



# COUNTRY REPORT OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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STAIRS – STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER ADAPTING IDEAS TO READJUST LOCAL SYSTEMS TO PROMOTE  
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



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# STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION

## Structure of the National Education System

The education system in the Czech Republic is based primarily on the Education Act (and on the Higher Education Act) and defines the process of gradual acquisition of qualifications (closer to ISCED) at individual levels of the school system. The main pillar of the system is the division of education into three areas: pre-school and primary (primary), secondary (secondary) and tertiary (other). Education in this sense is called formal. A more general term is lifelong learning, also known as lifelong learning.

### The levels of the education system

The youngest children may attend facilities for children less than 3 years of age or a children's group for children from 1 year of age until compulsory education begins.

**Pre-primary education (pre-school education)** is provided to children aged 3-6 years of kindergarten. Preference is given to children who have reached the age of 3 for enrolment in the catchment area. Since September 2017, the last year of preschool education (i.e., from 5 years) is compulsory.

**Compulsory education** starts at the age of 6 and lasts for 9 years.

Primary and lower secondary education (basic education) is usually carried out in nine-year primary schools, which are divided into first and second level (uniform structure). The age of pupils is usually 6 to 15 years. Multiannual grammar schools and eight-year conservatoires may also provide lower secondary education.

**Upper secondary education (secondary education)** is provided by secondary schools in general and vocational fields. The age of pupils is usually 15 to 18/19 years. Graduates achieve one of three levels of education:

- Secondary education with a school-leaving examination
- Secondary education with apprenticeship certificate
- High school education

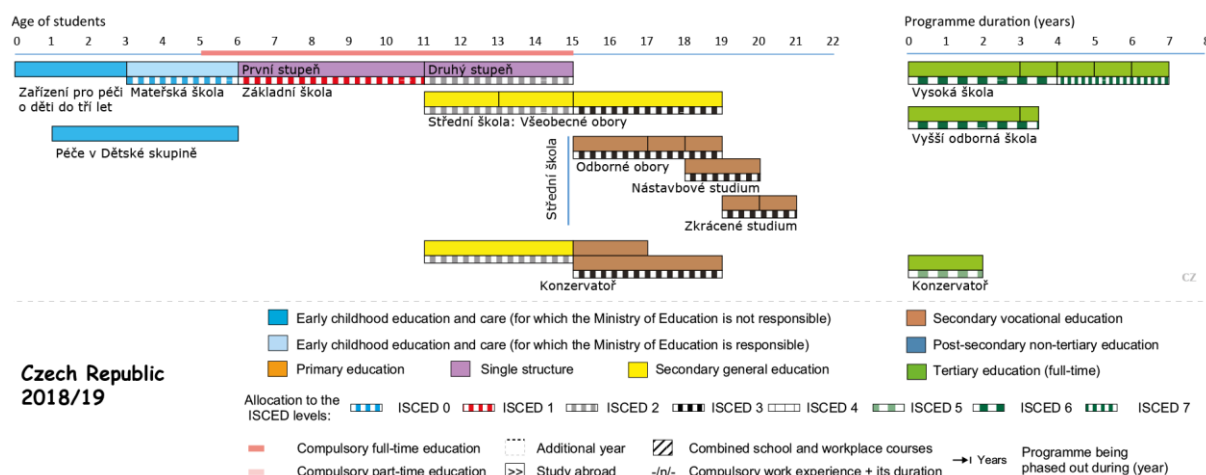
Secondary education with a school-leaving examination can be obtained in general (grammar school and lyceum) as well as professional orientation and is a condition for admission to tertiary education. High schools provide also a follow-up course that allows graduates of vocational certificate courses to obtain secondary education with a school-leaving examination, and a shortened study in which graduates with a school-leaving certificate and vocational certificate receive education in another field.

A specific type of schools are conservatories that provide lower and upper secondary and tertiary professional education with an artistic focus.

**Tertiary education** is provided by colleges and universities. Higher professional education is obtained through usually three-year programs. Higher education takes place in programs of the first, second and third cycle (bachelor, master and doctoral degree programs), or in unstructured long master programs.

**Adult education** includes general, vocational, leisure and other education.

## Structure of the education system



**Figure #1: Structure of the National Education System. Source: Eurydice 2018/19. National-policies / Eurydice / file / czech-republicdiragram-2018-2019\_en English Republic\_Diragram 2018-2019**

### Schools are administered by the founders:

1. Municipality
2. County Office
3. Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

## Early childhood education and care (ECEC) (ISCED 0)

### ECEC 2 - Pre-school programs (ISCED 0)

Pre-school education now requires at least one full year before primary school attendance.

## Primary and secondary education (ISCED 1, 2, 3)

### General education (ISCED 1)

#### Primary education

Primary education (age 6-15) is provided by a network of elementary schools lasting nine years. The last four years of elementary education may be completed at an eight-year grammar school, or it is possible from the seventh grade to change to a grammar school for a six-year study. In the Czech Republic, compulsory nine-year schooling is anchored in the law and may be preceded by pre-school education (age 2-6) organized by kindergartens and children's groups.

#### Secondary education

Secondary education is the second level of education in the Czech school system, following and continuing with primary education in the development of pupils already acquired knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and values necessary for professional employment. It also serves as a basis for

tertiary and subsequently life-long studies. Czech secondary education is most often named as “secondary education”, but according to different classifications, these terms are not entirely identical.

In the description of secondary education, the term "regional education" is used to include all education outside higher education.

Since the first concept (secondary education) focuses on defining the range of skills that need to be acquired at this stage and the second (secondary education) – examining the appropriate level of the different facilities that the teaching services provide, the education systems of different countries have not mutually similar enough to allow comparative analysis in the context of international education research. One of the most widely used is the ISCED (1997) *International Standard Classification of Education*, offered by UNESCO in the 1970s based on OECD and EU statistics. The basic elements of a certain level of education have been defined and the unification of evaluation parameters has created a reliable system of indicators enabling a comprehensive understanding of the different types of facilities and assessing whether equivalent education components in European countries are equally effective.

