



# THE STRATEGY OF LIFELONG LEARNING IN THE CR

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports  
Prague 2007

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## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	4
1. The concept of lifelong learning .....	6
1.1 Definition of the concept of lifelong learning.....	6
1.2 Development of the concept of lifelong learning.....	7
1.3 Lifelong learning for the 21 <sup>st</sup> century in EU strategic documents .....	10
1.4 Lifelong learning for the 21 <sup>st</sup> century in strategic documents of the CR.....	16
2. ANALYTICAL PART.....	22
2.1 Context analysis .....	22
2.2 Analysis of current situation in lifelong learning development.....	24
2.2.1 Overall characteristics.....	24
2.2.2 Identification of problems in the area of initial (general and vocational) education.....	28
2.2.3 Identification of problems in the area of tertiary education.....	33
2.2.4 Identification of problems in the area of further education.....	39
2.3 Summary results of analysis of the current state of development of LLL – SWOT analysis .....	44
3. STRATEGIC PART.....	46
3.1 Vision for lifelong learning in the CR.....	46
3.2 Main strategic goals .....	46
3.2.1 Recognition, permeability .....	47
3.2.2 Equal access .....	48
3.2.3 Functional literacy.....	51
3.2.4 Social partnership.....	52
3.2.5 Stimulation of demand .....	54
3.2.6 Quality.....	55
3.2.7 Counselling.....	56
3.3 Proposals for measures to promote the development of lifelong learning.....	57
3.3.1 Proposal of measures for the area of initial (general and vocational) education.....	58
3.3.2 Proposal of measures for tertiary education.....	62
3.3.3 Proposal of measures for further education.....	65
3.4 Interconnection of the main strategic directions with proposals for measures for individual segments of lifelong learning .....	71
4. INTERCONNECTION OF STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS, PROPOSALS FOR MEASURES FOR STRATEGIES OF LIFELONG LEARNING AND OPERATIONAL PROGRAMS IN THE CR FOR THE 2007-2013 PERIOD .....	72
4.1 Priorities of the Education for Competitiveness Operational Program and its connection to the Strategy of Lifelong Learning.....	73
4.2 Priorities of the Human Resources and Employment Operational Program and its connection to the Strategy of Lifelong Learning.....	77
DICTIONARY OF BASIC TERMS.....	79
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	81

## INTRODUCTION

The basic precondition of the Czech Republic for achieving success in a modern, dynamically developing economic environment consists neither in an extensive raw material base nor in financial capital. The key pillar for the success of the Czech Republic lies particularly in the ability of the inhabitants of this country to compete in the global, rapidly changing labour market. At the present time, the Czech labour force is recognized primarily for its qualifications, skills, precise work and ability to react flexibly to unexpected situations. However, we must not simply accept this favourable evaluation and forget about further development of human resources in the Czech Republic. It is necessary to also devote special attention to the emerging importance of sustainable development and the potential that is opening up in this area, especially in the sphere of lifelong learning.

Lifelong learning is a complex concept that is not clearly defined. In this connection, it is necessary to emphasize that this complex subject area cannot be unambiguously “planned”. The process of lifelong learning cannot be centrally managed; in particular, it is necessary to avoid bureaucratization of this sphere, expansion of the administrative system that will make decisions on these processes. The degree of regulation of the individual sectors depends primarily on the level of public interest in the development of a certain type of courses being offered. In order for basic changes to occur, all the key participants at the level of the government, regions, enterprises and individuals must support lifelong learning as one of the decisive factors in the competitiveness of the country. The creation of a motivating, legal-economic environment that allows funds to be invested effectively is a precondition for the development of lifelong learning. Investments into lifelong learning must be seen as development investments with the highest priority, with significant effects particularly in the long term.

The Strategy of Lifelong Learning (SLL) in the CR is a fundamental document for the other cross-sectional and individual concepts and policies in this area and constitutes a comprehensive concept for lifelong learning. Its intention is to gradually establish achievable targets that can be promoted, amongst other things, by resources from European funds in the 2007 – 2013 programming period. However, it is not intended to propose implementation procedures, as these must follow from a consensus amongst the participating parties in public policy.

The strategy is based on analysis of the basic strategic documents of the CR and the EU, which are related to or directly concerned with the aspects of lifelong learning from various points of view. It accepts the comprehensive conception of lifelong learning presented in these documents, encompassing economic, environmental and social aspects. In this sense, it is fully in accord with these documents. The contribution of the Strategy of Lifelong Learning in the CR consists primarily in incorporating the individual aspects mentioned in the individual documents into a comprehensive concept of lifelong learning and also in the intention to combine the efforts of all the participating parties in implementing the concept of lifelong learning.

The basic strategic directions of lifelong learning development, that could be primarily promoted, are defined on the basis of analysis of the current state of its development in the CR and its individual segments (initial general, technical and vocational, tertiary, further education). These strategic directions are then made more specific in measures, with consideration for their synergic connection to the relevant ESF<sup>1</sup> operation programs. In its

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<sup>1</sup> In particular the Education for Competitiveness Operational Program and the Human Resources and Employment Operational Program.

proposals, the Strategy is concerned to remove barriers and to provide targeted support for those aspects of lifelong learning that allow lifelong learning to become a reality for everyone.

In order to obtain a broad consensus for the contents of the individual priority areas, this Strategy was discussed with economic and social partners and is being submitted for discussion by the Government of the CR. Simultaneously, this Strategy is a reaction to the instigation of the bodies of the European Union, who submitted a report on the implementation of the **Education and Training 2010** working program. **The Success of the Lisbon Strategy Hinges on Urgent Reforms**<sup>2</sup>. On the basis of this report, it was recommended that the European Union member states increase their efforts to create and implement comprehensive, accessible and coordinated *national strategies of lifelong learning* placed in a European context.

Thus, the Strategy of Lifelong Learning in the CR should become a fundamental program document in this area for 2001 – 2015. However, successful implementation of this strategy will require immediate commencement of the implementation phase, which should lead to elaboration of the individual proposals and measures into specific tasks for participating parties, including calculation of financial requirements and the possibility of covering them. Participation and basic agreement of the main participants in this area (representatives of employees, employers, educators, self-governing units and the state administration) and the participation of professionals in the individual phases of lifelong learning are essential for the success of this phase.

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<sup>2</sup> “Education and Training 2010“. The Success of the Lisbon Strategy Hinges on Urgent Reforms. Translation Ministry of Education 2004.

# 1. THE CONCEPT OF LIFELONG LEARNING

## 1.1 Definition of the concept of lifelong learning

Lifelong learning constitutes a basic **conceptual change in the approach to education** and its organizational principles, where **all the potential for learning** – whether in traditional educational institutions in the framework of the educational system or outside of it – is seen as a single **interconnected unit**, that facilitates diverse and numerous transitions between education and employment and that permits obtaining of the same qualifications and competence in various ways and at any time during one's lifetime<sup>3</sup>. The formal educational system forms the essential basis for this concept of lifelong learning, but constitutes only one of its parts. Everybody should have the opportunity to receive education at various times during their lifetime in accordance with their capabilities, requirements and interests. Lifelong learning conceives all learning as an uninterrupted continuum "from the cradle to the grave". It is based on good basic and general education for everyone, from the early childhood. It should ensure that a human being will "learn to learn" and will have a favourable attitude towards learning. Subsequent initial and further vocational education should provide human beings with the skills and abilities to inventively resolve modern aspects of sustainable development, social cohesion and economy based on knowledge, and should also encompass moral aspects.

Lifelong learning can be divided into two basic stages, denoted as initial and further education. **Initial education** includes:

- **basic education** (primary and lower secondary – ISCED levels 1 and 2), which has a general character and usually corresponds to the period of compulsory education;
- **secondary education** (upper secondary – ISCED level 3), which has a general or vocational character, which is terminated by a school-leaving examination (maturita) (ISCED 3A), apprentice's certificate (ISCED 3C) or final examination (ISCED 3C). Secondary education in the CR also encompasses follow-up study for graduates of secondary education with apprentice's certificates (ISCED 4), ending with a school-leaving examination (maturita).
- **tertiary education** (ISCED 5 and 6) encompasses a broad sector of available education, usually following after passing a school-leaving examination (maturita). It provides specialized professional or artistic education. It includes higher education provided by universities and higher educational institutions, tertiary technical education provided by tertiary technical schools and, to a certain degree, also higher artistic education in conservatories.

Initial education occurs primarily at a young age and can be terminated at any time after completing compulsory education through entering the labour market or joining the economically inactive population.

**Further education** occurs after attaining a certain level of education or following the first entrance of the learner into the labour market<sup>4</sup>. Further education can emphasize a diverse

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<sup>3</sup> Palán, Z.: Celoživotní učení. [Lifelong learning.] In: Kalous, J. – Veselý, A.: Vybrané problémy vzdělávací politiky. [Selected aspects of educational policy.] Praha, Karolinum 2006, s. 25-37.

<sup>4</sup> Here, this definition of further education partly overlaps with the definition of initial education in that it also encompasses formal education obtained by adults in the school system.

spectrum of knowledge, skills and competences important for participation in the working, civic and personal life.

In the ideal case, lifelong learning is considered to be a continuous process; however, in actual fact, it consists in the continual preparedness of an individual to learn rather than in continuous study. In this, it is based on the principles that a specific acquired competence is not as valuable as the ability to learn. Thus, there is a tendency to speak rather about lifelong learning rather than lifelong education, to emphasize the importance of the learning activities of each individual that are not organized in character, i.e. independent learning, e.g. at work, during stays in nature, at cultural events, etc.

Thus, lifelong learning includes:

- **Formal education**, which is performed in educational institutions, usually in schools. Its functions, targets, contents, organizational forms and methods of assessment are defined by legal regulations. This encompasses obtaining levels of education that usually follow one from another (basic education, secondary education, secondary education with an apprenticeship certificate, secondary education with a school-leaving examination (maturita), tertiary technical education in conservatories, tertiary technical education, higher education (university education), whose completion is confirmed by the relevant certificate (certificate, diploma, etc.).
- **Non-formal education**, which emphasizes gaining knowledge, skills and competences that can improve the social and working position of the individual. Non-formal education is provided by employers, private educational institutes, NGO's, schools and other organizations. These include organized leisure time activities for children, adolescents and adults, foreign language courses, computer courses, retraining courses and also short-term training and lectures. This kind of education requires the participation of a professional instructor, teacher or trained organizer. It does not lead to obtaining a level of education.
- **Informal learning**, which is understood as a process of obtaining knowledge, acquiring skills and competences from everyday experience and activities at work, in the family and in one's leisure time. It also includes self-education, where the learner has no way of testing his acquired knowledge (e.g. television language courses). In contrast to formal and non-formal education, it is not organized, is usually not systematic and is not institutionally coordinated.

Lifelong learning assumes complementariness and intermingling of these forms of learning throughout one's entire lifetime, basically always and everywhere. Consequently, the term "lifelong" is also not wholly satisfactory, as it emphasizes only the temporal dimension of education. Consequently, recently the term "lifewide" learning has been coined, emphasizing that learning occurs in all environments and life situations.

## 1.2 Development of the concept of lifelong learning

The idea of human beings learning throughout their lives is not new. It is sufficient to recall the suggestions made by J. A. Comenius related to education performed in stages encompassing all of human life. However, during the development of society, the reasons why human beings should learn continuously changed and there was also a change in the expectations of individuals and societies from lifelong learning. The concepts of lifelong learning prepared so far have varied targets, from improvement of the existing state of education through a change in educational policy to a change in the entire social, economic and environmental context.



The concepts of lifelong learning that were formulated by international organizations (Council of Europe, UNESCO, OECD) in the 1960's and 1970's were concerned primarily with the "new humanism", i.e. social and cultural development of society through education available to all without any discrimination. International conventions and recommendations adopted by UNESCO in this period are also formulated in this sense. These concepts set primarily social and cultural targets, while targets related to work played at best a secondary role and environmental targets were completely ignored.

The concept of "permanent education" of the Council of Europe<sup>5</sup> emphasized primarily equality of educational opportunities. The UNESCO paper "Learning to Be"<sup>6</sup> was concerned with global educational policy and the social-cultural mission of this organization, especially in relation to improving overall educational levels in countries at various stages of social and economic development. The OECD concept of "recurrent education" was evolved in an attempt to escape from the cycle of constantly lengthening and poorly effective and expensive initial education. This concept was defined by the OECD in 1973 as follows:<sup>7</sup> "Recurrent education is a comprehensive educational strategy for all forms of education following on from compulsory or basic education, where its basic feature lies in distribution of education throughout the life of the individual in a recurrent manner, i.e. so that it alternates with other forms of active life, especially with work and also with leisure time and retirement".

Emphasis was placed primarily on the possibility of passing between school education and employment throughout one's whole lifetime as an alternative to prolonging school education at the beginning of one's life. School institutions, i.e. public education financed from public sources, played a fundamental role in these concepts of lifelong learning or education. This was related to the important role of the state in organizing, managing and financing the system. At that time, employers exhibited minimal interest in adult education as a means of maintaining or improving vocational qualifications, although, e.g. in Baťa's factories before the Second World War, adult education was a tried-and-true pathway to success.

The principles of lifelong learning have been accepted in developed countries at a policy level. However, in actual fact, there has been little significant implementation or achievement of the intended results of educational policy and, where this did occur, it was only in a highly reduced form.

The current concept of lifelong learning arose in the 1990's. It is being developed in a different environmental, economic and political climate than existed in the 1970's, and favours more realistic targets related to programs of lifelong learning emphasizing development of human resources, especially in relation to the requirements of an effectively functioning economy. The emphasis in this concept is shifting towards the aspect of vocational education and training (VET) for gainful employment. The basic idea from the 1970's has remained, but the understanding of its social function has changed. From a potentially useful instrument for cultivation of the human soul, it has become an important instrument in providing for the existence of each individual, dependent not only on the preconditions for employment in the labour market, but also on the potential for finding one's own identity and place in confusing social relationships

Basic changes compared to the conception of the 1970's lie primarily in the fact that less emphasis is placed on school institutions and, to the contrary, greater stress is placed on

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<sup>5</sup> Permanent Education. Final report. Strasbourg, Council of Europe 1978.

<sup>6</sup> Faure, E.: Learning to be. Paris-London, Unesco-Harrap 1972.

<sup>7</sup> Kallen, D.-Bergtsson, J.: Recurrent Education: A strategy for lifelong learning. Paris, OECD 1973.

the importance of institutions outside of the formal education system and the importance of non-formal education and informal learning in various environments. Other differences are related to the role of the state, which is no longer so important; the system is based rather on partnership in the framework of civil society and division of responsibility amongst the state, employers, municipalities, civic associations, etc. Instead of further education financed from public resources and alternation of education and employment, preference is given, e.g., to learning at the workplace and employment during learning.

A further substantial difference lies in endeavouring that, wherever possible, all individuals should complete the full cycle of secondary education, i.e. that they should remain in school to at least 17-18 years of age. The creation of this foundation for lifelong learning constitutes one of the bases for the strategy of development of lifelong learning for everyone. This also has fundamental consequences for the conception of initial education at the upper secondary level.

The concept of lifelong learning of the 1990's is described in a number of publications of international organizations. While the UNESCO report "Learning: The Treasure Within"<sup>8</sup> tends to be philosophical in nature, the OECD publication ("Lifelong Learning for All"<sup>9</sup>) and that of the European Commission (the White Paper on "Education and training: teaching and learning – towards the learning society")<sup>10</sup> suggest specific political strategies.

The concept presented by **OECD** is characterized by the following points:

1. All potential for education in the formal (school) and informal (out-of-school) sector is seen as one interconnected system that is intended to facilitate the acquisition of qualifications through various means at any time in one's lifetime. The basic strategy for creating such a coherent system consists in strengthening and reinforcing its base, an integral part of which consists in the system of initial education, so as to enable the creation of a strong and **good knowledge base for lifelong learning by all individuals**.

2. Lifelong learning is not restricted to linear passage through the educational system, but also places emphasis on development of mutual relationships between learning and employment. This requires primarily provision for more **flexible and smoother interconnections between education and employment**. Organization of education should acquire the character of various combinations of education in enterprises or schools and employment.

3. The development of lifelong education is related to many entities. **Consequently, responsibility for the central level lies with the Government in cooperation with social partners**. The Ministry of Education should play an important role in coordinating these partners so as to ensure the relevance, interconnection and effectiveness of educational policy.

The conception of the **European Commission** emphasizes an approach stressing a broad knowledge base and development of the abilities of individuals to participate in economic life, i.e. employability. This is a response to changes in society, characterized by the consequences of an information society, science and technology and internationalization. These general approaches are elaborated in several areas:

1. Support for acquisition of new skills, including a new means of social recognition of technical and vocational skills.

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<sup>8</sup> Delors, J.: Learning: the Treasure Within. Paris, OECD 1996.

<sup>9</sup> Lifelong learning for all. Paris, OECD 1996.

<sup>10</sup> White Paper on education and training : teaching and learning - towards the learning society. Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities 1996.

2. A closer relationship between schools and the business sector, including support for the development of apprenticeship of all forms.
3. Combating social exclusion, i.e. providing a so called second chance.
4. Promotion of fluency in the three languages of the Communities, which will be important for employability in the framework of the single European market.
5. Evaluation of material investments and investments into education on the same basis.

The current concept of lifelong learning combines the economic, social, environmental and cultural dimensions and is directed towards a learning society. This concept is concerned more than ever before with participation and shared responsibility amongst many partners in aspects of educational policy.

The proclamation of 1996 as European Year of Lifelong Learning was a culmination of attempts to introduce lifelong learning in the 1990's.

At the level of the United Nations Organization, lifelong learning is also understood to be one of the chief instruments for resolving urgent environmental issues and as the most effective pathway to sustainable development. EU foreign developmental assistance so far reflects the need for lifelong learning in developing countries to only a limited degree.

### 1.3 Lifelong learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> century in EU strategic documents

Lifelong learning is viewed in EU strategic documents both from the standpoint of employment and development of human resources and the standpoint of education. However, contemporary European documents employ a more comprehensive concept, emphasizing the economic, environmental and social aspects of lifelong learning. The Strategy of Lifelong Learning of the CR is based on this comprehensive concept.

#### The Lisbon process

The future direction of policy and activities in the EU for the 21<sup>st</sup> century was decided at the meeting of the European Council in Lisbon in March 2000, which approved the **Lisbon strategy** for transformation of Europe into the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. Lifelong learning plays a key role in this strategy. The Lisbon process was further elaborated in the area of education **in Stockholm in 2001**. Thus, the first official document was published, outlining a comprehensive and integrated European approach to national policies in the areas of education and vocational training. In connection with this document, a detailed working program was elaborated for achieving the targets, which was approved in **2002** by the European Council in **Barcelona**. This working program of **Education and Training in Europe (Education 2010)**<sup>11</sup> constitutes a strategic reference framework for the creation of policies in the area of education and vocational training at the EU. It is concerned with the individual levels and kinds of education and vocational training from basic skills to technical and higher education with special emphasis on the principle of lifelong learning.

In connection with the targets set by the Working program, **five European comparison benchmarks** were approved at a meeting of the European Council in Brussels in May **2003**: early

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<sup>11</sup> „Education and training in Europe: diverse systems shared goals for 2010”. Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities 2002. Ministry of Education

school leaving; graduates of mathematical, scientific and technical fields; the level of completion of upper secondary education; key skills; participation in lifelong learning. These benchmarks are seen as instruments in the open method of coordination of the national policies of the member states.

Further elaboration and evaluation of the Lisbon strategy in the areas of interest here occurred in two areas – employment and education.

The **meeting of the European Council in Brussels (December 2003)** concerned with economic growth and competitiveness in the EU countries adopted the report of the Employment Taskforce, headed by Wim Kok: “**Jobs. Jobs. Jobs. Creating more employment in Europe**” prepared in November 2003<sup>12</sup>. The report states that, although the EU member states have long been aware of the need to promote lifelong learning (LLL), actual progress is minimal. In order for LLL to become a reality, there must be a cultural shift toward cooperation between the public authorities, employers and individuals in promoting opportunities for vocational training corresponding to qualification requirements. The member states should prepare comprehensive LLL strategies through setting ambitious targets for improving the level of human capital, facilitating access to LLL and promoting new means of dividing costs among the public authorities, enterprises and individuals. The chief participants in LLL are Governments, which must establish the foundations for LLL systems using public funds. Attention must be paid to the quality and amounts of public expenditures.

In February of 2004, a report was presented on the state of implementation of the “**Education and Training 2010. The Success of the Lisbon Strategy Hinges on Urgent Reforms**”<sup>13</sup> working program, which defines specific challenges and proposes measures for making lifelong learning a specific reality. Here, lifelong learning is seen as a leading principle for policy in the area of education and training and it is proposed that the individual countries increase their efforts in creating and implementing comprehensive, accessible and coordinated *national strategies of lifelong learning* placed in a European context. Efforts should be exerted primarily towards providing all individuals with the necessary key competences and creation of an open and attractive educational environment accessible for everyone.

In November 2004, an evaluation report was submitted by a group of experts in the area of employment headed by Wim Kok and entitled “**The Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Employment**”<sup>14</sup>. This report presents a strategy to enable European economies to achieve the Lisbon targets, which are endangered in the middle of the ten-year period. Measures must be implemented in the following five areas: the knowledge society, the internal market, the economic climate, the labour market and environmental sustainability. The LLL strategies of the individual countries must set targets such that they can deal with rapid changes in technologies, increase participation in the labour market, reduce unemployment and enable people to work longer. All participants – the authorities, individuals and companies – must accept their portion of responsibility for improving the level and effectiveness of investments into human capital. In relation to this evaluation, a decision was taken by the **European Council in March of 2005**<sup>15</sup> to update the Lisbon

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<sup>12</sup> „Jobs, jobs, jobs. Creating more employment in Europe.“ Report of the Employment Taskforce chaired by Wim Kok. November 2003.

<sup>13</sup> “Education and Training 2010“. The Success of the Lisbon Strategy Hinges on Urgent Reforms. Ministry of Education

<sup>14</sup> „Facing the Challenge. The Lisbon strategy for growth and employment“. Report from the High Level Group chaired by Wim Kok. November 2004.

<sup>15</sup> Source: The Council of the European Union: European Council in Brussels, March 22 and 23, 2005 – Presidency Conclusions.

strategy to newly establish growth and employment as priorities. LLL was designated as an essential condition for implementation of the strategy.

The **European Council in June 2005**<sup>16</sup> adopted the **Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs for the period 2005 – 2008**<sup>17</sup> – this is a revision of the Lisbon strategy for the area of employment – as a reaction to the delay in implementing the strategy. The document consists of main guidelines for economic policies providing for economic cohesiveness in all three dimensions of the strategy (economic, social and environmental) and of the main directions in employment policy. A total of 24 such guidelines have been formulated. Implementation of the LLL system is important for realization a number of them, and this is expressed most clearly in measures related to employment policy. The member states were requested to prepare the approved main integrated guidelines for growth and jobs for 2005-2008 in their internal reform programs by the autumn of 2005<sup>18</sup>.

In March 2006, the **European Council in Brussels**<sup>19</sup> confirmed that the main Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs 2005 – 2008 remain valid and agreed on specific areas for priority measures, which will be implemented by the end of 2007. These consist in a) greater *investments into knowledge and innovation*, b) utilization of the potential of entrepreneurs, especially of small and medium-sized enterprises, and c) increasing job opportunities for priority groups. The national LLL strategy should provide all individuals with the necessary competences and qualifications, with increasing support from programs of education and training at the Community level, such as Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci.

