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# **Czech Republic**

## **VET in Europe – Country report**

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**2012**

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## CHAPTER 1.

# External factors influencing VET

### 1.1. Political and socio-economic context

The Czech Republic (*Česká republika* – ČR) came into being in 1993, as a result of a split of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic. The Czech Republic is a parliamentary republic and the head of the country is the President. In 2004, the country became a member of the European Union. As regards its administrative system, the Czech Republic has since 2000 been divided into fourteen administrative units called regions (*kraje*) (NUTS 3). They are governed by regional authorities: the Regional Assembly (*Zastupitelstvo kraje*) is elected by citizens and has decision making power. The Regional Council (*Rada kraje*) is elected by the Assembly and has executive power. It is headed by a regional governor (*hejtman*).

### 1.2. Population and demographics

The Czech Republic covers an area of 78 900 km<sup>2</sup> and the population is 10.5 million in 2012. According to the Eurostat population projections, the total population is expected to increase in the coming years due to growing life expectancy. The decline is expected to occur after 2025; therefore the population will show a fall earlier than the total EU-27 population (Table 1).

Table 1. **Total population**

	2001	2008	2012	2030p	2050p
EU-27	483 797 028	497 686 132	503 492 041	522 342 413	524 052 690
ČR	10 266 546	10 381 130	10 504 203	10 839 979	10 667 723

Note: p=projection

Source: Eurostat (table tps00001) a EUROPOP 2010. Extracted on 28.8.2012.

The most numerous population groups are the war and the post-war generations, that have retired in the recent years, and also the generation of people born during the 1970s, who are now in the period of high economic activity. Since 1990, the birth rate has been showing a considerable decline with the exception of a temporary increase in 2002-08 when the age group of those born during the 1970s had their children. The following age groups are not that numerous anymore and, over the long term, the population of the Czech Republic

is ageing. The proportion of the 65+ age group will increase from the current 16% to 22% by 2030 and afterwards it will still keep growing (Table 2).

Table 2. **Population and its projection by age groups**

Age group	Population (000s)					Population structure (%)				
	2011	2015	2020	2025	2030	2011	2015	2020	2025	2030
0-24	2 792.8	2 748.1	2 694.5	2 739.8	2 730.7	26.5	25.7	24.9	25.2	25.2
25-64	6 104.1	6 071.5	5 998.3	5 844.3	5 726.0	58.0	56.8	55.5	53.8	52.8
65+	1 635.8	1 871.4	2 123.3	2 279.3	2 383.3	15.5	17.5	19.6	21.0	22.0
Total	10 532.8	10 691.0	10 816.1	10 863.5	10 840.0	100	100	100	100	100

Note: 1st January population.

Source: Eurostat (table demo\_pjanbroad) a EUROPOP 2010. Extracted on 28.8.2012.

Population ageing will have consequences for education and training systems. The role of adult education and training will increase considerably. On the other hand, due to the demographic decline, schools will face the problem of low numbers of young students. This process has already started and upper secondary VET schools are supported by national and regional authorities and by the European structural funds to develop their capacity for adult education.

Although the proportion of young people in the population is decreasing over the long term, in the medium term, there is a strong population surge of children born in 2002-08. This population surge will, for a certain period of time, place increased demands on the capacity of primary education (around year 2020) as well as on secondary education (around 2030) (Table 3).

Table 3. **Projection of school-age population by age groups (000s)**

age	2011	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
0-4	579.5	576.0	537.9	495.0	456.9	456.7	485.1
5-14	938.6	1 050.0	1 164.1	1 136.5	1 054.6	973.6	936.8
15-19	582.7	468.8	486.4	588.0	599.0	560.2	518.2
20-24	692.0	653.3	506.1	520.3	620.3	630.9	594.3
0-24	2 792.8	2 748.1	2 694.5	2 739.8	2 730.7	2 621.4	2 534.4

Note: 1st January population.

Source: Eurostat (table demo\_pjanbroad) a EUROPOP 2010. Extracted on 28.8.2012.

### 1.3. **Economy structure**

The structure of the Czech economy changed considerably after 1989. The proportion of agriculture and industry has decreased and, conversely, the proportion of services has grown. However, as compared to the EU-27, the Czech Republic still shows lasting structural differences. The proportion of manufacturing in terms of gross value added and employment is significantly

higher than in the EU-27, on the other hand, the figures for the business service sector are considerably lower.

The large proportion of industry has a long tradition dating back to the end of the 19th century and so has the related vocational education. The communist regime strongly supported the development of heavy industry in particular. Following transition to the market economy, the Czech Republic became the target of extensive foreign investment – particularly in the automotive industry and electrical engineering. Foreign investors experienced a combination of a high level of technical education on the part of the labour force and low labour costs. However, some components of the competitive advantage – the low labour costs in particular – have been gradually eliminated and the country faces an outflow of less skills-intensive industrial production further east. The economic recession, which began in 2008, influenced mostly manufacturing and construction. The employment in services grew even during the crisis (Table 4).

Table 4. **Employment structure by sector**

	000s				%			
	EU-27		ČR		EU-27		ČR	
	2008	2011	2008	2011	2008	2011	2008	2011
Primary sector and utilities	15 350.5	14 915.7	326.8	301.5	7.0	6.9	6.5	6.1
Manufacturing	37 857.2	34 223.5	1 378.5	1 294.0	17.2	15.9	27.6	26.4
Construction	18 525.5	16 060.5	480.8	433.1	8.4	7.4	9.6	8.8
Distribution and Transport	42 932.9	41 405.3	946.7	926.1	19.5	19.2	18.9	18.9
Business and other services	50 287.1	51 829.9	947.1	1 008.1	22.8	24.0	18.9	20.6
Non marketed services	55 586.1	57 472.0	922.1	940.4	25.2	26.6	18.4	19.2
Total	220 539.3	215 906.9	5 002.0	4 903.2	100	100	100	100

Source: Eurostat (table lfsa\_egan2). Extracted on 28.8.2012.

## 1.4. Employment and unemployment

The rate of employment is a little higher than in the EU-27 – 65.7% in the Czech Republic compared to 64.3% in EU-27 in 2011 for population aged 15-64 <sup>(1)</sup>. The employment rate of young people has been declining significantly due to their increasing participation in education (especially in tertiary education). On the other hand, the employment rate of people aged 55-64 is slightly increasing as a consequence of gradual postponement of retirement age.

<sup>(1)</sup> Source: Eurostat, table lfsa\_ergaed, Extracted on 29.8.2012. For population aged 20-64 (EU 2020 indicator) the figures are 70.9% for the ČR compared to 68.6% for EU-27.

In comparison with the EU-27, the Czech Republic has a very low rate of employment among people with low skills (ISCED 0-2). There are very few people with low qualifications and they are at the margin of the labour market. They are unable to compete successfully for jobs that require higher qualifications and they often lack motivation to work due to low pay levels in low-skilled employment.

Compared to the EU-27, the Czech Republic shows a larger difference between the rate of employment of men and women, and this difference has been at a stable level. The main reason is the lower retirement age for women and a long period of maternity and parental leave in comparison with other EU countries (Table 5).

Table 5. **Employment rates by age groups and highest level of education attained (%)**

		2005			2008			2011		
		15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64
EU-27	0-2	24.7	66.1	42.5	24.9	67.1	43.8	20.7	62.1	43.3
	3-4	47.0	79.2	56.7	49.2	81.8	59.5	44.3	79.8	60.4
	5-6	60.2	87.8	73.6	61.9	89.0	74.6	55.5	87.1	74.8
	Total	36.0	78.0	53.3	37.4	80.2	56.5	33.6	78.0	57.5
ČR	0-2	3.4	51.8	32.8	4.3	56.0	39.1	3.8	53.2	33.2
	3-4	48.0	83.4	60.5	49.0	85.0	61.2	41.3	84.1	59.3
	5-6	52.1	88.8	79.0	42.0	86.3	82.2	39.0	83.9	80.7
	Total	27.5	81.9	58.3	28.1	83.4	60.6	24.7	82.4	59.0

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey, table lfsa\_ergaed). Extracted on 28.8.2012.

After 2005, the dynamics of the economic growth began to affect the rate of unemployment which dropped to 4.4% in 2008. Due to the economic crisis enterprises started to lay off a large number of employees since the beginning of 2009. The redundancies largely affected lower skilled jobs in the industry – e.g. workers on assembly lines. The unemployment rate reached its maximum 7.4% in 2010 and dropped back to 6.8% in 2011.

Similarly to the EU-27, it is young and low-skilled people who are most at risk of becoming unemployed. The economic growth in 2005-08 and the demographic situation caused a decrease in unemployment even in these groups but in the economic crisis young people with low and medium education level were the most influenced groups. Compared to the EU-27, the unemployment figures are, on the whole, slightly lower in the Czech Republic. However, the rate of unemployment is very high among people with low levels of education within the 15-24 age groups. The drop-out rate is lower than in the EU-27 (the

percentage of people aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education is 4.9% compared to 13.5% in EU-27 <sup>(2)</sup>), nevertheless the labour market position of the people who leave the education system before getting a qualification is far worse in the Czech Republic (Table 6).

Table 6. **Unemployment rates by age groups and highest level of education attained (%)**

	ISCED level	2005			2008			2011		
		15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64
EU-27	0-2	21.8	11.7	7.7	21.2	11.1	7.2	28.2	17.0	10.8
	3-4	17.3	8.2	7.6	12.9	5.7	5.2	18.7	8.1	6.5
	5-6	14.3	4.8	3.8	11.7	3.7	2.8	16.7	5.5	3.6
	Total	18.6	8.1	6.7	15.6	6.3	5.2	21.3	9	6.9
ČR	0-2	48.0	29.4	16.9	35.2	21.7	11.6	45.3	25.7	15.4
	3-4	16.4	6.4	5.8	7.1	3.3	3.4	15.2	5.6	5.9
	5-6	16.2	1.8	2.3	8.2	1.6	1.5	12.3	2.7	2.4
	Total	19.2	7	6.4	9.9	4	3.9	18	5.9	6

Source: Eurostat (LFS, table lfsa\_urgaed). Extracted on 28.8.2012

## 1.5. Labour supply and demand

Long-term unemployment constitutes a major problem within the context of the Czech labour market. In 2007, when the overall unemployment rate reached its lowest values, the proportion of long-term unemployment represented 52%. This value has been decreased by the inflow of the newly unemployed following the onset of the economic crisis. However, that does not mean that the problem of long-term unemployment would totally disappear from the Czech labour market (Table 7).

Table 7. **Proportion of long-term unemployment**

	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011
EU-27	45.6	46.1	42.7	33.1	42.9
ČR	48.7	53.0	52.3	30.1	40.6

Note: As long-term unemployed are deemed persons unemployed for 12 months and more.

Source: Eurostat, table lfsa\_upgal, Extracted on 28.8.2012

A high proportion of long-term unemployment is closely related to the structural unemployment issues. Even in times of culminating economic upswing and high demand for labour – when there were not even 3 unemployed persons

<sup>(2)</sup> Source: Eurostat, table t2020\_40, Extracted on 8.11.2012.

per a vacancy – there was a considerable number of unemployed whose qualifications did not match the requirements of the labour market. And conversely, even in times of crisis – when the number of unemployed was 18 times higher than the number of vacancies in the labour market – the employers had difficulties to find employees for certain jobs. The labour market experiences a long-term shortage of technical fields' graduates (Table 8).

Table 8. **The unemployed and job vacancies**

	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011
Number of job applicants	542 420	510 416	354 878	539 136	508 451
Number of job vacancies	40 188	52 164	141 066	30 927	35 784
Proportion	13.5	9.8	2.5	17.4	14.2

Note: Up to 31.12 each year.

Source: MPSV: *Statistická ročenka trhu práce* 2011 [Statistical yearbook of the labour market 2011], [http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/stat/stro/statisticka\\_rocenka\\_trhu\\_prace\\_v\\_cr\\_v\\_roce\\_2011.pdf](http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/stat/stro/statisticka_rocenka_trhu_prace_v_cr_v_roce_2011.pdf) str.14-18,

## 1.6. VET qualifications on the labour market

The Czech Republic shows a very high proportion of persons who attain at least upper secondary education (ISCED 3 or higher) and vocational education as such has a long tradition here. In student numbers, vocational education accounts for almost three quarters of secondary education. This type of education is either concluded by a *maturita* examination (ISCED 3A – 47% of upper secondary level graduates) enabling to continue the studies at tertiary education or it does not include *maturita* and then it is intended mainly for direct entry into the labour market (ISCED 3C – 29% of upper secondary level graduates <sup>(3)</sup>). (Table 9). Over a long term, the Czech Republic records a decline in interest in secondary vocational education at the expense of secondary general education and in secondary education without *maturita* at the expense of the secondary education concluded by a *maturita* examination. While the population decreases, the absolute numbers of study places at the secondary general schools (*gymnázia*) stay the same, which results in declining proportion of vocational education.

The position of graduates of vocational education without *maturita* in the labour market is not particularly favourable. This group is very sensitive to fluctuations in the economy. Compared to experienced workers, the graduates are disadvantaged and employers often complain about poor quality of the

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<sup>(3)</sup> The remaining 24% represent graduates of upper secondary general programs at the *gymnázia*. See Table 9.

graduates from vocational education without *maturita*. This is also due to the decline in interest in this type of vocational education, which often makes it a 'second-choice' education (Table 10).

