

**THE DEVELOPMENT AND STATE-OF-THE-ART OF ADULT LEARNING AND
EDUCATION IN PREPARATION FOR CONFINTEA VI.**

NATIONAL REPORT OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic

SEPTEMBER 2008

**THE NATIONAL REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT
AND STATUS
OF ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION
IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

1997 – 2007

General overview

Czech Republic is located in Central Europe. It occupies the lands of three historical territories which are Bohemia, Moravia and a part of Silesia; its area is 78 887 km². In administrative terms it is divided into 14 self-governed regions. The capital city is Prague. The population of the Czech Republic reached 10 424 926 (in June 2008). Czech Republic is a parliamentary democracy. Head of the state is the President of the Republic; the supreme legislative body is the two-chamber parliament which comprises of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. Czech Republic is a member of NATO (1999) and of the European Union (2004). It is also one of the members of the Visegrad Four.

Czech Republic is divided into the following 14 higher territorial administrative units:

14 regions	region capital	population (09/2006)
Capital City of Prague		1 186 618
Central Bohemia	Prague	1 171 200
South Bohemia	České Budějovice	630 063
Pilsen Region	Pilsen	553 896
Karlovy Vary Region	Karlovy Vary	304 770
Ústí Region	Ústí nad Labem	823 725
Liberec Region	Liberec	430 285
Hradec Kralove Region	Hradec Králové	549 620
Pardubice Region	Pardubice	507 425
Vysočina Region	Jihlava	511 406
South Moravia Region	Brno	1 132 350
Olomouc Region	Olomouc	639 857
Zlín Region	Zlín	589 975
Moravskoslezsky Region	Ostrava	1 249 778

According to the census of 2001 almost 94% of the population declare themselves to be of either Czech, Moravian or Silesian nationality which makes the Czech Republic one of the most homogenous countries in Europe in terms of nationality. Other nationalities are represented as follows: Slovak (1.89 %), Polish (0.51 %), German (0.38 %), Ukrainian (0.22 %), Vietnamese (0.17 %), Roma (0.11 %), and other (2.47 %). Please note that with respect to the Roma percentages the census does not quite correspond to reality.

In recent years the nationality structure of the Czech Republic has been influenced to a degree by work migration. In this respect the traditional national minorities lose some of their share (such as Slovaks, Poles and Germans) while other nationalities grow (Ukrainians, Vietnamese and Russian). At present time (as of 31. 12. 2007) there are 392 087 foreigners resident in the Czech Republic which represents about 3.8% of the population of the country - most of the foreigners come from Ukraine (126 526), Slovakia (67 880), Vietnam (50 955), Russia

(23 303) and Poland (20 607). During 2007 a total of 104.4 thousand of foreigners immigrated to the Czech Republic (which is 36 thousand more than in 2006).

Employment

The number of persons holding a single job or a main full-time employment position reached in the second quarter of 2008 on average the number of 5 003.3 thousand, i.e. 89.4 thousand more than in the second quarter of 2007 which in year-to-year terms represents an increase of 1.8 %. The majority of these persons were employed in full-time positions; the ratio of the part-time employment (5.0 % in the civil sector) belongs amongst the lowest in Europe.

The number of employees has grown in comparison with the 2nd quarter of 2007 by 79.2 thousand to 4 183.6 thousand and their share on the overall employment reached 83.6 %. The number of production cooperatives' members decreased by 2.7 thousand to 11.7 thousand. The number of entrepreneurs including family members who help out increased in comparison with the same period in 2007 by 14.1 thousand to 807.9 thousand and their share on the overall employment has slightly decreased in comparison the preceding year to 16.1 %. The numbers of entrepreneurs with their own employees decreased by 9.1 thousand to 176.9 thousand while the number of entrepreneurs without employees increased by 23.0 thousand to 601.0 thousand. The number of family members helping out the entrepreneurs recorded no significant change in comparison with the preceding year. In terms of international comparison Czech Republic belongs within the EU among the countries which boast large numbers of entrepreneurs.

The increase in the overall employment manifested itself mainly in the secondary sectors (industry, including construction industry) where the increase in the number of employees (by 63.0 thousand in comparison with the preceding year) continued to be significantly higher than in the entire tertiary sector (all service industry sectors, including transportation – recorded an increase by 42.8 thousand). The drain of employees from the primary sector (agriculture, game-keeping, fisheries, and forestry) further continues, reducing the numbers by 15.8 thousand persons last year. The largest increase of employed persons was recorded in the processing industry (by 37.1 thousand) and their share of employment (28.6 %) remains the highest of all EU countries.

The ratio of employment (ratio of persons holding a single or primary full-time employment in the 15-64 age group) reached 66.6 % and in comparison with the 2nd quarter of 2007 this number grew by 0.6 of a percentage point. The ratio of employment of men increased by 0.8 of a percentage point to 75.3 %, and the ratio of women increased by 0.3 of a percentage point to 57.8 %.

The increase in the number of the holders of a single job or main full-time employment was accompanied by the increase in the number of second jobs (by 9.4 thousand in comparison with the 2nd quarter of 2007, to 87.7 thousand). In comparison with the employees these second jobs are held mostly by entrepreneurs without employees (48.4 thousand).

The average number of the unemployed persons, according to the methodology of the International Labour Organization (ILO), free of seasonal variations, has decreased in comparison with the 1st quarter of 2008 by 10.4 thousand (without clearance of the seasonal influences by 24.4 thousand). The decrease in unemployment between the 1st quarter and the 2nd quarter of 2008 reflects the generally improved conditions for obtaining available

employment positions in the spring and the summer months rather than the overall improvement of the job market. More significant decreases of unemployment do not take place also due to the already low unemployment levels at present time.

The number of the unemployed reached 220.1 thousand (of whom 117.9 thousand are women), which are the lowest levels since the end of 1996. In comparison with the 2nd quarter of 2007 the total number of the unemployed decreased by 54.4 thousand and year-to-year by almost a fifth (decrease by 19.8 %). The year-to-year decrease in unemployment showed itself more in the female body of the population (by 30.7 thousand) rather than among men (where it decreased by 23.8 thousand).

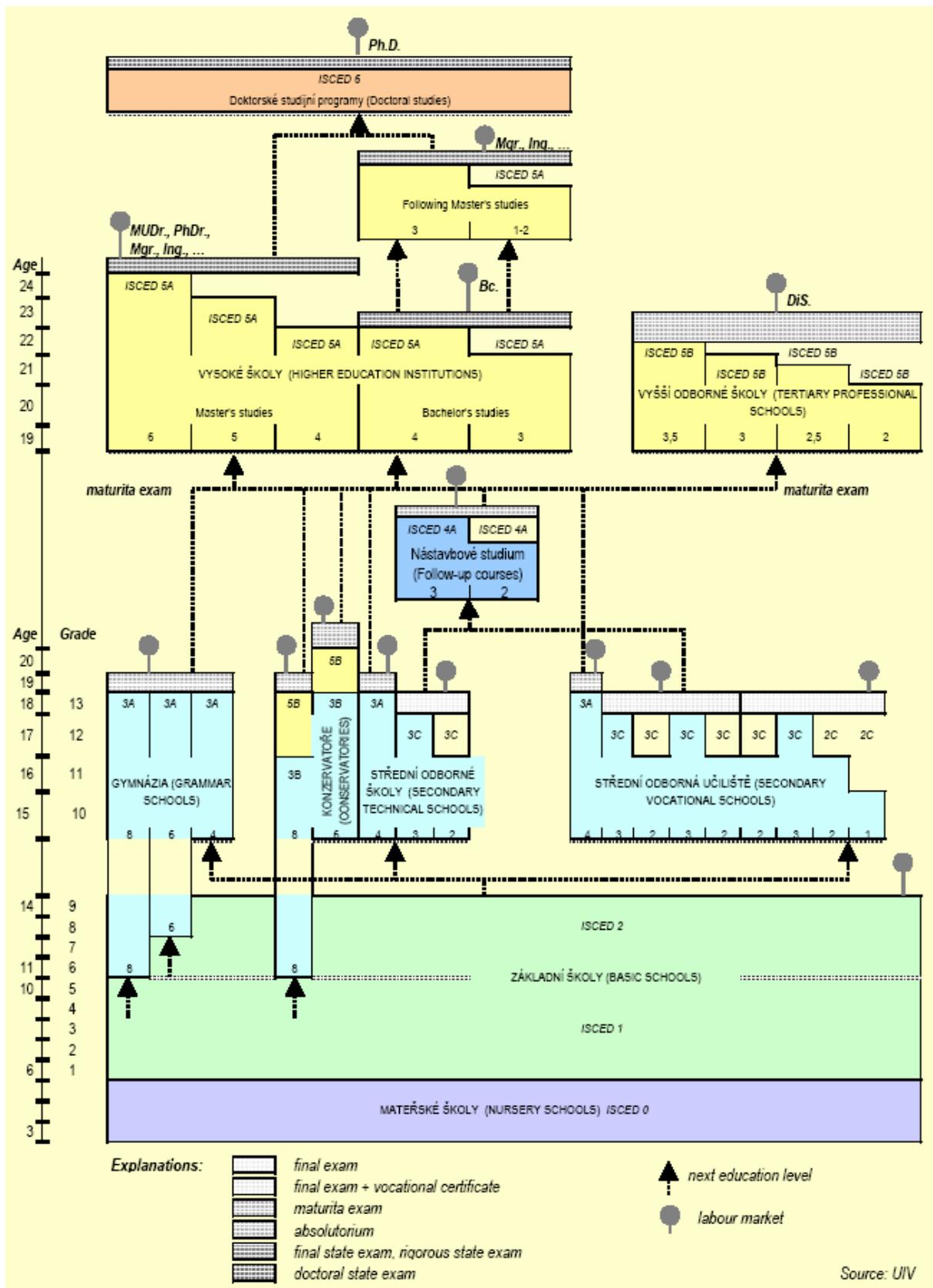
The number of the unemployed who have been unemployed for one year or more decreased by 37.9% in comparison with the 2nd quarter of 2007 to 112.5 thousand and their share thus slightly exceeded one half of all unemployed persons (51.1 %). In comparison with the rest of the EU the Czech Republic belongs among the countries with the highest ratio of the long-term unemployed. The extraordinarily high ratio of the long-term unemployed is in the group of unemployed with completed only the basic level of education (64.7 % of all unemployed with basic education), and in the group of the unemployed with secondary education without the leaving exam [maturita] this represents almost a half of the unemployed (49.2 %).