### **The Copenhagen Process**

The priorities of the Lisbon process that are specific for vocational education and training (VET) are defined in the **Copenhagen Declaration**<sup>20</sup>, which was signed in November 2002 in Copenhagen by the Ministers responsible for VET in the EU member states, the EFTA/EEA countries, the candidate countries, the representatives of the European Commission and representatives of the social partners at a European level. The declaration is related to strategy for improving the effectiveness, quality and attractiveness of VET. Its priorities include particularly promotion of transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications, common principles for recognizing informal and formal education, common criteria for ensuring quality, support for development of reference levels of qualifications and a credit system.

In **October 2004**, the **Maastricht study** was prepared – “Achieving the Lisbon goals: The Contribution of VET”<sup>21</sup>, which was intended to evaluate progress in relation to the Lisbon targets in the area of vocational education. This study was then presented at a meeting of foremost European representatives of VET in Maastricht in December 2004. The final document, the **Maastricht Communiqué**<sup>22</sup>, then set new priorities for the evolving Copenhagen process promoting especially transparency (EQF, ECVET) and expanding European cooperation in the area of VET.

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<sup>16</sup> Source: The Council of the European Union: European Council in Brussels, June 16 and 17, 2005 – Presidency Conclusions.

<sup>17</sup> Integrated guidelines for growth and jobs (2005-2008) – European Commission 2005.

<sup>18</sup> The National Lisbon Program for 2005-2008 has been prepared in the CR (National Program of Reforms for the CR). October 2005.

<sup>19</sup> Source: The Council of the European Union: European Council in Brussels, March 23 and 24, 2006 – Presidency Conclusions.

<sup>20</sup> Copenhagen Declaration of November 30, 2002, EC 2002.

<sup>21</sup> In: Cedefop Synthesis of Maastricht Study, Vocational Education and Training – Key to the future, Lisbon-Copenhagen-Maastricht mobilising for 2010, Cedefop 2004.

<sup>22</sup> Maastricht Communiqué on the future priorities of Enhanced European Cooperation in VET, 14 December 2004 (Review of the Copenhagen Declaration of 30 November 2002).

## The Bologna Process

The Bologna process is an intergovernmental process concerned with the creation of a European higher education area, which is intended to improve the employability and mobility of individuals and to increase the international competitiveness of European higher education. Support for and development of this process are part of the Lisbon process. The **Bologna Declaration (1999)**<sup>23</sup> on the creation of a European higher education area to the year 2010 is the basic document for this process. The countries of Europe thus got the opportunity of creating a common system of higher education in Europe utilizing the unique qualities of their educational systems.

Related documents include the **Prague communiqué (2001)**<sup>24</sup>, which emphasized particularly the importance of ensuring the quality both of the national systems and also at an international level, and also their mutual acceptance and the importance of cooperation in the area of recognition of documents and use of credits (ECTS). An important conclusion of the **Bologna Communiqué (2003)**<sup>25</sup> was primarily that, from 2005, each graduate from higher education should automatically and free-of-charge obtain a Diploma Supplement issued in a widely used European language. The **Conference of Ministers in Bergen (2005)**<sup>26</sup> adopted two important documents that specify at a European level:

- The framework for qualifications of the European higher education area.
- A set of standards, procedures and main guidelines in the area of quality assurance, including the principle of the European register of quality assurance agencies.

It thus follows for the individual countries that, by 2007, each country should commence work on a national qualifications framework that will be in accordance with the European framework. The national qualifications frameworks will be prepared by 2010. Simultaneously, a model of external evaluation, based on accepted standards, will be implemented at the national level.

## Lifelong learning

It follows from the above analysis of documents that lifelong learning is an integral part of the overall strategy in the areas of education and employment. Nonetheless, specific documents to promote lifelong learning have been prepared at the EU level.

In direct response to the Lisbon meeting, in October 2000 the European Commission issued the **Memorandum on lifelong learning**<sup>27</sup> to initiate a Pan-European debate on effective strategies for implementation of lifelong learning at an individual and institutional level and in all the spheres of public and private life. The Memorandum identifies six key areas for broad open discussion (key messages):

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<sup>23</sup> European space for higher education, Joint declaration of the Ministers of education of the countries of Europe at a meeting in Bologna on June 19, 1999 <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11088.htm>.

<sup>24</sup> Towards the European Higher Education Area, Communiqué of the meeting of European Ministers in charge of Higher Education, in Prague on May 19th 2001 [http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main\\_doc/010519PRAGUE\\_COMMUNIQUE.PDF](http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/010519PRAGUE_COMMUNIQUE.PDF).

<sup>25</sup> "Realising the European Higher Education Area" – Communiqué of the Conference Ministers responsible for Higher Education, in Berlin on 19 September 2003 [http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main\\_doc/030919Berlin\\_Communique.PDF](http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/030919Berlin_Communique.PDF).

<sup>26</sup> The European Higher Education Area – Achieving the goals, Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Higher Education, Bergen 19-20 May 2005 [http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main\\_doc/050520\\_Bergen\\_Communique.pdf](http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050520_Bergen_Communique.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> Memorandum on Lifelong Learning: Commission Staff Working Paper (October 2000) – available at the EU web site: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lll/lll\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lll/lll_en.html) (<http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/MemorandumEng.pdf>).

- New basic skills for all
- More investment in human resources
- Innovation in teaching and learning
- Valuing learning
- Rethinking guidance and counselling
- Bringing learning closer to home.

Consultations on the Memorandum throughout Europe led to formulation of the document **Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality**<sup>28</sup> in November of 2001. This document provided a broad definition of lifelong learning, encompassing an extensive spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning. The main objectives of lifelong learning should be active citizenship, personal fulfilment, social inclusion and employment. The basic principles to promote effective implementation emphasize the centrality of the learner, the importance of equal opportunities and the quality and relevance of learning opportunities. This document sends an important message in particular that traditional educational systems must be transformed so that they are more open and flexible, and so that learners can have individual learning pathways that are suitable to their needs and interests throughout their lives. Simultaneously, it emphasizes the value of non-formal and informal learning and the need for their recognition. This document is based on six priorities (key messages) towards which the member states should direct their efforts in the future in promoting the development of lifelong learning. The contents of these priorities are based on the six key messages of the Memorandum on lifelong learning:

- recognition of non-formal and informal learning, mutual recognition of certificates and diplomas,
- information, guidance and counselling,
- increasing investments into education, including private resources
- support for learning in communities, cities, regions and enterprises, so that they become learning-promoting organizations,
- free access to basic skills for all citizens, regardless of age,
- support for innovative pedagogy with emphasis on the development of competence, not only the acquisition of knowledge, including a new role for teachers.

This document led to the **Council Resolution on Lifelong Learning**<sup>29</sup> in June 2002. In 2003, the European Commission sent the member states a questionnaire, which was directed towards preparation of reports on progress in preparation of comprehensive strategies for lifelong learning.

The results were summarized in the publication **Implementing lifelong learning strategies in Europe: Progress report on the follow-up to the Council Resolution of 2002 on lifelong learning** of December 2003 and became an integral part of the report on implementation of the Working Program submitted in 2004 (see below). This document states that, while the principle of lifelong and life-wide learning is accepted in all the member states, the degree of implementation into practice is very variable. A difficulty lies particularly in the fact that the competence for the various components of lifelong learning is divided up amongst various ministries and levels of the state administration. The material gives a typology of the conception of lifelong learning as implemented in the member states:

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<sup>28</sup> Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality: Commission Communication. Brussels, EC November 2001.

<sup>29</sup> OJ 2002/C 163/01

a) a well-developed *cradle-to-grave culture* of lifelong learning, with wide public acceptance and high participation rates, covering not only work-related training, but also personal development and active citizenship, served by developed civil society, learning-promoting organizations and recreational learning by individuals;

b) an *employability-related* approach, building on solid initial training and focusing on continuing training to adapt to the changing production processes and structures, with strong participation by both the public sector and industry; workplace training complemented by recognized legal or collectively-negotiated rights to education and training leave; personal further development regarded largely as a private affair;

c) a more recent espousal of lifelong learning which is tied into **modernization of society and the economy** and seeks to change traditional assumptions about the division of life into distinct phases of learning, working and retirement; largely driven by public initiatives but supported by social partners;

d) a *social-inclusion approach* which mainly targets those whose initial experience of education and training has been unsatisfactory or inadequate, certainly in relation to the modern world, and which seeks to re-engage them in a learning experience which may, especially in the initial stages, focus on personal development and bringing them up to a level of personal and basic skills which they should ideally have reached on completion of their initial education; public bodies to the fore, civil-society adult educational organizations also involved.

### **Integration of initiatives**

The European Council and Commission pledged that, once each two years, they would evaluate progress achieved in introducing the “Education and Training 2010” work programme, which encompasses the Copenhagen process related to vocational education and training and measures in the area of higher education. In February 2006, the first such a report was issued - “**Modernizing education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe**”<sup>30</sup>. Here, repeated emphasis is placed on the double role of the systems of education and training: social and economic. Education and training are a determining factor for each country’s potential to achieve excellence, innovation and competitiveness. At the same time, they are an integral part of the social dimension of Europe, because they will transmit values of solidarity, equal opportunities and social participation. Reforms should therefore continue to seek synergies between economic and social policy objectives. The report states that progress has been achieved in defining lifelong learning strategies but that implementation remains a challenge. The report especially points out on-going problems, particularly that the initial education systems do not always provide the necessary foundations for lifelong learning.

Consequently, in **March 2006, the European Council**<sup>31</sup> confirmed that that education and training must be amongst the key aspects of the Lisbon program of reforms, where the LLL program for 2007 – 2013 will be of fundamental importance. In this connection, in October 2006 the European Parliament approved the Commission proposal for the introduction of a new **action program to promote lifelong learning in the 2007 – 2013 period**. This program includes existing and new subprograms concerned with education from

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<sup>30</sup> “Modernizing education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe - 2006. Joint Interim Report of the Council and of the Commission on progress under the Education and Training 2010 work programme.” 2006.

<sup>31</sup> Source: The Council of the European Union: European Council in Brussels, March 23 and 24, 2006 – Presidency Conclusions.



childhood to old age. They are intended to promote projects and activities that assist in mutual exchange, cooperation and mobility between the education and training systems in the EU.

The next evaluation report, which will be prepared in **2008**, will be based on more systematic monitoring of the **implemented lifelong learning strategy** in all the member states and its main priorities will lie in the role of lifelong learning in strengthening the European social model.

## **1.4 Lifelong learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> century in strategic documents of the CR**

The importance of promotion of the development of human potential, as one of the basic factors for sustainable economic growth of knowledge-based economies, is emphasized in the strategic documents of the CR. From the standpoint of lifelong learning, these documents are either placed in a specific context, i.e. they are concerned with more general aspects of social and economic development, the labour market and human resources, or they are directly related to aspects of education. The educational system is then seen in these documents as one of the basic pillars of the development of lifelong learning. Some of them react directly to EU initiatives (consultation process for the Memorandum, National Lisbon Program).

### **Contextual documents**

The Strategy of **Sustainable Development in the CR (2005)**, as an umbrella strategic document, places great emphasis on education, lifelong learning, research and development and harmonic interrelation of the environmental, economic and social pillars of development of society.

The **National Strategic Reference Framework of the CR 2007 – 2013**<sup>32</sup>, prepared in May 2006, is a basic document of the CR for utilization of EU funds in 2007 – 2013. This is based on the fact that, amongst other things, the development of the knowledge and skills of the population will be one of the positive factors greatly affecting the dynamics of development in the CR. The initial social-economic analysis points out the inadequately developed system of further education, and states that the system is not adapted to the needs and potential of adults or the requirements of employers. Opportunities are seen in this document in initiating fundamental changes in the educational system from 2006, such as:

- The Support of General Secondary Education Program to increase the number of general secondary schools and lyceums, to provide better preparation for tertiary technical and higher education and to lead to lifelong learning.
- Curriculum reform of education and training, which has already been commenced and which is intended to lead to substantial modernization of the content and methods of education.
- Improving the language fluency of all groups of inhabitants in relation to the important role of the English language – see the National Plan for Foreign Languages Teaching.
- Substantially greater and more effective utilization of the public capacities of the educational system for further education and training, which is also stimulated by the reduction in the number of children born in recent years.

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<sup>32</sup> National Strategic Reference Framework of the CR 2007 – 2013. Ministry for Regional Development, May 2006.

- Act No. 179/2006 Coll., on verification and recognition of the results of further education and amending some laws (the Act on Recognition of the Results of Further Education) permits evaluation of education achieved outside of the educational system in a transparent and objective manner.
- Creation of an effective system of permeable tertiary education to enable greater flexibility of study (shorter cycles, possibility of transfers, access to study at any age and at any level).

Great emphasis is placed in the document on the development of lifelong learning (LLL) and this is considered to be an important factor in the creation of an open, flexible and cohesive society, which is one of the necessary preconditions mentioned in the document for increasing competitiveness (in addition to a competitive economy, attractive environment and balanced development of the territory of the CR and its regions). Thus, LLL occupies one of the foremost places in the document in defining ways of achieving the global targets of the National Strategic Reference Framework.

The **National Lisbon Program 2005 – 2008 (National Program of Reforms in the CR)**<sup>33</sup> was prepared in October 2005 on the basis of the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs for the 2005 – 2008 period, issued by the European Commission (see above). For the area of education, the priorities are summarized at the beginning of the document in the general statement that reforms in the area of development of education improve the quality of the labour force, extend the potential for education and promote the ability to come to terms with the demanding conditions in a changing labour market. In this connection, the macroeconomic part mentions the aspect of ageing of the population and the necessity of increasing the level of participation of older persons in the labour market. The measures supporting this task lack emphasis on further education as a precondition for employability of the older generation. The part concerned with expenditures from the state budget mentions an increase in public expenditures for education as a priority. However, it does not consider the possibility of modifications in income structure (for example, in enterprises, expenditures for education could be more extensively included amongst items that could be deducted from the tax base for income tax for legal persons, or could be recognized as expenditures (costs) for achieving, ensuring and maintaining income), which would motive enterprises to greater activity in the area of education of employees and its financing. It is stated in the part related to **employment policy** that modernization of employment services should assist in improving further education of unemployed and job seekers. The National Program of Reforms indicates that the best-elaborated area of LLL consists in retraining, which will continue to be developed. Mention is also made of the need for participation of older workers in further education so that they can remain employed to a higher age. In the part on **education**, the National Program of Reforms states that insufficient attention was paid to LLL in the past and that a systematic approach should be taken to LLL promotion. Emphasis is placed on interconnection of the system of initial and further education through completion of the National Qualifications System. Mention is also made of the necessity of promoting further education in enterprises and promoting cooperation between employers, employees and educational and vocational institutions.

The **Strategy of Economic Growth**<sup>34</sup>, prepared in May 2005, defines the priorities on which the CR should concentrate **to 2013**, in order to approach the economic level of the economically more developed EU countries, while taking into consideration environmental requirements. The development of human resources, which is one of five defined priority

<sup>33</sup> National Lisbon Program 2005 – 2008. National Program of Reforms in the Czech Republic, October 2005.

<sup>34</sup> Strategy of Economic Growth in the Czech Republic, November 2005.

areas, overlaps with the implementation of the remaining priorities and affects their development or is dependent on them (institutional environment, financial sources, infrastructure, research and development and innovations). The area of LLL is mentioned in the individual measures without any overall uniform conception. A requirement for the creation of a comprehensive system for LLL is lacking.

The **Strategy of Regional Development of the CR**<sup>35</sup>, prepared in July 2000, places the development of human potential amongst decisive opportunities. This development will depend on strengthening active employment policy, especially programs for young people, people with health disabilities and the long-term unemployed, development of further education and lifelong learning in relation to the requirements of the European labour market, optimization of the network and structure of schools at the regional level and extending access to higher education. In the final formulation of strategy for regional development, it is required that the educational system be modernized and that it be related to employment in the regions. It is stated that there is a lack of a comprehensive system of further education for adults interconnected with initial education and providing opportunities for lifelong learning.

The **National Innovation Strategy**<sup>36</sup>, prepared in 2004, emphasizes that innovation must be based on education and highly qualified work in general. Further education or LLL is implicitly contained in the entire document and the educational system is seen as one of the pillars of the innovation system. Low expenditures for education are mentioned as one of the reasons for the low innovation activity of the CR. The creation of a functioning system of education, research and development and innovation and effective state administration will become a necessary condition for the CR for comparable membership in the EU. Education must be a constant priority. *The need for an interconnected system of lifelong education is mentioned.* One of the priorities of the **National Innovation Policy of the CR for 2005 – 2013** consists in securing human resources for innovation. It is necessary to promote various kinds and new forms of learning, including doctoral study programs and study organized in the business sector, learning and acquiring skills directly in the innovation process, e.g. in developmental laboratories, technical parks and incubators, and in small companies concerned with research and development. It is necessary to educate students and researchers in the areas of business, marketing and legal protection of industrial and other intellectual property.

The **National Program of Research and Development**<sup>37</sup> for 2004 – 2009 will continue to provide earmarked and institutional public support. A special program concerned with *Modern Society and its Transformations*” (declared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) also encompasses support for research projects concerned with the development of human resources. No specific program is concerned with the aspect of lifelong learning.

The **Convergence Program of CR for 2006-2008** of November 2005 is a multi-annual program that is regularly prepared by the Government and submitted to the European Commission for approval. It specifies the orientation of the Czech economy for meeting the Maastricht criteria (criteria of the public deficit, gross public debt, price stability, stability of long-term interest rates, and stability of the exchange rate). It is stated in the Convergence Program that reforms in the area of development of education improve the quality of the labour force, extend the potential for education and promote the ability to come to terms with the demanding conditions on a changing labour market. Mention is made of the recently prepared law on lifelong learning, which was adopted in 2006 as the law on verification and recognition of the results of further education.

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<sup>35</sup> Strategy of Regional Development of the CR, Ministry for Regional Development, July 2003.

<sup>36</sup> The National Innovation Strategy, Office of the Government of the CR, 2004.

<sup>37</sup> National Program of Research and Development, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2004.

The **Strategy of the Human Resources Development of 2003**<sup>38</sup> is the most comprehensive document in its concept of development of the LLL system. It points out fundamental and material reasons why the human resources development and its main instrument LLL have not been successfully implemented and recommends measures for the national and regional level that will facilitate the development of LLL. The main principles include the necessity of implementing LLL as a common and generally understood and accepted approach, the responsibility of the individual, their active role and free will for education and the use of information and communication technologies in education. These principles are further elaborated in the document.

### **Documents in the area of education**

The **Final Report from the consultation process to the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning**<sup>39</sup> of 2001 is specifically important for aspects of lifelong learning. Aspects related to implementation of lifelong learning for everyone are mentioned here. The first group of aspects is related to the existing educational system (e.g. the degree of selectiveness, low interest in individuals, low level of participation of social partners, inadequate financing and investments, underestimating the importance of the human resources development in education, low support for schools and teachers). The second group of problems is directly related to further education (or adult education). This relatively neglected sector of the educational system remains insufficiently developed. The most serious weak point is the lack of existence of a *comprehensive legal framework* that would unambiguously establish the responsibility of the main actors in further education (the state, social partners, municipalities, regions, public and private institutions), permitting permeability between the individual forms of education, especially between initial and further education, and provision for the effectiveness and cohesion of educational policy, employment policy and social policy. It also points out that the existing system mechanisms in education are suitable only for the traditional educational system. Consequently, they will have to be modified to fulfil new needs and satisfy new clients.

The **National Program for the Development of Education – the White Paper**<sup>40</sup>, approved by the Government in 2001, is concerned primarily with the development of the educational system, taking into account lifelong learning. It emphasizes that implementation of the concept of lifelong learning does not mean only expansion of the existing educational system to encompass the sector of further education. Far more is involved, with a fundamental change in the concept, targets and functions of education, where all the potential for learning – either in traditional educational institutions or elsewhere – are seen as a single unit. One of the main strategic ideas was thus formulated in this spirit: *“Education for all throughout one’s life”*. It is concerned to satisfy the educational requirements of children, adolescents and adults by suitable directing of capacities in schools and other educational facilities so as to ensure the availability of all levels of education and the provision of fair opportunity for maximum development of the diverse abilities of all individuals throughout their lives.

The necessity of development of lifelong learning as a condition for economic and social development is firmly anchored in the **Long-term plan for education and**

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<sup>38</sup> Strategie rozvoje lidských zdrojů pro Českou republiku. [Strategy of Human Resources Development in the Czech Republic.] Praha, National Training Fund, 2003.

<sup>39</sup> Final Report from the consultation process on the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning. 2001.

<sup>40</sup> The National Program for the Development Education in the Czech Republic - White Paper. Ministry of Education, 2001.

**development of the educational system in the Czech Republic<sup>41</sup>**, prepared by Ministry of Education in **2005 and 2007**, in which lifelong learning is an umbrella term for initial and further education. In the context of initial vocational education, the concept of lifelong learning is placed in contrast to the tradition of single, narrowly conceived preparation for a specific occupation. The long-term plan is also concerned with aspects of further education, where emphasis is placed primarily on the creation of a National Qualifications System and an Act on verification and recognition of the results of further education.

The document **Updating the Concept of Reform of Higher Education<sup>42</sup> (2006)** was created specifically for the area of higher education. It is concerned primarily with three areas – reform of financing, human resources development and research, development and innovation. In the area of financing from state funds, emphasis will be placed on achieving results through the activities of higher educational institutions and effectiveness of the use of these funds with provision for sufficient stability of the financial settings. The Ministry of Education will employ financial rules to motivate the higher educational institutions, amongst other things, to reduce the lack of success in study while maintaining the quality of graduates, and will promote cooperation between higher educational institutions and industry and employers of graduates in general, with the clients for the results of research and development and explicitly with the private sector. In the area of human resources development, the Ministry of Education will emphasize the necessity of increasing access to education and permeability of the system towards social and minority groups, support for cooperation between higher educational institutions and employers, innovation of study programs in the sense of new requirements on the part of employers and emphasis on language and other competences of students and academic workers. In the area of research, development and innovation, the main target consists in achieving a level of financial means for research and development at a level comparable with the average EU countries. The **Long-term plan for educational and scientific, research, developmental, artistic and other creative activities for the area of higher educational institutions for the period 2006 – 2010<sup>43</sup>** is a strategic material that further elaborates the main plans in connection with the Updating the Concept of Reform of Higher Education. The long-term plan is updated annually and, after discussions with representatives from higher educational institutions, the relevant developmental projects are announced for the specific year, permitting implementation of the plan.

The **State Program of Environmental Education, Enlightenment and Public Awareness in the CR** was adopted in 2000 specifically for the area of environmental education. The State Program contains the background, objectives and instruments in 4 key areas: 1. public administration, 2. children, youth and pedagogical and specialised workers, 3. environmental education and public awareness in the business sphere and 4. information, awareness and consulting for the public. It is implemented through periodically adopted action plans.

The **National Strategy of Education for Sustainable Development (2007)** outlines the main strategic lines for implementation of the principles of sustainable development in the framework of the educational system of the CR and in the framework of lifelong learning. The strategy is one of the starting points for the creation of educational programs and for the

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<sup>41</sup> The Long-term plan for education and development of the educational system in the Czech Republic. Ministry of Education, 2005.

<sup>42</sup> Updating the Concept of Reform of Higher Education. Ministry of Education, 2006.

<sup>43</sup> Long-term plan for educational and scientific, research, developmental, artistic and other creative activities for the 2006 – 2010 period. Ministry of Education, 2006.

creation of subject areas for subsidy policy and is an inspiration for cooperation with educational institutions at a local and regional level.