In order to avoid distortions and inaccuracies in the analyses caused by the diversity of the types of school systems, tables have been created which have included each national education system in an international standard. The table for the Czech system was created in 1999 and since 2008 it has been used by the Czech Statistical Office to analyse the current state of the education system, until after the influence of new educational trends, the original classification applied by the Czech system in 2014 was transformed.

ISCED level 2011	Type of education	It is being implemented in the Czech Republic	The original ISCED level 97
0	Early childhood education	kindergartens - level 02 (pre - primary education)	0
1	Primary	primary schools	1
2	Lower	secondary schools	2
3	Upper	secondary schools	3
4	Post-secondary not included in tertiary	Postgraduate studies, part-time study for upper secondary education postgraduate study, part-time study for upper secondary education with apprenticeship certificate or school-leaving examination (completed at secondary schools)	4
5	Tertiary – short cycle	tertiary professional education at tertiary professional schools	5
6	Undergraduate or equivalent degree	undergraduate studies at a university (bachelor degree)	6
7	Master's or equivalent degree	master's degree at college	7

8	Doctoral or equivalent degree	doctoral study at a university	8
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*Table #1: ISCED levels of education. Source: Špačková based on ISCED 2011 International Standard Classification of Education, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012*

The table shows that the content of secondary education is not provided to Czech pupils in a single part of the education system, but starts at the second stage of primary school (lower secondary), continues in several types of secondary schools and conservatories (upper secondary). Post-secondary study programs, such as post-secondary and part-time studies, aimed at completing a pupil's preparation for tertiary education outside the classical secondary school plan. The differentiation of the secondary system is much more distinctive than the primary one.

### Lower secondary education (ISCED 2)

#### Type of institution, main features, key data

The lower sub-type of secondary education (ISCED 2) follows primary education (creating the basic conditions for lifelong learning) and expands previously acquired skills (especially general skills) in a more specialized way. In most education systems, it is related to the completion of compulsory education (PSD). What is also important is the greater variability of school facilities compared to the previous level of education: in the Czech Republic, it can be provided through secondary school studies (6th-9th grade) or special schools, lower years of multi-year grammar schools, apprenticeships or practical schools.

### Upper secondary education (gymnasium, Lyceum) (ISCED 3)

#### Type of institution, main features, key data

Upper secondary education (ISCED 3) is the next stage, whose function may be either to develop the prerequisites and skills for further educational growth or to provide vocational and general training to enter the workforce. Depending on the individual alternative decisions of pupils to continue or terminate their studies, two forms are distinguished – the 'transit' and the 'final' stages of education. Most often within this degree, graduates receive a certificate of fulfilment of ESD, therefore the length of study is usually related to the stipulated ESD deadline. The diversity of device types is the largest in this type, which partly explains the problem of high heterogeneity in educational outcomes across schools. The basic division of individual types is categorization according to the expertise of the provided education – general (grammar schools), vocational (vocational secondary schools) or vocational (apprentice) schools.

Post-secondary education is the last subtype in a given category and relates to the organization of follow-up courses for secondary school graduates with an apprenticeship certificate in order to continue their education. It is mainly provided by secondary schools that include these courses in the school curriculum.

### Tertiary education

#### Type of institution, main features, key data

Tertiary education (age 19 and over) enables graduates to further increase their qualifications in various specializations by studying at either conservatoires, colleges or colleges (or universities).

Education at universities can then be distinguished into three basic levels: bachelor, master and doctoral (Ph.D.).

There are diverse objectives for organising the course and organization of education. In the context of the European Union, the basic principles and priorities shared (but with varying degrees of application) by its members can be mentioned – the principles of accountability, equal opportunities, multiculturalism, European dimension, democracy, subsidiarity, employability, European plurilingualism; information and communication technologies (ICT), environmental education, active European citizenship education, promoting social cohesion, etc.

## **NATIONAL CONTEXT AND CURRENT RESEARCH**

### ***KEY ISSUES REGARDING SOCIAL INCLUSION***

In the Czech system of regional education there are two significantly different categories of institutions providing educational services – schools and school facilities, together forming its so-called “infrastructure”. Schools provide education for pupils according to educational programs and school facilities provide services that are related to, support or supplement school. The main condition for the functioning of both types is their presence in the School Register, which gives them the right to draw funds from the state budget and also allows schools to issue state-guaranteed certificates.

The basic forms of schools are mainly kindergartens, primary, secondary and tertiary professional schools, as well as conservatories, elementary art schools and language schools with the right of state language examination. Of these schools, secondary education, all secondary schools, conservatories (completion of part of education corresponding to secondary education and passing the school-leaving examination), basic art and language can be included in secondary education, which emphasizes greater diversity of this level of education. School facilities can provide a variety of services, linked to the needs of pupils in the context of school education – such as after-school clubs and clubs, pedagogical-psychological counselling, accommodation and catering facilities, as well as various special-purpose facilities. Secondary education may include all of the above categories.

#### **Compulsory school attendance (CSA)**

CSA is one of the central concepts in the analysis of secondary education mechanisms, because its length and proportionate content depend on it. According to the Education Act, the minimum length of study in the Czech Republic is 9 years and starts no later than the sixth year after the child's birth, but this obligation expires after the student reaches 17 years of age. It is officially determined length can be tied to a certain number of years, or through the setting of the mandatory age of entering and leaving school. Compliance with ESD is most often associated with lower secondary education and in most European countries, at least one of them is certified in several possible ways: 1) a final examination; 2) stamps and year-round work; 3) final examination with regard to all-year work.

