



Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe

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STRUCTURES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS IN EUROPE

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INTRODUCTION: GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT

The Czech Republic came into existence when the former Czech and Slovak Federal Republic split into two states in January 1993. It is a small developed country with a rich industrial tradition and an exceptionally long tradition of a high educational status in the broadest strata of the population. Since 1989 it has been functioning on market economy principles and political parties' plurality. In 1995 the Czech Republic became a member of the OECD, and in 2004 it became a member of the European Union over which it was presiding in the first half of 2009.

The Czech Republic is a parliamentary democracy with a President elected by a Parliament, which exercises legislative power. The Parliament is divided into two Chambers, an Assembly of Deputies and a Senate. Members are elected to the Assembly of Deputies under the proportional system and to the Senate under the majority system. Executive power is held by the National Government.

Public administration, which underwent reforms targeted at high decentralisation in 2000-2002, is carried out by the central state administration and self-governing regional and local authorities.

The central state administration bodies are represented by individual ministries; in the field of education, it is the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Apart from the three areas mentioned in its title, the Ministry also has science within its purview.

The territorial administration has two levels: the basic self-government units are municipalities (6 249 in 2008), with regions (14) providing a higher level of territorial self-government. Regions were established in December 1997 with effect from 1 January 2000. The law sets special cases when self-government bodies can carry out the responsibilities of the state administration and when the self-government units also function as administration districts. Municipalities and regions have dual spheres of authority: independent authority to carry out allocated agendas including education; and delegated authority to carry out state administration. Some of the responsibilities that should be accessible to citizens, but cannot be provided by numerous small municipalities, were transferred to the so-called municipalities designated as having an extended sphere of action (205).

The Czech Republic has a total surface area of 78 866 square kilometres and a population of 10 467 542, giving it a population density of 133 inhabitants per square km (2008). In the long term, demographic development has been marked by great irregularities; in 2004, after years of downturn, it showed a mild upward trend. 34.5 % of the population fall into the 0-29 age cohort, over 8 % of the population are in the compulsory school attendance age (2008). In the 25-64 age cohort, 90 % of the population have upper secondary education, 14 % higher education (2006, Education at a Glance 2008).

The population is linguistically homogenous, minorities are small. Immigration has doubled in the past six years, nevertheless, in 2007 the immigrants represented 3.3 % of the population. The language of instruction is Czech. Pupils of ethnic minorities are guaranteed the right to education in their mother tongue to an extent appropriate to the development of their ethnic community. Schools for national minorities can function up to the upper secondary school level. With the exception of Poles, the minorities are scattered throughout the republic, which is why the only minority-language schools are Polish. There are 26 nursery schools, 22 basic schools and 3 upper secondary schools (one *gymnázium* and two vocational/technical schools). Romanies represent an important ethnic minority. Their precise number cannot be defined as it depends on whether they declare themselves to be Romanies or not. The official 2001 census put it at about one third (11 746 persons) compared to the previous census; the qualified estimate is 220 thousand people.

The State is denominationally neutral and freedom of religion is guaranteed. The number of people practising a religion is one of the lowest in Europe. 32 % of inhabitants declare themselves to be

believers; there are 21 registered churches and religious societies. Over 83 % of believers belong to the Roman Catholic Church (over 26 % of the population), with 7 % believers (2.2 % of the population) belonging to the two biggest Protestant Churches.

The Constitution of the Czech Republic, adopted on 16 December 1992, provides a general legal framework for future legal development.

The rights of citizens and the obligations of the State with regard to education were laid down in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (the constitutional law). First and foremost it guarantees the right to education, i.e. 'free education at basic and secondary schools and according to a citizen's abilities and society's possibilities also at higher education institutions'. Other declared basic obligations (e.g. compulsory school attendance) and rights (e.g. the right to free choice of profession and preparation for it) are derived from the respective legislation.

On 1 January 2005, a new Education Act (No. 561/2004) On Pre-primary, Basic, Secondary and Tertiary Professional Education came into force. It replaced not only the previous School Act, but also the Act on School Establishments and the Act on State Administration and Self-government in Education. It sets out the principles and aims of education, a two-level structure of educational programmes (documents) defining the aims to be attained, and the education system which has to implement them. The education system is composed of schools, which organise education according to centrally formulated framework educational programmes (see 2.3, 3.3, 4.3), tertiary professional schools, and school facilities, which provide education and services complementing or supporting education at schools. The Act sets out the rules to be followed within long-term policy objectives through which the strategy of education policy, both at national and regional levels, is set, and annual reports in which the fulfilment of the strategy is recorded. It stipulates the duration and way of fulfilment for compulsory schooling, entry requirements, the organisation of education and what constitutes the ending of study for different educational levels. It redefines special educational needs, giving preference to integration into mainstream classes instead of segregated education. The Act also regulates administration – the legal status of public and private schools, their establishing (if need be, disestablishing), registration, financing, status and the responsibilities of different levels of administration, e.g. municipalities, regions, and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, or other relevant ministries. The Act is implemented by a number of specific regulations providing in more detail for the organisation of education at individual levels, school services, financing and others.

The Act (No. 563/2004) on Educational Staff and on the Amendments of Several Acts (in force from 1 January 2005) regulates requirements for the performance of educational staff's duties, their in-service training and career progression.

The Act (No. 306/1999) on Providing Subsidies to Private Schools and Pre-school and School Establishments replaced the previous government regulation of subsidies.

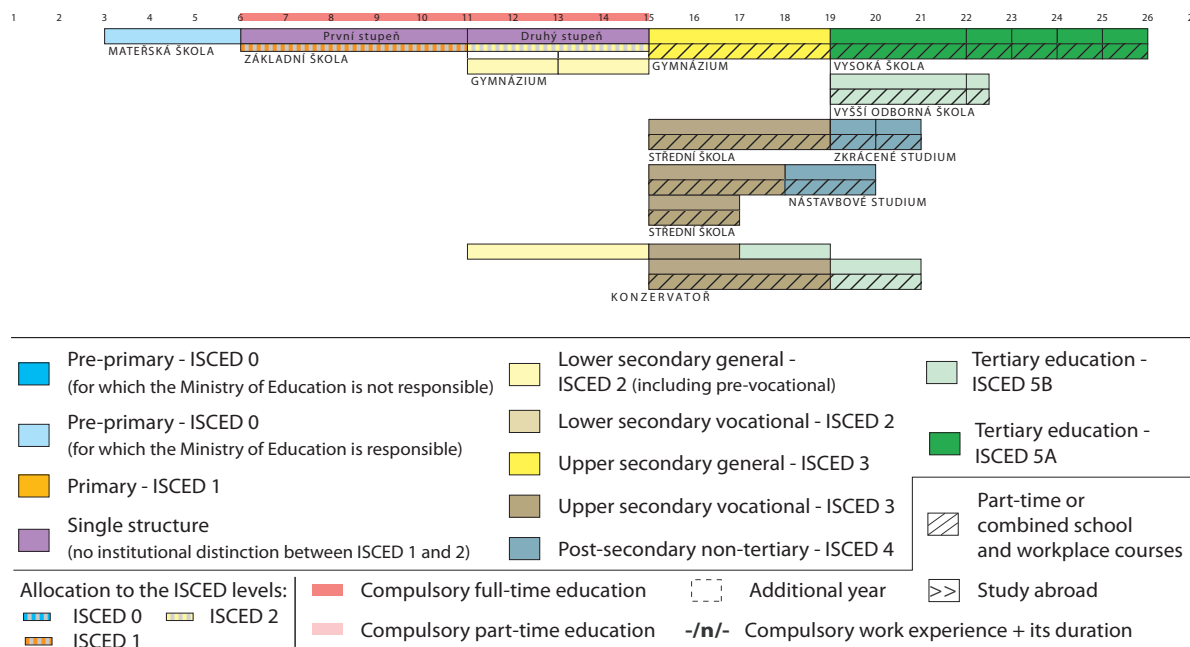
The Act on Institutional Education or Protective Education in School Facilities and on Preventive Educational Care (No. 109/2002) stipulates the requirements for the education of children and adolescents lacking proper family support or those with behavioural problems.

The Higher Education Act (No. 111/1998, amended several times) extended the non-university and private sectors of higher education. The majority of these are no longer state institutions (with the exception of military and police higher education institutions which are entirely state-funded) but public institutions (state-subsidised) that manage their own property and have wide-ranging autonomy.

In May 2006 (in full force from August 2007) the Act on Verification and Recognition of Further Education Outcomes (No. 179/2006) came into force. This law opened up a new pathway for adults to obtain a certificate for a qualification attained in practice without formal education.

1. INITIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING: ORGANISATION, FUNDING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

1.1 Organisation of the initial education and training system



The nursery school (*mateřská škola*) offers pre-primary education to children aged from 3 to 6. It is not compulsory, but attendance is very high – almost 93 % of children of the relevant age in the last pre-school-year. Crèches (*jesle*) are intended for children up to the age of 3; these are not integrated into the education system but come under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health; with regard to the three-year maternity leave, the crèches are attended only by 0.5 % of a relevant age group.

Compulsory school attendance takes 9 years (6–15 years of age, ISCED 1+2 educational levels). Pupils (almost 80 % of the respective population) attend basic schools divided into two levels (5+4 years). Starting with the second level there is the possibility of continuing compulsory schooling in secondary general schools (*gymnázia*), after the 5th year in eight-year secondary general schools, after the 7th year in six-year secondary general schools or conservatoires.

After completing compulsory schooling, 96 % of the population (in relation to the age cohort of 15 to 18-year-old youths) continue studies in non-compulsory upper secondary education, namely, either in secondary general schools that, apart from the eight-year, six-year schools mentioned above, have also four-year programmes (more than 20 % of population) or in vocational and other secondary schools (48.5 % in four-year courses completed with a school-leaving examination *maturitní zkouška*, 23 % in two or three-year courses completed with an apprenticeship certificate *výuční list*, and in some other courses) or in conservatoires. 94 % of population aged 25-34 years acquires at least upper secondary education (ISCED 3) (2007).

Those who have completed their upper secondary education in the fields of study requiring apprenticeship certificates can continue in ISCED 4A follow-up courses, which are completed with a school-leaving examination or they may extend their qualifications in shortened study courses.

Those who acquired education completed with a school-leaving examination (ISCED 3A or 4A), i.e. over 72 % of the population, can continue at a tertiary level, namely in tertiary professional schools (ISCED 5B), or higher education institutions (ISCED 5 and 6). In 2008, approximately 60 % of school-

leavers with a school-leaving examination enrolled in tertiary education. Apart from that school-leavers with the school-leaving examination (*maturitní zkouška*) have the possibility to extend their qualifications in post-secondary programmes of secondary schools (in shortened study courses).

Both private and denominational schools represent 2.2 % of nursery schools and 1.5 % of their pupils; for basic schools it is 2.6 % of schools and 1.3 % of pupils; for upper secondary schools it is 25.7 % of schools and 15.6 % of pupils; for higher professional schools it is 33.2 % of institutions and 34.8 % of students; for higher education institutions it is 63.3 % of institutions and 13.7 % of students in 2008/09.

1.2 Distribution of responsibilities

State administration in the education system is provided by heads of schools and school facilities, municipal authorities of municipalities with an extended sphere of action, regional authorities, the Czech School Inspectorate, and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and other central institutions (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Defence etc.) in the case of schools and school facilities founded by them. In the case of higher education institutions the administration body is represented by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports; apart from the areas mentioned in its title the Ministry has also science within its purview. State schools are, apart from the Ministry of Education, also administered by their founders – the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior.

Self-government in education is performed by school councils, municipalities and regions. Higher education institutions are self-governing institutions.

Central level

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy*) is in charge of the majority of state administration activities concerned with education, it prepares legislation and is responsible for the conception, the state and development of the education system as a whole (both within the state and towards foreign countries).

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (hereinafter referred to as the Ministry of Education) prepares legislation relating to executive and operational activities. The Ministry of Education identifies central educational policy and develops the overall strategy, and in particular it develops and promulgates the Long-term Development Policy Objectives of Education and the Development of the Education System (by the Education Act, it means for the educational levels of ISCED 0-ISCED 5B), and submits them to the Government (in each odd-numbered year) for approval. The Government then submits them to the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The first such plan was developed in 2003. The Ministry of Education provides methodological guidance and co-ordination of the long-term policy objectives of education and the development of the education system at regional levels. From 2009, long-term intentions will be drafted and evaluated every four years.

Based on annual reports drawn up by regions and by Czech School Inspectorate (*Česká školní inspekce*) and on other sources, the Ministry of Education submits an annual report on the state and development of education system to the Government.

The Ministry formulates educational content. The National Education Programme stipulated by law as a political document to be discussed with experts from the field of science but also with central trade union bodies, employers' representatives and regional authorities, and further considered by the government and approved by both chambers of the Parliament, has not yet been drawn up.

The Ministry of Education develops framework educational programmes for every educational level (up to upper secondary), for different fields at those levels and for language and basic art education. They define binding scopes of school education programmes. The Ministry accredits educational programmes for individual tertiary professional schools.

In the terms of labour relations, the Ministry of Education:

- determines the rate of teachers' teaching duties in individual types of schools which is then stipulated in a government decree.
- determines prerequisites for professional and pedagogical competence which are then stipulated by law.
- sets, by decree, principles for the forming of open competition commissions for selected educational posts;
- appoints and withdraws heads of institutions that are directly run by it, and the Chief School Inspector.

The Ministry of Education has lost most of its direct responsibilities for educational establishments. The Ministry retains control of a few dozen facilities for institutional and preventive care. In some special cases it can be the founder of some schools and directly administered organisations engaged in statistics, curricula, educational guidance, in-service training of teachers etc.

With regard to the obligation of the State to assure the functioning, efficiency and coherence of the education system of the Czech Republic as a whole, the Ministry of Education maintains the Register of Schools and School Facilities of all organising bodies. Being recorded in the register means that the school is entitled to provide education in the chosen field, form and scope and to receive funds from corresponding public sources within the limit specified in the record. The maintenance of the Register of nursery schools and some school facilities with a local sphere of action is delegated to the regional level.

In higher education, the Ministry of Education prepares and annually updates the Long-term Plan of the Educational, Scientific, Research, Developmental, Artistic and Other Creative Activities of higher education institutions, discusses and evaluates the long-term plan of individual public higher education institutions and the updating of these. It allocates financial resources from the state budget and controls their use, and on the basis of the Accreditation Commission's advice decides on the accreditation of the study programmes of higher education institutions.

The Ministry of Education also appoints the Boards of Trustees of public higher education institutions (after consultation with the head of the higher education institution – the *rektor* who is appointed by the President of the Republic). It is responsible for registering the internal regulations of higher education institutions, which only become valid after registration.

In the area of funding, the Ministry of Education is responsible for state funding policy in the education sphere (see 1.5).

Individual fields of study (at all educational levels including higher education institutions) are incorporated into the so-called Basic Study Fields according to the Classification of Basic Study Fields (CBSF) (translated also as the Classification of Basic Branches of Education (CBBE). As of 2009 this classification remains in the purview of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports while the Czech Statistical Office in 2008 started to use ISCED 97 as a new state classification system.

Regional level

Regions fully assumed their responsibilities on 1 January 2003. Members of the regional representative body (elected by citizens) elect the Council among themselves led by a commissioner. The regional representative body always establishes a Committee for Education and Employment (*Výbor pro výchovu a vzdělávání*), which has at least five members. The education system is administered by the respective department of a regional authority.

Regional Authorities draw up the long-term policy objectives of education and the development of the educational system of the respective region, in compliance with the long-term policy objectives of education and the development of the education system of the Czech Republic. The objectives are based on an analysis of the educational development, demographic expectations, labour market development and economic achievements in the region. They set goals for individual areas of education, the structure of education available, mainly the structure of individual educational fields, and their capacity. They also prepare a proposal for funding. Each Regional Council submits the part of long-term policy objectives concerning education provided by its schools to the respective Regional Assembly for its approval. It is then submitted to the Ministry of Education for its opinion and only then the objectives are published. As of 2009, a four-year instead of two-year periodicity was set.

The regional authority prepares and publishes annual reports on the state and development of the education system in the region.

Regions are the organising bodies of tertiary professional schools, upper secondary schools and school facilities for children with special educational needs (including nursery and basic schools), upper secondary schools with the language of instruction of a national minority, language schools authorised to organise state language examination, basic art schools, and school facilities serving them, including facilities for special interest education and other institutions.

As the number of municipalities in the Czech Republic is rather high (some of them are very small), an intermediate element was introduced: the so-called 'municipalities with an extended sphere of activity'; these fulfil some functions of the state administration for schools and school facilities founded by the municipalities, especially in funding (see 1.3).

The regional interests at higher education level are expressed by the regional representatives in the Boards of Trustees of higher education institutions.

Local level

Municipalities form an important component of public administration (currently they do not carry out state administration). Within the framework of self-government, they are responsible for assuring the necessary conditions for compulsory school attendance and for pre-primary education in the year preceding compulsory school attendance. Municipalities or unions of municipalities establish and financially administer nursery schools and basic schools (including schools with the language of instruction of a national minority), school canteens, possibly basic art schools, school facilities for developing personal interests (out-of-school activities), school facilities for special purposes or other institutions. In larger municipalities, they ensure that school meals are provided and that younger pupils are cared for outside school hours (with considerable financial assistance from the State).