## 2. ANALYTICAL PART

### 2.1 Context analysis

#### Macroeconomic developments

In the past decade, the Czech Republic attained a low **pace of growth**<sup>44</sup> compared to the EU-25 average in the 1996-2000 period, but a high rate in the 2001-2005 period. The real average annual growth in GDP in the 1996-2000 period in the CR was only about half the EU-25 average (1.5% vs. 2.9%), while it was almost twice as much in the following five years (3.6% vs. 1.7%). The rate of growth in 2005 exhibited a record value – 6.1%; however, this is expected to decrease this year and in the coming years. Barriers to further growth can be seen especially in the low quality of the institutional environment, inadequate legislation, excessive regulation of the labour market, a slow increase in the quality of human resources, and insufficient development of science and research and innovation activities. The favourable rate of growth of the GDP in recent years has appeared in convergence of the **economic level** in the CR towards the EU-25 average. The GDP per inhabitant, expressed in standard purchasing power, attained a value of 75% of the EU-25 level in 2005<sup>45</sup>.

In spite of the approximation of the economic level to the EU-25, the **sector structure** of the CR economy, expressed in the share of the individual sectors in overall employment, is different from the EU average. Above-average contribution of industry (30% vs. 20% in 2005) and below-average contribution of services (56% vs. 68% in 2005) continued to be characteristic for the CR<sup>46</sup>. However, there is an identical trend, i.e. a decrease in the level of employment in agriculture and industry and an increase in services and construction, although the dynamics of these changes are different. In the CR, there is a slower decrease in the level of employment in industry and increase in employment in services, but a faster decrease in agriculture and increase in the construction industry. New jobs are continuing to appear primarily in industry, especially as a result of foreign investment.

The favourable economic development is creating both private (individual, in enterprises) and public opportunities for increased investments into the human resources development. However, statistical data indicate that, in spite of political proclamations about the importance of education, these opportunities are not exploited at the level of the state budget. The **share of expenditures from the state budget for education** in overall expenditures has varied around about 11.4% since 2002, from 11.48% in 2002 to only 11.30% in 2004<sup>47</sup>. The situation in the CR is not favourable from the standpoint of international comparison; while the share of public expenditures for education in the GDP in the EU-25 equalled 5.2% in 2003, this figure equalled only 4.5% in the CR<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> Data source: Structural indicators (October 25, 2006), EUROSTAT

<sup>45</sup> Data source: Structural indicators (October 25, 2006), EUROSTAT

<sup>46</sup> Data source: Labour Force Survey, 2Q. 2005, EUROSTAT

<sup>47</sup> Data source: Statistical Yearbook of the CR, 2005, CSU

<sup>48</sup> Data source: Population and Social Conditions/Education and Lifelong Learning/Expenditure (May 17, 2007), EUROSTAT.

## Demographic development<sup>49</sup>

Similar to the other EU countries, the demographic development of the CR is characterized by a **change in the age composition of the population** in favour of the older generation. In 1995, the youngest age group of inhabitants (0-14 years) equalled 18.6% of the overall number of inhabitants; this figure had decreased to only 14.7% in 2005, while the share of the oldest age group (64 years or more) had increased from 13.2% to 14.2% over the same period. The share of the productive part of the population remains favourable, increasing from 68.2% in 1995 to 71.2% in 2005. This is a result of the strong post-war populations and strong population years in the 1970's, which have now reached productive age.

The total population of the CR **decreased** in 1995 – 2002. This trend has been reversed since 2003 because of the increase in the number of children being born and also because of increased migration. The population in 2005 was approx. 97 thousand inhabitants lower than in 1995. In 2005, a total of 10 234 thousand persons were living in the CR, i.e. about 1% less than in 1995. The **migration balance** has been positive since the 1970's, with the exception of 2001. In 2004, 254 294 foreigners had residence permits in the CR. These were mostly Ukrainians (31%), Slovaks (19%) and Vietnamese (13%).

On the basis of the mean variant of population forecast prepared by the CSU in 2003, the **expected demographic trend** can be characterized by a slight increase in the number of inhabitants. The expected changes in the age structure, combined with accelerated technical changes, will lead both to acceleration of changes in demands on the knowledge and skills of the labour force and also in an increase in these demands. Remaining in the labour market throughout one's working life will lead to greater demands on **occupational mobility** and will require a satisfactory state of health.

### The labour market

The **employment rate**<sup>50</sup> decreased annually in 1998-2005, from 67.3% in 1998 to 63.5% in 2005<sup>51</sup>. In spite of this trend, the level of employment in the CR remains above the EU-25 average, although this difference is decreasing. The labour market in the CR is **less demanding on qualifications** than the EU average. This is apparent from the lower share of scientific and intellectual workers (KZAM 2)<sup>52</sup> in overall employment and the lower share of persons with tertiary education (ISCED 5, 6)<sup>53</sup> in these positions and especially in the positions of technicians (KZAM 3). This indicates that particularly production and services with lower requirements on knowledge and technically less demanding are concentrated in the CR, and also that there is still a low share of persons with tertiary education in the CR, especially graduates of shorter programs, i.e. the educational programs of tertiary technical schools and bachelor's study programs in higher education. The contributions of the individual sectors also have a substantial effect, especially the relatively high share of industry and construction. The qualification structure can also be affected by the brain drain and the qualification structure of migrants (foreign workers).

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<sup>49</sup> Data source: Forecasts of the population in the CR to 2050, CSU 2003; data for 2005: CR – age composition of the population as of Dec. 31, 2005, CSU.

<sup>50</sup> The employment rate is calculated as a share of the number of employed persons aged 15-64 years in this total age group.

<sup>51</sup> EUROSTAT: Structural indicators (Oct. 20, 2006).

<sup>52</sup> Classification of occupations. The KZAM classification was prepared by the CSU on the basis of the ISCO-88 classification (International Standard Classification of Occupations 1988). [http://www.czso.cz/csu/klasifik\\_nsf/i/klasifikace](http://www.czso.cz/csu/klasifik_nsf/i/klasifikace)

<sup>53</sup> ISCED – International Standard Classification of Education.



The **registered unemployment rate** reported by the Ministry of Labour<sup>54</sup> reached 9.0% in 2005, which was 0.2% less than in the previous year<sup>55</sup>. The favourable inter-annual trend in the unemployment rate was greater for **men than for women**. Where the unemployment rate of men decreased inter-annually from 8% to 7.6%, the unemployment rate of women decreased only from 10.8% to 10.7%. The situation of persons **over 50 years of age** continued to worsen inter-annually; in December 31, 2005, these persons made up one quarter of the job seekers (25.2%), compared to 22.4% in December 31, 2004. However, the **youngest age group** of persons to 25 years of age exhibited the highest specific unemployment rate, equal to 20.2% in December 31, 2005. The unemployment rate is highly differentiated according to the **level of education** completed. Persons without qualifications have fifteen times more stricken with unemployment than persons with the highest tertiary level of education (in the middle of 2006, 32.1% of unskilled persons were unemployed, compared to 2.1% of persons with tertiary education<sup>56</sup>). There is also an increasing unemployment rate amongst persons with **altered working ability and disabled persons**, whose specific unemployment rate equalled 44.7% on the same date. Unemployment in the CR is particularly structural in character. The initial high reduction in the number of jobs in regionally concentrated branches, together with the low professional and spatial mobility of the labour force, affected by the situation in the housing market, transport accessibility and unwillingness to change occupation are all manifested in a **regionally** highly differentiated unemployment rate. Especially two regions continue to have high unemployment rates, the Ústí Region and the Moravian-Silesian Region and, in these districts, especially the Most a Karviná districts, where the unemployment levels in 2005 equalled 21.2% and 18.6%, respectively. From the standpoint of the duration of unemployment, since 2002 there have been a constantly increasing number of job seekers who had been unemployed for longer than 12 months and this figure exceeded 40% in 2005 (41.7%).

## 2.2 Analysis of current situation in lifelong learning development

### 2.2.1 Overall characteristics

#### **Educational structure**<sup>57</sup>

A traditionally strong aspect of the Czech population lies in the fact that most of the population has completed at least upper secondary education and only a small share of the population has no technical qualifications. The share of the population with only basic education or that did not complete even this level made up about 10% in 2005, while the EU-25 average was almost three times higher (29%). As for a population with a low level of education it is increasingly difficult to find a job in a knowledge-based economy, this fact is very important from the standpoint of social cohesion in society. The low share of persons with basic education is related to the traditional preferences for vocational education and the wide range of educational programs at the upper secondary education level, making study accessible for persons with different study ambitions.

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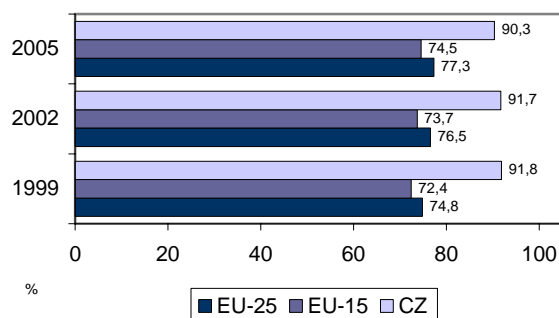
<sup>54</sup> The registered unemployment rate is a fraction, where the numerator includes the unemployed, whereas the denominator includes the total labour force, i.e. employed persons according to the CSU Labour Force Sample Survey, number of foreigners according to the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Industry and Trade records and the number of unemployed.

<sup>55</sup> Data source: Analysis of trends in employment and unemployment in 2004, 2005, Ministry of Labour.

<sup>56</sup> Source: Analysis of trends in employment and unemployment in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of 2006. Ministry of Labour 2006.

<sup>57</sup> Data source: Labour Force Survey 2000, 2005, 2006, EUROSTAT.

## Share of persons with at least secondary education in the population aged 20-24 years (in %)



Note: Data for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the years

Source: EUROSTAT, New Cronos, Population and Social Conditions, Sept. 5, 2005.

The share of inhabitants with secondary education in the CR (76.8% in 2006) is amongst the highest in Europe. In addition, there is a shift in the internal structure of interest of students in upper secondary education towards more demanding educational programs ending with a school-leaving examination (maturita) (ISCED 3A). At the present time, the Czech Republic already meets one of the set Lisbon objectives, that by 2010 the EU member states ensure that at least 85% of the younger generation of 22 years of age and 80% of the adult population aged 25-64 years have completed secondary education. The other EU-25 countries are also gradually approaching this objective and have improved their positions by approx. 3% over the last seven years. In contrast, over the same period of time in the Czech Republic, the share of the younger population (population aged 20-24 years) with at least completed upper secondary education (ISCED 3) decreased from 91.85 to 90.3% (see the graph above). Although this is not a sharp trend, it is a certain warning signal. It is apparent that maintenance or a further increase in the participation of young people in secondary education and its successful completion will be more difficult than in the past, i.e. that greater attention will have to be paid to the specific features of education, especially if greater social differentiation of the population or greater influx of migrants from less developed countries were to occur.

Conditions in the CR in relation to the share of the population with completed tertiary education are very unfavourable. The Czech Republic is well below the EU-25 average in this indicator, with only 13% of the population at this level, compared to 23% in EU-25. The share of the population with completed tertiary education has increased (by 1.6%) in the last few years (2000 – 2005); however, this is not sufficient to reduce the difference between the CR and the EU-25. The favourable trend was faster in the EU-25 than in the CR, leading to an even greater difference. Whereas this difference corresponded to 8.5% in 2000, it had increased to 9.8% in 2006. The position of the CR has worsened compared both to the EU-15 and to the EU-10.

This situation can be expected to improve considerably in connection with the increase in the capacity of public higher educational institutions, and the development of private higher educational institutions and tertiary technical schools. The development of shorter study programs is especially important; the other developed countries offer a greater range of these programs and have a greater number of graduates. The development of this level of tertiary education is important from the standpoint of growing employer demands; in addition to narrow specializations, they are increasingly demanding that employees have language and computer skills, capability of problem solving, independent decision-making, etc. In this

connection, vocational education, which was formerly completed by young people at the secondary level, will increasingly shift to the tertiary level.

### **Qualification levels amongst the older population<sup>58</sup>**

In connection with the phenomenon of ageing of the population, with the increase in the retirement age and longer employment in the labour market, it is important to consider the qualification level of the older population. The structure of the education of the older group of inhabitants aged 50-64 years is less favourable compared with the 25-39 age group. In 2005, the older age group contained a substantially higher share of persons with basic or lower education, 17% compared to 7%, and also had an insufficient share of persons with tertiary education (10.5% compared to 12.3%). There are also fewer persons with secondary education in the older population (71.3% compared to 78.7%). However, there is a substantial difference in that there are far more persons with vocational training, i.e. without a school-leaving examination (*maturita*). As qualified blue-collar occupations are in demand on the labour market at the present time, this fact need not be a disadvantage for the older population. However, a difficulty lies in the fact that their qualifications are often obsolete, as there has been a substantial change in the requirements from the individual professions with the introduction of new technologies. In addition, a narrow specialization was characteristic for vocational education obtained in the 1950's and 1960's. Consequently, older persons do not have the necessary key qualifications, and this complicates their transition from one job to another and rapid adaptation to changes in the labour market. Older persons are also not sufficiently motivated to acquire and keep new jobs.

### **Regional differences in the education structure of the population**

The qualification structure in the individual regions of the CR (14 NUTS 3 regions) exhibits certain deviations, whose dimensions are mostly not decreasing. The share of those with secondary education (ISCED 3) exhibits the lowest mobility; this group is predominant in the education structure of the population. There are greater deviations at the level of basic and tertiary education. As a consequence of former economic developments, especially some regions in the west and north of Bohemia (the Karlovy Vary and Ústí regions) have a disadvantageous position in the qualifications of the population, with a high share of the population with basic education (over 23%) and a lack of persons with tertiary education (less than 7% in the Ústí region). The inhabitants of the capital city, where jobs requiring higher qualifications, the state administration authorities, central offices of enterprises, centres of scientific research and universities, etc. are concentrated, has a level of education that substantially exceeds the average for the country (23.2% of the population of Prague over 15 years of age has tertiary education, compared to 10.8% for the whole country)<sup>59</sup>.

### **Educational mobility**

The increase in the level of education of the population is determined by the increasing educational mobility, expressing the fact that children achieve a higher level of education than their parents or, that younger age groups have a higher level of education than older age groups. The dynamics of intergenerational mobility is substantially affected by the original educational level, the share of the population with tertiary education in the age groups forming the basis for comparison. Although the Czech Republic has one of the smallest shares of the population with tertiary education in the 60-64 age group and thus a low comparative

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<sup>58</sup> Data source: Labour Force Survey, 2Q 2005, EUROSTAT

<sup>59</sup> Source: CSU: Employment and unemployment in the Czech Republic according to the results of a select labour force survey for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2006. <http://www.czso.cz/csu/2006edicniplan.nsf/p/3101-06>

basis, it exhibits the lowest change in the share of persons with tertiary education in the 25-29 age group of all the EU countries, only not quite 4% (see the table). Compared to the average EU values, where the educational shift corresponded to almost 15%, the CR is very backward. There is also a considerable difference compared to the new member states, which are attempting to remedy their educational handicap much more rapidly. It is important for the competitiveness of the Czech economy that the process of increase in educational mobility be further accelerated.

### Share of persons with tertiary education (2005, in %)

	Generation		Mobility level (%)
	entering the labour market	leaving the labour market	
CZ	15.1	11.4	3.7
EU-25	28.7	14.9	13.8
EU-15	29.7	15.1	14.6
EU-10	24.3	13.5	10.8
Best result	41.4 (BE)	31.1 (EE)	28.2 (CY)

Note: Data for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2005

Source: EUROSTAT, LFS, 2005

### Level of some skills in the population

The lack of **language skills** is a serious problem in the population that retards not only internationalization of Czech business, research and development, and marketing success of enterprises, but also integration of the Czech population into structures and informal relations in the framework of the EU.

### Share of the population fluent in a foreign language (2005)

	Population fluent in (in %) <sup>1</sup>	
	a foreign language <sup>2</sup>	English
CZ	67.0	24.0
EU-25	86.8	37.8
EU-15	93.8	40.3
EU-10	76.3	34.1
Best result	244 (LU)	79 (DK)

Source: Languages in Europe 2005 ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/languages/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/languages/index_en.html)).

Notes: 1) The figures may exceed 100% (persons speaking several languages are counted several times).

2) Languages that are very similar to the mother tongue are not counted (e.g. Slovakian for Czechs, Finnish for Estonians, etc.).

Compared to the other EU member states, the Czech Republic has a very low share of inhabitants fluent in English, although this skill is of key importance in international relations. Only about half as many people are fluent in English compared to the inhabitants of the EU-15 countries and this share is even lower than in the other new EU-10 member states. Similarly, fluency in other languages is also inadequate. Approximately 67% of the population of the CR can speak a foreign language (not counting Slovakian). The main impediment to language education lies in the lack of qualified teachers and the obsolete teaching methods, which do not develop all the aspects of language education.

### ICT skills

So far, the Czech population has only partly followed the trend connected with the spread of modern information and communication technology. In 2005, only approximately half as many Czech households had a computer with connection to the internet compared with

EU-25 (30% in the CR compared with 58% in the EU-25, and 19% compared to 48%, resp.)<sup>60</sup> and the Czech population remains far behind its European counterparts in ICT skills. In the level of the ability to use the internet for communication, for searching and processing information, the level of skills of Czechs is about a third lower. Here, there is a great difference between the youngest and oldest age groups. The deterioration in internet skills with age in the CR is not only greater than the EU average, but is also beginning to appear in younger age groups. The population in the age group over 55 years uses the internet only sporadically.

### Use of the internet according to age (in %)

	Age group					
	16–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65–74
CZ	64	41	41	29	15	2
EU-25	80	67	60	47	32	12
EU-15	82	71	64	52	36	14
Best result	97 (SE, NL)	95 (SE, FI)	93 (SE)	85 (SE)	74 (SE)	34 (NL)

Note: Data for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2005

Source: EUROSTAT, Community Survey on ICT Usage in Enterprises, in households and by individuals. Luxembourg, EUROSTAT 2005.

The level of computer literacy also decreases considerably with decreasing level of education and residence area also has a certain effect. Persons who live in areas with a greater population density or in areas with a greater number of cities exhibit a higher level of computer literacy than persons living in rural areas.

### Environmental knowledge and skills

The relatively young age of the environmental pillar of sustainable development and scientific knowledge in the area of the environment and, e.g., the chemistry of the environment of human beings and the effects of substances on health have so far prevented sufficient consciousness of this vital knowledge amongst citizens. The lack of knowledge and skills, especially amongst the older population, then lead to decision-making that does not take environmental factors into consideration. In addition, this prevents transfer of environmental experience to the younger generation in families. This then leads to low environmental competitiveness of domestic enterprises. Inadequate environmental knowledge and skills are also the reason why the industry and economy of the Czech Republic inadequately exploit the relatively open international market for the development, production and export of environmental technologies and for innovations in this area.

### 2.2.2 Identification of problems in the area of initial (general and vocational) education

From the standpoint of lifelong learning, it is important that initial education form a basis for further education, i.e. that students be equipped with **functional literacy and key skills** (communication, team work, ability to learn, ability to solve problems, ICT, etc.), which are necessary for a successful personal and working life. Although key skills have been included in the curriculum of initial education since the middle of the 1990's, they have not yet become an integral part of this process, because their development requires a relatively fundamental change in the conception of teaching.

<sup>60</sup> EUROSTAT, Community Survey on ICT Usage in Enterprises, in households and by individuals. Luxembourg, EUROSTAT 2005.

The results of some international comparative research studies are available for objective evaluation of the existing level of key skills among students in general initial education in the Czech Republic.

The **IEA PIRLS**<sup>61</sup> study, performed in 2001 among the students of grade 4 in basic schools, yielded results for Czech students that were internationally above-average, where Czech students achieved roughly equally good results in both the studied areas – literary and information.

The traditional **OECD PISA**<sup>62</sup> cycle of studies evaluates the level of reading, mathematical and scientific competences of fifteen-year-old students. The creators of the PISA survey submit a set of tasks to students around the world in three-year cycles; these tasks do not test their encyclopaedic knowledge, but rather their ability to resolve tasks in every-day life – i.e. their key competences. The first of the PISA cycles, held in 2000, concentrated on determining the level of **reading literacy**, which is a basic precondition for the development of all the other key competences. Czech students achieved above-average results in this test. They encountered the greatest difficulty in tasks requiring the search for various types of information. They were much worse at solving tasks set in working situations, where they were amongst the last. Simultaneously, an observation from an earlier survey was confirmed, that they are more capable of working with discontinuous texts (graphs, maps, tables, etc.) than with continuous texts. It was found that work with a text, as understood by the concept of reading literacy in the PISA study and, basically, also curriculum reform (critical evaluation, adopting one's own point of view, searching for information) is still not common in schools in this country. The study showed that only not quite half of fifteen-year-old students at basic schools achieve at least the basic level of qualification in the area of reading literacy and more than one fifth of students had only the lowest qualifications, characterized by the simplest reading tasks or did not even attain this level. This finding is very alarming from the standpoint of lifelong learning<sup>63</sup>.

Thus, it would seem that the concept of key competences is relatively harder to understand and manage in the Czech environment, especially for students (and their teachers) in the higher years of initial education. This is caused not only by the way of teaching, but also by the **high level of selectivity of the Czech educational system**. CR is a country with an above-average level of heterogeneity at the level of the competences of students at various kinds of schools; rather than the added value of the school, this is caused by the fact that talented students attend only a certain type of school. It was found that fifteen-year-old students at academic secondary schools achieved above-average results in PISA tests.

In addition, the results of determination of the level of key competences or the **functional literacy of the adult population in the CR**<sup>64</sup> – **SIALS** in 1998 convincingly

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<sup>61</sup> IEA – International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. The CR has been a member of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement since 1995. Since then, several international surveys have been held in the CR under its direction (e.g. RLS, TIMSS, CivEd, Sites and PIRLS); with the exception of the latter, evaluation concentrating mainly on the knowledge of students corresponding to school curricula was replaced by the concept of broader abilities and skills for life.

<sup>62</sup> PISA - Programme for International Student Assessment, OECD study, repeated in three-year cycles, studies the level of reading, mathematical and scientific literacy of fifteen-year-old students; the first cycle, concerned primarily with reading literacy, was held in 2000, while the last cycle concentrating on scientific literacy was held in 2006.

<sup>63</sup> In another area of the PISA study – mathematical literacy, this is a relatively specific and narrower skill than reading literacy; the results of Czech students in this area were above average in the international comparison in 2003; the results of the study of scientific literacy performed in 2006 have not been published yet.

<sup>64</sup> Literacy in the Information Age. Final Report of the International Adult Literacy Survey. Paris, OECD and Statistics Canada 2000.

demonstrated that the key to an active approach to the world of information lies at the level of a full-value secondary school-leaving (maturita) examination. People who had completed only study in a vocational field did not differ much in their competences from those who had only basic education. However, the results pointed to an overall unfavourable fact. Almost a third of the adult population was in the lowest level of functional literacy, compared to only a fifth in other countries. Compared to other countries, the CR was worst in literary literacy, while they were much better in documentary and numerical literacy. This confirms that the greatest handicap of the Czech population lies in an active approach to information – success in literary literacy was most sensitive to the ability to classify information according to certain criteria, generalize, compare and combine information rather than find and reproduce specifically defined information.