Table 9. **Graduates at secondary level**

Type of education	Numbers			%		
	2005	2008	2011	2005	2008	2011
Gymnázia (ISCED 3a – general)	25 449	24 445	24 010	21.3	21.6	23.9
Vocational with <i>maturita</i> (ISCED 3a–vocational)	51 687	54 086	47 462	43.3	47.8	47.2
Vocational without <i>maturita</i> (ISCED 3c–vocational)	42 120	34 619	29 069	35.3	30.6	28.9
Total	119 256	113 150	100 541	100	100	100

Source: *Vývojová ročenka školství 2003-4/2011-12* [Statistical Yearbook on Education] - <http://www.msmt.cz/statistika-skolstvi/vyvojova-rocenka-skolstvi-2003-04-2011-12>, 29.8.2012

Table 10. **Unemployment of graduates (2011)**

Vocational without <i>maturita</i> (ISCED 3c-vocational)	18.7%
Vocational with <i>maturita</i> and practical training	16.0%
Vocational with <i>maturita</i> (ISCED 3a-vocational)	11.4%
Gymnázia (ISCED 3a - general)	3.2%
Vocational post-secondary (ISCED 4)	20.6%
Tertiary technical (ISCED 5B)	9.4%
Tertiary – master degree (ISCED 5A)	7.1%

Note: The unemployment of graduates is calculated as the number of graduates registered at the Labour Offices in the total number of graduates in the previous year. Therefore it does not correspond to the standard unemployment rate definition.

Source: Burdová, J. – Chamoutová, D.: *Nezaměstnanost absolventů škol se středním a vyšším odborným vzděláním – 2011* [Unemployment of graduates with upper secondary vocational and tertiary technical education]. Praha: NÚV 2011.

## 1.7. Expenditure on education

Total public expenditure on education was 4.38% in 2009 which is lower than 5.4% in the EU-27 and there is no clear positive trend in this area in the Czech Republic (Table 11). Similarly, expenditure on secondary and post-secondary education as a proportion of GDP is lower than in the EU-27. As the proportion of the population entering secondary education is considerably higher compared to the EU-27, expenditure per student is overall even lower. Expenditure on technical and vocational secondary education only accounted less than a half of the total expenditure on secondary education. This is caused by the fact that ISCED 2 is a part of the compulsory education in the Czech Republic and nearly the entire provision at this level falls within general education. At the level of

upper-secondary and post-secondary education (ISCED 3-4) most of the expenditure is targeted at technical and vocational education (over 75%) <sup>(4)</sup>.

Table 11. **Total public expenditure on education as % of GDP, at secondary level of education (ISCED 2-4), 2002-08**

<b>Geo</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
EU-27	2.35	2.29	2.25	2.23	2.19	2.24	2.41
ČR	2.23	2.17	2.14	2.13	1.96	1.92	2.07

Source: Eurostat (UOE, table educ\_figdp); Extracted on 28.8.2012

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<sup>(4)</sup> Source: ÚIV – Statistical Yearbook on Education, own calculations.

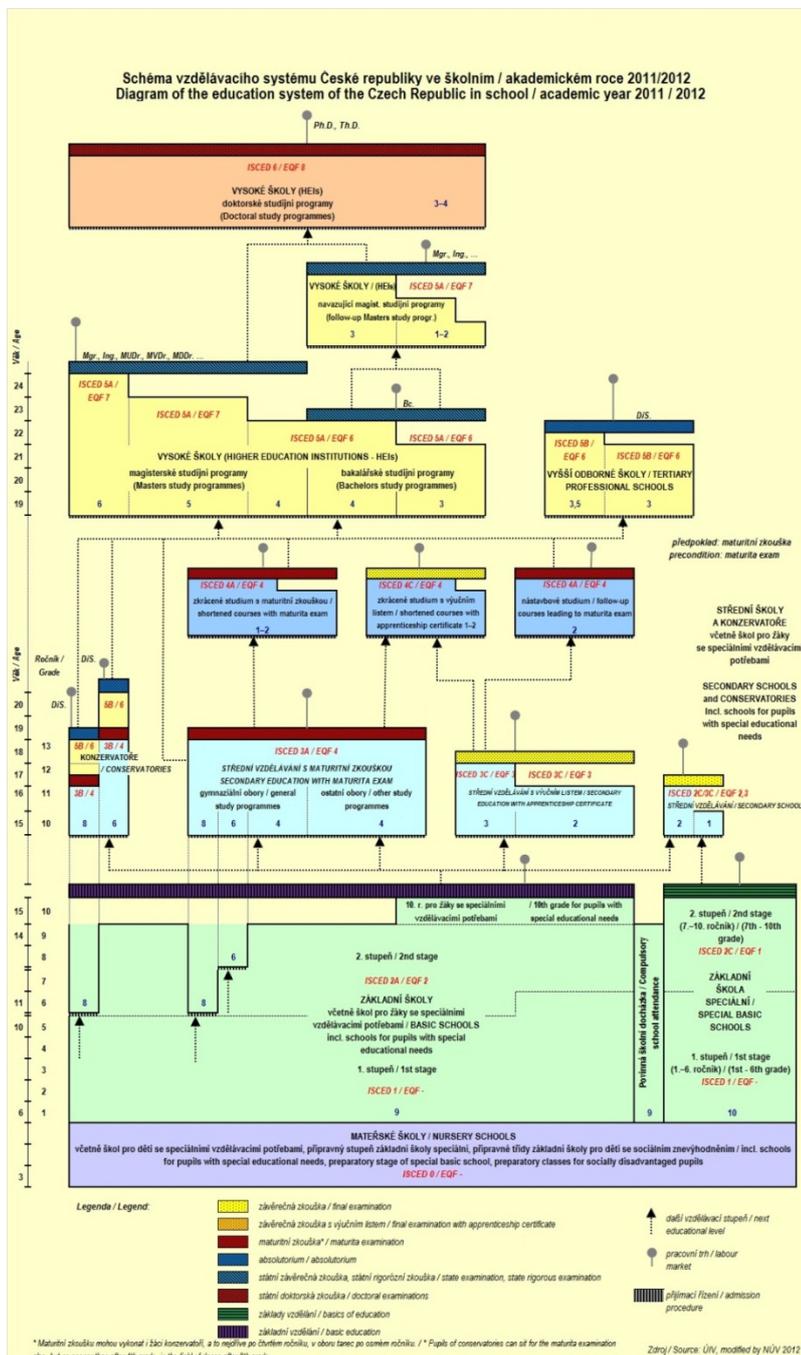
## CHAPTER 2.

# Providing VET in an LLL perspective

## 2.1. National education and training system

### 2.1.1. IVET system

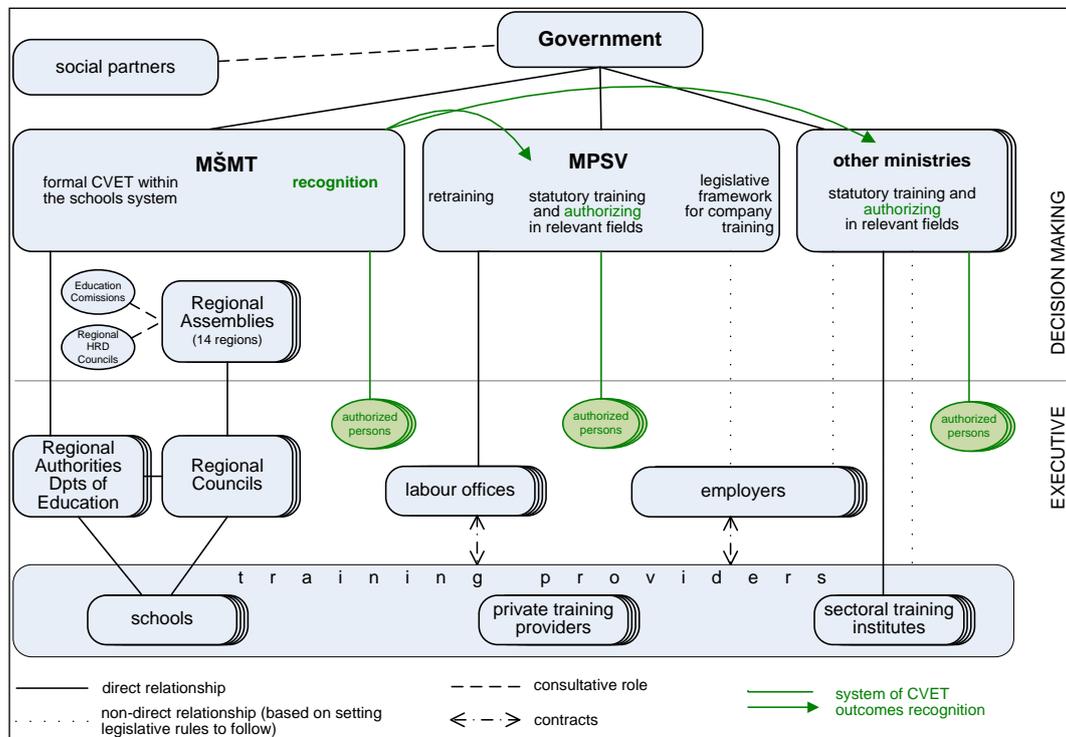
Figure 1. Czech education and training system



### 2.1.2. CVET system

CVET can be provided within the school system with the same structure and pathways as IVET (Figure 1). For CVET provided outside the school system, no regular structure or educational pathways are given. The provision is generally based on the free market or special programmes directed by individual departments (e.g. retraining within public employment services or sectoral statutory trainings) where a certificate is awarded upon completion, but no qualification level is achieved. Also the length of courses is very diverse. For overview of all stakeholders involved in CVET (Figure 2).

Figure 2. CVET system



## 2.2. Government-regulated VET provision

### 2.2.1. Governance of IVET

The main body responsible for IVET at the national level is the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy* – MŠMT). The key responsibilities of the MŠMT currently include the development of national education strategy and priorities; development of curricular policy and

care for the quality of education on the basis of the objectives and content of education; coordination of public administration and funding in the area of education.

At regional level self-governing bodies – regional assembly and regional council (*zastupitelstvo kraje, rada kraje*) – are set up. The regional assembly, which has decision-making powers, is obliged to form a commission for education and employment, which has its say on e.g. the number and the structure of the schools and their educational provision, the quality of schools, the funding of education in the regions, etc. The regional council (9-11 members) is elected by the assembly and holds executive powers. It forms expert commissions in various areas where they have an advisory function. One of the commissions is normally concerned with young people and education. Regional self-governing bodies are directly responsible for establishing and closing down VET schools and school facilities.

The regional authority (*krajský úřad*) is a regional body of the state administration. One of its departments deals with education, youth and sports. The authority is responsible for the execution of state administration in the region, and its main tasks in the area of education include, above all, the development of a regional long-term plan for the development of education and the education system, and a report about the situation in education in the region. Moreover, the regional authority allocates resources from the state budget to schools to cover pedagogical staffs' wages and direct educational costs, and checks upon their use.

The Education Commission and Regional Council for Human Resource Development has a consultative function at regional level.

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

In the Czech Republic, social partners can influence both the conception of objectives and content of vocational education and its framework organization in the respective field of study at national and regional levels, particularly through the co-operation on the preparation of curricular documents.

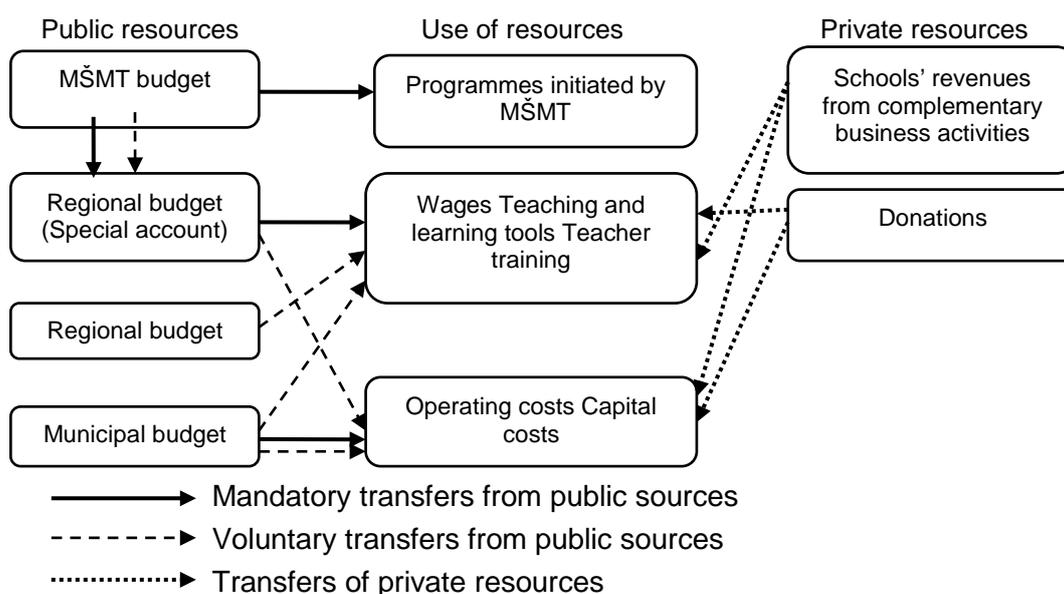
### 2.2.2. Funding IVET

The responsibility for funding secondary VET schools (secondary vocational schools – *střední odborná učiliště* – SOU, ISCED 3C; secondary technical schools – *střední odborné školy* – SOŠ, ISCED 3A) and tertiary professional schools (*vyšší odborné školy* – VOŠ, ISCED 5B) is shared between the MŠMT and founders, i.e. above all regional authorities or in some cases private entities, churches, ministries. Regions administer approximately 80% of SOU and SOŠ and some 65% of VOŠ.