#### **Forms and levels of upper secondary education**



Pursuant to Section 25 of the Education Act, there are several forms of upper secondary education, unlike lower education, which are only in full-time form. These other forms of education are intended for people who have to master education and profession at the same time.

In the Czech system, there are three levels of secondary education and related three alternative possibilities of its completion – secondary education, secondary education with a vocational certificate and secondary education with a school-leaving examination.

## Management of secondary education

The main actor of the Czech school system is the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for the state administration and is a guarantor of the level, quality and unity and quality education system.

However, the ministry does not have an administrative network to enable the state administration to be carried out immediately, but it can influence other subjects of the education system through various orders, superiors and instructions. For example, the School Register is a tool for influencing the form of education, and the Education Act is a basic legal document defining general educational objectives, content and scope. [6] Other documents are, for example, the National Program of Education (defines the main areas of education, its objectives, contents and means necessary to achieve these objectives), Framework Educational Programs (defines the compulsory content, scope and conditions of education for each field) school education programs) as well as various government decrees and orders.

Regional authorities are territorial self-governing units with a considerable degree of autonomy, for which the law does not stipulate any direct and explicit competence. In addition, they are an important element of the education system, as they establish approximately 68% of schools and are therefore the most important actor in regional education. They prepare a long-term plan of education and development of the education system.

Funding of public state facilities is provided through subsidies from the state budget and the European Social Fund. Regional education (primary and secondary schools) is funded through a so-called “mixed” model of financial administration, in which the Ministry of Education represents the state and delegates selected competences, powers and responsibilities to local authorities (regions and municipalities).

Since the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) is the main decisive actor in the education system in the Czech Republic, setting up and overseeing the pursuit of objectives is its responsibility. The definition and declaration of the principles of the school system can be found in the main public policy document in the field of education – Act 561/2004 Coll. on pre-school, primary, secondary,

More specific goals of secondary education as well as the compulsory content, scope and conditions according to the fields of study are set by **the framework educational programs** for grammar schools, (grammar schools – called gymnasium) with sports training and vocational education.

## IDENTIFYING KEY LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

### *INSTITUTIONS AND PROFESSIONALS*

#### Main features of the education system

Schools managed by public administration; powers distributed among central managing authorities, regions and municipalities

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports** as a state administration body in education:

- Is responsible for the state, conception and development of the education system;
- Allocates funds from the state budget;
- Sets the qualifications and working conditions of teachers;
- Determines the framework content of pre-primary to secondary education;
- Approves educational programs of tertiary professional schools.

**County:**

- Establishes secondary schools (ISCED 3);
- Establishes conservatories (ISCED 2, ISCED 3, ISCED 5);
- Establishes higher professional schools (ISCED 6).

**Municipalities:**

- Establish kindergartens (ISCED 0);
- Establish primary schools (ISCED 1, ISCED 2);
- Ensure compulsory education.

#### **Legal entitlement to pre-school education from 3 years of age**

The Education Act imposes an obligation on the municipality to ensure that a child who has a permanent residence in the municipality and who has reached at least 3 years before the start of the school year (by 31 August) is placed in a kindergarten. Pre-school education is compulsory for children who have reached the age of 5 (from the beginning of the school year following the day they reach 5 until the start of compulsory education). Education in the last year of public or state kindergarten is provided to the child free of charge.

#### **After completing compulsory education, most pupils move to upper secondary education (ISCED 3)**

The percentage of people in the 20-24 age group who have successfully completed at least upper secondary education was 89%, while the European average (EU 28) was 83% (2017). *Source: Eurostat Database*

High level of pupils enrolled in vocational programs (ISCED 3) 78.5% of upper secondary pupils are enrolled in vocational programs, with an EU average of 55.7% (2012). *Source: Eurostat Database*

Low drop-out rates (ISCED 3) The rate of early school leavers (defined as the percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education not participating in further education or training) was 6.7% in 2017, while the European average (EU 28) was 10,6%. *Source: Eurostat Database*

#### **Autonomy of universities**

Universities (ISCED 6-8) are generally independent legal entities with a high degree of autonomy. Their self-governing powers include:

- Labour relations (including wages);

- Economy;
- Creation and implementation of degree programs accredited by the National Accreditation Office for Higher Education.

### **Low fees at public universities**

The only fees paid by students are associated with the admission procedure and are paid by the students on a one-off basis (except for students studying in a foreign language who pay tuition fees).

## **Counselling in education**

Counselling in education from an early age, usually from the age of three, to university level includes a wide range of services that complement and support the effectiveness of school education of pupils (children, students). Advisory services in education are provided in co-operation and close co-operation with schools / school educators and pupils' parents, adult learners. Counselling services include **psychological, special education and career activities**. These activities include diagnostics (psychological diagnostics, special pedagogical diagnostics, diagnostics of the need for support measures for pupils with special educational needs), formulation of recommendations for necessary support measures, assistance and participation in their implementation into practice, continuous monitoring of their fulfilment and effectiveness. Further consulting, intervention, methodological, coordination and educational activities and career counselling. Counselling services are provided with the **informed consent of the counsellor** (legal guardian / adult) and in accordance with ethical principles.

Counselling in the Czech education system is **an extensive system**. Institutions are only partially specialized, most institutions operate in all three monitored areas – pedagogical (study), psychological and career. Professional competence of the area is required. Institutions focusing on the needs of pupils with disabilities and some institutions that focus solely on career guidance are more distinct.

Educational counselling services are aimed at **supporting** the development of pupils' skills and knowledge, including social skills, promoting universal and harmonious personal development, supporting pupils' career decision-making, promoting pupil's orientation towards lifelong learning.