**Inequalities persist** in the approach to initial education, and subsequently limit development of lifelong learning amongst some groups of the population. Unequal educational opportunities do not appear with compulsory school attendance, but sooner, in the framework of preschool education, where a great deal can be done to include disadvantaged groups of children amongst the others and prepare them for a normal educational process. Consequently, the Education Act provides for charge-free education in the last year of a kindergarten established by the state, region, municipality or unions of municipalities. At the present time, 77% of the population of three-year-olds and 94% of five-year-old children attend preschool education; this is at a high level internationally. The educational system also includes preparatory classes at basic schools for children in the last year before commencing compulsory school attendance, who are socially disadvantaged and where it can be expected that inclusion in a preparatory class corresponds to their development (1779 children attended this type of class in 2004/5).

At the time of completion of compulsory education, pupils are selected on the basis of entrance examinations, which are traditionally based on testing a large amount of encyclopaedic knowledge rather than on testing of general study prerequisites, and this begins at the 1<sup>st</sup> stage of basic schools (primary education) in the form of selective schools or classes or schools or classes with specific teaching programs. However, a specific problem lies in the fact that about 9% of children enter multi-year general secondary schools after the 5<sup>th</sup> grade of compulsory education (i.e. at 10 years of age) and a further 2% of children of the appropriate age make this transition after the 7<sup>th</sup> grade of compulsory education. This share is twice as large for Prague (16.5%) because Prague acts as an official area for the entire Central Bohemian Region and the atypical population composition compared to the other regions of the CR means that parents are more interested in an general secondary education for their children. In the other regions, the share of children accepted for multi-year general secondary schools in the relevant age group of the population corresponds to about 6.3% (Zlín Region) and 10.3% (Southern Moravian Region).

**Recreational learning** is also very important for children and adolescents. However, the appropriate data is not available for the relevant analysis. This is a result primarily of the wide range of providers – civic associations, leisure-time centres and other entities, and also the broad age range of participants in this education. This begins in childhood through extra-curricular activities in clubs for children and young people, recreational clubs, etc. The Czech Republic has a strong tradition in this area compared to the rest of Europe. Studies have shown<sup>65</sup> that only about 10% of children in the 8-14-year age group do not have any hobbies and most have 2-3 recreational activities per week. In making a choice, which is influenced

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<sup>65</sup> See, e.g., the study of the Median agency for Junák – the Federation of Scouts and Girl Scouts in the CR in 2003. [http://crdm.adam.cz/download/archa/2004/Archa\\_5\\_04\\_vnitri\\_priloha.pdf](http://crdm.adam.cz/download/archa/2004/Archa_5_04_vnitri_priloha.pdf)

most by the parents, the benefits and the usefulness for the child and for their role in life are most important. However, the providers of this education, who are mostly volunteers, enjoy low prestige, similar to that assigned to their skills acquired through non-formal education. Nonetheless, at the present time, it is possible to acquire university qualification in the “social pedagogue” or “leisure-time pedagogue” study program.

In the system of secondary education, the CR has **one of the highest rates of participation in secondary education** in the EU and a high share of the population with at least secondary education.

- the share of graduates from secondary education (ISCED 3) in the population with the typical age for completing study in 2004 equalled 84% of the population (EU average 19 – 83%)

In 2004, 94% of the population in the 25-34 year age group had at least secondary education (ISCED 3) (EU-19 average = 78%)<sup>66</sup>.

Thus, the CR meets one of the objectives of the Lisbon strategy, where the EU set the objective of at least 85% of twenty-year-olds and 80% of the population aged 25-64 years having at least upper secondary education (ISCED 3) by the year 2010. These high values are a result of the fact that most young people continue to study some type of secondary school after completing basic school. This facilitates a relatively complex system of the secondary link of the school system, which allows everyone to find a suitable educational program, especially in the area of vocational education. However, the achieving of this high share of the population with secondary education represents a certain ceiling and its maintenance will depend on how well the consequences of increasing social differentiation are managed and also on the influx of migrants from less developed countries.

**Dropping out of school** is far less frequent than in other countries; nonetheless, there has been a slight increase in the number of young people leaving school prematurely in recent years. In addition, most students successfully complete the secondary (i.e. the upper secondary level) of education into which they were accepted. 6-8% of young people leave the educational system with only basic education. Thus, the CR meets the objectives of the Lisbon strategy that the share of the population in the 18-24 age group with lower secondary education (ISCED 2) who do not participate in education should decrease below 10%. Premature school leaving is apparently related to the social background of the students, i.e. primarily to the parents and their interest in or attitudes towards education. The vast majority of students (over 90%) who leave school after the basic level have parents with basic education or apprentice training. The group of young people who prematurely ended secondary (i.e. the upper secondary level) of education in their selected field corresponded to 5.8% of all students in 2004/5. Of this number, at least one quarter (i.e. 1.5% of the total number of students) transferred to another school or changed their field of education and began to study a different, usually less difficult, field during their secondary education<sup>67</sup>.

From this standpoint, the **low permeability** between the educational programs of secondary education, at the same or different levels of difficulty, remains a problem. Thus, a student, who has not completed a multi-year educational program by a school-leaving (final or maturita) examination, does not receive any certificate (except for individual certificates)

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<sup>66</sup> Education at a Glance. Paris, OECD 2006. (EU 19 = 19 OECD countries that are EU members, i.e. Austria, Belgium, CR, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Great Britain.)

<sup>67</sup> Úlovcová, H. – Bubíková, M. – Viceníková, T. – Hyt'ha, P.: Premature leaving of secondary education by young people. Prague, NITVE, 47 pp.



that would document the completion of the education. Educational programs are conceived linearly, i.e. from the beginning to the end according to a preset learning plan. Thus, they require an unambiguous choice at the beginning and it is necessary to complete study by leaving at the end of the educational program without any simple means of correcting the original decision. Educational programs are not divided into smaller units and basically do not count on enrolment of other persons than the graduates of basic schools. There is no possibility of combining educational programs, and transferring from one type of school to another is a complex process and mostly involves a step down and means the loss of the previous part of completed studies, unless the head of the relevant school decides otherwise.

This situation also does not allow for flexible **connection between initial and further education**. There is no transparent national system of qualifications that would permit evaluation and recognition of skills acquired through various educational programs, including competences acquired by non-formal or informal learning. There is not even a module and credit system that would permit more flexible combination of courses of initial and further education, supplementing of missing parts of education necessary for acceptance into a higher level of schooling or inclusion of already completed parts of education in transfer to a different educational program. The **National Qualifications System** prepared in connection with the Act on verification and recognition of the results of further education should bring a certain amount of progress towards greater openness and permeability in the system of initial vocational education and its connection with further education<sup>68</sup>. The National Qualifications System should formulate the requirements for competences for the performance of qualified activities (complete and partial qualifications) for the purposes of their recognition and certification, whatever the means through which they were acquired. The development of the module and credit system in the CR should support the consultation process for ECVET (European Credit Transfer System for VET)<sup>69</sup>.

In order to create a firm basis for lifelong learning, it is necessary for young people to leave the system of initial vocational training with qualifications that can be employed in the labour market and also permit further education. Realistic **participation by social partners**, especially employers, in formulating their requirements on graduates of vocational education, is necessary in order to ensure harmony of the qualifications obtained with the requirements on the labour market. The above-mentioned National Qualifications System, which is being created in cooperation between the educational and employer sphere and which should unify the requirements on the individual types of qualifications, and should lead to some improvement. To date, employers have had few opportunities to affect vocational education which, including practical training in the vocational fields occurs solely in a school environment that is far from the actual working environment in enterprises and companies. In addition, employers participate only minimally in the creation of educational programs or in establishing the requirements on examinations. There are a great many barriers that prevent cooperation between schools and enterprises, whether in relation to student practice, practical training of apprentices or providing for internship for vocational teachers and trainers. The fact that, e.g., 65% of the graduates of vocational fields never enter the actual working environment during their studies, is a great handicap<sup>70</sup>. Students in secondary vocational

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<sup>68</sup> Act No. 179/2006 Coll., on verification and recognition of the results of further education and amending some laws (the Act on Recognition of the Results of Further Education).

<sup>69</sup> ECVET(European Credit Transfer System for VET). Principles and Essentials Rules for Implementation of a ECVET. EC Brussels, 2004.

<sup>70</sup> Kofroňová, O. - Vojtěch, J. – Hrešan , J.: Šetření k realizaci odborného výcviku ve 3letých učebních a 4letých studijních oborech SOU. [Survey of implementation of practical training in 3-year vocational and 4-year study fields at Secondary Vocational Schools.] Praha, VÚOŠ 2000. 13 p., annexes.

schools undergo only brief practice in enterprises. This situation greatly complicates the transition from school to work.

### **2.2.3 Identification of problems in the area of tertiary education**

The **level of participation of the population in tertiary education** in the CR is far below that in most OECD countries, in spite of the substantial increase in the number of students enrolled, especially in the second half of the 1990's, corresponding to approximately 6-8% annually. According to OECD indicators, e.g., in 2001, only 12% of Czechs aged 25-64 years had tertiary education. This is approximately half the OECD average. Consequently, a current priority in educational policy consists in diversification of the entire system of tertiary education, entailing a shift from an elite to a mass system of higher education.

In the past fifteen years, the Czech tertiary system of education has undergone fundamental changes and dynamic development. As pointed out by the OECD Country Note, based on independent external evaluation of tertiary education in the CR in 2006, the European dimension of Czech tertiary education policy has become more important, especially as a consequence of participation of the country in various EU programs, the process of preparation for accession to the EU and participation in the Bologna process since 1999<sup>71</sup>.

**Fundamental institutional changes** have occurred in the tertiary sector since 1989. Six **new universities** were established in various regions<sup>72</sup>. At the present time in the CR, higher education is provided at a total of 26 public and 2 state higher educational institutions, where over 90% of students are studying. The adoption of the Act on higher education, which permitted the establishment of **private higher educational institutions**, was a fundamental institutional change. At the present time, there are 43 of these in the CR, all of which are higher educational institutions of the non-university type. A total of 24 thousand students study at these institutions, i.e. 8% of the total number of students of higher education. **Tertiary technical schools (VOŠ)** have been established since 1992. An attempt has been made to create a new sector of higher non-university education in the CR. These institutions rapidly increased in number and there are now 171 such institutions offering 183 fields of study. However, only 30 thousand students attend these schools, i.e. only 9% of the total number of students of tertiary education in the country.

**Tertiary technical schools** provide tertiary technical education for applicants who have completed secondary (i.e. upper secondary) education with a school-leaving examination (maturita). At the present time, VOŠ frequently cooperate with secondary schools (secondary technical schools or secondary vocational schools) – these schools have the same founder, are active in the same areas, etc. However, it is the intention of further development of VOŠ to connect study at these schools with the greatest possible number of higher educational institutions to facilitate the **transition between these elements of the tertiary sector**. The graduates of VOŠ who have the abilities and prerequisites for higher study can apply for study at higher educational institutions. On the basis of amendment of Article 49 (3) of the Act on higher education, introduced by Act No. 562/2004 Coll., a higher educational institution or faculty may establish different conditions for acceptance of applicants who have completed a certified educational program or part there of at a VOŠ or study a certified educational program at a VOŠ in this country or abroad.

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<sup>71</sup> Independent evaluation of tertiary education in the CR by an OECD expert commission was performed during 2006 and its output was formulated as the Country Note published at the beginning of December 2006.

<sup>72</sup> Most of them were established on the basis of existing independent higher educational institutions or faculties.

At the present time, several VOŠ (there were twenty of them in 2005) cooperate on the basis of an agreement on mutual cooperation with higher educational institutions in providing bachelor's study programs. Applicants for study in these study programs are accepted by a higher educational institution, which also awards the academic title of "bachelor" ("Bc") to graduates of a bachelor's study program. The graduation diploma also mentions where the study program was implemented. In addition, several VOŠ have been transformed into higher educational institution of the non-university type.

Tertiary technical education was extended after 1995. However, since 2004, there has been a sudden and quite marked decrease in interest in study at VOŠ. Most students (65%) enter VOŠ after obtaining secondary education with a school-leaving (maturita) examination at a secondary technical school (SOŠ) and approximately 25% are graduates of general secondary school education. Only 5% of students at VOŠ obtained previous (upper) secondary education with a school-leaving (maturita) examination at a secondary vocational school (SOU). It is also important to take into account that more than **half the graduates of VOŠ undertook study at VOŠ because they were not accepted at a higher educational institution** (53%) and this choice of study was a "substitute solution" for them<sup>73</sup>. This was probably also the reason for the rapid decrease in interest in study at VOŠ after 2003, when there was a substantial increase in acceptance of students at higher educational institution.

The graduates of VOŠ find jobs relatively easy according to their unemployment rate. In 2005, approx. 10% of this group of graduates was unemployed. Certain differences can be observed between the graduates of various fields of study. The greatest unemployment rate occurred for graduates of VOŠ in the field of *law and public administration work*. This could be because employers prefer applicants for employment with bachelor's degrees to applicants with graduates of VOŠ. **Higher educational institutions (HEI)** provide two types of study according to the Act on higher education:

- they provide certified study programs where graduates obtain a university education;
- they provide programs of lifelong education<sup>74</sup> free of charge or for a fee, where these programs are oriented towards a occupation or are recreational. A higher educational institution awards a certificate to graduates of study in the framework of lifelong learning. A higher educational institution can recognize up to 60% of the credits required for normal completion of studies obtained by successful graduates of lifelong learning, obtained in the framework of certified study programs, provided that they become students according to the Act on higher education, .

### **Students and graduates of higher educational institution**

**Interest in study** at higher educational institutions is constantly high, but with uneven emphasis on various fields. According to information from the student register as of October 31, 2005, **approx. 63.7% of all applicants** who applied for study in certified study programs **began study at all the higher educational institutions** in the 2005/2006 school year. Simultaneously, public higher educational institutions accepted 66.9% of all applicants for study. The numbers of applications submitted to higher educational institutions are substantially higher because some applicants apply at several higher educational institutions. Substantially fewer applicants for study attend the entrance examinations and even fewer accepted applicants register for study, because they were accepted at several schools and selected only one of them.

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<sup>73</sup> NÚOV data.

<sup>74</sup>The term lifelong education used in the Act on higher education does not correspond to the term lifelong learning used in this Strategy.

In recent years, the CR has exhibited a substantial increase in the numbers of students accepted for tertiary education, where a significant part consists in students accepted for study at higher educational institutions. Since 2000/2001, these dynamics of growth have been amongst the highest in the world; the average rate of growth of the share registered for the tertiary education for the first time equalled almost 10%. There was also a slight demographic decrease. Because of these two mutually reinforcing tendencies, the share of the population of the relevant age of those registered for study at higher educational institutions for the first time (ISCED 5A) increased to 55.7% in 2006<sup>75</sup>. According to OECD statistics<sup>76</sup>, CR belongs amongst the countries with the fastest rate of changes in the tertiary sector, although the actual numbers of those entering study remain low compared to a number of OECD countries. Compared to 1995, which is taken as a base (value of 100), the increase in the number of those entering the tertiary sector, i.e. including VHS students, can be expressed by the value 189. Only Poland, Hungary, Iceland and Greece have higher figures.

According to data from 2005, the greatest number of graduates of higher educational institutions complete “long” master’s study – 43.0%. However, the number of graduates from bachelor’s study remains almost constant – 41.2% of all graduates<sup>77</sup>. This confirms that structuring of study in the framework of the Bologna process is progressing very intensively in the CR. However, the **ability of bachelor’s graduates to find work** remains problematic. This is related to the conception of bachelor’s study programs. In the spirit of the Bologna process, part of them should be oriented towards practice. However, a large portion of educators, especially at public higher educational institutions, orient this study towards the area of specialist fundamentals, which then leads on to study in master’s study programs. It is then difficult for the graduates of bachelor’s study programs to find jobs. In addition, most graduates of bachelor’s study are interested in continuing study and obtaining a master’s degree (this is also connected with the social view of higher education, which considers the bachelor’s level to correspond to incomplete higher education). The OECD evaluators were also surprised by this fact and point it out in their report, where they state: “The ministries and representative bodies must take basic steps to ensure that the title of bachelor obtains the status that it deserves. It is both necessary to “direct a change” (identify and publish successful results) and also this is an area where the public sector should adopt a leading role in the manner of employing the graduates of bachelor’s study.”

**Education of adults in the framework of study programs at higher educational institutions** remains of lesser interest. The number of graduates of higher educational institutions decreases rapidly above the age of 26. This could also be caused by the fact that, above the age of 26, students no longer have the right to payment of social and health insurance by the state, and thus try to terminate study. This is also undoubtedly affected by the realistic opportunity to study effectively during employment or the so-far negligible range of study programs available for full distance forms of study. However, the importance of the need for lifelong extension and post-graduate study is increasing for practitioners with secondary and higher education. This range of programs should be oriented towards specific needs of world of work and transfer of the results of science and research to the innovation process.

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<sup>75</sup> Koucký, J.: [Kolik máme vysokoškoláků? Materiál pro jednání pracovní skupiny pro aktualizaci dlouhodobého záměru rozvoje vysokého školství pro rok 2008.] How many students of higher education are there? Material for the meeting of the working group for updating the long-term plan of development of higher educational institutions for 2008. Praha, Ministry of Education, March 2007.

<sup>76</sup> Education at a Glance. Paris OECD, 2006. Statistical table C2.2

<sup>77</sup> Institute for Information on Education, registers of students of higher education.

The **effectiveness of the system of tertiary education and decreasing interest in study of technical fields** are also problems. The quantitative development of higher education in this country has led to detrimental effects and tendencies. The length of time that the average student of higher education spends at higher educational institutions is increasing and the success of study is decreasing, especially in the first two years of study. This is a serious problem, especially amongst students of technical fields, where the success rate in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years is only about 40% at some faculties.

Each year, there is an increase in the number of applicants accepted for study of technical fields. For example, 80% more applicants for study at technical higher educational institutions were accepted in the 2002/2003 academic year than ten years previously in 1992/1993 and the success of applications for study in technical fields (76.1%) is also the highest in the past ten years. Nonetheless, the share of applicants accepted for study in technical fields in the structure of accepted applicants according to groups of fields has decreased substantially. In 1992/1993, applicants accepted for study in technical fields corresponded to 39.9% of all applicants accepted for study; in the 2002/2003 academic year, applicants accepted for study in technical fields corresponded to only 25.8% of all applicants accepted for study at higher educational institutions<sup>78</sup>. The trend in decreasing interest in technical study is not only a Czech phenomenon, but has also been observed abroad. However, this undoubtedly constitutes a substantial risk for the development of technology and of the economy as a whole.

In relation to the number of qualified teachers, the large numbers of students are a limiting factor that practically excludes individual work with students and targeted support for the specific needs of study groups (e.g. the differences between the graduates of general secondary schools, graduates of SOŠ and SOU), etc. Pedagogical and scientific workers form less than half (47.3%) of all employees at public higher educational institutions. As pointed out by the OECD commission of experts<sup>79</sup>, a rigid career system is maintained in the CR, with strict qualification conditions, which corresponds ever less to the requirements of a diversified tertiary system. External practitioners, who teach at higher educational institutions and orient students towards a specialist and working life, remain in the positions of assistants with low financial remuneration. The OECD experts were of the opinion that the complex set of factors related to human resource management at higher educational institutions could have a negative effect on the development of occupationally oriented study in bachelor's study programs.

### **Range of study programs**

The range of certified study programs for **face-to-face forms of study** is currently diversified into four types. In accordance with the Bologna process of creation of the European higher education system, higher educational institutions provide certified bachelor's study programs leading to master's and doctor's programs. Simultaneously, long (mostly five-year) master's study programs are provided that, as study programs, do not follow on from certified bachelor's study programs in cases where this is required (e.g. in relation to the conditions and rules for performance of the relevant professions) by the character of the study program (e.g. study programs of medicine, law, pedagogy for basic and secondary schools, etc.).

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<sup>78</sup> Institute for Information on Education, registers of students of higher education.

<sup>79</sup> Thematic Review of Tertiary Education – Country Note Czech Republic, November 2006.

The provisions of Article 44 (4) of the Act on higher education permits certification and subsequent implementation of a study program in the form of **distance or combination of distance and face-to-face study**. This range of study is intended for students who cannot or do not want to participate in standard face-to-face study for objective or subjective reasons. This form corresponds to the offer of a “second chance” for adults, economically active students, who did not utilize the possibility for study at a higher education institution during the relevant stage in their lives. Simultaneously, these forms of study enable better access to higher education (and education in general) for persons who are physically or socially handicapped (e.g. physically disabled, young people from socially disadvantaged families, women on mother’s leave, socially isolated persons, etc.). Since 2000, there has been a constant increase in the number of students in certified programs in combined or distance forms of study and those intended primarily for further education of adults.

At the present time, over five and a half thousand study programs and fields in face-to-face forms of study, over two and a half thousand study programs for combined forms of study, but only three study programs for distance forms of study have been certified at all Czech higher educational institutions<sup>80</sup>. It is apparent that the difficulties associated with preparation of distance education, together with the great demands on pedagogical erudition and skills in the use of information and communication technologies for education constitute a retarding factor in the development of good-quality distance education in the CR.

Higher educational institutions also provide a range of **courses and programs of lifelong learning** (pursuant to Article 60 of the Act on higher education). They are intended for the general public as recreational study (e.g. recreational courses, third-age university) and also the specialists for supplementing or updating earlier professional education, e.g. programs of further education of pedagogical workers. According to IIE, **at total of 38 393 persons**, 65% of whom were women, **were registered for lifelong learning at higher educational institutions** in the period from November 1, 2004 to January 31, 2005<sup>81</sup>.

The amendment to the Act on higher education of 2001 (Act No. 147/2001 Coll.) allows HEI’s to provide lifelong education in the framework of certified study programs. Up to 60% of the credits required for normal completion of studies, obtained in the framework of lifelong learning, can be recognized for obtaining a higher education diploma, provided that the student is subsequently accepted into a study program. A large share of higher educational institutions design their study programs for the area of further education of adults in this sense and thus react to the demand for obtaining higher education qualifications amongst productive adults. Paradoxically, this trend is augmented by the fact that demographic data clearly indicate that the Czech population is rapidly ageing. This will mean prolonging of the period of economic activity of individuals, adaptation to the qualification requirements of a changing labour market and thus an increase in the potential demand for broader and more diverse lifelong learning than that offered by the present institutions in the tertiary sector.

Courses in **further technical education** reacting to specific requirements of the region within the area of the higher educational institution or in connection with cooperation with practice – with employers or manufacturing enterprises – tend to be of lesser interest for higher educational institutions. Some courses of lifelong learning are prepared in cooperation with professional chambers, companies, etc. However, there are a number of barriers to mutual cooperation of the workplaces of regional state and public administrations, companies

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<sup>80</sup> Database of the certification commission at [www.msmt.cz](http://www.msmt.cz).

<sup>81</sup> This information can be considered only rough; it depends what the HEI include in the statistics. Lifelong learning is entirely within the competence of the HEI, including awarding of graduation certificates, and is not completely recorded in any register.

and other employees with higher educational institutions in the region, which are being overcome only slowly. **Further education of teachers** constitutes an exception; here, in contrast, higher educational institutions offer a wide range of study programs, including programs for obtaining pedagogical qualifications and for extending pedagogical qualifications.

Almost all public higher educational institutions offer a large range of good-quality activities in the area of **education of seniors**. “Third-age universities” are now considered to be a traditional activity of higher educational institutions and there is great interest on the part of seniors (generally persons older than 55 years of age). Academics also generally have a positive attitude towards this educational activity. The great interest in participation in educational activities of third-age universities and their high standard is greatly affected by the substantial financial support from the state. Support for the education of older persons is also important from the standpoint of their position in the labour market. The ageing of the population will gradually lead to participation of older persons in the working process or later retirement. It is also apparent that their effective placement in the labour market will also require extension and diversification of the range of further education provided by educational institutions in the tertiary sector. However, at the present time, education of seniors that is more of a recreational or civil character, without any effect on further application, tends to predominate.