The general numbers of the unemployed according to the ILO definitions (in the 15-64 age group) reached 4.3 %, which again represents the lowest levels of unemployment since the end of 1996. In comparison with the 2nd quarter 2007 it decreased by 1.1 of a percentage point. The general unemployment in the Czech Republic is in the long term lower than the average unemployment levels of all the EU member states or around the average number of all countries in the Euro zone.

The regional unemployment rates (age group 15 and older) fluctuate between 1.8 % in the Capital City of Prague to 7.6 % in the Moravskoslezsky Region. The decrease in unemployment levels took place in comparison with the 2nd quarter of 2007 in all regions of the country, the most marked decrease taking place in the Ústí Region which however remains plagued by high unemployment. In the preceding half a year there were no significant decreases of unemployment levels in the regions which already enjoy very low unemployment.

The low unemployment levels continue to be recorded among the university educated persons (1.4 %) and persons who attained a full secondary education with the leaving exams [maturita] (2.7 %). High unemployment continues to be recorded among those with basic education (18.4 %) and about average in the group of persons with secondary educations *sans* the leaving exam, including those coming from vocational schools (4.3 %).

The overall architecture of the Czech educational system.



This document uses the revised version of the ISCED 97. The original version of the ISCED is not suitable for the Czech environment.

1. Policy, Legislation and Financing

1.1.1. What is the legislative and policy environment of ALE in your country? Indicate which policies and laws related to ALE have been established since 1997 (CONFINTEA V).

Further education is not regulated by special legislation in the Czech Republic.

Act No. 179/2006 Coll., on verification and recognition of further education results

Since 1.8.2007 the Act No. 179/2006 Coll., on verification and recognition of further education results and on the amendment of certain other laws, (hereinafter the “Act 179/2006 Coll.”) has been in operation. This new legal norm introduces a uniform, transparent and objective method of verification and recognition of skills and knowledge of individual applicants without regard where such were obtained – whether by studying or in practice. This possibility had not existed under the applicable legislation in the Czech Republic before although this is one of the key elements of further education.

The Act 179/2006 Coll. provides a wholly new perspective on individual professions (full qualification) which are divided into the so-called “partial qualifications.” Any partial qualification is a part of a full qualification which can be utilized independently on the job market. The full qualification of a “baker” is further divided into the partial qualifications such as “making bread and [other] pastry”, partial qualification “making short pastry,” partial qualification “making gingerbread” and similar.

All qualifications are maintained in the National Qualifications System. National Qualifications System is a database of all full and partial qualifications. For each of the partial qualifications there were created certain qualification and evaluation standards by the National Institute for Professional Training in cooperation with its social partners and departments of state. The qualification standard is a document which defines what the holder of a particular qualification should be familiar with, and the evaluation standard defines, in the form of professional skills, how the applicant seeking recognition must prove these skills to obtain any of the partial qualifications.

The verification and recognition is carried out by the so-called “authorized persons.” An authorized person is a person who has the authority to verify, by the method defined in the relevant evaluation standard, the accomplishment of the professional competence of the applicant – this means the authority to administer examinations and issue certificates on the recognition of a partial qualification. The authorized person may be any physical or legal person who complies with the conditions set forth by the law.

The fulfilment of such conditions is documented by an applicant to the body which grants the authorization, which is usually the competent ministry which oversees the profession in question. The granting of the authorization is subject to an administrative fee. This fee covers the expenses of the body which grants the authorization related to the granting of an authorization.

Should a citizen be interested in obtaining a certificate of recognition of a partial qualification he/she shall approach the authorized person who holds authorization for that particular partial qualification and to sign up for an examination. Should he/she consequently fulfil all requirements set forth by the evaluation standard the authorized person shall issue to

him/her the certificate on the recognition of that particular partial qualification; such certificate is valid across the country. The examination is subject to a fee and the fee is set to cover the expenses related to the administration of the examination. The specific fee may be found in the evaluation standard for each partial qualification.

The new law thus enables one to obtain a certificate on the recognition of the so-called partial qualification on the basis of the skills and knowledge which were verified in an examination. The significance of the partial qualifications is supported by the requirements of the job market where the employers often do not require their prospective employees to hold a specific achieved degree of education (such as vocational certificate or completed leaving examination [maturita]), but who require employees for particular job positions who are familiar with certain work procedures relevant to such position. The Act 179/2006 Coll. contributes to an increased flexibility, preparedness and applicability on the job market.

Requalifications

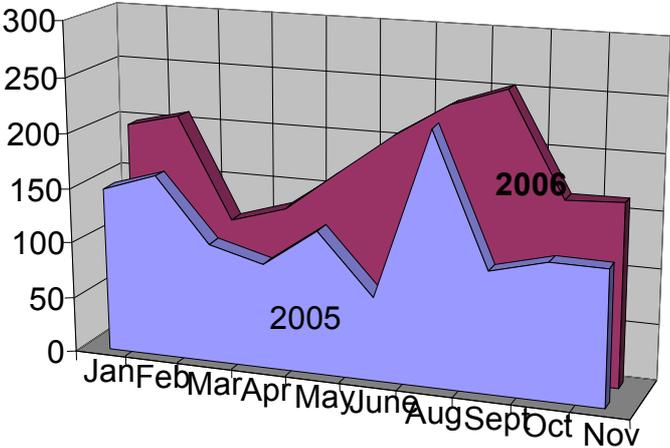
Requalifications are an indispensable part of further education which are focused on the unemployed and employed alike in order that these groups are able to keep or to obtain a new job. In comparison with the EU-15 countries Czech Republic uses the potential offered by requalifications on a very small scale. Only 10% of the unemployed do take part in requalification training courses while in most of the EU countries this ratio is at least twice as high and up to four times higher. The insufficient scope of the requalifications is evident also in the international comparison of the involvement of the unemployed in further education. Similarly, the length of the courses into which the unemployed are signed up is in the Czech Republic significantly shorter than it is usual in other European countries (the number of classes is approximately half the usual number). The weak participation of the unemployed in requalifications is also accompanied by the lack of interest in self-education (only 13.2 % in the Czech Republic care to educate themselves further in comparison with the average of 31.8 % in EU-25 countries), which is, among other, caused by the already low qualification level of these unemployed individuals. This situation makes it more difficult for the unemployed to return to employment and thus it contributes to the increase of the long-term unemployment levels which, as of the end of 2005, affected almost 42 % of the unemployed. The cause of the low number of the unemployed undergoing education is linked to a large degree to their insufficient motivation. Recently, the requalification courses have begun to adapt to a larger degree to the specific needs of the certain groups among the unemployed such as the low qualified and older persons who require a more individual approach in the form of counselling, personalized education methods, support during the studies and integration of the courses with practice. These running processes must be further strengthened and speeded up. The co-participation of the social partners in the creation of the requalification courses is relatively low. The employers often fail to recognize the validity of the requalification education and their readiness to employ persons who underwent requalification courses is often low. This negatively influences the potential success of the integration of those persons who underwent requalification on the job market which, at the end of 2006, moved around 45 %.

Requalifications will change in the future.