School autonomy

The law gave all schools the status of independent legal entities and thus a higher degree of autonomy. School heads are appointed by a founder (the municipality, the region or the Ministry, or possibly another subject) on the basis of a competitive recruitment process. According to the Education Act, they can be removed only for reasons stipulated by the law.

The school heads have full responsibility not only for the quality and efficiency of the educational process (including creating school educational programmes, choosing textbooks) but also for the management of the school, for appointing and dismissing educational staff and for relations with the founder and public. For reason of accessibility, some basic schools and other school facilities are established even for small numbers of pupils. Minimal school and class sizes are set by law. The founder may grant exceptions provided it is ready to bear the increased costs.

Under the Education Act, a school's founder has to establish a School Council (*školská rada*) enabling parents, full-aged pupils, staff, and others involved to participate in the administration of schools.

Public higher education institutions were granted autonomy at all levels of management. Internal management of institutions, the establishment of self-governing academic bodies, content and organisation of study, labour relations and financing is exercised by the Academic Senate (a representative body in which at least one third and at most half of the members are students), the head of the higher education institution (*rektor*), the Academic (Art) Board and a Disciplinary Commission. Other bodies include the Board of Trustees that safeguards public interest in the institution's activities and good management of the property, and a manager (*kvestor*). Even at the faculties, there are autonomous bodies, but they are not legal entities. Higher education institutions also have a representative body; the Higher Education Council, made up of representatives from the academic community.

State higher education institutions (University of Defence and Police Academy) are established by the relevant ministries. Their autonomy is limited: they do not have a Board of Trustees, they have no autonomy in salaries, and their budget is linked to the budget of the relevant ministry. The University of Defence is not a legal entity.

Advisory and consultative bodies

The highest advisory body at the national level is the Council of Economic and Social Agreement (*Rada hospodářské a sociální dohody*; tripartite: government – employers – unions). In the field of science and research the advisory body is represented by the Research and Development Council whose deputy chairperson is the Minister of Education.

The Ministry of Education is assisted by several advisory bodies in deciding on the development of education and the different levels of the educational system, the recognition of educational institutions, economic issues, etc. These are either institutions directly governed by the Ministry (e.g. in order to prepare statistical data, education programmes, evaluation tools), or ad hoc established advisory bodies.

1.3 Financing

Expenditure on education in the Czech Republic comes mainly from public funds.

In line with administrative responsibility, the major part of state (central) funding comes from the budget of the Ministry of Education. Since 1992, the system of financing is on a 'per capita' basis rather than according to the type of institution, and most of the resources are allocated from the educational budget.

Other funds are provided by the organising bodies of schools and school facilities: regions and municipalities from their budgets. Their income comes from the taxes gathered usually at the central level and allocated to regions and municipalities according to given percentages.

The Ministry of Education

- determines basic principles governing the funding of schools and school facilities;
- submits background information for the drawing up of the state budget;
- sets binding principles for the allocation of financial resources within the education sector;
- allocates funds to schools and school facilities under its direct control or under the direct control of the church;

- allocates through regions funds for institutions under the direct control of regions, as well as for schools run by other authorities;
- allocates funds beyond the set level to schools and school facilities run by all authorities, providing that they carry out a pilot verification of new forms and methods of teaching, as well as funds for development programmes announced by the Ministry of Education;
- allocates funds to public and, in a limited extent to private higher education institutions;
- checks the use of allocated funds.

Financing schools and school facilities founded by regions and municipalities (ISCED 0 - 5B)

Capital expenditure of schools and school facilities and those running costs that are not direct educational costs is met by their organising bodies.

The Ministry of Education covers direct educational costs, especially for salaries of teachers and other staff and teaching aids. These resources are allocated through regional budgets according to the number of pupils and per capita amount. The Ministry sets the central per capita amounts for four age categories corresponding to individual educational levels: ages 3-5, 6-15, 16-18, and 19-21 years. The fifth per capita amount is set for children/pupils in institutional education.

Based on principles and indicators specified by the Ministry of Education, regional authorities set the regional per capita amounts of direct educational costs per pupil depending on the type of school and relevant educational programmes. In doing so, they consider how long-term policy objectives are met, how demanding educational programmes are, etc. Regional per capita amounts include increased costs for persons with special educational needs. The regional authority directly allocates the resources (determined by multiplying the relevant regional per capita amount by the number of pupils) to schools and school facilities for which it is responsible and to basic schools and nursery schools that are run by municipalities.

All schools can also opt to make use of other sources of funding (e.g. from sponsors, prospective employers, rental of rooms or sports facilities, etc.).

Financing public and state higher education institutions

According to the Higher Education Act of 1999, public higher education institutions are entitled to manage their own property although a substantial part of their activity is directly financed by the state. Funds for higher education institutions are set annually by the Act on State Budget. In 2006, the relative proportions of running and capital costs were about 80:20. Rules for allocating grants change to make it possible to influence the activities of higher education institutions in accordance with the priorities of the long-term plans for higher education.

80 % of education is funded through per capita amounts (cost units) set per student and, since 2005, also per graduate. Study programmes are divided into seven groups according to the relative cost, with a cost coefficient between 1 and 5.9. The total sum is calculated as a product of the basic per capita amount per student or graduate which is set annually by the Ministry of Education, the cost coefficient of programmes and the fixed number of students/graduates on programmes. Students who exceed the normal duration of study by more than a year are not included in the calculation. Any increase in the number of students must be in accordance with the results of negotiation procedures between each individual higher education institution and the Ministry of Education. In case the higher education institution exceeds agreed limits, only the limits are included. The state provides other funds for investments which are judged individually on request of higher education institutions. This system provides higher education institutions with more than 80 % of total non-investment costs. According to

special rules, higher education institutions are also given funds for research, catering and accommodation of students.

Higher education institutions receive their own income from their property, from their educational, scientific, research, development and innovation activities and from fees; this income amounts around 25 % of all incomes of public higher education institutions. The students cover the expenses of admission proceedings and pay for any extension of their studies beyond the standard time or if they wish to follow a second study programme. Students also pay for studying in a foreign language. Further income comes from lifelong learning programmes, which are not studies in the sense of the Higher Education Act.

State higher education institutions are financed by their responsible bodies – the University of Defence by the Ministry of Defence and the Police Academy by the Ministry of the Interior.

Financing private schools

Private and denominational schools are free to charge fees, although denominational schools do not usually do so. There are not any regulations on the amount of fees.

Private schools receive a state contribution towards their running costs from the Ministry of Education through the regional authorities. Capital expenditures are covered from school fees and other private sources. Public funding makes up the larger part of their overall resources.

Per capita amounts for individual types of private schools and educational programmes are set annually by the Ministry of Education based on the Act on Providing Subsidies to Private Schools. Subsidies can be granted to a private school on the basis of a contract with the relevant regional authority. The contract includes the extent of educational activity and the percentage of the per capita amount. Schools receive either a basic subsidy (as a certain percentage of the per capita costs of an analogous public institution) to which every institution in the network is entitled as long as it applies for it, or institutions may apply for an increased subsidy. Both the basic and the increased percentages of the subsidy are set down by law. The basic subsidies range from 80 % for special schools, to over 60 % for nursery schools, basic schools, upper secondary and tertiary professional schools to 50 % for other schools and school facilities. According to the contract, the subsidy may be raised up to 90 % of the appropriate per capita funding in the case of upper secondary and tertiary professional schools, and 100 % in the case of nursery, basic and special schools. Certain conditions must be met to obtain an increased subsidy: the school must already have received the subsidies for at least one year, must have received an average or higher than average evaluation of the school's results by the Czech School Inspectorate, have the legal structure of a public benefit corporation or (in the case of another legal form) an obligation to invest the school's whole profits in education. The subsidy is set according to the actual number of pupils in fields and forms of education put in the school register (see 1.2).

Denominational schools and school facilities receive funds directly from the Ministry of Education to cover their non-investment costs, which are based on the same funding formula as for public schools.

Private higher education institutions started to be established after 1998 as rather small institutions. They can apply for state subsidies only if they are public benefit corporations or if prior to receiving state consent to become private higher education institutions they were tertiary professional schools and they were allocated a subsidy. With regard to the rules of equity of the economic competition in the EU, they can get a subsidy only for study programmes that are deemed to be in the public interest, otherwise only up to 200 thousands € within three consecutive years.

1.4 Quality assurance

The evaluation of schools and school facilities is carried out by the Czech School Inspectorate (*Česká školní inspekce*) – one of the key institutions of the state administration in education. It falls within the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. This central control body is responsible for monitoring activities in pre-primary, basic (primary and lower secondary), upper secondary and tertiary education (with the exception of institutions of higher education) and school facilities. It is responsible for studying and evaluating the results of education, the quality of professional and pedagogical management, working conditions, teaching materials and equipment for public legal auditing, the use of the funds from the state budget and monitoring the observance of generally binding regulations. The head of the Inspectorate is the Chief School Inspector (*ústřední školní inspektor*) appointed by the Minister of Education. The Czech School Inspectorate comprises a central office and inspectorates. Inspections are organised in accordance with a plan proposed by the Chief School Inspector and approved by the Minister of Education, or on the basis of complaints or other stimuli. Results of inspections are inspection or topic reports, control protocols and also the annual report comprising the summary evaluation of the education system. In 2008/09 there were 282 inspectors.

School head evaluates teachers and school head is evaluated by founder.

The Education Act (and corresponding regulation) requires schools to carry out a self-evaluation at least once in two years which then constitutes the background for the evaluation and for the annual reports of the Czech School Inspectorate. Most schools prepared their self-evaluation for the first time in 2007.

The founder shall carry out evaluation of its schools and school facilities under criteria published in advance.

Evaluation of private and denominational schools is carried out by the Czech School Inspectorate under the same rules as for public schools.

Thematically focused quick surveys, contracted by the Ministry of Education and implemented by the Institute for Information on Education, serve as background materials for evaluating the situation in the regional education system.

The quality of higher education is monitored by the Accreditation Commission that evaluates activities of higher education institutions and the quality of accredited activities and publishes evaluation results. If the Accreditation Commission finds shortcomings in implementing accredited activities, it recommends that the respective higher education institution or cooperating legal entity remedy the matter. If the situation is not redressed, the Accreditation Commission can propose to the Ministry of Education to suspend or remove accreditation.

Further information about the education system can be found in international comparisons (PISA, TIMSS and others) and OECD studies.

Summarising evaluation based on all given sources is published every year in the annual report of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, which is a basis for the long-term plans in education (see 1.2).

2. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

Pre-primary education in nursery school has a long and special national tradition. It is intended for children aged 3-6, but also older children whose compulsory school attendance was postponed. Younger children (under 3) attend nursery school only exceptionally. Attendance is not compulsory, but 76.5 % of 3 year olds, 89.4 % 4 year olds and 92.8 % 5 year olds attend nursery school (data for 2008/09). The municipality ensures the place in nursery school to a child with a permanent residence in the municipality in the last year before their entrance to compulsory schooling. Schools and classes are coeducational.

Pre-primary education aims to support the development of a pre-school age child, support his/her healthy emotional, intellectual and physical development and help the child to acquire the basic rules of conduct, fundamental life values and interpersonal relations. Pre-primary education creates the basic prerequisites for continuing education. It helps to remove inequalities in development among children prior to their admission to basic education and provides special educational care for children with special educational needs.

Education in nursery school is regulated by the Education Act, by a decree on pre-primary education and some other decrees.

Nursery schools are generally independent legal subjects administered by municipalities or unions of municipalities. Funding falls under the responsibility of the founder except for salaries and teaching aids covered from the state budget.

Schools can charge parents a contribution of up to 50 % of the cost per child (except for educational costs), in private and denominational schools fees are not regulated. The last school-year of pre-primary education in public and state schools is free of charge. Parents contribute to meals, which are subsidised.

Preparatory classes are established in basic schools (see chapter 3) for socially disadvantaged children during the year prior to their starting compulsory school, these correspond to the pre-primary level of education.

The traditional institutions caring for children under 3 years are crèches (*jesle*), generally administered by large municipalities, which finance them. These come within the sphere of the Ministry of Health. Since 1990 there has been a big decrease in the number of crèches and in 2008 there were 46 of them with 1 413 places. The State mainly supports the care for the youngest children in the family; namely through maternity leave and parental leave benefit.

In the 2008/09 school-year, there were 301.6 thousand pupils in 4 809 nursery schools. The number of children in one class was 23.1 pupils on average.

2.1 Admission

Pre-primary education is intended for children aged 3–6. In exceptional cases, where parents have no other alternative, it is possible to accept younger children. Currently there are also 6 year olds and older children (about 20 %, in proportion to age group of 6 year olds) whose attendance at basic school has been deferred, usually at their parents' request.

Preference of admission is given to children during the last year prior to their entrance of compulsory schooling. The child who is admitted should have obligatory inoculations. Other admission criteria are set by the school head. Recently the number of unsettled applications has been growing.

The school head decides on the inclusion of pupils in a preparatory class upon the request of the child's legal guardian and a written recommendation of the school guidance facility.

2.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue

Nursery schools provide education during the whole school-year (from 1 September to 31 August). It may close or operate on limited hours in July and/or August in response to local conditions. The attendance of children in another school can be arranged. Nursery schools can be full-day (the majority) or half-day care centres (they operate usually from Monday to Friday); they can also be established as boarding facilities. Nursery schools are usually open 10 to 11 hours a day, and parents can use their services as needed by mutual agreement with the school. In addition to teaching, nursery schools provide games, walks, rest (sleep), and meals; a garden with a playground is often found within the area of the nursery school.

An average sized nursery school has 62.7 children (2008/09). They should have a minimum of 18 children on average (15 if there is only one class in a school) and a maximum of 24. A group of children has one or two teachers depending on the number of children in the group and the duration of the teaching.

Classes may be organised according to age or according to the degree of adaptability or progress. Alternatively, children may be put into groups with mixed ages and progress levels. The integration of children with physical disabilities into mainstream schools also exists. In these cases, the fixed maximum number of children per class is reduced accordingly (between 12 and 19).

Preparatory classes are established in basic schools and have 7 to 15 pupils.

2.3 Curriculum

In 2004 the Ministry of Education published the Framework Educational Programme for Pre-primary Education (FEP PpE), on the basis of which nursery schools developed their own school educational programmes (SEP).

FEP PpE is divided into the following educational areas: Child and his/her body, Child and his/her psyche (Language and speech, Cognitive abilities and functions, imagination and fantasy, thought operations and Self-concept, emotions and will), Child and others, Child and society, and Child and the world. The main components of the programme are spontaneous games and physical activities, including outdoor activities and games, walks and excursions. Sleep is also an important element of the routine. Personal development and socialisation are also supported by activities related to literary, artistic and moral education. All activities emphasise emotional involvement and encourage a spirit of participation. School educational programme also sets out approaches, forms and methods of work to be applied by the school.

On the basis of FEP, educators can build their own plans of work in individual classes – class educational programmes so that their content would meet the age, possibilities, interests and needs of children from specific classes and their form would meet the work method of educators. These plans are prepared continuously, adapted and finished operatively.

Nursery schools also offer e.g. foreign language teaching, swimming courses, artistic activity, speech therapy and programmes for gifted children. On the basis of an agreement between the Ministry of Education and IBM since 2002, some nursery schools have taken part in a programme for the introduction of computers in schools (Kid Smart Early Learning Programme).

The content of education in a preparatory class is based on FEP PpE and the teaching time is set by the number of lessons in the first year of basic education according to the Framework Educational

Programme for Basic Education, i.e. 18–22 lessons. The curriculum is included in the SEP of the basic school.

2.4 Assessment

Teachers provide a professional assessment of the development of children, but this is not an assessment of the child's performance in relevance to a given standard, or a comparison of children and their performance. Every nursery school, and indeed every teacher, can choose or prepare a system for monitoring and assessing children's development. If any irregularities or problems occur during attendance, the nursery school will, with the agreement of parents, provide educational, psychological or medical consultations and offer remedial and developmental programmes tailored to the child's individual needs.

For transition to compulsory education see introduction to the chapter 3.

At the end of the second term, the teacher of the preparatory class prepares a report on the proceedings of pre-school preparation of the child in the given school-year.

2.5 Teachers

Nursery school teachers obtain a full qualification from a four-year upper secondary school course with a school-leaving examination (*maturitní zkouška*) (ISCED 3A), as a document attesting to the education is the final report (*vysvědčení o maturitní zkoušce*). Another possibility is the three-year study at tertiary professional school completed by the *absolutorium* examination, the graduates acquire tertiary professional education (ISCED 5B) certified by the diploma of a graduate of a tertiary professional school and are awarded a degree 'qualified specialist' (*diplovaný specialista*) abbreviated as 'DiS'. The qualification can also be acquired by a three-year Bachelor's study, or a consecutive two-year Master's study at faculties of education at universities (ISCED 5A). The study is completed by final state examination, part of which is the defence of a thesis, graduates receive a diploma (*vysokoškolský diplom*), a diploma supplement (*dodatek k diplomu*) and a degree *bakalář* (Bc.), or *magistr* (Mgr.).