**Unemployment rate of graduates of HEI** in the CR is generally very low. According to current statistics of the Ministry of Labour, unemployment of HEI graduates constitutes only a tiny share of overall unemployment in the country. For example, as of September 30, 2006, only 0.86% of the total number of registered unemployed persons were HEI graduates. More detailed analysis reveals that sporadic unemployment rate of HEI graduates tends to appear in certain fields of study and is also higher in university cities (with the exception of Prague). Relatively higher numbers of unemployed HEI graduates, however only several dozen, appear particularly in Brno, Olomouc and Ostrava. According to OECD data, the employment of men who are graduates of ISCED 5 A tertiary education (25-64 years of age) in the CR exceeds the OECD average and this figure equals the OECD average for women<sup>82</sup>.

**Connection of the tertiary sector to the labour market.** The employment rate of HEI graduates is considered to be one of the most important indicators of the quality of higher educational institutions. In its Long-term Plan for 2006 – 2010, the Ministry of Education places considerable emphasis on this aspect and, on the basis of trends in unemployment, plans “regular updating of the range of HEI programs with emphasis on the employability of graduates and on trends in the development of employer requirements on the graduate profile”. This is very closely related to the interconnection of HEI and their teaching and research with practice. Some predominantly technically oriented HEI are active in this respect; the situation is more complicated in non-engineering fields or in fields that are not strongly professionally oriented. Greater orientation towards employability and placing graduates in the labour market can be expected from private HEI and VOŠ. This is also related to the fact that the representatives of employers and professionals in practice participate at these educational institutions to a greater degree in their managerial bodies or directly in teaching as external lecturers.

**Financing of higher educational institutions** in the CR is a long-term problem. A discussion has long been going on as to whether the existing system is financially sustainable or whether it will be necessary to depend on fees and other private sources for sustainability of the system. At the end of the last century, there was a substantial decrease in expenditures

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<sup>82</sup> Source: Education at a Glance, OECD Indicators 2005, data for 2003.

per student as a consequence of the substantial increase in the number of students and minimal increase in public financing of HEI. Conditions began to improve substantially after 2005, with a considerable increase in the volume of public finances for higher educational institutions from CZK 9 billion in 2000 to CZK 16.8 billion in 2005. Nonetheless, the actual expenditures per student do not attain the 1995 level and, at the present time, the share of the GDP per student is slightly below the average for the OECD countries. The level of private funding for higher educational institutions is very low and corresponds to approximately one eighth of the total income of higher educational institutions, while this is about one fifth in the OECD countries. It is thus apparent that higher educational institutions are highly dependent on public funding and that it will be difficult to maintain and finance growth in the future. The OECD evaluation report draws attention to this state of affairs and recommends consideration of reform of the financing of HEI, including an increase in the contribution of private financing<sup>83</sup>.

#### **2.2.4 Identification of problems in the area of further education**

Further education is currently a less-developed area in the concept of lifelong learning. The education of adults at schools leading to acquisition of a formal level of education is mostly considered to constitute a continuation of initial education. Although this education has a very long tradition in the school system, its forms are not sufficiently flexible towards the requirements of adults and, consequently, it is not sufficiently utilized to supplement qualifications during the working life. Further education, undergone after completion of initial education and concerned with occupational development (further vocational education), retraining or recreational education, suffers from numerous systemic and financial barriers.

Participation of the adult population in the CR in further education does not correspond to contemporary European trends. On an average, 42% of the population aged 25-64 years in the EU-25 participates in some form of further education annually<sup>84</sup>. With a level of 29%, the CR falls behind the developed EU-15 countries, and also most of the new member states, whose economic and social conditions are comparable or worse than in the CR. This evaluation also corresponds to the characteristics<sup>85</sup> monitored by the European Commission in meeting the Lisbon objectives in the area of education. With a level of 6.3% (2004), the CR falls far behind the set Lisbon objective to achieve a level of at least 12.5% by 2010. There has recently been an increase in participation in further education by 0.9%; however, this corresponds only to the average for the EU-25 countries. This means that the Czech Republic remains in approximately the same position amongst the EU countries. In order to achieve the Lisbon objectives, the participation of the adult population in further education would have to double.

Adults can receive education in various forms during their lives. They choose the form that corresponds to their needs, the available time and their financial capabilities. However, the variety and quality of courses being offered is also important. This education can consist in formal education at schools, courses of non-formal education, provided by various educational institutions or enterprises, or informal learning corresponding to various ways of self-education<sup>86</sup>.

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<sup>83</sup> Thematic Review of Tertiary Education – Country Note Czech Republic, November 2006, p. 29.

<sup>84</sup> Level of participation in education during the previous 12 months, data for 2003, Source: EUROSTAT 2005.

<sup>85</sup> Level of participation in education during the past 4 weeks.

<sup>86</sup> All the data related to formal, non-formal and informal education mentioned in the text below are related to 2003, Source: LFS – Ad hoc module 2003, EUROSTAT 2005.



The Czech Republic is in last position in the group of European countries, with 1.4% of the **adult population participating in formal education** at schools. The older and middle age group above 45 years of age practically does not participate in this type of education in the CR. In fact, even the youngest age group of adults aged 25-34 years participates in formal education only sporadically (4% compared to 11% in the EU). The fact that, in the CR, of the very numerous group of adults with secondary education (almost 77% of the population aged 25-64 years), only a small share attempts to supplement or increase their education. This share equals only 1.1%, which is five times less than the EU average. Persons with low qualifications, who have achieved only basic education in the framework of school attendance, practically do not participate in further education (0.1%). It is necessary to create specific mechanisms for returning them to the educational process, especially young adults.

The low interest in study at schools amongst adults is a result primarily of the low capacity of schools and their inability to offer educational programs in a form and using methods that would be attractive for adults interested in studying. It is necessary to introduce preparatory courses prior to commencing study, especially for persons with low qualifications, to make it possible to utilize the results of non-formal learning and knowledge gained from experience, to modularize study and to adapt the pedagogical process. Educational institutions that do not belong in the school system react more flexibly to educational needs. The financial character could be a further barrier or complications could be connected with difficulties in harmonizing education with employment. Favourable trends have been observed only in the preparation of legal regulations in the area of recognition of qualifications acquired through further education<sup>87</sup>. The necessary instruments and institutional prerequisites for application of the legal regulations in practice are being prepared with assistance from the ESF systemic projects.

Approximately 13% of the population of the CR participates in **non-formal learning**<sup>88</sup>, which consists in participation in various courses at the workplace or elsewhere. Here, the CR does not fall as far behind the EU average (17%) as in the other forms of education; differences in participation between the individual qualification and occupational groups are lesser in the CR than in the EU countries.

However, the number of hours spent in courses of non-formal learning is substantially lower in the CR (50 hours annually) than in the EU countries (84 hours annually). Especially workers with low qualifications attend only very short training sessions lasting about 25 hours annually, which is one of the lowest figures for the whole EU (the EU average is 87 hours annually). The short duration of the courses, attended by persons with low qualifications, permits acquisition of simple skills in series production lines, but does not provide an adequate basis for increasing their occupational flexibility.

Women in the CR participate in non-formal learning even less than men. This is especially true of the youngest (25-34 years) and oldest (55-64 years) age groups. This model is not common in the EU. This corresponds to the relatively greater difficulty in combining care for the family with further education, lower readiness to participate in further education at a higher age and also attitudes and lesser incentives from employers, who organize a major part of courses in non-formal learning. In contrast, women self-educate to almost the same degree as men.

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<sup>87</sup> Act No. 179/2006 Coll., on verification and recognition of the results of further education and amending some laws (the Act on Recognition of the Results of Further Education).

<sup>88</sup> Participation in non-formal education includes all courses, including recreational education (see the Dictionary of Basic Terms).

**Retraining** constitutes a substantial part of further education intended for unemployed and employed persons for retention of existing jobs or obtaining new employment. Compared to the EU-15 countries, the CR utilizes the potential of retraining to a very small degree. Of the total number of unemployed persons, only not quite 10%<sup>89</sup> undergo retraining, while this figure is two to four times higher in the EU countries. International comparison of participation of unemployed persons in further education also points out the inadequate extent of retraining. In addition, the length of courses to which unemployed persons are assigned is much shorter in the CR than is common in the European countries (they last approximately half as long). The low participation of unemployed persons in retraining is also accompanied by lack of interest in self-education (only 13.2% in the CR compared to 31.8% for the EU-25 average<sup>90</sup>), which is caused, amongst other things, by the low qualification level of unemployed persons. This situation complicates return to the labour market and contributes to an increase in long-term unemployment, which affected almost 42%<sup>91</sup> of the total number of unemployed persons at the end of 2005. The causes of the low share of persons receiving education amongst the unemployed are closely connected with their lack of motivation. Recently, retraining courses have begun to adapt more to the needs of specific groups of unemployed persons, especially persons with low qualifications and older persons, who require a more individual approach in the form of counselling, educational methods, support during study and interconnection of teaching with practice. These initiated processes should be strengthened and accelerated. Participation of social partners in the creation of retraining courses is rather low. Employers frequently do not recognize the full value of retraining and exhibit low willingness to accept retrained persons. This negatively affects the placing of retrained persons on the labour market, which corresponded to only about 45% at the end of 2006<sup>92</sup>.

**Informal learning** is understood as a process of obtaining knowledge, acquiring skills and competences from everyday experience and activities at work, in the family and in one's leisure time, during stays in nature, at cultural events, etc. It also includes self-education using means of communication, including the information potential of the internet<sup>93</sup>. On an average, each third person participates in self-education in the EU-25, while only each fifth person in the CR does so. There are substantial differences between the individual qualification groups. While persons in the CR with tertiary education study independently to the same degree or even somewhat more than in the EU, persons with low qualifications study far less. In addition to low motivation and awareness, the lack of home computers, limited access to the internet and low computer literacy are all factors here.

**Education organized by enterprises** is an important form of further education. According to the survey of the World Economic Forum<sup>94</sup>, the development of human resources and education of employees is not a company priority in the CR and this is performed to an inadequate extent. On the basis of the CVTS2<sup>95</sup> survey in 1999, of the total number of enterprises in the CR, 69%<sup>96</sup> provided their employees with further vocational

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<sup>89</sup> Data for 2002. Source: OECD: Employment Outlook, 2003.

<sup>90</sup> Data for 2003. Source: LFS – Ad hoc module 2003, EUROSTAT 2005.

<sup>91</sup> Analysis of trends in employment and unemployment in 2005, Ministry of Labour.

<sup>92</sup> Ministry of Labour: Structure of the flux of applicants after successful retraining – quarterly report II, 4<sup>th</sup> Q, 2006.

<sup>93</sup> For more details, see the Dictionary of Basic Terms.

<sup>94</sup> WEF: Global Competitiveness Report 2004-2005. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

<sup>95</sup> Continuing Vocational Training Survey 2. Further vocational education of employees in 1999. Prague CSU, 2001.

<sup>96</sup> Katja Nestler and Emmanuel Kailis: First survey of continuing vocational training in enterprises in candidate countries, Statistics in Focus, Theme 3 – 2/2002, EUROSTAT.

education. This share is lower than in the EU-15 (72%), but is more than is common in the new member states. The attention paid by enterprises to education of their employees and systematic human resources development is dependent on many factors. These include the size of the enterprise, the branch to which it belongs and participation of foreign capital in ownership of the company. Czech companies are far less concerned with development of their human resources. This difference is partly caused by the worse financial conditions in Czech companies, the lower level of company management and especially the lower culture or even absence of management of human resources. Small and medium-sized companies are in the worst position in this respect. However, conditions are not satisfactory even in larger medium-sized companies, as they often lie outside of the framework of program support (they cannot attain the level of investment incentives and they no longer fulfil the conditions for support for small companies). They mostly concentrate only on compulsory training following from the legal regulations.

It is apparent from international comparison of **company expenditures** for education per employee that companies in the CR fall far behind the EU average. Expenditures in small enterprises attained only 43% of the EU average and expenditures by medium-sized companies were similar (42%), while the comparison was best for large enterprises. However, even here, investments into employee education were not even half the European average (46%)<sup>97</sup>. Companies in the branches of retail trade, gastronomy, transport and also in construction and in industry that still employ the greatest share of economically active inhabitants, invested the least into human resources development. Lower expenditures constitute a barrier not only for the overall extent of company education, but also for its intensity. The number of hours spent in courses is more than a quarter less than the EU-15 average<sup>98</sup>.

Summarily, it can be stated that further education is not sufficiently utilized in the CR as a means for overcoming problems in the labour market and in the occupational careers of individuals. To the contrary, differences established by initial education become deeper throughout life. So far, the processes that would reduce the backwardness of the CR compared to the EU in participation in further education have not yet been commenced.

Legal regulations currently exist in the sphere of further education, which deal with only the area of verification and recognition of the results of further education or some other areas, such as, e.g., retraining, specific education prescribed for performance of some occupations, etc.

There continue to be numerous financial, information and systemic barriers on the side of demand, which prevent improvement of access to further education for the population as a whole and especially for some social and qualification groups of the population. There is a complete lack of financial and motivation stimuli for individuals in the form of, e.g., tax instruments, education accounts, or substantial financial advantages for retraining. In addition to stimulation of interest in further education, it is necessary to extend and improve supporting information and counselling services, which are currently fragmented and incomplete. In relation to requirements, individual counselling is

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<sup>97</sup> Continuing training in enterprises in Europe – Results of the Second European Continuing Vocational Training Survey in Enterprises, EUROSTAT 2005, internal calculations to the unweighted EU-22 average (without SK, MT, CY) from the absolute PPS data.

<sup>98</sup> Continuing training in enterprises in Europe – Results of the Second European Continuing Vocational Training Survey in Enterprises, EUROSTAT 2005, internal calculations to the unweighted EU-22 average (without SK, MT, CY).

insufficiently developed to provide comprehensive testing of educational prerequisites and needs and to motivate individuals towards achieving these goals.

On the side of supply, problems exist particularly in the quality of education, which is practically not evaluated, with the exception of school and retraining programs. This would require the creation of institutional structures and instruments for evaluation of the level of educational institutions and for verification of the quality of educators and of educational programs. Individual activities that occur in the area of accreditation and certification should be interconnected and included in a comprehensive system. There is also a lack of supportive systems to improve quality, which would provide for research, development and innovation in the area of offers of further education and would promote their extension. In addition to quality, inadequacies also exist in the structure of available further education. It is especially important to emphasize inadequacies in relation to the labour market and the specific needs of some groups of clients.

## 2.3 Summary results of analysis of the current state of development of LLL – SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most inhabitants have completed secondary education (upper secondary level).</li> <li>• A low number of inhabitants have only basic education (lower secondary level).</li> <li>• Above-average results for functional literacy at ISCED level 1 of basic school.</li> <li>• Low number of students that leave the educational system prematurely (i.e. the upper secondary level of education).</li> <li>• Broad territorial coverage by educational institutions of all levels and types. Varied system of tertiary education (VOŠ, public, private and state HEI).</li> <li>• Decentralized system of HEI with full academic freedom, open to Europe.</li> <li>• Large, diversified range of study programs in the tertiary sector.</li> <li>• High demand for tertiary education, especially for education at HEI.</li> <li>• Variety and diversity of providers of recreational</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low overall share of the population with higher education; limited social prestige and qualification base of the bachelor's level of education.</li> <li>• Inadequate qualifications levels amongst the older population.</li> <li>• Low number of households with up-to-date ICT (PC's, internet).</li> <li>• Regional differences in the education level of the population</li> <li>• Low educational mobility (children do not achieve a higher level of education than their parents).</li> <li>• Low level of development of key competences (incl. language and ICT).</li> <li>• Low participation of social partners in development of lifelong learning.</li> <li>• Lack of a comprehensive system for identification of educational needs and of an accessible individualized system of counselling and information services.</li> <li>• Early selectivity of the educational system, limited permeability between forms of education. Conservative attitude of HEI, low level of mutual cooperation, predominant orientation towards degree study, slow development of distance study at HEI and VOŠ, that would permit good-quality study during employment, inadequate connection to the requirements of practice and limited cooperation with employers. The range of study offered still does not fully satisfy the level of demand for tertiary education.</li> <li>• Continuing inequality in access to tertiary education, reflected particularly in the lower level of access for students from lower social stratum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of an open area for LLL (the National Occupations System, the National qualifications framework and recognition of non-formal and informal learning pursuant to Act No. 179/2006 Coll., on verification and recognition of the results of further education, a module and credit system in connection with ECVET, etc.).</li> <li>• Increased demand for leisure time activities for children, adolescents and adults will facilitate their further development.</li> <li>• The capacities of basic and secondary schools can be utilized for further education – schools as the educational centres of municipalities.</li> <li>• Curriculum reform at basic schools and secondary schools will facilitate the development of key competences and increase motivation for LLL.</li> <li>• Expansion of the tertiary sector will facilitate generalization of secondary vocational education and place greater emphasis on key competences.</li> <li>• Diversification of the tertiary sector in connection with the Bologna process will facilitate further development of bachelor's study programs oriented towards practice.</li> <li>• HEI can become regional centres for education and research or can participate actively in newly formed regional LLL centres.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of interconnection of policies in the areas of education, industry, health, social services and culture.</li> <li>• Lack of concurrence of the qualifications being offered with the needs of the economic sphere (both qualitative and quantitative); lack of interconnection between the sphere of education and the sphere of work, incl. lack of practice for students.</li> <li>• Inadequate care for talented persons, orientation towards the average.</li> <li>• Inequalities in access to education lead to social exclusion and can endanger social cohesion.</li> <li>• The second level of basic schools (ISCED 2) and upper secondary education ending with an apprentice certificate could become less valuable education for variously disadvantaged persons.</li> <li>• Inadequacies in the quality of the tertiary sector of education (unsatisfactory interconnection of teaching with research and with the needs of the economic sphere, ageing teaching staff, lack of preparedness of teachers for specificities of adult education, etc.).</li> <li>• Lack of finances in the tertiary sector, high dependence on state financing and low support financed by private sources limit its development.</li> <li>• Unresolved inclusion of bachelor's</li> </ul>

<p>education and large age difference amongst participants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower interest in study of technical fields and high level of failure in this study.</li> <li>• Lack of a systemic environment (systemic and financial barriers) for further education limits its development – on the side of supply, there is a lack of a system for ensuring the quality of educational programs and of educators; on the side of demand, there is a lack of stimuli for participation.</li> <li>• Low participation of adults in all forms of further education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of distance education will bring a further target group into education, especially economically active adults.</li> <li>• Participation of schools in the tertiary sector in international educational projects and ESF projects will open possibilities for development of educational activities and innovation of study opportunities towards further development of adult education and support for LLL.</li> <li>• Acceleration of technical changes and allocation of qualification-demanding investments will lead to an increase in demand for further education for persons of productive age.</li> </ul>	<p>study in the corresponding qualification level will lead to preference of bachelors for immediate continuance in study in master's programs rather than leaving for employment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low participation of unemployed persons in retraining leads to an increase in their long-term unemployment and to the danger of social exclusion.</li> </ul>
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### 3. STRATEGIC PART

#### 3.1 Vision for lifelong learning in the CR

*To provide all groups of the population throughout their lives with the opportunity of acquiring and recognition of qualifications required on the labour market and of improving key competences required for success in their working, civic and personal lives.*

The vision for lifelong learning in the CR emphasizes the economic, environmental and social aspects of the benefits of lifelong learning. Consequently, it emphasizes support for:

##### **a) personal development**

Lifelong learning should enable everyone to develop throughout their lifetime according to their abilities and interests and to attempt to be successful in all spheres of life. It should provide them with consciousness of the unique nature of their own person without a feeling of vulnerability or their own superiority in the society of various nations, languages and cultures.

##### **b) social cohesion and active citizenship**

Lifelong learning should be one of the most important integrating forces increasing the social cohesion of society and environmental responsibility, and this should not occur only through transfer of shared values and common traditions. Lifelong learning can substantially equalize opportunities in life, reduce exclusion of disadvantaged groups to the fringes of society and thus contribute to social stabilization. Lifelong learning can also substantially contribute to education of judicious, critical and independently thinking individuals with an awareness of their own dignity and with respect for the rights and freedoms of other people, who can develop democracy and a civil society.

##### **c) employability**

Lifelong learning should contribute to an increase in employability, i.e. the ability to find employment and a permanent position in the labour market, not only in the CR, but also abroad – especially in Europe. This requires orientation of general and vocational education towards a continuous increase in the flexibility and adaptability of the individual, towards their creativity and initiative, towards independence and responsibility. Simultaneously, it should open scope for innovation and business and thus create new jobs.

#### 3.2 Main strategic goals

The main strategic goals represent priority areas that should receive fundamental attention in the coming years. They indicate the basic idea of the expected development in the given area, including problems and suggestions that should be the subject of further considerations, clarification and subsequent specific elaboration.

### **3.2.1 Recognition, permeability**

#### ***Create an open area for lifelong learning, including recognition of the results of non-formal and informal learning***

Education is provided in many different ways and under various conditions. So far, only formal school education has been recognized and certified by nationally valid documents<sup>99</sup>. However, all types of education and learning should be identified and recognized, beginning with normal school instruction to gaining experience in families, communities and at the workplace, on the basis of the results of this education. Recognition of the results of all forms of education and learning will enable the creation of an open space for lifelong learning, where the transition between the individual sectors of education will be greatly facilitated so that some pathways do not lead to dead ends. Recognition of the results of education without regard to where and how they were acquired will also simplify the route to further study (e.g. will allow for exemption from some examinations on the basis of determined knowledge and skills) and demonstration of qualifications for acceptance into employment (e.g. will allow substitution of formerly obtained occupational experience for vocational education).

The CR has set out in this direction, but is still at the start of the whole process. Resolution of these aspects is approached at several levels, which must be further elaborated:

- *Legal:* On August 1, 2007, the ***Act on verification and recognition of the results of further education***<sup>100</sup> will come into force; this will be an important step towards equal importance for various ways of acquiring qualifications. This Act establishes a relatively universal system of evaluation of education acquired outside of the educational system and introduces a uniform, transparent and objective means of verification of the skills and knowledge of the individual<sup>101</sup>. This will make it possible to obtain a certificate of recognition of a “partial qualification”, i.e. skills that facilitate finding employment. The importance of partial qualifications is supported by the requirements of the world of work, where an employer frequently does not require that employees have completed levels of education, but it is sufficient for the given position if the employee is conversant with certain working activities that are required for the particular profession. A further effect of the law is the possibility of acquiring partial qualifications and combining them into complete qualifications and the subsequent possibility of acquiring a level of education. In the future, consideration should also be taken of further steps that would enable especially adults to acquire complete qualifications required for success in the labour market without attempting to increase their level of formal education.

- *Systemic:* A ***National Qualifications Framework***, based on a National Occupations System, created on the basis of the above law on recognition of the results of further education, with support from a ESF project, should form an administrative and relationship framework for all

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<sup>99</sup>In addition, the graduates of retraining programs accredited by the Ministry of Education or Ministry of Health or on the basis of the special regulations receive certificates with national validity (Article 108 of Act No. 435/2004 Coll., on employment).

<sup>100</sup> Act No. 179/2006 Coll., on verification and recognition of the results of further education and amending some laws (the Act on Recognition of the Results of Further Education).