Within the framework of the certain systemic projects (from the ESF) which are carried out under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) and Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) in relation to the accreditation of requalification

programs the emphasis will be maintained to view the requalification programs to constitute one of the significant areas of further education. For these reasons a discussion shall be initiated on how to set up the entire system in order to comply not only with the requirements of “accreditations for accreditations,” but also with the public interest in the field of further education. For instance the integration of the requalification courses into the preparatory courses for various partial qualifications under the Act 179/2006 Coll., or into the framework of the systemic project of the MLSA – quality in further professional education and similar would be possible.

Number of applications for accreditations (of requalification programs)



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
■ 2005	149	164	107	94	129	76	227	110	122	122
■ 2006	195	207	117	132	167	205	236	254	163	164

Note: The graph shows a number of applications seeking accreditation in 2005 and 2006. In these two years the Accreditation Committee did not sit in July and in December.

1.1.2. What are the priority goals for ALE in your country?

Czech Republic vision of the adult learning and education:

To provide all segments of the population during their lifetime with the opportunities to obtain and to have recognized those qualifications which are applicable on the job market and to improve the key competences necessary for a full application in work, civil and private life.

The vision for the adult learning and education in the Czech Republic emphasises the economic, environmental as well as social aspects of the benefits of lifelong learning. With respect to these goals it this focuses on the provision of support to the following:

a) personal development

Lifelong education should enable each and every person to develop their abilities according to their capacity and interests and to strive for their application in all spheres of life. Everyone should be allowed to be conscious of their own personal uniqueness without the feeling of threat or supremacy over other in the environment of different nations, languages and cultures.

b) social cohesion and active citizenship

Lifelong education should act as one of the most significant integrating factors which strengthen the social cohesion of the entire society and its environmental responsibility not only by handing over of the shared values and common traditions. Lifelong education has the capacity to significantly even out the opportunities in life, to limit banishment of the disadvantaged segments of the society to the margins and thus to contribute to its stabilization. Lifelong learning may also provide a significant contribution to the education of the judicious, critical and independently thinking citizens who have a sense of their own dignity and who hold the respect for the rights and freedoms of others, and who are able to develop democracy and the civic society.

c) employability

Lifelong education should contribute to the increased employability i.e. the ability to find employment and to apply oneself on the job market not only in the Czech Republic but also abroad – especially in Europe. This requires that the general and specific professional education is oriented to deliver the increased flexibility and the ability to adapt, to promote creativity and initiative, independence and responsibility. Simultaneously, the education should open up the field to innovation and business and as a result to create new employment opportunities.

Chief strategic directions

Chief strategic directions are represented by the priority areas which the Czech Republic will pay increased attention to in the following years.

Recognition, Permeability

To create an open field for lifelong learning including the recognition of the results of informal education and informal learning

Education is being realized in many different forms and methods under a varying set of conditions. Up until the present time only the formal school education has been recognized and certified by documents valid country-wide. However, all other forms of education and learning should also begin to be identified and recognized, commencing with basic school education and ending with expertise acquired in families, communities or at the workplace on the basis of the results of such learning. The recognition of the results of all forms of learning and education will allow for the creation of an open field for lifelong learning where it will be significantly easier to transfer between the individual education sectors so as to stop certain routes of education finding itself in a dead end. The recognition of the results of education without regard to the place where such were obtained will ease the route to further education (e.g. to allow for the exemption of certain types of examinations on the basis of the acquired knowledge and skills) and also to the proof of qualification in relation to job applications (e.g. the professional training will be possible to be complied by manifesting the expertise in the particular professional field).

Czech Republic already took the first steps in this direction. The resolution of these issues is being approached on several levels which need to be further developed:

- *Legal*: On 1. 8. 2007 the new law came into force, the ***Act on verification and recognition of further education results***, which represents a significant step to the emancipation of various routes leading to the obtaining of a qualification. This law sets up a relatively universal system for the evaluation of the achieved education outside of the formal educational system and introduces a uniform, transparent and objective method of the verification of the skills and knowledge attained by an individual person. It enables one to obtain a certification of the recognition of the so-called partial qualification, i.e. of the set of certain skills which would facilitate an application on the job market. The significance of these partial qualifications is supported by the real life requirements where the employers often do not require from the prospective applicants a certain degree of attained formal education but rather a practical proficiency in a set of work processes which are adequate for the performance of a given job. Another effect of the said law is the potential to build up such partial qualifications into a full qualification and the consequent possibility to obtain complete degree of education. In the future it would perhaps be possible to consider further steps which would allow, especially the adult population, to obtain a full qualification necessary for the application on the job market without seeking the elevation of the attained degree of formal education.

- *Systemic*: the ***National Qualification System***, which is established by the above law on the recognition of further education and with the support of the ESF project, should create and administrative and relationship framework for all qualifications recognized on the job market and to allow for the identification, classification and organization of the various results of learning attained by various routes into 8 qualification levels and further into a system of partial and full qualifications. The creation of the national qualification system (NQS) should be understood as an ongoing process of harmonization of the requirements for professional qualification by all interested partners from the sphere of education as well as the sphere of work [application]. In relation to the EQF the existence of the NQS should promote the transparency and recognition of the qualifications obtained in the Czech Republic on the European level including other international recognition.

Equal Access

To promote availability and equal chance in access to education opportunities during the entire lifetime

The availability of opportunities to pursue lifelong learning to all groups of population has a significant influence on the social cohesion. This does not anymore mean only the promotion of equal access, respectively of reducing the inequalities in access to the school education, but also the equal access to opportunities to obtain further education. Czech Republic however belongs into the countries which have problems in both these spheres. International comparison shows a low level of inter-generational mobility, i.e. high dependence of the attained degree of education on the education attained by one's parents and on the social situation of the family. This has significant negative consequences; first and foremost such situation limits the development of talent existence of which must be considered as independent of the cultural and educational background of the family environment. Weak inter-generational mobility in the attained degree of education has its roots in the approaches which are being applied in the Czech educational system on all levels. This concerns especially the system of entrance exams to high schools and universities but also the methods of schooling which is focused on passing of the knowledge. This imposes demands on the home preparation of the child and thus gives priority to children from educated families with higher cultural capital. The initial schooling in schools has certain tendency to reproduce the inequalities arising from such lower cultural and educational environment rather than to balance them out. This continues also in any further education where the attendance is dependent on the degree of education attained in the initial phases.

One of the ways how to reduce these inequalities is namely the introduction of *expanded supply* of educational opportunities. However, this by itself will not lead to a reduction of the differences in participation on the education of individuals from different social groups. Important factor is the *diversity and the availability of the supply of education*, which will motivate all segments of the population with different assumption and interests with regard to the participation in education, on all levels including further education. It is necessary to keep in mind the maximalization of the chances to obtain the best quality accessible education and the through this also the enhanced facilitation of all members of the society.

While in the sector of the initial education including the tertiary education the demand for education is high, the demand for and participation on further education is very low in the Czech Republic. Presently, the further education is taken up primarily by the people with the already high level of initial education and so any further education effectively accentuates the differences in skills which are the consequence of a limited involvement in the school education in the first place. For these reasons the emphasis in *further education* should be conversely placed on providing the second chance and to even out the differences already in existence. Furthermore, any further education must remove the barriers which are related to the disadvantaged position of individuals on the job market, especially with regard to the unemployed, persons in danger of losing their jobs, persons potentially at risk in entering the job market due to some form of discrimination (whether in connection with their age, genders, ethnicity, etc.) or individuals who are not wholly integrated into the job market in the first place. The solution is to create the possibilities so that everyone could, in their adult life, improve the level of their formal education but also to be able to supplement and develop their professional skills in congruence with the changing job market and to maintain their chances for employment.

The important factor is to promote motivation for the adults to seek education; such motivation obviously depends on the education addressing their real issues, and on the ability of the people to apply their own experience and whether they will have the ability to choose when, how and what they would learn. This remains a problem in realization of further education in schools and other schooling institutions where the work with adults often leaves a lot to be desired. It is thus necessary to promote the *education of the pedagogic staff in the use of specialised methods in education and work with the adult students*. This is important because the education should become attractive also for the less educated citizens who until then were excluded from education or participated in it only minimally.

The equality of access to education is inconceivable without specific *measures for the promotion of education of the disadvantaged segments of the population*, namely the handicapped whether by health or socially, the youth and the young unemployed under 25 years of age, older persons, women on parental leave and after the return from the leave, ethnically disadvantaged, immigrants and workers with low or no qualification. Large part of the attention paid to these segments of population is realized by requalification courses organized by the labour offices which however must be expanded and supplemented by additional components. The offer of the educational programs must take into account and respect the individual needs of all members of the said disadvantaged groups. In order that this education becomes more effective the motivational components must be strengthened, put on equal footing with the requalification activities and also expanded into consolidation of the already acquired expertise in the workplace, respectively with the competent counselling, including mentoring and coaching. Analogically, the didactic methods, aids and form of further educations should be more adapted to the resources of those disadvantaged persons. It is necessary to develop innovative methods of instruction, to modularize coursework and provide combinations of different routes, and to interlace the theoretical learning with practical training. Another important element of the education-related offers to the disadvantaged is the individual approach to the clients who utilize the courses to test their expertise acquired beforehand and to develop those skills and knowledge, using individual educational plans, which these clients miss.