Counselling services also include activities aimed at **preventing** school failure, preventing early school leavers, preventing risky behaviour, preventing pupils' relationship and personality problems, and targeted intervention services to address these areas

Counselling services are also focused on providing **direct psychological and special pedagogical intervention** to pupils with special educational needs, assistance in resolving pupils' crisis situations, methodological support of parents and pedagogical staff of schools and school facilities.

School counselling services also include **social counselling**, including in particular the provision of social-legal counselling, social intervention and cooperation with public authorities (social and legal protection of children) in promoting the pupil's interest.

The system of counselling in education in the field of identifying **the need for support measures** for pupils with special educational needs, gifted pupils, pupils from other cultural backgrounds, designing specific support measures according to the pupil's identified educational needs and the task to participate in their implementation support the success of the educational process. It also

includes monitoring of the progress and effectiveness of the support measures in practice. (For more on the support system through support measures, see Education of pupils with special educational needs.)

**The role of educational counselling** is to identify early risks of pupil development and risk in the smooth running of their education, to identify pupil's educational needs in a timely manner and to design and implement targeted support activities to improve pupil learning outcomes based on teamwork of all relevant actors and individual case analysis; support of his personal development and professional orientation.

Supporting activities and measures include a wide range of special pedagogical, psychological and pedagogical-organizational, personnel and technical measures, which are provided to pupils in need of support **free of charge** from the state budget.

Counselling services are provided to **pupils**, their **guardians, schools and school facilities** in close cooperation with them.

**Advisory services provide:**

- **Schools** (through professional teaching staff (educational counsellor, school prevention methodologist, school psychologist or school special educator) and non-teaching staff (social worker)
- **School counselling facilities**, which are a pedagogical-psychological counselling centre and a special pedagogical centre
- More detailed information on the activities of counsellors is available in the section Counsellors in pre-school and school education in Chapter 9.

Advisory services may be provided by other natural or legal persons within the specified scope and conditions.

**Methodological and theoretical background** of counselling is formed by the National Institute for Education, which also fulfils the coordinating role and role in the area of further education of counselling staff, and the Department of Psychology and Special Education of Universities. It also provides information and methodological background and direct services in the field of pedagogical-psychological and career counselling. In the area of career counselling, it cooperates with the Labour Office of the Czech Republic and its regional branches, which are in the competence of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. (See Career Counselling.)

**The methodological and professional platform** is represented by professional associations dealing with various fields of education and universities (departments of psychology, special education). (See Career Counselling.)

The National Institute for Education is authorized to **revise the recommendations** of school guidance facilities concerning the assessment of the educational needs of pupils with special educational needs, the draft conditions for their education, the identification and design of support measures to support the success of education of pupils with special educational needs. Adolescent pupils, legal guardians of underage pupils, or a public authority, school or school facility or the Czech School Inspectorate have the right to request a revision of a recommendation issued by a school counselling centre if they have doubts about the correctness of the issued recommendation. (See Special support measures.)

Families of children under 7 years of age with disabilities can benefit from **early care** services provided under the Social Services Act. This is a field service, possibly supplemented by an outpatient form, provided to the child and the parents of a child who is disabled or whose development is in danger due to unfavourable health. The service is aimed at supporting the family and supporting the development of the child with regard to its specific needs. About 50 providers are registered in the register of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Some of them, for example, organize various seminars or lend appropriate toys and toys for children. Consultations take place in the field. They can be supported from public sources.

*Legislation and Bibliography: Education Act. Decree on the provision of guidance services in schools and school guidance facilities*

### Counselling in schools

Schools provide counselling services to their **pupils and their guardians**. The focal point of the school's counselling services is to support the development of the pupil's personality, his / her educational outcomes, setting suitable conditions for education, prevention of risky behavioural manifestations, assistance in deciding on the pupil's professional orientation and creating and implementing pedagogical support plans.

Schools provide counselling services to the school counselling centre, which **usually operates**:

- **Educational counsellor** (provides counselling services in the area of choice of educational pathways and job application, i.e., career counselling, participates in solving educational or relationship difficulties of the pupil, mediates contact to professional workplaces)
- **School prevention methodologist** (co-ordinates the creation and implementation of the school prevention program, which mainly includes activities to prevent risky behaviour – truancy, self-harm, substance abuse, sexual abuse, racism and xenophobia, promoting multicultural values facilitating contact with professional workplaces)

The provision of school advisory services **may also be ensured by**:

- **School psychologist** (mainly involved in the creation of an inclusive climate at school, participates in the development of educational support plans, individual educational plans, provides guidance to legal representatives on education issues, provides consultations and assistance to pupils in solving their problems, participates in support of education pupil, including gifted pupil, early identification of risk factors in pupil development, performing orientation psychological diagnostics, direct psychological support to pupils with special educational needs in accordance with the content of support measures)
- **School special educator** (especially in the area of support for the creation of an inclusive school climate, support for education of pupils with special educational needs, especially pupils with disabilities, early identification of risk factors in child development) , participation in the preparation of the educational support plan and its fulfilment, participation in the creation and implementation of individual educational plans, methodological assistance to school teachers in the education of pupils with special educational needs, methodological assistance and support to pupils' legal

representatives in education and training). The decision to fill the school advisory office is the responsibility of the school head

**School counselling primarily includes:**

- Supporting the building of an inclusive school climate
- Promoting the success of education and preventing school failure
- Primary prevention of risky behaviour of pupils, creation of school preventive programs and support of their implementation, education to healthy lifestyle
- Career guidance is integrated from the level of basic education integrating educational, information and counselling support in the choice of educational path and later professional employment
- Professional support for inclusion and education of pupils with special educational needs (including gifted pupils, foreigners or persons belonging to national minorities)
- Detection of problem areas in the performance of the pupil, his / her strengths, recommendation of the method and participation in solving the problem
- Preparation of a plan of pedagogical support within the support measures of the first level and its fulfilment in the education of pupils at risk of school failure, early school leaving or risky behaviour
- Continuous and long-term support for the education of gifted and exceptionally-gifted pupils
- Methodological support for teachers in applying psychological and special pedagogical knowledge and skills to the educational activities of the school
- Implementation of support measures of the second to fifth level in cooperation with school counselling facilities (pedagogical-psychological counselling centre, special pedagogical centre) and provision of intervention activities to pupils with special needs; educational needs
- Co-ordination of provided support services at school, participation in the preparation of individual educational plans of pupils with special educational needs
- Provision of information and mediation of the possibility of using other relevant services in relation to the support of school pupils' education
- Providing basic information on available social services and other relevant professional services
- Methodological support for teachers in applying support measures to the school's educational activities

