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Vocational education and training in the Czech Republic

Thematic Overview

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Theme 1: General policy context – framework for the knowledge society

1.1 Political and socio-economic context

The Czech Republic came into being in 1993, as a result of a split of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic. The CR is a parliamentary democracy and the head of the country is the president. In 2004 the CR became a member of the European Union. It is a member of the North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). As regards its administrative system, the CR has since 2000 been divided into fourteen administrative units called regions (NUTS 3). They are governed by regional self-administrative authorities headed by regional governors.

1.2 Population and demographics¹

The Czech Republic covers an area of 78,900 km² and the population was 10.2 million in 2003. Following the change of social system in 1989, there was a steep decline in the birth rate, which since the mid-1990s has hovered at a minimum level in European as well as global terms. There are positive trends as regards the death rate. Although the population is ageing, the number of deaths has been declining over the long term, and life expectancy is rising. The low number of births has resulted in a natural population decline, which is only partially set off by migration. The population in the CR has been declining since 1994. As late as 2003, after nine years, an overall increase in population occurred, but only thanks to migration figures.

In terms of long-term development trends, the mean variant of a demographic prognosis envisages a change in the population structure disavouring younger age groups. The result will be an ageing population accompanied by grave social and economic implications. Population ageing is evident in the age index (the ratio of population aged 65+ to 0-14-year-olds), which is expected to rise from 89 in 2003 to 163 in 2025. At the same time, the burden on the economically active population expressed by the dependency index (the ratio of population aged 65+ and 0-14 to the 15-64 age group) is expected to rise from 42 in 2003 to 53 in 2025.

Population structure by age groups

Age group	Population		Population structure (%)	
	2003	2025	2003	2025
0 – 24	2 958 575	2 319 205	29.0	22.7
25 – 59	5 281 655	5 044 361	51.7	49.4
60 +	1 971 225	2 853 634	19.3	27.9
Total	10 211 455	10 217 200	100.0	100.0

Source: Age Structure of the Population of the Czech Republic in Terms of Gender and Age Groups in 2002; Projection of the CR's Population (mean variant including migration), CSO 2004, own calculations.

¹ Sources: Development of the CR's Population in Terms of International Comparison, CSO 2002; Age Structure of the Population of the Czech Republic in Terms of Gender and Age Groups in 2002; Projection of the CR's Population (mean variant including migration), CSO 2004, own calculations.

1.3 Economy and labour market indicators²

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-25, the CR still shows lasting structural disproportions. The proportion of industry and construction in terms of gross value added and employment is significantly higher in the CR than in the EU-25. On the other hand, the figures for the service sector are lower in the CR. The importance of the service sector has been growing constantly, particularly thanks to the growing proportion of business services. The importance of construction is decreasing. However, the importance of industry has risen slightly in recent years, mainly due to the manufacturing industries where foreign companies operate.

Structure of gross value added (in current prices) and employment (%)

	Gross value added				Employment			
	EU-25	CR			EU-25	CR		
	2003	1995	2000	2003	2003	1995	2000	2003
Agriculture	2.1	4.6	3.9	2.8	5.8	6.0	4.7	3.9
Industry and construction	26.8	39.9	38.5	38.0	25.3	39.9	38.5	38.6
Services	71.1	55.5	57.6	59.2	68.9	54.1	56.8	57.5

Source: EUROSTAT – New Cronos database (National Accounts, Labour Force Survey), Structural indicators (Employment); Labour Force Survey – Labour Market in the Czech Republic 1993 - 2003, CSO 2004, own calculations.

The rate of employment in the Czech Republic is still higher than in the EU-25, but it has been declining, with slight oscillations, since 1989. Since the 2nd half of the 1990s this decline has been combined with increasing unemployment (the rate of unemployment grew from 4 % in 1995 to 7.8 % in 2003) and a growing number of economically inactive people (the rate of economic participation of the population decreased from 61.5 % in 1995 to 59.4 % in 2003). Compared to the EU-25 the CR shows a larger difference between the rate of employment of men and women, and this difference has been hovering at a stable level.

Employment rate (15-64 age group, %)

	EU-25	CR		
	2003	1995	2000	2003
Total	62.9	69.4	65.0	64.7
Men	70.8	77.9	73.2	73.1
Women	55.1	61.0	56.9	56.3

Source: EUROSTAT – New Cronos database (Labour Force Survey), Structural indicators (Employment); Labour Force Survey – Labour Market in the Czech Republic 1993 - 2003, CSO 2004, own calculations.

The development of **unemployment** in Czech Republic in the transformation period differed considerably from that in other countries in transition. The rate of unemployment in the CR started to grow considerably only as late as 1997 (until then it was around 4 %). Unemployment reached the highest level (according to the ILO definition) in 2000 (8.7 %). The rate of registered unemployment slightly exceeded 10 % in 2004. The differences in the rate of unemployment between men and women are greater in the CR compared to the EU-25. There is growing unemployment in the CR in the age group up to 25 – it exceeded the EU-25 level in 2003.

² Sources: EUROSTAT – New Cronos database (National Accounts, Labour Force Survey), Structural indicators (Employment, Innovation and research); Prameny: EUROSTAT – Labour Force Survey – Labour Market in the Czech Republic 1993 - 2003, CSO 2004, own calculations; Education at a Glance, OECD 2004.

Unemployment rate (% , ILO/EUROSTAT definition)

	EU-25	CR		
	2003	1995	2000	2003
Total	9.1	4.0	8.7	7.8
Men	8.3	3.4	7.3	6.2
Women	10.0	4.8	10.4	9.9
< 25 years	18.4	..	17.8	18.6

Source: EUROSTAT – New Cronos database (Labour Force Survey), Structural indicators (Employment); Labour Force Survey – Labour Market in the Czech Republic 1993 - 2003, CSO 2004, own calculations.

Public expenditure on education as a proportion of GDP decreased in the CR from 4.62 % in 1995 to 4.16 % in 2001 (in the EU-25 the proportion is higher – 5.09 %). There is a considerable imbalance as regards expenditure per student in tertiary education. While the index of student number increase was 162 compared to 1995, the index of expenditure increase was only 103. The proportion of public expenditure on education in **total public expenditure** in the CR grew slightly from 7.7 % in 1995 to 8.3% in 2001. However, it remains lower compared to the EU-25 (10.9 %).

1.4 Educational attainment of population³

The education structure of the Czech population (aged 25-64) in terms of the basic ISCED levels shows a considerably lower proportion of the group with basic education and a lower proportion of the population with tertiary education. On the other hand, there is a very high proportion of the population with secondary education. The low share of those with tertiary qualifications is attributed mainly to the still insufficient provision of tertiary education, particularly short study programmes at ISCED 5B level.

Population structure by educational attainment (25-64 years, %)

	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6
EU-25	34	42	21
CR	12	76	12

Source: EUROSTAT – New Cronos database (Labour Force Survey).

Compared to the EU-25, the Czech Republic scores very well as regards the proportion of the population aged **18-24 with basic or lower education** who no longer participate in either initial or continuing education. Despite a slight increase in this proportion in 2003 it is still more than twice as low as in the EU-25.

The proportion of the population aged 18-24 with basic or lower education and not participating in either initial or continuing education (%)

	2002	2003
EU-25	18.5	18.0
CR	5.5	6.0

Source: EUROSTAT – New Cronos database (Labour Force Survey).

³ Sources: EUROSTAT – New Cronos database (Labour Force Survey).

Theme 2: Policy development – objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities

2.1 Objectives and priorities

In 1999 an Outline of Policy in the Area of Education and the Development of the Education System was presented for public discussion. (for the chart see chapter 4) The first stage consisted of discussion at expert level and was followed by a public discussion of the scheme entitled “Challenge for Ten Million”. The result of this preparatory stage is the **National Programme for the Development of Education, the so-called White Paper**, which was discussed by the government in March 2001. Following on from the White Paper was the **Long-Term Plan of Education and Development of Education System** which was prepared by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) in 2002 as a key strategic document, setting out plans for the development of the education system supported by the state. Its importance lies in the fact that it should operate as an effective instrument for reaching accord between state policies (MoEYS) and regional policies in a situation where major responsibilities for governance and decision-making have been delegated from the state to regions. Following from the MoEYS’s Long-Term Plan of 2002, **Regional Long-Term Plans for the Development of Education** were drawn up by regions (14) in 2003. The development of the plans at national and regional levels is inter-linked – in terms of timing, procedures and structure – and the MoEYS performs a coordinating and methodological function. The School Act commands the MoEYS (as well as regions) to develop long-term plans once every two years when the progress made is assessed and the plans might be adjusted or complemented as need be. The Long-Term Plan published in 2004 should focus on education policy in the European context, taking particular account of the Lisbon objectives. In line with the new School Act (effective from 2005) long-term plans for the CR will be binding (i.e. will be discussed in Parliament and approved by the government).

In the 1990s there was extensive expert discussion and a pilot testing concerned with improvements to the content of education and the quality of educational outcomes. Many of the findings found their way into the **new School Act**, which was passed in 2004. At the same time **principle proposition for a new act on CVET** was drafted, which should provide a legal framework for lifelong learning.

The aforementioned policy documents and legislative materials covering the entire education system set out the main developmental priorities and directions. They include the following:

Curricular reform

Curricular reform is primarily based on a shift from memorising facts to the development of key competencies, such as work with information and information technologies, foreign language and communication skills and others, and on contacts between schools and the labour market. This trend will be reflected in a two-level development of curricula, where framework educational programmes (curricula) will be binding nationwide for a specific level and field of education. School-based curricula will allow schools to shape their distinct profiles, and to meet the needs of students and regional labour markets. (see Theme 7)

Reforming completion of secondary education and training

Final examinations in vocational programmes without “maturita” will be enhanced by rendering all their parts more objective (this concerns the written, oral and particularly the

practical part, in which social partners should cooperate extensively). Reform of the “maturita” examination will consist in the introduction of a national, centrally administered and evaluated examination (in 2008) in general subjects. The vocational part of “maturita” will be set by the school, which will also be responsible for its implementation and evaluation. (see Theme 8)

Ensuring quality, monitoring and evaluation of educational outcomes

The relatively extensive autonomy of schools must be offset by a systematic evaluation of educational outcomes. The objective is to develop a coherent system of monitoring and evaluation of schools with the use of external evaluation and the introduction of a system for quality care based on self-evaluation and student assessment. (see Theme 8)

The development of integrated, diagnostic, information and counselling system in education

This system should integrate the systems of pedagogical-psychological guidance and centres for career counselling, and expand the scope of services by covering the services of school psychologists. (see Theme 9)

Optimisation of educational provision and the institutional structure of IVET

The provision of IVET should be brought more into line with the needs of regional labour markets and the anticipated employment opportunities for school leavers. Special emphasis should be placed on strengthening the provision of IVET completed by “maturita”. The primary task, particularly at regional level, is to optimise the network of secondary schools – i.e. to increase the size of schools, to create multi-functional schools and to introduce programmes with a broad professional profile.

Support for the development of tertiary education, particularly Bachelor studies

In particular, it is necessary to address the further development of higher professional schools, and to foster the perception of them as institutions providing short-cycle professional tertiary education (ISCED 5B), their position and links to higher education (HE) institutions, and their distribution across the country. A limited number of these schools should form a basis for the establishment of new public HE institutions of a non-university type, which will provide mainly Bachelor study programmes.

The development of CVET as part of lifelong learning

As there is no coherent legislation regulating this sector, the priority is to prepare propositions for a new act on CVET.

Many of the priorities mentioned above are being implemented. Some framework educational programmes are being tested, and so is the national (common) part of the “maturita” examination and the more objective final examinations in some vocational programmes. Regional long-term plans set out the priority of optimising the network of schools, which the regions are implementing with every effort. Methods of ensuring the quality of education and the development of the information-counselling system have been designed already, and implementation is planned via systemic projects supported from the ESF. However, Bachelor studies are only developing thanks to private initiatives, and the development of CVET has been stagnant.

Theme 3: Institutional framework – provision of learning opportunities

3.1 Administrative framework

The governance and administration of VET were strongly affected by public administration reform launched in the area of education in 2001. The major principles of the reform included decentralisation, strengthening the role of regional administration and support for school autonomy. The system of funding shows similar trends. All schools providing initial VET (except higher education institutions), are funded by the Ministry of Education via regional authorities, which allocate the resources to individual schools. Private schools included in the schools network are funded in a similar manner from public resources, and only a smaller part of their revenues comes from private sources (for details see Theme 10).

Until 2000 major powers in the VET area were concentrated in the **Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS)**. In January 2001, as part of public administration reform, the powers were taken over by newly established regional administrative bodies. The MoEYS thus lost its responsibility for establishing secondary and higher professional schools, as it has been delegated to regions. The main responsibilities of the MoEYS currently include:

- development of national education policy and strategy, primarily in the form of the Long-Term Plan for the Development of Education and the Education System, and provision of methodology for and coordination of long-term plans for the development of education in regions;
- development of curricular policy and care for the quality of education on the basis of the objectives and content of education, set as part of an approved system of subject areas and framework curricula; operation of a system for monitoring and evaluation of student and school performance;
- coordination of public administration and funding in the area of education, including communication with social partners at national level; issuing decrees regulating educational conditions in schools; initiation of developmental and innovative schemes, etc.

At regional level **self-governing bodies – regional assembly and regional council** - were 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 structure of the schools network and 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 that 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. Established schools must be approved by the MoEYS and ranged into the “framework of schools” for being eligible for funding from public sources. Regional bodies administer the schools and cover their capital and operational costs. They appoint directors of the schools set up by them based on appointment procedures and upon ministerial approval.

A regional body of state administration is a **regional authority**. 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.

As schools' autonomy has been extended, school **directors** hold significant powers. They are responsible for implementation of approved 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)⁴.

3.2 Legislative framework for vocational education and training

Initial vocational education and training (IVET) up to the level of higher professional schools is governed by the law on pre-school, basic, secondary, higher professional and other education (the **School Act**). From 1 January 2005 a new School Act will come into effect⁵. It will replace the existing law and other scattered, incoherent and many times amended legal regulations. The new act will stipulate the conditions under which education takes place in schools and school facilities, define the rights of individuals and legal entities in education, and establish the responsibilities of bodies executing state administration and self-administration in education. At the same time ministerial decrees and other regulations will enter into force which elaborate on the stipulations in the law in more detail.

Higher education (HE) institutions are governed by the **act on higher education institutions**⁶ of 1998 which provides for the establishment of private HE institutions and which has changed the legal status of state HE institutions. They have become so-called public HE institutions, while the amendment of 2001 provides them with the opportunity to pursue business activities using their own property and collect tuition fees for courses within the framework of lifelong learning.

The administrative framework of IVET was also considerably affected by the **act on the establishment of higher-level administrative units (regions)**⁷ which came into effect on 1 January 2000. This comprehensive reform of public administration has had major effects on the system of governance of IVET. It was designed to eliminate major shortcomings concerning, above all, too extensive powers on the part of state administration and a high degree of centralisation of state administration in central administrative bodies. The public administration reform has provided for the setting up of the so far non-existent regional self-administration.

As at 1 January 2005 an **act on pedagogical staff**⁸ enter into force which stipulate a new definition of the position of pedagogical staff and lay down requirements for the performance of their occupation, their continuing training and career system.

⁴ Act no. 561/2004 on pre-school, basic, secondary, higher professional and other education.

⁵ Act no. 561/2004 on pre-school, basic, secondary, higher professional and other education.

⁶ Act no. 111/1998 on higher education institutions, as amended.

⁷ Act no. 347/1997 on the establishment of higher-level administrative units.

⁸ Act no. 563/2004 on pedagogical staff and changes to other laws.

There is no comprehensive legislation regulating continuing vocational education and training (CVET). There are single regulations covering its parts. (see also Theme 5) For example, retraining of job seekers is subject to the **act on employment**⁹, adult education in the education sector falls within the purview of the School Act, and continuing training in specific professions (e.g. physicians, electricians, teachers) is governed by the relevant legal regulations mostly at a level below laws. This is why **principle propositions for an act on continuing education and training** have been put forward¹⁰. The act should, in a comprehensive and coherent manner, foster the issues of initial and continuing VET and recognition of non-formal and informal learning. It should define legal obligations of the main players involved, identify the conditions for funding, introduce a uniform system for evaluation of the standards and quality of CVET courses, introduce incentives for all entities involved (educators, learners, employers), and stipulate rules for the operation of an information-counselling system which would facilitate understanding of the CVET provision. Although the propositions do not provide a comprehensive coverage of lifelong learning, it is still – in view of the current situation – a major step forward which, if the bill is passed, could encourage the development of CVET in the CR. (see also Theme 8)

IVET Governance and Administration

Function Level	Decision-making	Executive	Consultative
National	Parliament	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	Government Council for Human Resources Development
Regional	Regional assembly	Regional council (self-administration) Regional authority – department for education, youth and sports (delegated state administration)	Education Commission Regional Council for Human Resources Development
Local		Director of school or school facility	School council

⁹ Act no. 435/2004 on employment.

¹⁰ Draft propositions for an act on continuing education and training. Prague, MoEYS, October 2004.

3.3 Role of social partners

The involvement of social partners in VET is voluntary and depends on the initiative of the parties concerned. There are no legal regulations fostering this involvement and the roles of social partners in this respect. The positions provided by social partners are of a consultative nature.

At **national** level a platform for social dialogue is provided by the Council for Economic and Social Agreement. Apart from other issues, it also covers education – it is the responsibility of a “working team for education and human resources”. At this level, social partners as members of this Council contribute to the formulation of legal regulations and government papers and provide their comments. The Government Council for Human Resources Development established in 2003 plays an important part in promoting a comprehensive approach to human resources development (HRD). It is composed on a tripartite principle and its task is to take part in the development of strategic national documents and decisions inter-linking the areas of employment, VET, qualifications and entrepreneurship. Establishment of similar bodies for strategic HRD management has been initiated at regional level as well.

In general, as regards the **regional** level, social partners are represented in Regional Councils for Social and Economic Agreement and Councils for HRD. However, the situation varies region by region. In practice social partners are involved in changes to the structure of VET provision.

At **sectoral** level there are some examples of good cooperation between social partners and VET schools. This cooperation is usually initiated by professional organisations (economic chambers) – i.e. not by employers nor trade unions. The level of cooperation depends on the importance of the relevant industry for the regional economy.

At **enterprise** level cooperation occurs mainly between schools and companies which employ graduates. Education in VET schools is not designed so as to prepare an individual for a specific position. On-the-job introductory training is entirely up to companies. One reason for this is the fact that the business sector often uses state-of-the-art technologies, whereas schools do not have human, teaching and technical resources to cover the latest developments. Social partnership also involves the process of collective bargaining both at ministerial level and at corporate and institutional levels. This process is provided for in the Czech legal system¹¹. At present the agreements include positive examples that affect participation in lifelong learning.

One positive development, as regards the pursuit of harmony between the content of VET and labour market needs, is representation of social partners on so-called “branch groups” at the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education. The formation of the groups in 1998 was authorised by the Ministry of Education and they contribute to the identification of objectives and the content of VET. There are currently 23 “branch groups” covering the entire spectrum of occupations which those who complete secondary VET schools and higher professional schools may perform¹². Another important step embedded in the new School Act is that social partners are obliged to take part in final examinations.

¹¹ Act no. 2/1991 on collective bargaining.

¹² They have 8-20 members. They include experts acquainted with the situation in industry, and expert in curricular development. The experts' membership of the groups is voluntary and not remunerated. Ensuring co-operation may therefore sometimes constitute a problem.

The involvement of social partners in the development of VET takes the form of projects within various programmes which may serve as examples of good practices (mainly the Leonardo da Vinci programme). In project implementation the aforementioned problems occur that relate to social dialogue and, most importantly, to low levels of motivation on the part of social partners and missing legislation.