In the 2008/09 school-year, there were 23 567.8 of teachers (full-time equivalent) in nursery schools. The children/teacher ratio was 12.8.

For in-service training see 4.1.6.

3. SINGLE STRUCTURE EDUCATION

Basic education includes primary and lower secondary education. The pupils fulfil compulsory school attendance.

Basic education builds on pre-primary education and education in the family should help pupils form and gradually develop their key competencies and provide them with the firm foundations of general education focusing mainly on situations close to real life and on practical conduct.

The provision of basic education and training is dealt with in the Education Act approved in September 2004, which came into force in January 2005. The organisation of basic education, the numbers of pupils in schools and classes, conditions for providing textbooks and teaching aids are regulated by a Ministry of Education's decree on basic education. The organisation of a school-year is also regulated by the Ministry of Education.

Since 1996/97, the length of the basic school and the length of compulsory school attendance have been 9 years. Children of compulsory school age (6 to 15 years) mostly attend basic schools. Basic school has two levels: the first stage now covers the first to fifth grades (ISCED 1), and the second stage the sixth to ninth grades (ISCED 2). Pupils can, upon their parents' request and if they meet the admission requirements, complete their compulsory education beginning from the sixth or eighth grade at a multi-year *gymnázium* (see 4.1) or 8-year conservatoire (*konzervatoř*) (see 4.2). Since 2005, pupils acquire the level of basic education (*základní vzdělání*), ISCED 2A after having successfully completed the compulsory school education (the educational programme of basic education). They then obtain certificates with a supplement confirming that they have acquired this level of education.

In September 1998, home tuition was approved on an experimental basis. Since 2005, this type of education has been codified by the new Education Act as individual tuition (*individuální vzdělávání*). The head of the school providing compulsory education in which the pupil is enrolled gives permission to organise this type of education. Only pupils in the first stage (primary level) can opt for home schooling. Since the 2007/08 school-year, there has been the pilot verification of the individual education of pupils of the second stage of basic school (ISCED 2). In the 2008/09 school-year, 433 pupils were being educated at home.

Both schools and classes are coeducational.

Since 1990, basic schools have mainly been established by municipalities. Nursery schools can be integrated into basic schools.

Pupils with special educational needs can be integrated into regular classes. If required by the nature of the disability, schools, eventually classes, departments or study groups using adapted educational programmes are established for disabled children, pupils or students. Pupils with serious mental disability, pupils with multiple disabilities, and autistic pupils are entitled to be educated at a special basic school if they are not educated otherwise. School-leavers of this school attain basics of education (*základy vzdělání*).

If in a municipality a Committee for National Minorities was established, a class or school offering education in the language of the relevant minority must be set up.

Education at public and state basic schools is free of charge.

Pupils completing compulsory schooling obtain textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education free of charge. Pupils of the first grade and in preparatory classes do not return the textbooks. Apart from textbooks, they also get basic school aids according to a defined extent.

Parents contribute:

- to the additional requirements of pupils within the framework of the curriculum, some other teaching materials, courses outside the school (swimming, skating, skiing) and school camps in rural environments;
- outside the curriculum to meals that are largely subsidised, to school clubs (i.e. school facilities providing general interest activities) and special interest courses.

In 2008/09, 858.6 thousand pupils were participating in compulsory school attendance. 458.2 thousands of them were in the first stage (ISCED 1), 400.4 thousands were in basic schools, *gymnázia* and conservatoires (ISCED 2).

In the Czech Republic, there were 4 133 basic schools with 816 thousand pupils in the first and second stages. The number of pupils in one class is 19.2 on average.

3.1 Admission

Basic schools accept pupils who have reached 6 years of age by 1 September of the year in question. The maturity of pupils is assessed during their enrolment to school. If a pupil is not considered mature enough to attend school, he/she continues to attend either a nursery school or a preparatory class. Preparatory classes are established within basic schools. These classes have fewer children, each child is given individual tuition and teachers can use the help of the teacher's assistants. Around 2 % of pupils move into compulsory education from these classes. Children turning 6 between the beginning of the school-year and the end of the calendar year can be admitted if they are sufficiently mature, physically and mentally, and if their legal guardian applies for admission. Pupils complete their compulsory schooling in the relevant catchment area, unless their parent (or their legal guardian) chooses another basic school.

3.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue

The school-year begins on 1 September and ends on 31 August of the following year. The summer holiday is in July and August. There is a one-week holiday in spring, with other short holidays in the autumn, furthermore at Christmas, at Easter and at the end of the first semester.

Pupils attend school from Monday to Friday. In addition to morning classes, there are also afternoon classes once or twice a week.

The compulsory number of lessons per week by the Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education is in compliance with the legislation as follows:

| 1st stage | 2nd stage |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Year 1 – 18-22 lessons | Year 6 – 28-30 lessons |
| Year 2 – 18-22 lessons | Year 7 – 28-30 lessons |
| Year 3 – 22-26 lessons | Year 8 – 30-32 lessons |
| Year 4 – 22-26 lessons | Year 9 – 30-32 lessons |
| Year 5 – 22-26 lessons | |

A lesson lasts 45 minutes. The timetable allows for intervals of less than one lesson (i.e. less than 45 min) and block teaching can be used.

In order to ensure access to schools, there are schools with only the first stage (or exceptionally with only the second stage) in small municipalities (according to the last data from the 2004/05 school-

year, such schools made up 37.6 % of all basic schools with about 12 % of all first-stage pupils). These are usually schools with several grades in one class (only within the first stage).

Pupils are divided into classes by age. At the first stage, there can be classes with pupils of mixed age.

The maximum number of pupils per class is 30. If a class integrates pupils with special educational needs, the number is reduced; the minimum average number is 17. A school with only the first stage has an average of 10–15 pupils in one class, according to the number of classes. In 2008/09, the national average of pupils per class was 20.3 and 212.8 per school.

School buildings are usually used for one shift per day. The school head decides on the availability of the school building (e.g. outside school hours).

3.3 Curriculum

The Education Act (2005) set a two-level structure for educational programmes. Framework Educational Programmes, produced at the central level, specify the concrete objectives, form, length and content of education and some general conditions for their implementation, as well as conditions for the education of pupils with special educational needs. The school head draws up a school educational programme in accordance with the Framework Educational Programme and the school's conditions. Since September 2007, teaching according to the Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education (FEP BE) has been binding from years 1 and 6 of basic education and year 1 of eight-year *gymnázium*.

The significant document is still the Standard for Basic Education, which was a binding document for creating the Basic School, National School and General School educational programmes. These programmes can be followed until the end of 2011 (in year 5), or 2010 (in year 9) school-years at the latest. It divides educational objectives and content into seven areas: languages, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences, aesthetic education, health and life-style education, crafts and technology. The timetables of the Basic School, National School and General School educational programmes were modified progressively to enable a smooth transition to teaching according to the FEP BE.

According to FEP BE, in basic education the key competencies are as follows: learning; problem solving; communication; social and personal competence; citizenship; and work. The FEP BE defines nine main educational areas (consisting of one or more educational fields), cross-curricular themes and supplementary educational fields. It also specifies the compulsory content of the fields, i.e. the curriculum and expected outputs at the end of every period (the first stage is divided into first and second periods: years 1-3 and 4-5). It is possible to create one or more subjects from one educational area or integrate the content of more educational areas into a so-called integrated subject. The FEP BE also includes a framework timetable.

Framework timetable

| Educational areas | Educational fields | Minimum number of hours | | Additional notes |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|---|
| | | 1st stage | 2nd stage | |
| | | years 1-5 | years 6-9* | |
| Language and language communication | Czech language and literature | 35 | 15 | must be taught in every year |
| | Foreign language | 9 | 12 | compulsory from year 3 (at least 3 hours a week in every year); may be taught from the year 1 |
| Mathematics and its application | | 20 | 15 | must be taught in every year |
| Information and communication technology | | 1 | 1 | is taught at least once at the first stage and once at the second stage |
| People and their world | | 12 | - | is taught at first stage only, in every year |
| People and society | History | - | 11 | |
| | Citizenship education | - | | |
| People and nature | Physics | - | 21 | |
| | Chemistry | - | | |
| | Biology | - | | |
| | Geography | - | | |
| Art and culture | Music | 12 | 10 | must be taught in every year |
| | Fine art | | | |
| People and their health | Health education | - | 10 | at the first stage included in the educational area of People and their world |
| | Physical education | 10 | | must be taught in every year, at least 2 hours |
| People and the world of work | | 5 | 3 | must be taught in every year |
| Cross-curricular themes (Personal and social education, Education for democratic citizenship, Education towards thinking in the European and global context, Multicultural education, Environmental education, and Media studies; need not be included in every year) | | P | P | |
| Disposable hours | | 14 | 24 | |
| Total compulsory number of hours | | 118 | 122 | |

P = must be included at the given stage and disposable hours can be used

* or lower years of multi-year *gymnázia*

In both the first and the second stages, a fixed number of disposable hours is specified (14 in the first stage, 24 in the second stage); use of these hours is fully at the discretion and responsibility of the school head, and all disposable hours must be used in the school educational programme (SEP) timetable. Disposable hours can be used:

- to implement cross-curricular themes;
- to increase the number of hours for particular educational areas and fields;
- to introduce other areas of compulsory education which enhance the orientation of the school;
- to introduce supplementary educational fields (e.g. Drama Education);
- to implement the content of an educational field Second foreign language for at least 6 hours, which must be offered to pupils at least from year 8 (the school must offer English to pupils

who did not choose it as their first foreign language). It may also be used to offer other optional subjects for the same number of hours for pupils who have not opted for a Second foreign language;

- to increase the number of hours for physical education in two successive years of the first stage, where compulsory swimming lessons are offered;
- to introduce teaching to support the education of pupils with special educational needs.

The Framework Educational Programme also contains a supplement concerning pupils with mild mental disability. For pupils with a more severe mental disability, an independent Framework Educational programme was issued.

Religious education can be taught in accordance with the principles and objectives of education. Religious education is taught as a non-compulsory subject at schools established by a municipality or a union of municipalities, if at least seven pupils of the school request it.

Teachers are free to choose concrete methods and teaching procedures. Common learning and educational strategies at the level of an educational programme as well as the individual subjects are stated in the school educational programme. The Ministry of Education grants approval to textbooks on the basis of an assessment as to whether they comply with educational objectives. Schools may also use other textbooks unless these are contrary to the educational objectives. School heads are responsible for the choice of textbooks.

3.4 Assessment, progression and certification

Pupils move up from one year to the next on the basis of their results. If a pupil fails in the overall assessment at the end of the year, he/she does not proceed to the next grade. However, a pupil proceeds to the next grade if he/she has already repeated a year within one stage. On the contrary, it is possible to transfer an extraordinarily gifted pupil to a higher grade on the request of parents and school guidance facility, without his/her completing the previous grade, on the condition that he/she passes an examination covering the required syllabus of the grade that has not been completed.

All pupils are assessed continuously in individual subjects and at the end of each semester, when the pupil's behaviour and overall learning outcomes are assessed, as well as their performance in each subject.

The rules for the evaluation of pupils are set in accordance with the regulation by the school code and are also laid out in the school educational programme. The assessment must be unambiguous, comprehensible, comparable to the rules set in advance, factual and versatile. All individuals are approached individually. Marking on a five point scale, verbal assessment, scores (in per cent), pupils' ranking in class and other methods are used. Marking is used in almost all schools but only less than one quarter of them limit themselves to this. Most often, a combination of the above possibilities is used.

Continuous assessment is reflected in the reports that pupils receive at the end of the first semester and at the end of the school-year. The evaluation of a pupil's education results included in a school report may be expressed by a mark, verbally, or by combination of both. This concerns both basic and upper secondary schools. Marks used to assess pupils' knowledge are on a scale of 1 (excellent), 2 (very good), 3 (good), 4 (satisfactory) and 5 (fail). There is no final examination at the end of basic school, but in the last year of compulsory school attendance, each school issues its pupil with a final evaluation stating how the pupil concerned has achieved the educational objectives stated by the law. This can also occur in the 5th or 7th year if the pupil completes his/her compulsory education at a *gymnázium* or conservatoire.

Parents (legal guardians) of pupils are legally entitled to information on the progression and achievements of their children; this information is a part of the school documentation. A concrete form of informing the parents is not centrally specified.

Czech compulsory school attendance is characterised by its low rate of failure. For a number of years, the average number of pupils repeating a grade has been less than 1 % (the number is lower at the first stage than at the second). The number of pupils completing their compulsory school attendance before reaching the last year of basic school has ranged between 3-5 %, in the past four years. A number of these pupils continue their studies at secondary vocational schools, where they gain a professional qualification.

3.5 Guidance and counselling

Educational staff responsible for guidance services at schools include, educational counsellors (*výchovný poradce*), school prevention specialists (*školní metodik prevence*) and sometimes school psychologists or special educators (*speciální pedagog*), who can be employed by the school. Schools provide assistance in preventing pupil failure, in dealing with socially pathological phenomena, support to pupils with special educational needs and special talent and career guidance. Schools can cooperate with school guidance facilities. The educational and psychological counselling (*pedagogicko-psychologické poradny*) determines the extent to which pupils are educationally and psychologically prepared for school, identifies the special educational needs of pupils in schools, provides guidance services for pupils with a high risk of school failure or of problems in their personal and social development, career advice and guidance and methodological support and consultation for schools relating to exceptionally gifted pupils, and ensures the prevention of socially pathological phenomena in schools. There must be at least one centre in every district. The special educational centres (*speciálně pedagogické centrum*) are established mainly at schools established specifically to ensure the education of children and young people with mental and physical disabilities (*speciální školy*). Their aim is to provide guidance services, supportive care and expert assistance for pupils with disabilities and possibly other disadvantaged pupils; pupils attending *speciální školy*, pupils integrated into mainstream education, and for pupils with severe and combined disabilities who cannot attend school.

Information on further studies is provided to secondary school pupils on the Open Days (more in the chapter 4.1.5).

3.6 Teachers

Basic school teacher training is obtained in higher education institutions. Primary as well as lower secondary level teachers must have a master's degree.

Teachers for the first stage of basic school gain a Master's degree after, what is usually, a five-year course, at a faculty of education. Students prepare for teaching all curriculum subjects and at some faculties, students may specialise in e.g. music, art, physical education, or a foreign language. Study always includes practical experience of varying durations in schools. Education is completed with a state final exam that covers a thesis defence. Graduates acquire a university diploma, a diploma supplement and an academic degree *magistr* (Mgr.).

Training of teachers for the second stage of basic school is similar to that for teachers of general subjects at upper secondary schools – see 4.1.6.

Teachers at the first stage are generalists. At the second stage, teachers are specialists, usually qualified to teach two subjects.

In 2008/09 school-year, there were 59 492.3 teachers (full-time equivalent) in basic schools. The pupil/teacher ratio was 13.7. In the first stage, the pupil/teacher ratio (16.6) is higher than in the second stage (11.2).

For in-service training see 4.1.6.

4. UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

This chapter deals with upper secondary education. It also includes, to a certain extent, lower secondary and artistic tertiary professional education.

Upper secondary education is mostly conducted in secondary schools, part of them provide general education and another part vocational (professional) education always with a substantial share of general education. Most pupils study in four-year general or technical courses (ISCED 3A) completed with a school-leaving examination (*maturitní zkouška*) that enable them to enter the tertiary level of education, others in apprenticeship courses (ISCED 3C) and a small number of students in simple secondary education courses, part of which is intended for pupils with a more severe mental handicap. Secondary schools also provide (ISCED 2) lower secondary education in general secondary programmes that are attended by a fifth of students of a relevant age group. Chapter 4.1 is dedicated to lower and upper secondary education in secondary schools. Secondary schools also provide post-secondary education which is dealt with in detail in chapter 5.

Among sparsely represented schools belong conservatoires, which offer art education. School-leavers predominantly acquire 'tertiary professional education at the conservatoire' – *vyšší odborné vzdělání v konzervatoři* (ISCED 5B) but can also pass a school-leaving examination and attain secondary education completed with the school-leaving examination (ISCED 3A). The dance conservatoires also partially cover the lower secondary education (ISCED 2). For details see 4.2.

4.1 Secondary school education

Upper secondary education is a highly differentiated system guaranteeing education and vocational training for almost the entire population of young people between completion of compulsory school attendance and taking up employment or continuing in higher education. The aim of secondary education is to develop knowledge, skills and values attained within basic education, in either broader general education or vocational education connected with general education.

Pupils attending upper secondary schools are generally aged 15 to 18 years. The starting age of study is set by the completion of compulsory education. Some secondary schools (multi-year *gymnázia*) also provide a programme of compulsory education and therefore even younger pupils attend them. Education is not compulsory for 15-18 year olds, but in 2008/09 95.8 % were in education.

In 2008/09, 507 thousand pupils studied in 1 069 secondary schools in day form of study (pupils in follow-up courses are not included). The number of pupils in one class was 24.4.

The education is regulated by the Education Act, the decree on secondary education, decrees on admission and ending the studies and some other legislative.

The 2004 Education Act reflects the development within secondary education. Its goal has been newly defined and levels of education have been defined according to the length and types of educational programmes, not types of school.