A large part of the further education is being organized by the various corporations, whether undertaken at the workplace or externally. Corporations show large differences in their approach to the development of their employees. *Small and mid-sized enterprises* have not only fewer funds to invest into the education of their employees but also these often do not have the necessary know-how in terms of human resources management as well as have problems with planning of the education and its realization. In some of the cases this also applies to larger corporations which however cannot compete in this respect with the large corporations which are foreign-controlled and which utilize all the advantages in education systems, methodology and sometimes also the training and education centers of their mother companies. The employees of the small and mid-sized companies thus have only a limited and difficult access to education. In order to remove these obstacles it will be necessary to provide aid not only in financial terms, to cover the expenses related to the realization of the training, but also a methodological guidance and counselling at the preparatory (concept) stages of such training sessions and to provide assistance in creation of conditions which will enable the workers to participate in such training sessions.

Functional literacy

To develop functional literacy and other key competences including the ability to continuously learn during one's entire lifetime

The equality in education applies not only to the availability of the educational opportunities but also in the development of key competences which enable people to pursue education during their entire lifetime. These include the so-called basic skills or **functional literacy**, which is defined as an ability to participate in the information world. Low levels of functional literacy becomes the factor in the competitiveness of the economy of a given country and its social cohesion as such low literacy levels in certain segments of the population may lead to their marginalization. Functional literacy influences one's ability to learn effectively and thus the entire concept of the lifelong learning

The new requirements of the work sphere which come as the consequences of globalization and the development of new technologies, organization of work and the structure of corporations and which are thus are projected into the new requirements on the qualification of the workers imply new requirements with respect to further **key competences**, which can be characterized in terms of high transferability, i.e. the possibility of their use in new and unforeseen situations. The typical examples of such key competences whose use is similar in various situations and circumstances are for instance the methodological competences – problem-solving, use of information and communication technology, communication competences – foreign languages, writing and verbal skills, personal competences – critical thinking ability to work in a team, ability to learn, self-management, self-control, environmental competences – ability to rise to challenges and meet threats which arise from the environment and in relation to health. An integral part of the key competences is also the so-called financial literacy, i.e. the ability of an individual and households to create family budgets, to select financial products and similar.

These competences are nothing new but represent a new quality which significantly influences the concepts of educational programs. The low level of development of these competences in the adult population must therefore necessarily lead to the changes in the content and methods of education in the initial as well further education.

The very important issue is the development of the **key competences of adults**, and especially of those which were not to developed in the course of their formal education such as information technologies and environmental issues. The level on which these are managed by the adults influences the employability on the job market but also the motivation of the adults to seek further education. Besides the functional literacy, language competences, ability to present, work in teams and similar these competences also include the **use of information and communication technology**. Familiarization of these, especially with respect to the older segments of population should be strongly supported as such competences broaden the potential participation on distant learning (including e-learning) forms of education. In order to develop these key competences in adults there should be a strong emphasis on the development of specific methods and courses (focused primarily on adult applicants for employment and on all disadvantaged groups on the job market), including the preparation of the lecturers, trainers and consultants.

Social Partnership

To promote the congruence of the offer of educational opportunities with the needs of the economic, environmental and social development by cooperation with social partners

The issues related to the congruence of the offered education with the needs of the job market are very broad and in the Czech Republic it has been resolved only by narrow particular projects which are not mutually interconnected and whose results do not serve as a regular source of information which the users on different levels could readily use. This

should change with the establishment of the above mentioned *National Qualification System* whose function should be understood as a continuous process of harmonization of the requirements for professional qualification among all interested partners whether from the educational or work spheres. The activities related to the establishment of the National System of Professions and the National Qualification System should constitute and verify the possibilities of cooperation between the educational sector and its social partners in the form of the so-called sector councils. Sector councils are becoming an important platform for a broader and more systematic involvement of the employers into the lifelong learning and play a significant role in the processes of verification and recognition of the qualifications as discussed above.

Stimulation of the demand

To stimulate the demand for education in all segments of population during the entire lives of the individual participants

In order to motivate the adult population to seek further education the social atmosphere is very important as well as the degree to which the government and its social partners support the professional and special-interest education of the adult population. The financial incentives for the participation of an *individual* in further education need to be focussed on the promotion of the general participation on further education as well as on the promotion of the participation of specific population groups. Only so can the Czech Republic at least achieve the referential values set forth for this area on the EU level. When creating concrete tools it will be necessary to utilize the expertise of the EU countries in which the financial incentives have the form of education coupons, paid time off work, deduction of the expenses into further education from the tax base, and offers of subsidized courses. Financial aid may be granted in a lump sum on the basis of a promulgated subsidy program, or it may be anchored in the relevant legislation.

Foreign expertise must also be utilized with regard to the creation of financial measures which are directed at *corporations*. These must be considered with respect to their advantages and limitations as well as with respect to the application of non-financial stimuli of commercial subjects, in the implementation and obtaining of the standard “Investors in People”, awarding national prizes in regard of company education and similar.

Quality

To promote supply of high-quality educational opportunities

Quality is the substantial dimension of the lifelong education and refers to all its components, i.e. the providers of the education (schools, training institutions), educational programs and also the staff involved (teachers, lecturers). In the area of further education there exists no mechanism which would ensure quality, save for the accreditation procedure for the requalification programs. It is therefore necessary to pay an extra emphasis and provide extra support so as to be able to continuously obtain relevant feedback on the function of the system and its components with regard to the promulgated objectives, and to analyze this feedback and organize necessary changes in the system. The quality must always be ensured and verified with regard to the equality of the chances to obtain education and justice in education.

Ensuring the quality should be based in the *combination of external evaluation and self-evaluation* and on the combination of the formal procedures and informal (experience-based) methods of quality management.

Formal procedures (certification of the knowledge of individuals, accreditation of institutions and programs) are oriented to risks and their prevention. They only attest that the particular components meet the requirements defined in a certain norm in the form of a minimum standard. They however do not attest the achievement of a high or specific quality that is necessary in concrete situations. To improve the quality of these procedures means to ascertain especially the quality and relevancy of the various norms, input and output standards and definition of clear and verifiable objectives. For these reason it is immensely important that the interested parties on the national, regional or local level (according to the nature of such norm) agree on the particular objectives. Only so it can be prevented that standards with conflicting objectives are pushed ahead (such as the concept of RVP and the common part of the state exams [maturita]). Formal procedures are missing especially in reference to further education; their constitution should be linked to the National Qualification System which should play the role of the common output standard.

Decentralized management and support to the establishment of the educational programs which are tailored to local needs legitimately lead to the increased necessity **to monitor the entire system** with regard to the promulgated objectives. Important role is played by the comparative international reviews which provide a valuable feedback with respect to the level of the development of the individual aspects of the lifelong learning in the Czech Republic. While the field of initial education is being monitored in a satisfactory manner, further education sorely needs a monitoring system to be yet established.

A significant role in terms of public control is fulfilled also by the informal methods of quality management (such as references). To these ends, it is necessary to promote various forms of **informal initiatives** which would evaluate the entire spectrum of lifelong learning and its various components from various points of view, and which would bring their users information and decisive criteria and which would contribute to the “culture of quality” generally. A significant role in this respect could be played by the social partners, especially the representatives of the employers, companies or labour offices.

Counselling

To develop information and counselling services

Lifelong learning creates a diverse and flexible system of educational opportunities and thus it is important for its participants that there exists an effective counselling and information system on education and employment where anyone can find their own route to education. At present time the counselling in the Czech Republic in this field is focussed on the grammar school pupils in terms of providing them with assistance in their choice of continued education in high schools or, in terms of providing the high school students with assistance in their choice of tertiary education, or with respect to the unemployed. In both of the preceding cases this counselling is related to fundamental long-term, and also some short-term, decision on education or application on the job market.

In the context of the lifelong learning the people need assistance during their entire lifetime, and employers as well, in order to choose a relevant path of education and to understand the consequences of their choice in terms of education. The basic task is therefore a creation of complex **information and counselling framework available to all segments of the society during their lifetime and also the employers** and such goal should be realized on the basis of interlinking of the existing capacities. An entire range of activities has already been realized, however, and effective cooperation and coordination between the providers of counselling services falling under the departments of MLSA and MEYS must be further

promoted, as well as coordination on the national, regional and local levels. Counselling services being provided are often fragmented and thus it is necessary to promote their cohesion so the clients receive relevant information as well as counselling, or where necessary pedagogic and psychological services.