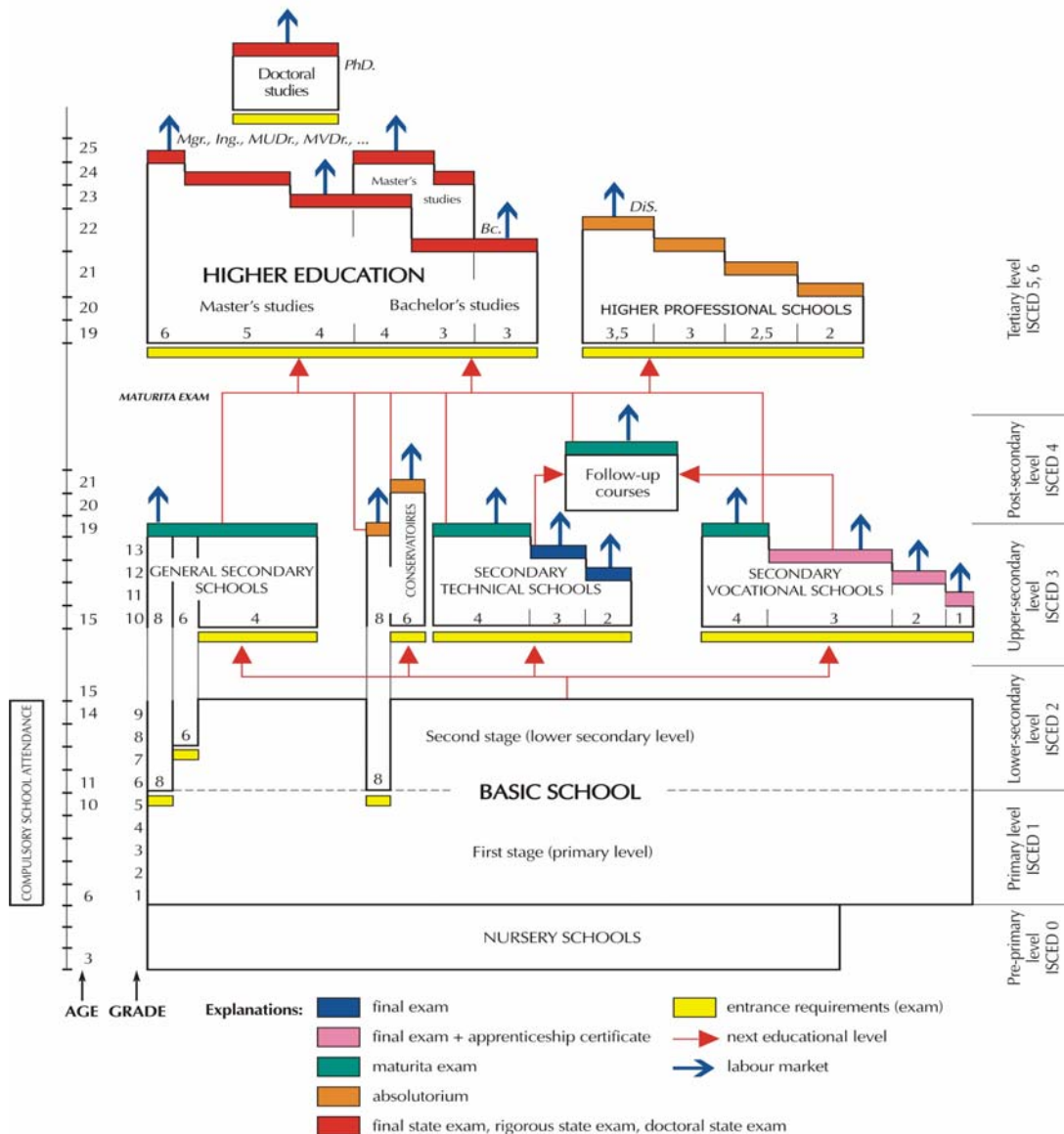
	Responsibilities of social partners in VET area	Type of role (advisory/decision-making)
National level	Formulation of and comments on legal regulations and government papers	advisory
Regional level	Formulation of, recommendations to and comments on strategic documents at regional level	advisory
Sectoral level	Formulation of general frameworks for the provision of continuing training in companies (in sporadic cases this is implemented as part of collective bargaining at a higher level)	advisory/decision-making
Enterprise level	Planning and implementation of training in companies (collective agreements – difference between corporate and school level), co-operation between schools and companies	advisory/decision-making

Theme 4: Initial vocational education and training

4.1 Background to the initial vocational education and training system and diagram of the education and training system

The education system of the Czech Republic comprises nursery schools, basic schools, secondary schools, conservatoires, language schools entitled to administer state language examinations and higher professional schools – all these institutions are codified by the School Act. The act also covers institutions providing basic training in arts (as part of leisure activities) – basic arts schools. The education system also includes school facilities serving educational and other purposes that are subject to the School Act, or possibly the act on institutional and protective educational care. The highest level of education within the education system is represented by higher education institutions, which are subject to the act on higher education institutions.

Education system of the Czech Republic



Schools providing VET at secondary and tertiary levels (ISCED 2–5) are distinguished by the level of education and the nature of the education provided. There are **secondary schools (gymnasia, secondary technical schools and secondary vocational schools), conservatoires, higher professional schools and higher education institutions.**

Secondary schools

Secondary schools provide upper secondary education (ISCED 3) – either general or vocational. A characteristic feature of the Czech education system is that virtually all basic school leavers (almost **95 %**) continue studying after the completion of compulsory education. Most of these students acquire a vocational qualification that is recognised by the labour market as early as at upper secondary level.

Until recently, admission to secondary schooling was conditional upon successful completion of basic school. The existing legislation facilitates access to secondary schools also for those who completed compulsory education while failing to complete all nine years of basic school, on the condition that they meet admission requirements. For entering secondary and tertiary education, admission proceedings must be held. An entrance examination is usually part of the proceedings.

Secondary schools are attended mostly by students aged 15-19. The lower age limit is determined by completion of compulsory education. The participation of the 15-18 age group in education was 91.1 % in 2003/2004. Secondary schools have two tasks: to prepare students for performing various occupations in the national economy, administration, culture, arts and other areas, and to prepare them for further studies at a higher level.

The structure of secondary general and vocational education has undergone one of the most important changes to have occurred in the Czech education system since 1989. The ratio of students admitted to “maturita” and “non-maturita” programmes, which was some 40:60 before 1989, was reversed as early as 1997, and stabilised at a ratio of about 60:40 in favour of “maturita” courses. The proportion of vocational education in the entire area of secondary education is still extraordinarily high: some 81 % of the population achieve a vocational qualification at this level.

One important change at this level has been the establishment of private and church schools. The development of private schools at all levels started virtually from zero and gained momentum in the 1990s. In the academic year 2003/04 their proportion in the number of educational institutions in the system of secondary education was 20 %.

Secondary schools between school year 1989/1990 and 2003/2004 – proportions according to the founding body

School year	1989/90	1992/93	1995/96	1998/99	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04
Secondary schools - total	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
- public	100,0%	87,7%	76,5%	75,9%	78,0%	78,0%	78,0%
- private	0,0%	10,7%	21,5%	22,2%	20,0%	20,0%	19,9%
- church	0,0%	1,5%	2,0%	1,9%	2,0%	2,0%	2,1%

Source: ÚIV database.

Admission to a secondary school is conditional upon the completion of compulsory education and the passing of entrance proceedings. Students normally take entrance examinations (written or oral) at the school for which they have applied. Their content is determined by the secondary school based on basic school curricula, while taking account of its own educational profile. The admission criteria include student performance at the entry examinations (normally in the Czech language and mathematics, sometimes also in a foreign language; at art or sports schools in the relevant related subject), the basic school record and, sometimes, the results of psychological tests. The decision as to how many and which students will be admitted is up to the school director.

The responsibility for the development of principal pedagogical documents for public schools rests with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS). It assigns this task to the relevant expert institutions, coordinates their work and approves the final documents. Non-formal groups of teachers, teachers' organisations and independent professional associations contribute to the modernisation of the existing, and the design of new, curricula. The autonomy that schools have gained facilitates considerable diversity as to the content of education and the shaping of distinct school profiles which accommodate regional needs and the students' interests.

Upon successful completion of a programme at secondary level, the following qualifications are acquired: secondary education with a vocational certificate (*výuční list*), secondary education with "maturita", or secondary education (without a vocational certificate and "maturita"). The "maturita" examination at all types of school opens up the opportunity to apply for tertiary education. There are the following types of secondary school:

- a) **gymnasium** (*gymnázium*) is secondary general school and its name is in line with Central European tradition. It provides general secondary education completed by a "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). In 2003 gymnasium leavers accounted for **20 %** of all secondary school leavers;
- b) **secondary technical school** (*střední odborná škola*) provides secondary technical education in four-year programmes completed by a "maturita" examination (ISCED 3A), which entitles graduates to apply for higher education and to perform mid-level technical, business and other similar jobs. In 2003 secondary technical school graduates accounted for **35.6 %** of all secondary school leavers.
- c) **secondary vocational school** (*střední odborné učiliště*) provides a vocational qualification in two- and three-year programmes, entitling those who acquire it to perform manual work and similar occupations (ISCED 3C). In 2003 the proportion of those who completed these programmes was some **38 %**. 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. In 2003 the graduates of these programmes accounted for **5.4 %** of all secondary school leavers. Secondary vocational schools may also provide one- and two-year programmes (ISCED 2C) for pupils who completed compulsory education but failed to complete all nine years of basic school, for young people with special learning needs, and pupils who completed special (*zvláštní*) or auxiliary (*pomocné*) schools. In 2003 those who completed these programmes accounted for less than **1 %** of all secondary school leavers.

Secondary schools¹ – students in full-time programmes (according to schools and ISCED levels) - 2003/2004

Type of study	Secondary technical schools	Secondary vocational schools	Gymnasia ²	Secondary schools - total
Total	204,604	192,980	100,053	497,637
- proportion (%)	41,12%	38,78%	20,11%	100,00%
with “maturita” (ISCED 3A)	199,310	30,341	100,053	329,704
without –maturita” (ISCED 3C)	2,790	143,591	x	146,381
follow-up (ISCED 4)	2,504	19,048	x	21,552

Note: ¹ Secondary schools excluding conservatoires.

² Students at upper secondary level.

Source: Statistical Yearbook on Education 2003/2004, ÚIV.

Secondary schools – numbers of students, teachers, schools and relative data - 2003/2004

	Gymnasia	Secondary technical schools	Secondary vocational schools	Secondary schools -total
Full-time students	100,053	204,604	192,980	497,637
- proportion %	20.11%	41.12%	38.78%	100.00%
Teachers	10,990.8	17,867.9	9,948.1	38,806.8
Instructors and training supervisors	x	x	11788,2	11,788.2
Number of schools	348	924	735	2,007
Number of students per teacher	9.1	11.5	19.4	12.8

Note: Secondary schools excluding conservatoires.

Source: Statistical Yearbook on Education 2003/2004, ÚIV.

Conservatoires (*konzervatoře*)

Education at conservatoires aims to develop the knowledge, skills and other capacities acquired in basic and basic arts schools, to provide general education and prepare students for the performance of demanding artistic activities in the field of music, dance, singing and drama.

Studies at conservatoires are either completed by “maturita” (secondary education – ISCED 3A), or by “absolutorium” (higher professional education – ISCED 5B).

Higher professional schools (*vyšší odborné školy*)

Higher professional schools (the first were set up in 1995) prepare students for a qualified performance of demanding professional tasks. They provide higher professional education (ISCED 5B) completed by “absolutorium” to secondary school leavers with a “maturita” certificate.

Higher education institutions (*vysoké školy*)

HE institutions provide education in three types of programme: *bachelor* (ISCED 5B), *master* (ISCED 5A) and *doctoral* (following on from *master* programmes – ISCED 6). Until the end of 1998 all existing HE institutions had university status. Since 1999 there has been an opportunity for establishing HE institutions of a non-university type.

4.2 IVET at lower secondary level

Secondary vocational schools may provide one-to-two-year programmes at **ISCED 2C** level for students with mental disabilities of various severity, vocational training programmes for students who completed compulsory education but failed to complete all nine years of basic school, and programmes preparing special school leavers for the performance of simple auxiliary tasks as part of manual occupations. At the end of these programmes students take final examinations and obtain a vocational certificate. Secondary vocational schools also offer programmes preparing students for the performance of simple auxiliary tasks in services or manufacturing. Those who complete them (mostly people with rather severe mental disabilities) only obtain a certificate of the completion of basic education.

4.3 IVET at upper secondary level (school-based and alternance)

Secondary education in the Czech Republic (CR) has a tradition of over a hundred years. VET was always focused on the development of the capacity to apply technical knowledge and skills in practice. The proportion of general education was gradually expanded, and the theoretical aspect of various subjects was studied more profoundly. Schools providing vocational and technical education used to have a very narrow specialisation stemming from their historical development. Some schools have maintained this specialisation and train students from extensive catchment areas, or even from the entire country. However, a considerable number of schools provide more types of education both in terms of levels and disciplines.

Students admitted to the first year must have completed compulsory education (15-year-olds).

The principal curricula document with nationwide validity is the **Standard of Secondary Vocational and Technical Education**. It is divided into three parts: 1) general education – common subjects related to the socio-cultural function of education, 2) key competencies, 3) basic vocational and technical education. The requirements set out in the Standard are differentiated in order to cover:

- the relevant qualifications – i.e. secondary education with a vocational certificate (ISCED 3C) and secondary education with “maturita” (ISCED 3A),
- various subject areas (i.e. 21 thematic areas – e.g. mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, agriculture, etc.).

Extensive **curricular reform** is currently under way, consisting in the development and ensuing application of newly designed **framework educational programmes** (stressing key competencies) for various branches of education, which will be implemented along with the new School Act entering into force (2005). Following on from the framework educational programmes there will be **school-based educational programmes** designed by schools (see Subtheme 7.3). 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. In parallel with the curricula, professional requirements are being drafted as part of the “Integrated System of Typical Working Positions”, which will define the requirements for the performance of various occupations, and should also ensure comparability with the relevant requirements in the European Union.

Vocational and technical programmes at upper secondary level are provided by the following types of school:

- secondary technical schools
- secondary vocational schools
- conservatoires

Secondary technical schools (STS) may be public, private or church owned. Education at public schools is provided for free, while private and denominational schools may collect tuition fees. In 2003/04 there were 815 secondary technical schools in the CR, of which 598 were public, 201 private and 16 church owned. The average number of students per school was 244.

The educational provision at secondary technical schools is in compliance with curricular documents approved by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. However, school directors can adjust these documents. The study plan may be changed in line with regulations in place – normally up to 10 % of the overall number of teaching periods. Subject syllabi may be modified to the extent of up to 30 % of the teaching periods allocated to each subject (the adjustment is due to new technologies, modernisation of the field, regional conditions and the requirements of social partners). Schools may also develop their own curricula, but their application is subject to approval by the MoEYS. Study plans include general subjects (Czech language and literature, a foreign language, mathematics, natural sciences, civic education, history and physical education), and vocational subjects, depending on the relevant programme. Vocational subjects include practical exercises, laboratory work, etc. The study plans at STS 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 (on average 6-8 weeks altogether), during which students experience the feel of a real workplace, facilitate contacts between the students and employers.

Classic teaching methods still prevail. Methodological approaches taking account of different student aptitudes are increasingly being employed, the pedagogical aspect of teaching is being strengthened and so is the proportion of independent students work. The teaching takes place in classrooms, or in special rooms and laboratories.

STSs carry out both continuous and final assessment of students. The “maturita” examination in four-year programmes at STS 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. Employers acknowledge this certificate without any reservations as a certificate of a vocational qualification.

Secondary vocational schools (SVS) prepare students (in line with the legislation in place) for vocational tasks corresponding to the relevant programmes. The involvement of

companies in vocational training occurs primarily at school level. In order to improve their curricula, schools cooperate with labour offices, enterprises, professional associations and chambers of commerce. However, as a result of the legislative conditions, the involvement of corporate sphere in the funding of vocational training at SVS is very weak. A typical feature of vocational training at this level is the high number of students who are not trained for the work in a specific company or organisation.

Students who are admitted to the first years must have completed compulsory education (15-year-olds). This vocational training (two years or mostly three years) results in the acquisition of a secondary vocational qualification. It is completed with a final examination and the student gets a vocational certificate (*výuční list*). The final examination does not allow for entering tertiary education. Graduates of two- or 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 and pass “maturita” examination. In addition to this, SVS may train students “in programmes designed for the performance of certain more demanding manual occupations and some tasks of an operational and technical nature”. In this case the studies take four years and are completed with “maturita”, which opens up the possibility of studying at a higher education institution or a higher professional school.

Most SVSs provide both theoretical education and practical training. There are also SVSs that only provide theory, and, conversely, there might be independent centres of practical training and practical training units, mostly in companies.

Secondary vocational schools may be public (453 - some 90 % of students), private (90 - about 10 % of students) and church (a negligible number). Education in public SVSs is provided for free, whereas private and church schools may collect tuition fees. An average size of a SVS is 300 full-time students.

The study plans include general subjects (the same as at STSs), 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 %. In four-year programmes the ratio is about 40:30:30. In follow-up courses for graduates of three-year vocational programmes at SVS, the study plans only include general subjects and vocational theory. The ratio is about 45:55. Traditional teaching methods also prevail at SVS. Theoretical instruction takes place in classrooms; for the teaching of foreign languages students may be divided into groups. In practical training students are divided into 6-17 member groups. Practical training takes place mostly at specially designed training facilities or workshops. In view of the nature of the programmes, practical training may also be held in laboratories or specially equipped classrooms.

As at STSs, continuous assessment is applied and the final assessment takes the form of a “maturita” examination (in four-year programmes). The final examination in three-year programmes is a vocational examination where the students demonstrate their preparedness for the performance of the relevant tasks and occupations. It consists of a practical examination in vocational subjects and a theoretical examination in vocational subjects. Upon a successful passing of the final examination students get a final examination record and a vocational certificate.

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 9th year of basic school are admitted to six-year music and drama programmes. The eight-year dance programme is designed for those who complete the 6th year of basic school, and in the lower years implement their compulsory schooling.

Six- and eight-year programmes are normally completed by an “absolutorium”. The graduates get a certificate of “absolutorium” and a diploma. Conservatoire graduates have the title “specialist with a diploma” (“*diplovovaný specialista*“, abbreviated as “DiS“ – behind the name). The graduates achieve upper secondary education (ISCED 5B). Students at conservatoires may also take a non-compulsory “maturita” examination during their studies – at the earliest after four years in music and drama programmes, and after eight years in dance.

4.4 Apprenticeship training

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

4.5 Other youth programmes and alternative pathways

Alternative educational approaches within the system of IVET, which, pursuant to the existing School Act, provides exclusively formal education, are applied in specifically designed educational programmes. The new School Act effective from January 2005 provides for various educational routes (e.g. in order to achieve the same qualification). It will also be possible to combine formal (school) and non-formal education.

Secondary schools can also provide shortened one-to-two-year full-time programmes leading to a vocational certificate (for applicants who have already passed “maturita”), or to a “maturita” certificate (for applicants who have already passed “maturita” in a different field).

Specifically adjusted educational programmes leading to the acquisition of a qualification are designed for the so-called Waldorf schools (their number is very low), or for students with special learning needs.

In justified cases the school director may grant exceptions in a regular approved educational programme (e.g. may recognise parts of a different programme). Apart from formal education, young people may undertake various forms of leisure education – e.g. in language schools and other institutions developing their talents (arts, sports, etc.).

4.6 Vocational education and training at post-secondary (non-tertiary) level

At present, the only form of vocational education at post-secondary level is the so-called **follow-up studies** (ISCED 4). Secondary schools providing programmes completed by “maturita” in a particular field may also provide follow-up courses for those who complete three-year vocational programmes in related fields. 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 2003/2004, the proportion of new entrants in follow-up courses out of the total number of graduates of three-year vocational courses in the previous year was 27.4 %.

