses

Table: Schools and school facilities – registered number of employee, labour expenses

Own calculations