**Counselling at primary and secondary school level**

In providing counselling services, the school counselling staff (usually an educational counsellor, school prevention methodologist, school psychologist and school special educator) cooperates with all schoolteachers, especially classroom teachers, and school counselling facilities to address issues related to pupil education and setting appropriate conditions for their education.

The school co-operates with a pedagogical-psychological counselling centre, a special pedagogical centre, or with other institutions that are involved in supporting the education of the pupil and protecting his / her interests, e.g., with the authority for the social and legal protection of children,

with NGOs working in support of social inclusion. In the area of career counselling, the school co-operates with the Labour Office within the competence of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

The basic document to support the school success of pupils in the provision of school counselling services is the pedagogical support plan, which is a document of support measures of the first level. The plan of pedagogical support is elaborated by the school, if necessary, to support the pupil's performance in some area by pedagogical means. The pedagogical support plan contains a description of the pupil's difficulties to which the pedagogical support is directed, the pupil's strengths, the objectives to be achieved and how they are achieved, and the effectiveness evaluated.

### **Children with special educational needs**

In order to support the education of pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and the need for support measures of levels 2 to 5, schools prepare an individual pupil's educational plan based on the recommendations of the school counselling centre. At secondary level, the school head may authorize education according to an individual educational program for other serious reasons than special educational needs or pupil's talents. *See also Special support measures.*

### **Nursery school counselling**

Kindergartens, which are intended for children as a rule from the age of three (at the earliest two years), provide guidance to the child's parents in the field of pedagogical support for child development, provide parents with information on available professional counselling and other services aimed at promoting support for its successful development and development and support for its preparation for compulsory education.

Kindergartens may set up a school guidance centre for the provision of guidance services.

The nursery school co-operates with a pedagogical-psychological counselling centre, a special pedagogical centre, or with other institutions that are involved in supporting the education of the child and protecting his / her interests. In case of threat to the interests of the child, it co-operates with the body of social and legal protection of children. Kindergartens cooperate with elementary schools in ensuring the smooth transition of children from pre-school education to compulsory education, and co-operate with organizations providing early care within the competence of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in ensuring the smooth transition of children from early care to pre-school education.

Kindergartens provide specific support to children with special educational needs by applying supportive measures. Support measures are implemented by professionally trained and professionally qualified pedagogical staff of the school (pedagogue, special educator, school speech therapist, etc.) in accordance with the educational needs of children and recommendation of support measures by the school counselling centre and in cooperation with it.

A key document that nursery schools prepare and implement as part of their counselling services is a pedagogical support plan. The pedagogical support plan is developed for a child who requires the application of first-level support measures in his / her education.

In order to support the education of children with a greater range of special educational needs and the level of support from 2 to 5 kindergartens, based on the recommendations of the school



counselling centre, elaborate an individual educational plan of the child that includes necessary pedagogical-organizational, content, school. *See also Special support measures.*

*Legislation and Bibliography: Education Act. Decree on the provision of guidance services in schools and school guidance facilities. Law on social and legal protection of children*

### Counselling in school counselling facilities

Special education centres focus primarily on supporting pupils with hearing, visual, physical, speech impairment, multiple disability, autism or mental disabilities.

In relation to pupils with disabilities, as codified in the Education Act, pedagogical and psychological counselling centres tend to specialise in providing counselling services to pupils with learning disabilities or behavioural disorders. The target group is furthermore pupils with personality or relationship problems, foreign pupils and pupils disadvantaged due to cultural or other life situation. See Psychological counselling for more details.

*Legislation and Bibliography: Education Act. Decree on the provision of guidance services in schools and school guidance facilities*

### Psychological counselling

Educational-psychological counselling provided to pupils (children, students) is an integral part of the system of education and support of education of all pupils and their harmonious development, including pupils with special educational needs.

Pedagogical-psychological and special pedagogical counselling support is provided to pupils by school counselling facilities, which are pedagogical-psychological counselling centres and special pedagogical centres.

Diagnostic institutions and educational care centres provide counselling services in the context of institutional care or protective care and preventive educational care.

On the website of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports there is a map of educational and psychological counselling centres in the Czech Republic.

*Legislation and Bibliography: Education Act.*

### Educational and Psychological Counselling

Educational and psychological counselling centres are school counselling facilities established by regions or other legal or natural persons (ecclesiastical and private counselling centres). There is at least one workplace in each district.

Psychological counselling services are provided by psychologists, special educators and social workers.

The individual or group work of these experts with pupils, their guardians and teachers includes diagnostic, interventional, methodological and information activities. It is carried out on an outpatient basis at the counselling centre and visits to the counselling experts in schools and school facilities.