4.7 Vocational education and training at tertiary level

Non-university studies

For the last 8 years, **higher professional schools (HPS)** 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 are private (out of the total number of higher professional schools 67 % are public, 26 % private and 7 % church). Only about one quarter of HPSs operate on their own. Some of them have recently acquired the status of higher education institutions of a non-university type. The objective of HPSs is to offer students the opportunity of obtaining a vocational qualification for the performance of demanding professional activities, or of enhancing the qualification they have already achieved.

Higher professional schools – numbers of students, teachers, schools and study groups - 2003/2004

Full-time students	25, 550
Students - total	30, 681
Teachers	2, 184,8
Study groups	1, 280
Number of schools	168
Number of students per teacher	14.0
Number of students per study group	19.96

Source: Statistical Yearbook on Education 2003/2004, ÚIV.

Higher professional schools provide study programmes lasting 2 to 3.5 years. The longest programmes include practical training in the form of a work placement over three months long. HPSs, including public ones, may collect tuition fees. 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. The average number of full-time students per one school was 152 in 2003/2004.

Theoretical instruction takes place in classrooms set up with regard to specialisations, while practical training is implemented in groups established to take account of the situation in the workplace. The programmes may be studied full-time or part-time.

The curricula are designed by individual schools. However, they must be approved by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) based on a recommendation issued by the Accreditation Commission for higher professional education. The ratio between general, general vocational and specific vocational subjects is roughly 20:40:40. The number of teaching periods per week in full-time programmes ranges from 26 to 33 compulsory and compulsory/optional subjects. Practical training in a specific field constitutes an important component of this type of study. 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. Schools maintain close contacts with social partners in their regions and with the relevant industry. Specialists from industry often work as consultants and members of school consultative bodies. The teaching methods are similar to those applied in higher education. The instruction consists of lectures and seminars, practicals, laboratory exercises and work placements.

The assessment of learning outcomes and marking are fostered by assessment regulations designed by each school, which must be in line with the relevant legislation and approved by the MoEYS. The assessment regulations provide for a marking scale (mostly four grades), and assessment methods. It is also stipulated in the regulations which of these methods will be applied to particular subjects. The school also regulates the organisational details concerning examination retakes, including the deadlines for fulfilling school duties due for one term or academic year. The studies are completed by “*absolutorium*”. “Absolutorium” is a vocational examination consisting of an examination in the theory of vocational subjects, a foreign language, a graduate thesis and its defence. The composition and number of vocational subjects in which the exam is taken are determined by the relevant curricula. The defence of the graduate thesis may include a test of practical skills. Upon a successful passing of “*absolutorium*”, the student of the HPS attains higher professional education and the title of “*diplomovaný specialista*” (specialist with a diploma, abbreviated as DiS. and stated behind the name).

Graduates from higher 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 apply to secondary school leavers who hold a “*maturita*” certificate.

University studies

University-type programmes predominate in tertiary education in the Czech Republic (CR). Universities provide both general and vocational education. Universities provide accredited study programmes and lifelong learning programmes.

Bachelor study programmes are designed to prepare students for the performance of an occupation and for further studies in a Master study programme. They last 3-4 years (ISCED 5B). **Master study programmes** focus on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge in line with modern science, research and development, on mastering its practical application, and on nurturing creative activities. In arts disciplines it is focused on demanding artistic training and the development of talents. Master study programmes follow on from Bachelor programmes. The standard length is 1-3 years (ISCED 5A). If the nature of the study programme so requires, accreditation may be awarded to a Master programme which does not follow from a Bachelor programme. In this case it lasts 4-6 years. A **Doctoral study programme** may follow only after the completion of a Master programme. These programmes focus on research and independent creative activities concerned with research and development, or on independent theoretical or creative work in arts. The standard length is 3 years (ISCED 6).

A minimum requirement for admission to a university is the completion of secondary education with “*maturita*”, or “*absolutorium*” in the case of conservatoires. (Arts disciplines at universities may constitute an exception in this respect. However, the subsequent passing of a “*maturita*” examination is a condition for the award of a university degree). Admission to Master studies following on from a Bachelor programme is conditional upon due completion of the Bachelor programme. Admission to Doctoral programmes is conditional upon due completion of a Master programme.

About 48 % of applicants admitted for the first time to a university are gymnasium graduates, 47 % come from secondary technical schools and 5 % completed secondary vocational schools where they achieved secondary education with “*maturita*” (2002/03 data). In

consequence of the growing interest on the part of applicants, universities are only able to accept about 56 % of applications. Still, intake figures have been constantly increasing.

Pursuant to the act on higher education institutions, the education of Czech nationals at public HE institutions is free of charge, except for some special fees (related to admission proceedings, extending the standard length of studies, etc.). Foreign students who come to study at Czech HE institutions based on international agreements are subject to the same conditions as Czech students.

A study programme is designed and submitted for accreditation by the HE institution, or by an institution that seeks to deliver it in co-operation with the HE institution. The nature of the programme is determined by its type (Bachelor, Master, Doctoral), and the form of study (full-time, distance or a combination of the two). Study programmes are subject to accreditation issued by the MoEYS based on a recommendation of the Accreditation Commission, which is set up by the government. Bachelor and Master programmes are based on two major methods of instruction – lectures and practicals. Doctoral study programmes are implemented in line with an individual study plan under the guidance of a supervisor.

The studies in Bachelor programmes are completed by a state final examination and the defence of a Bachelor thesis. The graduates are awarded the degree of Bachelor (Bc.), or Bachelor of Arts (BcA.). The studies in Master programmes are completed by a state final examination and the defence of a Master thesis. Graduates of Master programmes achieve the degree of Master (Mgr.), Master of Arts (MgA.), engineer (Ing.), engineer-architect (Ing.arch.), MUDr. or MVDr. After obtaining the degree of Master, a so-called “rigorous” (*rigorózní*) examination may be taken, which also involves the defence of a thesis. When the examination is passed successfully, the following academic degrees are awarded: JUDr. in law, PhDr in humanities, pedagogy and social sciences, RNDr. in natural sciences, PharmDr. in pharmacy, etc. The studies in Doctoral programmes are completed by a state doctoral examination and the defence of a dissertation. Upon successful passing of the examination the degree of Doctor (Ph.D.) is awarded.

Theme 5: Continuing vocational education and training for adults¹³

5.1 Background and main types of continuing education and training for adults

Continuing education and training (CVET) began to develop more extensively as late as the 1990s. The development was marked by the predominance of market impulses and spontaneity without appropriate co-ordination and systemic approaches. Adult education in schools has a longer tradition, and so does the training of employees in certain professions and areas.

Documents

The main intentions as regards adult education in the Czech Republic (CR) are contained in a number of documents prepared at national level. The **National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic** (the so-called White Paper), approved by the government in early 2001, includes, apart from initial education, a description of the problems related to continuing education and recommendations as to how to improve it. Three key measures are recommended in this document, namely to develop a legal framework for the development of CVET, to set up a system of financial and non-financial incentives, and to establish mechanisms for a systemic development of adult education.

In 2000 the **Strategy for Human Resources Development in the Czech Republic** was developed, and in 2003 it was adopted by the Czech government. It proposes a number of strategic areas which also cover a lifelong learning development strategy.

Continuing education is also touched upon in various policy papers which set out objectives in other areas, particularly employment and social development. These are: national employment action plans (NEAP), The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion for 2004 – 2006¹⁴, The National Programme concerned with Preparation for Population Ageing for 2003 – 2007¹⁵, State Information and Communication Policy - e-Česko 2006¹⁶.

However, although the ambitions of the CR in the area of CVET are high, **most measures that have been proposed are only slowly and often only partially being put into practice.**

Types of CVET

At present, **CVET takes the following forms:**

- adult education in schools leading to the acquisition of a formal level of education,
- training of employees in enterprises and other organisations,
- specific training of employees in certain occupations and industries (including the so-called “normative” education),
- retraining of job seekers,
- education as a leisure activity.

¹³ The Theme was prepared with the use of the study “Adult Education within the Framework of Lifelong Learning“ (Coufalík, NTF, 2004) and the report “The Structures of Systems of Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education in Europe: the CR 2003“ (Eurydice, 2003).

¹⁴ Adopted by Government Resolution no. 730/2004.

¹⁵ Adopted by Government Resolution no. 485/2002.

¹⁶ Approved by Government Resolution no. 265/2004.

Adult education in schools leading to the acquisition of a formal qualification has been developing mainly over the last five decades. This type of education at secondary schools and higher education (HE) institution reached its peak in the 1960s. The proportion of adults educated at secondary schools was almost 22 % of the total number of students¹⁷. Nowadays the proportion is less than 6 %. Adults undertaking HE in the 1960s accounted for almost 37 % of all students. At present, adults at HE institution and higher professional schools in programmes leading to a formal qualification account for approximately 16 % of the total number of students.

The proportion of students in part-time (distance, evening, external and combined) forms of studies at secondary schools (in the school years 1990/1991 to 2002/2003)

	1990/91	1995/96	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
Number of students – total (all forms of studies)	629,098	682,085	539,362	545,093	551,474
Number of students in part-time forms of studies	51,131	42,120	29,424	28,605	29,821
Proportion in the total number of students (%)	8.1	6.2	5.4	5.2	5.4

Source: *Developmental Yearbook on Education, Institute for Information on Education (ÚIV), 2003.*

The proportion of students in part-time (distance, evening, external and combined) forms of studies at HE institutions (in the academic year 1990/1991 to 2002/2003)

	1990/91	1995/96	2000/01	2001/02 ¹⁾	2002/03 ²⁾
Number of students – total (all forms of studies)	115, 072	136, 889	185, 588	195, 894	212, 460
The number of students in part-time forms of studies	18, 693	13, 429	24, 804	28, 102	33, 954
The proportion in the total number of students (%)	16.2	9.8	13.4	14.3	16.0

¹⁾ Data excluding four private HE institutions – the data about them were not included in the SIMS system.

²⁾ Data excluding six private HE institutions - the data about them were not included in the SIMS system.

Source: *Developmental Yearbook on Education, Institute for Information on Education (ÚIV), 2003.*

The training of employees in enterprises and other organisations has, in most cases, developed over the last 15 years. Only one (smaller) part of this training has a longer tradition – i.e. the compulsory training of employees performing designated occupations, which is stipulated in the relevant legal regulations. At the outset of economic transformation the training activities of enterprises were reduced for several years as a result of their restructuring and insolvency. A gradual change occurred as late as after 1994 – mainly in connection with the inflow of foreign capital which has brought about progressive concepts of human resources development. The shortage of advanced qualifications and some professions in the labour market forced enterprises to set about their staff development in a more intensive manner.

¹⁷ Historical Yearbook on Education in the Czech Republic 1953/54 – 1997/98. Praha:ÚIV, 1998.

Statistical data about the scope of in-service training in the CR are not regularly monitored. As part of the “CVTS 2”¹⁸ which studied the continuing training of employees, the proportion of employees of enterprises and other organisations that undergo training was about 49 % of the total number of employees. This is an average figure – the real figure varies depending on a number of perspectives – e.g. industry, company size, foreign capital in the company, the educational attainment of employees, occupation, etc.

The proportion of enterprises providing training for their employees (%)

	Small	Medium-sized	Large	Average
CR	62	84	96	69
EU-15	56	81	96	62

Source: European Social Statistics – CVTS 2, EC 2002.

69 % of enterprises in the CR organise some form of training for their employees. The total figure may vary according to the size category. The scope of training provided increases as the size increases (96 % of large companies provided training as compared to 62 % of small companies). As regards the proportion of companies providing training, the CR ranked among the most successful of candidate countries reviewed in 1999.

The proportion of employees participating in training courses (only companies providing training)

	Small	Medium-sized	Large	Average
CR	42	42	53	49
EU-15	43	42	49	47

Source: European Social Statistics – CVTS 2, EC 2002.

The average number of training hours per course participant

	Small	Medium-sized	Large	Average
CR	26	24	25	25
EU-15	33	32	30	31

Source: European Social Statistics – CVTS 2, EC 2002.

Moreover, the proportion of employees participating in training courses is comparable with the EU average. On the other hand, the intensity of training expressed by the number of training hours per course participant is lower in the CR – short-term training activities predominate.

Decisions as to the main characteristics of the training of employees – e.g. the content, focus, training providers or funding, take place at company level. Most training courses are provided by external training organisations, only a portion of the courses are organised by training departments of the companies. Private training organisations are the most frequent providers of in-service training, while secondary schools and HE institutions rank among the providers showing the lowest figures in this respect (1.4 a 3.7 %).

¹⁸ CVTS 2 (Continuing Vocational Training Survey) – a detailed survey of the continuing vocational training of employees initiated by the European Union. It was conducted in 2000 in 25 countries in line with a uniform methodology. The year 1999 was designated as the reference period, and the organisation responsible for the survey in the CR was the Czech Statistical Office.

Specific training of employees in certain occupations or industries is usually regulated by the law (e.g. in healthcare), decrees or other regulations issued by the relevant ministerial or professional body. Ministerial training institutes are established and governed directly by the relevant ministries. The main tasks of these institutes include the administration and implementation of the training of employees (specialists) in specialisation courses at selected workplaces, the development of study plans for the vocational training, and the relevant methodological guidance and supervision. The specific training of employees is traditionally implemented in healthcare, energy, public administration, transport, the interior and defence. (see Theme 8.1)

The retraining of job seekers, or other individuals, began to develop after 1990, in parallel with the formation of employment services. It is one of the instruments of an active employment policy. The number of individuals undergoing retraining was in between 12-17 thousand before 1998, and since 1999 it has been rapidly increasing, so that in 2003 the number exceeded 42 thousand. The amount of financial resources spent on retraining is also growing. However, in view of the growing number of the unemployed, the proportion of job seekers involved in retraining is only slightly increasing and currently reaches some 8 %. In years to come it may be expected that the number of participants in retraining will increase, and that the scope and structure of the courses will be more adapted to the needs of the clients – particularly groups facing disadvantages in the labour market.

Selected indicators on job seekers undergoing retraining (in thousand)

Year	Number of job seekers in retraining	Average number of registered unemployed per month	Proportion of job seekers in retraining in the average number of job seekers (%)	Expenditure (thousand CZK)
1993	12,095	155,214	7.79	73,359
1994	14,814	172,064	8.61	103,248
1995	13,454	154,992	8.68	100,091
1996	12,107	162,042	7.47	91,727
1997	11,448	222,983	5.13	90,418
1998	16,381	316,567	5.17	147,325
1999	22,938	447,367	5.13	236,232
2000	33,331	468,708	7.11	345,920
2001	35,145	444,017	7.92	382,652
2002	36,015	479,650	7.51	370,431
2003	42,753	522,758	8.18	405,870

Source: Labour Market Analyses, MoLSA.

5.2 Planning and organisation of learning

Responsibility

The overall responsibility for education has the **Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports** (MoEYS). The education of adults provided by secondary schools, higher professional schools and school institutions is the responsibility of the relevant ministerial departments.

Adult education provided by higher education (HE) institutions – i.e. distance and lifelong learning including the “Third Age University” - fall within the purview of HE institutions.

The responsibility for retraining is borne by the **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs** (MoLSA) which determines the conditions under which training organisations providing retraining courses operate (must be accredited by the MoEYS). Retraining is organised by **labour offices** which determine the types and nature of the courses depending on the needs and requirements of regional labour markets, or possibly employers.

The systems of specific continuing training administered by ministries are subject to the law, regulations and decrees of the relevant ministries (e.g. the Ministry of Health¹⁹). The situation is similar as regard the training of specific occupations provided by organisations with nationwide operations (e.g. in energy). The regulations are binding for all employers.

The provision of **training services on a commercial basis** is not governed by any regulatory body. One exception is 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 MoEYS for accreditation).

In early 2003 the **Government Council for Human Resources Development** was set up as a body of the government of the Czech Republic (CR) with consultative, initiation and co-ordination functions in the area of strategic management of human resources development, including adult education. (see Theme 3)

Social partners have only been involved in education for a short time – roughly since 1996. There are three major institutions: The Confederation of Industry of the CR, the Economic Chamber of the CR, and the Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions. Their main focus is vocational training. They are pursuing a change in economic rules which should provide incentives for enterprises to take part in training. They are actively involved in the development and evaluation of key documents concerning education and training. However, their role is somewhat restricted to consultations, and they do not have any decision-making or executive power. (see Subtheme 3.3)

Legislation

So far there is no law in the CR that would deal with adult education, nor has there been any such law in the past. In 2004 the drafting of an act on continuing education was launched. At present, the principal propositions of such an act exist. The law will follow from existing legal regulations, particularly the School Act. The bill should be finalised in 2005.

The legislation in place that affects continuing education consists of regulations fostering other areas, but touches upon various aspects of CVET. Three types of regulations may be distinguished:

- **Laws covering initial education and training** which lay down the ways in which, at every level, schools may provide adult education (including the completion of basic education);

¹⁹ In line with act no. 95/2004 on the conditions concerning the acquisition and recognition of professional and specialised competencies to perform the occupation of physician, dentist and pharmacist.

- **Regulations concerning labour and employment:** the Labour Code²⁰, the act on employment²¹ and the binding Decree on Retraining of Job Seekers and Employees²²; the act on investment incentives and changes to other acts²³ and government regulation on material support for the creation of new jobs and the retraining of employees²⁴;
- **Other laws and decrees** (e.g. the act on pedagogical staff; the act on technical standards and the act on state expert supervision; the act on the conditions concerning the acquisition and recognition of professional and specialised competencies to perform the occupation of physician, dentist and pharmacist; the act on trades, etc.).

Certification and recognition of education

In the CR there is no coherent **system for accreditation and recognition of non-formal learning**. In some cases institutions providing continuing education test the prior knowledge of course participants. Neither is there an integrated system for **evaluation and certification** of the knowledge and skills acquired in CVET. Several types of certificate are used. For example, upon completion of CVET leading to a formal qualification, the graduate obtains a document of the same validity as the document awarded upon completion of IVET (a vocational certificate, a “maturita” certificate, an absolutorium, a university degree). Upon completion of compulsory CVET, the graduate obtains a certificate allowing the holder to perform specific professional activities (the certificate is valid nationwide). Successful graduates of retraining courses and courses organised by enterprises obtain a certificate stating that the participant has undergone the relevant course. Certain types of certificate are issued based on the completion of a generally recognised type of continuing education – these certificates may only be issued by accredited institutions. They are valid nationwide and in many cases are recognised internationally. (see Theme 8)

Information about educational provision

In the CR, there is no comprehensive system in providing information about the provisions of adult education. There are only partial information systems and isolated sources.

Information about distance, evening and external studies at secondary schools, higher professional schools and HE institutions is part of the information system “Schools Network Registry” which is regularly updated by the Institute for Information on Education. This information database is available on-line, and both facilitate criteria-based searches and provides for links to the websites of the schools listed.

Information about the provision of retraining courses is provided by labour offices and their information and counselling centres.

Information about courses provided on a commercial basis is rather scattered and often incomplete. A list of institutions providing accredited programmes is maintained at the MoYES. In 2001 an internet database of continuing education entitled DAT was developed

²⁰ Act no. 65/1965 – the Labour Code.

²¹ Act no. 435/2004 on employment.

²² Decree 519/2004 on the retraining of job seekers and employees.

²³ Act no. 72/2000 on investment incentives and a change of other laws.

²⁴ Government Regulation no. 103/2002 on material support for the creation of new jobs and the retraining of employees as part of investment incentive schemes.

(www.eu-dat.com). The data is entered in the database by the providers. Those interested in training may search the information according to selected criteria. The database is also used by labour offices in relation to the organisation of retraining. Besides this, there is the internet database Učení online (Learning Online – www.uceni-online.cz), which covers primarily language courses (in the CR and abroad), and, to a lesser degree, courses in informatics and other fields.

5.3 Delivery mechanisms and providers

Adult education is provided by:

- schools – primarily secondary schools, higher professional schools and higher education (HE) institutions;
- other institutions:
 - i. organisations for their employees: enterprises, institutions, state administration bodies, etc.;
 - ii. non-profit organisations: foundations, churches, trade unions, political parties;
 - iii. commercial training organisations (schools may also provide retraining on a commercial basis).