The fundamentals covered by general subjects and the theoretical part of technical subjects in four-year technical education have been reinforced. Thus, education is no longer divided into general (so-called, 'full secondary education' – *úplné střední vzdělání*) and 'full secondary technical education' (*úplné střední odborné vzdělání*); both types are now considered as 'secondary education completed with the school-leaving examination' (*střední vzdělání s maturitní zkouškou*). The existing classification of schools – secondary general school (*gymnázium*), secondary technical school (*střední odborná škola*) and secondary vocational school (*střední odborné učiliště*) has been preserved. These types are not defined by law; many schools provide more courses of different level of education and various specialisations, so such divisions are not applicable to them.

Through successful completion of the relevant type and length of educational programme, the following levels of education can be acquired at secondary school:

- a) secondary education completed by a school-leaving examination (*střední vzdělání s maturitní zkouškou*). Study programmes are of various length, e.g. a four-year study (ISCED 3A), six or eight years of study at multi-year *gymnázium* (ISCED 2A+3A) or 1–2 years of post-secondary education (ISCED 4A, see chapter 5);
- b) secondary education leading to an apprenticeship certificate (*střední vzdělání s výučním listem*) – two to three years (ISCED 3C) or post-secondary education (ISCED 4C, see chapter 5);
- c) secondary education – *střední vzdělání* (1-2 years) (ISCED 2C/3C).

Governmental provisions specify courses in which the above educational levels can be attained.

The length of the study corresponds to day form of study. The same level of education can also be attained through other part-time forms of education (see 4.1.2); in this case the study may be one year longer. Education attained in all forms is equal. Interest in other than day form of study (earlier referred to as on-the-job study – *studium při zaměstnání*) has fallen considerably since 1989 because of the availability of daily courses. In 2008/09, 2.4 % of all pupils of upper secondary education studied in other forms of study. See also chapter 7.4.

The structural development of upper secondary education has been one of the most important changes in the Czech education system since 1989. In that year, the ratio of leavers from courses leading to the school-leaving examination (which is a prerequisite for higher education) to those without this exam was around 40:60. By 1997, this ratio had reversed; in 2008/09, it was around 70:30 in favour of courses completed with the school-leaving examination. The position of technical and vocational education at the upper secondary level is still extremely high. Around 80 % of the population complete their upper secondary education at these schools. Nevertheless, many leavers of technical courses completed with the school-leaving examination are admitted to higher education institutions.

General courses completed by the school-leaving examination (ISCED 3A) are usually provided by secondary general schools (*gymnázium*). The aim of study at the *gymnázium* is to provide pupils with key competencies and a broad outlook, preparing them, above all, for higher education and other types of tertiary education, for professional specialisation, as well as for life in society. *Gymnázia* may offer 4-year courses for pupils from the age of 15 (who have completed their compulsory school attendance), 6-year courses for pupils from the age of 13 who have completed the 7th year or 8-year courses for pupils from the age of 11 who have completed the 5th year, often within one and the same school. Six-year or eight-year (multi-year) *gymnázia* have two stages – a lower stage (the first four years of an eight-year *gymnázium* or the first two years of a six-year *gymnázium*), which corresponds to the second stage of the basic school (ISCED 2), and the higher stage (ISCED 3A). The lower levels of multi-year *gymnázia* provide compulsory school attendance. Pupils are not obliged to continue their studies once they have completed their compulsory school attendance. With the transition to the two-level system of curricula, former specialised courses of the *gymnázia* are replaced by one course (*Gymnázium*) from 2009/10 and specialisation is up to the individual schools. Only sports training *gymnázium* and bilingual *gymnázium* are preserved as separate courses. Pupils, who completed *gymnázia*, represent about 20 % of all school-leavers of day form of study in secondary schools. Over two fifths of all pupils complete their education at a multi-year *gymnázium*. The majority of pupils continue their studies at higher education institutions or other institutions.

Technical courses completed by the school-leaving examination are usually professionally oriented and mostly provided by secondary technical schools (*střední odborné školy*), or in the case of some more practically oriented fields, then by secondary vocational schools. A new type of study is lyceum

courses – technical, economical, pedagogical etc., which offer a broader general vocational education and serve as a preparatory study for similarly oriented higher education courses. Schools providing technical courses completed by the school-leaving examination were founded on Czech territory as early as the 19th century. These schools were intended to provide an education with an intermediate level of qualifications on the assumption that these students would move directly into the labour market. The education was geared towards developing the ability to apply acquired technical knowledge and skills in practice. At present, leavers of secondary education completed by the school-leaving examination (ISCED 3A) are qualified to perform their profession, but they can also enter tertiary educational level (higher education institutions or tertiary professional schools). In addition to the professional part of the education, general education is also included, making up about one half of the curriculum. The range of fields is wide, and divided into 27 groups. The education is provided mostly in four-year courses, which are intended for pupils who have finished compulsory school attendance (at age 15). Moreover some schools organise post-secondary education (see chapter 5), traditionally this is provided in two year follow-up courses (*nástavbové studium*), leading to the school-leaving examination, for pupils who have an apprenticeship certificate. Many pupils choose de facto five-year professional education composed of three-year training, through which they gain an apprenticeship certificate, and a further two years completed by the school-leaving examination.

Courses leading to an apprenticeship certificate are very profession and practice-oriented (however, training also includes general education), the attained education does not enable the school-leavers to enter the tertiary level of education. This education is historically associated with different forms of practice-oriented apprentice training which was accompanied, to a limited extent, by general education. This training was later replaced by so-called apprentice schools, whose status after World War Two, rose to rank equally alongside other upper secondary schools as secondary vocational schools. They were run by companies, and after 1990 they came under the control of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, and from 2001, regions or private entities. Co-operation with enterprises continues to be extensive, however it is characteristic of vocational education that pupils are not trained to work for a specific company. Education in courses where pupils attain an apprenticeship certificate lasts three or two years. The courses are divided into 18 groups. Some of the courses are organised for pupils who have not completed the programme of basic school. Pupils are admitted to the first year of study once they have finished compulsory school attendance (at age 15). Leavers acquire the ISCED 3C level qualification.

One- to two-year courses are partially intended for special education, these are the courses of the practical schools (*praktická škola*) aimed at pupils with more serious mental disability, they acquire the ISCED 2C level qualification. Other courses are intended for those pupils who have not successfully completed basic school, such courses prepare pupils for less demanding professions (ISCED 3C).

Secondary schools are usually public (generally established by the regions), but can also be private, or denominational (see 1.7). Education is free of charge; fees are paid only at private or possibly denominational schools. Parents contribute to different courses organised outside the campus (e.g. swimming, skiing courses) and extracurricular courses if organised. They also contribute to meals taken in the school catering facilities, or possibly accommodation (both of which are subsidised). Pupils buy textbooks themselves. Schools operate libraries with a limited stock of textbooks that can be lent to pupils from low-income families. Schools also lend textbooks to pupils completing their compulsory education and pupils with disability. The school head may, with the consent of the founder, issue Scholarship Rules according to which, pupils may be granted scholarships for excellent results. Pupils younger than 26, or their parents, are entitled to the state social support, tax reliefs and reduced fares; the health insurance is paid by the State (for more see 6.1.2). Those not entitled to such support are pupils of other than day courses who are gainfully employed.

4.1.1 Admission

The prerequisites for admission to upper secondary school are the successful completion of compulsory school attendance (or possibly completion of basic education without completing compulsory school attendance) and meeting the entrance requirements (which may include an entrance examination or an aptitude test).

The prerequisite for admission to the eight-year *gymnázium* is the successful completion of the fifth year of a basic school; to the six-year *gymnázium* is the successful completion of the seventh year of a basic school (or corresponding years of eight-year *gymnázium* or eight-year conservatoire).

For admission to the first year of secondary school, the school head announces at least one round of enrolment proceeding, the number of other rounds is not limited. In the first round, the pupils may apply to three secondary schools of their choice. Applicants who receive a decision on admission must confirm their intention to study at the particular school by a registration form, at the latest, 5 days from receiving the decision (however, later on he/she can request the school head to return the form and register at some other school). Criteria on which a pupil is accepted or rejected by a school head of secondary school may result from preceding education outcomes expressed in school reports, entrance examination or aptitude test results, if such an examination is included (e.g. in Czech and mathematics, in a foreign language or, in the case of artistic and sports schools, in a subject relevant to the alleged talent), and pupil's other abilities, knowledge and other qualities (e.g. the results of psychological tests), or health prerequisites of the applicant for a particular field of study. If the head of a secondary school decides on the performance of the entrance examination, its content and form is determined by the head on the basis of and within the Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education. Two terms are announced in the first round of the enrolment proceeding. According to the Framework Educational Programme for some fields of studies aptitude test; terms for this examination are set earlier than for possible entrance examinations.

In order to be admitted to the higher levels of gymnasium pupils do not have to pass an entrance examination, but they can apply for another secondary school.

The law permits a pupil to change their course or school. The decision rests with the head of the school which the pupil applies for. A special comparative examination may be required and ordered by the head of the school to which the pupil wishes to be transferred.

4.1.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue

The school-year at secondary schools is distributed in a similar way as in basic school – see 3.1. Pupils attend school from Monday to Friday. Classes are taught in mornings but afternoon lessons are not exceptional. A lesson lasts 45 minutes; a lesson of practical training is 60 minutes long. In one week, the pupils have a maximum of 35 lessons (in some arts fields 40, in the case of sports training, 46 lessons). The average number of lessons in vocational courses is 33. During the school-year in courses leading to an apprenticeship certificate (*výuční list*), one week of theoretical education (vocational and general) usually rotates with a week of practical training.

The Ministry of Education stipulates a minimum of 60 pupils per school and a maximum of 30 pupils per class, with the minimum average number of pupils per class being 17. In schools providing education in courses for which the curricular documents prescribes an aptitude test, the minimum number of pupils in the school is 30, and there is no minimum number of pupils in a class. Classes are mostly organised according to the year of study. If requirements set by the regulation are fulfilled, pupils from more classes or years can be taught together in some subjects. Part or all of the instruction in selected subjects may be carried out in smaller groups. Foreign languages are always taught in smaller groups with 9-23 pupils. For practical training, pupils are divided into groups. For

each specialisation, the size of groups is determined by a government decree, taking into account the nature of the activity and occupational safety requirements. Practical training mostly takes place in training workshops or in company workshops and offices.

The education can have the day form or other forms – evening, distance, e-learning or a combination of some of these (for more information, see 7.4).

The framework educational programmes for individual courses determine which, other than day forms, the education can be provided in (e.g., the e-learning form is possible only in several courses of the secondary education completed with school-leaving examination */maturitní zkouška/*). In addition to the day form, the most common is the distance form of learning.

4.1.3 Curriculum

Until recently, the content of secondary education, concrete aims and timetable were set by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in detailed curricular documents for individual courses. These are still the binding documents for courses and classes in which the new educational programmes are not yet valid.

The new Education Act, valid since 2005, introduced the new, two-level structure of the curricular documents; the education is provided according to framework educational programmes approved at the central level and school educational programmes created by school.

The framework educational programmes (FEP) set the general content of education and general timetable, the key competences of school-leavers, conditions of education, etc., stressing the outputs of education. FEPs for general courses are prepared by the Research Institute of Education in Prague, for technical/vocational courses by the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education. The programmes are successively approved by the Ministry of Education, the instruction according to the school educational programmes for the first group of courses started in 2009/10 (in the first years) and the last group of FEPs will be binding from September 2012. The reform is closely connected with the substantial reduction of the number of courses, which are now drawn up more widely and the final number of which will be about 250.

On the basis of the FEP and legislation in force, the school develops the school educational programme (SEP). During the preparation, the pupils' needs and the conditions of the school have to be respected, the legal requirements of parents, and if necessary, those of the founder; and the regional conditions have to be taken into consideration. The school head is responsible for the development of the SEP and its implementation, while teachers participate in the preparation of individual parts and take part in decision-making. The School Council gives its opinion on the proposed SEP and its implementation and approves the methods of assessing pupils. The content of a SEP and its conformity with the FEP are evaluated by the Czech School Inspectorate. The SEP must be available to the public.

A school can prepare a separate SEP for each form of education (for day and other forms) or individual programmes can be included in one document. Schools can prepare SEPs for several different specialisations with a common (integrated) first year, differentiation according to specialisation is carried out in successive years. On the basis of one FEP a school may prepare several SEPs for different specialisations.

In addition to textbooks and teaching texts approved by an approval clause of the Ministry of Education, the schools may also use other textbooks and teaching texts unless these are contrary to these educational objectives. A school head decides on the use of textbooks and teaching texts.

The choice of specific educational methods depends on the teacher. The SEPs for the general courses describe educational strategies. The SEPs for technical and vocational courses set the character of the education concept which the school follows, the didactic conception of individual subjects and the preferred teaching methods and forms in these subjects. The basic methodological and material requirements can be set in the FEP.

General courses – gymnázia

For classes which do not so far follow the school educational programme, a basic document for education is the Standard for Education in Four-year *Gymnázium* or for the lower stage of multi-year *gymnázium* the Standard for Basic Education (see 3.3). Curricular documents stating goals, a detailed timetable for four-year and eight-year *gymnázium* (six-year *gymnázium*) and syllabuses (educational content) of individual subjects are derived from it. The timetable provides schools with some freedom. The content is binding, but it is not divided into years; this is the responsibility of the school.

In July 2007, the Ministry of Education approved the Framework Educational Programme for the *gymnázium* and the Framework Educational Programme for sports training *gymnázium*. Schools teach according to school educational programmes from the 2009/10 school-year starting in the first year of the four-year *gymnázia*, the third year in the six-year and the fifth year in the eight-year *gymnázia*. For lower stages of the multi-year *gymnázia*, the Framework Educational Programmes for Basic Education is valid (see 3.3). The eight-year *gymnázia* have been using this programme since 2007/08 (starting with the first years), from 2009/10 it will be binding for the first years of the six-year *gymnázia*. For the six-year bilingual *gymnázia*, a pilot version of the Framework Educational Programme for Bilingual *Gymnázia* was approved. Instruction according to the pilot SEP started in all of the schools (18) on 1 September 2009, piloting will continue till 2015.

The Framework Educational Programme for *Gymnázia* (FEP G) stipulates the objectives of *gymnázium* education, the key competences which should be acquired by pupils, the educational areas and cross-curricular topics, a framework timetable, rules to design the school educational programme (SEP), the conditions for the education of pupils with special educational needs (pupils with health disabilities or disadvantages, and pupils from different cultural environments and socially disadvantageous background), the conditions for the education of exceptionally gifted pupils, material, personnel and educational-psychological conditions, the conditions of safety and mental hygiene and manual labour hygiene, psycho-social conditions and the organisational and management conditions of *gymnázium* education.

Each of the eight educational areas has its characteristics, objectives and content of education (expected outcomes and subject matter). Each area is divided into one or more courses. For cross-curricular themes, the characteristics, contribution to pupil's personal development and thematic fields are set. The stress is put mainly on educational outcomes. The expected pupils' key competencies are now defined. Close attention is also paid to pupils' system of values and their personal and social development, which the cross-curricular themes should primarily contribute to.

The Framework timetable

| Educational area | Educational field | Total number of teaching hours during the study | Note |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Language and language communication | Czech language and literature | 12 | obligatory in each year |
| | Foreign language 1 ²⁾ | 12 | obligatory in each year |
| | Foreign language 2 ²⁾ | 12 | obligatory in each year |
| Mathematics and its application | | 10 | obligatory in years 1 to 3 |
| People and nature | Physics | 36 | obligatory in years 1 and 2 |
| | Chemistry | | |
| | Biology | | |
| | Geography ⁵⁾ | | |
| | Geology | | |
| People and society | Civic and social science essentials | | |
| | History | | |
| | Geography ⁵⁾ | | |
| People and the world of work | | X | during years 1 to 4 |
| Art and Culture ³⁾ | Music | 4 | obligatory in years 1 and 2 |
| | Fine arts | | |
| People and their health | Physical education | 8 | obligatory in each year |
| | Health education | X | during years 1 to 4 |
| Information and communication technology | | 4 | during years 1 to 4 |
| Optional educational activities ⁴⁾ | | 8 | obligatory in years 3 and 4 |
| Cross-curricular themes (Personal and social education, Education towards thinking in the European and global context, Multicultural education, Environmental education, Media studies) | | X | during years 1 to 4 ¹⁾ |
| Available hours | | 26 | fully in responsibility of school head ⁶⁾ |
| Total compulsory number of hours | | 132 | |

X – the number of hours is stipulated by the SEP

- 1) Content of educational area (field) has to be provided during this period, and the details are stipulated in the SEP.
- 2) One of the foreign languages must be English.
- 3) The offer must be such that pupils will on the basis of their own choice have the opportunity to acquire the full range of content of at least one of the fields, including the integrated topic Art production and communication.
- 4) Hours intended for optional subjects.
- 5) Due to its nature, Geography is included in the list of fields of both educational areas – People and Nature and People and Society.
- 6) All hours must be used. They are intended for the implementation of cross-curricular themes, for inclusion of other subjects, for the school's specialisation, and for increasing the number of hours for individual educational areas (fields).

The number of hours per week in each year must be between 27 and 35. The minimum number of hours per study is 132 hours, although the school can increase it up to 140 hours. Any hours over and above the set 132 are not covered from the state budget.