<sup>101</sup> The provisions, mechanisms and other processes of the Act on verification and recognition of the results of further education do not apply to the entire area of health-care occupations, both medical and non-medical. This blockage is based on the wording of Acts No. 95/2004 Coll. and No. 96/2004 Coll., and also on a number of international agreements concluded with WHO, primarily on the rights of patients, new mothers and injured persons.



the qualifications recognized in the labour market and allow identification, classification and assignment of the results of learning obtained in various ways into 8 qualification levels and into a system of partial and complete qualifications. The creation of a National Qualification Framework (NQF) should be evolved to the level of qualifications acquired in the tertiary sector of education and understood as a continuous process of harmonization of the requirements on vocational qualification by all stakeholders in the spheres of education and work. In connection with EQF<sup>102</sup>, the existence of NQF should promote transparency and recognition of qualifications acquired in the CR at a European level, including international recognition.

- *Process*: The manner of recognizing previous learning<sup>103</sup>, i.e. procedures, in which the results of previous learning are identified, evaluated, recognized and certified, has so far been implemented only under pilot conditions and is limited to qualifications terminated by an apprentice certificate, as the relevant law has not yet come into effect. Consequently, for the future, it would be important to gradually develop a ***comprehensive system of practical procedures and instruments for identification and recognition of the results of non-formal and informal learning for all levels of qualifications***. In the creation of methods and instruments for verification of the results of non-formal and informal learning, it is important to cooperate with the representatives of social partners. It is also possible to employ foreign experience and, in addition, some methods of working and balance diagnostics, which are currently being developed in the framework of employment services, can also be used.

In connection with NQF, it is also necessary to consider the possibility of development of a ***modularization and credit system***, which would enable inclusion and recognition of individual study units (or qualifications). Transition to a credit system in initial education would then enable closer interconnection and horizontal ***permeability*** between schools with different orientation at the same level of the educational process (e.g. between general and vocational education at the secondary school level or between higher educational institutions and tertiary technical schools in the area of tertiary education) and also vertical permeability (e.g. between vocational education at the upper secondary and tertiary level, especially VOŠ). This will require intense ***negotiations on the manner and rules of transfer of credits*** between the individual types of educational institutions and counting of credits obtained on the basis of previous learning by these institutions. This process should be developed in the CR in connection with the ECVET consultation process<sup>104</sup>.

### **3.2.2 Equal access**

#### ***Support availability and an equal chance in access to educational opportunities during a person's entire life cycle***

The availability of opportunities for lifelong learning for all groups of the population has a substantial influence on social cohesion. It is necessary to ensure, not only equality or reduction of inequality in access to school education, but also equal access to opportunities for further education. However, the CR is a country with problems in both these areas.

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<sup>102</sup> EQF (European Qualification Framework) - Towards a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning. EC Brussels, 2005.

<sup>103</sup> The results of previous learning include both the individual results of previous formal education at schools and also the results of non-formal education in courses, as well as the results of informal learning (self-education) and acquisition of experience.

<sup>104</sup> ECVET (European Credit Transfer System for VET). Principles and Essentials Rules for Implementation of a ECVET. EC Brussels, 2004.

International comparisons<sup>105</sup> indicate low intergenerational educational mobility and thus high dependence of the acquired level of education on the education of one's parents and the social background of the family. This has very negative consequences, primarily in limitation of development of talents, whose occurrence should be considered to be independent of the cultural and educational background of the family environment. Low inter-generation mobility in the achieved level of education is rooted in the methods that are employed in the Czech educational system at all its levels. This is particularly true of the system of entrance examinations at secondary schools and higher educational institutions and also of teaching methods oriented towards provision of knowledge. This places demands on the home preparation of the child and prefers children from more educated families with greater cultural capital. Initial education in the school system has a tendency to reproduce rather than reduce inequality derived from a low-cultural educational environment. This continues in further education, where participation is dependent on the level of initial education achieved.

The pathway towards reducing inequality thus depends particularly on *extending the range* of educational opportunities. However, by itself, this will not lead to a reduction in differences in participation in education by individuals from different social groups. The *variety and availability of education being offered* is important for motivation of all groups of the population with different preconditions and interests in participating in education, at all levels, including further education. It is necessary to constantly bear in mind maximization of chances for the best possible education and thus inclusion of all members of society.

While the capacity of the extended range of educational opportunities in the CR is related mainly to tertiary and further education, a greater variety of educational opportunities is required in the entire spectrum of lifelong learning.

The concept of *inclusive schools*, whose pedagogical methods facilitate elimination of barriers and support for the talents and capabilities of all students, should be greatly promoted in preschool education and in the framework of compulsory education. The educational process should provide a common nucleus for all students and should also enable individual profiling through a wide range of compulsory elective subjects. The educational methods must simultaneously be diverse to satisfy, not only students who are oriented towards conceptual and theoretical thinking, but also those who prefer the practical experience of learning. Especially these students are at a disadvantage with the current academic methods of teaching and inadequate communication on their educational needs and the sense of their education and this limits their motivation to continue their education.

High participation in upper secondary education and a low level of premature school leaving are facilitated in the CR by various educational pathways oriented towards general or vocational education. Countries, in which most students pass through a general educational program at this level, frequently encounter difficulties in maintaining motivation amongst these students, with a high proportion of premature school leaving. Consequently, it is important to preserve these *various means of directing educational pathways* and to develop them so as to retain a suitable range of opportunities for practically oriented students and for weaker students who have difficulties managing the schoolwork at this level. On the other hand, it is necessary to ensure that none of the pathways is a dead end and that each pathway permits access to tertiary education, on the basis of a module and credit system. In order to preserve the motivation of all students, it is necessary to ensure that various educational pathways are provided and financially secured, where possible, "*under one roof*".

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<sup>105</sup> SIALS - Literacy in the Information Age. Final Report of the International Adult Literacy Survey. Paris, OECD and Statistics Canada 2000.

The problem of availability is most pressing in the tertiary sector and its resolution lies mainly in development of a diverse range of educational opportunities, both institutions (non-university, university) and forms of study (especially distance). All types and forms of tertiary education should become an integral part of this sector and their mutual permeability should be ensured on the basis of a credit system.

While, in the area of initial education and also tertiary education, the demand for education is high, that for participation in further education is very low in the CR. Simultaneously, further education is undertaken primarily by people with a high level of initial education and thus further education increases the differences in skills following from limited participation in school education. Consequently, attention in *further education* should be concentrated on providing a second chance and should attempt to eliminate these inequalities. In addition, further education must eliminate barriers related to the disadvantageous position of individuals in the labour market, especially for unemployed persons, persons in danger of loss of employment, persons endangered in entering the labour market by some form of discrimination (because of their age, sex, ethnic background, etc.) and individuals who are not fully integrated into the labour market. Thus, it is necessary to create opportunities so that every adult can increase the level of their formal education and also so that everyone is capable of supplementing and developing their professional skills in accordance with the changing conditions in the labour market, and can thus increase or at least maintain their chances of employment.

Consequently, it is important to promote motivation of adults towards education; this also depends on whether the education is related to their actual problems, whether they can employ their own experience, and whether they can make a choice and can decide when, how and what they will learn. This remains a problem particularly in provision of further education at schools and in school facilities, which frequently do not know how to work with adults. It is thus necessary to promote *education of teachers in the use of specific methods of teaching in work with adults*. This is also important for attracting the least qualified individuals, who were excluded from this process to date or participated minimally.

Equal access to education is inconceivable without specific *measures to promote education of disadvantaged groups of the population*, especially health and socially disadvantaged individuals, young people and young unemployed people to 25 years of age, older persons, women being on maternity leave and after returning from it, ethnically disadvantaged persons, immigrants and workers with low or no qualifications. A considerable part of care for this group is implemented through retraining courses provided by the labour offices, which should be extended to include further competences. The range of educational programs must take also into account and respect the individual needs of members of all disadvantaged groups. In order to increase the effectiveness of this education, it is necessary to increase motivation, to make it equivalent to retraining activities and also to extend the reinforcing of acquired skills at the workplace or with the relevant counselling support, including mentoring and coaching. In addition, didactic methods, aids and forms of further education should be adapted more to the capabilities of disadvantaged persons. It is necessary to develop innovative methods of teaching and modularization of courses with the possibility of combining several pathways and to combine teaching courses more with practical training. Another important element of educational courses for disadvantaged persons consists in an individual approach to clients, employing testing of formerly acquired skills and on the basis of individual educational plans developing the knowledge and skills that are lacking in the given case.

A considerable part of further education is organized by enterprises at workplaces or elsewhere. There are great differences in attitudes to employees in different companies. *Small*

*and medium-sized companies* have lesser financial capabilities for investment into education of their employees and frequently do not even have the know-how for managing human resources; they also frequently encounter difficulties in planning education or in its implementation. This is also sometimes true of slightly larger companies that cannot compete in this respect with very large companies with foreign management, who utilize the advantages of the educational system, methodologies and sometimes also the education centres of the parent companies. Thus, the employees of small and medium-sized companies have worse and limited access to education. In order to remedy this, it is necessary to provide assistance not only of a financial nature to cover the costs connected with implementation of training courses, but also methodical management and consulting in conceiving training and also assistance in creating conditions for allowing employees time for education.

### 3.2.3 Functional literacy

#### *Develop functional literacy and other key competences, incl. the ability to learn throughout one's life*

Equality of education is related not only to the availability of educational opportunities but also to acquisition of key competences that enable the individual to learn throughout his lifetime. These include “basic skills” or *functional literacy*, which is defined as the ability to participate in the world of information<sup>106</sup>. A low level of functional literacy becomes a factor in the competitiveness of the economy of a particular country and in social cohesion, because a low level of literacy amongst some groups of the population can lead to their marginalization at the fringes of society. Functional literacy affects the ability of people to learn effectively and thus also affects the degree to which the idea of lifelong learning can be implemented.

The requirements on further *key competences*, which are characterized primarily by their transferability, i.e. the ability to be used in new, unpredictable situations, follow from the new requirements of the sphere of work, which are the consequence of globalization and development of new technologies, organization of work and the structure of enterprises and thus new requirements on the qualifications of employees. Typical examples of key competences, whose use is similar in various situations, for various tasks and under various conditions, consist, e.g., in methodological competences – problem-solving, use of information and communication technologies, communicative competence – foreign languages, written and oral expression, personality competence – critical thinking, the ability for team work, the ability to learn, self-management, self-control, environmental competence – the ability to react to incentives and threats from the area of the environment and health. Key competences also encompass financial literacy, i.e. the ability of individuals and families to create a family budget, choice of financial products, etc<sup>107</sup>.

These competences are nothing new, but represent a new quality that substantially affects the conception of educational programs. The low level of these competences in the CR amongst fifteen-year-old students<sup>108</sup> and the adult population<sup>109</sup> must necessarily lead to

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<sup>106</sup> This was defined in the SIALS international literacy survey as follows: “The ability to understand printed information and utilize it in everyday activities, in personal life, in employment and in the community so that the individual achieves their goals, develops their knowledge and potential.” It is used to denote a broad range of abilities to process information.

<sup>107</sup> The system of creating financial literacy at basic and secondary schools. Prepared on the basis of Government Resolution No. 1594 of December 7, 2005.

<sup>108</sup> PISA - Programme for International Student Assessment, OECD study, repeated in three-year cycles, studies the level of reading, mathematical and scientific literacy of fifteen-year-old students; the first cycle, concerned

changes in the contents and methods of teaching in initial and further education. It is of fundamental importance to introduce *curriculum reform* that will reduce emphasis on transfer of knowledge and, to the contrary, emphasize the development of more general key competences. This general requirement should be consistently incorporated both into framework educational programs for the individual fields in basic and secondary education and also into the requirements on entrance examinations for higher school levels, as well as into the requirements on final and school-leaving (maturita) examinations.

The insufficient education of teachers also constitutes a fundamental retardant to changes in teaching. As a consequence, *education of teachers* in innovative pedagogical approaches, based primarily on activities, cooperative and project learning and connection of information with the life experience of the student, is fundamental for the success of curriculum reform. In order to introduce teaching that develops the skills and competences of students, teachers should be able to communicate examples of good practice, and obtain *methodical support and other supportive services* so that they can devote themselves maximally to teaching. It is also important to establish the criteria and framework of methodical assistance so as to guarantee its high level. This supportive sector is substantially under-dimensioned in the CR.

It is also very important to develop *key competences of adults*, especially those who were not prepared during their schooling, such as, e.g., information technology and environmental subjects. The level of these competences determines not only the ability to obtain a position in the labour market, but also the motivation of adults for further education. In addition to functional literacy, language skills, presentation ability, team work, etc., it is also necessary to develop the ability to *use information and communication technologies*. Learning these skills should be greatly encouraged, especially amongst the older population, because they improve the ability to participate especially in distance (including e-learning) forms of education. Specific methods and courses should be created for development of the key competences of adults (especially for groups of adult applicants and persons interested in employment and for all disadvantaged persons in the labour market), including training of instructors, trainers and consultants.

#### **3.2.4 Social partnership**

*Through cooperation with social partners, promote harmonization of the range of educational opportunities offered with the requirements of economic, environmental and social development.*

The aspect of harmonization of educational offer with the requirements of the labour market is a very broad subject and is resolved in this country only through minor projects, which are not interconnected and whose results are not used as a regular source of information that could be employed by users at various levels. This situation should be changed by the creation of the above-named *National Qualifications Framework* whose functioning should be understood as a continuous process of harmonization of the requirements on vocational qualifications by all stakeholders in the spheres of education and work. Activities connected with the creation of the National Qualifications System and the National Qualifications

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primarily with reading literacy, was held in 2000; the last cycle concentrating mainly on scientific literacy was held in 2006.

<sup>109</sup> SIALS - Literacy in the Information Age. Final Report of the International Adult Literacy Survey. Paris, OECD and Statistics Canada 2000.

Framework should create and verify the potential for cooperation between the educational sphere and social partners through “sector councils”. The sector councils could then become an important platform for greater and systematic participation of employers in lifelong learning and could play an important role particularly in the processes of verification and recognition of qualifications, e.g. in verifying the qualifications of authorized persons, in providing for control when performing examinations, etc.

A *system of early identification and prediction of qualification requirements* should be constituted for continuous up-dating of NQF and for other purposes of harmonizing the educational offer with the requirements of the labour market (creation of framework – FEP and school educational programs – SEP, directing the range of further education offered, etc.); this system would permit consistent monitoring of qualification requirements from both a qualitative standpoint (content of qualified work, required competences) and also from a quantitative standpoint (potential for success of various qualified groups in the labour market). Determination of the current requirements of the sphere of work is simultaneously relevant primarily for directing supply and demand for further education, as this sector offers short-term to medium-term courses and can thus react relatively rapidly to requirements in the labour market. On the other hand, primarily medium-term and long-term prediction of qualification requirements are important for initial education; this is far more difficult. Individual projects that are being implemented are applied in specific ways; however, a comprehensive system of predicting qualification requirements for the CR as a whole is not yet functional. For the development of this system, it is necessary to monitor and evaluate long-term economic, technical, environmental and investment trends affecting the situation in the labour market and to cooperate with the chief entities in this field.

Support for various *mechanisms and forms of cooperation between the sphere of education and social partners* at all levels is also important for harmonizing education and the requirements of the labour market. At a national level, policies should primarily be coordinated in the areas of education, employment, qualifications and support for enterprises, where it would be useful to reconsider the need for a coordination body extending over the sectors. The gradually established *Councils for human resources development*, which should be an instrument for coordination and creation of a consensus on the priorities of a specific policy amongst a large number of independent entities active in the particular area (organizations of employers and employees, enterprises, educational institutions, civic and special-interest associations, etc.), are important bodies at the regional level. Direct support is required particularly by various forms of *partnership of schools and enterprises* and *partnerships of schools and NGO and NPO* (practice of students and teachers, teaching by experts from practice at schools, formulating and directing diploma theses and other professional practice) and also for targeted elimination of barriers preventing these partnerships (e.g. the legal position of a student during practice, fears of companies related to theft of know-how, etc.). The interconnection of *higher educational institutions with research and development in the economic sphere* is of fundamental importance and is considered to be the most effective strategy to promote innovation and increase the competitiveness of a particular economy.

Social partnership is also related to *environmental partnership*, which is expressed by the most developed societies and enterprises in declarations and voluntary pledges, where the connection of the social and environmental standpoint is presented, systems of environmental management of enterprises are introduced and/or the criteria for sustainable development are evaluated.

### 3.2.5 Stimulation of demand

#### *Stimulate demand for education in all groups of the population throughout their lifetimes*

The demand for initial education is still high in the CR; however, certain groups of the population continue to acquire an inadequate level of education and leave school prematurely or are in danger of leaving school prematurely without acquiring qualifications that can be employed in the labour market. Although these groups do not constitute a major share in the CR (approx. 6-8% of the school-year population), it is necessary to devote increased attention to them and especially to increase their motivation to remain in or return to the educational system. In the framework of the school educational system, the motivation of these groups can be increased particularly by offering various options for less difficult, practically oriented educational pathways at secondary schools. These possibilities exist in the CR (e.g. in vocational schools and practical schools); however, it is necessary to find ways to prevent young people from leaving these schools prematurely. The solution lies in both the social area and in the educational sphere.

The *structure of the social system* should be changed, especially for families where education is not considered a priority, where families live off social assistance and the children's parents are often unemployed. These changes are unavoidable because it is necessary to awaken the interest of parents in leaving their children in initial education and to motivate unemployed young people towards an active attitude and towards return to education. This must be economically more advantageous for them than unemployment. In addition, it will be necessary to resolve the aspect of systemic *support for socially disadvantaged students* at all school levels (social grants exist only at higher educational institutions and there is only ad hoc support for Romany children in secondary schools). There is current a lack of state-supported and guaranteed loans for study, tax relief during study and other potential financial and non-financial instruments to support study, as well as stimuli for achieving excellent results in study.

An acquired distaste for learning, caused by lack of success of the student at school, is another reason for leaving the educational system prematurely. These problems must be resolved through a change in teaching style, in particular orientation towards active and project teaching, that would enable students to learn on the basis of practical tasks, and especially a *combination of teaching in the classroom with teaching at the workplace*. This is important for early awareness of the relationship between knowledge and practice, which should motivate students and also improve their chances of obtaining employment.

The social atmosphere and the degree to which the Government and social partners support vocational and recreational education of adults are important in promoting adult motivation for further education. This continues to be a problem in the CR because, in spite of proclamations, no *measure supporting the demand* of individuals, communities and enterprises for education has been adopted so as to simplify access to education (e.g. making available facilities for child care and for children's leisure time), so that education would become an important and advantageous investment for personal development and career promotion. Financial incentives for participation in further education *for individuals* should concentrate both on support of overall participation in further education and also support for participation by specific groups of the population. Only in this way will the CR have a chance to approach the reference value established for this area at the EU level. In the creation of specific instruments, it is necessary to utilize experience in the EU countries, in which financial incentives have the form particularly of educational vouchers, paid educational leave for further education, deduction of expenditures for further education from the tax base and

offers of subsidized courses. Financial assistance may be awarded singly on the basis of a declared assistance program or can be enshrined in the relevant legal regulations.

Foreign experience must also be utilized in formulating financial instruments earmarked for *enterprises*. It is necessary to consider their advantages and disadvantages and also to consider the use of non-financial stimuli in the form of support for business entities in implementation and achieving of the Investors in People standard, awarding of national awards for education at enterprises, etc.

### 3.2.6 Quality

#### *Promote provision of a good range of educational opportunities*

Quality is an important dimension for lifelong learning and is related to all its components, i.e. providers (schools, educational companies), educational programs and educators (teachers, lecturers). While the mechanisms ensuring quality are more or less constituted for initial education (e.g. inclusion of schools in school registers, approval of framework educational programs for individual fields in basic and secondary education, accreditation of educational programs for tertiary technical education and study programs of higher educational institutions, inspections, final examinations, etc.), and it is possible to consider how well they fulfil their role, no quality assurance mechanism exists in the area of further education, except for accreditation of retraining programs. Thus, considerable attention must be paid to this aspect and support should be provided so that it is possible to regularly obtain feedback on the functioning of the system and its components in relation to the set objectives, to evaluate this feedback and to organize the subsequent changes. However, quality must always be determined and assured in relation to equal opportunity and justice in education.

Quality assurance should be based on a *combination of external evaluation and self-evaluation* and on a combination of formal procedures and an informal (experience-based) ways of quality assurance.

*Formal procedures* (certification of the knowledge of individuals, accreditation of institutions and programs) are oriented towards risks and their prevention. They only certify that a certain component corresponds to the requirements defined in a certain regulation as a minimum standard. However, they do not demonstrate the achievement of high quality or the necessary and required quality for a specific situation. Thus, improvement of these procedures means primarily consideration of the quality and relevance of the particular standards, input and output standards and establishment of clear and verifiable objectives. Thus, it is very important that the national, regional and local (depending on the nature of the regulation) stakeholders agree on these objectives. This is the only way to prevent implementation of standards with contradictory objectives (such as, e.g., the conception of FEP and the common part of school-leaving (maturita) examinations). Formal procedures are lacking particularly in further education; their establishment should be bound particularly to the National Qualifications Framework, which should play the role of an output standard.

Decentralized management and support for the construction of educational programs adapted to local requirements will necessarily lead to increased need for *monitoring of the whole system* in relation to the set objectives. Comparative international surveys are also important and provide valuable feedback on the level of development of the individual aspects of lifelong learning in the CR. While, in the area of initial education, monitoring is provided



in a satisfactory manner, in further education there is an urgent need for establishment of the entire monitoring system.

Informal means of quality assurance (e.g. references) also play an important role in public control. Consequently, it is necessary to support various *informal initiatives*, which evaluate some of the components of lifelong learning from various points of view, give users information, provide them with decision-making criteria and thus contribute to the “culture of quality” in the open environment of lifelong learning. Social partners can play an important role in this respect, especially representatives of employers, enterprises or labour offices, which are capable of evaluating the objectives of schools and the results of their graduates from the standpoint of the labour market.

External evaluation should be balanced by *self-evaluation*. This is especially true for schools and other providers of education. Awareness of the fact that improvement of work and self-development are possible only through continuous evaluation of results is not traditional in this country and is only now being created. Consequently, it is necessary to provide schools with the maximum methodical assistance in introducing internal quality systems, quality criteria, methods of self-evaluation<sup>110</sup> and means of using self-evaluation, e.g., in rationalizing the educational offer, creation of the image of an educational institution facing strong competition, etc.

### **3.2.7 Counselling**

#### ***Development of information and counselling services***

Lifelong learning consists in a diverse and flexible system of educational opportunities and an effective counselling and information system on education and employment is necessary for it and its participants, to allow everyone to find his own ideal educational pathway. At the present time in the CR, counselling is directed towards basic school students in choosing follow-up education at secondary schools and/or secondary school students in choosing tertiary education, as well as towards the unemployed. In both cases, it is related mainly to fundamental long-term or short-term decisions on education or success in the labour market.

However, in the context of lifelong learning, all individuals during their lifetimes and also employers for their employees must choose suitable education and also understand the consequences of their decisions on education. Thus, a basic task consists in creation of a comprehensive *information and counselling system available to all groups of the population throughout their lifetimes and also to employers*, on the basis of interconnection of already existing capacities. A number of activities have already been implemented, but it is necessary to especially support more effective cooperation and coordination between the providers of counselling services from the sectors of the Ministries of Labour and Education and also coordination at the national, regional and local levels. Counselling services remain fragmented and it is thus necessary to promote their interconnection so that clients receive the relevant information and counselling and/or pedagogical-psychological services.