In view of the absence of statistics in the area of adult education, it is impossible to establish the number of institutions operating in the education market. Based on data acquired from various sources, their number may be estimated at 2,500 – 3,000 (in 2002). The number of institutions providing accredited programmes increased rapidly in the 1990s (from 1,435 in 1998 to 1,825 in 2000), and currently is rather stagnant (1,626 in 2002)²⁵. Private training organisations and consultancies account for over 70 % of institutions providing accredited programmes.

The structure of institutions providing accredited programmes in the area of adult education

	1995	2000	2002
Structure	(in %)	(in %)	(in %)
Private training organisations	64.5	53.0	55
Ministerial institutes	7.6	6.1	3.9
Schools	10.6	19.4	17.7
Humanitarian organisations	1.5	1.5	4.4
Enterprises	7.6	2.1	4.4
Private agencies and consultancies	5.9	17.9	14.6
Other	2.3	0	0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: A survey into the activities of institutions providing accredited training programmes – carried out by the MoEYS.

²⁵ The System of Continuing Vocational Education -Education, Research and Development as the Key Factors of Social and Economic Development, NTF, 2003.

The structure of institutions providing continuing education has been changing. Overall, there is a decrease in the proportion of training facilities in enterprises and an increase in the proportion of flexible private agencies and consultancies. The size of training organisations has not undergone any dramatic changes. Over 70 % of training institutions employ 1-9 people.

The structure of institutions providing accredited programmes according to the number of employees (%)

Number of employees	1-2	3-5	6-9	10-14	15-20	21-25	26-30	31 and more
1995	9.4	41	22.8	16.1	6.2	1.8	1.5	1.2
2000	38.5	25.7	7.8	9.0	5.2	1.9	1.1	10.8
2002	31.6	35.5	13.4	7.2	5.2	0.9	1.6	4.6

Source: A survey into the activities of institutions providing accredited training programmes – carried out by the MoEYS.

Secondary and higher professional schools

Schools provide various forms of part-time adult education leading to the acquisition of a formal qualification. There are programmes at secondary and higher professional level in some fields where the schools also provide full-time programmes. Basic and secondary schools may also organise courses for those who fulfilled their compulsory education, but did not complete basic education.

Adult education at schools which leads to the acquisition of a formal qualification has a number of characteristic features. Firstly, **the curricula are derived from the curricula for full-time programmes for children and young people**. On the one hand, this facilitates comparability of outcomes and certificates. On the other hand, the different professional and personal experience of adults is not sufficiently taken into consideration. Secondly, typical of this type of adult education are **long programmes lasting several years**, which are (or at least should be) in line with educational standards, but which cannot respond to the development of learning needs in a flexible manner. Thirdly, adult education at schools has **other important attributes that are identical to those of initial education of children and young people**: it is mostly provided by public schools which are governed and financed by regional authorities or the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS). Graduates of adult education programmes at secondary or higher professional schools obtain, after passing the prescribed examinations, a certificate or a title of the same validity as in full-time studies.

Secondary technical schools and secondary vocational schools may also organise various continuing training courses including retraining. This education is provided on a commercial basis.

Higher education institutions

Higher education (HE) institutions also provide adults with the opportunity of studying some programmes in a distance form or combination of full-time and distance form. Upon passing the prescribed examinations, graduates achieve a degree of the same validity as in regular full-time studies.

As part of its educational activities HE institution may provide, either for free or for a fee, lifelong learning programmes outside the framework of its study programmes. They may be focused on professional development or conceived as a leisure activity (e.g. the “Third Age University”). Detailed conditions concerning lifelong learning are stipulated in the institution’s internal regulations. Participants in lifelong learning are not students, as stipulated in the law on higher education institutions.

Centres for Distance Education (e.g. at the Pedagogical Faculty of the Technical University in Liberec) have been set up with support from the Phare programme. The centres have facilities connected to the Internet and a library with theoretical publications about distance learning techniques, and examples of distance learning programmes both in the CR and abroad.

Institutions providing adult education (commercial and non-profit)

Education provided by enterprises, non-profit and commercial organisations varies in terms of type, focus, level and length of courses. It is organised according to supply and demand, and therefore there are no fixed admission requirements, educational objectives, course content, learning methods, and evaluation and certification procedures. In general, the courses are most frequently focused on foreign language teaching, the use of computers, management and accountancy.

Training facilities in enterprises

Training facilities operated by enterprises are primarily designed to meet the company’s training needs. Most training activities are performed to meet legal requirements or company guidelines. Many certificates of such training are only valid in the particular company.

In recent years it has been common to take out the training facilities from the company structure – as part of outsourcing - and enable the facility to obtain an independent status. Training is then provided on an external basis.

Ministerial and other training institutes and centres

There are training or similar institutes within the administrative areas of certain ministries which provide systematic training for the employees in that area. The ways of administrating and operating these institutes vary. In some cases they are institutions directly governed by the relevant ministry, in other cases they are consultative and training centres providing services on a commercial basis. The most important of them are:

Public administration institutes: *Institute for Public Administration* at the Office of the Government of the CR. It provides training courses for civil servants at central level. *Institute for Local Administration* set up by the Czech Interior Ministry which provides the training of officers in regional and local administrative bodies in line with the act on regional and local administration officers.

Ministerial training institutes: For example, *Institute for Post-Graduate Education in Healthcare*, which is a research and training institution governed by the Ministry of Health; *Pedagogical Centre Prague* directly governed by the MoEYS – it has branches in regions and provides for the training of pedagogical staff primarily at basic and secondary schools. Some

of the branches also deliver training courses for individuals with other than teaching qualifications.

Other institutes which serve as training centres in energy, transport, etc. For example, the *Institute of the Confederation of Industry* is focused on the provision of education and training, counselling services and consultations for members of the Confederation (which is a voluntary association of employers and entrepreneurs in industry and transport). *Economic chambers* design their training activities for entrepreneur-beginners, and for businessmen operating small and medium-sized enterprises. *Regional Counselling and Information Centres (RPIC)* – there is a network of 36 of these centres offering programmes for entrepreneurs operating small and medium-sized enterprises. *Business and Innovation Centres (BIC)*, which provide services for SMEs, aim at supporting innovative business projects, the transfer of foreign technologies, and implementation of the outcomes of research and development with the use of the European Centre of Business and Innovation Centres EBN, which provides the relevant methodology and monitors their activities. Some BICs organise seminars and training for entrepreneurs.

5.4 Access to learning opportunities and programmes

Funding

One important aspect of access to education is its financing. The situation varies according to the provider and type of education. Courses may be provided for free, or for a fee required from the participant, covering the training costs in full or in part.

The financial conditions of the various forms of part-time programmes provided by schools and leading to the acquisition of a formal qualification are similar to those applying to full-time studies – i.e. education at public basic and secondary schools and public higher education (HE) institutions is provided for free. Higher professional schools and private HE institutions collect tuition fees. Education is funded from the resources of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) either via regional or municipal authorities, or directly.

Retraining courses are funded from various sources. Job seekers and people interested in changing a career are entitled to the full coverage of course fees (by the labour offices from the state budget). If retraining is organised by a company for its employees, the costs are shared between the company and the labour office.

Continuing training in enterprises is the responsibility of the employer. The employer normally finances the training in full and gives the employee unpaid leave, provided that the qualification-enhancing training is in line with the company's needs (or the employer may agree a co-funding scheme with the employee).

The funding of other types of adult education (e.g. the “Third Age University”, the training provided by civic associations, foundations, driving schools, etc.) is shared between non-state organisations and individuals. The data about financial resources and costs of these types of continuing education are not available. However, it is estimated that they account for a very low proportion of the total financial resources spent on CVET in the Czech Republic (CR).

Financial incentives to promote participation in continuing education and training

There are no or very weak incentives for **individuals**. There is only the advantage of a 10% increase in unemployment benefits provided that the job seeker takes a retraining course. This is not a very strong incentive.

Neither are the incentives for employers very effective. **Enterprises** may include their training costs in deductible costs. As part of active employment policy measures, employers may get a contribution from the labour office to organise retraining for employees to retain their jobs in the company. As part of investment incentives for employers and entrepreneurs, large investors may be granted a subsidy for the training or retraining of their employees (see Subtheme 5.2 Legislation). Small investors may obtain a similar subsidy (limited in amount) as part of the programme for the support for the creation of new jobs in regions most afflicted with unemployment. (see Theme 10) In the future there could be a more extensive support for continuing training in enterprises, since, as the CR has joined the EU, the opportunity has opened up of drawing resources for specific training from the European Social Fund.

Access to education for socially disadvantaged groups

Socially disadvantaged groups normally suffer from an insufficient level of educational attainment, and a lack of motivation to increase it. Moreover, they often have financial, health or family problems. The non-existence of a legal/institutional framework for continuing education also has an impact on disadvantaged groups of adults. There is no comprehensive government policy focusing on these groups as regards their education, not to mention a policy interlinking social and educational aspects. There are only partial measures under different policies.

There are courses provided by basic schools for adults who failed to complete all years of basic school or those who attended a special school (the completion of which is not recognised as full basic education).

A broadly-conceived scheme for the training of the population in information and communication skills was launched by the Ministry of Informatics in 2003 – the **National Computer Literacy Programme**. The objective is to ensure the acquisition of basic computer and Internet skills. The scheme involves short practical courses for a minimum fee, which are primarily focused on disadvantaged groups.

The act on employment sets out a list of individuals who are given special care when they seek job – due to their health condition, age, the fact that they look after a child, or for other serious reasons²⁶. These individuals may be placed in all types of retraining courses, including courses specifically focusing on motivation and re-socialisation. Moreover, the labour office

²⁶ They are the following:

- a) individuals with health disabilities;
- b) individuals up to 25 years of age;
- c) graduates of HE institutions within two year of their completion of studies, but only up to 30 years of age;
- d) pregnant and nursing women, and mothers within nine months of childbirth;
- e) individuals looking after a child up to 15 years of age;
- f) individuals older than 50;
- g) individuals registered as job seekers for more than 6 months;
- h) individuals requiring special assistance. This is to mean particularly those individuals who, temporarily, found themselves or live in extraordinarily difficult circumstances, individuals not socially adapted, individuals who have completed a sentence in jail, and individuals from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds.

may develop a so-called **individual action plan** (IAP) for them in order to increase their employability. Labour offices are obliged to offer an IAP to young people up to 25 and graduates of HE institutions up to 20 (within two years of the completion of studies) – this is part of the programme “First Chance” that has been implemented nationwide since 2004. An IAP is a form of counselling where a written agreement is concluded between the job seeker and the labour office (normally after 3-4 months of unemployment) in which the two parties jointly set out all steps and measures to be taken. The agreement usually also includes a training plan adjusted to the personal and professional potential of the individual (balance diagnostics are often used to assess this potential).

Counselling and balance diagnostics for disadvantaged adults began to develop as part of active employment policy schemes on the basis of Government Resolution no. 640/1999²⁷. Centres were established in all NUTS 2 regions which, in cooperation with labour offices, provide services aimed at the testing of individual capacities and aptitudes in relation to employability, and at recommending suitable training courses.

The access of individuals with physical disabilities to continuing education must be addressed in a systematic manner. After many years when these issues were not properly tackled, the government approved in 2003 **Propositions for integrated rehabilitation of individuals with physical disabilities**. The drafting of an act has followed which, if passed, should enter into force in 2006. The act should address, apart from other things, the training of the disabled for suitable jobs following medical, social and pedagogical rehabilitation. People with physical disabilities are entitled to take part in labour market measures implemented by labour offices which provide extensive opportunities for their integration into the labour market.

5.5 Bridging initial and post initial education and training

The opportunities for transfers between initial and continuing education are so far limited. One of the reasons for this is the fact that certificates issued by institutions providing continuing education outside the schools system are not generally recognised. There is no transparent national system of qualifications that would facilitate the assessment and recognition of competencies acquired in various training programmes, including the competencies acquired via non-formal learning. The education provided by schools has not been modularised so as to allow for a more flexible combination of initial and continuing education programmes, or for the completion of a missing part of education as a prerequisite for admission to schools at more advanced levels.

The new School Act, which will come into effect in 2005, does not provide a solution to these issues. However, it contains certain provisions that facilitate links between the two systems. One novelty is the possibility of taking shortened programmes to obtain a vocational certificate and a “maturita” certificate. Young people and adults who complete upper secondary education with “maturita” will be able to get a second vocational qualification without the need to undergo the programme at its standard length. In admission proceedings, school directors will be able to recognise prior formal as well as non-formal education. Although the recognition of education acquired elsewhere is not based on objective criteria, a credit system etc., it may be expected that this approach will at least partially facilitate transfers between initial and continuing education.

²⁷ Government Resolution no. 640/1999 on measures to support the employment of individuals facing difficulties in the labour market.

A national system of qualifications does not exist. The Integrated System of Typical Working Positions (ISTP), which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and which contains information about occupations in the labour market, could constitute a foundation for such a system. At present the system is designed to identify the characteristics of suitable initial education, and the experience and certificates required for the performance of the relevant occupation and job. In the future it should also include information concerning continuing education. In its final version the system should interlink the requirements for education and training in various branches of initial and continuing education with labour market requirements.

5.6 Re-education and re-training needs due to labour market developments and mobility

Labour offices organise retraining as part of an active employment policy. **To retrain means to change or complement the existing qualification of a job seeker, and to acquire new knowledge and skills facilitating his/her performance of a suitable job.** Studies at secondary schools and higher education (HE) institutions, and follow-up courses are not considered to be retraining. Retraining is carried out based on a written agreement between the labour office and a job seeker which stipulates the conditions under which the retraining will take place (decree no. 519/2004).

Two basic types of retraining have been gradually developed:

- specific (targeted) – i.e. a change of the existing qualification focusing on the acquisition of specific theoretical knowledge and practical skills for a suitable job. It is mostly based on existing or anticipated labour market needs, and often related to a specific job offer and labour market monitoring;
- non-specific - i.e. focusing on enhancing the employability of individuals, particularly graduates of secondary schools and HE institutions, by means of the acquisition of knowledge commonly required by the labour market.

Most people take part in specific retraining (over 50 %) – i.e. retraining designed to fulfil skills shortages in the labour market. On the other hand, the proportion of non-specific and complementary retraining courses has been rising (some 30 %). They are particularly designed for school leavers who are not sufficiently prepared for entering the labour market.

The average length of retraining courses is about 2 months. Most of those who undergo retraining find jobs within 3 months of their completion (63.2 %), and 19.5 % find jobs within 6 months of the completion of retraining. This means that the overall success rate is 82.7 %.

Another impulse for the development of retraining is the provision of investment incentives for new investors. In line with the law, they may receive a contribution to cover staff training and retraining costs. Investment incentives are targeted at districts with an average and above-average rate of unemployment.

Various ways of providing retraining courses have also been developed. The legislation²⁸ distinguishes the following ways of course delivery:

- a) as part of continuing vocational training programmes;
- b) as part of special programmes leading to the acquisition of a specific skill;

²⁸ Decree no. 519/2004 on the retraining of job seekers and employees and the retraining of employees. The decree complements the new law on employment which entered into force on 1 October 2004.

- c) as part of educational activities within international programmes;
- d) as part of educational programmes designed for job seekers who receive special attention in line with the act on employment;
- e) as part of school programmes for upper secondary education (that fall within the system of fields of education);
- f) as part of other educational activities leading to the acquisition of a new qualification or the improvement of the existing qualification.

Retraining may only be provided by institutions that are accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. In 2002, there were 1,124²⁹ institutions with accredited training programmes. **Retraining providers** are mostly private training organisations, secondary vocational schools and training facilities in companies. According to a survey carried out by the Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs³⁰, about **two thirds of retraining providers are private training organisations**. The bodies within employment services organise the retraining in most **manual occupations** in company training facilities and in secondary vocational schools. The retraining of **technical and administrative workers and particularly secondary school leavers** is organised in private training organisations and partly also at secondary technical schools.

²⁹ A survey of the MoEYS into retraining programmes accredited in 2002. Praha: MoEYS, 2003.

³⁰ The role of employment services in the implementation of state employment policy. Employment policy implementation in line with labour market needs. Praha: VÚPSV, 1999.

Theme 6: Training VET teachers and trainers

6.1 General background

In the VET area in the Czech Republic there are **teachers of general subjects, teachers of vocational subjects, trainers in practical subjects, and practical training supervisors.**

A trainer in practical subjects (*učitel předmětu praxe*) teaches practical subjects in workshops at secondary technical schools. A **practical training supervisor** (*mistr odborné výchovy*) is responsible for the practical component of training at secondary vocational schools. Outside the education system there are **practical training instructors** (*instruktoři praktického výcviku*) who are in charge of the practical training of secondary vocational school pupils in the workplace.

The employment terms for these pedagogical staff are regulated by the Labour Code which, however, does not specify the occupational category of a teacher. The School Act defines the category of pedagogical staff which also includes teachers and practical training supervisors, school directors and deputy directors. On 1 January 2005 the new **School Act** and the act **on pedagogical staff** enter into force. This legislation provides a new definition of the position of pedagogical staff. The act on pedagogical staff provides for continuing training of pedagogical staff and introduces a career development system. It stipulates that pedagogical staff is obliged to pursue continuing training and school directors are assigned the duty to organise continuing training in line with the relevant school plan. Certificates testifying to participation in various educational events organised by institutions accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) will be relevant for the career development of pedagogical staff. A more detailed specification of the conditions for classification of teachers and trainers in career categories will be provided in a decree that is currently under development.

A school director is appointed by the school's founding body. Schools are legal entities and therefore hold powers in industrial relations – they are the employers of teachers and practical training supervisors. Teachers and trainers at VET schools are employed based on **open recruitment procedures that are not standardised**. In line with the Labour Code, an employment contract is concluded between the teacher/trainer and the school director. School directors may hire qualified teachers at their discretion. In the event that there is a shortage of qualified teachers, a school director may employ an applicant without the required vocational or teaching qualification.

The low attractiveness of the teaching profession and inadequate remuneration of teachers/trainers is negatively reflected in the quality of pedagogical staffs and the teaching process. Only a small number of graduates of teacher training programmes enter the education sector and if they do, they tend to leave during their initial years on the job. Many men and good teachers leave the profession for financial reasons. In consequence of this pedagogical staffs are ageing. Decision-makers, expert bodies concerned with education and school administering bodies realise the gravity of the situation. Programme documents set out objectives in terms of enhancing the professional standards of pedagogical staff, improving the quality of their initial as well as continuing education, and redressing their remuneration.

The introduction of ICT into teaching is conditional upon computer literacy on the part of teachers, and availability of the relevant facilities. The objective of the State ICT Policy in Education (for more details see Theme 7) is to make sure that 75 % of teachers use ICT as a

regular teaching tool, and that schools are equipped with the ICT facilities. The training of teachers in ICT is financed by the state and it is provided by accredited training centres (e.g. Pedagogical Centre in Prague). This makes it possible for teachers to acquire ICT competencies from the beginner level up to advanced level, and take a specialisation following the completion of various modules.

6.2 Training of teachers/trainers in educational establishments

Initial training of teachers of general and vocational subjects

There are two **models of initial teacher/trainer training** in the Czech Republic: integrative and consecutive. The **integrative model** is characteristic of the initial training of teachers of general subjects. In this model all components of teacher training – i.e. vocational subjects, pedagogical-psychological disciplines and practical training – are integrated into one study programme. At the end of the studies students take final examinations in the subjects they will teach and their didactics, and in pedagogical and psychological disciplines. In this way they meet the requirements for vocational and pedagogical competencies.

Teachers-to-be who are trained within the integrative model take **accredited Master study programmes at public higher education institutions**. Most teachers of general subjects study at the teacher training faculties of universities. The curricula are developed by individual faculties. Each study programme is subject to accreditation awarded by the Ministry of Education (MoEYS) for a period at most twice as long as the standard length of the relevant programme.