The individual components of the information and counselling system perform their tasks however the counselling system as a whole is significantly undersized with regard to capacity. The counselling for the pupils and students of the secondary and tertiary levels of education is particularly underestimated, as well as counselling for adults which is in reality provided to the entire public but used primarily by the job applicants and seekers of employment. Thus, the fundamental task in this area is to ***increase the availability of the counselling services.***

Counselling stations which are oriented on adult education practically do not exist and therefore the public makes use of the counselling system focussing on the employment services. It will be a principal task to promote further ***development of counselling and information services directed at education and employment of the adults*** to be available to all. Here, the principal role in this development should be assumed by the Regions. Simultaneously with consolidation of the network of institutions educating the adult population and promotion of the regional opportunities for education, the capacities of the information and counselling services should also be expanded, and these centres should provide their services to all adults seeking information or counsel in connection with their additional education or qualification, or in connection with the change of profession or employment. The work with the job applicants and the disadvantaged groups and the need to improve the effectivity of the requalifications puts heavy requirements onto the scope and quality of these counselling services which just be provided in connection with the needs of the employers. Increased personalization of the counselling services in accordance with the needs of the individual clients requires both the newly prepared counsellors and the new tools, as well as innovative procedures and new forms of cooperation with those organizations which may assume at least a part of the counselling duties.

The availability of the information and counselling services should be further supported by the services utilizing modern technologies. Even though some of the information systems are already in operation it would be beneficial to interconnect them and to simplify them for the users so the information from all such systems is available from one source. An important part is to develop direct counselling services by the means of telephone or e-mail etc.

1.1.3. How is ALE organized within the government? What ministry/s are in charge or involved? Is ALE centralized/decentralized? How?

Please refer to the previous section.

Czech Republic does not have special legislation which would comprehensively solve the area of further education. The most important law which handles the further education is the Act No. 179/2006 Coll., on verification and recognition of further education results (please see section 1.1.1. above). This Act falls under the competences of the MEYS which fulfils the role of the coordinator and methodologically manages the activities of other state departments which play the role of authorization bodies.

Another important piece of legislation is the Act No. 435/2004 Coll., On Employment, as amended (which falls under the competences of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs). MEYS is under the obligation stemming from this Act to grant accreditations to educational institutions and to their educational programs related to requalifications. The conditions for granting the accreditations are governed by the Decree of the Ministry No. 524/2004 Coll., on accreditations of the facilities performing requalifications of job applicants. How this activity is organized by the MEYS is not set forth in any generally applicable legislation, but it is an internal matter of the MEYS to ensure the methods of evaluation of the submitted application for accreditations. In order to undertake the activities resulting in granting of accreditations to the various educational facilities an Order of the Minister of Education, Youth and Sports No. 2/2005 was issued under which the Accreditation Committee for the accreditations of the facilities performing the requalifications (hereinafter the “Committee”) was formed, and which also defines the rights and obligations of the Committee as well as the accreditation procedure and rules of procedure which are defined in its Bye-Laws and Rules of Procedure attached thereto.

Further education is not centralized in the Czech Republic and there are a number of institutions in the Czech Republic which provide courses to adults.

1.1.4. How are the policy and implementation strategies aligned, for example, with:

- **policies in other sectors (health, economy, labour, rural development, etc.);**
Data not available
- **other goals, such as gender equality, social cohesion, active citizenship, cultural and linguistic diversity;**
the system of verification and recognition of the results of informal education and informal learning is the building stone for the system of further education (please see above).
- **the creation of knowledge economies and/or the building of learning societies;**
- **national development plans and strategies; or in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers;**

Strategy for Lifelong Learning

The strategy for lifelong learning (hereinafter the “SSL”) is a document which arose on the basis of a public demand for the comprehensive concept of lifelong learning which would oversee the initiatives directed at the development of human resources in the Czech Republic in the years 2007 – 2015. SSL came into being in accordance with the calls of the European Commission recommending to the member states to intensify their efforts in the realization of the complex, permeable and coordinated national strategies for lifelong learning in the setting of the European context.

SSL is a document prepared by a team of experts drawn from across the spheres of employers, employees, and experts on education and which seeks to define gradually achievable objectives which are directed toward the promotion of a personal development, social cohesion active citizenship and competitiveness of the citizens of the Czech Republic.

SSL was approved by the government of the Czech Republic and adopted by its resolution No. 761 on 11 July 2007. Under this resolution the MEYS was charged to submit to the Czech government by 31. 12. 2008 the implementation plan for the SSL and in cooperation

with other state departments to ensure the realization of such measures as defined in the SSL. The implementation plan is being prepared at present time.

Operational Program Education for Competitiveness

Operational Program Education for Competitiveness (OP EC) is long-term thematic program running under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic (MEYS) under which it is possible to disburse, within the years 2007-2013, financial funds from the European Social Fund (ESF), one of the structural funds of the European Union (EU).

OP EC is focussed on the area of development of human resources by education in all its various forms with the emphasis on the complexity of the system of lifelong learning, creation of the suitable environment for research, development and innovative activities of the participating subjects.

The global objective of the OP EC in 2007-2013 is to develop a learned society for the purposes of improving competitiveness of the Czech Republic through modernization of the system of initial, tertiary and further education, their interlinking into a complex system of lifelong learning and improvement of the conditions in research and development.

The specific goals of the OP EC are represented by the routes which lead to the fulfilment of the global objective:

1. Development and improved quality of the initial phases of education focussing on the improvement of the key competences of its graduates in order to enhance their application on the job market and to increase their motivation to seek further education.
2. Innovation in the area of tertiary education leading to the interlinking with the research and development activities, increased flexibility and creativity of its graduates applicable in cognitive economics, increased attractiveness of conditions underwriting research and development activities and creation of comprehensive and effective tools which would promote innovative processes as a whole.
3. Strengthening the adaptability and flexibility of human resources as the fundamental factor of competitiveness of the economy and sustainable development of the Czech Republic through the promotion of further education both on the side of the demand as well as the supply.
4. Creation of modern, high-quality and effective system of lifelong learning through the development of the system of the initial, tertiary and further education including the interconnection of these individual components into the system lifelong learning.

1.1.5. What are the main development challenges in your country? How are the ALE goals defined in relation to these challenges?

1. Creation of the National Qualification System

In the area of further education the key significance is held by the establishment of the National Qualification System, by the popularization of the system of verification and recognition of the results of informal education (Act 179/2006 Coll.) and the acceptance of this system by the employers.

The National Qualification System is being built within the framework of the OP EC project with a significant active co-participation of the representatives of the employers in the Sector Council.

2. Transformation of the schools into the centres of lifelong learning

With regard to the expected decrease of the number of children in schools it will be necessary to transform the schools into the local centres for lifelong learning. Their task will be to provide consultations and counselling services related to the expanded or strengthened qualification of the citizens. One of the fundamental missions will be to teach the adults that it is useful to pursue education throughout their lives.

The fulfilment of these objectives will be one of the key activities of the UNIV2 project which is realized within the OP EC, and which will also support the system of the verification and recognition (such as promotional campaign, preparation of educational programs etc).

3. Support of the Individual Education of the Citizens – SIEC

The promotion of the development of the lifelong learning in the Czech Republic will be realized through the program of Support of the individual education of the citizens – SIEC (over 4 billion from the funds of the OP EC), which will be providing a non-returnable financial aid to the citizens for language courses, ICT courses and business skills courses. The expected kick off of the project is planned for 2009.

1.1.6. Are there other policies in place that have an impact on ALE?

– National Strategic Reference Framework

The National Strategic Reference Framework of the Czech Republic for the years 2007–2013 (NSRF CR) is a part of the preparation of the Czech Republic for the disbursement of the financial funds which are designated for the realization of the policies of economic and social cohesion in the upcoming seven years.

The National Strategic Reference Framework defines the fundamental strategies and priority areas which will be in the Czech Republic financed from the funds of the European Union in the program period of 2007–2013. Czech Republic may obtain, through the various operational programs which exist under this Framework, nearly 770 billion Czech Korunas in the coming years from the structural funds and the Cohesion Fund.

– Operational Program Human Resources , Employment – under the auspices of the MLSA

The Operational Program Development of Human Resources (OP DHR) is the base for the realization of the support from the European Social Fund in the area of the development of human resources in the Czech Republic in the years 2004 - 2006.

The global objectives of the Operational Program Development of Human Resources is to achieve a high and stable level of employment which is based on the qualified and flexible workforce, integration of the socially excluded groups of the population in connection with the competitive enterprises while respecting principles of sustainable development.

1.2. Financing of ALE

At present time (with the exception of the requalifications and educational activities financed from the structural funds) one of the key obstacles for the entry into further education is the high costs associated with this type of education, especially with regard to the persons in disadvantaged positions on the job market and generally for persons with low income.

Czech Republic expends comparably high financial resources toward the target group of job applicants and job seekers (requalification and other tools and funds of the Active Employment Policy; in 2007 approximately CZK 270 million). With regard to the currently low unemployment levels, which hover close to the “psychological barrier” (4.7 %; *data available from ČSÚ; 6. 7. 2008*), the importance of the evaluation of the system of financial expenditure toward further education by the state continues to grow as well as the necessity to seek new routes toward the promotion of further education.