The Framework Educational Programme for Sports Training *Gymnázia* (FEP STG) and FEP G differ only in the content and number of lessons of physical education and sports training. In the timetable, physical education and sports training account for 64 teaching hours. The total compulsory number of hours is 184, with the number of hours per week at 46 hours.

Except the identification data every SEP has to contain:

- characteristics of the school (capacity and equipment, educational staff, long-term projects and international co-operation and co-operation with parents and other subjects...);
- characteristics of SEP (the school's specialisation, a profile of the school-leaver, organisation of enrolment proceedings and the school-leaving examination (*maturitní zkouška*), the educational strategy, description how the teaching of pupils with special educational needs or exceptionally gifted pupils will be ensured, integration of cross-curricular themes);
- the timetable and the teaching programmes (educational content of subjects);
- the rules for pupils' assessment and self-evaluation of school.

In the SEP, the content of education is divided into subjects and years (teaching programmes) and the timetable is worked out in detail. It is possible to integrate, divide into more subjects or otherwise link topics of each educational field and cross-curricular theme; apart from the standard approach the curriculum can be taught in the form of seminars, courses, forums or projects. The obligatory numbers of teaching hours must be respected, although the school head has a relatively high number of hours at his/her disposal (20 % of the total number of hours), which provide for the specialisation of school and pupil.

Technical and vocational courses

In courses of the secondary education completed with school-leaving examination, the general component of education (including ICT and economic subjects for non-economic courses) forms an average of 60 % of the curriculum. For arts fields, it is just 35 % (although the total number of hours for these fields is higher), for lyceum courses, on the contrary, 77 % of curriculum (2007).

Compared to courses completed with the school-leaving examination, education in courses leading to the apprenticeship certificate is more practically oriented and includes a smaller general component. The general component of education forms an average of 34 % in three-year courses (2007), 30 % in two-year courses and only 19 % (2004/05) in two-year courses for pupils who did not complete the basic education or who completed a practical basic school (*základní škola praktická*). Practical training is an important part of education, which takes on average almost half of the education time.

Courses of secondary education (without a school-leaving examination or an apprenticeship certificate) prepare their pupils for simple occupations and in addition to the vocational (professional) training, the education includes a general component which takes up 30-40 % of the curriculum (2004/05). The training of pupils with serious mental disability in Practical one-year and two-year schools has a specific character, as it aims to supplement and broaden the general education which they acquired during their compulsory school attendance and to provide them with the knowledge and skills needed to perform simple tasks in different occupations as well as in everyday life.

In courses for which the FEPs have not yet been approved and in years in which the FEPs are not valid, the basic curricular document is the Standard of Secondary Vocational Education, in force since 1 January 1998, which sets the basic requirements for whole secondary technical/vocational education. According to the Standard, the curricular documents for individual courses are centrally prepared or approved, including the school-leaver's profile, the characteristics of an educational programme, the timetable, and the teaching programmes of individual subjects. Schools are allowed to adapt approved curricula for up to 10 % of the whole weekly number of teaching hours in the year, and the educational content in teaching programmes (modules) by up to 30 % of total number of hours.

The framework educational programmes (FEPs) are being approved in four phases; in the first half of 2009 the majority of FEPs (224) have been approved for all types of courses, including the follow-up

study (see 5.3). In 61 courses, the instruction according to the SEPs based on the FEPs starts in 2009/10. In the other 82 courses, it will start in the next school-year at the latest, in another 82 courses in 2011/12 and in the remaining courses in 2012/13.

FEPs set objectives of secondary vocational education, key competencies, vocational competencies and job opportunities for leavers, curricular frameworks for individual educational areas, a framework timetable of the content of education, cross-curricular themes, rules for the development of the school educational programme (SEP), basic conditions to provide the educational programme (material, personal and organisational conditions and conditions of safety work and health protection during the educational activities), the conditions of education for pupils with special educational needs and exceptionally gifted pupils, and the application of the FEPs on the education of adults.

For every educational area, which can include several educational fields, the obligatory content of education and required outcomes of education are set. The list of educational areas follows:

- language education and communication (in the Czech language and a foreign language);
- humanity and social education;
- science education (physics, chemistry, biology and ecology);
- mathematical education;
- aesthetic education;
- education for health (including physical education);
- education in information and communication technologies;
- economics education;
- specific vocational education (depending on a field of study).

The framework timetable of the content of education sets the total number of hours of individual educational areas per study. A number of hours are at the discretion of the school. The time for job practice (or apprenticeship practice or practical training) is also set.

The way the cross-curricular themes are included into instruction is set by the SEP. All the following themes must be included: Citizens in a democratic society, People and the environment, People and the world of work, Information and communication technologies.

In addition to the identification data, the SEP includes the school-leaver's profile, the characteristics of the SEP (the overall conception, the organisation of instruction, implementation of practical training, key competencies and cross-curricular themes, other and out-of-school activities, assessment criteria, conditions of enrolment proceedings, the form of the *závěrečná zkouška* exam and/or the profile part of school-leaving examination, approaches to the education of pupils with special educational needs and exceptionally gifted pupils), the timetable and an overview of distribution of the content of education, the teaching programmes or educational modules and characteristics of the partnership with the social partners.

4.1.4 Assessment, progression and certification

Secondary schools use both continuous and final assessment of pupils in different subjects. Pupils obtain a school report after the first semester and at the end of the school-year. Rules of assessment in individual schools are set out in the school code. Actual methods of continuous assessment are normally chosen by individual teachers. There are neither any annual and other exams at the end of a

year, nor any standardised national testing of pupils' performance. A pupil's outcomes in individual years are assessed on the same scale as at basic school (see 3.3).

Parents (legal guardians) of both the under age and of age pupils have right to information on their child's progression and achievements, the information is a part of the school documentation. The actual way of communicating the information to parents is not set centrally.

A pupil who has succeeded in all compulsory subjects at the end of the second term proceeds to a higher year. The school head decides if an unsuccessful pupil can repeat a year.

Studies in general, as well as technical/vocational courses of secondary education completed with school-leaving examination (*maturitní zkouška*), end with this examination. The content of this examination is set by the schools, the objectives requirements are not set externally. In general courses (*gymnázia*), the school-leaving examination consists of two compulsory subjects (Czech language and literature, a foreign language) and two optional subjects. In vocational courses, the examination consists of Czech language and literature, an optional subject and vocational subjects. The examination in the Czech language has a written and an oral part, the examination in vocational subjects has a theoretical and practical part, in other subjects the examinations are oral. The school-leaving examination is assessed by a board.

The new Education Act substantially changed the organisation of the school-leaving examination which will consist of two, common and profile, parts. It should take place in the 2010/11 school-year for the first time. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is responsible for the centrally prepared, standardised common part for all school-leavers. In the 2010/11 school-year, the common part will consist of the Czech language and an optional subject – a foreign language (chosen out of 5 possibilities) or mathematics. From 2011/12, it will consist of three exams, namely an examination in the Czech language, an examination in a chosen foreign language, and an examination in an optional subject (mathematics, basics of civic education and social sciences or informatics). For each exam, the pupil can choose from two levels of difficulty. The selection of a certain foreign language is preconditioned by the fact that the language should be taught at the respective school, however, the pupil does not have to be taught this language. The school head can prescribe an optional subject for the students of a certain field of study or limit the option for them. The school is responsible for the profile part of the exam. This part consists of two or three compulsory exams (this is set by the framework educational programme). The school head determines the exams or the offer of possible ones or combines both variants. In certain fields of study, the compulsory subject/subjects of the profile part are set by the Framework Educational Programme. To successfully pass the school-leaving examination the pupil must successfully carry out both parts of the exam and all their components. A school-leaving examination certificate is issued by the school on a prescribed form and documents the passing of the school-leaving exam. It is issued with a supplement confirming the level of education acquired.

The passing of the school-leaving examination is a prerequisite for admission to a higher education institution (see 6.2) or a tertiary professional school (see 6.1), but it is also an evidence of the relevant professional qualifications. School-leavers can extend their qualification in another course completed with a school-leaving examination or in shortened study courses at secondary school (ISCED 4C, see chapter 5) completed with an apprenticeship certificate (*výuční list*).

For courses of secondary education leading to an apprenticeship certificate as well as courses of secondary education, pupils must pass a final examination (*závěrečná zkouška*). Employers recognise the certificates as evidence of the relevant professional qualifications. The qualification does not entitle pupils to enter tertiary education, the leavers of three-years courses leading to apprenticeship certificate can be admitted to a follow-up study (ISCED 4A, see chapter 5) in which they acquire secondary education completed with the school-leaving examination. Leavers of all courses leading to

apprenticeship certificate can extend their qualification in other courses with apprenticeship certificate, i.e. by shortened study at secondary school (ISCED 4C, see chapter 5).

In the case of secondary education courses completed with an apprenticeship certificate, the final examination consists of a written, an oral part and an examination in practical training. Upon passing the final examination, the pupils receive a final examination certificate (*vysvědčení o závěrečné zkoušce*) and an apprenticeship certificate.

In the case of secondary education courses not completed by an apprenticeship certificate, the final examination consists of a practical exam in vocational subjects and a theoretical exam in vocational subjects. Pupils obtain a certificate (*vysvědčení o závěrečné zkoušce*).

The organisation and assessment of the final examination is the responsibility of the school. For courses leading to an apprenticeship certificate, standardised examination assignments are being developed for individual courses within the New Final Examination project. In the 2008/09 school-year, about half of the schools used and tested these. In the 2009/10 school-year, the assignments for all the courses will be prepared. The uniform assignments are in relation to framework educational programmes (see 4.1.3) and the qualification and assessment standards of the National Qualification Framework (see 7.4).

4.1.5 Guidance and counselling

The guidance services for pupils at secondary schools are analogous to those for pupils at basic schools – see 3.5.

Early educational guidance provided by the school or by a network of educational and psychological guidance services helps pupils to make their choice. Guidance is provided to pupils or people interested in study also by the Centre for Career Guidance which is a part of the National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education. Among others, it administers the Internet portal www.infoabsolvent.cz, where an interested person finds for every course information on job opportunities, on unemployment, schools offering the particular course etc. Information on further study is also provided by the tertiary professional schools, higher education institutions and the Centre for Higher Education Studies based in Prague.

The career guidance is also provided within the 'People and the world of work' – the educational area (for *gymnázia*) or cross-curricular theme (for technical/vocational courses) which are included in the framework educational programmes. The way of implementation of this educational content is specified by the school educational programme. The FEPs also require the *gymnázium* leavers to have entrepreneurship competences and leavers of vocational courses to have competences to enter the labour market and carry out business activities.

4.1.6 Teachers and trainers

Initial training

Teachers of general subjects in lower and upper secondary schools must have a Master's degree (ISCED 5A). They generally obtain their qualifications through a three-year Bachelor's programme followed by a two-year Master's degree programme; they are specialists, usually in two subjects. The training is provided by faculties of education usually in concurrent courses in the given field of study or pedagogy. Teacher training at other faculties (of arts/philosophy, natural sciences, mathematics/physics, information sciences, physical education and sports) can be concurrent or consecutive. Bachelor's courses are mostly specialised in the field of study, while the subsequent Master's courses are focused more on the professional (pedagogical) aspect of study.

Graduates from academic Master's degree courses can gain teaching qualifications in consecutive higher education courses lasting three years for Bachelor's courses or two years in lifelong learning courses at higher education institutions.

Teachers of theoretical technical subjects gain Master's degrees from specialised higher education institutions (technical universities, agricultural universities, faculties of medicine, universities of economics, theology and fine arts, etc.) through Bachelor's and follow-up Master's courses and usually gain their teaching qualifications consequently.

Teachers of practical training (*učitelé praktického vyučování*) and teachers of vocational training (*učitelé odborného výcviku*) can acquire the same professional qualifications as teachers of theoretical technical subjects, but the tertiary professional education (ISCED 5B), acquired in 3 to 3.5-year study in tertiary professional school, or usually four-year secondary education completed by the school-leaving examination (*maturitní zkouška*) (ISCED 3A) in upper secondary school is sufficient. They achieve their teaching qualification consequently (as a Bachelor's degree, in a lifelong learning programme at higher education institutions or by a 120-hour pedagogy course in institutions for in-service training of educational staff). Teachers of vocational training must have an apprenticeship certificate (*výuční list*) (ISCED 3C) in the relevant field of study.

The study in Bachelor's or Master's programmes ends with a final state examination, part of which is the defence of a thesis, graduates receive a higher education diploma (*vysokoškolský diplom*), diploma supplement (*dodatek k diplomu*) and degree Bachelor – *Bakalář* (Bc.), or Master – *Magistr* (Mgr.) or equivalent degree (see 6.2.4). Lifelong learning in the field of pedagogical sciences and the study of pedagogy is completed with a defence of a final paper and by a final examination before a commission, the graduate obtains a certificate.

In the 2008/09 school-year, there were 46 734.9 teachers (full-time equivalent) in secondary schools. The pupil/teacher ratio in day form of study was 11.3.

In-service training

The Act on Educational Staff stipulates an obligation of the in-service training of teachers in public and state schools, but does not prescribe its obligatory form. In-service training renews, supplements or enhances qualifications, extends them or may also enable staff acquire them. A school head organises in-service training in accordance with a plan which is laid down after negotiations with a relevant trade union body. It is necessary to take into account the study aspirations of the educational staff, and the school needs and budget. In-service training is organised by higher education institutions within the lifelong learning programmes, institutions of in-service training and at other facilities on the basis of accreditation granted by the Ministry of Education. Some programmes of in-service teacher training are also offered by the National Institute for Further Education – *Národní institut pro další vzdělávání* (NIDV) which functions as an institution of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports receiving funding from the State Budget. It has central and regional workplaces. NIDV is the institution responsible for government priorities in in-service training and prepares national projects which are covered by resources from the European Social Fund.

In-service training is also provided by scientific associations, guidance facilities, professional associations and various private commercial and non-profit organisations.

The regulation lists three types of in-service training:

- courses aimed at gaining required qualifications (e.g. courses leading to the extension of qualifications at a different type or stage of school, courses for school heads);

- courses aimed at meeting further qualification requirements (e.g. courses for the guidance counsellor /*výchovný poradce*/ or courses aimed at meeting the requirements for performing specialised activities, e.g. prevention of socially pathological phenomena);
- courses and seminars aimed at perfecting professional qualifications.

Courses aimed at meeting (further) qualification requirements are completed with a final examination and possibly with the defence of final paper. Participants of all in-service training programmes receive a certificate.

Teachers may also choose the form of self-study. If this is the case, they are entitled to 12 working days off for study in the school-year (if operational factors allow this). The regulation of the Ministry of Education stipulates the types of in-service training and the educational staff career system.

4.2 Education in conservatoires

The conservatoire (*konzervatoř*) provides general education and prepares pupils for the performance of demanding artistic or combined artistic and pedagogical activities in such fields of study as music, dance, singing, and drama. Schools offer 6-year or 8-year programmes.

In the first four years, the six-year courses provide upper secondary education (ISCED 3B), in the following years tertiary education (ISCED 5B). They are meant for pupils aged between 15 to 20 years, but more than one third of the enrolled students are adults. Six-year conservatoires offer music, singing, musical-dramatic art, and piano tuning courses.

Eight-year dance courses are meant for pupils in the typical age from 11 to 18 years. The first four years correspond to the lower secondary level (ISCED 2) – the second stage of basic school (see chapter 3). They are followed by two years of upper secondary (ISCED 3B) and two years of tertiary (ISCED 5B) education level.

The school-leaver usually acquires, 'upper secondary education at a conservatoire' (ISCED 5B), which allows access to artistic courses at universities. But they can also pass the school-leaving examination /*maturitní zkouška*/ (ISCED 3A), which is a prerequisite to be admitted to all courses of tertiary education.

In the 2008/09 school year, there were 18 conservatoires in the Czech Republic with 3 535 pupils, the majority of them (94 %) participated in the day form of study.

The education in public and state schools is free of charge. Parents' contributions and financial support of the family is described in 4.1.

4.2.1 Admission

Six-year courses admit pupils who have completed their compulsory school education, or successfully completed basic education prior to finishing compulsory school attendance. Eight-year courses admit pupils who have successfully completed 5 years of basic school. Admission proceedings require candidates to demonstrate talent in the form of an aptitude test, the applicant who was not admitted has a chance to file application for a secondary school.

4.2.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue

The school-year at conservatoires is distributed in a similar way as in basic school – see 3.1. A lesson lasts 45 minutes. In one week, the pupils have a maximum of 40 lessons.

A school has a minimum of 80 pupils. Pupils are taught individually or in groups and general subjects can be taught to larger groups. Pupils are divided into departments, which comprise of teachers and pupils of all years who are specialising in the relevant artistic courses. The minimum number of pupils in a department is 5 and the maximum is 500.

4.2.3 Curriculum

Schools still provide education according to the curricular documents approved by the Ministry of Education, but new framework educational programmes for individual courses are being prepared and tested. They should be approved in the spring of 2010. The schools will prepare their own school educational programmes on the basis of them and they will start teaching according to them in the first years in the school-year 2012/13 at the latest.