The individual components of the information and counselling system fulfil their tasks; however, the capacity of the counselling system as a whole is far too small. Especially

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<sup>110</sup> So far, for example, Příručka pro sebehodnocení poskytovatelů odborného vzdělávání. [Handbook for self-evaluation of VET providers.] Stanislav Michek a kol. Praha, NÚOV 2006. has been published, and Hodnocení kvality základního vzdělávání. [Evaluation of the quality of basic education.] Praha, ČŠI 2006.

the importance of counselling for the students of the secondary and tertiary levels of education is underestimated, as is counselling for adults, which is basically provided for the general public but is utilized mainly by job seekers and people interested in employment. Thus, an ***increase in the availability of counselling services*** is a basic task. The school counselling system for children and adolescents is functional and geographically relatively accessible, but its capacity is inadequate. Especially school-based services providing counselling assistance should be developed to bring counselling to students and their parents directly at schools and facilitate their connection with the life of the school. This is also a step that should assist in ***interconnecting counselling and educational activities at schools***. The fact that teaching material related to entrance into the world of work and choice of an occupation have been integrated into framework educational programs for fields of education in basic and secondary schools is of fundamental importance from this point of view. Counselling services should be developed in the same way at higher educational institutions, which currently have insufficient capacity that is inadequate for the needs of the student population and also do not provide complex services.

There are practically no counselling centres related to education for adults and thus the general public frequently utilizes the counselling systems of employment services. Thus, a basic task will consist in promotion of further ***development of counselling and information services on education and employment for adults*** available to all. The regions should play a major role here. In parallel with strengthening the network of institutions providing education for adults and support for the regional educational offer, the capacities of information and counselling centres should be expanded, to provide services to all adults who are looking for information and advice when they wish to supplement their education or qualifications or are considering a change in occupation or employment. Work with job seekers, with disadvantaged groups and the need to increase the effectiveness of retraining places high demands on the extent and quality of counselling services, which must be provided in connection with the requirements of the employment sphere. Greater individualization of counselling according to the needs of individual clients also requires newly prepared counsellors as well as new instruments, innovative procedures and new forms of cooperation with organizations, to which part of counselling activities can be transferred.

The availability of information and counselling services should continue to be supported by services using modern technology. Although some information systems are already functional, it would be advantageous to interconnect them and make them more user-friendly so that information from all sources is available at a single site. It is also important to evolve direct counselling services using telephone discussions, e-mail, etc.

### **3.3 Proposals for measures to promote the development of lifelong learning**

The proposed measures mentioned below should implement and put into practice the individual strategic directions of development of lifelong learning (the seven main strategic directions of development of LLL are described in part 3.2 of this material). The measures are formulated so that they can be further specified and elaborated for the requirements of implementation. They can also serve as an orienting approach in conceiving and evaluating projects or in making decisions about which projects will be supported.

It is expected that, when an implementation plan is drawn up, the Ministry of Education will have a coordination role in cooperation with the other affected sectors. In addition to cooperation with the specific sectors mentioned under the individual measures,

cooperation is also expected with the regions, professional chambers, special-interest and professional associations, organizations of employers, professional societies, sector councils, associations of legal persons performing the activities of schools entered in the register of schools and schooling facilities and representatives of higher educational institutions and other potential partners.

### **3.3.1 Proposal of measures for the area of initial (general and vocational) education**

Measures for the area of initial education are formulated jointly for all general and vocational education and measures related to specific initial vocational education are subsequently classified independently. Measures are concerned particularly with various aspects of curriculum reform, which constitute an important opportunity for a fundamental change in the concept of education towards development of key competences. Measures are also concerned with limiting phenomena that could constitute a certain threat. The most serious of these include the high selectivity of the educational system and the existing inequalities in access to education. Measures that are specific for initial vocational education are related particularly to connection with the sphere of work and cooperation with social partners.

The greatest emphasis in measures for initial education is placed on the **third strategic direction concerned with developing functional literacy**, which is related to measures concerned with implementation of curriculum reform (measure A). The development of functional literacy and key competences is a new quality in the sense of the **sixth strategic direction concerned with quality assurance**, which should be monitored.

Great attention is devoted to measures related to the **second strategic direction dealing with equal access to education**. This area contains primarily measures directed towards reducing the selectivity of the educational system (measure B). In the sphere of initial vocational education, it is especially necessary to ensure accessibility and permeability of the education offered for all groups of the population and thus prevention of premature school leaving (measure B).

In the area of initial vocational education, measures are related mainly to the **fourth strategic direction, concerned with harmonization of the range of educational opportunities with the needs for social, environmental and economic development**. The range of education should correspond to the needs of the sphere of work and, for this purpose, it is necessary to provide for suitable instruments of cooperation with employers (measure F).

Other individual measures are related to implementation of the **fifth strategic direction of stimulating demand for lifelong learning**. A suitably diverse educational offer in initial education can play an important role in motivating young people to continue their education (measure B).

For this purpose, young people should have access to a sufficiently complex **information and counselling system (the seventh strategic direction)**, in order to orient themselves with suitable assistance in this educational offer (measure E).

The individual measures are also related to the **first strategic direction concerned with recognition of qualifications**, because qualifications acquired in initial vocational education must correspond to the National Qualifications Framework under preparation (measure E).

The following measures are involved:

**A. Promotion of curriculum reform with emphasis on increasing the functional literacy of students**

- provide material and technical assistance to schools and teachers concerned with development of *key competences and functional literacy of students*;
- provide material and methodical assistance to schools and teachers in the creation and implementation of new school educational programs concerned primarily with dissemination of *innovative teaching strategy* (e.g. project teaching, Practice Firms, student companies, etc.), that would stimulate motivation to learn throughout their lives and facilitate development of key competences in students (communication, team work, problem solving) allowing the person to act appropriately and effectively in various situations in their lives;
- promote the creation and development of an effective system of monitoring and methods of determining the results of education with emphasis on key competences, which would enable teachers and students to gain *feedback on the quality* of their work;
- provide teachers with *supportive services* facilitating the preparation of this type of teaching and assistance in its implementation (e.g. teaching aids);
- reform initial and promote further *education of teachers*, which would help to change teaching stereotypes of teachers in favour of the above-mentioned teaching strategy so that they are capable of working with variously motivated and talented groups of young and adult students;
- promote the implementation of curriculum reform *politically and in the media*;
- promote the education of students and teachers in *ICT, foreign languages and aspects of sustainable development*, in accordance with the concept of key competences, i.e. with emphasis on their practical use, including promotion of creation of the necessary infrastructures.

**Responsible:**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports  
(in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Agriculture,  
Ministry for Regional Development, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and  
Ministry of Health)**

**B. Reduce inequality in access to education**

- promote *participation in preschool education in a motivating environment*, especially for children from socially and ethnically disadvantaged background (with emphasis on socialization, language preparation, contact with nature, provision of a choice of activities to which they do not have access in their home environment, etc.);
- promote the *concept of inclusive schools and school facilities for the whole time of compulsory school attendance by improving the preparedness of schools for the extent of heterogeneity of the population, which they are capable of effectively educating in joint classes*; for this purpose, provide for a diverse range of educational opportunities that would permit choice according to the interests and talents of

students and thus eliminate selection of students for multi-year general secondary schools;

- in connection with expanding the capacity of tertiary education, ***expand the opportunities for general education at the upper secondary level***, especially promotion of the development of general technical education (technical and economic lyceums, etc.);
- adopt measures at the social and educational levels to ***prevent students leaving school prematurely*** (i.e. students who do not continue secondary education after completing basic school (i.e. compulsory education) or those who do not complete (upper) secondary education by a final or school-leaving (maturita) examination and leave secondary school without qualifications).
- create various forms of ***financial and material support*** for very talented and/or disadvantaged individuals (grants for study at secondary schools and higher educational institutions both in the country or abroad, incentives for finding and maintaining of talents in the areas of science and research, etc.).

**Responsible:**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**

**Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs**

**Ministry of Finance**

**C. Develop extra-curricular activities and recreational activities of students**

- promote ***extension of the function of schools and school facilities to the area of leisure time activities*** and recreational activities of students, their parents and entire communities so that, especially in areas with few cultural opportunities, the school becomes a centre of culture and education for the municipality;
- promote ***cooperation of schools and school facilities with NGO*** and other institutions organizing leisure time activities and be concerned with a further ***extension of opportunities offered***, including freely available activities as a prevention of socially pathological phenomena;
- understand care for the recreational activities of children and adolescents as an opportunity for ***manifestation of abilities and talent***; organize national and international ***competitions and projects*** in diverse recreational activities as motivation for the widest possible sector of the population;
- promote participation of schools and educational institutions in sustainable development of the local environment (esp. in community life).

**Responsible:**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**

**Ministry of the Environment**

**Ministry of Agriculture**

**Ministry for Regional Development**

**Ministry of Health**

**Ministry of Interior**

## **Proposal of measures specific for initial vocational education and training**

### **D. Promote permeability and transferability between educational programs of secondary schools and between programs of secondary and tertiary institutions and their connection to further education;**

- promote the creation of *educational centres* (vocational training centres, etc.) i.e. schools or networks of schools that offer general and technical or vocational educational programs at various levels and intensities and courses in further education, including provision for permeability between these programs;
- promote the *diversity of educational pathways* corresponding to various types of talents and motivation of secondary school students (from theory to practice, and also from practice to theory) with specific emphasis on groups endangered by premature school leaving; this should be performed while maintaining their equality and accessibility to school-leaving (maturita) examinations and tertiary education;
- promote the *modular system* of organization of educational programs of vocational education and training facilitating better vertical and horizontal permeability and connection to further education, including recognition of partial qualifications<sup>111</sup> and a credit system<sup>112</sup>.

### **Responsible:**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**

### **E. Facilitate the transition and success of graduates in practice**

- promote the introduction and functioning of a *National Qualifications Framework* created on the basis of a National Occupations System as a means of communication between the sphere of education and social partners on requirements on qualifications useful in the labour market;
- promote the utilization of NQF in the creation of school educational programs and the requirements for final examinations and the profiled part of school-leaving (maturita) examinations, so that a graduate from secondary school has adequate *initial qualifications* required as the first fixed points in the world of work; in this, promote participation and cooperation with social partners;
- promote practice by students and internships of teachers in enterprises, including stays abroad within the EU; promote provision (in cooperation with social partners) of at least *three-month managed practice* (or practical training) in the business sphere for all students participating in secondary vocational education and training;
- promote the availability of individualized *career counselling* for all students and secondary school graduates, providing information and counselling assistance in the area of employment possibilities and related education.

### **Responsible:**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**

**Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs**

**Ministry of Agriculture**

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<sup>111</sup> Act No. 179/2006 Coll., on verification and recognition of the results of further education.

<sup>112</sup> ECVET (European Credit Transfer System for VET). Principles and Essentials Rules for Implementation of a ECVET. EC Brussels, 2004.

**Ministry for Regional Development**  
(in cooperation with the **Ministry of Industry and Trade**)

**3.3.2 Proposal of measures for tertiary education**

Measures for the area of tertiary education must be based on the specific characteristics of the tertiary sector. This encompasses the area of highly professional education through a diversified range of educational programs and courses at several types of educational institutions and contributes in a fundamental manner to the preparation of qualified human resources for the development of the economic potential of the country, for developments in the area of research and development and innovation. Preparatory education of future professionals takes place in this sector in cooperation with research and development institutes. Simultaneously, however, this sector is increasingly part of the system of further education of adults during their economic lives and thus also participates in satisfying the increasing demands on the education of the population.

The strategy must be directed towards flexible and creative graduates with good theoretical knowledge and practical skills, which they will be able to regularly update and supplement during their active life so as to find a position in an information economy. This is promoted mainly by measures *in the framework of strategic directions 2 and 3*, i.e. measures promoting availability and equal access to tertiary education and development of the key competences of individuals for lifelong learning.

Great attention is paid to promotion of targeted measures in the *framework of strategic directions 4, 5 and 6*. This entails promotion of the development of opportunities in the educational process in the framework of the tertiary sector and adaptation of these opportunities to good-quality and effective study during employment, improving the quality of tertiary education and its close connection with practice and employer requirements, as well as strengthening of the interconnection of higher educational institutions with research and development. These measures are intended to achieve a state of affairs will realistically permit studying and achieving of higher vocational and academic education by every capable and motivated individual, irregardless of age, sex or physical or social handicaps, including limitations following from current economic activities.

The following measures are involved:

- A. **Strengthening of the development of opportunities, especially for bachelor's study programs**, oriented towards practice and closely connected with current developments in knowledge and changing employer requirements. **Strengthening of real opportunities for cooperation between future employers, especially industrial enterprises and the area of services, with higher educational institutions** and tertiary technical schools in the preparation and implementation of these study programs.
- enable good-quality professional practice of students during study;
  - increase the possibilities for work by professionals from practice in teaching and in the management bodies of schools;
  - promote the cooperation of potential employers of graduates in preparing study programs;
  - promote the cooperation between higher educational institutions and practice (employers, companies, professional organizations, etc.) in the preparation of short-

term and long-term courses of further technical and vocational education, i.e. tailored courses.

**Responsible:**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**

**Ministry of Agriculture**

**Ministry for Regional Development**

(in cooperation with the **Ministry of Industry and Trade**)

- B. Targeted and systemic **support for the development of good-quality and effective forms of education**, alternatives to face-to-face study, which will provide adult individuals with a realistic opportunity for studying in parallel with full economic, social and family activities;
- promote the development of distance education utilizing information and communication technologies to ensure the quality and effectiveness of this study;
  - promote the creation and functioning of educational facilities of the “distance university” type, institutions that are capable of systematically devoting themselves to development of the opportunities for methodical, good-quality distance education with rapid reaction to current requirements in the labour market, react flexibly to requirements of employers and the state and to interest on the part of the population.
  - search for ways of improving the opportunities for access of the population to ICT, especially access to fast internet.

**Responsible:**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**

**Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs**

- C. Use effective measures to promote **overcoming of barriers to access to tertiary technical and higher education throughout one’s lifetime**
- permanently monitor and use effective instruments to assist in overcoming barriers in access to study at HEI, especially support for students from lower social levels and provide effective support for individuals studying while working;
  - stimulate success of students in study (e.g. through motivating achievement grants for good students, rewards for standard duration of study, effective support for study stays abroad, etc.).

**Responsible:**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**

**Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs**

**Ministry of Interior**

**Ministry of Finance**



**D. Improve the quality of higher educational institutions and their pedagogic activities**

- promote further education of academic workers, especially promising young teachers through improving their pedagogical competences, skills in using ICT for teaching, and language and environmental competences;
- place emphasis on professional pedagogical preparation of academic workers for the area of adult education;
- in the framework of development of the pedagogical and research qualities of academic workers, emphatically support their international mobility.

**Responsible:**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**

**E. Improve the possibilities for permeability of the tertiary sector of education and recognition of previously achieved education**

- to improve permeability, consistently implement modularization of study, the ECTS credit system, the National Qualifications Framework and, in recognition, consistently comply with the Act on higher education and the principles of the Lisbon Convention<sup>113</sup>, not only for foreign, but also for domestic qualifications;
- recognize knowledge and skills acquired outside of the formal educational system and prepare methodologies for such a procedure. Foreign experience in this area can be employed in preparation of a methodology for recognition of non-formal and informal learning for technical and vocational education acquired in the tertiary sector.
- promote the development of a counselling system at higher educational institutions; extend psychological and study counselling to include the aspect of career counselling.

**Responsible:**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**

- F. Promote cooperation of institutions active in the sector of tertiary education, especially effective interconnection of VOŠ and HEI and the creation of joint study programs of higher educational institutions with similar educational areas, particularly programs and courses of further adult education.**

**Responsible:**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**

- G. Increase the teaching capacities of higher educational institutions for educating adults from world of work.** Distance and combined forms of study require not only different pedagogical competences, but also a greater number of teachers (tutors), who

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<sup>113</sup> Convention on Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region – publ. in the CR under No. 60/2000 Coll. Int. Tr.

provide time-consuming individual support for students in the framework of directing self-study.

**Responsible:**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**

- H. **Promote multi-source financing of the tertiary sector of education**, including constant pressure on increasing public funds, at least to the level of the average for European countries. Look for means of legal support, consider tax instruments, the possibility of participation of regional companies and other employers of graduates in financing, etc.

**Responsible:**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**  
(in cooperation with the **Ministry of Finance**)

### **3.3.3 Proposal of measures for further education**

In the area of further education, LLL strategy is concerned with the improvement of the system of further education, i.e. legal definition of responsibilities, rights and obligations, establishment of systemic instruments for stimulation of participation, creation of the essential preconditions for implementation of the Act on recognition of the results of further education, introduction of a system for evaluation of the quality of offered opportunities, and development of a counselling system for the users of further education. Only good-quality and widely available further education can contribute to improvement or restoration of the employability of individuals.

Further measures are concerned with those areas of further education where the market has failed. Amongst educational opportunities, this applies particularly to courses that are connected with high costs of implementation and to providing educational opportunities that are currently lacking, especially for disadvantaged groups. Consequently, in the framework of the proposed measures, the development of opportunities is promoted both by information and methodical consulting for educators, as well as by financial support for the creation of new educational programs in currently undeveloped areas and areas that are less attractive for the market.

Emphasis is placed on interconnected development of the individual parts of the system of further education, i.e. supply, demand, quality of services, information and counselling support, program support and financial stimuli.

The main directions in the strategy of lifelong learning lie in the area of further education implemented in the following manner:

**The first strategic direction concerned with recognition of the results of education** is implemented through measures concerned with the creation of preconditions for implementation of the Act on recognition of the results of further education (measure B).

**The second strategic direction concerned with equal opportunity** is reflected in measures providing for opportunities for further education and measures stimulating demand.

In respect to opportunities, it is necessary to adapt them to the capabilities of various groups of educated persons, especially disadvantaged groups (measure D). Measures related to demand are concerned with equalizing the position of disadvantaged groups of individuals and enterprises by non-financial and financial instruments (measures A and E). Other measures related to the development of information and counselling services (measure G) will also lead to more equal access to opportunities.

In the framework of the **third strategic direction concerned with the development of functional literacy**, it is necessary to concentrate on the skills of the adult population that were not acquired under the former educational system. This applies particularly to the ability to use information technology, language skills and other skills that enable utilization of the acquired competences in normal life and employment, to change employers, etc. (measure D).

In order to implement the **fourth strategic direction concerned with harmonization of the educational opportunities offered with the needs of social-economic and environmental development**, it will be necessary to introduce a system of monitoring, evaluation, and prediction of trends in the labour market. This information will be available to all interested entities (measure C).

Implementation of the **fifth strategic direction stimulating demand for lifelong learning** is possible in further education primarily through elimination of financial (measure A) and non-financial barriers amongst individuals and employers. Measures to alleviate non-financial barriers amongst individuals have the form of counselling support (measure G) and assistance services (measure D); amongst employers, this has the form of introduction and implementation of systems of human resources development (measure E).

The **sixth strategic direction concerned with the quality of educational opportunities** is implemented through measures concerned with the creation of a system of external and internal evaluation using the existing individual activities (measure F).

In the framework of the **seventh strategic direction concerned with the development of information counselling services**, it is proposed that a system providing complex information be created in the area of further education, not only in relation to educational opportunities and educators, but also including other supporting information. In order to improve the level of counselling services, support will lead to their individualization and comprehensiveness. The measures are also related to improving availability through extending the capacity of counselling services (measure G).

The following measures are involved:

**A. Stimulation of individuals and employers to expand participation in further education and to increase investments into further education, interconnected with a systemic and program component of financial support for further education**

- on the basis of experience in the EU, propose a comprehensive system of financial instruments directed toward individuals, acting to increase participation in education in general and specifically stimulating disadvantaged groups;
- strengthen positive and negative stimuli of unemployed persons towards participation in retraining, increase the effectiveness of retraining;
- evaluate the effectiveness of existing financial instruments directed towards employers and propose a comprehensive system based on experience in EU countries.

**Responsible:**

**Ministry of Finance**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**

**Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs**

(in cooperation with the **Ministry of Industry and Trade**)

**B. Provide for recognition of various educational routes to acquiring qualifications**

- promote the creation of the necessary preconditions for introduction of a law on recognition of the results of further education in practice (National Qualifications Framework, qualification standards, evaluation standards, authorization of persons to verify professional qualifications, etc.) and provide for an information campaign directed towards individuals and institutions;
- ensure permeability between further and initial education through acquisition and recognition of credits.

**Responsible:**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**

**C. Create conditions for harmonizing educational opportunities with the requirements of the labour market**

- develop organizational and methodical activities in harmonizing opportunities for further education with the present and future requirements of the labour market, promote the interconnection of decisive partners at a national and regional level (educators, enterprises/associations, professional chambers and professional associations, labour offices, etc.), monitor current and forecast medium-term and long-term qualification requirements;
- evaluate trends in educational opportunities and requirements, provide information on these trends to all stakeholders (bodies responsible for development of further education at a national, regional and local level, labour offices, educators, employers), for evaluation requirements, introduce systematic (statistical) determination of information on persons receiving further education, utilize surveys of participation of individuals (select surveys of the labour force, ad hoc surveys), monitor and process information on educational opportunities.

**Responsible:**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**

**Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs**

**Ministry of Agriculture**

**Ministry for Regional Development**

(in cooperation with the **Ministry of Industry and Trade**)

**D. Develop opportunities for further education according to client needs and ensure availability of educational opportunities**

- establish research and development in the area of the methodology and technology of further education, ensure spreading of innovation through methodical assistance to teachers in the creation of educational programs, study materials and aids, in learning new teaching methods, using modern technology in teaching, promote cooperation amongst educators, enterprises and other entities in the development of new programs and instruments;
- financially support the creation and implementation of programs directed specifically towards disadvantaged groups of clients for the development of their vocational competence and lacking key skills;
- improve and individualize more educational opportunities for job seekers and persons interested in employment according to client requirements, strengthen the role of motivation activities and practical improving of acquired skills at the workplace, including mentoring and coaching; expand application of individual action plans, train workers to draw up, implement and evaluate these plans; in accordance with requirements on improvement of retraining, modify the professional capacities of employment services and cooperating institutions;
- ensure the availability of further education through support for the use of existing and creation of new educational capacities at all founders;
- develop assistance services facilitating participation of adults in further education (e.g. care for dependent family members, assistance services, etc.);
- promote the acquisition and development of key skills by adults in the area of ICT and language preparation;
- promote the development of recreational and civic education.

**Responsible:**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**  
**Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs**  
**Ministry of Interior**  
**Ministry of Finance**  
**Ministry for Regional Development**

**E. Increase the level of education of the employees of enterprises so that this becomes an effective factor in increasing the competitiveness of enterprises and the vocational flexibility of employees**

- introduce company systems of human resources development, support creation of networks of companies and transfer of experience in the area of employee education, support for small and medium-sized companies in employee education implemented in various forms, including P3 projects (public-private partnership), modular educational programs, preparation of company instructors;
- support modern educational activities in companies while extending production, introduction of new technologies, innovative changes, etc.;

- provide financial and organizational support for restructuring companies in training employees for new activities or work for different employers, promote new forms of cooperation of enterprises with labour offices.

**Responsible:**

**Ministry of Agriculture**  
**Ministry for Regional Development**  
**Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs**  
**Ministry of Finance**  
**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**  
 (in cooperation with the **Ministry of Industry and Trade**)

**F. Increase the quality of further education**

- support the system of external quality evaluation of opportunities through certification of teachers and accreditation of educational programs, implemented in connection with use of funds from public budgets;
- promote various forms of supportive activities through provision of information, methodically and financially, to improve the range of opportunities offered (cooperation in sector or otherwise specifically targeted networks, dissemination of information and examples of good practice, etc.);
- instigate development and introduction of criteria and procedures in self-evaluation by educational institutions.