Educational and psychological counselling usually performs the following **activities**:



- It determines the pedagogical-psychological readiness of pupils for compulsory education and publishes a report and recommendations.
- Identifies the special educational needs of school pupils using methods of psychological and special pedagogical diagnostics.
- Develops recommendations with proposals for support measures for pupils with special educational needs and gifted pupils.
- Provides pupils with direct psychological and special pedagogical support and intervention.
- Provides support for pupils at increased risk of school failure or personal and social development problems.
- Provides counselling services to pupils with different cultural backgrounds and living conditions.
- Provides career guidance to pupils.
- Provides information, methodological and advisory support to pupils' legal representatives.
- Through prevention methodology it ensures prevention of risky behaviour, implementation of preventive measures and co-ordination of work of school prevention methodologists.
- Provides methodological support to pedagogical staff of schools and school facilities in providing advisory services to schools and school facilities in the application of support measures.
- It draws up recommendations for adjusting the final examinations of secondary school and tertiary professional students, including the school-leaving examination.
- Provides assistance and consultation to schools in identifying extraordinary talents and provides professional pedagogical and psychological services to gifted pupils.
- Performs regular evaluation of the implementation of support measures.

In the area of career / career counselling, counselling centres co-operate with relevant workplaces of the Labour Office of the Czech Republic (see Career Counselling in the Concept of Lifelong Learning).

*Legislation and Bibliography: Education Act. Decree on the provision of guidance services in schools and school guidance facilities*

### **Special Educational Center**

Especially pedagogical centres operate mainly in schools established for groups of pupils with physical, mental, hearing or visual impairment, speech disorders, autism, multiple disabilities, exceptionally in schools for pupils with developmental learning or behavioural disorders. They specialise in providing counselling services for the category of pupils for which the school is established. The development trend is to provide these specialised counselling services in an integrated way for more categories of pupils with disabilities.

The expert teams of the centres are special educators, psychologists and social workers. Depending on the type of disability of the clients of each centre, these teams may be supplemented by other specialist staff. The activities of the centres are carried out on an outpatient basis at the centre and by visits to the centre's staff in schools and school facilities, or in families and facilities providing care for pupils with disabilities.

The main focus of the activity is to support pre-school children in the care of parents (legal guardians), to support pupils integrated into schools and school facilities, to support children with severe and multiple disabilities who cannot attend school, usually between 3 and 19 years. Schools for pupils with a specific type of disability are provided with counselling services only in the framework of diagnostic care.

The Special Educational Centre usually performs the following activities:

- Determines the preparedness of pupils with disabilities for compulsory education.
- Identifies the special educational needs of pupils with disabilities and the need for support measures.
- Prepares professional documents for creating conditions for education of pupils with special educational needs.
- It draws up recommendations for adjusting the final examinations of pupils with disabilities.
- Provides career guidance in continuing education and employment.
- Provides special pedagogical care and support services to pupils in inclusive education, if the school cannot provide this support to its teachers.
- Performs special pedagogical and psychological diagnostics and provides counselling and assistance in solving problems in education, mental and social development of pupils with disabilities.
- Provides guidance on the education of pupils with disabilities to educational staff and pupils' legal representatives.
- Provides methodological, information and consultation support to schools that educate pupils with disabilities to pupils' legal representatives.
- Performs regular assessments of the need and effectiveness of support measures.

*Legislation and Bibliography: Education Act. Decree on the provision of guidance services in schools and school guidance facilities*

Educational Care Centres are educational establishments that provide diagnostic, preventive and counselling services to minors in difficult life situations, persons at risk of behavioural disorders or already developed manifestations of behavioural disorders and negative phenomena in social development, for which no institutional care is ordered or imposed protective education, eventually for adults until the completion of secondary education (client).

Diagnostic activity is focused on recognition of essential features of client's personality, identification of client's needs and problems. It is the starting point for elaboration of an individual educational plan and setting of special pedagogical and psychological therapeutic procedures. Therapeutic activity is aimed at more fundamental changes in the client's behaviour and attitudes.

The Educational Care Centre provides psychotherapeutic assistance to children, young people and parents, for example in relationship issues, behavioural disorders, bullying among children, and asocial manifestations in children and youth in children and youth (aggression, substance use, initial crime) or psychiatric problems and personality problems in children.

This care is provided by a team of experts in the field of psychology, special education and social work.

The basic methods of work include the following individual psychotherapy, family therapy, group psychotherapy.

The centres also offer the possibility of co-ordinating voluntary therapeutic stays in educational care centres for children and young people with the accommodation department.

Some centres develop prevention programmes for schools; such as bullying, racism, drug addiction or the safe use of the Internet. It also offers diagnostics and intervention in the case of socially pathological phenomena in the class team.

The Centre of Educational Care co-operates with the school, pedagogical and psychological counselling institutions, the body of social and legal protection of children, health care facilities and other bodies involved in the prevention and solution of the risk behaviour of the client.

*Legislation and Bibliography: Education Act. Decree on the provision of guidance services in schools and school guidance facilities*

### Diagnostic Institute

The Diagnostic Institute is a school facility that performs during the diagnostic stay special pedagogical and psychological examinations of children who were ordered by the court for institutional care or protective care, or children whose placement in the diagnostic institution for the purpose of professional examination and suggestions for their behaviour asked the parents / persons responsible for their upbringing (on the basis of a contract between the institution and the child's legal guardian or adult). Outpatient care can provide preventive educational care, ie provide special pedagogical or psychological services to children with behavioural disorders, their families or schools.

*Legislation and Bibliography: Education Act. Decree on the provision of guidance services in schools and school guidance facilities. Act on the Performance of Institutional Education or Protective Education in School Facilities and on Preventive Educational Care in School Facilities and on Amendments to Other Acts*

### Career counselling

**The transmission of information about the world of work** is part of the content of education in both compulsory and post-compulsory education.

**Practical training** is another form of preparation for life in the world of work, particularly in upper secondary education, particularly in vocational schools, which attends nearly 75% of the population concerned.

In addition to school, **guidance counsellors** (see School Counselling), career guidance counselling is carried out by institutions specialising in career counselling.

*Legislation and Bibliography: Decree on the provision of guidance services in schools and school guidance facilities. Development Yearbook of Education in the Czech Republic 2006 / 07–2016 / 17*

### Career issues in educational content

In compulsory education, one of the educational areas of the Framework Educational Programme for Elementary Education is the area of Man and the World of Work.