Education in conservatoires includes general education, vocational and pedagogical components.

4.2.4 Assessment, progression and certification

For the assessment of pupils' achievement and their progression in higher years see 4.1.4.

Education is generally completed by passing an *absolutorium* examination, which gives leavers, 'tertiary professional education in the conservatoire' (ISCED 5B). Leavers are awarded a degree, 'qualified specialist' (*diplomovaný specialista*), DiS. Pupils may pass the school leaving examination (*maturitní zkouška*) not earlier than after the fourth year, and in dance after the eighth year and acquire thus 'secondary education completed with the school leaving examination' (ISCED 3A). For more information on the school-leaving examination, see 4.1.4.

The *absolutorium* in conservatoire is a comprehensive professional examination consisting of a theoretical examination in vocational subjects specified by a curricular document, an examination in a foreign language, a thesis and its defence, and a performance in one or two principal artistic branches, or an examination in artistic and pedagogical training. If a pupil completes the conservatoire without passing a school-leaving examination, he/she must sit for a final examination in front of an Examination Board (*komisionální zkouška*) prior to the *absolutorium* exam. The final examination is composed of an exam in the Czech language and literature, for a six-year course also in the history of the field studied. Having passed the *absolutorium* examination, the pupil is awarded a certificate on *absolutorium*.

4.2.5 Guidance and counselling

The guidance services for pupils in conservatoires are organised within the framework of the guidance system for pupils in secondary schools (see 4.1.5).

4.2.6 Teachers and trainers

Teachers of general subjects have the same qualification as teachers of these subjects at secondary schools (see 4.1.6). Teachers of art subjects achieve their art qualification at different levels of education and their teaching qualification through consecutive education (in-service training). Graduates of conservatoires and some higher education courses can gain their teaching qualifications by concurrent study.

5. POST-SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION

In the Czech Republic, post-secondary education is understood to mean certain programmes providing a level of education as stipulated in the Education Act and some other types of education intended for secondary school-leavers which have the character of supplementing retraining.

Post-secondary education that does not provide the relevant level of education (one-year post-secondary foreign language courses at language schools, retraining courses at a school that requires secondary education completed with an apprenticeship certificate (*výuční list*) and courses organised by a higher education institution that are not oriented towards earning a degree – retraining courses, 'Year Zero' courses) is dealt with in chapter 7. This chapter deals only with programmes providing the relevant level of education:

- a) Follow-up courses (ISCED 4A) are intended for applicants who completed three-year courses completed with an apprenticeship certificate (ISCED 3C) and want to supplement their secondary education with a school-leaving examination. It is a two-year course completed with a school-leaving examination. It is usually entered by students immediately after they complete their preceding education. Their educational track at a secondary school takes in fact five years (a three year apprenticeship course and a two-year follow-up course) and upon its completion, students have both a secondary education with an apprenticeship certificate and with a school-leaving examination.
- b) Shortened study courses aimed at acquiring secondary education completed with an apprenticeship certificate (ISCED 4C) provide education for school-leavers with a school-leaving examination (ISCED 3A) and courses with an apprenticeship certificate (ISCED 3C), who want to acquire further qualifications. The studies take one to two years and are completed with a final examination.
- c) Shortened study courses aimed at acquiring secondary education with a school-leaving examination (ISCED 4A) are organised for school-leavers with a school-leaving examination (ISCED 3A), who want to acquire further qualifications. The studies take from one to two years and are completed with a school-leaving examination.

In 2008/09, there were 45 059 students in follow-up courses, 126 students in shortened courses completed with apprenticeship certificate and 411 students in shortened courses completed with school-leaving examination.

Follow-up courses have a long tradition; shortened studies were re-introduced by the new 2004 Education Act. Shortened study courses are held in the secondary schools that have listed a relevant course of upper secondary level in the School Register. All programmes in public and state schools are provided free. Parents' contributions and financial support to families is described in chapter 4.1.

5.1 Admission

The minimum requirement for being admitted to:

- a) follow-up courses, is secondary education with an apprenticeship certificate (*výuční list*) acquired in the relevant field of study (succession in study fields is set forth in a government decree),
- b) shortened study programmes with an apprenticeship certificate, is secondary education with a school-leaving examination (*maturitní zkouška*) or secondary education with an apprenticeship certificate acquired in a different field of study,

- c) shortened study programmes with a school-leaving examination, is secondary education with a school-leaving examination in a different field of study. In admission proceedings, similar rules apply as in admission proceedings to upper secondary education, see 4.1.1.

5.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue

The organisation of the school-year and the forms of education (day and others) are the same in post-secondary courses of secondary schools as in upper secondary education courses. Also, the rules for dividing pupils into classes and smaller groups as well as space requirements are identical. For more information, see chapter 4.1.2.

In follow-up courses, almost half of the students study in day form of study, they are mainly fresh leavers of upper secondary programmes, thus directly continuing their studies. In the case of shortened study programmes, other forms of education are usually applied.

5.3 Curriculum

The teaching documents for secondary school courses are the subject of the curricular reform underway that is described in detail in chapter 4.1.3. Part of the reform concerns the reduction of the number of courses which applies also to post-secondary courses (the scope of courses is much broader than before). Most courses still follow previous teaching documents that regulate, in rather more detail, educational content. Framework Educational Programmes (FEP) for individual courses are gradually issued to regulate educational content in more general terms, with an emphasis on learning outcomes. Each school creates its own school educational programmes (SEP) for individual courses that elaborate in detail the educational content and set forth specific conditions for education. The structure of FEP and SEP is described in chapter 4.1.3. Independent FEPs are issued for follow-up courses. Some of them were approved in May 2009 and schools will start teaching according to the prepared SEPs, at the latest, in the school-year 2011/12. Courses with shortened study duration are executed according to the FEP of respective upper secondary courses. Principles for the creation of SEPs for courses with shortened study duration are stated in the FEP. Schools can either create independent SEPs or incorporate an educational programme of shortened study courses in the SEP for upper secondary education.

Schools can draft independent SEPs for individual forms of education (day classes and others) or they can have one common SEP for all offered forms of education.

5.4 Assessment, progression and certification

In post-secondary courses of secondary schools continuous assessment, mid-term and end of term summative assessment and conditions for advancement to the next grade do not differ from assessment in upper secondary courses. In follow-up courses and shortened study aimed at acquiring secondary education completed with a school-leaving examination (*maturitní zkouška*), the school-leavers obtain school leaving certificates upon the completion of their studies. The organisation and content of school-leaving examinations is identical as in upper secondary courses (see 5.1.4). As students of courses with shortened study duration passed school-leaving examinations upon the completion of the preceding level of education, they do not have to sit in for the common part of a school-leaving examination. In courses with shortened study duration aimed at acquiring secondary education with an apprenticeship certificate (*výuční list*), education is completed with a final examination and school-leavers obtain final examination certificates as well as apprenticeship certificates. The organisation and content of final examinations is the same as in upper secondary courses (see 5.1.4). The school head can recognise an individual examination for the student who

acquired secondary education with an apprenticeship certificate in another field of study if its content corresponds to the examination the student should sit for.

5.5 Guidance and counselling

Detailed information on counselling for secondary school students is provided in chapter 4.1.5.

5.6 Teachers and trainers

Detailed information on secondary school teachers is provided in chapter 4.1.6.

6. TERTIARY EDUCATION

Traditionally, higher education institutions (*vyšoké školy*) provide tertiary education of ISCED 5A and 6 levels; they can be of university and non-university types. For a detailed description see 6.2.

Tertiary professional schools (*vyšší odborné školy*) have been included into tertiary education relatively recently; they are more focused on providing students with practically oriented qualifications of ISCED 5B level. For a further description see 6.1.

In 2008/09, the ratio of the enrolled population of 19 year-olds in full-time study of tertiary education was 58.6 % of which 90 % were in higher education institutions and 10 % in tertiary professional schools. Applicants completing their studies with a school-leaving examination in 2008 make up 86.3 % of all enrolled to full-time study, resp. 49.3 % enrolled to all forms of studies.

In January 2009, the government dealt with the White Paper on Tertiary Education which should provide a conceptual basis for legislative changes in tertiary education.

6.1 Tertiary professional education

Tertiary professional schools were introduced in the 1992/93 school-year on an experimental basis and since 1995 they have been part of the educational system. Their aim was to fill the gap in qualification needs between secondary and tertiary education. These schools have mostly been attached to secondary technical schools and they still form a single legal entity with them. Tertiary professional education has been regulated by the same Education Act (No. 561/2004) as basic and secondary education, the Decree on Tertiary Professional Education (No. 10/2005) dealing with further particulars.

Educational programmes at these schools last 3 years of day form of study (full-time), medical courses 3.5 years including practical training. The school-leavers obtain the tertiary professional qualification – ISCED 5B level.

In 2008/09, there were 28 027 students in 184 tertiary professional schools, 75 % of them in day form of study. The average number of students per school in day form of study is 119.

The fields of study at tertiary professional schools are set by the government regulation linked to the so-called, 'Classification of Basic Study Fields' (see 1.2). Each school prepares its own educational programme for the particular field of study. It contains the goals, form, length and content of education, its conditions, organisation, course of education, its completion, profile of a graduate and employment possibilities. A school must produce evidence that it will be able to implement the educational programme, including providing evidence of co-operation with experts from practice and an estimate of the number of admitted applicants. Programmes must be accredited. Accreditation is granted by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports on the basis of a judgement of the Accreditation Commission for tertiary professional education. Programme accreditation enables schools to enrol and educate students based on the educational programme. The educational programme has to be taken into account when assessing the students as well as when evaluating the school and when allocating financial resources from the state budget.

The content of education is organised in areas corresponding to various subjects or other comprehensive units of the syllabus, e.g. modules. These units are divided into compulsory, compulsory optional and optional subjects. The number of lessons is defined by the curriculum.

The theoretical part of the study programme takes the form of lectures, seminars, consultations, practicals and excursions.

Practical training in the relevant field is a substantial part of this type of study. It can be organised on the premises of the school or, based on a contract, in work places owned by corporations or individuals.

The organisation of study is similar to university study with an emphasis on individual work. Tertiary professional schools also provide Bachelor's degree programmes in co-operation with higher education institutions. Current development shows a convergence of both types of tertiary education however tertiary professional schools are not included in the Bologna Process.

Further existence and form of tertiary professional schools is subject to discussion. The present condition has been described and a proposal for a change has been submitted in the principal points of the White Paper on Tertiary Education.

6.1.1 Admission

Only applicants who have completed their secondary education with the school-leaving examination (*maturitní zkouška*) are admitted. The admission criteria do not include students' age but the usual age is 19. However, students are often older.

The school head decides on the number of students admitted in accordance with the capacity set for the school on its registration in the school register and in accordance with the long-term objectives of individual regions.

The school head decides on whether there will be an entrance examination and on its content.

A student can apply to more than one school at a time.

An applicant can skip a year or more provided his/her previous education has been acknowledged.

The education of foreigners is regulated by the Education Act. Citizens of the European Union and members of their families have equal access to education and school services as citizens of the Czech Republic. Persons who are not citizens of the European Union have access to tertiary professional education, provided they have the legal right of residence on the territory of the Czech Republic. If foreigners have already studied abroad, they are exempted from an entrance examination in Czech language during admission procedures at tertiary professional school. A working knowledge of Czech sufficient for education is verified through conversation.

6.1.2 Students' contributions and financial support

Tertiary professional schools can charge fees. The maximum level of fees in public schools is set by the Decree on Tertiary Professional Education and depends on how financially demanding each particular field of study is. For most fields of study the charge is CZK 3 000, for the least demanding ones CZK 2 500, but for certain other fields it ranges from CZK 4 000 to 5 000. The fees are payable in two instalments.

The school head may reduce an individual student's fee by up to 50 % of the set amount especially on the grounds of their social state.

The amount of tuition in private (or religious) schools is not limited.

Students (or their families) can receive government financial support. Students:

- are entitled to free health care. Health insurance for students until the age of 26 is paid by the state;

- are eligible for subsidised transport. There is a system of reduced fares for pupils who commute to school. Between the ages of 15 and 26 they pay no more than 75 % of the normal fare;
- may receive allowances until they reach the age of 26, if their family income is less than 2.4-times the set minimum subsistence.

A family of a student receives a social allowance if their income is twice the subsistence minimum. Notwithstanding the family income, one of the parents might be able to claim tax relief. The school head of a tertiary professional school may, with the consent of the founder issue Scholarship Rules according to which pupils and students may be granted scholarships for excellent results.

School may provide school meals or accommodation if necessary. In public schools, payment is limited by a decree.

6.1.3 Organisation of time, groups and venue

The school-year is divided into a winter and a summer term. School instruction within a school-year lasts 40 weeks, out of which, lessons last for 32 weeks, 6 weeks are dedicated to self-study and obtaining assessment by the due date, and 2 weeks serve as a time reserve. A lesson lasts 45 minutes and a practical training session lasts 60 minutes, a consultation lesson lasts 45 minutes. It is possible to organise courses, practical training and examinations during the school holidays, but school holidays must not be shorter than four weeks.

The beginning and the end of lessons in the winter and summer terms, the beginning and the end of the period dedicated to self-study and assessment by the due date, the beginning and the end of school holidays, and possibly further divisions of the school-year, are determined by the school head in accordance with the accredited educational programme.

The number of students in a study group is between 10 and 40 students (in Arts fields, the minimum number of students is 6).

6.1.4 Assessment, progression and certification

A student who has successfully met the requirements specified by the accredited educational programme for a relevant year proceeds to a higher year. Having considered the student's study results, a school head may permit a student, who has not met the requirements, to repeat the year.

During his/her studies at tertiary professional school, a student can request a transfer to another tertiary professional school, to change their educational field of study or to suspend their studies for a period of no longer than 2 years. It is up to the head of the school to which the student applies to decide on a transfer.

A school head may recognise the comprehensive background education achieved by a student provided that it is documented with a relevant certificate. The school head may recognise partial education of a student provided he/she can prove that no more than 10 years have elapsed since its completion, or that it is evidenced by examination.

Forms of assessment include continuous assessment (primarily takes the form of questions, written work, tests, individual assignments, and term papers), examinations (a four-level assessment scale is used), or other assessment specified by the educational programme, possibly system of credits. Each school chooses the form to be applied to particular subjects and in individual school terms. This information is included in the educational programme.

Education ends with an *absolutorium*; an examination consisting of a theoretical exam in vocational subjects (at most three subjects), an exam in a foreign language and defence of a thesis. A thesis may be written and defended by several students; however each student is evaluated individually. A thesis and its defence may also contain a part examining practical skills.

A four-point assessment scale is used in the *absolutorium*.

Having passed the *absolutorium* examination, the graduate has completed tertiary professional education, which is certified by the *Absolutorium* certificate and the diploma of a graduate of a tertiary professional school. The graduates are awarded a degree 'qualified specialist' (*diplomovaný specialista*) abbreviated as 'DiS' and written after the name.

The 2004 amendment of the Higher Education Act made the transition from tertiary professional schools to higher education institutions easier; a higher education institution may set different conditions for applicants who have completed all or part of an accredited education programme at a tertiary professional school.

6.1.5 Guidance and counselling

Educational guidance for tertiary professional schools is organised in a similar way as for secondary schools (see 4.1.5).

6.1.6 Academic staff

Tertiary professional school teachers (*učitelé vyšší odborné školy*) can be teachers of general subjects and technical subjects or of practical training (*praktického vyučování*) and vocational practice (*odborné praxe*). Although a teaching qualification is not required for these teachers, the other prerequisites for performing their educational activities are similar to those of secondary school teachers – see 4.1.6. Also the conditions for in-service training of tertiary professional schools teachers are identical to those for secondary school teachers (4.1.6).

In 2008/09, there were 1 815.2 teachers (full-time equivalent) in tertiary professional schools.

6.2 Higher Education

Higher education institutions come under the Higher Education Act (No. 111/1998) and its amendments. Their activities are also subject to internal regulations related to the Act. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports maintains a register of internal regulations of higher education institutions. Whereas eight of the regulations defined by the Higher Education Act are compulsory for every public higher education institution, others may be defined by individual school statutes. For more details on higher education administration, see 1.2, School Autonomy.

By law, higher education institutions are of two types – university, providing all levels of study programmes (Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral) and non-university usually offering only Bachelor's degree programmes but never Doctoral programmes.

The institutional structure of higher education institutions has changed as a result of the Higher Education Act. Most state institutions of higher education gained the status of public institutions. There are 26 of these, two of which are of non-university type. They can be established or closed down only by law.

The University of Defence (*Univerzita obrany*), which came into existence on 1 January 2004 through the merging of three military schools, and the Police Academy are still state institutions. They are controlled by the relevant Ministries (Defence and the Interior).

Private higher education institutions began to emerge shortly after the law came into force namely as non-university type of institutions. After 2007, two of them became universities. They have often developed from private tertiary professional schools. Private higher education institutions can only function as legal entities after obtaining the approval of the Ministry of Education which is based on the recommendation of the Accreditation Commission (seventeen of them have the status of public benefit organisation). Forty-five private institutions of higher education had been registered by 31 December 2008.