The resources from the MŠMT budget are designated for covering the direct non-investment expenditures, while the resources from the founders are allocated to schools for operational and capital costs. The funding from public budgets (for direct and operational costs only) is based on per-capita normative rates set for the given school type and the study field. Schools may also receive resources from the MŠMT budget for development programmes. The content and the aim of these programmes are announced by the MŠMT for the given budgetary year. In addition, some individual subsidies may be determined during the process of budget approval in the Parliament. They are usually aimed at capital investments.

Private resources constitute a very limited source of the funding of public secondary VET schools. These are resources earned by the school from renting their property, from the provision of services for a payment and from complementary business activities. Schools may also accept donations from individuals and enterprises (Figure 3).

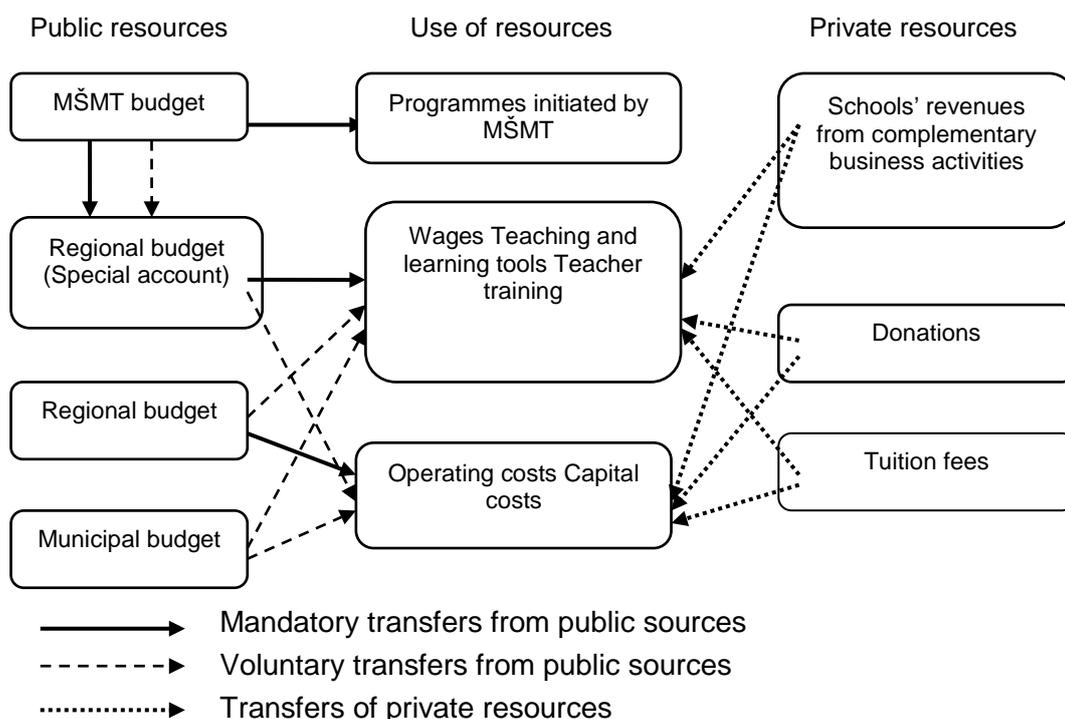
Figure 3. Financial flows in initial secondary VET



The MŠMT budget also provides financial resources to private schools and schools set up by registered churches or religious societies which are included in the schools register. The subsidy is set as a percentage of the per-capita normative rate for a comparable programme and form of study provided within public education.

One partial source of the funding of private secondary VET schools, and also public VOŠ, is the fees these institutions collect. The maximum fees for public VOŠ are set by legislation and differ for individual study fields, but generally they are very low, ranging from CZK 2 500 to CZK 5 000, i.e. approx. EUR 100 to EUR 200, per year (exchange rate on 15.10.2012: EUR 1 = CZK 24.9). The level of tuition fees collected by private schools is fully at their discretion (Figure 4).

Figure 4. **Financial flows in tertiary education – tertiary professional schools (VOŠ)**



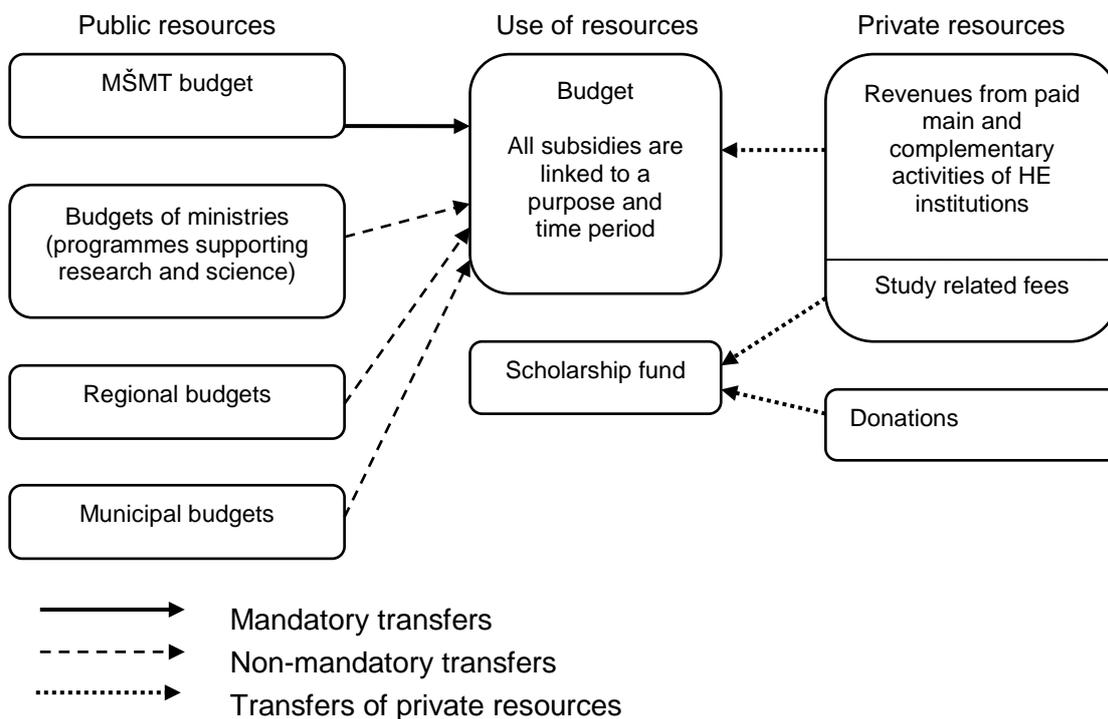
#### 2.2.2.1. Public higher education institutions

Each public higher education institution (*vysoká škola* – VŠ) is entitled to a contribution from the state budget. This contribution is used to cover costs related to the implementation of accredited study programmes and lifelong learning programmes, and costs associated with research and institutional development (students' accommodation and meals, social scholarships, etc.). The level of the

contribution is derived from the number of students, the type of accredited study programmes and lifelong learning programmes and the achievements in educational and creative activities, i.e. the results of research, the quality of education, the employability of graduates and the extent of mobility. VŠ is entitled also to a subsidy for its individual development programme. Investment costs are financed by state budget through the Programme of property reproduction.

A public VŠ may also collect study-related fees. Their level is derived from a 'basic fee', which is set by the MŠMT for each academic year. The basic fee for the academic year starting in 2012 is CZK 2 801 (approx. EUR 112). Fees may be collected for: participation in admission proceedings; exceeding the standard length of studies by more than one year; taking another bachelor or master programme, if the student has already completed one study programme; and studying in a foreign language. The legal representative of the VŠ (rector) may exempt some fees or defer them only to some students with insufficient social background (Figure 5).

Figure 5. **Financial flows in tertiary education – public higher education institutions (VŠ)**



#### 2.2.2.2. Private higher education institutions (VŠ)

Private VŠ must assure, by their own means, financial resources for the implementation of the activities. If a private VŠ has the status of a public benefit

organisation, it may receive a subsidy from the MŠMT in compliance with the MŠMT's rules for the provision of subsidies to private VŠ, but there is no legal entitlement to these subsidies.

### **2.2.3. Legislative framework for IVET**

Initial vocational education and training (IVET) up to the level of tertiary professional schools is governed by the Act on pre-school, basic, secondary, tertiary technical and other education (the School Act) (*Zákon o předškolním, základním, středním, vyšším odborném a jiném vzdělávání – Školský zákon*).

Higher education institutions (*vysoké školy – VŠ*) are governed by the Higher Education Act (*Zákon o vysokých školách*).

The administrative framework of IVET was also considerably affected by the Act on the establishment of higher-level administrative units (regions) (*Zákon o vytvoření vyšších územních samosprávných celků*). This law has delegated some key responsibilities in the IVET area to regional bodies.

The Act on pedagogical staff (*Zákon o pedagogických pracovnících*) stipulates a new definition of the position of pedagogical staff and lays down requirements for the performance of their occupation, their continuing training and career system.

### **2.2.4. Initial Vocational Education and Training System**

Compulsory education includes primary and lower secondary levels and its length is nine years (normally from the age of 6 to 15) and it always represents general education <sup>(5)</sup>. VET is predominantly provided at the upper secondary and tertiary levels (ISCED 2C-5) and students enter it usually at the age of 15 or later. (There is an exception of some ISCED 2C VET programmes and the initial part of the conservatoire dance programmes – see below – that fall into the lower secondary level, but they are marginal in terms of students numbers).

IVET is distinguished by the level of education and the nature of the education provided. There are secondary schools (secondary technical schools and secondary vocational schools), conservatoires, tertiary professional schools and higher education institutions. IVET in public schools is provided for free, whereas private and church schools may collect tuition fees.

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<sup>(5)</sup> Children of this age mostly attend the basic schools (*základní škola*). It comprises the first stage (grade 1-5) and second stage (grade 6-9). Upon successful admission, pupils of the second stage can complete their compulsory education at a multi-year *gymnázium* or conservatoire.

All secondary schools can be set also up specifically for pupils with special educational needs depending on the type of disability. There are no tertiary professional schools set up specifically for people with disabilities.

#### 2.2.4.1. IVET at lower secondary level

The lower secondary level IVET programmes (ISCED 2C) are designed primarily for students with mental disabilities of various severity or other disadvantaged students who have study difficulties. As such it involves only small number of compulsory education leavers. The programmes lasting one to two years are designed to prepare them for the performance of simple tasks as part of manual occupations in services or manufacturing and/or to strengthen their manual skills and working habits. The programmes are provided by the secondary vocational schools (*střední odborná učiliště – SOU*) or by practical schools (*praktické školy*) that specialize in disadvantaged pupils and where special pedagogues and specific teaching methods are used. The practical school does not provide vocational qualifications, but develops and strengthens manual skills and working habits and prepares for the performance of simple auxiliary tasks in production or services. At the end of these programmes students take final examinations and obtain a certificate of a final examination. Between 2003/2004 and 2010/2011 the overall number of IVET pupils in lower secondary education (ISCED 2) dropped by 27% (Table 12 and 13).

Table 12. **Students in lower secondary education by programme orientation: general, pre-vocational, vocational 2010**

	Total ISCED2	ISCED2gen	%	ISCED2pv	%	ISCED2voc	%
EU-27	21 938 990	21 358 933	97.4%	346 616	1.5%	233 442	1.1%
ČR	379 231	377 058	99.4%	2 173	0.6%	:	:

Note: information not available, gen - general; pv - pre-vocational; voc – vocational.

Source: Eurostat (UOE). Extracted on 28.8.2012

Table 13. **Students in lower secondary education by programme orientation (national data)**

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
ISCED 2 general	500 544	493 162	485 114	456 968	430 870	401 568	377 058	399 993	363 313
ISCED 2C Prevocation AI and vocational	2 180	2 216	3 552	2 002	2 117	2 094	2 173	2 323	2 326
ISCED 2 – Total	502 724	495 378	488 666	458 970	432 980	403 662	379 231	369 316	365 639
Prevocation AI - %	0.4%	0.4%	0.7%	0.4%	0.3%	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%

Note: Till 2005-06 also the pupils of the last grade of practical level of auxiliary schools are included. These were cancelled by the new Education Act.

Source: UOE Questionnaires, MŠMT.