In the first stage it includes four thematic units:

- Work with small materials
- Design activities
- Growing work
- Food preparation

All circuits are mandatory.

The second level is divided into eight thematic areas:

- Working with technical materials
- Design and construction
- Growing and breeding
- Operation and maintenance of the home
- Food preparation
- Work with laboratory technology
- Use of digital technologies
- The world of work

Thematic area, “The world of work”, is compulsory and at least one other area is selected from other schools according to their conditions and pedagogical intentions. Given its focus on the selection of future occupations, it is recommended to rank it in the highest grades.

At **the upper secondary level**, preparation for professional and economic civic life takes place within the framework of teaching topics in the educational field (for grammar schools), respectively. cross-sectional topic (for professional fields) **Man and the world of work**. Framework educational programmes require that grammar school graduates have the entrepreneurial competence and graduates of vocational fields of competence for employment and entrepreneurial activities.

**The inclusion of vocational training and vocational training** in enterprises in the vocational curricula of vocational secondary schools enables contact between pupils and employers, which may influence the decision to start employment. In addition, some pupils continue to work as employees in the company where they practice. Contact with the world of work in VET is ensured through practical training in enterprises (see Teaching and learning in upper secondary education).

*Legislation and Bibliography: Framework Education Program for Primary Education. Framework Educational Program for grammar schools. FEP for secondary vocational education*

## Career guidance institutions

Career counselling provides pupils with:

- Educational counsellor at school (see Counselling at school)
- Educational and Psychological Counselling
- Special education centre (in the case of pupils with disabilities)
- Career guidance centre

- Information and counselling centres for career choices of the Czech Labour Office (IPS)

### **Information and Advisory Centres for Employment Choice of the Czech Labour Office (IPS)**

Labour Offices have undergone a new legal regulation establishing the Labour Office of the Czech Republic, which has its regional branches; they include contact centres set up according to accessibility needs. Information and counselling centres (IPS) for career choices operate at regional branches of the Labour Office, **providing up-to-date information:**

- A network of high schools and universities, study and apprenticeships across the country
- The conditions and course of the admission procedure
- The demands and requirements of each profession
- On graduate employment opportunities
- The situation on the labour market in the region and in the whole Czech Republic
- On the possibilities of retraining (for details see Unemployed and other defined groups)

Information and counselling centres for the selection of occupations of the Labour Office of the Czech Republic (IPS) provide detailed descriptions of individual professions, the possibility of self-service testing of professional interests in relation to the profession and relevant education, electronic search of study or apprenticeship throughout the Czech Republic and they are all free of charge.

The standard activities of an educational counsellor include (in addition to those listed in the School Advisory section) the accompaniment of class teams of the final year at school year during a visit to the Information and Advisory Centre of the Labour Office of the Czech Republic, where are pupils introduced to the current situation on the labour market. Pupils are also informed that they can make an appointment for individual consultation on career choices or transition to the labour market.

### **National Institute for Education (NIE)**

The Career Guidance Center is part of the National Institute for Education (NIE), which also publishes a number of publications analysing the success of graduates in the labour market.

NIE manages the information portal [www.infoabsolvent.cz](http://www.infoabsolvent.cz) - Information System on the Employment of School Graduates in the Labour Market (ISA), which was created within the system project VIP Career (2005–2008) of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, co-financed by the European Social Fund. On the website of the applicant, for each field of education at secondary schools, conservatories and colleges, will find a summary of the field, graduate employment, unemployment information, basic documents, schools implementing the field, and basic information on admission to these schools. It is also possible to search according to the selected occupation - for each position is given its characteristics, activities performed, overview of fields in which it is possible to obtain the necessary qualifications, average monthly earnings and other information. Educational fields can also be selected according to the type of disability of the pupil. The website also contains advice on career choices and, in case of difficulties in study, contacts to professional staff of pedagogical-psychological counselling centres, Career Counselling Centre, Labour Offices and Youth Information Centre.

An important part of the VIP Career system project was also the creation of school counselling centres at more than a hundred schools where a school psychologist and / or school special

educator, educational counsellor and school prevention methodologist work. The current tendency is to increase the number of school counselling centres and thus strengthen the competences of schools to provide counselling services to pupils directly.

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### **Professional preparation of pupils with special educational needs**

The vocational training of pupils with special educational needs and the offer of courses is similar to that of the general population, while maintaining the special educational support resulting from pupils' special educational needs. Career counselling is provided similarly to other pupils; in the case of the disabled, special educational centres also participate in it. The transition of young people with severe or multiple disabilities from vocational training to the labour market seems to be the most problematic area of care for the disabled. The situation is particularly difficult in the area of employing people with intellectual disabilities. These adolescents are generally listed as long-term unemployed, eventually earn a pension in connection with their disability and often remain in the social network.

*Legislation and Bibliography: Decree on the provision of guidance services in schools and school guidance facilities.*

To complete the questionnaire, we addressed teachers

- Kindergartens – (kindergarten Radotín Prague, kindergarten Strakonice, kindergarten Klatovy, kindergarten Beroun, kindergarten Kamenice nad Lipou)
- Children's groups (DS Sedmíráska České Budějovice, DS Brouček Čkyně)
- Elementary schools (Elementary school České Budějovice, elementary school Vlachovo Březí)
- Special Elementary Schools (Primary School Strakonice)
- Children's homes (DD Volyně and DD Písek)
- Secondary schools and colleges (SPgŠ a VOŠ Prachatice, VOŠ a SŠ České Budějovice)
- Universities (University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Miroslav Ondříček Film Academy Písek)

## **QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **Question 1.**

**What is inclusion? What is social inclusion and why is it important? What is the difference between inclusion and integration? How do you understand inclusion specifically?**

Inclusion is understood by teachers from different levels of education in the same way.