Higher education institutions organise accredited study programmes and programmes of lifelong education. Lifelong learning programmes are aimed at individual professions or interests. See also 7.4. In addition to their study programmes, all higher education institutions carry out other activities such as research, development, artistic work, or possibly other creative activities.

Study programmes have to be accredited. The accreditation is granted by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports based on an opinion of the Accreditation Commission, which is established by the Government. Within the accreditation process, decisions are also taken on authorisation to award academic degrees. The Accreditation Commission also carries out an evaluation of faculties in the individual specialisations.

Study programmes are developed and submitted for accreditation by an institution of higher education or other institution which wants to carry out the programme in collaboration with the higher education institution.

Programmes may be for Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral studies and may be in a day form study (full-time), distance or a combination of both. Each study programme is usually divided into specialisations.

Fields of study are divided according to an approved list of the Classification of Core Fields that applies nation-wide (see 1.2). There are more than 150 core fields of study at higher education institutions. The classification of fields of study corresponds essentially with the traditional classification of academic fields, e.g. humanities, social sciences, science, medicine, education and teacher training, mathematics, computer science, engineering, economics, agriculture, military and police sciences, arts and architecture, physical education and sport.

The law does not lay down the length of study for any particular study field. In compliance with the implementation of the Bologna process principles, the expansion of Bachelor's degree programmes is encouraged, as well as, the highest possible transferability of study. The three-cycle structure of study (Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral study) has been fully introduced at all university type higher education institutions.

Bachelor's study programmes are focused on professional training and provide a basis for studies in Master's study programmes. The programmes last 3-4 years and graduates acquire the qualification of ISCED level 5A. Bachelor's degree programmes prevail at private institutions.

Master's study programmes aim to provide theoretical knowledge based on the latest scientific findings, research and development, at mastering their applications and to develop creative skills. These study programmes follow on from Bachelor's degrees. Their standard length is 1-3 years. If the character of the study programme so requires, accreditation can be granted to a Master's degree programme (4-6 years long), which does not follow on from a Bachelor's one.

Therefore the standard study programme is between three and seven years. Graduates of all types of degree programmes acquire the qualification of ISCED level 5A.

A Doctoral study programme can follow the completion of a Master's programme. It is aimed at scientific work, independent creative activity in the area of research and development or at

independent theoretical and creative skills in art. It is offered solely in universities and lasts 3-4 years and graduates acquire the qualification of ISCED level 6.

Teaching on Bachelor's and Master's programmes rests on two main methods – lectures and seminars. Doctoral studies run according to an individual study scheme under a tutor's guidance.

Attendance at lectures is not compulsory whereas attendance at seminars usually is.

In accordance with the development in Europe, especially with the Bologna Process and with the proposals of the European Commission, the National Qualification Framework for tertiary education is being built as a part of the National Qualification System. The Framework should be compatible with both the covering Qualification Framework for the European Region of Higher Education and the European Framework for Lifelong Learning, and is to follow-up the work done previously in the Czech Republic for lower levels of the education system (see 7.1).

In the 2008/09 academic year, there were 369.6 thousand students at public and private higher education institutions, 8 % of which were foreigners. There were 264.3 thousand students in full-time form of study, 109.2 thousands in distance and combined forms. Structure of students by type of study programmes was as follows: 161 402 students in Bachelor's, 49 407 in long Master's, 45 990 in short Master's and 10 571 in doctoral study programmes.

6.2.1 Admission

The minimum requirement for admission to a higher education institution is secondary education completed with a school-leaving examination (*maturitní zkouška*). The requirement for admission to a Master's programme following on from a Bachelor's programme is the successful completion of the Bachelor's programme. The requirement for admission to a Doctoral programme is the successful completion of a Master's programme.

Students may apply for admission to several fields of study. Each higher education institution decides on the number of enrolled students and on specific admission proceedings (results of entrance examination, upper secondary school results, approval of credits from previous studies of other fields of study or of tertiary professional school, etc.). In general, admission to studies at higher educational institutions is limited primarily by the capacity of each institution. This number of students which will be funded in the academic year is limited at the central level by the amount of money allocated to school through formula funding.

The admission proceedings usually include an entrance examination, in particular a written test, an oral examination or both. If the number of applicants who meet the conditions is higher than the maximum number which can be enrolled, applicants are ranked based on the examination results.

The law provides for equal access to tertiary education for all age categories as well as for foreigners. In the admission proceedings, foreigners must meet the same requirements as Czech students. According to the 2004 amendment of the Higher Education Act, a higher education institution may set different conditions for admission of e. g. applicants who have completed all or part of their studies at a higher education institution in the Czech Republic or abroad. Study conditions for foreign students are stipulated in the statutes of public higher education institutions.

6.2.2 Students' contributions and financial support

By law, higher education for citizens of all nationalities is free of charge, with the following exceptions:

- fees for administration of admission proceedings;
- fees for extending the duration of study beyond a set limit;

- fees for the study of an additional programme;
- fees for study in a foreign language.

The base for fees is 5 % of the average running cost per student paid to the institutions by the Ministry of Education from the state budget in a calendar year.

Public institutions can set a registration fee, which can be up to 20 % of the base figure.

If the actual period of study exceeds the standard duration for Bachelor's or Master's studies by one year, then the student is charged at least 1.5 times the base for every further six months of study in which a student attends the institution.

If a holder of a Bachelor's or Master's degree wishes to take another Bachelor's or Master's study programme, the student can be charged the full base for each year (this is not the case for concurrent study programmes).

Fee for studying in a foreign language is set regardless of the base.

Private institutions of higher education can fix their own fees. The law does not set any limit on fees.

The head of the institution (*rektor*) may reduce the fees, exempt a student from paying them or defer payment with regard to a student's achievements or social situation.

For state social subsidies, health insurance, transport discounts and tax reliefs, see 6.1.2.

Meals in students' cafeterias are provided at subsidised prices. Since 2005/06, the higher education institution has allocated the subsidy for accommodation, amounts calculated according to the ministerial rules and specified by its internal regulations, in the form of contributions for accommodation directly to students.

Students can be given a grant based on merit or social (a grant strictly defined by a law for students in burdensome situation) and other grounds according to the grant regulations of the relevant institution. In Doctoral full-time study programmes, students receive a monthly grant ranging from CZK 5 000 to 10 000.

6.2.3 Organisation of the academic year

The academic year lasts 12 months; the start is fixed by the head of the higher education institution (*rektor*). Courses are divided into semesters, years or blocks, which are composed of a period of teaching, an examination period and a vacation.

The structure of the academic year is decided by each institution. It usually begins in October and is divided into two semesters: winter and summer, with approx. a five-week examination period after each semester. The summer vacation is in July and August.

6.2.4 Assessment, progression and certification

The frequency and methods of assessing students' achievements differ according to the field of study. In some cases, a system of partial examinations taken after each semester has been introduced, in other cases one comprehensive examination after each completed part of studies is prescribed, mostly at the end of a certain module. Performance in examinations and in the defence of the thesis is graded. In majority, institutions students are assessed by means of credits. The credit system has been encouraged since it allows completed parts of studies to be recognised, thus contributing to transferability within the system.

Bachelor's degree studies end with a final state examination and part of which is usually the defence of a thesis. The academic degree obtained is *bakalář* (Bc.) or *bakalář umění* (BcA.). This is put in front of the person's name.

Master's degree studies end with a state examination part of which is the defence of a thesis. The academic degree awarded is *magistr* (Mgr.), *magistr umění* (MgA.), *inženýr* (Ing.), *inženýr architekt* (Ing. arch.) Students of medicine, veterinary medicine and hygiene are the exception. They finish their studies with a state examination – *rigorózní zkouška* – and they are awarded the degree doctor of medicine (MUDr.), dentist (MDDr.), or doctor of veterinary medicine (MVDr.). All degrees are used in front of the name.

Doctoral studies finish with a state doctoral examination and defence of a thesis. The degree for all fields of study is *doktor* (Ph.D.) with the exception of theology, where the degree *doktor teologie* (Th.D.) is awarded. Both degrees are used after the name.

As a document attesting to the closure of studies and the awarding of particular academic degree is the higher education diploma (*vysokoškolský diplom*) and diploma supplement (*dodatek k diplomu*).

Having been awarded the academic degree, *magistr* students can sit a state examination *rigorózní zkouška* which includes the defence of a thesis – *rigorózní práce*. Those who have passed the exam and successfully defended their thesis are awarded the degree of *doktor*, the abbreviation differing according to the field of study (JUDr., PhDr., RNDr., PharmDr., ThDr., for catholic theology, the degree is – licentiate – ThLic.). This is put in front of the person's name.

In 2007/08, 63.7 thousand students graduated from public higher education institutions, 79 % of those in full-time forms of studies. Graduates of full-time forms of studies at private higher education institutions constitute 36 % of the total number of graduates (9 451) from these institutions.

Superior in number are the graduates of economics and administration (25.9 %) as well as graduates of technical sciences (24.5 %). On the contrary, the least represented are the graduates of justice, legal and public administration (3.3 %) and arts and culture (2.1 %).

Successful graduates of all programmes can either enter the labour market or, in the case Bachelor's and Master's programmes, can continue their studies.

Upon completion of lifelong learning courses, students obtain a certificate from the institution of higher education. Higher education institution can recognise up to 60 % of credits needed to complete a study programme to successful graduates of lifelong education within the accredited study programmes if they become students in the meaning of the Act.

For more information, see 7.4.

Continuing education is a common part of the working life of higher education graduates.

6.2.5 Guidance and counselling

Higher education institutions all boast academic guidance service centres. The legislative basis for these was laid down in the Higher Education Act, according to which, the public higher education institutions are obliged to offer to applicants, students and other persons information and guidance services connected with the study and future work placement of graduates of study programmes (similar guidance is usually also provided by private higher education institutions). They provide, in particular, educational guidance before and during the first months of study at a higher education institution, psychological counselling and psychotherapy, social counselling focused on students' social and economic problems and vocational and career guidance.

In the field of higher education counselling, project activities have been underway since 2008 with eight universities participating under the coordination of the University of Economics, Prague. Since 2009, a follow-up development program run by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has been implemented with a focus on making higher education counselling services more effective and on creating a network of counsellors who would mutually cooperate.

6.2.6 Academic staff

Academics are those employees of institutions of higher education who carry out both educational and scientific work, as well as research, development, artistic or other creative activity, e.g. professor (*profesor*), associate professor (docent), specialised assistant (*odborný asistent*), assistant (*asistent*), lecturer (*lektor*) and academics involved in science, research and development. Other specialists who are not members of the higher education institution's staff can also teach in these institutions. An institution's internal regulations define the position of a visiting professor.

The law does not prescribe any special pedagogical training for academics. Career development is specified by internal institutional regulations. The degree of docent (associate professor) is awarded by the *rektor* following a habilitation procedure in which the scientific or artistic qualifications of the applicant are examined, partly on the basis of their habilitation dissertation. Professors are appointed in a specific field by the President of the Republic on the recommendation of the higher education institution's council, submitted through the Minister of Education.

The obligation of academic staff to further educate themselves is not defined explicitly in The Higher Education Act. But The Higher Education Act states that in addition to teaching the academic staff must fulfil also the scientific, research, development, artistic and other creative activities. According to the Model Ethics Code for Academic Staff of Higher Education Institutions, which is not a binding document but many *vysoké školy* prepared their own ethics code on its basis, the academic staff permanently develop their own abilities, extent and deepen knowledge and skills in the area of their professional focus as well as general educational work.

In 2008, 16 976.6 of academics (full-time equivalent) were employed at higher education institutions. Professors and associate professors constituted 31 % of these.

7. CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Czech adult education has a long tradition. The beginning of edification activities dates back to the period of the enlightenment. In the course of the 19th century, many cultural-enlightenment institutions and associations were founded. Initially, adult education was rather a matter of individual interest. At the beginning of the 20th century, trade organisations in certain professions (e.g. medical) or fields (e.g. agriculture) became the main providers of such education. In some professions, the system is very well developed. In the 1960s, there was a remarkable development of in-company training. In the 1970s, the research and publication production in the area of adult education started to grow.

At present, continuing (further) education is provided in the following areas:

- general education, for a small minority who have not reached the desired level of initial education, in preparatory courses for entrance examinations to secondary schools, to higher educational institutions, and in language education;
- further vocational education and training (acquisition, broadening or completing of qualifications, retraining, obligatory periodical updating of knowledge and skills in specified professions);
- civic/special interest education (which has a long tradition in the Czech Republic) is generally of a cultural nature and satisfies people's political, historical and cultural and similar interests.

Further education and training is provided by schools, including *vysoké školy*, by employers, public administration and self-governing bodies and by their educational institutions, by non-governmental non-profit organisations including professional and commercial organisations.

7.1 Policy and legislative framework

The adult education issues are covered by a number of different regulations. (However, one integrated legal regulation does not exist.) The current legislation consists of the following acts:

1. The Education Act valid from 1 January 2005, drawn up taking lifelong learning into account, which:
 - newly defines other than full-time forms of education (see 7.4);
 - strengthens the role of follow-up courses (*nástavbové studium*); enables the school-leavers with apprenticeship certificate (*výuční list*) to improve their qualification by school-leaving examination /*maturitní zkouška*/ (ISCED 4A, see chapter 5);
 - introduces shortened forms of study to attain apprenticeship certificate or to attain secondary education completed by a school-leaving examination (both forms provide a second chance for applicants who have difficulties in finding work) (ISCED 4, see chapter 5);
 - introduces the possibility of recognising prior learning;
 - makes it possible to acquire a level of education without having studied at a secondary or tertiary professional school;
 - regulates the possibility of further education in courses which do not provide a recognised level of education.
2. Higher Education Act includes a provision on the lifelong learning programmes. (For more information see 7.4.)

3. The 2006 Act on Verification and Recognition of Further Education Outcomes from 2006, implemented progressively since 2007, makes provision for:
 - the National Qualifications Framework as a publicly accessible register of entire and partial qualifications and their standards for qualification and evaluation;
 - rules for awarding and withdrawing authorisation for verification of further education outcomes (partial or entire qualifications);
 - rules of assessing and acquiring a partial qualification, and
 - responsibilities of state administration bodies in the verification and recognition of further education.
4. Regulations related to work performance: the Labour Code, the Employment Law and related regulations of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, e.g. the Decree on accreditation of training facilities providing retraining.

According to the Labour Code, the employer takes care of the professional development of the employees, i.e. initial training (for unqualified employees or those transferred to different types of jobs), practical training for school-leavers, deepening and improving of the qualification. The employer is entitled to require an employee to participate in courses. The employees are obliged to maintain and improve their qualifications for the agreed work performance.

The Employment Act, which takes into account and reflects EU legislation, defines state employment policy, its subjects and tools. The framework of pro-active employment policy includes measures for the development of human resources, e.g. training courses, retraining, information and guidance.

5. Regulations specifying qualification requirements for some non-manual professions: e.g. acts on the administration of territorial units, on courts and judges, on tax advisers, employees in the health sector, etc. These regulations often define institutions, which organise training or examinations. One of these regulations is the 2004 Act on Educational Staff and the Decree of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports on in-service training of educational staff.
6. On the basis of the Act on Technical Standards and the Act on State Supervision, regulations concerning professional skills and qualification requirements, regular further education and re-examination of employees have been developed. These regulations also anticipate the establishment of special institutions for education and certification.
7. The Trade Licensing Act, which regulates the provision of education on a commercial basis does not stipulate any special requirements, although, retraining programmes have to be accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, or, in the case of education covered in points 3 and 4, by the relevant ministries: Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice, etc. or other responsible authorities.

7.2 Distribution of responsibilities

Other full-time forms of study, which lead towards a specific level of education, including higher education study programmes, fall within the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. The Ministry outlines the general framework of further education and supports its development mainly through an effort to restructure educational programmes and through financing development programmes. Its specific sphere of responsibility includes retraining where the Ministry is an accreditation body for retraining programmes. In 2006, the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education were extended: it continues to coordinate the activities of other ministries and other bodies in the system of recognition of qualifications. It approves, amends and deletes entries on the list of entire

and partial qualifications in the National Qualification Framework (NQF), which is managed and published by the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education. It approves, changes and cancels qualification and assessment standards. The Ministry established an advisory body for this area: the National Council for Qualifications.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs guarantees state employment policy. It is responsible for designing the National Occupations System – a database which will offer information on labour market demands for qualifications. The Ministry is the founder of Labour Offices which provide information and guidance services related to vocational training and further education, organise retraining of job seekers, co-finance retraining (including subsistence during retraining), and encourage development of job opportunities through which school-leavers can gain professional experience and young job seekers can gain qualifications.

The Ministry of Industry and Trade strives to increase the competitiveness of industry. This involves support for the introduction of new technologies, including retraining of employees.

The Ministry for Regional Development promotes the implementation of all educational initiatives at regional or local levels.

The Ministry of Culture is one of the central state authorities for media, libraries and cultural education, which are an important part of non-vocational (interest) education.

All ministries are responsible for vocational training in regulated professions within their respective sectors. They are authorising bodies according to the Act on Verification and Recognition of Further Education Outcomes: they grant authorisation to verify and recognise further education outcomes and participate in preparation of qualification and assessment standards in their sectors.