#### 2.2.4.2. IVET at upper secondary level (mainly school based)

The upper secondary education is generally open to all applicants who meet the admission criteria (they are usually set by the school director). The compulsory education performance is a principal criterion and usually an entry examination must be undergone. However, especially in programmes completed with vocational certificate (ISCED 3C) there is often no entry examination. In some fields, particularly in arts (conservatoires), an aptitude test forms an obligatory part of admission proceedings.

Vocational and technical programmes at upper secondary level are provided by schools <sup>(6)</sup> offering three (ISCED 3C) or four year (ISCED 3A) programmes:

- (a) three-year vocational programmes (completed by final examination, ISCED 3C), enabling graduates to perform manual work and similar occupations are usually provided by secondary vocational schools (*střední odborné učiliště – SOU*). Secondary vocational schools also provide a small number of four-year programmes completed by *maturita* (ISCED 3A), providing a qualification to perform demanding manual work and technical occupations and opening up the path to higher education. Graduates of three-year programmes leave directly for the labour market. They may continue studying on the condition that they undergo a two-year follow-up programme (ISCED 4A – see below) and pass *maturita* examination. The study plans include general subjects (the same as at SOŠs), vocational subjects (the selection of which depends on the nature of the programme), and practical training. The proportions of general and vocational subjects and practical training vary depending on the programme and year. In three-year programmes, which are the most common, general subjects are allocated 30-35% of the instruction time; vocational subjects get 20-30% of the time and practical training 35-45%. Practical training takes place mostly at specially designed training facilities or workshops/ laboratories.
- (b) the four-year technical programmes (completed by a *maturita* examination, ISCED 3A) are usually provided by secondary technical schools (*střední odborná škola – SOŠ*) and entitle their graduates to apply for higher education or to perform mid-level technical, business and other similar jobs.

Study plans of secondary technical schools include general subjects and vocational subjects, depending on the relevant programme. Vocational subjects

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<sup>(6)</sup> Different types of secondary schools are often integrated in one legal entity (a school) called for example 'integrated SOU and SOŠ of subject' providing more diverse study opportunities under 'one roof.'

include practical exercises, laboratory work, etc. The study plans at SOŠ also include work placements in companies and other institutions. The length of these placements depends on the nature of the programme. The proportions of general and vocational subjects vary depending on the fields of study and years. The ratio is around 45:55 in favour of vocational subjects. Work placements <sup>(7)</sup> (on average 6-8 weeks altogether), during which students experience the feel of a real workplace, facilitate contacts between the students and employers.

The *maturita* examination in four-year programmes at SOŠ consists of Czech language and literature, an optional subject and vocational subjects. The examination in vocational subjects is composed of a theoretical and practical part. Upon successful passing of *maturita* students are awarded a *maturita* certificate.

As a response to highly demanded general education at *gymnázium* <sup>(8)</sup>, lyceum programmes were developed at the secondary technical schools besides usual vocational programmes. The proportion of general education in lyceum programmes accounts for approximately 70% of the curricula. They include technology, business, natural sciences and teacher training. Graduates are prepared for studies at higher education institutions in similar disciplines.

### **Conservatoires**

Conservatoires are a specific type of secondary school with a different regime. Students with music, dance and drama talents take an aptitude test as part of the admission proceedings. Applicants who complete the 9<sup>th</sup> year of basic school are admitted to six-year music and drama programmes. The eight-year dance

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<sup>(7)</sup> In the Czech Republic, IVET at ISCED 3 level is 'school-based', although educational programmes at this level have a large proportion of practical training. Practical training is part of curricula for programmes preparing students for manual occupations (ISCED 3C). It takes place in school workshops, practical training centres, or in authorised companies (possibly small business owner's premises). Work placements (on average 6-8 weeks in the course of the programme) are part of curricula which prepare students for middle-level technical/business and similar functions (ISCED 3A). Work placements take place either on a continuous basis as part of classes, or in blocks (full weeks). Work placements are implemented in school facilities (either a school farm or workshop), and in a real working environment – in companies and institutions. The proportions of theory and practice and the scope of placements vary depending on the programme. Organisation of work placements is the responsibility of the school.

<sup>(8)</sup> *Gymnazium* provides general secondary programmes completed by *maturita* examination (ISCED 3A) and prepares students primarily for higher education. The studies may last four years (upper secondary), six or eight years (lower and upper secondary).

programme is designed for those who complete the 6th year of basic school, and in the lower years of the conservatoire they implement their compulsory schooling. Six- and eight-year programmes are normally completed by an *absolutorium*. The graduates achieve tertiary qualification (ISCED 5B) and get a certificate of *absolutorium* and a diploma. They have the title ‘specialist with a diploma’ (*diplomovaný specialista*, abbreviated as DiS). Students at conservatoires may also take a non-compulsory *maturita* (secondary education – ISCED 3B) examination during their studies.

### Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship training as specified in a definition used in the European Union does not exist in the Czech Republic.

### Participation in Upper Secondary Education

The number of pupils in upper secondary education dropped by 14% in the 2003-04 – 2011-12 period. Most pupils at upper secondary level attend vocational programmes (74% of pupils). These are both ISCED 3C programmes that are primarily designed for entering the labour market, and ISCED 3A programmes that allow for continuation of studies at tertiary level both in ISCED 5B and 5A type programmes. The proportion of pupils in vocational programmes decreased by 13% during the period of 2002-03 – 2010-11, but the decreasing tendency has been present since the mid-90s. In the academic year of 2009-10, for the first time in many years the overall proportion of pupils in vocational programmes slightly increased (Tables 14 and 15).

At present there are 26% of pupils attending general education at upper secondary level. There has been an increase by 5 percentage points since 2002-03. This increase is caused primarily by a growing number of schools that introduce lyceum-type programmes and a rising number of pupils in these programmes.

Table 14. **Students in upper secondary education by programme orientation 2010**

	Total ISCED3	ISCED3gen	%	ISCED3pv	%	ISCED3voc	%
EU-27	21 805 909	10 932 440	49.8%	.	.	10 7185 514	48.9%
ČR	469 908	126 492	26.9%	0	0.0	343 416	73.1%

Note: gen - general; pv - pre-vocational; voc – Vocational.

Source: Eurostat (UOE). Extracted on 28.8.2012

Table 15. **Students in upper secondary education by programme orientation (national data)**

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
ISCED 3 general	101 098	111 724	101 491	121 320	124 788	127 545	126 492	116 665	115 000
ISCED 3 vocational	390 847	381 322	388 467	369 199	358,447	349 613	343 416	331 202	307 664
ISCED 3 - total	491 945	493 046	489 958	490 519	483 262	477 158	469 908	447 867	422 664
general - %	20.6%	22.7%	20.7%	24.7%	25.8%	26.7%	26.9%	26.0%	27.2%

Source: UOE Questionnaires, MŠMT.

#### 2.2.4.3. VET at post-secondary (non-tertiary) level (mainly school-based)

At present, the only form of vocational education at post-secondary (non-tertiary) level is the so-called follow-up studies (ISCED 4A). This type of education may be taken by pupils who have acquired an apprenticeship certificate (*výuční list*) (ISCED 3C). Follow-up courses in the relevant field can be organised by secondary schools which provide *maturita* courses in the same field. Follow-up programmes take two years and are completed by a *maturita* examination. The numbers of graduates of vocational programmes who are interested in completing their education via follow-up courses tend to grow. In the academic year 2011-12, about 34% of the total number of graduates of three-year vocational courses entered in follow-up courses.

Follow-up courses may be entered either immediately after completion of the previous programme, or after a period of work experience. This segment of the education system provides a second chance and significantly enhances the passage through the system. Instead of a four-year course with *maturita* a number of pupils opt for a three-year programme leading to an apprenticeship certificate that is followed by a two-year follow-up course. After completion of these five years graduates acquire both an apprenticeship certificate and a *maturita* certificate (Table 16 and 17).

Table 16. **Participation rates in postsecondary non-tertiary education, 2010**

	ISCED4	ISCED4gen	%	ISCEDd4vpv	%
EU-27	1,474,495	239,722	16.3%	1,234,773	83.7%
ČR	91,599	33,473	36.5%	58,126	63.5%

Note: gen - general; vpv - vocational and pre-vocational; - information not available.

Source: Eurostat (UOE). Extracted on 30.6.2011.

Table 17. **Students in postsecondary non-tertiary education by programme orientation (national data)**

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
ISCED 4 general	26 483	27 756	27 772	30 346	31.656	33.794	33 473	38 887	40 426
ISCED 4 vocational	59 353	56 578	52 205	50 274	55.075	57.131	58 126	44 543	38 261
ISCED 4 – total	85 836	84 334	79 977	80 620	86.731	90.925	91 599	83 430	78 687
vocational – %	69.1%	67.1%	65.3%	62.4%	63.5%	62.8%	63.5%	53.4%	53.4%

Source: UOE Questionnaires, MŠMT

### Reforms to the completion of studies

- (a) *Maturita*: since the school year 2010/2011 the organisation of the *maturita* examination has been substantially changed. It now consists of two parts, common and profile. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy* – MŠMT) is responsible for the centrally prepared, standardised common part for all school-leavers. The profiling/vocational part will be set by individual schools, which will also be responsible for its implementation and evaluation. The new scheme aims at securing comparability, enhancing prestige and objectivity of the *maturita* examination.
- (b) New final examination: for courses leading to an apprenticeship certificate (*výuční list*), standardised examination assignments were also developed for individual courses within the national projects taking place in the years 2009-14, aiming to bring an end to the current situation when each school prepares its own final examination content. The fundamental feature of the new final examination (NZZ) is a uniform content for each specific field of education (e.g. bricklayer, toolmaker, baker, hairdresser, etc.) that is developed jointly by vocational school teachers and experts with practical experience. The process of unifying the final examination requirements leads to an increased level of comparability of learning outcomes. The uniform assignments are in relation to national curricula and the qualification and assessment standards of the National Qualifications Framework and they are, of course, going to be modified each year. Starting the school year 2014-15, the use of uniform assignments is expected to become obligatory for all secondary schools.

### Curricular development process

The vocational education system of the Czech Republic has been undergoing an extensive curricular reform, aimed at pupils in vocational training to acquire

knowledge, skills and attitudes they need for a full life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The curriculum is newly created on two levels – on the national level and on the level of individual schools – and is focused mainly on learning outcomes and key competences. The so-called national curricula (*rámcové vzdělávací programy* – RVPs) contain the minimum requirements for education stipulated by the State and, on the level of individual schools, form the basis for the so-called school-based curricula (*školní vzdělávací programy* – ŠVPs). There has been developed an independent national curriculum for each field of education and at the same time, the number of fields of education has been reduced to approx. 275 broader fields. The national curricula for vocational schools were developed during 2007-12 by the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education (*Národní ústav odborného vzdělávání* – NÚOV – renamed to NÚV in 2011) and subsequently approved by the MŠMT. In line with the approved national curricula, the schools need to develop their own school curricula within 2 years. The objective of this two-level development of curricula is to allow for a more flexible shaping of graduate profiles in line with regional needs, the development of the relevant field and the interests and capacities of students.

Social partners were also actively involved in the preparation of curricular documents. This should help to improve the quality of curricula and their implementation (e.g. creating better conditions for training, especially workplace training) and further enhance the labour market success of the graduates, particularly in the region.

### **Quality assurance mechanisms**

Evaluation of schools and assurance of the quality of education are carried out both by means of external evaluation, and self-evaluation. In addition to this, each newly established school is evaluated by the MŠMT. The MŠMT then takes a decision on its inclusion into the school register (only schools entered in the register are entitled to receive public financial resources).

- (a) External evaluation: the Czech School Inspectorate (*Česká školní inspekce* – ČŠI) is the external evaluation authority. The ČŠI is an administrative body with a nationwide scope of operations. It identifies and evaluates the situation, implementation and outcomes of education provided by schools, their compliance with school-based curricula and the appropriate relationship between framework and school-based curricula. It makes sure that legal regulations are being observed and that public resources are spent in an efficient manner. The results of a school may also be evaluated by its founding body. In 2007, the MŠMT established the National Network for Support of the Quality Assurance in VET. The network provides information

and advisory services to all stakeholders involved and initiates informative and methodical activities aimed at VET quality assurance.

- (b) Self-evaluation of schools: it has been embedded in the legislation since 2004 <sup>(9)</sup>. Its outcomes form a basis for the development of an annual report about the school's activities, and also serve as background material (among other things) for external evaluation by the ČŠI.

### **Permeability**

The horizontal permeability is traditionally very high in the Czech Republic. The vertical permeability is possible upon the decision of the school director and usually also depends on a kinship of both schools. In 2009, the amendment to the School Act introduced for graduates of study programmes leading to apprenticeship certificate shortened study programmes which allow them to acquire another apprenticeship certificate. The amendment to the School Act of 2011, among other things, introduced fields of education, which enable pupils to acquire apprenticeship certificate and *maturita* at the same time (after passing the apprenticeship examination after three years of study and *maturita* examination after four years of study). This should also avoid problems in case pupils do not pass *maturita* examination and help to strengthen their position on the labour market. Since 2012-13 the MŠMT acceded to experimental four-year validation.

At the same time, efforts are made to create measures (by means of modifying the legislation) providing for transferability of the ECTS credits between vocational education at tertiary level and education at higher education institutions.