In the Czech Republic there is no direct and clearly defined promotion in the area of further education (in a similar fashion as it exist with regard to the pension contribution insurance, building savings, education within the formal educational system, etc.). The situation is partially unequal between the citizens of the Czech Republic and legal persons, who may, in certain limited instances, use the costs expended on the strengthening of the qualification of its employees as a tax deductible item.

At present time there is a deficit in the Czech Republic (source: Operational Program Education for Competitiveness; SWOT analysis) in the area of the education of adults, especially in the field of language education, computer literacy and business skills education). This area will be taken care of with the use of direct non-returnable aid provided to citizens, which shall serve as a tool for the increased demand for further education in these given areas. Czech Republic also plans to create such tools that will ensure the financing of further education and to seek, across the broad spectrum of social partners, an acceptable system which will support their participation in the education of

- a) Employers and employees
- b) Self-employed
- c) The unemployed adult population
- d) The disadvantaged groups of citizens (to be specified for instance with reference to the Act on Employment)

In order to fulfil these objectives the following tools shall be used (according to the specification of the individual groups)

- a. tax incentives
- b. direct financial aid (by the state) of the selected educational activities (non-returnable financial aid)
- c. system of multi-faceted resources of financing for the promotion of selected educational activities

1.2.1. Public investment in ALE

a) + b) As the area of further education is not directly supported by the state within the integrated educational system in the Czech Republic this share cannot be determined. The largest amounts directed toward these purposes are the funds from the Active Employment Policy (for the prevention and the solution of the unemployment) which reached almost CZK 270 million from the state budget. Another significant source of public money into the area of further education are the funds co-financed by the ESF where, for the years 2007-13 (respectively 15) there are earmarked funds in approximately CZK 11 billion. The competent authority which is responsible for the systemic development of the system of further education is the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Aid to the unemployed, funds for the prevention of unemployment is disbursed by the MLSA.

c) Within the framework of decentralized/local governments the funds are earmarked only for the purposes of internal education. Usually, no form of financial aid is provided toward these types of education.

d) Czech Republic does not maintain accurate records of funds of the regional and supranational character. An exception is of course the ESF funds where the MEYS has in its competence the funds of OP EC (for further education approximately CZK 11 billion.) and the MLSA has under its competence the funds of OP LZZ (for further education – especially professional training approximately CZK 15 billion).

1.2.2. Foreign bilateral/multilateral donor investment in ALE

Czech Republic does not have any information on the activities of this type. These activities are not being realized centrally. The only exception is the funds disbursed from the community program Lifelong Learning Programme, Grundtvig, where for 2008 these activities are to receive CZK 40,000.00.

1.2.3. Support to ALE from private/corporate sector.

In cooperation with the companies the CVTS survey indicated for 2005 that the total costs for further education facilitated by the companies will reach (including travelling expenses and diets etc.) CZK 6.6 billion. GDP for 2005 had been indicated at CZK 2 984 billion (representing 0.22 % of the GDP).

1.2.4. Civil society support to ALE (e.g. religion institutions, unions, NGOs)

Czech Republic does not have any information on the financial flow with respect o these activities.

1.2.5. Learners/individuals contributions to ALE

Surveys of these areas, especially the AES survey will be available only in 2009.

2. Quality of Adult Learning and Education: Provision, Participation and Achievement

2.1. Provision of ALE and institutional frameworks

2.1.1. Institutions responsible for managing and co-ordinating ALE at national level

The largest part of the responsibility for the sector of further education is borne by the Ministry for Education, Youth and Sports.

The Ministry for Education, Youth and Sports grants accreditations for requalification courses designated for job applicants plus it also grants accreditations to courses for further education of pedagogic staff, and accreditations in the area of spots.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs grants accreditations for courses educating social service workers and oversees labour offices; accreditations of further education of medical staff fall under the competences of the Ministry of Health and accreditations of the courses designated for education of the public administration officers and local governments fall under the competence of the Ministry of the Interior.

2.1.2. ALE programmes in the Czech Republic

The Ministry for Education, Youth and Sports grants accreditations to approximately 1 500 – 2 000 requalification courses each year. Besides these there are also courses which do not have accreditation.

Comparison of the outcome data of the accredited and non-accredited programs according to some of their key characteristics. From the point of view of the structure, a number of the requalification courses copies other courses on the market (the only difference lies in better offerings in the language and technical courses). It is also obvious that the structure of the funding is different and that the requalification courses are often longer in terms of the numbers of hours.

From the point of view of average attendance the other courses on the market are somewhat fuller than the requalification courses; however, the difference hovers around the limit of a statistical mistake. Larger average attendances of the non-accredited courses are also communicated by the regional institutions in the regions with lower unemployment levels, stronger attendance is indicated by the subjects with offices in those regions which show higher unemployment levels (institutions from these region also offer a clearly longer hourly subsidies for these courses). Larger average attendances in accredited courses are also declared by the various schooling facilities, and on the contrary larger attendance of non-accredited courses is typical for all other subject with the status of physical persons, companies, associations and other state institutions.

Czech Republic does not have at its disposal a comprehensive database of programs for further education.

2.1.3. Linkages between and non-formal approaches

Promotion of informal education in the Czech Republic:

- The UNIV project (Recognition of the Results of the Informal Education and Learning – 2005-2008)
- Act No. 179/2006 Coll. on verification and recognition of further education results (in force as of 1.8.2007)

The systemic project of the Ministry of Education UNIV (Recognition of the Results of the Informal Education and Learning within the school network) is financed by the ESF and the state budget of the Czech Republic. It allows all adult applicants to obtain a speedy addition to their partial or full qualifications and the consequential better application on the job market. During the course of this type of education they have a chance to have recognized, thanks to the standardized evaluation standards, that knowledge and those skills which they acquired during their lifetime informally outside of the school system. It is thus easier and faster to obtain such new partial qualifications or even a vocational certificate in the profession of their choice. Besides that the applicants do not have to commute into the centers and the school capacities in the region will be utilized, especially in schools where the numbers of the pupils enrolled in the initial stages of education will decrease.

This principle of recognition of the already acquired competences has been allowed by the new Act No. 179/2006 Coll. on verification and recognition of further education results which is in force since last August. The UNIV project is managed by the National Institute for Professional Education in 8 regions at this time. A total of 78 high schools and higher professional schools – centres of adult learning have signed up into the first three-year phase of the project (in the Region of Karlovy Vary, South Bohemia, Olomouc, Pardubice, Ústí, Zlín, Liberec and in the Moravskoslezsky Region). Schools created two education programs under the UNIV framework each, and these courses were created by the teams of five participants hailing from the ranks of teachers who were involved with the project and motivated within the project budget.

During those three years there were 310 educational seminars for the pedagogues from high schools – the future lecturers of the adult clients. The project processed the total of 4 550 direct participants and there were 138 educational programs and 172 training and methodology materials created. Besides that the project trained 269 guides and appraisers of the project. The pedagogues at schools were broadly educated so as to be able to prepare modular educational programs which could mutually interlink. A great experience was also the training in the psychology of adult “pupils”.

In the last months of the project a total of 54 from 78 of the involved schools took part in the pilot verification of the created concrete educational programs which are the main product of the entire project. This pilot verification processed, at schools and at the workplaces of their social partners, a total of 210 candidates. These candidates were recruited from the ranks of the former students who prematurely left the school system but who continued to work in the profession, and also those who did find employment in their profession, and also from the numbers of the workers of the social partners / cooperating firms. The pilot verification processed 47 partial qualifications in several sectors. Ten of the involved schools also already acquired the authorization as educators using the newly created and verified educational programs in the pilot phase.

Act No. 179/2006 Coll., on verification and recognition of further education results

The Act No. 179/2006 Coll., on verification and recognition of further education results, creates conditions for new approaches to recognition of qualification. The fundamental principle is that the citizen may have their actual knowledge and skills formally recognized without regard to whether they acquired these in schools, in a course, in practice or by self-education. The law allows for the acquisition of a certificate of recognition of the so-called partial qualification on the basis of an examination administered to verify a particular

knowledge of skill. All qualifications are managed through the National Qualification System, which is a database of all partial and full qualifications. The acquisition of the certificate is beneficial especially for those citizens who did not finish schools or who work in other professions than they received training for.

2.1.4. ALE and certification and national awards

Further education has its foundation in the created National System of Qualifications and in the verification of the qualification in accordance with the Act No. 179/2006 Coll., on verification and recognition of further education results, as amended. This area significantly participates in the systemic base for all other components of further education. The system creates a register of recognized qualifications, allows for their verification by examinations administered by authorized persons and strengthens the possibilities of communication between the state administration and the employers. Two years after the Act 179/2006 Coll. was adopted there were 339 partial qualifications prepared (at this moment there are 70 qualifications approved).

Within this system there were 19 Sector Councils created which serve as a platform for the recognized representatives of employers to formulate their qualification needs (with the help of the standards) toward the responsible representatives of the state.