The consecutive model is characteristic of the initial training of teachers of vocational subjects. The student is first trained to become an expert in the chosen field. Therefore the choice of subject matter and teaching methods correspond to this objective. After passing the relevant state examinations, the student achieves the qualification of “inženýr” (engineer) in mechanical or chemical engineering, economics, agriculture, etc. If he/she opts for the teaching profession, the requirements for so-called “pedagogical competence” must be fulfilled. This competence is achieved through **pedagogical studies** which may run either in parallel with undergraduate training in the specialised disciplines, or after completion of undergraduate studies. This model is currently the only way for teachers of vocational subjects to acquire vocational as well as pedagogical competencies. There is also a portion of teachers of general subjects who follow this model to achieve a pedagogical competence.

Until 1998 there were specific requirements set by the MoEYS for (complementary) pedagogical studies concerning, for example, admission, the length of studies, a list of disciplines that had to be included, final examinations, etc. However, since 1998 these studies have been part of lifelong learning as the law on higher education institutions stipulates. **Lifelong learning courses** need not be accredited, and their scope and content are neither set, nor evaluated. After completion the student obtains a certificate of completion of the course. It is then up to the employer to respect or not to respect it – i.e. to acknowledge or not to acknowledge the pedagogical competence acquired. Lifelong learning courses – i.e. also pedagogical studies, may be provided by higher education (HE) institutions **for a fee**. The state does not subsidise their implementation. This is why individual HE institutions (faculties) often either “subsidise” pedagogical studies from resources allocated to them by the state for accredited programmes, or ask a minimum fee from the students.

The basic requirement for admission to pedagogical studies concerns prior education: teachers-to-be must have an accredited Master degree. However, since HE institutions do not provide appropriate programmes for future teachers of certain vocational subjects taught at secondary vocational schools (ISCED 3C) and also at higher professional schools (ISCED 5B) – e.g. subjects in courses such as those which produce hairdressers, waiters, dental technicians, orthopaedic/prosthetic laboratory workers, applicants with secondary education with “maturita” (ISCED 3A) are also admitted to pedagogical studies. These teachers have therefore lower qualification, with consequences for their remuneration and social security.

With the exception of parallel studies, pedagogical studies are not provided on a full-time basis. Students mostly work as teachers of vocational subjects during their studies. Some VET schools where the students in pedagogical programmes work provide resources to cover part of the studies. Some schools provide their teachers with leave for studying, others compress their teaching load into four hours per week. At some schools teachers must take regular holidays for their studies.

The curriculum of pedagogical studies is developed by each faculty (department or institute) responsible for their implementation. The length of pedagogical studies provided in a so-called “combined” form is 3 to 4 semesters. Pedagogical studies are completed by a **final examination** which normally includes pedagogical and psychological disciplines and didactics of vocational subjects. The defence of a final paper is also part of the final examination.

Apart from pedagogical studies provided by HE institutions in the form of lifelong learning courses, the new act on pedagogical staff stipulates that teachers of vocational (and also general) subjects at secondary schools may also acquire pedagogical competence by means of complementary studies of the following accredited programmes: Bachelor study programme in pedagogical sciences for secondary school teachers, and a programme in pedagogical sciences provided by organisations for continuing teacher training.

Teachers of general or vocational subjects at higher professional schools obtain a professional qualification upon completion of an accredited Master study programme that corresponds with the nature of the relevant general or vocational subject. Teachers at this level are not required to have obtained a pedagogical qualification and their vocational qualification suffices.

Initial training of practical training supervisors

The initial training of trainers is similar to the initial training of teachers of vocational subjects. Practical training supervisors obtain their **vocational qualification** upon completion of a Master or Bachelor programme at an HE institution, a higher professional school or upon passing a secondary school leaving examination (“maturita”) and a final examination in the relevant subject area. In practice trainers with “maturita” and a vocational training certificate at secondary level predominate. Trainers acquire a **pedagogical qualification** upon completion of the pedagogical studies described above. Another way of obtaining a pedagogical qualification for trainers is so-called **complementary pedagogical studies**.

The curriculum of pedagogical studies for trainers is similar to that for teachers of vocational subjects. The only difference is that, apart from didactics of vocational subjects (the scope of which is less extensive as compared to teachers of vocational subjects), didactics of practical

training is also taught. Admission and completion requirements are the same for trainers and for teachers of vocational subjects.

Cooperation among HE institutions which provide pedagogical studies for teachers of vocational subjects or practical training supervisors had until recently been incoherent and haphazard. At present the MoEYS is initiating, with the support of Cedefop, the development of a partner network of providers of training for teachers of vocational subjects, practical training supervisors and practical training instructors in companies – a so-called TTnet in the Czech Republic. The network will be launched in January 2005.

Continuing training of teachers of vocational subjects and practical training supervisors

The most general provisions concerning the obligation on the part of employees to undertake continuing training are set out in the Labour Code. The new act on pedagogical staff stipulates this **continuing training obligation** very clearly. The MoEYS annually allocates a certain amount to schools that must be spent on continuing training. From these resources schools may finance continuing training programmes for pedagogical staff that are accredited by the Accreditation Commission of the MoEYS. Some schools already have professional development plans. Schools may choose continuing training programmes based on their needs and the training needs of individual teachers and trainers.

Continuing training programmes may be provided by HE institutions within the framework of lifelong learning. Moreover, they may be provided by the **Prague Pedagogical Centre** and other institutions and organisations, including schools whose charter contains the provision of continuing education. The Prague Pedagogical Centre is financed from the budget of the MoEYS. It has branches in all regions and their exclusive focus is continuing training of pedagogical staff. Continuing training is always provided for a fee.

These continuing training programmes are developed by the staff of the aforementioned institutions and accredited by the MoEYS commission. In terms of content they are focused mostly on innovation and expansion or improvement of pedagogical and psychological competencies and personality development. Development of vocational competencies and labour market knowledge are only involved in the continuing training of teachers to a limited extent.

There are only few continuing training programmes for teachers of vocational subjects and practical training supervisors. This is because the spectrum of vocational subjects is very broad, while the number of teachers of individual vocational subjects is low as compared to the numbers in other teaching sub-categories. There is also a **shortage of experts** concerned with didactics of vocational subjects and practical training. Moreover, there is insufficient attention paid to continuing training of vocational subjects' teachers in research.

Continuing training concerned with curricular changes should be provided, above all, by the Prague Pedagogical Centre (in cooperation with National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education, HE institutions, etc.). Currently an outline of this type of continuing education is being drafted.

Apart from educational institutions, companies may also be involved in the training of teachers (particularly continuing training). Such training is most often provided by companies whose technologies and products are getting established in the market (e.g. plasterboard systems, cars). However, there is no relevant information about the scope of this type of

training that could facilitate comparison of any kind. The training of teachers in companies is rather sporadic and is not governed by any systemic regulations. Its provision is up to the initiative of schools and companies and depends on the quality of the relationship between the school and the potential employers of its graduates.

6.3 Training of trainers/teachers at the workplace (apprenticeship training and CVET in enterprises)

Practical training of pupils at secondary vocational schools and training centres (*odborná učiliště*) takes place in companies under the leadership of so-called instructors. They are employees of the company providing for the practical training based on a contract with the relevant training institution. The contract stipulates powers and responsibilities and deals with the VET school, company and the instructor as contractual parties. Instructors get an agreed fee for their work. The training of the instructors takes the form of a course in psychological and pedagogical disciplines. It lasts several days and it is provided by HE institutions preparing teachers for vocational education and training. The instructors should, after a period of time, update this qualification. Continuing training of instructors is not governed by any regulations and it is not provided on a systematic basis.

6.4 Training of teachers and trainers in continuing education and training (outside enterprises)

There are no specific regulations in the CR concerning the work of trainers in continuing training programmes. Nor is the training of these trainers and teachers provided for in a consistent manner. There are currently two institutions in the Czech educational market that provide training for trainers leading to a certificate. The Association of Adult Education Providers (AIVD) offers training courses combining distance and regular skills training. The trainers in management education are trained by the Association of Management Trainers and Consultants (ATKM).

Theme 7: Skills and competencies development and innovative pedagogy

7.1 Mechanisms for the anticipation of skill needs

The need for forecasting future skills needs on the labour market is set out in major government papers as one of their priorities (Human Resources Development Strategy, Long-Term Plan for the Development of Education and the Education System, National Employment Action Plan).

The Czech Republic (CR) lacks a coherent system for forecasting skill needs. However, for a number of years various initiatives have been developed that aim at creating a solid system for early identification of skill needs. They take the form of single projects that are not inter-related, and their results do not serve as a regular source of information on which users at various levels could rely.

So-called “branch groups” operating within the purview of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) focus on qualitative changes in the content of skilled labour. These groups consist of experts in vocational programmes development, representatives of vocational and technical schools and employers. On the basis of available sources of information about the developments in various industries they follow **development trends in groups of related occupations**. The activities of the branch groups cover virtually all employment opportunities available to graduates of secondary VET schools and higher professional schools. One partial outcome of the work of the groups is 21 industry-focused studies which constituted a basis for the development of a comprehensive study published in 1999³¹. The monitoring of development trends in groups of related occupations will be repeated periodically. The results of this exercise should directly influence the development of so-called framework educational programmes for VET – in other words curricula documents at national level.

A mostly quantitative approach is applied in the project **Information System on the Situation of School Leavers in the Labour Market (ISA)**,³² which is also implemented within the purview of the MoEYS. The objective of this project is to develop information services so that in the career choice process all the capacities and interests of a job applicant can be taken into consideration, as well as all risks related to the situation in the labour market and employment opportunities. ISA provides up-to-date information about the factors that affect employment opportunities for school leavers (economic development, demographic changes, the development of unemployment and of the education system, etc.). This information is then made available to groups of users via the Internet, publications, the media, etc. The main users include applicants for studies at VET schools and their graduates, employers, counselling centres (e.g. information-counselling centres at labour offices), schools, regional education authorities). The **RISA project – Regional Information System on the Situation of School Leavers in the Labour Market**³³ is an ISA variant at regional level. It was completed in 2004 for the Moravia-Silesia region. It makes it possible to collect, process and analyse information concerning the development of supply and demand in the regional labour market, the needs of regional employers and the educational provision of schools and other training organisations in the region.

³¹ Kadlec, M.: Monitoring Development Trends in Groups of Related Occupations, Prague, VÚOŠ 1999.

³² Vojtěch, J. et al.: Uplatnění absolventů škol (Employment of School Leavers)– 2003. Praha NÚOV, 2003.

³³ www.risa.cz

In 2001 a combined qualitative/quantitative methodology for forecasting skill needs was developed as part of a project financed from the Leonardo da Vinci programme. It is based on experience gained in selected Western European countries and adjusted to the conditions in the CR. The methodology includes a quantitative forecasting model which provides information about employment prospects in the labour market throughout the CR over a five-year period for particular qualifications, and information about employers' chances of finding prospective employees with such qualifications. There is also a methodology for the development of sectoral and regional studies which aim at complement the quantitative information in the model by the qualitative aspects of the changes in sectoral/regional demand for qualifications. The methodology is being developed further and used in projects supported by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA).

This means that there are various approaches employed in forecasting qualification and skill needs in the CR. They are usually further developed within various projects which have had growing effects both on the design of VET curricula and on decisions about quantitative aspects of the structure of the VET system (e.g. the number of applicants admitted to various VET programmes).

The fact that the process of early identification of skill needs is very demanding in terms of information sources, the need for ensuring cooperation between a wide range of institutions and experts at various levels (national, regional, sectoral), and financial resources, has led to a proposal for the development of a system for regular forecasting of skill needs in the CR. The proposal, drafted in 2003 for the MoLSA, contains an overview of activities performed, a list of institutions bound by an agreement on cooperation, financial estimates and prospective sources of funding. This systemic approach should establish conditions for regular prognostic work that would be independent of the approval given to isolated projects. The system is not yet in operation.

The CR has joined a new Cedefop initiative entitled **Skillsnet** which is focused on the creation and operation of an international network concerned with early identification of skill needs. The sharing of information, methodological approaches and methods of organisation related to the identification of skill needs produces valuable information and inspiration for further development of prognostic activities.

7.2 Bridging pathways and new educational partnerships

As regards the overcoming of barriers between various types and levels of education in the Czech Republic (CR), a strategy entailing co-operation and **integration of various programmes within one educational institution** is being implemented.

One example is so-called **“follow-up courses”** which make it possible for those who complete vocational programmes at ISCED 3C level to continue their studies and achieve a qualification at ISCED 3A level which enables access to tertiary education. The admission requirement is completion of a vocational programme within the same or a similar study branch. Follow-up courses last two years and are completed by a “maturita” examination. Optimally, the student may, in five years, obtain a vocational qualification (certificate) as well as a “maturita” certificate without the need for interrupting studies and transferring to a different school.

There have been rather sporadic cases where general and vocational education was integrated by means of integration of a *gymnázium* and a secondary technical school. *Gymnázia* always promoted their profile as schools preparing for studies at tertiary level and were afraid to merge with secondary technical schools. In view of these secondary technical schools introduced, in the 1990s, general/vocational programmes of a *lyceum* type (technical, economic, science, pedagogy) which have a general focus and are designed for students who aspire to study at higher education (HE) institutions of a technical and business nature. In the academic year 2003/2004 first year students at *lycea* accounted for 5.7 % of students in first years at secondary technical schools (ISCED 3A). There are very good prospects mainly for technical *lycea* due to their cooperation with HE institutions. Moreover, the establishment of *lycea* is supported by regional self-governing bodies. In view of the low number of *gymnázia*, *lycea* may constitute an alternative way of increasing the number of students with general as well as vocational education at ISCED 3A levels who, at the same time, will have the necessary preparation for HE.

Modularisation did not facilitate better transferability between educational paths in the CR, since due to legislative barriers modular curricula could only be implemented as part of the existing educational routes. It is only now that a national system of qualifications is being developed with the prospect of facilitating links between initial and continuing education, as well as between formal and non-formal learning.

7.3 Renewal of curricula

The need for increased mobility and flexibility of the labour force has resulted in changes in VET curricula towards generalisation. The scope of the general component in educational programmes is traditionally relatively large, and it makes it easier for graduates to continue studying. The proportion of **general education** is set to be at least 45 % and 30 % in “maturita” courses (ISCED 3A) and vocational courses (ISCED 3C) respectively. The increase in the general component in vocational courses occurred mainly at the expense of the practical component which formerly accounted for up to 50 % of instruction, while now it should only be some 35 %³⁴.

The teaching of **foreign languages** is an obligatory part of the curricula of both “maturita” and vocational courses. However, the standards of foreign language teaching are often very low, one of the reasons being insufficient qualifications on the part of teachers.³⁵ English, German and Russian are the most common languages taught. The teaching of other languages, including French, is virtually negligible.

Since the 1990s VET curricula have been gradually set to encompass support for **entrepreneurial skills**. A new subject was introduced covering issues such as the setting up of a trade or a company, and the development of management and business skills. In three-year vocational programmes the subject covers the basics of entrepreneurship, in “maturita” courses the range is wider and often includes work in “fictitious” or student companies. Employers take part in the development of business skills by means of work placements for students.

³⁴ Kofroňová, O. – Vojtěch, J.: Analýza vzdělávacích programů z hlediska zaměstnatelnosti absolventů (Analysis of Educational Programmes in terms of Employability of Graduates). Prague, Tauris, 2000.

³⁵ According to the result of the project Access of Young People to Education and their Employment Opportunities (code LS02G) within the programme LS Research for State Administration of the Ministry of Education, Youth and sports - MoEYS, NÚOV (2003).

The skills facilitating the understanding of labour market issues are also gradually finding their way into VET curricula. Students get basic information about the labour market as part of the services provided by information-counselling centres at labour offices. A methodology for a subject dealing with the **introduction to the world of work** has been developed including an e-learning programme for teacher training. However, the integration of these topics into teaching is not binding for schools and it is entirely at the discretion of school directors.

It is clear from the above that, as regards curricula innovation, major changes occurred in the curricular content and new skill requirements. A fundamental change in favour of innovative teaching methods is expected in relation to the implementation of the new School Act.

The School Act passed in 2004 enacts changes in curricular policy. At central level, so-called **framework educational programmes** (curricula - FEPs) will be developed which reflect the efforts made towards curricula based on competencies and, in addition to the content of education, also set out the required targeted competencies of graduates. Before the end of 2003 over 20 FEPs had been developed covering approximately 70 % of VET students³⁶, and they have been and will be tested on a pilot basis³⁷. The development of FEPs is co-ordinated by the National Institute of Technical and Vocation Education, who co-operate with the relevant “branch group” consisting of representatives of schools, social partners and, most importantly, employers. The development of FEPs is a demanding process involving several rounds of consultations with all stakeholders (teachers, school associations, social partners, professional associations, regional education authorities, etc.), until they are finally approved by the Ministry of Education.

Key competencies form an important part of FEPs. They cover the communication and information skills, teamwork, problem-solving and the capacity to learn. They are conceived as transferable competencies which each individual needs in his/her personal as well as working life. Methodological recommendations concerning how to integrate the key competencies into a curriculum are focused primarily on **project teaching**. This has been so since the mid-1990s when the Phare VET Reform project was implemented.³⁸

Schools will design their **school-based educational programmes** based on FEPs. They will take account of both the objectives of national policies, and the plans and requirements for education resulting from a specific regional environment and the needs of social partners. Methodological materials are being developed to assist curricula designers at schools.

Great attention is being paid to improving information literacy. Therefore in 2000 an **Outline of State IT Policy in Education** was adopted³⁹. The objective of Stage 1 of implementation (until 2005) is to establish conditions facilitating an effective and efficient introduction of ICT in teaching at school and, consequently, achieve high levels of information literacy among school leavers; to make sure that ICT is used as a common instrument by 75 % of teachers; and to create conditions for the involvement of schools in the system of lifelong learning of citizens in ICT.

³⁶ We will do without framework educational programmes. Učitel'ské noviny, r. 106, no. 44 2003. p. 11
Annual Report of NÚOV. Prague NÚOV, 2004.

³⁷ The POSUN project. Prague NÚOV, 2003.

³⁸ From Pilot Schools to Reform Strategy. Prague, NTF, 1998.

³⁹ Outline of State ICT Policy in Education. Prague, MŠMT, 2000.

Theme 8: Validation of learning – recognition and mobility

8.1 Validation of formal learning – general concepts and schemes

At present, only the following educational results are recognised at national level in the Czech Republic: the outputs of **formal IVET** and the corresponding outputs of the so-called “second chance” education within the framework of **adult education provided by schools**; the outputs of **so-called “normative” education** leading to the acquisition and updating of special professional competencies which constitute a prerequisite for the performance of certain activities (e.g. driving licences for certain vehicles, welding licences, judicial and other experts’ licences, etc.); and the **outputs of accredited retraining courses** offered, above all, to registered job seekers and others who seek employment opportunities.

Formal IVET

Certificates issued in formal education are governed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) legislation⁴⁰. Apart from other things, these regulations stipulate evaluation procedures for the relevant programmes and rules for issuing certificates of their successful completion.

In other than regulated professions, **certificates of formal IVET do not constitute a legally binding requirement for the performance of a specific profession** – the requirements concerning the level and type of education of employees are decided upon by employers. Nevertheless, formal education in the relevant discipline and at the appropriate level is normally required in the labour market.

General and vocational formal education at “maturita” level are equal in legal terms (all programmes completed by “maturita” fall in the ISCED 3A category). Certificates of vocational training acquired at this level perform a **qualification function (not formally binding)** and an **educational function (formally binding)** – they are a prerequisite for entering tertiary education.

Final examinations and certification are currently performed by schools and take the form of public examinations in front of an examination board in line with central regulations providing for their content and implementation. Social partners have not so far been required to be members of the examination boards. The new School Act effective from 2005 stipulates an obligation for social partners to be represented on examination boards at VET schools.