Inclusion is a school system in which everyone has the chance to educate indiscriminately, merging into the mainstream.

Social inclusion is seen as very important for individuals and society as a whole, as it enables quality coexistence in society in everyday life.

Social inclusion aims to integrate people with various disadvantages into everyday life. Social inclusion is important both from the normal human point of view, where everyone should have a chance to live a successful full life, and from an economic point of view, where the dependence of disadvantaged people on financial contributions should be reduced.

Inclusion vs. integration - in integration we try to adapt the pupil to the school, in inclusion we adapt the environment to the needs of the pupils. Inclusion is therefore understood as merging with mainstream education, integration as inclusion

## **Question 2.**

**Who participates in the development of the national concept in the Czech Republic? Which people most influenced the changes? Who or what was an obstacle to change? What are the greatest achievements of inclusion (advantages and disadvantages)?**

Development of the national conception in the area of inclusion is solved by some professional publications, they are part of bachelor and diploma theses (e.g., INCLUSION AS A CURRENT TREND IN EDUCATION, author Bc. Eva Rygelová, published by Masaryk University 2017). The history of development is therefore well known and sophisticated.

It is based on the Action Plan for Inclusive Education 2016-2018, elaborated by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in relation to the approved amendment to the Education Act. The idea is certainly worthwhile, but it is already in the middle of 2019 and it is not working on its connection to the next period, nor its evaluation.

Main achievements of pro-inclusive measures:

- Funding of basic elementary schools - support measures
- Possibility to fill some positions in regular schools - eg special educator, psychologist
- Creating new jobs - teaching assistant
- Material security
- Main achievements of negative aspect for pro-inclusive measures
- Elimination of high-quality special education.
- Overall reduction in basic education.
- Increasing the burden for ordinary and gifted pupils.
- Financial demands.
- Unqualified teaching staff.
- Restrictions on the rights of the disabled child who have the right to education appropriate to him / her.
- Inability to achieve the success of a handicapped child in a common elementary school team.

## **Question 3.**

**What impact does inclusion have on**



Children - more disadvantaged pupils have a chance of education. However, this fact also affects the so-called intact pupils, who are often not given due attention due to the included pupil in the classroom. This often reduces the demands on all pupils, which leads to a decrease in the level of learned educational content, skills, or lessons, overall knowledge and skills development.

Parents – in many cases, parents think they have the full right to “put” their disadvantaged child into the mainstream class without thinking what the consequences will be and whether it really will be beneficial. Given the legislation set, it is very difficult for them to explain that this is not always the best way.

Educators and non-educators – as with the previous ones, depend on the nature of the disadvantage. In case of a pupil's minor disadvantage, the teachers have a number of tools to work with the pupils, given the support measures available. Nonetheless, in many cases, the overall process of degradation (especially in the case of more severe disadvantages) is generally reduced as the teacher usually adapts to the weakest pupil (of course this depends on a number of factors – e.g., number of pupils in class, number of pupils included, teaching method).

Directors - this is probably the most difficult position. On one hand, the director is being pushed by legislation, another by the parent, the founder and, last but not least, by the CSI, which expects certain educational results (as well as the general and professional public). Unfortunately, finding a conflict of interest for all these groups is quite often impossible, so the director is constantly shifting from one to the other, trying to find the best way, while facing considerable criticism from the rest.

## **Question 4.**

### **When did you feel pressure on inclusion and why? Still pressure continues?**

The problem is perceived differently by elementary schools, otherwise by special education.

In special education, adjustments were begun in 2014, which led to a reduction in the number of pupils, often rash, hasty inclusion of pupils in mainstream primary schools. They were not prepared for changes either materially, financially or personally. The concept of inclusion was not sufficiently elaborated and interconnected, pedagogical staff lacked sufficient education, lacked professional positions. There was also a lack of public awareness. The pressure to develop inclusion continues, educators and parents of mainstream schools are opposed to inclusion. First of all, there are no individual plans for inclusive pupils, which would allow for the involvement of pupils in a collective where the child can excel (e.g. education), in other subjects pupils could be educated individually.

As an example, we take a look at a private high school.

Given the perspective of secondary vocational education and the less ties to this issue compared to compulsory education, I cannot claim to be subject to sudden enormous pressure. We only deal with partial cases and, unlike primary schools, it is unlikely that we will meet five included children in one year. The pressure aimed at us most probably during the 2016 amendment, when the bureaucracy and all the documentation became more difficult. After this year, the awareness of inclusion in society has also expanded, so we have started to address the different requirements of parents. Nowadays we have become accustomed to it and it is more of a routine work for us, but it is burdensome.



Question 5 Sources: knowledge, people, buildings, equipment, transport and finance. How were the resources provided at urban, regional and national level and implemented in practice? What were the obstacles and how did they overcome them? What helped principals and teachers to implement inclusion in practice?

All resources that have been provided to us (and are still provided) flow through support measures. Thanks to them, it is possible to provide assisted pupils with assistants and possible compensatory aids. Prior to the amendment to the Decree, the financing of these resources was a problem. As a private school, we had to pay everything from our own resources, and we could only apply for partial financial compensation under the development program. However, this compensation only paid a percentage of all the necessary costs for the included pupils. Financially standardised support measures were created with the amendment – every school, regardless of the founder, is entitled to the payment of the necessary compensatory aids and support measures. This step has helped us greatly in implementing effective pupil inclusion. Currently, the biggest problem is the small number of staff suitable as teaching assistants. Education of pedagogical staff in the field of inclusion is currently complemented by schools within various ESF-funded projects, specifically in the addressed schools, e.g., the project, “Support of pupils with disabilities at primary schools in the South Bohemian region”, or the project, “Kindergartens as centres of peer support in to individualise education and develop creativity.”