2.2. Participation in ALE

2.2.1. Statistical data on participation

The key indicator for the sector of further education is currently the rate of the participation of the adult population in this type of education. At present time, in comparison with other EU member states, the situation in the Czech Republic is not entirely satisfactory.

The sole regular indicator of the rate of participation of the adult population on further education is the “Lifelong learning – percentage of population between 25 and 64 years participating on the education and training”.

The lifelong learning applies to individuals between 25 and 64 years who stated that they took part in education or training in four weeks preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator is comprised of the total population in the same age group, with the exception of those who did not answer the question regarding the “participation on education or training”. The denominator and the numerator are derived from the EU Labour Force Survey. The collected information refer to any education or training whether applicable or not to the respondents current or future employment.

The European Union benchmark for 2010 has been set at 15%.

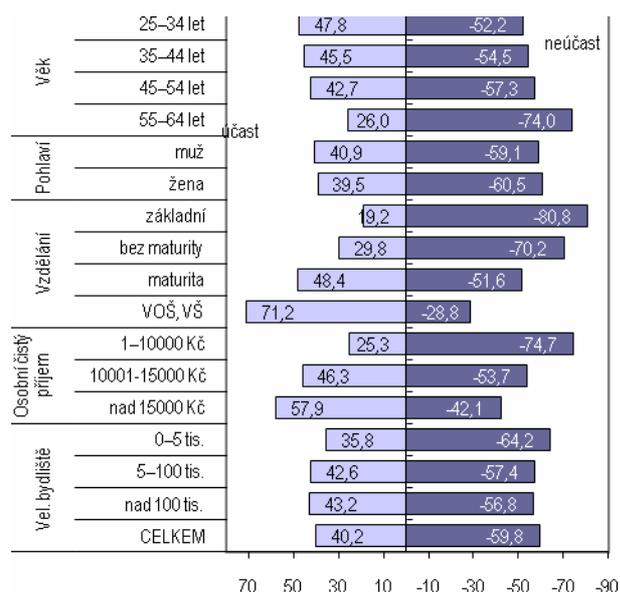
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
EU (27)	7.2	8.5	9.3	9.7	9.6	9.7
Czech Republic	5.6	5.1	5.8	5.6	5.6	5.7

According to the overall results of the survey 40 % of the respondents took part in some type of education in the last 12 months and 60 % of the respondents did not take part in any form of education nor pursued an individual course of self-learning. Figures 6 and 7 show the basic characteristics of the population who participate in some form of education (on the left), and those who do not (on the right).

According to the survey, men and women took part in education on the comparatively similar levels, at around 40 %. With age the readiness to pursue education slightly declines (48 % in the 25–34 age group, 43 % in the 45–54 age group), and sharply declines before the retirement age (26 % in the 55–64 age group). The rate of the people pursuing education rapidly grows in dependence to the higher degree of an already attained education (30 % for those who attended vocational schools not offering leaving exam certificate [maturita]; 71 % among the people who attained maturita and more). Similarly, the participation in education grows with income (25 % with income under CZK 10 000, 58 % above CZK 15 000). From the perspective of the size of the municipality it can be deduced that people from municipalities with 5 000 and less participate less, and in terms of Regions the lowest readiness to undergo any additional education is apparent in the Vysočina, Pardubice and Ústí Regions, other Regions being at approximately same level.

More often, people who are active economically pursue education than those who are not active (not taking into account the students involved in the formal round of schooling). These include especially the people in higher positions (71.1 % of the management staff, 73.8 % higher professional positions). Entrepreneurs educate themselves somewhat less (around 50 %) and least education is sought by the people in manual positions (23 % skilled workers, 24,7 % unskilled workers). Low participation is evident in the groups of the unemployed and economically inactive, and both the housewives (25.6 %) and pensioners (15.2 %).

Overall participation / absence form education I. (%)



věk = age (years)

pohlaví = gender (men, women)

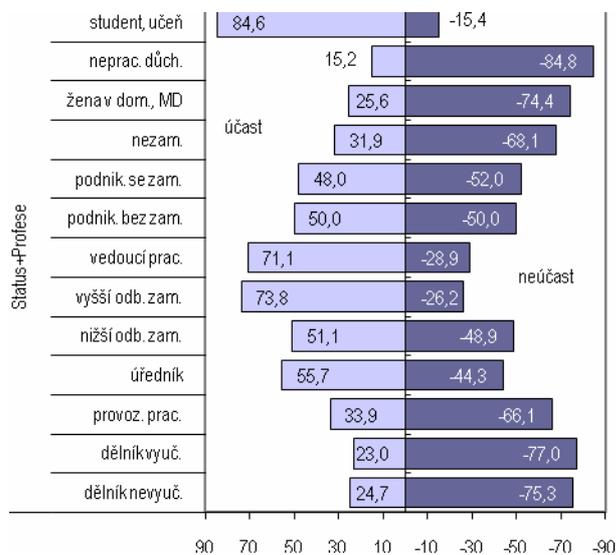
vzdělání = education (basic, without leaving exam, with leaving exam, higher and university education)

osobní čistý příjem = net personal income (nad = above)

vel. bydliště = size of municipality

celkem = total

Overall participation / absence form education II. (%)



student, učeň = student, trainee

neprac. důchodce = pensioner (not working)

žena v dom., MD = housewife, maternal leave

nezam. = unemployed

podnik. se zam. = entrepreneur with employees

podnik. bez zam. = entrepreneur without employees

vedoucí prac. = management

vyšší odb. zam. = higher-ranking professionals

nižší odb., zam. = lower-ranking professionals

úředník = white-collar workers

provozní prac.. = operative worker

dělník vyuč. = skilled worker

dělník nevyuč. = unskilled worker

účast – participation

neúčast – non-participation

Social groups with low participation on further education

From the perspective of employability and the potential application on the job market the risk groups include especially those segments of society which do not pursue any education whatsoever. These include almost three quarters of the people above 55 years of age, i.e. those prior to retirement. Involvement of this segment in further education, especially in informal education is very important as their careers still do have certain mileage before them in connection with the retirement age being postponed and their preservation on the job market is dependent on the acquisition of new competences. A barrier for these people will certainly be the low level of functional literacy, i.e. low skills in terms of the work with information and potentially with information and communication technologies. It is also clear that this segment suffers from insufficient motivation to participate in further education as well as low readiness of the employers to finance their education with respect to the approaching end of their active economic life.

Participation in education also depends on the attained level of education. It is evident that people who did not take a leaving exam [maturita] participate in further education in a limited extent. Those with basic schooling and those who attained higher education without taking the leaving exam however do not show much difference: almost 80 % of the basic education level individuals and 70 % with higher education who did not take the leaving exam fail to participate in any further education. The significant barrier in terms of insufficient knowledge and skills necessary for further education comes fully into force with respect to these two groups as well as the acquired dislike of education in general. It is the leaving exam at higher schools which creates the divide and which evidently equips a man with the motivation and competences toward further education. In cases of completed tertiary education this becomes entirely evident as the graduates do become conscious of the need of lifelong learning and its benefits as well as having an easier access to it.

Another significant barrier is the personal income. Three quarters of the people with the net personal income under CZK 10 000 do not participate in further education. It may be assumed that this level of income is related to the low level of education attained and application in profession which require little or no qualification. In this survey it became obvious that two thirds of the operative workers and three quarters of the skilled and unskilled workers do not participate in further education. These segments of the society, which already face the hurdles of insufficient motivation and insufficient competences toward further education, which are the barriers which are primarily related to the insufficient degree of attained education, also face the financial barriers. Large number of the informal education courses must be paid for by their attendees and these costs related to informal education, such as internet access, use of libraries, purchase of textbooks etc. are demotivating.

Another group with low participation in further education are the unemployed. Two thirds of the unemployed who do not pursue any education represent the potential of untapped workforce. These shows to be a large problem as these people gradually loose working and personal competences which their used to have and who may as a result falls into the trap of long-term unemployment.

Czech Republic belong among the countries which have, in comparison, a low rate of the unemployed enrolled into requalification and high rate of the long-term unemployed. The unemployed also face the accumulation of all the above mentioned barriers which are related primarily to low functional literacy, insufficient motivation and financial barriers, and which result in the high risk social marginalization of this group. Education financed in these instances from public funds may help these groups with maintenance of their activity and the minimum basic competences for their functioning within the society without understanding these main criteria of the effects of such requalification to necessarily be the return of these persons to work.

Another significant group which does not pursue any further education are almost three quarters of the housewives, or women on maternal or parental leave. Even though the gender does not represent a barrier for the participation in further education (according to this survey around 40 % of the men and equally around 40 % of the women do participate), this segment of society must be paid special attention to. They do represent the potential workforce which should maintain and improve their knowledge and skills during the period of their economic inactivity. They represent a very diverse group, especially with respect to attained education, however the main barrier here is represented by the obligations related to the looking after the family as well as in connection with sometime financial barriers that are in existence in relation to the subordinate station of the women in the household and their limited income.