#### *2.2.4.4. VET at tertiary level (mainly school-base)*

### **Tertiary professional schools (vyšší odborné školy – VOŠ)**

Since the school year 1995-96, tertiary professional schools have been operating in this sector, providing education at ISCED 5B level. Most of them were established at secondary technical schools and, together with them, form one legal entity. Some of them have recently acquired the status of higher education institutions of a non-university type. The objective of VOŠs is to offer students the

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<sup>(9)</sup> The obligation for schools to carry out self-evaluation is stipulated by the Education Act. Further details are set out in the Decree no. 15/2005 Coll. that lays down the requisites in relation to strategic (long-term) plans, annual reports and self-evaluation of schools.

opportunity of obtaining a vocational qualification for the performance of demanding professional activities, or of enhancing the qualification they have already achieved. Applicants must have completed upper secondary education with *maturita* (normally 19 and older). The school director may decide whether an entrance examination should be part of admission proceedings, and what its content should be.

VOŠ provide study programmes lasting 3 to 3.5 years. VOŠs, including public ones, may collect tuition fees.

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

The studies are completed by *absolutorium*. It is a vocational examination consisting of an examination in the theory of vocational subjects, a foreign language, a graduate thesis and its defence. Upon a successful passing of *absolutorium*, the student of the VOŠ attains tertiary professional education and the title of *diplomovaný specialista* (specialist with a diploma, abbreviated as DiS), see also conservatoires (Section 2.2.4).

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

### **Higher education institutions (*vysoké školy – VŠ*)**

VŠ provide education in three types of programmes: bachelor (ISCED 5A), master (ISCED 5A) and doctoral (following on from master programmes – ISCED 6).

Non-university higher education institutions provide predominantly Bachelor programmes, Master programmes to a lesser degree and no Doctoral programmes. These are mostly smaller private institutions.

University-type institutions predominate in tertiary education. They provide all three types of study programme – Bachelor, Master and Doctoral. Moreover,

they provide both general and vocational education as well as lifelong learning programmes.

A minimum requirement for admission to a VŠ is the completion of secondary education with *maturita*, or *absolutorium* in the case of conservatoires. The education of Czech nationals at public VŠ is free of charge, except for some special fees (related to admission proceedings, extending the standard length of studies, etc.). Private VŠs provide education for payment.

### Participation in Tertiary education

Since 1989 there has been a robust expansion in the number of students. The largest increase (in percentage as well as absolute terms) in the 2003-04 – 2011-12 period occurred at ISCED 5A level where the number of students increased by 44%, while the number of ISCED 5B students decreased by 1%. The number of doctoral students (ISCED 6) went up by 10% (Table 18 and 19).

Table 18. Participation rates in higher education by programme orientation – 2010

	Total ISCED 5_6	ISCED 5a	%	ISCED 5b	%	ISCED 6	%
EU-27	19 846 588	16 682 956	84.1%	2 629 514	13.2%	534 119	2.7%
ČR	437 354	378 621	86.6%	32 812	7.5%	25 921	5.9%

Note: - information not available.

Source: Eurostat (UOE). Extracted on 28.10.2012.

Table 19. Students in tertiary education by programme orientation (national data)

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
ISCED 5A	262 530	279 207	283 484	308 376	336 319	360 029	378 621	386 730	384 152
ISCED 5B	33 046	32 193	31 879	31 247	32 533	32 638	32 812	33 875	32 649
ISCED 6	23 282	24 907	22 646	23 654	24 340	24 906	25 921	26 438	26 166
ISCED 5, 6 total	318 858	336 307	337 405	362 630	392 540	416 847	433 414	439 619	441 108
% ISCED 5A	82.3%	83.0%	84.0%	85.0%	85.7%	86.4%	86.6%	87.9%	87.1%
% ISCED 5B	10.4%	9.6%	9.4%	8.6%	8.3%	7.8%	7.5%	7.7%	7.4%
% ISCED 6	7.3%	7.4%	6.7%	6.5%	6.2%	6.0%	5.9%	6.0%	5.9%

Source: UOE Questionnaires, MŠMT.

### 2.2.5. Government regulated CVET

As concerns CVET directly leading to the acquisition of a qualification level (i.e. formal CVET), it is provided within the formal schools system and there is no distinction made between initial and continuing education. The same legislation applies and the same bodies have responsibility. Also training programmes, levels of qualification, curricula, quality assurance and assessment does not significantly differ. There are some drawbacks that traditional teaching methods (lectures, 'frontal' approach to communicating knowledge) still predominate in schools, work and life experience of the adult participants is not reflected, and the specificities of adult learning are not always acknowledged. The entrance examination where the knowledge gained in prior initial education is mechanically tested, frequently poses an obstacle to adults' access to education, particularly at the higher levels. Nevertheless, the lifelong learning approach is one of the policy priorities in recent decade and several nation-wide projects dealing with LLL were implemented.

Among the programmes that are particularly suitable for adults we have the two following:

#### 2.2.5.1. *Part-time and distance learning programmes*

Although adults may study in all forms of programmes, most of them opt for part-time or distance courses which can be easily combined with employment. These programmes are subject of the same approval/accreditation process as the full-time courses. In general, the content and completion requirements are same as in full time studies, and graduates get the same certificates, only the time arrangements and in some cases also the methods (e.g. the use of e-learning) are suited better to the needs of employed participants. They are open for all applicants who meet the entry requirements set by the relevant school.

Part-time education at secondary and tertiary professional levels (ISCED 3-5) is not yet much widespread, but gradually developing. The programmes may be one year longer than the respective full-time programmes.

Part-time education at higher education level has a tradition and is better developed than at the lower levels. It is supported mainly through initiatives of individual universities and the National Centre of Distance Education (*Národní centrum distančního vzdělávání – NCDiV*). The majority of the VŠs offer so-called combined studies, where the distant form of learning is combined with a portion of on-site learning (taking place e.g. during weekends) or individual consultations. The range of the fields of study is nearly as diverse as in full-time studies, although the number of courses and participants is much lower.

#### 2.2.5.2. *Shortened programmes at secondary technical and secondary vocational schools*

There is relatively new (since 2005) opportunity to study so-called shortened programmes at secondary technical and secondary vocational schools. The full-time programme takes 1-2 years and respective part-time alternatives may be longer by one year at the most. They are very suitable for adults as they are designed for those who have already completed secondary education and intend to acquire a qualification in a different field, or they have secondary general education and intend to get a vocational qualification. Candidates with *maturita* (ISCED 3A) may get an apprenticeship certificate (ISCED 4C) or another *maturita* (ISCED 4A) in a different field; candidates who have an apprenticeship certificate (ISCED 3C) can only get an apprenticeship certificate (ISCED 4C) in a different field. However, the number of applicants has so far been very low (around 1200 in 2010-11).

### 2.3. Other forms of training

The education not directly leading to government-regulated qualification level is regarded as CVET (with the exception of post-*maturita* language courses <sup>(10)</sup>) and corresponds to the term 'non-formal CVET'. In line with the Act on validation and recognition of the outcomes of CVET, it is possible to take a series of examinations and apply for recognition of qualifications acquired within CVET (so called vocational qualifications).

#### 2.3.1. Non-formal CVET legislation

There is no comprehensive piece of legislation regulating continuing vocational education and training as a whole. There are regulations (acts or decrees) covering various parts of CVET, or other areas that also touch upon its various aspects. The most important step forward was the Act on the Validation and Recognition of the Outcomes of CVET (*Zákon o ověřování a uznávání výsledků dalšího vzdělávání*) effective since 2007. The law creates a legislative framework for the recognition of qualifications acquired through non-formal and informal

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<sup>(10)</sup> The post-*maturita* language courses provided by the authorised language schools are considered IVET by the legislation and only graduates after their *maturita* exam are allowed to enter them under this condition. Participants can undergo the state language exam, which is standardized and nationally recognized, but it does not constitute an educational level. Language schools must have their courses accredited by the MŠMT.

learning and legislatively interlinks the areas of CVET and IVET. Details in Section 3.

### **2.3.2. Non-formal CVET governance**

The MŠMT has the main overall responsibility for CVET. The responsibility for retraining under the public employment services is borne by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (*Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí – MPSV*). The systems of statutory training (*normativní vzdělávání*) are administered by the ministries relevant to the subject (e.g. the Ministry of Health responsible for training of health staff, Ministry of Interior Affairs responsible for public administration staff training, etc.)

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

At regional level, there are Regional Councils for Human Resources Development. They have consultative, initiation and co co-ordination functions in the area of strategic management of human resources including CVET development.

### **2.3.3. CVET provision**

#### *2.3.3.1. Training provided within the schools system (not leading to a qualification level)*

#### **Training provided by schools (in addition to their primary activities related to IVET)**

These courses are defined by the legislation (the Schools Act), but they are not subject of strict rules and schools may provide them on a voluntary basis. They may be offered for a payment and are normally run by the school teachers. Access is usually open for all applicants who meet the entry requirements as set by the school. A certificate is awarded upon successful completion of a course. They include:

- (a) specialist courses, courses in various subjects or subject areas, and post-*maturita* specialisation courses offered by secondary schools and tertiary professional schools. They are focused on acquiring additional knowledge and skills necessary for the practice of a profession;

- (b) lifelong learning courses at higher education institutions (*vysoká škola – VŠ*) with an objective to complement or update a vocational or professional qualification. Most of the participants are specialists who already have a qualification in the given field. Institutions issue certificates of course completion. The length and subjects are diverse. Part-time or e-learning courses predominate. Within this scheme, most universities run also the so called Third Age University. The courses are tailored to leisure and personal interests of the seniors and financially supported by the state.

Also accredited teacher training courses (so-called complementary pedagogy studies) can be provided to make it possible for professionals to obtain a teaching qualification. These courses normally last 1-2 years and their graduates get a nationally recognised qualification that entitles them to teach in their field at a particular level of education or to provide other educational services (educational guidance, etc.)

### **Training provided by the specialized institutions within the schools system**

The legislation (School Act) defines several types of institutions that provide special services and/or specific training. Access is open for all applicants who meet the entry requirements (if set), courses are usually provided for a payment and a certificate is awarded upon successful completion. Almost all of the courses are part time based <sup>(11)</sup>. They include:

- (a) basic art schools (*základní umělecké školy – ZUŠ*) that provide part time courses in arts (music, dance, fine arts, literature/drama). Most clients are children and youth, but adults can also take part;
- (b) state language schools that have the authorisation to administer state language examinations (*jazykové školy s právem státní jazykové zkoušky – JŠ*) that provide language education and carry the standardized examinations. Besides the post-*maturita* language courses, they provide also common language courses for general public;
- (c) leisure centres (*střediska volného času – SVČ*) focusing primarily on leisure activities, but often delivering also courses in languages, computer skills, fine arts, music, photography and other areas including continuing education courses for teachers and the general public.

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<sup>(11)</sup> The 'post-*maturita* language courses' run by the state language schools can be full time, but they are considered IVET by the legislation (Section 2.2.). They constitute an opportunity for students after their *maturita* to prolong their IVET while gaining language skills.

### 2.3.3.2. *Training in enterprises*

#### **Obligatory training**

According to the Labour Code (*Zákoník práce*), the employer is obliged to:

- (a) ensure appropriate practical experience for employed graduates <sup>(12)</sup>;
- (b) provide introductory training for all employees who enter into employment without a qualification;
- (c) provide initial training for an employee who has transferred to a new workplace or is supposed to do a different type of work (if needed);
- (d) train employees to ensure their health and safety at work.

The law does not specify the form or length of this training. Its content, frequency and other characteristics depend mainly on the employer who also covers the costs. The State Labour Inspection Office may check on the quality and appropriateness of this training. In recent years e-learning has become increasingly frequent.

#### **Training based on the employer's HR policy**

This training is not regulated by the state. Most of it is provided by external training organisations and consultancies. To a lesser degree training courses are delivered by companies' own training facilities. A very small part is provided by secondary or tertiary schools. The certificates acquired via company training are only valid within the particular company.

Staff training is financed mainly by employers. There is no systemic state support for investment in human resources in companies, nevertheless employers can receive some public incentives through several programmes operated by the state and co-funded mostly from the European Structural Funds and the state budget.

The general tendency is that the enterprises with more employees spend relatively more funds for employees training than the smaller enterprises.

### 2.3.3.3. *Statutory training (normativní vzdělávání)*

Statutory training is based on legal requirements related to certain professions (esp. in public administration, healthcare, railway transport, electrical engineering, etc.) The training is normally provided by sectoral/industry institutes. They differ in terms of management and operations. Some are directly managed by the

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<sup>(12)</sup> A graduate in that situation is defined as an individual within two years of completion of education.

relevant ministries, others are organisations providing training and guidance services on a commercial basis.

### **Retraining in the framework of ALMP**

Retraining is organized by the MPSV's institute – the Labour Office <sup>(13)</sup> (ÚP) and regulated by the law. The courses are provided by various training providers (private or public providers including schools) that have a contract with the ÚP. The courses must be accredited by the MŠMT.