At “maturita” and lower levels a five-grade scale is used to assess student performance (1= excellent; 5= fail). In the tertiary sector a four-grade scale is used (1= excellent; 4= fail). A final examination is considered to be passed if none of its components is assessed by the “fail” mark. The following are common **features of student assessment** at secondary vocational and secondary technical schools:

- formative as well as summative evaluation is applied during studies;
- there is no general description of student performance in relation to marking;
- there are no student assessment standards to be used in the course of studies;

⁴⁰ The School Act, Decree of MoEYS no. 354/1991 on secondary schools, Decree of MoEYS no. 442/1991 on completion of studies at secondary schools and training centres in line with the wording of act no. 138/1995.

- at the end of studies students take comprehensive final examinations. The law stipulates that the performance of the student during the examinations should be assessed with no regard to his/her previous performance;
- final examinations are not standardised (see below);
- assessment is therefore very subjective (a difference of 2 grades is estimated as possible – i.e. the performance of a student who at school A gets the mark “good” (3) may get “very good” (2) at school B and “sufficient” (4) at school C).

Student assessment at higher professional schools corresponds in principle to that at universities. At the end of their studies students take the so-called “absolutorium” (for more details see Theme 4).

All final examinations carried out within VET programmes are either entirely (final examinations in ISCED 3C vocational programmes) or predominantly focused on testing **student knowledge in the vocational component of the programme**. The “maturita” examination (ISCED 3 A) programmes contains a component designed to test the knowledge of the students in general subjects (the compulsory “maturita” subjects at the moment are the Czech language and either mathematics or a foreign language depending on the student’s decision). “Absolutorium” (ISCED 5) contains a compulsory examination in a foreign language.

In view of the aforementioned drawbacks of certification – particularly the non-existence of student performance assessment standards – **new regulations for the completion of VET studies** have been prepared: final examinations (in vocational programmes without “maturita”) and “maturita” examinations. A nationwide introduction of reformed “maturita” is envisaged for 2007.

In 2007 a **reformed “maturita” examination** will be introduced (ISCED 3A), which will consist of two parts – common and “profile-based”. The common part is the responsibility of the state as it is centrally developed and evaluated. It consists of an examination in the mother tongue, a foreign language and an optional subject (the student may choose from mathematics, basic civic and social issues, basic science/technology issues, basics of information technology). This concept makes it possible to standardise the examination, to improve its transparency and enhance the relevance of the “maturita” certificate to be used for entering further education – primarily at tertiary level. The “profile-based” component is the responsibility of the school director. It takes account of the nature of the discipline, the graduate profile, targeted competencies and the relevant programme. This part of “maturita” will make it possible for the school to shape its profile distinctly, which, particularly in VET, is important.

According to the new School Act a **final examination** in VET programmes at ISCED 3C level consists of a written examination, an oral examination and a practical training examination. There is a new obligation to appoint an expert in industry to be a member of the examination board. The legislation so far has not provided for social partners to be ordinary members of the board – if they are invited to take part in the exams, they can ask the examinees questions but are not involved in their assessment.

A comprehensive approach to the issue of completion of training in vocational programmes without “maturita” is supported by a systemic project entitled “**QUALITY – Development of a Comprehensive System for Monitoring and Evaluation, including Establishment of a Centre for Identification of Educational Results**”. The project will be implemented by the MoEYS and its partners with the support of the European Social Fund. The starting point for

the project is evaluation standards which set professional competencies for various programmes and criteria for their evaluation. In the project evaluation standards will be combined with the development of the uniform final examinations. By the end of 2008 they will be drafted and tested on a pilot basis at all ISCED 3C level programmes.

“Normative” education

The non-existence of a generally valid legal regulation fostering the recognition of non-formal education has resulted in the development of a number of specific sub-regulations within decrees issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and other ministries (agriculture, industry and trade, health, the interior, and defence) which govern various specific types of CVET or qualification testing. These partial regulations are abundant and they concern, for example, the recognition of the professional competence of individuals working in electrical engineering⁴¹, crews of ships⁴², railways and railway transport operators⁴³, healthcare workers⁴⁴, etc. In line with the relevant regulations they are required either to have obtained the respective certificate, or to have passed the relevant examinations. What is most important in this respect is that it is impossible to perform the respective activity unless the individual holds the relevant formal certificate.

Retraining

The recognition of retraining courses organised by labour offices is provided for in the act on employment⁴⁵. The act authorises the MoEYS to issue a special decree and to carry out accreditation of retraining providers and courses. This means that the responsibility for retraining is divided between the MoLSA and MoEYS. The MoLSA jointly with labour offices (which fall within its purview) attend to the development of so-called retraining programmes, while the Accreditation Commission at the MoEYS is formally assigned the task of accrediting them, and also decides on the nature, function and legal validity of certificates issued.

Graduates of accredited retraining courses acquire formally recognised national certificates of qualification, which, however, are not equivalent to the certificates obtained in the formal education system. So far it has not been possible to ensure formal recognition of single skills that, when accumulated, could constitute an equivalent to the relevant certificate recognised in formal education (applying the principle of formal recognition of non-formal or informal learning outcomes). Whether or not these certificates are recognised in the labour market is therefore not clear, and depends on the specific provider and the quality of the course.

8.2 Validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning

In the Czech Republic (CR) there is no comprehensive legislation governing the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. This situation restricts transferability between initial and continuing education and, as a result, participation in lifelong learning. Although

⁴¹ Decree no. 50/1978.

⁴² Act no. 61/2000 on seaway shipping.

⁴³ Act no. 266/1994 on railways.

⁴⁴ Act no. 95/2004 on the requirements for acquisition and recognition of a professional competence to perform the profession of a physician, dentist and pharmaceutical worker.

⁴⁵ Act no. 435/2004 on employment.

formal certificates do not, with some exceptions⁴⁶, constitute a binding qualification requirement, this situation leads to deterioration both in transparency for employers in selecting and hiring new staff, and occupational mobility of individuals.

What is particularly discouraging is the fact that, in adult education – and particularly in “second chance” education - adult learners, in order to acquire the relevant certificate of education, must undergo the same comprehensive programmes as in initial education (only the form of studies differs). No account is taken of the diversity of prior formal education and the actual personal competencies of the learner. Neither is account taken of the learner’s ambitions which he/she pursues by re-entering the education system.

Perhaps the only exception is to undergo a so-called “qualification examination” for those who do not meet qualification requirements for the performance of a trade in line with the act on trades⁴⁷. Based on a successful passing of this qualification examination in front of an examination board composed of representatives of the trades office, the relevant secondary technical or vocational school, the missing professional qualification may be acquired.

In view of this situation the government, in its resolution of 4 June 2003 on the National Employment Action Plan, assigned the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) the task of developing, in cooperation with other institutions involved, propositions for an act on continuing education which, in addition to other issues, would foster the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

The objectives that are currently most topical are as follows:

- to provide for an appropriate diversity in the paths along which adults may achieve the relevant certificates (particularly the “maturita” certificate as a formal requirement for entering both types of tertiary education);
- to provide for the recognition of their actual personal competencies regardless of where and how they have been acquired.

The propositions⁴⁸ for this act envisage that the national system of qualifications derived from the national system of occupations (administered by the MoLSA) will become the principal systemic framework for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. For each qualification included in the system an evaluation standard will be set, which should cover a standardised description of the competencies that must be tested for the relevant qualification to be recognised. The evaluation standards should be issued by the MoEYS, which will develop them in cooperation with professional associations and the relevant ministries in line with the National System of Occupations.

The propositions envisaged that the verification of the competencies achieved will be done by means of contrasting the competencies demonstrated with the relevant evaluation standard. This verification of the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning should be done by a so-called “authorised person” appointed by an organisation authorised to do so by the MoEYS. Authorised persons may be individuals and legal entities proposed in their field by professional associations. They must have the required qualification in the relevant discipline for which the authorisation is awarded, and must have the prescribed length of practical experience. The verification of professional competence should be done by means of an

⁴⁶ Specific regulated professions and activities defined by law for the performance of which a special certificate is required.

⁴⁷ Actno. 455/1991 on trades.

⁴⁸ Principle proposition for an act on CVET. Working material of the MoEYS, Prague, October 2004.

examination for which anyone who has the necessary skills to pass it may apply. The examinations should be organised by an organisation authorised by the MoEYS. The examination should be performed at the presence of the authorised person, and it may be oral, written or practical, while its content should be in line with the job requirements. The acquisition and demonstration of professional skills is then confirmed by a certificate that corresponds to the relevant qualification. A list of the skills acquired should also be part of the certificate.

These certificates acquired as a recognised outcome of non-formal or informal learning should be recognised both in the system of initial education and in the labour market.

In initial education, the recognition of the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning is the responsibility of the school director on the basis of the relevant certificates. The director may admit the applicant in a higher class or issue a document certifying the completion of formal education at a specific level. The director may also determine which additional examinations the applicant must pass to acquire the relevant qualification.

However, apart from specific certificates necessary for the performance of certain occupations), the legislation in place is not a guarantee that these certificates will provide secure employment in the relevant fields. In the CR there is no direct binding link between individual jobs (the performance of specific tasks or occupations) and qualifications acquired in education and training (the exceptions are mentioned above). It is therefore up to the employer to assess the qualifications of job applicants.

Theme 9: Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment

9.1 Strategy and provision

At present, most **career counselling services** are provided within two parallel systems. The first falls within the purview of the **Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS)**, the other one is administered by the **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA)**. Both systems share one objective – the provision of services facilitating optimal solutions to career-related issues (the choice of an optimal professional orientation, educational pathway and career, and the related specific situations in the personal lives of individuals).

Career counselling services provided at schools and school counselling facilities, which are the responsibility of the MoEYS, 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.

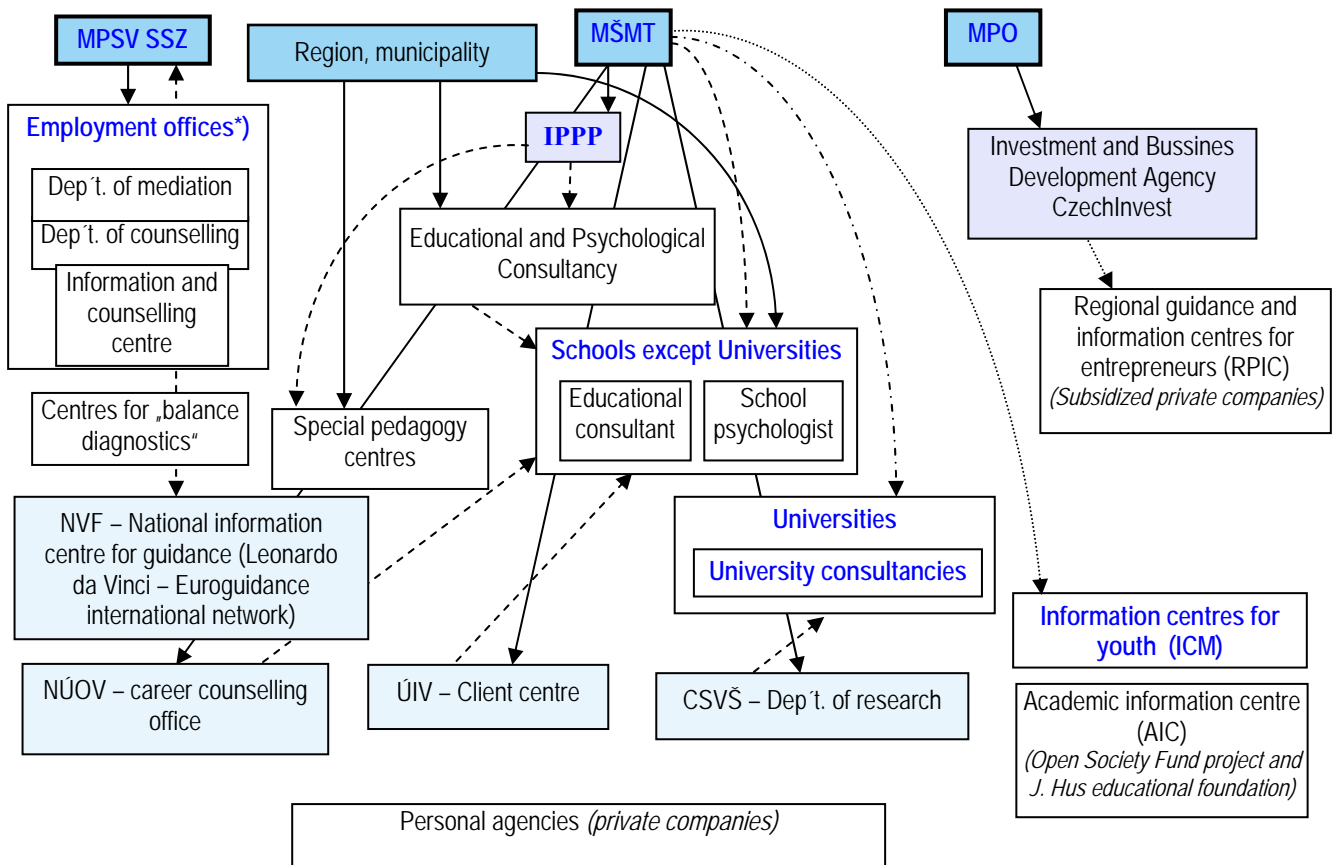
The MoLSA (Employment Services Administration) system of counselling services is aimed at resolving problems related to the transfer from school to employment, and at supporting active and independent decisions on optimal employment.

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 **National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance (NRCVG)**, which is part of the Europe-wide network Euroguidance within the Leonardo da Vinci programme, plays an important part in this respect. One of the main objectives of the NRCVG is to support a European dimension to cooperation in the area of counselling. It also promotes cooperation between various national counselling systems.

In 2004 the MoEYS developed a proposal for a **national policy for the development of career counselling in the Czech Republic (CR)**. The policy sees the role of career counselling in the context of lifelong learning and considers it to be an important instrument in relation to the human resources development strategy and the prevention of unemployment. The policy sets out strategic goals and ways of implementing them – e.g. enhancing the efficiency and the scope of career services, providing for horizontal (between ministries and between central and regional levels) and vertical (all clients are guaranteed access to all parts of the system) links within the system of career counselling. Other objectives include the development of career counselling at school level, establishing links between education and counselling at schools, implementation of an information system about employment of school leavers, etc. Some objectives will be implemented with the support of the European Social Fund.

The system of guidance and counselling services aimed at education, training and employment in the Czech Republic



Explanation notes :

Dark grey colour indicates control institutions, grey colour indicates methodological institutions, and white colour indicates the counselling institutions.

- > Continuous line means direct control and funding
- - - -> Dash line means methodological help
-> Dotted line means partly funded from grants and subsidies
- . - .> Dot-and-dashed line means funding yes but not direct control

*) *Employment offices have a number of other units*

The MoEYS counselling system

The following bodies are part of the current career services system of the MoEYS: ministerial bodies, schools and school counselling facilities.

The MoEYS 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 **Institute of Pedagogical-Psychological Counselling** plays a major role in this respect. Its main tasks include coordination of career services in schools, and attending to the quality and efficiency of their provision. 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 **National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education** focuses, apart from the development VET policies and strategies for their implementation, on research, methodology and information related to career counselling, and supports the teaching of subjects dealing with labour market issues. One unit of the Institute is the **Centre for Career Counselling** which provides information about programmes offered by secondary VET schools and higher professional schools. The Institute also pursues the development of an integrated information system concerning the situation of school leavers in the labour market (ISA), and provides information to various users about employment opportunities for school leavers.

Educational counsellors are coordinators of counselling services in **schools**. All basic and secondary schools are obliged by law to establish the position of educational counsellor. The counsellors also work as teachers. The teaching load of teachers-counsellors is decreased in line with the number of students at the school. 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**.

From the academic year 2000/2001 **the curricula for secondary schools has included subject matter concerned with an introduction to the world of work**. It comprises a set of thematic areas designed to develop personal capacities as regards the understanding of labour market issues and flexibility. The thematic areas will be taught coupled with the provision of career services at schools. However, there are limitations as regards the teaching of this subject, as teachers lack appropriate training. This is why a **Methodological Instruction for Teachers** and **Methodology for Teaching the Introduction to the World of Work** have been developed. The labour market topics are incorporated into the newly developed framework educational programmes for secondary VET which will be gradually introduced in the form of a cross-sectional theme – Man and the World of Work.

From the academic year 2000/2001 **lower secondary education has involved subject “career path selection”**. The objective is to prepare pupils for transfer from compulsory education to upper secondary schools and to the labour market. The subject is focused on developing the skills that improve employability and help the pupils understand various items of important career-related information. The thematic area “Man and the World of Work” is an integral part of the framework educational programme for lower secondary education.

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.

Pedagogical-psychological guidance centres are located in all districts and provide services aiming at solving study-related, psychological and behavioural problems of pupils and students. Their main activity is work with children, pupils and their parents – both individually, and in groups. Career services provided by these centres are derived from a pedagogical-psychological diagnosis of the pupil's capacities, personal qualities, interests and other personal characteristics.

Centres for special pedagogy provide counselling to children and young people with sight, hearing, physical, mental or combined disabilities, and with communication disorders.

Educational care centres provide career services as part of preventive care for children and young people who show or are at risk of developing behavioural and social development disorders.

Information centres for youth collect exhaustive information about educational opportunities for all age categories. They are grouped in an association of information and counselling centres for young people (www.icm.cz).

The MoLSA counselling system

The provision of career services within the purview of the MoLSA began to develop systematically as late as the early 1990s when labour offices were set up. The body superior to labour offices is the MoLSA's Employment Services Administration. Labour offices provide counselling services to citizens that are related to job seeking and job brokering, career choice or change, vocational training, retraining and industrial relations. A total of 77 labour offices were established (in each former district town), and 182 branches – i.e. 259 contact points for clients.

Counselling at labour offices (LO) may be distinguished as follows:

- **basic** – pervading all activities of the LO where there is a contact between the client and the staff;
- **professional** – provided mostly by information and counselling centres of LOs This concerns counselling related to career selection or change;
- **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 diagnostics.

There is **Information and counselling centre** at each LO and its main task is to provide assistance as regards career choice by 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). There are also software products (particularly career choice programmes and programmes presenting educational courses available), and videotapes (films on occupations and vocational fields). Each centre employs a career counsellor who is ready to attend to clients' needs.

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 of the kind that form part of specialised counselling (and therefore the offices had the necessary personnel). As personnel numbers at LOs are limited, the provision of “balance diagnostics” services has been expanded by means of the setting up of external centres (there

are 25 of them at the moment). LOs may cooperate with the external centres (which have been authorised by the MoLSA) on a contractual basis and, in this way, secure their services for their clients. The external centres are obliged to observe a uniform methodology for employment services and comply with a Quality Charter.

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

9.2 Target Groups and modes of delivery

Services for young people

The current state of affairs is the result of a gradual development of the counselling system operated by schools, the main long-term priority of which was prevention and elimination of educational and study-related problems in children and young people. Only over the last two years has emphasis also been placed on career issues. The most frequent **methods of career counselling** at basic and secondary schools include individual and group counselling. In addition to this pupils may attend various educational fairs, open door days at schools, job brokering events, etc. There are **additional sources of information** available either at schools or at specialised counselling centres.

Target group	Professional care priorities
Basic school pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - comprehensive diagnostics of learning disorders and educational problems, - individual and group interviews designed to establish professional orientation followed by individual consultations, - socio-metric examinations of groups of schoolmates, - prevention of socio-pathological disorders and drop-outs, - in justified cases actions are taken following the establishment of a diagnosis (mostly individual psychotherapy)
Secondary and higher professional school students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - testing study-related aptitudes and assistance in study and professional orientation, prevention of drop-outs, - prevention of socio-pathological disorders
Students in higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pedagogical-psychological services, educational and career counselling

Services for adults

The provision of counselling services to adults in the CR is not yet satisfactory, as it falls primarily within the purview of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA). Counselling services for adults are not provided within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS). There are exceptions such as counselling centres operated by some MoEYS's organisations (Centre for Career Counselling at the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education; Customer and Information Centre at the Institute for Information

on Education, Centre for Higher Education Studies) – these also provide information about continuing education opportunities. At present the MoEYS, as one of the institutions responsible for the implementation of state ICT policy in education and lifelong learning, pursues the task of developing a system covering general, relevant and reliable information about educational activities for young people and adults. Support for the development of this system is one of the policy priorities of the Ministry.