**Responsible:**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**  
**Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs**  
**Ministry of Finance**

**G. Develop an information and counselling system for the users of further education**

- interconnect currently separate databases of educational opportunities (public and private) into a complex information system providing comprehensive information on the range of programs, courses and other educational opportunities being offered, on the quality of opportunities, on the conditions for participation, including rights and obligations following from the valid legal regulations, on the possibilities of obtaining assistance, etc.
- ensure the quality (reliability) of information and its regular updating, disseminate information through various media so that it is accessible for all target groups, provide for a user-friendly classification system for information available on the internet;
- provide for an increase in the quality of counselling services through improving the methodology of work with adult clients and preparing methodology for working with specific groups of clients, train the employees of counselling and information services in new methods and individualized procedures;

- through extending the capacities of counselling services and interconnecting their components, provide for the comprehensiveness of counselling services and their availability for all interested persons in all phases of their educational and working lives.

**Responsible:**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports  
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs**

### 3.4 Interconnection of the main strategic directions with proposals for measures for individual segments of lifelong learning

☀ indirect mediated effect  
 ☀☀☀ significant interconnection

Main strategic directions of lifelong learning in the CR	Proposals of measures for the individual segments of lifelong learning			
	Initial general education	Initial vocational education	Tertiary education	Further education
1. Recognition, permeability	☀	☀☀☀	☀☀☀	☀☀☀
2. Equal access	☀☀☀	☀☀	☀☀☀	☀☀☀
3. Functional literacy	☀☀☀	☀☀	☀	☀
4. Social partnership	☀	☀☀☀	☀☀☀	☀☀☀
5. Stimulation of demand	☀	☀☀	☀	☀☀☀
6. Quality	☀☀	☀☀	☀☀☀	☀☀☀
7. Counselling	☀	☀☀☀	☀	☀☀☀

☀☀☀☀ directly supported measure



#### **4. INTERCONNECTION OF STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS, PROPOSALS FOR MEASURES FOR STRATEGIES OF LIFELONG LEARNING AND OPERATIONAL PROGRAMS IN THE CR FOR THE 2007-2013 PERIOD**

The Education for Competitiveness Operational Program (ECOP), prepared by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for withdrawal of funds from ESF, is a basic operational program of the Czech Republic to promote lifelong education in the 2007 – 2013 period. It defines the orientation and depth of intervention in the area of development of human resources through education in all its diverse forms, with emphasis on a complex system of lifelong learning and creation of a suitable environment for research and development and innovation activities and stimulation of cooperation between educational institutions and the production sphere<sup>114</sup>.

In its contents, ECOP is divided into three priority axes – the first for initial education, the second for tertiary education, research and development and the third for further education. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will be an important partner in creation of a system of further education and implementation of programs of further education. In this area, ECOP is directly connected with a further fundamental **Human Resources and Employment Operational Program** (HREOP), prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for withdrawal of funds from ESF. HREOP will be utilized to promote further education concerned primarily with increasing employment, and acquiring and improving qualifications for performance of a profession. The priority axes of HREOP consist in adaptability of employees and employers, an active employment policy and improved attitude towards work, permanent incorporation of job seekers and prevention of unemployment. It is also concerned with development of education in the public administration, public services and international cooperation.

Tertiary education, research and development, as the second priority axis of ECOP, will be developed through investments from ERDF (European Research and Development Fund) through the **Research and Development for Innovation Operational Program** (RDOP) This operational program was prepared by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in order to strengthen the research, development and innovation potential of the CR, providing for growth, competitiveness and the creation of jobs in the regions through higher educational institutions, research institutes and other relevant entities. RDOP differs from the previous two operational programs through its structure and type of support. The priority axes of RDOP are concerned with development of research and development capacities, development of capacities for cooperation of the public sector with the private sector in research and development and increasing the capacities of higher educational institutions for tertiary education. In relation to the Strategy of Lifelong Learning, RDOP will undoubtedly have a great impact on the quality of tertiary education (strategic direction 6). For the other strategic directions, an indirect mediated effect can be expected for these “hard” investments into the development of lifelong learning.

A separate **Prague Adaptability Operational Program** (PAOP) has been prepared to promote lifelong learning in the area of the Capital City of Prague, which will also be financed from ESF funds. In contrast to the other areas of the CR, the GDP per inhabitant in

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<sup>114</sup> EC OP version of October 31, 2006, p. 1.

the region of the Capital City of Prague is above the EU-25 average. Consequently, its financing from ESF is governed by different rules and it creates independent operational programs. The structure, priorities and objectives of PAOP correspond to the programs for the rest of the territory of the CR. The programs mutually supplement one another and simultaneously take into account specific regional features.

The following table outlines the degree of interconnection of the main strategic directions of the Strategy of Lifelong Learning with ECOP and HREOP. Here, the seven basic strategic directions encounter the priority axes of the two above-mentioned key operational programs. The level of support proposed in each operational program can be read off for each strategic direction.

Main strategic directions of lifelong learning in the CR	Education for Competitiveness Operational Program			Human Resources and Employment Operational Program		
	Initial education	Tertiary education, research and development	Further education	Adaptability	Active labour market policy	Social integration and equal opportunity
<b>1. Recognition, permeability</b>	☼	☼☼	☼☼☼	☼☼	☼	
<b>2. Equal access</b>	☼☼☼☼	☼☼	☼☼	☼☼	☼☼☼☼	☼☼☼☼
<b>3. Functional literacy</b>	☼☼☼☼	☼	☼☼	☼	☼	☼
<b>4. Social partnership</b>	☼☼	☼☼	☼☼	☼☼☼☼	☼☼☼☼	☼☼☼☼
<b>5. Stimulation of demand</b>	☼	☼☼	☼☼	☼	☼☼	☼
<b>6. Quality</b>	☼☼☼☼	☼☼☼☼	☼☼☼☼	☼☼	☼	☼
<b>7. Counselling</b>	☼☼☼☼	☼☼	☼☼☼☼	☼☼☼☼	☼☼☼☼	☼☼☼☼

- ☼ indirect mediated effect
- ☼☼ significant interconnection
- ☼☼☼ directly supported activities

#### 4.1 Priorities of the Education for Competitiveness Operational Program and its connection to the Strategy of Lifelong Learning

ECOP is divided into three priority axes – the first for initial education, the second for tertiary education, research and development and the third for further education.

The **Initial Education Priority Axis** will be implemented through three areas of support. The first area of support attempts to improve the quality of initial education. Continuation in the already initiated process of curriculum reform and its support in the professional and public sphere are decisive for quality. Schools will be provided with

complex methodical support for creation of school educational programs, their innovation with emphasis on the development of key competences of students and their subsequent implementation. The success of curriculum reform is dependent on activities creating a complex system of support, monitoring, evaluation, and counselling. Support will be provided for the actual evaluation of the schools and the systems of quality management, as well as an increase in the quality of school inspections. Mutual cooperation of schools, e.g. in disseminating examples of good practice, and also partnership with further entities in the area of education, with employers and with local institutions will contribute to increasing quality. For students, the higher quality will mean, amongst other things, a system of career counselling and information support for choice of the optimum educational pathway. Development of the individual potential of students will be promoted by new forms and methods of teaching (ICT, teaching of languages). Promotion of quality will also concentrate on education outside of schools and recreational education.

This area of support corresponds directly to strategic direction 6 – Quality. Curriculum reform will attempt to develop key competences, functional literacy of students (strategic direction 3) and innovative teaching strategy, similar to measure A. Support for extracurricular activities and recreational education correspond to measure C. Cooperation with social partners will promote employment (strategic direction 4) and managed practice of students of secondary vocational education – measure F. Support for career counselling will implement strategic direction No. 7 and the last part of measure F.

The second part of support is concerned with equal opportunities for students, including students with special educational needs. It attempts to ensure equal opportunities for education for everyone regardless of the kind of disadvantage (health, social, ethnic, etc.). It also promotes an improvement in the approach towards talented students and integration of students with special educational needs into the normal educational process. Special emphasis will be placed on multicultural enlightenment, prevention of racism and preparation of children from different language and cultural background for school attendance. Activities will concentrate on an individual approach according to the actual needs of students, creation of individual educational programs and supporting mechanisms. Equal access, as main strategic direction No. 2, is fully implemented by this area of support. Measures B and D cover this area of support in the proposals for measures for the strategy of initial education.

The measures of the strategy are even more specific in this subject area. They propose extension of the opportunities for general education at the upper secondary level (measures at the level of educational policy) and introduce new possibilities for motivation and work with talented individuals (grants for study at schools both in the country and abroad) beyond the framework of ECOP (paid from the state budget).

The third area of support is intended to improve the competences of pedagogical and non-pedagogical staff in schools and school facilities. Education of teachers forms the basis for curriculum reform and other proposed measures. The main task in this area of support lies in contributing to the creation of a motivation system for further education of pedagogical and non-pedagogical staff and the related systematic support for this education. In the framework of education, support will be provided for the development of professional and general competences (IT competence, foreign languages) through various forms of teaching (e-learning, study stays). Amongst managerial workers, knowledge in the area of management, project management and financial and personnel policy will be improved. Teacher education will be favourably reflected in all the main strategic directions and will specifically supplement measures A, B and D.

The priority axis of initial education will be indirectly addressed by two strategic directions – Recognition and permeability and Stimulation of demand. Recognition and permeability of the system of initial education are guaranteed at the time of compulsory education. After its completion, comparability will be determined by the national level of the curriculum – framework education programs. The framework education programs for initial vocational education will also gradually reflect the influence of the National Qualifications Framework and, in the future, this should guarantee graduate qualifications based on the requirements of the labour market. This process must be further supported at the national level.

In this sense, it extends beyond the measures of the ECOP strategy, where it proposes support for a modular system of organization of educational programs of vocational education.

The “**Tertiary education, research and development**” priority axis contains five areas of support. The first deals with the systemic framework of tertiary education and development of human resources in research and development. It will be concerned with proposal and implementation of an optimal system of financing tertiary education, innovation of the management system, support for project management, a business approach and innovative solutions. It will simultaneously attempt to design and implement a complex system of evaluation of the quality of tertiary education, research and development and support for technical and scientific fields. This area of support is encompassed by strategic direction 6 Quality and will be implemented by measures H and D.

The second and third areas of support are concerned with improving the quality and support for tertiary technical and higher education. This support will be related to innovation and modernization of education and study programs in connection with the requirements of the labour market and with participation of professionals from practice. The introduction and development of combined and distance forms of study are very important. Support will be provided for teaching in foreign languages, training in operating a business and motivation for studying technical and scientific fields. Cooperation between tertiary technical schools and higher educational institutions, as well as cooperation with foreign educational institutions (participation of individuals and teams in international projects and networks) and cooperation with employers (practice) are key factors in the development of tertiary education. Here, once again, support will be provided for information and counselling services for students. This information should be concerned particularly with the current opportunities for education being offered, success rates of graduates in relation to the field of study and the current and expected requirements of the labour market. Activities in this area of support are very broad in scope and encompass strategic directions 4, 5, 6 and 7. Development of forms of study contributes to implementation of equal access – strategic direction 2. Partnership between schools will extend transferability – strategic direction 1. These activities are in accordance with the proposals for measures A, B, C and F.

The fourth area of support is concerned with human resources in research and development. This consists in support for further education of workers in research and development, creation of teams, improvement of working conditions, and support for mobility between research institutions and the business sector. Similar to for initial education, these activities have a favourable impact on the quality of education (strategic direction 6) and merge with measures D and G.

The last, fifth area of support corresponds to partnership and the network of institutions of tertiary education, research institutes, the private sector and public administration. Closer contact and joint activities will lead to better interconnection with the

labour market and better transfer of knowledge and the results of research and development. This cooperation will contribute to strategic direction 4 and measures B and C.

Beyond the framework of ECOP, the measures of the strategy of lifelong learning in this area is also concerned with the ECTS credit system, its consistent introduction and the search for further ways for recognition of knowledge and skills obtained outside of the formal education system.

The “**Further Education**” **Priority Axis** will be implemented through three complementary areas of support. The first area of support is concerned with the systemic and institutional framework for provision of further education. In addition to support for development of the system of further education itself, assistance will also be provided for creation of supporting systems, i.e. counselling, information, monitoring, evaluation and analytical. Support will also be provided for activities leading to interconnection of the systems of initial and further education and to recognition of the results of non-formal and informal learning. Activities contained in ECOP are connected primarily with the following strategic directions of Strategy of Lifelong Learning: Recognition and permeability – 1, Quality – 6 and Counselling – 7, and implement measures B, F and G proposed in the Strategy for the area of further education.

Compared to ECOP, in some measures the Strategy of Lifelong Learning proposes more specific elements of the system of further education, while it leaves scope for consideration of the possibility of modifying the valid legal regulations that directly or indirectly regulate the area of further education (e.g. the Act on value added tax) so as to eliminate barriers on the part of supply and demand for further education.

The second area of support is concerned to improve the further education of individuals. Support will be provided for education of individuals in the areas of general and vocational competences and also for the creation of education modules directed towards language, IT and business skills. This area of support will also concentrate on the development of systems stimulating demand for further education, i.e. on the development of information and counselling services. ECOP implements this area of support through a total of four strategic directions of the Strategy of Lifelong Learning – the strategic directions of Stimulation of demand – 5, Counselling – 7, Functional literacy – 3 and Equal access – 2. Activities contained in this area of support for ECOP are related to measures A, D and G contained in the Strategy of Lifelong Learning in the further education part.

Compared to ECOP, the Strategy also proposes the creation of a system of financial instruments stimulating the participation of individuals in further education.

The third area of support concentrates on the development of the opportunities available for further education. Support will be related to the creation of educational modules connected to initial education and programs for education of adults at schools and other educational institutions. Support will also be provided for education of educators, who provide for the organization of further education, and also for the development of networks and partnerships in the area of further education and counselling, as well as for consulting in the introduction of modern and innovative educational technologies and methods. ECOP activities are related to parts of the following strategic directions of the Strategy of LLL – Employability – 4, Counselling – 7, Functional literacy – and Equal access – 2. They are related to measures C and D in the proposed measures in the Strategy of LLL for the area of further education.

Beyond the framework of ECOP, the strategy has specific proposals for harmonizing the educational opportunities available with the requirements of the labour market and needs of clients.

The Strategy of LLL will also be implemented through HREOP. The following part of the Strategy of LLL deals with analysis of the relationships between these two documents.

## **4.2 Priorities of the Human Resources and Employment Operational Program and its connection to the Strategy of Lifelong Learning**

The main objective of HREOP consists in improving employment and employability of individuals. This objective is implemented through five substantive priority axes: Adaptability, Active policy on the labour market, Social integration and equal opportunities, Public administration and public services and International cooperation. In many respects, the first two priority axes encompass further education as the basic route to improve or maintain the positions of individuals in the labour market and to increase the quality of the labour force, including preparation of experts for specific employment services and for services in the area of social inclusion. This does not consist only in support for the implementation of the educational courses themselves, but also support for the development of the range of opportunities available for further education according to client requirements, for strengthening the institutions providing educational services, and acquisition of the necessary know-how in the area of human resources development by companies and organizations.

The assessment of the accordance of the HREOP with the strategic directions of lifelong learning is concentrated in the first three priority axes of HREOP. This is because, in these principles, the operational program implements the strategic direction directly through specific activities. The fourth priority axis of HREOP directed towards development of the public administration implements all the strategic directions, as it is connected with the quality of institutions of the public administration and implementation of policies, but only indirectly. Similarly, the fifth priority axis promoting international cooperation affects the implementation the Strategy of LLL only indirectly, although this is an important aspect.

The **“Adaptability” priority axis** is concerned with two areas of support. The first area consists in increasing the adaptability of the labour force and competitiveness of enterprises, i.e. increasing the level of vocational knowledge, skills and competences of employees and employers, related to their developmental plans and increasing their competitiveness. In this framework, support will be provided for enterprises in creating and introducing modern company systems of human resources development and in implementation of modern educational programs. This area of support overlaps with the fifth strategic direction, Stimulation of demand. Specifically, it will implement measure E of further education defined by the Strategy of LLL.

The second area of support lies in increasing the adaptability of employees and employers in restructured enterprises. In this framework, activities will be implemented to increase the flexibility of workers and to prepare them for new working tasks, a change of occupation, transfer to a different employer, etc. It is necessary to motivate these workers and provide them with key skills and vocational knowledge, so that they are capable of satisfying the new job requirements, and to support them through targeted counselling. This area of support is based on the second strategic direction of the Strategy of LLL, equal access and on

the fifth strategic direction Stimulation of demand. It also partly overlaps with the third strategic direction Functional literacy. Specifically, it will implement measure E of further education defined by the Strategy of LLL.

The **“Active labour market policy” priority axis** encompasses two complementary areas of support. The first type of support includes all types of active measures in the labour market, of which further education is related mainly to retraining and the related services of a counselling character and balance diagnostics. It is the objective of this area of support to expand the knowledge and skills of the client necessary for obtaining or retaining employment. The effectiveness of retraining can be improved through individualization and adaptation of educational and counselling methods to the capabilities and needs of specific groups of job seekers and persons interested in employment. Activities implemented in the framework of this area of support are in accordance with the second strategic direction of the Strategy of LLL Equal opportunity and the third, Functional literacy. These activities will directly implement measure D of further education defined by the Strategy of LLL, related to the range and availability of further education according to client needs.

The second area of support is concerned with modernization of employment service institutions, which is necessary for implementing new instruments and individual methods of work with clients and for developing the educational offer in technically demanding fields where this has been lacking to date. This is related primarily to preparation of methodologies, educational programs and training of workers in employment services and cooperating organizations. In addition, a foundation is being prepared for development of systems of predicting changes in the labour market and in professional structures. Through these activities, the operation program directly implements part of the seventh strategic direction of the Strategy of LLL, Counselling, and simultaneously creates conditions, i.e. indirectly affects implementation of the second (Equal opportunities) and third (Functional literacy) strategic directions of the Strategy of LLL. Specifically, these activities implement the strategies defined in measures D and G and partly in measure C for further education in the framework of the Strategy of LLL.

The **“Social integration and equal opportunities” priority axis** contains four areas of support: (i) support for social integration, (ii) support for social integration of Romany areas, (iii) integration of socially excluded groups in the labour market and (iv) support for equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market and harmonization of working and family lives. The first three areas are concerned with the provision of comprehensive services to excluded or endangered clients through a combination of motivation, educational, social and other supportive measures. Simultaneously, it is expected that methodologies, educational modules and other instruments will be prepared, including training of workers providing social integration services for field work and using specific methods and approaches to clients. The second strategic direction of the Strategy of LLL, Equal opportunity, the third direction, Functional literacy, and the seventh strategic direction, Counselling, develop these areas of support for the operational program in relation to the mentioned specific groups of the population. They also reflect the fifth strategic direction, Stimulation of demand, as they also implement supportive activities enabling disadvantaged groups to participate in education. Specifically, these areas of support implement measures D and G of further education defined by the Strategy of LLL.

## DICTIONARY OF BASIC TERMS

### **Lifelong learning**

Lifelong learning encompasses all the potential for learning (whether in traditional educational institutions in the framework of the educational system or outside of it) that is seen as a single interconnected unit, that facilitates diverse and numerous transitions between education and employment and that permits obtaining of the same qualifications and competence in various ways and at any time during one's lifetime.

### **Formal education**

Formal education is performed in educational institutions, usually in schools. Its functions, targets, contents, organizational forms and means of assessment are defined by legal regulations. This encompasses obtaining levels of education that usually follow one from another (basic education, secondary education, upper secondary education with a certificate of apprenticeship, secondary education with a school-leaving examination (maturita), higher education in conservatories, tertiary technical education, higher education), whose completion is confirmed by the relevant certificate (certificate, diploma, etc.).

### **Non-formal learning**

Non-formal learning emphasizes gaining knowledge, skills and competences that can improve the social and working position of the individual. Non-formal learning is provided in the facilities of employers, private educational institutes, NGO, educational facilities and other organizations. These include organized leisure time activities for children, adolescents and adults, foreign language courses, computer courses, retraining courses and also short-term training and lectures. This kind of learning requires the participation of a professional instructor, teacher or trained organizer. It does not lead to obtaining a level of education.

### **Informal learning**

Informal learning is understood as a process of obtaining knowledge and acquiring skills and competences from everyday experience and activities at work, in the family and in one's leisure time. It also includes self-education, where the learner has no way of testing his acquired knowledge (e.g. television language courses). In contrast to formal and informal education, it is not organized, is usually unsystematic and is institutionally uncoordinated.

### **Initial education**

Lifelong learning can be divided into two basic stages, denoted as initial and further education. Initial education includes:

- **basic education** (primary and lower secondary level – ISCED 1 and 2), which has a general character and usually corresponds to the period of compulsory education;
- **secondary education** (upper secondary level – ISCED 3), which has a general, technical or vocational character, is terminated by a school-leaving examination (ISCED 3A), apprentice's certificate (ISCED 3B) or final examination (ISCED 3C). Secondary education in the CR also encompasses extended study for graduates of secondary education with apprentice's certificates (ISCED 4), ending with a school-leaving examination (maturita).
- **tertiary education** (ISCED 5 and 6), which encompasses a broad sector of available education, usually following after passing a school-leaving examination (maturita). It provides specialized professional or artistic education. It includes higher education provided by higher educational institutions, tertiary technical education provided by tertiary technical



schools and, to a certain degree, also higher education in conservatories. The system of higher education is regulated by the Act on higher education, while other schools in the tertiary sector are regulated by the Act on Education.

Initial education occurs primarily at a young age and can be terminated at any time after completing compulsory education through entering the labour market or joining the economically inactive population.

### **Further education**

Further education or learning occurs after attaining a certain level of education or following the first entrance of the educated person into the labour market<sup>115</sup>. Further education can emphasize a diverse spectrum of knowledge, skills and competences important for application in the working, civil and personal life of the individual.

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<sup>115</sup> Here, this definition of further education partly overlaps with the definition of initial education in that it also encompasses formal education obtained by adults in the school system.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CSU</b>	Czech Statistical Office
<b>CVTS2</b>	Continuing Vocational Training Survey 2
<b>ČŠI</b>	Czech School Inspectorate
<b>ECOP</b>	Education and Competitiveness Operational Program
<b>ECVET</b>	European Credit (Transfer) System for Vocational Education and Training
<b>ECTS</b>	European Credit Transfer System
<b>EQF</b>	European Qualifications Framework
<b>ERDF</b>	European Research and Development Fund
<b>ESF</b>	European Social Fund fond
<b>EU-15</b>	(Old) member states of the European Union: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom.
<b>EU-10</b>	(New) member states of the European Union: CR, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia
<b>EU-25</b>	EU-15 + EU-10 member states
<b>Europass</b>	the first European set of documents on education and work experience
<b>FEP</b>	framework educational program
<b>HE</b>	higher education
<b>HEI</b>	higher educational institution
<b>HREOP</b>	Human Resources and Employment Operational Program
<b>ICT</b>	information and communication technology
<b>IEA</b>	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
<b>ISCED</b>	International Standard Classification of Education
<b>KZAM</b>	Classification of employment

<b>LLL</b>	lifelong learning
<b>LLE</b>	lifelong education
<b>MPSV</b>	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
<b>MSMT</b>	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NQF</b>	National Qualifications System
<b>NPO</b>	Non-Profit Organization
<b>PAOP</b>	Prague Adaptability Operational Program
<b>PIRLS</b>	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
<b>PISA</b>	Programme for International Student Assessment
<b>SEP</b>	school educational program
<b>SIALS</b>	Second International Adult Literacy Survey
<b>SME</b>	small and medium-sized enterprises
<b>SOŠ</b>	secondary technical school
<b>SOU</b>	secondary vocational school
<b>U3V</b>	Third age university
<b>VET</b>	vocational education and training
<b>VOŠ</b>	tertiary technical school