The ÚP units determine the type and nature of the courses depending on the needs and requirements of regional labour markets, or potential employers and they also cover the costs. Since 2012, a job seeker has an opportunity to find a retraining course on his/her own. The ÚP unit will assess the course chosen and if it is found to be suitable with respect to the jobseeker's health condition and his/her prospective employability, funding will be provided.

Since 2009, retraining courses must be linked to the National Register of Vocational Qualifications (*Národní soustava kvalifikací* – NSK) <sup>(14)</sup> and the content of the course must be in compliance with the relevant vocational qualification (if defined for the field) <sup>(15)</sup>. The examination is realized by the authorised person in line with the provisions of the Act on recognition and validation of the outcomes of CVET (see Section 3). This ensures that the competences acquired during retraining courses can be recognized by a formal certificate, on condition that the individual collects all partial qualifications comprising together a full qualification.

Following types of retraining can be provided:

- (a) The retraining of unemployed and people at risk of unemployment. Participation is recommended to individuals registered at the regional ÚP units by the offices' staff. Besides the unemployed people registered at the ÚP units, who are the primary target group, also people at risk of becoming redundant, people who wish to change their job and other applicants (e.g. women on maternity leave or inactive persons) can take part in retraining.

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<sup>(13)</sup> Until 2012, there have been individual regional labour offices managed by the ministry; since 2012, they have been formally transformed into one legal entity – the Labour Office, with regional units.

<sup>(14)</sup> The Czech Republic has existing classification system for qualifications awarded in initial education, the KKOV (Classification of Educational Qualification Types) and the levels in the NSK (National Register of Vocational Qualifications).

<sup>(15)</sup> The Decree of MŠMT no. 176/2009 Coll stipulates that only the courses concluded by an examination for the relevant qualification will be accredited by the MŠMT.

Usually, regional units of the ÚP develop targeted projects for specific groups of people who are present in their registry in larger numbers (e.g. the disabled, people over 50, women after maternity and parental leave, the long-term unemployed, people with combined disadvantages, juveniles, etc.). The retraining of job seekers is funded exclusively from the budget of the MPSV via ÚP budget. The duration of courses normally ranges from several weeks to several months (the minimum length is set by the legislation and differs for various course types).

- (b) The retraining of employees. Retraining may also take place at the initiative of an employer with the aim of ensuring that the employees continue their employment. In that case the ÚP may cover the costs of retraining and other related costs for the employer or for the organisation that provides the retraining courses for the employees. The retraining of employees takes place during working hours and employees are entitled to a wage reimbursement amounting to their average earnings.

#### 2.3.3.4. *Non-regulated ('free market') training*

Some training courses and programmes are offered by public or non-profit organisations, such as regional and local culture and training centres, libraries, museums, foundations, churches, political parties, etc. This education is accessible for all those interested in the relevant subject area who, at the same time, can meet certain requirements (in terms of time, finance, etc.). Social partner's institutions (trade unions, economic chambers, etc.) may also provide training.

Demand driven courses may be offered by commercial training providers or independent consultants and lecturers. Usually there are no entry requirements except for the payment of the course fee. Graduates get a certification of course completion which is issued based on attendance or upon passing an examination or test.

#### **2.3.4. Quality assurance mechanisms**

Evaluation of the quality of non-accredited courses is the responsibility of the providers and users – there are no quality standards and the quality is not assessed by any particular body or institution. The market is believed to be the decisive force, but as there is only a limited regional market, the quality differs widely and it is not always appropriate. Some associations of training providers issue certificates for their lecturers that should guarantee their quality.

The quality of state accredited courses is guaranteed by the relevant responsible state bodies (in most cases respective ministry). The quality is

assessed during accreditation proceedings. If certain shortcomings are discovered, accreditation is not granted. The quality of the actual provision is not evaluated on a continuous basis – it is the subject of re-accreditation (accreditation is only awarded for a limited period of time).

### 2.3.5. Participation in CVET

The participation of adults in education was, over the long term, below the EU-27 average, nevertheless in 2011 there was a remarkable increase and the figure exceeded the EU-27 average (8.9%) by reaching 11.4% <sup>(16)</sup>. This is due to extensive ESF funded projects that have been launched as anti-crisis measures and provide funding for company training (see also Section 4.2). This cannot be interpreted as a clear trend yet. However, the data from previous years also suggested possibility of slight improvement that was temporarily inhibited by the crisis. The important factor influencing the overall participation in adult education is low participation of inactive and unemployed people (lower than EU-27 average). Although it also saw an increase in 2011, the participation of employed people rose more rapidly due to the above mentioned projects (Table 20 and 21). Most of the adult training is initiated by employers; the investments of individuals in their own education are much lower.

Table 20. Participation of adult population in education

Country/year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Total</b>							
EU-27	9,5	9,3	9,1	9,2	9,2	9,1	8,9
EU-15	10,9	10,7	10,4	10,6	10,5	10,4	10,0
CR	5,6	5,6	5,7	7,8	6,8	7,5	11,4
<b>Employed persons</b>							
EU-27	10,4	10,1	9,9	10,1	9,9	9,8	9,5
EU-15	11,9	11,6	11,2	11,4	11,3	11,0	10,6
CR	6,3	6,4	6,5	8,9	7,8	8,6	13,4
<b>Unemployed persons</b>							
EU-27	7,4	7,7	8,1	8,3	8,6	9,2	9,1
EU-15	9,1	9,2	9,3	9,5	9,8	10,5	10,4
CR	2,7	3,3	3,1	3,4	3,4	5,2	7,5

<sup>(16)</sup> Percentage of adult population (aged 25-64) participating in education within the four weeks prior the survey. Source: [www.dvmonitor.cz](http://www.dvmonitor.cz) (LFS data).

<b>Inactive persons</b>							
EU-27	7,1	7,0	6,9	6,9	7,1	7,1	6,9
EU-15	8,5	8,4	8,2	8,1	8,3	8,4	8,1
CR	3,9	3,4	3,6	4,3	4,0	4,3	5,5

Note: Proportion of persons taking part in education during 4 weeks prior to the date of survey, within 25-64 age group.

Source: Eurostat (LFS), table trng\_lfs\_03. Extracted on 8.11.2012.

**Table 21. Participation of adult population in non-formal education**

<b>Country/year</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
EU-27	7	6.9	6.7	6.9	6.7	6.7	6.4
EU-15	8.5	8.3	8	8.1	8	7.9	7.4
CR	3.9	4.3	4.2	6	4.9	5.6	9.6

Note: Proportion of persons taking part in non-formal education during 4 weeks prior to the date of survey, within 25-64 age group.

Source: [www.dvmonitor.cz](http://www.dvmonitor.cz). Extracted on 8.11.2012.

## CHAPTER 3.

# Shaping VET qualifications

### 3.1. Anticipation of skill needs

The Czech Republic lacks a coherent system for forecasting skill needs. However, over the course of the years various initiatives have been developed, especially at research level, that aim at creating solid methods and individual tools for early identification of skill needs. They still take the form of single projects that are not inter-related, and their results do not serve as a regular source of information. Projects are contracted mostly by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (*Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí – MPSV*) and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy – MŠMT*).

The National Training Fund – National Observatory of Employment and Training (*Národní vzdělávací fond – Národní observatoř zaměstnanosti a vzdělávání, NVF-NOZV*), Center for Economic Research and Graduate Education – Economics Institute (*Centrum pro ekonomický výzkum a doktorské studium – Národohospodářský ústav, CERGE-EI*) and the Research Institute of Labour and Social Affairs (*Výzkumný ústav práce a sociálních věcí – VÚPSV*) belong to the most experienced institutions in this respect. Their long-term cooperation in carrying out forecasts and developing methodologies constitutes a good foundation for the necessary forecasting system. The results of forecasting activities carried out by the NVF-NOZV are presented to the general public in a coherent and comprehensible manner at [www.czechfutureskills.eu](http://www.czechfutureskills.eu).

### 3.2. Monitoring of current trends

In addition to this, there are projects of various other institutions that are not directly concerned with forecasting skill needs but that carry out certain partial activities within this area. The National Institute for Education (*Národní ústav pro vzdělávání – NÚV*) has developed an Information System on the Situation of Graduates in the Labour Market (ISA) available at [www.infoabsolvent.cz](http://www.infoabsolvent.cz). The Education Policy Centre (*Středisko vzdělávací politiky – SVP*) of the Faculty of Education at Charles University carried out an analysis of the development of qualification requirements in the Czech labour market to be used as a part of the ISA. There are also partial activities at regional level focusing on examining employers' needs and short-term outlooks of regional labour market

developments. These analyses and predictions of future development only exceptionally concern longer periods of development in relation to regional strategies.

One of the ways of obtaining employers' opinions on the development of professional requirements is to ensure their representation in the so-called sector councils (see below).

Employers are also asked to provide their views as part of ad hoc surveys and surveys dealing with skills needs and the expected occupational requirements. These surveys are suitable for identifying the needs in the immediate future (at most 1-2 years). They normally have a regional focus and they are not carried out on regular basis. They have not proven to be appropriate for predicting long-term trends.

The need to interconnect isolated activities and to establish a systematic approach to forecasting skills needs has appeared at the top of the agenda of the relevant ministries only recently. The matching of educational provision with labour market needs and forecasting skills needs were defined among the priorities in the Lifelong Learning Strategy adopted by the government in 2007. In the follow-up Implementation Plan of the LLL Strategy adopted in 2008, the responsibility for the system of forecasting skills needs and providing for the main inputs (projections and sectoral studies) has been allocated to the MPSV. The MŠMT is responsible for taking over, processing and using this information in the area of education. Cooperation with other ministries is also envisaged.

In 2009, the MŠMT launched the project *Koncept* whose main objective is to conceptually address the area of continuing education. Information products on current as well as future skill needs useable by the field of education especially by schools and training providers, counsellors and expert groups involved in the preparation of the National Qualification Framework are, among others, proposed and validated within its framework. Also pilot information products intended for various users were designed within the project. In 2010, the so-called Qualification Cards for Occupations (*Kvalifikační karty profesí – KKP*) and Educational Field Profiles (*Profily vzdělávacích oborů – PVO*) were proposed.

### 3.3. Development of qualifications and the labour market

The existing needs of the labour market are reflected in the content of qualification standards. In line with the Act on recognition of the outcomes of

continuing education <sup>(17)</sup>, standards for vocational and complete vocational qualifications (see below in the text under Recognition of qualifications) are being developed (in cooperation with sector councils – see Sector councils below in the text). Upon meeting the requirements of all statutory approval processes these standards will become part of the National Register of Vocational Qualifications (*Národní soustava kvalifikací – NSK*).

There is a common database of knowledge, skills and competencies being developed in relation to requirements identified by the world of labour (description of occupations and jobs). The content of the database affects the design of qualifications and constitutes a common foundation for the National System of Occupations (*Národní soustava povolání – NSP*) and the NSK). It is being developed along with the gradual creation of the two systems where employers play the main role (via experts who are sector councils' members).

Labour market requirements described in the qualification standards for complete vocational qualifications play a key role in the development of curricula for initial (vocational) education. These requirements are the starting point for formulating the objectives and content of the vocational component of national curricula (*rámcové vzdělávací programy – RVP*). The School Act <sup>(18)</sup> stipulates that these framework programmes will be developed for all fields of education at secondary level. Based on these national curricula, secondary schools design their own school curricula (school educational programmes). This mechanism ensures that the current labour market requirements are reflected in all initial education programmes.

Continuing (vocational) education programmes respond directly to the requirements set at national level for various occupations and jobs in the National System of Occupations or the requirements set by approved standards in the National Register of Vocational Qualifications. Training programmes (modules) may also respond to the requirements identified by continuing education providers at regional or local levels. Since 2009, retraining programmes provided within the ALMP must be also linked to the National Register of Vocational Qualifications (see Section 2.3).

The range of methods used as part of formal recognition of learning outcomes is being developed and, in essence, covers school-based approaches. It should be expanded by means of adding other approaches that should

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<sup>(17)</sup> Act no. 179/2006 Coll., on validation and recognition of the results of continuing education and on changes to other laws.

<sup>(18)</sup> Act no. 561/2004 Coll. on preschool, basic, secondary, tertiary professional and other education (School Act).

gradually be tested and evaluated, and their implementation should be considered. Gradual implementation of the Common European Principles as well as measures to strengthen the quality and comparability of processes are of key importance.

In this context various activities related to the development and strengthening of cooperation with social partners are being monitored and promoted – be it permanent and institutionalised cooperation (sector councils for qualifications and field groups for curricula) or ad hoc cooperation prompted by the need to ensure the quality of implementation of various tasks as part of important projects.

### 3.4. Implementation of the curricula

Field groups have been already working under the Statute adopted by the MŠMT for more than twenty years. They have been established based on the need to foster, on national level, creation of educational programmes (National curricula) whose objectives and contents are in line with the labour market needs. Field groups' project supports, among others, tasks related to monitoring and assessment of VET quality, curricular reform of VET in the Czech Republic and implementation of European tools – ECVET, EQAVET and assignment of qualifications' levels to EQF levels. There are 25 field groups consisting of experts from the area of education and of labour market and occupations. Their expertise covers full spectrum of potential applicability of VET graduates.