Within the purview of the MoLSA services to adult clients as well as young people are provided by labour offices – particularly by their job brokering, counselling and retraining departments, information and counselling centres, job clubs, and, since recently, “balance diagnostics” centres. As regards the employment policy of the MoSLA, **the main target group** of these centres is **job seekers**. Another category includes people who seek alternative employment (they have a job but want to change it for various reasons or are at risk of redundancy). One important category is school leavers (within two years of successful completion of school at any level). Attention is also paid to the categories of citizens who have limited access to education for some reason (e.g. the disabled, ethnic minorities, citizens at pre-retirement age, etc.).

Adults may also use a number of **information sources on the Internet**. There are systems developed with state support, such as the DAT database of continuing education (www.dat.cz), the Integrated System of Typical Working Positions – ISTP (containing comprehensive information about occupations and related requirements, including a possible analysis of the client’s suitability – www.istp.cz), the Registry of schools and school facilities which is administered by the Institute for Information on Education (www.uiv.cz), the Centre for Career Counselling – www.nuov.cz, and others. There are also commercial systems available. Counselling services focusing mostly on adults are also provided by **private consultancies** (e.g. recruitment agencies).

9.3 Guidance and counselling personnel

The category of employees in the area of career services

Schools (basic and secondary)	educational counsellors school psychologists also teachers of careers and labour market related subjects at basic and secondary schools respectively are involved in the system
Pedagogical-psychological guidance centres Centres for special pedagogy	psychologists special pedagogues
Information and counselling centres at HE institutions	professional counsellors
Labour offices (job brokering and counselling departments)	job brokers professional counsellors
Information and counselling centres	professional counsellors
Centres for “balance diagnostics”	psychologists professional counsellors
Recruitment agencies, regional information and counselling centres and others	usually private entities the with a varying structure and personnel

Basic qualification requirements for the performance of professional activities of counsellors (MoEYS)

- **Educational counsellor** – also works as a teacher. A master degree is complemented by post-graduate qualification studies focused on educational counselling. A requirement has recently arisen that educational counsellors should also undertake training in career counselling (many have already done so) to meet the demands associated with the career choice process.
- **School psychologist** – a four-semester post-graduate study (there are suggestions to make this programme part of undergraduate education). Psychological counselling may only be provided by an individual with a degree in psychology or in the combination of psychology and pedagogy. Independent diagnostic and therapeutic work may only be performed by an individual with at least one year of experience in counselling.
- **Psychologist** – a master degree at teacher training or philosophical faculties in accredited study programmes.
- **Special pedagogue** - a master degree at teacher training faculties in the relevant specialisation. Independent diagnostic and therapeutic work may only be performed by an individual with at least one year of experience in counselling at school.
- **Teacher of career path selection / introduction to the world of work** – is a teacher with a qualification in other subjects. Studies with this focus have not yet been included in the undergraduate training of teachers-to-be. Special courses are organised and methodological instruments developed to support the teaching of these subjects.

There are various seminars organised as part of the **continuing education of the above mentioned professionals**, focusing on various topics. They are organised by the Institute for Pedagogical-Psychological Guidance, pedagogical-psychological guidance centres, labour offices, pedagogical centres, etc. One of the objectives set out in the draft of the National Policy for the Development of Career Counselling is that of developing professional standards for educational-career counsellors, and of testing a new approach to their training in pregradual and lifelong learning programmes.

Basic qualification requirements for the performance of professional activities of counsellors (MoLSA)

The system for the training of counsellors at labour offices has a modular structure and consists of three levels:

- **1. introductory** - acquisition of common competencies (basic socio-psychological training, a legal minimum, basic awareness of employment services issues);
- **2. functional** - acquisition of the knowledge and skills necessary for the performance of counselling;
- **3. specialisation** - acquisition of the knowledge and skills facilitating further professional development and improvement of the quality of the services provided.

Theme 10: Financing – Investment in Human Resources

10.1 Background information concerning financing arrangements for training

The system of funding IVET is derived from the system of state administration and self-administration in education. There are also differences depending on whether the institution is private or public. In 2001, as a result of decentralisation of public administration and the strengthening of regional and local self-administration, the responsibility for founding **secondary and higher professional schools** was delegated to regions (regional authorities). Regions administer approximately 76 % secondary vocational and technical schools and some 66 % of higher professional schools.

The structure of schools providing secondary VET according to the founding body

Founding body	Schools		Schools	
	Number	Proportion (%)	Number	Proportion (%)
	Secondary VET ^{*)}		Higher professional education	
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	-		-	-
Ministry of Justice	1	0.1	-	-
Ministry of Interior	4	0.3	1	0.6
Ministry of Defence	4	0.3	-	-
Municipality	7	0.5	-	-
Region	1, 054	76.2	111	65.7
Private	296	21.4	45	26.6
Church	17	1.2	12	7.1
Total	1, 383	100	169	100

Source: Own calculations based on data in the Statistical Yearbook on Education 2002/2003, Performance Indicators, table A1.1.7, ÚIV.

*) includes secondary vocational and secondary technical schools.

The responsibility for funding is shared between the founding body and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS). The funding of secondary VET schools and higher professional schools is governed by the School Act⁴⁹.

The funding of **higher education (HE) institutions** is regulated by the act on higher education institutions⁵⁰. Based on this law HE institutions have acquired the status of **public HE institutions**. State-owned assets necessary for teaching, research and public activities carried out by HE institutions have been transferred into their ownership. A management board, which must be established at each public HE institution, sees to the efficient use of these assets.

Tuition fees are the source of revenues for **private HE institutions**. If a private HE institution has the status of a public benefit organisation⁵¹, it may receive a subsidy from the MoEYS. The subsidy must be used to fund the teaching of accredited study programmes and lifelong learning programmes⁵² and to support creative activities associated with these programmes.

⁴⁹ Act on pre-school, basic, secondary, higher professional and other education no. 561/2004.

⁵⁰ Act on higher education institutions no. 111/1998.

⁵¹ Act no. 248/1995 on public benefit organisations and on changes to other acts.

⁵² More details about lifelong learning programmes provided by HE institutions see chapter 5.3.

Staff training is financed by employers, employees, or by both. Upon meeting certain conditions the employer may obtain a certain amount of resources from the state budget as part of active employment policy schemes, or on the basis of the act on investment incentives⁵³, or within the framework of various programmes⁵⁴.

The retraining of job seekers is financed from the state budget (the budget of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) as part of an active employment policy⁵⁵. Retraining is organised by labour offices and the courses are delivered to participants for free.

10.2 Funding for initial vocational education and training

Pursuant to the School Act **the revenues of a school legal entity** are structured as follows:

- a) financial resources from the state budget;
- b) financial resources from the budgets of regional and local administration;
- c) revenues from main and complementary activities;
- d) financial resources received from the founding body;
- e) fees for education and school services;
- f) revenues from property owned by the school legal entity;
- g) donations and inheritance.

Public secondary VET schools and higher professional schools

The expenditure of **public schools**⁵⁶ set up by regions is covered from the state budget via the budget of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) and from the relevant regional budget. The resources from the **state budget** are allocated to schools to cover their expenditure related to (a) industrial relations (wages and salaries, including social security and health insurance contributions, and a contribution for state employment policy), (b) teaching tools, textbooks (which are provided for free), (c) the continuing training of teachers and trainers. Resources from **regional budgets** are allocated to schools for operational and capital costs. If a municipality is the school's founding body, operational and capital costs are covered from the municipal budget. In line with its priorities and financial situation, a municipality may contribute resources for any costs incurred by schools in its administrative area. As regards schools set up by a ministry, the costs of teaching and operation and capital costs are covered by the ministry's budget.

The funding from public budgets to which schools are entitled is based on so-called "normatives" (normative rates). **National normative rates** are set by the MoEYS as a level of costs related to education and school services per one pupil/student and calendar year. The "normative" level per one student depends on the type of school (secondary vocational school, secondary technical school, higher professional school), and on the relevant field of education. Resources are provided according to the actual number of pupils/students up to a permitted number set by the MoEYS. Financial resources are provided in the form of a subsidy to a regional budget (on a special account).

⁵³ Act on investment incentives no. 72/2000 as amended. Before 2000 investment incentives were provided on an individual basis in line with government resolutions.

⁵⁴ A programme for the support for the creation of new jobs in regions most afflicted by unemployment. approved by the Czech government's Resolution no. 566/2004 of 2. 6. 2004. The Operational Programme – Human Resources Development, the Single Programming Document – Objective 3, Prague.

⁵⁵ Act on employment no.1/1991 as amended.

⁵⁶ An overview of VET schools according to their founding bodies is listed in the annex.

Regions set so-called regional normative rates by means of which they distribute the overall amount of resources received from the state budget to individual schools in the relevant region. The regional normative rates are set taking account, above all, of (a) the regional long-term plan for of education and development of education system, (b) framework educational programmes (curricula), (c) the scope of teaching, (d) the number of pupils in classrooms. The region must observe a methodology developed by the MoEYS. The levels of national as well as regional normative rates are made public.

Schools may also be allocated resources from the state budget for **experimental testing and development programmes**. These are not mandatory expenditures and depend on which programmes the MoEYS initiates for the given period. In addition to this, subsidies may be determined pursuant to the act on the state budget for partial coverage of operational costs incurred by schools set up by regions.

Private resources constitute a very limited source of the funding of public secondary VET schools. These are resources earned by the school from renting its property, from the provision of services for a payment and from complementary business activities. These activities may only be carried out provided that the main function of the school is not disrupted. Schools may also accept donations from individuals and enterprises. Private resources from **individuals** are mainly used to purchase textbooks and teaching tools which are not provided for free.

Private secondary VET schools and higher professional schools (HPS)

The state budget also provides financial resources for the activities of private schools and schools set up by registered churches or religious societies⁵⁷ which are included in the schools network. The resources are provided on the basis of a contract between the school and the relevant regional authority. The contract specifies the activities for which the subsidy is provided – in general non-capital costs related to education are covered. The subsidy is set as a percentage of the “normative” per one pupil/student for a comparable programme and form of study provided within public education. The school may ask the region to increase the subsidy subject to the fulfilment of specific conditions⁵⁸. The percentage of the normative and the level of the subsidy are illustrated in the following table. The proportions have been valid since 2000/2001.

The funding of private schools from the state budget

Type of school	% of the normative	increased % of the normative
Secondary vocational school	80	100
Secondary technical school and HPS	60	90

Source: The act on the provision of subsidies to private schools, pre-school and school facilities.

One partial source of the funding of private secondary VET schools, and also public higher professional schools, is the fees these institutions collect for the provision of education or school services. The rules governing the level of the **fees** and a maximum fee for public HPSs

⁵⁷ Act no. 306/1999 on the provision of subsidies to private schools and pre-school and school facilities, in the wording of act no. 132/2000, act no. 255/2001, act no.16/2002 and act no. 284/2002.

⁵⁸ These conditions are stipulated in the act on the provision of subsidies to private schools. The school that applies for an increased subsidy must have scored average or better than average results in the most recent evaluation conducted by the Czech School Inspectorate. It must also undertake to use the entire profit to pay for education and regular operations. In the case of a school that provides “follow-up” courses for graduates of vocational programmes without “maturita”, it must commit itself to adhering to the set intake number.

are set out in a MoEYS regulation. The level of tuition fees collected by private schools is fully at their discretion.

Public higher education (HE) institutions

The funding of HE institutions is governed by the act on HE institutions⁵⁹. The revenues of **public HE institutions** primarily consist of:

- a) subsidies from the state budget (hereinafter “subsidies”);
- b) study-related fees;
- c) income from property;
- d) other revenues from the state budget, state funds and municipal budgets;
- e) revenues from complementary activities;
- f) donations and inheritance.

Each public HE institution is **entitled** to a **basic subsidy**. This subsidy is used to cover the costs related to the implementation of accredited study programmes and lifelong learning programmes, the costs associated with research, scientific, developmental, artistic and other creative activities⁶⁰, and the costs of institutional development. The level of the basic subsidy is derived from the long-term plan of the HE institution, the MoEYS’s long-term plan for the development of HE institutions, the type and financial demands of accredited study programmes and lifelong learning programmes, the number of students, the achievements in educational and creative activities and their demands.

Apart from the basic subsidy, public HE institutions may be allocated a subsidy for students’ accommodation and meals. This subsidy is set by the MoEYS for each HE institution based on how extensive are the services related to accommodation and meals which the institution provides for its students.

The rules concerning the provision of subsidies to public HE institutions, which cover the calculation formula, as well as the level of subsidies provided to individual HE institutions are published in the MoEYS’ Bulletin and on the Ministry’s websites.

A public HE institution may collect study-related fees. Their level is derived from a “basic fee”⁶¹, which is set by the MoEYS for each academic year. The basic fee for 2004-2005 is 2,561 CZK. Fees may be collected for:

- a) participation in admission proceedings at 20% of the basic fee;
- b) exceeding the standard length of studies by more than one year at the level of at least 25% of the basic fee for each started month of the extended period;
- c) taking another bachelor or master programme, if the student has already completed one study programme – a maximum up to the basic fee level;
- d) studying in a foreign language.

The level of fees is announced publicly by the HE institution before the deadline for filing applications for studies. The fees (with the exception of the fee listed under (d)) constitute an income to the scholarship fund. The rector may exempt fees (b) through to (d), or defer their due dates taking into consideration the student’s performance and social situation.

⁵⁹ Act no.111/1998 on higher education institutions, as amended

⁶⁰ This activity must follow from accredited study programmes and lifelong learning programmes.

⁶¹ The basic fee is set at a level of 5% of total non-capital expenditure per one student which was provided to HE institutions by the MoEYS in the previous year.

As part of its complementary activities HE institution may perform paid activities which follow from its educational and creative activities, or ensure a more efficient use of human resources and property. These complementary activities cannot endanger the quality, scope and availability of the main activities.

Private HE institutions

In line with the act on HE institutions, private HE institutions must secure, by their own means, financial resources for the implementation of the activities for which they have received authorisation. Study-related fees are set by the institution in line with its internal regulations. The MoEYS may provide a subsidy to private HE institutions for the implementation of accredited study programmes and lifelong learning programmes, and for creative activities following from these. The subsidy is provided in compliance with the MoEYS's Rules for the provision of subsidies to private HE institutions. There is no legal entitlement to the subsidies and their level is calculated in line with the aforementioned Rules.

The proportion of resources provided by institutions responsible for the funding of IVET in the total expenditure on VET

In the Czech Republic (CR) the overall expenditure on IVET is not monitored regularly. It is mainly data about private expenditure that are missing. The revenues of schools from complementary business activities are not accounted for either, but they are assumed to constitute a negligible proportion of the overall amount of resources. Public expenditure is not distinguished according to whether it is on initial education or on continuing education of adults provided by schools (distance, evening, external or combined forms of studies).

Public resources spent on higher education in 2003⁶² (subsidies from the state and local budget for educational activities, accommodation and meals for students, research and development, capital spending) accounted for some 78.5 % of the overall annual budget of HE institutions⁶³. Revenues from the institutions' own activities (student services, accommodation fees, payments for student and staff meals, donations, renting, revenues from sales of own products, sales of property, fees for various training courses, symposia, etc.) account for 21.5 % of the HE institutions' budget. Based on the data available it is impossible to distinguish between resources related to initial and continuing education provided by HE institutions.

10.3 Funding for continuing vocational education and training, and adult learning

Publicly provided CVET

The funding of CVET that is provided by secondary and higher professional schools or higher education (HE) institutions on a part-time basis (evening, distance or external studies), and completed in the same way as full-time studies, is subject to the same regulations as those in place for initial education.

⁶² Source: Data of the MoEYS.

⁶³ This concerns both public and private HE institutions. The proportion of private HE institutions' funding in overall resources from the state budget is some 1/1000.

HE institutions may provide, as part of their educational activities, lifelong learning programmes (focusing on professional development or taken as a leisure activity) either for a fee or for free. The detailed terms are set out in the institution's internal regulations.

A survey of institutions providing accredited retraining courses has shown that, on average between 2000-2002, the costs of these courses were covered by the participants (42 %), labour offices (40 %), enterprises (15 %) and from other sources (3 %).⁶⁴

Enterprise-based CVET

The training of employees is largely financed by employers, and the resources spent are accounted for as company costs. There are no legal regulations stipulating the level of expenditure for this purpose. One exception is the obligatory training of the staff performing specific occupations which the employer is obliged to arrange for. There are no nationwide financial incentives which would stimulate employers to spend more on staff development, and promote more extensive participation on the part of employees.

Companies may obtain contributions for the training of their employees. As part of an active employment policy they may receive a contribution from the labour office for retraining designed for the relevant employees to retain them in the company. Following the CR's accession to the EU it is also possible to draw resources for specific training from the **European Social Fund**.

Large investors⁶⁵ may, as part of investment incentive schemes, get a subsidy of up to 35 % of their training or retraining costs. Smaller investors⁶⁶ may obtain a similar subsidy of up to 30 thousand CZK per one employee participating in training or retraining. These subsidies are provided within the **Programme for the support for the creation of new jobs in regions most afflicted with unemployment**.

In the CR there is no regular monitoring of the data on employers' spending on the training of employees. However, one-off surveys have shown that, in the 1990s, this expenditure accounted for less than 1 % of total gross wages⁶⁷. In 1999 this indicator was 1.13 % - i.e. there has been a slight increase. This data only covers direct training costs. If we add the cost of the wages of the trainees, the proportion of the overall costs of training which companies pay is around 1.9 % of total labour costs. This figure is the highest of the 10 new EU member states, but still fails to reach the EU-14 average (2.3 %).

The average level of direct training costs hides the differences between companies of varying size and operating in different branches. The largest proportion of direct training costs in total gross labour costs occurs in companies in the electricity, gas and water supply branches (5.8 %). However, in these branches there is a high proportion of compulsory continuing training. An above-average level proportion of training costs is also shown by the financial intermediation (3.4 %). On the other hand, the lowest proportions occur in companies in mining and quarrying, woodworking and furniture manufacturing (0.3 %), and manufacturing in textile and leather (0.4 %). In terms of company size, the smallest companies (up to 50

⁶⁴ Source: A survey of accreditations awarded to retraining programmes by the MoEYS in 2002, MoEYS material, own calculations.

⁶⁵ This concerns investment in manufacturing exceeding 100 million CZK in regions with an above-average rate of unemployment.

⁶⁶ Investments exceeding 10 million CZK in regions most afflicted with unemployment.

⁶⁷ Coufalík J.: Participation in Continuing Education, Human Resources in the Czech Republic 2003, Prague 2004.

employees) spent the least level of resources on training (1.1 %). The largest proportions of training costs in total costs occurred in medium-sized companies (250-499 employees – 2.6 %). There are also differences according to company ownership. Surveys show that foreign-owned companies pay more attention to the training of their staff than Czech companies.

10.4 Funding for training for unemployed people and other groups excluded from the labour market

The retraining of job seekers is funded exclusively from the state budget (the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) budget). The financial resources are distributed to individual labour offices (LOs) via the Employment Services Administration of the MoLSA. The amounts are derived from calculations of the costs of various active employment policy measures developed by LOs. LOs cover course fees, but may also contribute to other retraining-related costs. Full or partial coverage of travel and accommodation expenses and meals depends on the financial resources available to the relevant LOs.

In the longer term, there is a marked trend of increasing the proportion of retraining costs in the overall costs of an active employment policy. It may be expected that this trend will continue in view of the fact that the Czech Republic (CR) shows a very low rate of participation in retraining compared to other developed countries. On the other hand, the burden of the growth in the proportion of spending on retraining financed by LOs will be mitigated by the fact that there is an increasing proportion of funding from other sources (projects co-funded from EU pre-accession funds), and that there is a growing proportion of short-term (cheaper) courses.

