

REPORT FOR DGVT ON NEW INITIATIVES IN VET (PERIOD JUNE-SEPTEMBER 2008)

Educational strategy for Sustainable Development of the Czech Republic

On 9th July 2008, the CR government approved the Educational Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Czech Republic for the period 2008-2015. This is a conceptual document applying basic principles and topics of sustainable development of all types and levels of education. This document, first of all puts stress on interconnection of economic, social and environmental aspects of society development. Active citizenship, poverty reduction, safety, human and citizen rights and environmental education belong to varied topics, which strategy for sustainable development deals with.

The strategy wants to use, first of all the development of competences of trainers at all educational levels (within preschool, elementary, secondary, tertiary professional higher and continuing education), the development of competences of trainees and sufficient and available educational offering

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in a close collaboration with the Ministry of Environment will coordinate meeting this strategy. As this document has an interdisciplinary and intersectoral character, a working group composed of the representatives of departments, higher education institutions and the professional public will be established. The strategy should also be one of guiding documents for budget appropriation from the Operation Programme Education for Competitiveness and other operation programmes.

The strategy, apart from other things will support the development of educational programmes focused on the application of innovative methods for quality management in public administration. In the company sphere, it will assist to develop educational programmes focussed on the social responsibility of companies and the system of environmental management. Within elementary and secondary schools the Strategy will motivate for strengthening communitarian functions of schools and the further continuation of the curricular reform. As regards higher education institutions, the reform will support interdisciplinary study programmes and last but not least closer cooperation of higher education institutions with practice through expertise centres.

As the Czech Republic approved the Strategy, it joined ongoing Decade for Education for Sustainable Development declared by the United Nations in 2005. The Czech Republic responds by this Strategy to the regional Educational Strategy for Sustainable Development which was adopted by all UN member states of the Economic Commission for Europe (including the Czech Republic) in Vilnius in Lithuania in 2005. In addition, the Czech Republic took an active part in the preparation of this document from its very beginning.

Legislative changes in VET

Amendment to the Act on recognition of vocational qualification

On 1st July 2008, Act No. 189/2008 Coll. came into effect. It amends the legislation of vocational qualification recognition in the Czech Republic, especially Act No.8/2004 Coll. on recognition of vocational qualification and other competences of EU member state citizens as amended by later acts (the Act on recognition of vocational qualification) and other related acts.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and other ministries prepared a proposal for the Act which amends the Act on recognition of vocational qualification and other competences of EU member state citizens as amended by later acts (the Act on recognition of vocational qualification) and other related laws. The

reason for it was the necessity to implement a new regulation on recognition of vocational qualification (2005/36/EC) in the Czech legislation. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports became an administrator of the aforementioned implementation in view of the fact that aforementioned directive 2005/36/EC on recognition of vocational qualifications falls under its control. This directive consolidates about 15 previous directives of the general and sector system for recognition of vocational qualifications into one legal tool. That is why this directive simplifies the communitarian legislation. With respect to this fact the act proposal, which aimed at transferring this directive into the CR legislation, was very extensive (about 1000 pages).

Changes in the School Act

Act No.241/2008 Coll. amends the School Act in the field of Maturita examinations. The amendment to the Act came into effect partially on 4th July 2008, partially will be efficient on 1st September 2009. Act No.243/2008 Coll. changes the regulations for admission to secondary study programmes stipulated by the School Act. The Act came into effect on 4th July 2008.

The exact wording of Act No.561/2004 on preschool, elementary, basic, secondary, tertiary professional and other education (the School Act) as amended by later regulations came into effect on 2nd September 2008 and takes into account all changes in the act that became effective from this date.

National Programme of Preparation for Ageing for 2008-2012

In January 2008, the Czech government adopted the updated version of the strategic document: National Preparation for Ageing titled: “Quality of Life in Old Age”. This document specifies and further develops measures stated in the National Programme of Preparation for Ageing for 2003-2007. The steps dealing with education are determined in several strategic priorities. Life –course perspective, which stresses the necessity of education promotion, a positive attitude towards education from schooldays and also throughout the whole life, is applied here. This can prevent problems of old aged people in the labour market. The document (apart from other things) works out a concept of lifelong learning system development, increases lifelong learning opportunities and lifelong learning availability, including special retraining programmes and counselling and guidance for older people. ESF funds should be used for expansion of lifelong learning opportunities in the network of schools. The project, which aims at the promotion of the development of individual further education in ICT and foreign language competences, should be implemented.

In the near future, the Czech government should also analyse the possibility of using financial motivation of employees and employers for participation in further education as well as employment of older people. Labour offices should mandatorily develop Individual action plans for unemployed people older than 50 years of age. These plans should contain a complex solution of situation of these people. Initiatives leading to increasing awareness of seniors in all important fields will be introduced and promoted. Framework educational programmes implemented at schools will also contain education on intergenerational relations and old age and ageing.

Besides this document, the government charges individual ministries with the promotion of initiatives (within the system of grants and other programmes) aiming at increasing the quality of life in old age and research conducted in this particular field.

The document represents further strengthening and specifications of intentions specified in the document from 2003. It represents an important framework for the implementation of policy

coping with coming demographic changes. This framework is mainly based on the promotion of lifelong learning principles.