A relatively new type of entities operating nationwide, primarily in the process of defining occupations and qualifications, are the sector councils (*sektorové rady* – SR <sup>(19)</sup>) created as representations of employers in particular fields.

Currently there are 29 sector councils consisting of the representatives of employers, however, also educators or ministries are involved.

They are involved primarily in the creation of qualification standards. On annual basis, they carry out skill needs analysis of the labour market in particular sector and suggest which standards of vocational qualifications need to be created – in relation to occupations and jobs defined in the NSP. The National

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<sup>(19)</sup> The concept started to be developed in 2006 as a systemic project of the MŠMT under the title National Qualifications Framework (*Národní soustava kvalifikací* - NSK). Its development is currently fostered by a national systemic project NSK2 with potential of gradual completion of council network which will fully cover the needs of national economy. Sector councils are modelled on the British system.

Institute of Education is in charge of coordination and methodological accuracy. The NÚV submits the proposals for further approval to authorising bodies (see below), the MPSV and the MŠMT, with whom the comments and suggestions are subsequently discussed. The process of a standard development starting with its proposal and ending with its approval by the MŠMT is rather time-consuming; it takes 12 to 20 months.

Defining learning outcomes (see also Section 2 – Curricular development process)

When referring to learning outcomes there is no uniform terminology being used across the different levels of the Czech education system. While within the primary and secondary education it is customary to use the term *výsledky vzdělávání* (education outcomes), the translation of the EQF recommendation is using the term *výsledky učení* (learning outcomes) and the tertiary education mostly uses the term *výstupy z učení* (learning outputs). The system of recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes (National Register of Vocational Qualifications, NSK) uses the term competencies when referring to the units of learning outcomes of which particular qualifications are composed.

### **Involvement of social partners**

The Act no. 179/2006 Coll., on validation and recognition of the results of continuing education, has significantly contributed to the process of involvement of social partners in broader context of educational programmes development. The law clearly defines the role of social partners in the process of creating and approving relevant qualification and assessment standards. Particularly representatives of employers as members of sector councils and field groups are involved in all processes ranging from the setting of qualification requirements for occupations and describing qualifications (including definition of new qualifications) to the development and implementation of training programmes dealing with the evaluation process and recognition of the outcomes of education and learning.

The School Act, effective since January 2005, strengthened the role of employers in designing objectives and content of vocational education and evaluation of its outcomes (see also Section 2 – Governance of IVET and Curricular development process).

In line with the law, an expert from practice is appointed as a member of the examination board for the final examinations in the programmes of secondary education with an apprenticeship certificate (ISCED 3C).

### 3.5. Recognition of qualification

The legislative framework for the recognition of qualifications acquired through non-formal and informal learning was created by the Act no. 179/2006 Coll., on validation and recognition of the outcomes of CVET (*Zákon o ověřování a uznávání výsledků dalšího vzdělávání* – Continuing Education Recognition Act).

The Act distinguishes two types of qualifications:

- (a) vocational qualification (*profesní kvalifikace*, PK) is defined as ‘ability of a person to duly perform a task or a set of tasks within an occupation’<sup>(20)</sup>;
- (b) complete vocational qualification (*úplná profesní kvalifikace*, ÚPK) is defined as a professional competence to duly perform all the tasks within an occupation<sup>(21)</sup>.

Complete vocational qualification (ÚPK), in accordance with the Act no. on validation and recognition of the outcomes of CVET<sup>(22)</sup>, may be acquired in one of the following ways:

- (a) provided there is a field of education (taught within the IVET system) corresponding to the ÚPK an individual must acquire a set of vocational qualifications required by the NSK for the given ÚPK by passing respective exams and consequently also pass the examination prescribed for the field of education corresponding to the ÚPK (in a school where the field of education is taught);
- (b) provided there is no corresponding field of education an individual just acquires the vocational qualifications required by the NSK and proves that he/she has achieved the education level (acquired in a field of initial vocational education) corresponding to the qualification level of particular complete vocational qualification.

There is a qualification and assessment standard for each vocational qualification:

Qualification standard (*Kvalifikační standard* – KS<sup>(23)</sup>) for a complete vocational qualification is the starting point for formulating the curricula

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<sup>(20)</sup> It means that the term occupation has broader meaning than the set of tasks which as a whole secures certain career opportunities (e.g. furniture assembly, installation of lifts, manufacture of upholstered seats, sports massage, flower arrangement, cold dishes catering, production of ice cream, etc.).

<sup>(21)</sup> (e.g. pastry chef, hairdresser, plumber, economist, engineering technician, etc.).

<sup>(22)</sup> Besides, the ÚPK is also awarded after completing a field of education within the normal school system (regulated by the Schools Act) – see Section 2).

(Framework educational programmes) for all fields of education, for the adjustment of educational objectives; it is also the basis for determining the relation of particular vocational qualifications to the relevant complete vocational qualification.

Assessment standard (*Hodnotící standard* – HS <sup>(24)</sup>) is a statutory standard for validation and recognition of vocational qualifications. The examinations leading to achievement of an apprenticeship certificate are carried out in line with the assessment standards.

The Act defines vocational qualifications in relation to occupations. These are part of the NSP <sup>(25)</sup>.

In 2012 also the Trades Licensing Act was amended, stipulating that a set of vocational qualifications leading to the complete vocational qualification will constitute (even without a final examination and an apprenticeship certificate) sufficient precondition for obtaining a trades licence for selected crafts.

A significant step towards interconnecting the Czech qualifications and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) was the approval of the National Referencing Report by the Czech Government in July 2011. As a direct consequence, as of July 2011, all qualification standards for vocational qualifications are submitted for approval to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in both Czech and English versions.

### 3.6. Awarding bodies

As soon as the comments are dealt with, the standards approved by the MŠMT are published in the NSK information system ([www.narodni-kvalifikace.cz](http://www.narodni-kvalifikace.cz)) and the authorisation process – in other words granting of licences to the bodies that will in line with the assessment standards for relevant vocational qualifications carry out the examinations – may commence.

Validation and recognition of vocational qualifications (*profesní kvalifikace*, PKs) is in line with the Act no. 179/2006 Coll. carried out by the so-called

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<sup>(23)</sup> HS is defined by the law as ‘structured description of professional competence of an individual to duly perform a task or a set of tasks within an occupation, or two or more occupations’.

<sup>(24)</sup> KS is defined by the law as ‘a set of criteria and organisational and methodological procedures set up to verify the achievement of vocational qualification to duly perform a task or set of tasks within an occupation, or two or more occupations’.

<sup>(25)</sup> Its creation, updating and content are stipulated in the Act no. 435/2004 Coll., Act on Employment.

authorised persons. Authorisation of persons entitled to verify the qualifications, implementation of the examinations and issue of certificates, etc. is specified in particular by the implementation Decree of MŠMT <sup>(26)</sup>. It also stipulates the role of sector councils (see above).

Validation is carried out by means of examination. The applicant needs to prove in a manner specified by the assessment standard all competencies listed in the qualification standard in line with the criteria set out by the assessment standard. Upon a successful examination, the applicant is awarded a certificate on vocational qualification (PKs).

A certificate on vocational qualification is a nationally valid document, which in addition to the information on the applicant, authorised person and the examination includes also a list of the proved and validated vocational qualifications.

Any individual or legal entity meeting the requirements set by the legislation and the assessment standard of relevant vocational qualification is entitled to become an authorised person for particular vocational qualification. The authorized person has to meet requirements concerning professional competence and requirements concerning material and technical equipment.

As soon as a particular vocational qualification is published in the National Register of Vocational Qualifications, each entity interested in becoming an authorised person is entitled to apply at the so-called awarding body which is an organisation of state administration (one of the ministries or ČNB, the Czech National Bank, *Česká národní banka*) listed in the NSK as a relevant body for the given vocational qualification ([www.narodnikvalifikace.cz](http://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz)).

The authorization application fee amounts to CZK 1 500 (approx. EUR 55) per qualification. The awarding body assesses whether the applicant meets the requirements for authorised person specified in the assessment standard and it also inspects quality of examinations and is entitled to impose a fine or even withdraw authorisation in case that the terms and conditions are not met.

### 3.7. Mechanisms for quality assurance in the process of recognition of qualifications

Mechanisms are set to support quality of outputs and processes. They evolve in relation to the NSK, information systems (as a support for all processes) pursuant

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<sup>(26)</sup> Decree No. 208/2007 Coll.

to the Act no. 179/2006 and other related activities. These mechanisms monitor the quality of outputs – the standards in particular.

**Assessment of the factual accuracy**

Within the development of new vocational qualifications (PKs), there are experts who assess the final proposal submitted by the working group (*pracovní skupina*, PS) and fill in a structured questionnaire. The PS in cooperation with the guarantor (NUV) assesses the relevance of the expert opinion and eventually adjusts the standards accordingly.

**Assessment of the so-called educability, or even of professional competencies of the educators (not yet carried out as a square assessment)**

During the development of the PK – also the representatives of the educators will be appointed to working groups.

The validation will be carried out within the systemic project UNIV III – setting that approximately 300 curricula for continuing (vocational) education shall be developed in line with the PK standards (secondary schools are involved in this project and they provide the feedback for development of standards).

Given that development and implementation are carried out simultaneously, applicability and efficiency of the created and published vocational qualifications are monitored.

## CHAPTER 4.

# Promoting participation in vocational education and training

### 4.1. Promoting participation in IVET

In 2008, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MŠMT) adopted an action plan to support vocational education and training. Its implementation should lead to an expansion and strengthening of mechanisms that increase participation in VET. The plan contains, above all, the following strategic steps: enhancing transferability within the VET system, improving career counselling and the provision of information to the general public, and facilitating cooperation between schools and employers in terms of content, funding and implementation of VET including providing incentives for this cooperation.

As regards promotional campaigns, there is no uniform and comprehensive measure at the national level. One of the initiatives is the TV campaign '*l řemeslo může být cesta k úspěchu*' (Also a craft can be a path to success) to promote vocational education (crafts) and secondary technical education as an option for future successful career. The campaign consisted of TV spots and discussion programmes (talk shows) with the primary target group being the parents of children who face the choice of further educational path (at the end of basic school) and the children themselves.

#### 4.1.1. Regional level

A number of very successful campaigns and projects co-financed from the ESF are initiated in the regions (e.g. '*Řemeslo žije*' (Craft is alive); '*Auta nás baví*' (Cars are fun); TECHYES, NADOTECH; '*Řemeslo má zlaté dno*' (The craft has a golden bottom); '*Nemachruj, buď machr*' (Don't brag, be whizz), etc. Regions were or still are successfully carrying out this task.

The support for participation depends, to a large degree, on the policies pursued by the relevant regional authority and on the regional labour market requirements. Most of these campaigns (supporting the participation in IVET) are initiated by regional administrative bodies in cooperation with or with the support of social partners, particularly employers. They take the form of outdoor advertising, web portals, articles in the press, regional TV spots or online videos, distribution of printed materials in schools, various events, education fairs, open days, etc. Regional authorities also provide scholarships for students in fields that

are normally in low demand (see below). This strategy has proven quite successful.

Employers opt for information campaigns in order to increase interest in their business. They attend schools during open days and inform potential candidates or initiate also extensive media projects (e.g. web-based campaign run by employers in the automotive industry). In some cases, companies offer scholarships and may also conclude contracts on VET support that set out the obligations of the company and the pupil.

Regional media campaigns are also carried out by school in order to attract prospective students.

The campaigns are primarily aimed at the pupils in the last years of compulsory education, who need to decide about their next educational path, however, they are at the same time aimed at their parents who often actively influence the decision-making concerning the career choice of their children. The intention is to link the campaigns with the career counselling provided at schools, to facilitate a fair image of the content and working environment in particular professions and reduce thus the number of students dissatisfied with the chosen field.

#### **4.1.2. Financial incentives in IVET**

The MŠMT prepared in 2009 a proposal on specific conditions for the provision of tax incentives and subsidies for employers providing practical training to students. This direct support shall also help to partially mitigate the often criticized lack of consistency with the actual working environment. The intention has not been implemented in full due to the planned tax system reforms; nevertheless since 2015 a tax base increase for companies providing practical training to students (by means of contributions financing the upgrade of training facilities or material used for the purposes of practical training) will be introduced.

Based on the amendment to the School Act of 2009, the schools may use part of the per capita labour costs to pay the employee of the company – the instructor – leading the practical training. The schools shall, by means of this measure, be able to involve more easily the companies to implement practical training and as contractual partners they may more effectively check on its quality.

The regions provide from their budgets scholarships to the students of secondary schools. Financial support is meant to motivate students to adopt a more responsible attitude to their studies and to keep students in supported fields. Regular school attendance, excellent learning results and good behaviour are prerequisites for receiving a scholarship. The scholarship may slightly differ in

individual regions (a student can normally obtain an amount of about EUR 1 000 per 3 years of study) and its amount derives from the particular grade of study. Besides merit scholarships, there are also incentive scholarships provided to students in some regions. It is up to the regional authorities to decide which particular fields will be subsidized. Unsatisfied demand of the labour market for specialists in certain fields together with the requirements of the employers and the long-term shortage of students are the starting points for determining the fields that should be supported by means of scholarships. Some fields have recorded an increase in interest, in others, however, the student interest continues to decline.