Expenditure on retraining in 1993-2003 and the proportions in GDP and in total expenditure on active employment policy (AEP)

Year	Expenditure on retraining (p.p.)	Proportion of retraining costs in total AEP costs (%)	Proportion of AEP costs in GDP (%)
1993	73, 359	9.8	0.07
1994	103, 248	14.4	0.06
1995	100, 091	15.8	0.05
1996	91, 727	16.6	0.04
1997	90, 418	16.6	0.03
1998	147, 325	16.3	0.05
1999	227, 957	8.8	0.14
2000	334, 794	10.2	0.17
2001	382, 652	9.4	0.19
2002	370, 431	10.6	0.15
2003	405, 870	12.4	x

Source: MoLSA's Analysis of the Development of Employment and Unemployment in the relevant years, Statistical Yearbooks of Czech Statistical Office, own calculations.

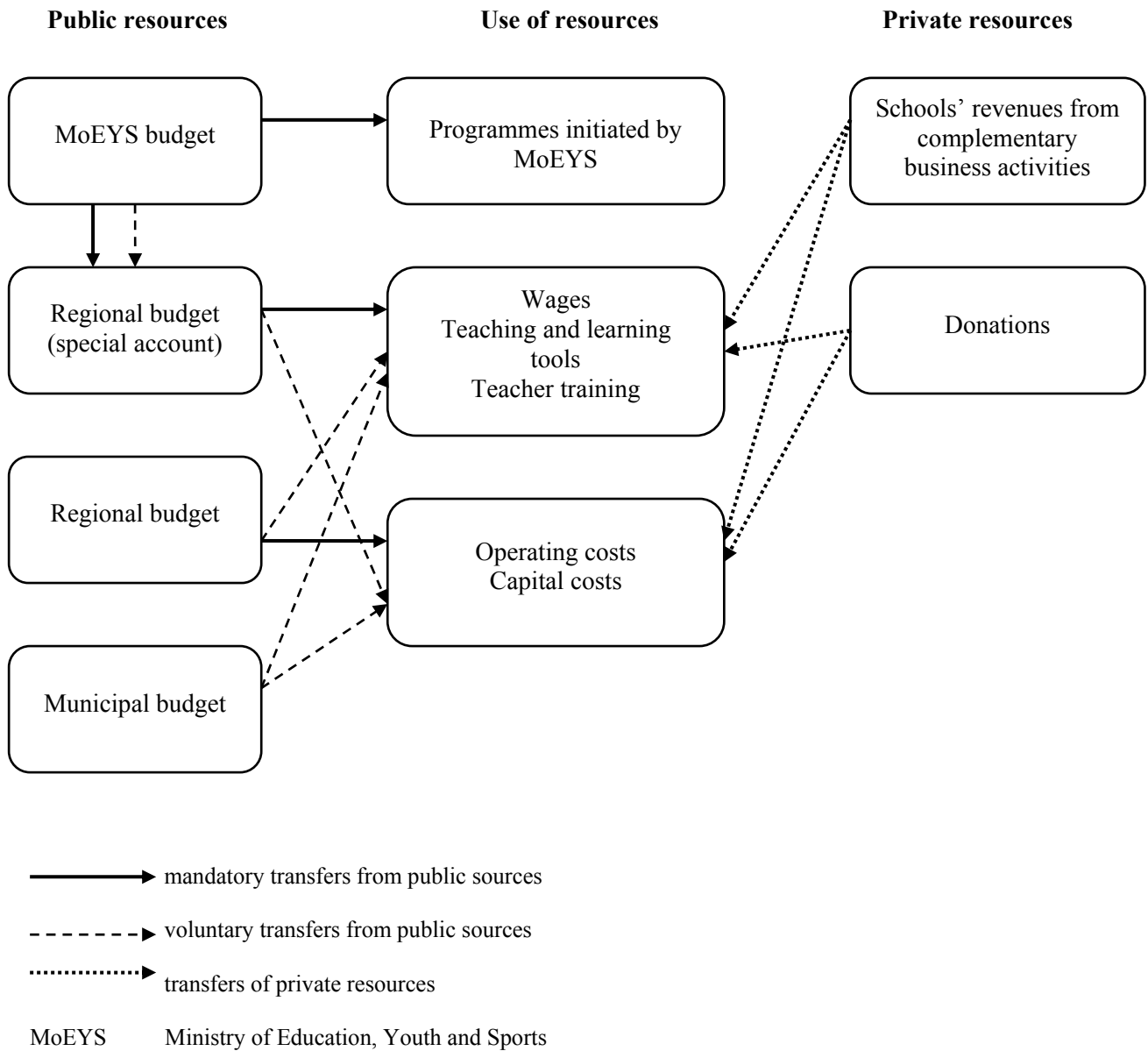
In connection with the CR's joining the EU, resources will also be drawn from the ESF to cover quantitative and qualitative expansion or retraining provided by LOs. These resources will be used to co-fund various activities in line with the relevant measures of the Operational Programme – Human Resources Development, and the Single Programming Document – Objective 3, Prague.

10.5 Perspectives and issues: from funding to investing in human resources

The MoEYS is working on changes in the funding of higher education. These changes are in line with the government's commitment to maintain **public higher education free of charge**. The funding of public HE institutions from the state budget should be based on a medium-term outlook, while reducing the weight attributed to quantitative aspects and increasing the weight attributed to qualitative aspects (research and development, cooperation with industry and regions, the quality of education, etc.). Legislative changes are under development that will promote co-funding schemes. A change in regulations on financial support for student accommodation is also envisaged.

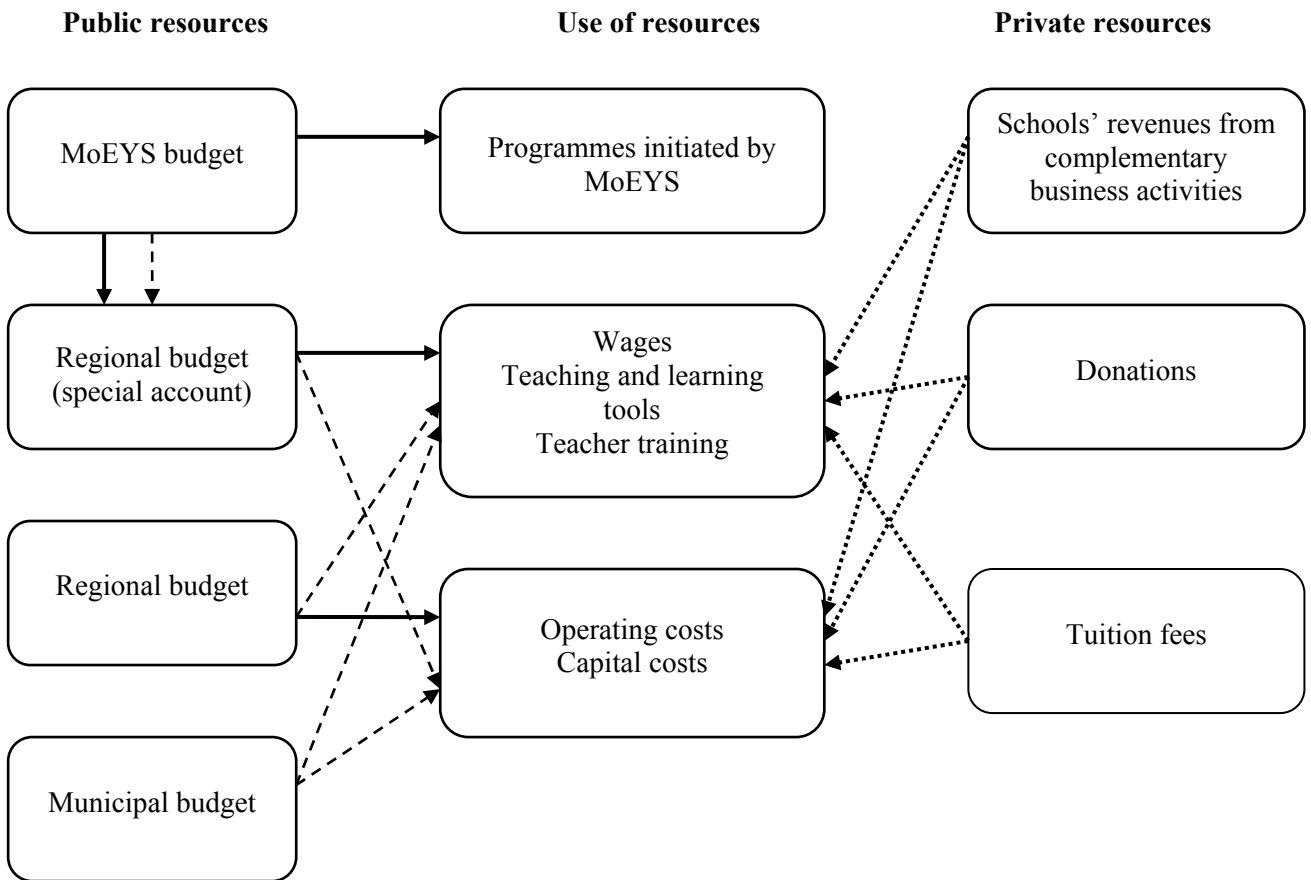
As part of the **propositions for the act on CVET** (for details see Subtheme 5.2), financial measures have been proposed that should promote interest – both on the part of learners and providers - in continuing education leading to a **partial qualification**.

A chart of financial flows in initial secondary vocational education and training ¹⁾



1) The chart concerns schools whose founding body is the region – i.e. 76 % of all secondary vocational and technical schools

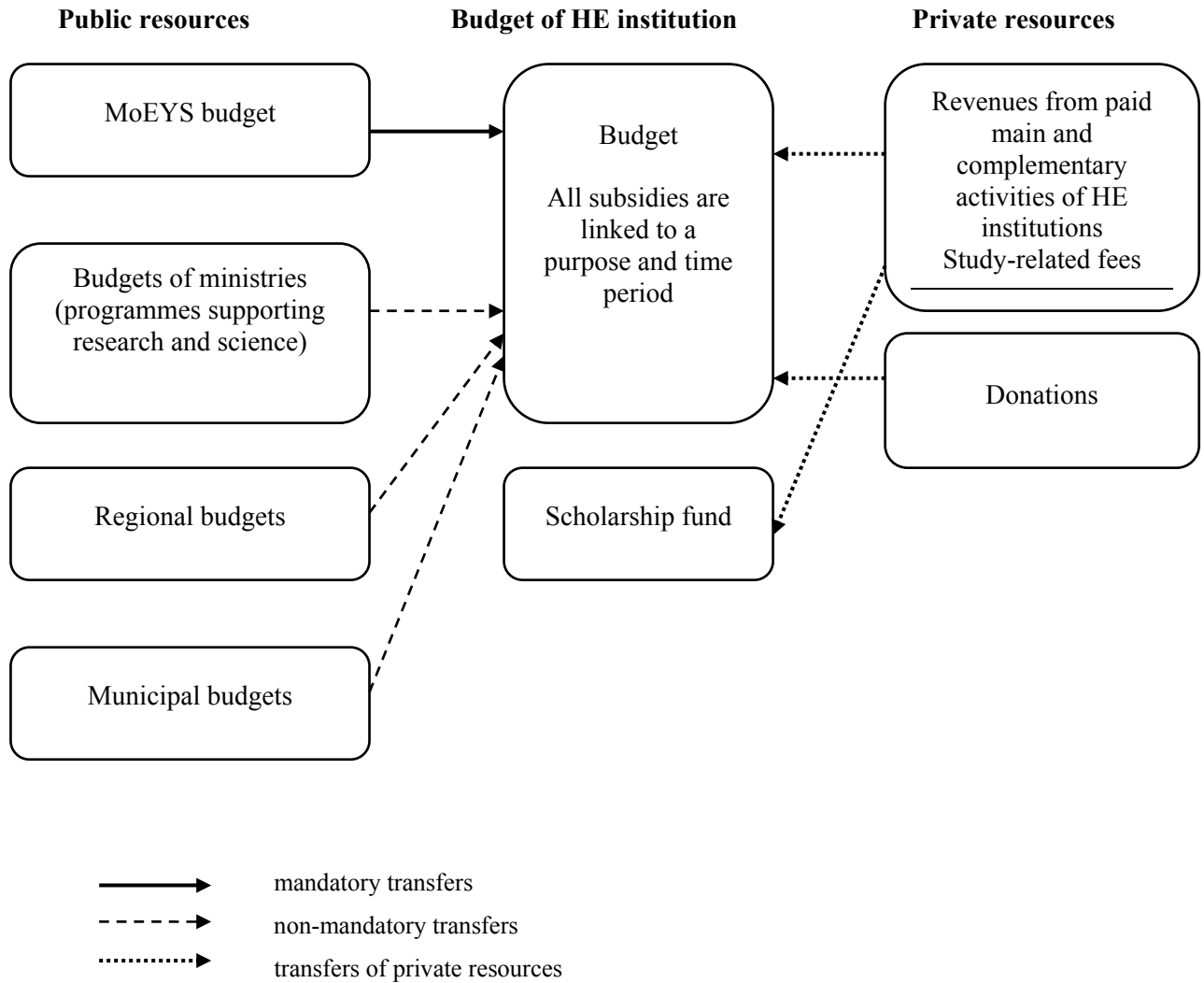
A chart of financial flows in tertiary education – higher professional schools



- > mandatory transfers from public sources
- - - - -> voluntary transfers from public sources
-> transfers of private resources

MoEYS Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

A chart of financial flows in tertiary education – public HE institutions



Theme 11: European and international dimension – towards an open area of lifelong learning

11.1 National strategies related to policy priorities, programmes and initiatives at EU level

The Czech Republic (CR) embarked on implementation of the objectives of the European education and employment strategy in the first half of the 1990s. The **Lisbon strategy objectives** are reflected in major **strategic documents and policies** developed by the CR before its joining the EU: the National Employment Action Plan, National Programme for the Development of Education (2001), Strategy for Human Resources Development in the CR (2003), Long-Term Plan for the Development of Education and the Education System in the CR (2002) and an updated version of the Long-Term Plan for 2004-2008.

As part of **pre-structural assistance** for candidate countries, the CR had an opportunity of using resources within the Phare programme from as early as 1993. In 1993-2001 the Phare resources which the CR drew amounted to 632 million EUR. The funds were also targeted to the area of human resources development. The resources were used, among other things, to co-fund, in 1994-1998, a major Phare programme entitled Vocational Education and Training Reform. The project triggered transformation and innovation of initial vocational education in the CR. Since 2002 the CR has been involved in the **activities of the working groups of the European Commission** which have been set up to pursue the efficient implementation of Lisbon objectives in vocational education and training. The work of the groups has already affected the activities of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) and organisations under its direct governance.

The Long-Term Plan of 2002 and its updated version for 2004-2008 set out the following **development priorities**: 1. Modernisation of the objectives and content of education (including the introduction of a two-level curricula development process); 2. Quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation of education; 3. Support for pupils with special learning needs; 4. Development of counselling and information systems; 5. Enhancing the professional standards and social standing of teachers; 6. Support for continuing education as part of lifelong learning for all. It is also expected that most of these priorities will be implemented with financial assistance from the European Social Fund (ESF).

The **Operational Programme – Human Resources Development** will be implemented in a shortened programming period 2004-2006 with financial support from the **ESF** (for the entire CR except Prague, which will draw ESF funds based on Single Programming Document, Prague, Objective 3). Overall responsibility of ESF programmes has Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA). One of the OP HRD priorities is directly focused on the development of lifelong learning. Under this priority, the MoEYS is responsible, among other things, for implementation of the measure designed to improve the quality of education and for setting up systems promoting links between education and labour market. The MoLSA will implement the measure aiming to develop continuing professional training. The measures promoting lifelong learning will be put into practice via systemic projects (development of national policies and systems), national projects (implementation of national policies) and grant schemes (to complement national policies to cover target groups at regional and national levels).

11.2 Impact of Europeanisation/internationalisation on education and training

In addition to pre-structural assistance within Phare, the Czech Republic (CR) also had an opportunity, as early as from 1996, to take part in **Community programmes** designed to promote European cooperation in education.

Within the **Leonardo da Vinci programme** a total of 473 **mobility projects** have been approved and implemented, involving 5,131 participants. Of these 77 % were students at all types of vocational and technical schools and 7 % of teachers at these schools. Through participation in mobility projects the students' vocational and language competencies are improved, and this has a positive effect on their employability. The programme helps VET schools expand their international cooperation, improve their skills related to preparation and management of trans-national educational projects, and enhance the quality of their educational provision. Multi-year **pilot projects** within Leonardo da Vinci facilitate innovation in the objectives and content of vocational education. In 2000-2003 the European Commission approved 27 projects promoted by Czech organisations. Apart from this, some 80 Czech organisations take part annually in pilot projects and language competencies projects as partners of foreign organisations.

So far, 327 secondary and post-secondary technical schools have participated in projects within the **Socrates programme** in which the CR has been involved since 1997 (in only 4 % of cases as project-coordinators). The total number of participants amounts to over ten thousand students, of which 786 spent a period of time at a foreign partner institution. Vocational training abroad has so far been undertaken by 1,960 teachers, trainers and managers of the aforementioned institutions.

Student mobility in higher education (HE) is supported by the **Erasmus** sub-programme. A total of 39 Czech tertiary education providers are involved in Erasmus. The number of participants in mobility schemes tends to grow (from 1998 until 2004 over 10 thousand students were involved). Primary focus in the upcoming period will be on the quality of mobility, not only on its quantity, on extending the lengths of the visits and on involving more private HE institutions in mobility schemes.

In addition to Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes, Czech students may undertake education abroad as part of various international cultural agreements. In such cases the visits are mostly financed by the hosting country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and applicants compete for grants. Other educational opportunities abroad are rather exceptional and they are the initiative of individual students or schools. The largest obstacles in this respect include lack of resources for fees and accommodation abroad, and the fact that the studies might not be recognised in the CR.

In the future the **Europass National Centre** in the CR will play an important part in promoting a European dimension in education. Its task will consist in promoting in the CR the use of documents facilitating the educational and occupational mobility of young people in the EU, and in providing information about Europass and mobility opportunities in the EU. The Europass National Agency in the CR was set up on 1 October 2004 at the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education.

List of abbreviations

AIC	Academic Information Centre
AIVD	Association of Adult Education Providers (Czech abbreviation)
ATKM	Association of Management Trainers and Consultants (Czech abbreviation)
BIC	Business and Innovation Centre
Cedefop	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CR	Czech Republic
CSO	Czech Statistical Office
CSVŠ	Centre for Higher Education Studies (Czech abbreviation)
CVET	continuing vocational education and training
ČMKOS	Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions (Czech abbreviation)
EBN	European Centre of Business and Innovation Centres
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
EU – 15	states of European Union before joining new member states in 2004 (15 states)
EU – 25	states of European Union after joining new member states in 2004 (25 states)
FEP	framework educational programmes
GDP	gross domestic product
HE	higher education
HPS	higher professional school
HRD	human resources development
IAP	individual action plan
ICM	Information Centre for Youth
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPPP	Institute of Pedagogical-Psychological Counselling
ISA	Information System on the Situation of School Leavers in the Labour Market
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISTP	Integrated System of Typical Working Positions
IVET	initial vocational education and training
LO	labour office
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MPSV	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Czech abbreviation)
MPO	Ministry of Industry and Trade (Czech abbreviation)
MŠMT	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (Czech abbreviation)
NATO	North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NEAP	National Employment Action Plan
NRCVG	National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance
NÚOV	National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education (Czech abbreviation)
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
NVF	National Training Fund (Czech abbreviation)
RISA	Regional Information System on the Situation of School Leavers in the Labour Market

RPIC	Regional Counselling and Information Centre
STS	secondary technical schools
SVS	secondary vocational schools
ÚIV	Institute for Information on Education (Czech abbreviation)
VET	vocational education and training