Regions establish councils for education, training and employment. One of their objectives is to build links between the world of education and the world of work. Regions also establish regional centres for lifelong learning that are sometimes composed of a network of upper secondary and tertiary professional schools providing adult education services. Chambers of Commerce and Human Resources Development Councils also operate at a regional level. The regions also set the conditions for language and basic art education.

Communities have an important role in education as the bodies responsible not only for the *základní školy*, which can offer space for adult education, but also for a great number of museums, galleries, libraries and culture centres, which traditionally organise public education activities.

Social partners have been active in education since approximately 1996. The three most important organisations are: the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic (*Svaz dopravy a průmyslu České republiky*), the Czech Chamber of Commerce (*Hospodářská komora České republiky*) and the Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions (*Českomoravská konfederace odborových svazů*). Their main sphere is vocational training, both initial and, even more importantly, continuing training. These organisations aim to change the economic environment in order to encourage companies to take an interest in education and training.

The provision of educational services on a commercial basis is not controlled by any regulatory body. The only exceptions are institutions wishing to provide recognised further vocational training (which have to apply for accreditation to an authorised body, e.g. the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports) and institutions providing approved language courses (which apply for accreditation to the Ministry of Education).

7.3 Financing

Adult education through which a relevant education level is attained may be organised at upper secondary and tertiary professional schools in other than the full-time (day) study. It is financed by the Ministry of Education through regional authorities. Funds are allocated to regional authorities on the basis of the number of pupils in age cohorts relevant to educational levels and national per capita amounts (see 1.3). According to set rules, regions establish their own regional per capita amounts for every type and form of education in agreement with their long-term policy objectives, taking into account registered activities of individual schools. The only exceptions are courses in which adults can complete basic education when, as a rule, the costs of the study are covered from the central budget. Language and basic arts education at schools is provided upon payment. Basic schools are financed mostly from the state budget.

The university study programmes in a combined or a distance form are financed in the same way as the programmes in the full-time form (see 1.3).

Retraining is financed from various sources. Unemployed people registered as job seekers are entitled to attend such courses fully funded by Labour Offices (from the budget of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, namely from contributions of companies, employees and self-employed people earmarked for the state employment policy). Other participants have to bear the cost themselves. Labour Offices share the costs of retraining courses organised by institutions for their employees.

Financing of company level educational activities is the responsibility of the employer. Employers usually offer fully funded training and provide employees with paid leave if the increase in their qualification meets the employers' needs. Employers and employees can also agree on terms of sharing costs.

Employers can include expenses of further education and retraining of employees provided by institutions other than the employer, as well as expenses for the operation of their educational facilities, in their costs, provided it is not up to the state administration to cover them. However, the current financial incentives are considered to be insufficient both for providers and participants in education.

Special interest education activities are fully funded by the participants. Prices are based on free market principles.

7.4 Programmes and providers

A. Types of training institutions, programmes and their objectives

A.1. Schools (according to the Education Act)

Schools primarily organise coherent adult education programmes, providing a certain level of education through other than full-time forms of studies. These programmes at upper secondary and tertiary professional levels and in conservatoires are mostly provided in fields for which full-time programmes also exist. Follow-up courses (*nástavbové studium*) (post-secondary education – ISCED 4) are organised in other than full-time study forms. As is the newly established shortened form of study for acquiring secondary education completed either by attaining an apprenticeship certificate (*výuční list*) or by a school-leaving examination (*maturitní zkouška*) (see chapter 5).

2.4 % of students participate in other than day form of study at secondary schools (ISCED level 3), in post-secondary education (ISCED level 4) it is 56.2 % of students. Over one fourth of tertiary professional schools students participate in other than day form of study.

For those who have completed compulsory school attendance requirements but have not completed basic education, both basic schools and secondary schools can organise courses aimed at completing basic education. In the 2008/09 school-year, 368 pupils attended courses to obtain basic education.

All schools can also organise various further education courses, including retraining, but they have to gain a special accreditation.

The educational objectives in all forms of education are identical. Acquisition of qualifications is prevailing.

Adult education is also organised by basic art schools – *základní umělecké školy* (however, special interest education activities are mostly intended for basic and upper secondary school pupils) and language schools authorised to organise state language examinations – *jazykové školy s právem jazykové zkoušky* (both special interest education activities and qualification courses, also the one-year post-secondary courses – see below, chapter A.4).

Admission requirements for other forms of studies providing courses for adults leading to a defined level of education are usually identical to those for full-time study. This is also the case for applicants who have completed their previous education abroad.

A school head can partially recognise education achieved by a learner prior to his/her present study if it is documented or if the learner demonstrates his/her knowledge in an examination.

For one-year post-secondary language courses, secondary education completed with a school-leaving examination (*maturitní zkouška*) is required.

A.2. Higher educational institutions

Higher educational institutions provide adults with the opportunity to study in many types of study programmes, either in the form of distance learning or combined distance and full-time study. The attained education is equal.

From the total number of higher education students, 29.5 % participated in the distance or combined form of study.

Higher education institutions can provide lifelong learning courses in addition to their regular study programmes. Courses can be offered free or for fees, and can be career-related (e.g. in-service training of educational staff) or for personal development (e.g. the University of the Third Age). The lifelong learning courses organised for the upper-secondary school-leavers (retraining courses, 'preparatory classes', etc.) are regarded as the post-secondary education (ISCED 4A), see below, chapter A.4. The specific conditions for lifelong learning are set by the internal regulations of each institution. In keeping with the Higher Education Act, participants in lifelong education are not considered to be university students. Since 2001, it has been possible for higher educational institutions to acknowledge credits gained in lifelong education programmes. If successful graduates of these programmes become students of accredited study programmes, higher education institution may acknowledge credits up to the amount of 60 % of the credits necessary to obtain the higher education diploma.

In 2008/09, 47 institutions offered lifelong learning courses, 44 071 of persons participated in them. Of them, 5 506 constitute participants of programmes for acquiring teaching qualification, 4 936 participants of programmes for extending teaching qualification and the rest chose other programmes.

Secondary school-leavers constitute 70 % of all participants, Master's programme graduates one fourth of participants and the remaining 5 % are tertiary professional school graduates.

The National Network of Distance Education has been formed under the support of the PHARE programme. It consists of the National Centre for Distance Learning at the Centre for Higher Education Studies in Prague and many centres at 24 higher education institutions.

A.3. Profit and non-profit non-school institutions

Organisations (enterprises, institutions, state administration bodies) provide education primarily for their own employees by means of their own education institutions or trainers, or by hiring services of other institutions. In-company training is aimed at improving current performance of the tasks within the organisation.

The non-profit organisations providing further education are: the education organisations in different sectors, professional organisations, foundations, churches, trade unions, political parties, cultural institutions (museums, galleries, libraries, houses of culture).

Education is also provided by commercial educational institutions. Schools can also organise educational courses on a commercial basis.

If commercial institutions acquire accreditation, they can also run one-year post-secondary foreign language courses (see below, chapter A.4).

Education provided by enterprises and non-profit or commercial organisations includes courses of various types, subjects, levels and duration. Courses are offered depending on the current supply and demand. Therefore, it is impossible to give a general description of admission requirements, educational objectives, the content and methods of education, assessment or certification.

Information on retraining courses usually states if they are targeted at unemployed people or if they do not relate to the learner's status in the labour market. The minimum requirement for some courses is secondary education completed with a school-leaving examination (*maturitní zkouška*) or with an apprenticeship certificate (*výuční list*). Retraining courses organised within active employment policy and accredited by the Ministry of Education aim to increase the employability of job seekers and groups threatened with unemployment.

In general, the most frequently offered courses are those in foreign languages, ICT, management and accounting.

A.4. Further education of school-leavers

The leavers of all types of schools who did not succeed in the labour market are offered the so-called non-specific retraining courses, preparing job applicants for employment thus increasing their employability. The courses focus on computer literacy, management, marketing, accounting, banking, labour relations and preparation for private enterprise in combination with intensive foreign language training.

Secondary school-leavers have a chance to take one-year post-secondary foreign language courses following a school-leaving examination in the day form. These are run by legal and natural persons listed in the supplement to the Decree on Further Study. The courses have the character of post-secondary education (ISCED 4A). The students who successfully passed the first school-leaving examination (*maturitní zkouška*) or graduated from a conservatoire (*absolutorium*) in the calendar year in which they start the language course continue to have official student status (i.e. they are entitled to tax benefits, student discounts etc). Students are offered foreign language courses at several levels of difficulty and they can take a state or internationally acknowledged exam. Apart from the chosen language, they are often enabled to study the second (subsidiary) language. The courses are paid.

Within lifelong learning programmes (sometimes called 'Year Zero'), some higher education institutions (e.g. Faculty of Arts or Law Faculty, Charles University) accept applicants who passed an entrance exam but were not admitted to regular courses due to a lack of capacity. These students can take subjects according to the study plan for Year 1 and if they satisfy all prescribed study requirements, they can be excused from the entrance exam for the following academic year and become students of regular courses. The studies have the character of post-secondary education (ISCED 4A). The students (before being admitted to regular courses) do not have official student status and thus are not entitled to student benefits. These programmes are paid.

Some higher education institutions and commercial education agencies offer preparatory courses for entrance exams for many fields of study and in a broad scope for those applicants who were not admitted to regular study programmes. Education agencies also organise courses whose content is similar to the first year of higher education (these are sometimes called 'Year Zero'). Participants in these courses do not have official student status and cannot enjoy various student benefits. Some education agencies therefore offer courses combining one-year post-secondary foreign language courses and training for entrance exams for the chosen field of study with student status maintained. These courses are paid.

B. Main principles of the organisation of time and venue

Adult education at secondary or tertiary professional levels is usually organised in part-time forms of education, namely in:

- evening courses (*večerní*) – ranging from 10 to 18 lessons a week in the afternoon or evening;
- distance study (*dálkové*) – self-learning supported by consultation in the range of 200-220 consultation hours in a school-year;
- distance study mostly in the form of e-learning (*distanční*) – self-learning mainly via information technologies, supported by individual consultation;
- combination of study forms (*kombinované*) – education using full-time and one of the forms of education mentioned above.

The study can take one year longer than in a day form.

Higher education institutions organise distance forms of study (e.g. specially prepared printed materials, e-learning, occasional student meetings/workshops, individual consultations etc.) and a combination of forms of studies for adults.

The organisation, duration and venue of qualification, retraining and special interest courses are determined by the institution, which provides them. To a certain extent, institutions can take into account the needs of participants.

C. Curriculum, teaching methods

In its content, formal education is dominated by social sciences, commerce and law (33 % ratio in educational activities) and far behind them are fields of technology, production and construction, pedagogy, medicine (health studies) and social services, natural sciences, mathematics and informatics, arts and humanities, services, agriculture, veterinary medicine and general education.

Curriculum documents for other than full-time study programmes are a modification of the full-time curriculum documents. They are developed by the respective institutions.

The content of further adult education is prepared by the programme organisers: a company prepares a programme for its employees according to their or its needs; a commercial or other institution

prepares it in compliance with the demand of individuals or enterprises, which order courses for their employees.

The content of non-formal education focuses on fields of services (37 % ratio in educational activities), social sciences, commerce and law, arts and humanities, technology, production, construction and health studies.

According to the Adult Education Survey (*Šetření o dalším vzdělávání*), in 2007 3.9 % of adults in the age group of 25 to 64 participated in formal education and 35.4 % in non-formal education. Over a half of the respondents (54.7 %) participated in informal learning. Survey was carried out by the Czech Statistical Office according to the Eurostat methodological guidelines in 2008.

The teaching methods of adults in schools are not markedly different from those used in full-time courses with similar content; although self-study forms a substantial part of the educational process.

A broad range of methods from lectures and seminars to workshops are used in further education outside schools. Interactive teaching methods such as playing roles, simulation, case studies, often based on the learners' experience are gaining importance.

There has been a significant innovation of content and methods especially in language courses, which to a certain extent follow methods and techniques common abroad (a move away from a linguistic approach and an emphasis on communicative competency).

Information and communication technologies are gaining ground both in formal and non-formal adult education.

D. Assessment, accreditation and recognition

Having passed prescribed examinations, graduates of other than full-time study at upper secondary or tertiary professional schools, or higher educational institutions receive a certificate or a degree of the same validity as those in full-time study. (See chapters 4.1.4, 4.2.4, 5.4, 6.1.4, 6.2.4.)

Attainment on adult education courses within lifelong learning at higher educational institutions is recognised by certificates.

Every qualification provided by secondary or tertiary professional education can be acquired without prior education at the relevant school after an examination in subjects or other elements of the educational programme.

A system of state recognised qualifications in the area of further vocational education and training for the present up to ISCED level 3C was launched in mid-2007. Successful passing of an examination taken under the new Act on Verification and Recognition of Further Education Outcomes is documented by a certificate which lists professional skills and their relation to the occupation. Successful passing of the examinations of partial qualifications, that verify the attainment of all professional skills set by the NQF for performing of certain occupation, enables one to take a final examination or the school-leaving examination (*maturitní zkouška*) in a corresponding field without prior education and to acquire *střední vzdělání s výučním listem* or *střední vzdělání s maturitní zkouškou*.

The authorised bodies (individuals or organisations) who were entrusted with the organisation of examinations verifying the mastery of professional skills according to the National Qualification Framework in the sense of the Act on Verification and Recognition of Further Education Outcomes are authorised by relevant ministries or other charged bodies. Up to now, these are mainly schools.

Some professions (medicine and a number of technical professions) have their own examination system as do some professional organisations, e.g. the Auditors' Chamber or the Chamber of Tax Advisers.

There are two independent systems of certification in language education: the traditional Czech system of state language examinations used by language schools authorised to organise these examinations, and adopted systems of international certification of individual languages, which are carried out by accredited (often foreign) institutions.

7.5 Quality assurance

Schools of all levels, except for higher education institutions, are evaluated through the Czech School Inspectorate. Schools are obliged to carry out regular self-evaluation. Higher education institutions are evaluated by the Ministry of Education, especially within the process of study programme accreditation. The education programmes in the distance or combined study form are subject to accreditation as well as in the full-time form (see 6.2).

In the Czech Republic, several ministries are entitled to carry out accreditation procedures of educational programmes or educational institutions regulated by legislation. These are especially:

- The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for retraining programmes, in-service training programmes for teachers and sports field educational programmes;
- The Ministry of the Interior for educational programmes for civil servants of territorial self-governing units;
- The Ministry of Health for gaining and acknowledging competence for performing health professions;
- The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for the social services field.

According to the Employment Act, the retraining courses can be provided only by the institutions with accredited educational programme, by schools providing education in a field incorporated in the register of schools and school facilities, by higher education institutions with accredited study programme according to a special legal regulation or by an institution with an educational programme according to a special legal regulation. This type of education can also be provided by the company training departments.

No general system of accreditation of institutions has yet been developed.

The other institutions are (by operation of law) neither evaluated nor sufficiently monitored. In some fields however respective entities take part in other independent systems of quality evaluation.

There are two approaches which have recently prevailed in the promotion of quality assurance, particularly in the area of managerial education:

- An increasing number of institutions apply ISO 9000 international standards. By acquiring the ISO certificate, they give evidence of the standard quality of their services. These standards can be applied to both educational institutions and lecturers and educational programmes.
- Associations of educational and consulting firms stipulate their own set of requirements, usually inspired by the Total Quality Management approach.

7.6 Guidance and counselling

There are no special legislative measures for guidance services for adults in education system. However, the Government authorised the Ministry of Education to participate in the development of an information system of educational opportunities not only for children and youth, but also for adults. The National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education is engaged in vocational guidance in the education sectors. One unit of the Institute is the Career Guidance Centre. (For more information see 4.1.5.)

Labour Offices, which fall within the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, provide guidance services in the area of further education, especially retraining. This Ministry is the provider of the Integrated System of Typical Positions (ISTP) portal where it is possible to find a programme to draw up one's own work profile, on the basis of which, an individual can look for work or for information on different professions including pay levels. It includes the Database Advanced Training – DAT (Internet database). Providers of educational services put data concerning their activities in the database. Users can search for courses according to the chosen criteria. The database also includes retraining courses arranged by Labour Offices.

Guidance services are also provided by private employment agencies (*agentura práce*) which must be accredited by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

7.7 Teachers and trainers

Teacher qualifications are stipulated in the Act on Educational Staff. Requirements for the qualifications of primary, secondary and tertiary professional school teachers are described in respective chapters. Teachers of language schools entitled to hold a state language examination and basic art schools must have a master's degree in a given field and pedagogical qualification acquired in concurrent or follow-up studies. Teachers participating in education of adults in schools do not need any special training for teaching adults. Topics related to adult education are usually included in the in-service training of teachers. Specialists in adult education are trained at three departments of Czech universities (Faculty of Philosophy of Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Philosophy of Palacký University in *Olomouc* and *Vysoká škola Jana Ámose Komenského* in Prague), but they have been mostly employed in personnel management.

Various professional associations set forth their own requirements for the competence of lecturers who work in internal educational systems of relevant sectors (fields).

The qualifications of trainers and instructors working for commercial institutions as well as the quality of teaching in these institutions are rarely monitored.

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The list of references is divided into two parts: Bibliography and Legislative. The chapter is concluded with a list of websites where more detailed information on education in the Czech Republic can be found.

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