## 4.2. Promoting participation in CVET

For many years, the Czech Republic was recording low participation in CVET compared to other EU countries, however in 2011 the figure steeply increased (it reached 11.4% versus 8.9% in EU-27 <sup>(27)</sup>) due to the ESF funded anti-crisis projects supporting company training (see below). At political level, there is a high awareness of the need to promote continuing vocational education of the adults and it is reflected in most strategic documents related to the topic. However, in practice the enforcement of effective systemic mechanisms of permanent nature is very slow in the context of high emphasis on austerity measures.

Tax incentives do not play any important role in the Czech Republic. Only two small incentives are included in the Czech legislation: (i) costs for employees' training are deemed as a part of overall business costs for taxation purposes, and (ii) individuals can deduct the costs for exams in line with the Act on validation and recognition of the outcomes of CVET from their tax base.

The investment incentives for companies (Act no. 72/2000 as amended) provide the possibility to get a contribution for employees' training and retraining (25-55% of the training and retraining costs can be provided – SMEs and the training of at-risk groups are favoured). Investment needs to be done within the sectors of manufacturing, applied research and development and innovations or strategic services. Only investors in districts with an unemployment rate exceeding 50% of the average unemployment rate can apply for these incentives.

In addition, there are on-going temporary projects aimed at promoting CVET that are financed from the ESF, such as the media campaign promoting

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<sup>(27)</sup> Source: [www.dvmonitor.cz](http://www.dvmonitor.cz).

continuing vocational education and training of the adults within the framework of UNIV2 *Kraje* project (UNIV2 Regions <sup>(28)</sup>) in 2011-12 or the projects of the MPSV launched in response to the economic crisis – currently two projects: ‘*Vzdělávejte se pro růst*’ (Get trained for Growth) and ‘*Vzdělávejte se pro stabilitu*’ (Get trained for Stability).

### 4.3. Guidance and counselling

Most career counselling services are provided within two parallel systems. The first falls within the responsibility of MŠMT; the other one is administered by the MPSV. Both systems share one objective: the provision of services facilitating optimal solutions to career-related issues.

#### 4.3.1. The MŠMT counselling system

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

The MŠMT bodies are mainly responsible for issues related to policy, methodology and coordination as regards the development of the education system – i.e. also for career counselling. The National Institute for Education (NÚV) plays a major role in this respect. It focuses, apart from the development of VET policies and strategies for their implementation, on research, methodology and dissemination of information related to career counselling, and supports the teaching of subjects dealing with labour market issues. The Institute also provides specific training focused on counselling services and the development and introduction of new methods of diagnostics in the area of psychology, special pedagogy and pedagogy.

The Centre for Career Counselling is a unit of the NÚV providing information about programmes offered by secondary VET schools and tertiary professional schools. The NÚV also pursues the development of an integrated information system (ISA) concerning the situation and eligibility of school leavers in the labour market and provides information to various users.

Educational counsellors are coordinators of counselling services at schools. All schools at the primary, lower secondary and upper secondary level are obliged by law to establish the position of educational counsellor. The counsellors

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<sup>28</sup> [www.nuov.cz/univ2k/propagacni-kampan-1](http://www.nuov.cz/univ2k/propagacni-kampan-1) (available only in Czech).

also work as teachers. They are subject to methodological guidance by the relevant pedagogical-psychological guidance centre, and address, in cooperation with other teachers, the school director, parents and specialised counselling facilities, the issues related to education and professional orientation of the students. Each school also employs a school methodologist concerned with the prevention of socio-pathological disorders, and there might also be school psychologists and special pedagogues.

Since the academic year 2010-11, the curricula for secondary schools has included a subject Introduction to the world of work and lower secondary education has introduced a subject Career path selection.

The most frequent methods of career counselling in compulsory and upper secondary education include individual and group counselling. In addition to this, pupils may attend various educational fairs, open door days at schools, job brokering events, etc. The system [www.infoabsolvent.cz](http://www.infoabsolvent.cz) <sup>(29)</sup> constitutes a very useful source of information for career decision making (of pupils, students and also adults) and the success of graduates on the labour market.

Counselling services provided by schools are linked to the activities of school counselling facilities – i.e. pedagogical-psychological guidance centres, centres for special pedagogy, educational care centres and information centres for young people.

Information centres for youth collect comprehensive information on educational opportunities for all age categories. They are grouped in the association of information and counselling centres for young people.

#### **4.3.2. The MPSV counselling system**

The MPSV system of counselling services to adults is aimed at resolving problems related to the transfer from school to employment, and at supporting job seekers and job applicants to find a job and to increase their employability through retraining.

Act no. 73/2011 Coll., on the Labour Office (*Úřad práce – ÚP*) effective as of April 2011, newly modified the organisation of employment services in the Czech Republic. It set only one centralized legal entity (the Labour Office – ÚP)

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<sup>(29)</sup> The system [www.infoabsolvent.cz](http://www.infoabsolvent.cz) was developed under the national systemic project *VIP Kariéra*, which was completed in 2009 and was co-financed from the ESF. This system collects information essential for career decision-making (of pupils, students and adults) and the success of graduates on the labour market. The system continues operating and has been evaluated as very beneficial by the OECD.

consisting of 14 regional units. Each unit includes several local contact centres<sup>(30)</sup>.

Counselling at the UP may be distinguished as follows:

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

There is an Information and Counselling Centre at each ÚP unit and its main task is to provide assistance as regards career choice for young people and adults. There is a wide range of information materials and media available for this purpose – mainly used on a self-service basis (descriptions of occupations and leaflets on educational provision). Each centre employs a career counsellor who is ready to attend to the clients' needs.

Main target group of these centres are job seekers, people who seek alternative employment, school leavers and other groups at risk of unemployment.

There are also visits being organised for the pupils in the last stage of compulsory education. In recent years, extensive austerity measures followed by a reorganization of the employment services lead to the reduction of financial as well as human resources that significantly affected also counselling services provided by the Labour Office branches. Counselling is provided at a lower range, it is often outsourced and it is rather likely that in some cases its quality is at stake.

In 2000, there was established a principal network bringing together Centres for Balance Diagnostics operating at those labour offices which had been providing psychological services within specialised counselling.

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

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<sup>(30)</sup> The former structure (until 2011) consisted of 77 Labour Offices (in each district town), and 182 branches – i.e. 259 contact points for clients.

#### 4.3.3. Another services for adults

Adults may also use – in addition to the traditional one-to-one guidance sessions – a number of information sources provided on the Internet. There are systems developed with the state support, such as the DAT database of continuing education ([www.dat.cz](http://www.dat.cz)), the Integrated System of Typical Working Positions (*Integrovaný systém typových pozic* – ISTP) containing comprehensive information on occupations and related requirements (including an optional analysis of the client's applicability – [www.istp.cz](http://www.istp.cz)), the Registry of schools ([www.uiv.cz](http://www.uiv.cz)), [www.infoabsolvent.cz](http://www.infoabsolvent.cz) system and others. There are also commercial systems available. Counselling services focusing mostly on adults are also provided by private consultancies (e.g. recruitment agencies).

There are also non-profit organisations dealing, among other things, with counselling services for migrants – e.g. META (Association for Opportunities of Young Migrants – [www.meta-os.cz](http://www.meta-os.cz), Centre for Integration of Foreigners – [www.cicpraha.org](http://www.cicpraha.org), Counselling Centre for Refugees – [www.migrace.com](http://www.migrace.com), etc.)

The National Guidance Forum (*Národní poradenské fórum* – NPF, [www.narodniporadenskeforum.cz](http://www.narodniporadenskeforum.cz)) is an advisory body of the MŠMT/MPSV for career guidance in a lifelong perspective. It was established in 2010. Given the potential of its members, it is able to ensure inter-sectoral coordination of activities related not only to the acquisition of professional competences of the career guidance providers within initial and continuing vocational education, but most importantly to the coordination of project plans implemented in the field of lifelong guidance on departmental and interdepartmental level. Thus it constitutes a necessary shift for an increase of the synergy of pre-set systemic changes at the national level and consequently more efficient use of funds from the state budget and the European Social Fund.

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

The Centre for the Promotion of Vocational Guidance Services operating at the National Training Fund (NVF) is monitoring the development of counselling and guidance services which are within the purview of the MPSV and the development of services in CVET.

International dimension is represented mainly by the Czech Euroguidance Centre, which conducts educational activities for counsellors, particularly in the area of domestic as well as international career guidance. Its website [www.euroguidance.cz](http://www.euroguidance.cz) provides the counsellors with scope for sharing information and experience at the national as well as international levels. The Czech

Euroguidance Centre aims at facilitating experiences of European countries to the expert public fostering thus the development of career counselling in the Czech Republic. The Euroguidance Centre in the Czech Republic operates within the National Agency for European Educational Programmes (*Národní agentura pro evropské vzdělávací programy* – NAEP, [www.naep.cz](http://www.naep.cz)).

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

CERGE-EI	Centrum pro ekonomický výzkum a doktorské studium-Národohospodářský ústav,(Center for Economic Research and Graduate Education – Economics Institute)
CV	Celoživotní vzdělávání (Life-Long Learning – special learning course provided by higher education institutions)
CVET	Continuing Vocational Education and Training
CVT	Další odborná příprava (Continuing Vocational Training)
CVTS	Continuing Vocational Training Survey
CZK	Česká koruna (Czech crown – Czech currency)
ČR	Česká republika (Czech Republic – ČR)
ČSÚ	Český statistický úřad (Czech Statistical Office)
ČŠI	Česká školní inspekce (Czech School Inspectorate)
DiV	Distanční vzdělávání (Distance Education)
ECVET	European Credit Transfer in Vocational Education and Training
EQUAVET	European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	Evropská unie (European Union)
EU-15	European Union before joining new member states in 2004 – 15 states
EU-25	European Union after joining new member states in 2004 – 25 states
EU-27	European Union after joining Romania and Bulgaria in 2007 – 27 states
GDP	Hrubý domácí product (Gross Domestic Product)
HR	Human Resources
HRD	Human Resources Development
HS	Hodnotící standard (Assessment Standard)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IPPP	Institut pedagogicko-psychologického poradenství (Institute of Pedagogical-Psychological Counselling)
SA	Informační systém o uplatnění absolventů škol na trhu práce (Information system on the situation of school leavers in the labour market)
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education

ISTP	Integrovaný systém typových pozic (Integrated System of Typical Working Positions)
IVET	Initial Vocational Education and Training
LLL	Lifelong Learning
KKP	Kvalifikační karty profesí (Qualification Cards for Occupations )
KS	Kvalifikační standard (Qualification standard)
MPSV	Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs)
MŠMT	Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports)
NAEP	National Agency for European Educational Programmes
NCDiV	Národní centrum distančního vzdělávání (National Centre for Distance Education)
NOZV	Národní observatoř zaměstnanosti a vzdělávání (National Observatory of Employment and Training)
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSK	Národní soustava kvalifikací (National Register of Vocational Qualifications)
NSP	Národní soustava povolání (National System of Occupations)
NÚOV	Národní ústav odborného vzdělávání (National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education)
NÚV	Národní ústav pro vzdělávání, školské poradenské zařízení a zařízení pro další vzdělávání pedagogických pracovníků (National Institute for Education, Education Counselling Centre and Centre for Continuing Education of Teachers)
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
NVF	Národní vzdělávací fond (National Training Fund)
PK	Profesní kvalifikace (Vocational Qualification)
PPS	Standard kupní síly (Purchasing Power Standard)
PVO	Profily vzdělávacích oborů (Educational Field Profiles)
RISA	Regionální informační systém o uplatnění absolventů (Regional Information System on the Situation of School Leavers in the Labour Market)
RVP	Rámcové vzdělávací programy (National Curricula)
SJŠ	Státní jazykové školy (State Language Schools)
SME	Malé a střední podniky (Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises)
SOŠ	Střední odborné školy (Secondary Technical Schools)
SOU	Střední odborná učiliště (Secondary Vocational Schools)
SR	Sektorové rady (Sector Councils)

SŠ	Střední školy (Secondary Schools – i.e. Secondary Vocational Schools, Secondary technical schools and Gymnázia)
SVČ	Střediska volného času (Leisure Centres)
SVP	Středisko vzdělávací politiky (Education Policy Centre)
ŠVP	Školní vzdělávací programy (School Curricula)
ÚIV	Ústav pro informace ve vzdělávání (Institute for Information on Education)
UNIV	Projekt Uznávání výsledků neformálního vzdělávání a informálního učení (Project Recognition of Results of Non-formal Education and Informal Learning in the Networks of Schools Providing Adult Education)
UOE	UNESCO-OECD-Eurostat statistics on education
ÚP	Úřad práce (Labour Office)
ÚPK	Úplná profesní kvalifikace (Complete Vocational Qualification)
VET	Odborné vzdělávání a příprava (Vocational Education and Training)
VOŠ	Vyšší odborné školy (Tertiary Professional Schools)
VŠ	Vysoké školy (Higher Education Institutions)
VÚPSV	Výzkumný ústav práce a sociálních věcí (Research Institute of Labour and Social Affairs)
ZUŠ	Základní umělecké školy (Basic Art Schools)

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