A barrier to the access to further education, although not as serious as the ones described above, may also represent the place of the residence of the applicant. No participation is recorded for almost two thirds of the population resident in municipalities of 5 000 inhabitants or less. These also represent a diverse group of people. It may be assumed that there are less people resident there who attained the full tertiary education than in the cities above 100 thousand inhabitants, although the main barrier will probably be the difficult travel and the related financial and non-financial costs which would come into existence in connection with the participation in the informal education courses. It may also be assumed that these areas do experience an inferior availability of the means for informal education such as internet, libraries and so on.

From the above mentioned we may deduce that the typical non-participating individual is one facing the barriers in terms of access to further education, one who attained only the basic level of education, between 55–64 years old and his/her income is less than CZK 10 000, is economically inactive and resident in municipalities with 5 thousand or less inhabitants.

The results of the Adult Education Survey (AES) which is organized by Eurostat and in the Czech Republic realized by the Czech Statistical Bureau are currently being processed and will be available to the public in the mid 2009.

2.2.2. What existing surveys/studies have been undertaken on non-participation and groups that are difficult to reach? Please give main results in terms of who the excluded are, why they are being excluded and what kind of support can be given.

Reasons why people do not participate in further education are most often related to their attitudes and motivations. The most significant reasons [not to participate] are given as follows: feeling that the attained education is sufficient, or potentially will not bring about the desired benefits, high financial cost, and lack of time. Factor analyses discovered that the people who do not actively pursue education could be divided into two main groups: (1) people who would pursue further education but who for the reasons of “real barriers” (of

external nature, or related to what is on offer) do not realize such interests; (2) and people who are not interested in further education due to their own attitudes or personal circumstances.

Ad 1) **Groups seeking further education** can be characterized by viewing their education as insufficient, not being satisfied with it, and have interest to further their education. People feel the so-called objective (actual) barriers which are outside their power. These include the cost of the courses; lack of information o what is being offered and insufficient supply of the courses.

This group includes mostly various [low-level] officials and the low-ranking professionals and people between 35–44 years of age. Same barriers also influence people with secondary education who completed the leaving exams [maturita], and with average income in the range of CZK 10–15 000, people from smaller towns (below 5 000 inhabitants) and more often women than me. These social groups do need solutions which are oriented to financial aid, availability of information and counselling. A part of this group is comprised of the unemployed who are however also influenced by these barriers as well as by resignation in terms of further education (please see below).

Ad 2) The second group of people who are interested in furthering their education could be divided into the following three categories, **who**:

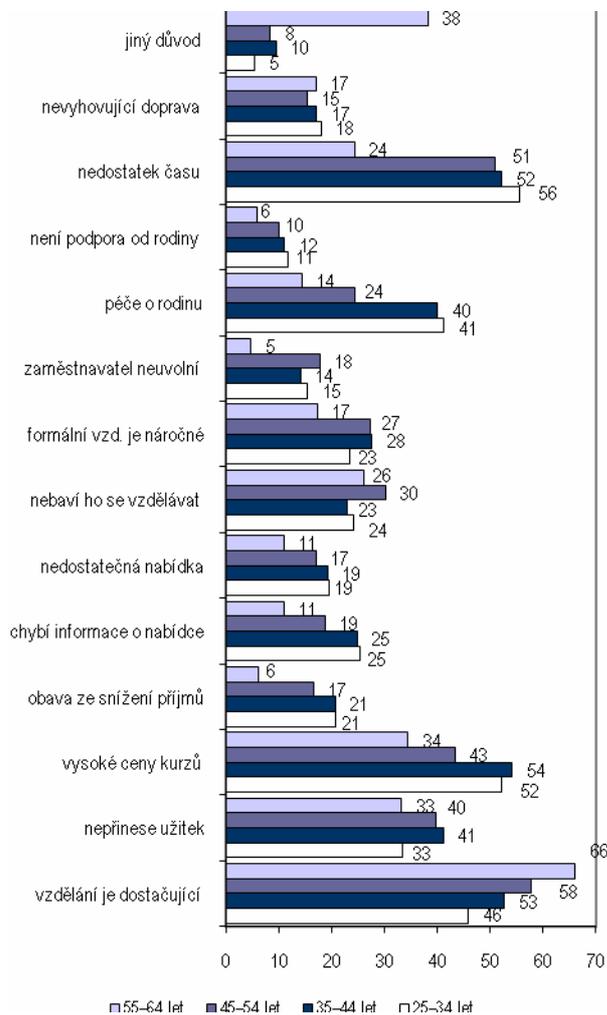
2.1 **resign** in terms of further education. This subgroup would under certain conditions want to pursue some form of education but these people primarily do not believe that education would bring about any benefit. On the other hand, neither they do believe in themselves that they would be able to manage to participate. Education is connected mainly with negative experiences, they do not care for education, and education overall seems to be quite difficult. This group includes most of the unemployed and the unskilled as well as skilled workers. These people often participate in the secondary job market, fluctuate from job to job and have low income. Education which they underwent does not provide a way out from this situation.

2.2 **cannot participate** in further education due mostly to lack of time and due to their obligations related to the care for the family/household. This group would like to participate as it considers their education as insufficient, the real barriers do not play a major role, but the time for education cannot be simply found. These reasons appear primarily in relation women but often enough in younger age groups of 25–34 across the genders. This is the time of starting up the families and of the care for the young children, which is also the most exacting period in the life of the family in financial terms. The group which cannot pursue further education due to the lack of time includes entrepreneurs who employ employees, higher-ranking professional workers and white-collar workers. The lack of time is rather a result of intense work.

2.3 **do not need to seek education**, as they consider their education as sufficient – this group does not usually feel any real barriers in terms of access to the education, but is not in general interested in further education because their attained education seems to be sufficient. This group includes members of management, higher-ranking professional workers, and people with university education. It must be mentioned however that these attitudes are only espoused by approximately 30 % of the respondents belonging to these groups who do not participate in further education. Otherwise this subgroup shows the largest participation in further education as a whole (more than 70 %).

The analysis of the investigation into the habits of individuals in this respect demonstrated that that besides the real barriers connected with finances, organization of the professional and family life, quality of the further education on offer and with counselling, the largest problem

is the lack of readiness to pursue further education. These attitudes stem from the feeling of complacency as well as resignation. The negative attitudes of the population and the real barriers thus create a closed circle from which the Czech Republic should find its way out the sooner the better unless it plans on offering only a cheap workforce in the future.



jiný důvod= other reasons

nevhovující doprava = inconvenient transportation

nedostatek času = lack of time

není podpora rodiny = lack of family support

péče o rodinu = care for the family

zaměstnavatel neuvolní = no time off from employment

formální vzd. je náročné = formal ed. too demanding

nebaví ho se vzdělávat = does not care for education

nedostatečná nabídka = insufficient supply

chybí informace o nabídce = lack of information on courses

obava se snížení příjmů = anxiety over reduced income

nepřinese užitek = will not bring benefits

vzdělání je dostačující = sufficient education

let = years

Organization of the requalification programs which are designated for the persons from the disadvantaged groups (the long-term unemployed, people disadvantaged by age, social background or family situation) have been since the beginnings a part of the active employment policies. Besides the persons with health handicaps who are subject to a large degree to specific set of measures the labour offices do tend to enrol these categories of job applicants in most instances into normal requalification courses; there are even quota recommended by the MLSA for individual categories of applicants which are to be [subject] to the APZ tools, including requalification enrolment. Educational programs directed at certain problem groups of job applicants are to a larger degree realized.

The priorities of the new operational programs Human Resources and Employment and Education for Competitiveness do reflect large the emphasis on the groups of the disadvantaged persons and thus it may be assumed that new programs will be created which will be focussed on the development of professional and transferable competence of these disadvantaged groups.

The results of the Adult Education Survey (AES) which is organized by Eurostat and in the Czech Republic realized by the Czech Statistical Bureau are currently being processed and will be available to the public in the mid 2009.

2.2.3. What existing surveys/studies have been undertaken on learner motivation?

At present time a team of experts is in the process of completion of the Implementation Plan for the Lifelong Learning Strategy in the Czech Republic and the issues of learner motivation are one of the themes which this document will address. Currently, no results of any surveys in this field are available.

2.2.4. Which measures have been undertaken to mobilize learners and to increase participation?

Certainly, one of the possibilities would be financial aid. At present time it is impossible to provide the participants in the requalification courses realized and financed through the active employment policies with support services in the necessary scope. The exceptions include the travel cost, accommodation and the board for the course participants, or potentially accompanying persons, which could be reimbursed to the participants by the labour office as costs related with the requalification. More room in this respect is provided by projects realized and financed under the ESF. Experience from these projects must however be analyzed first and to propose systemic measures on how to interconnect the support services with the educational activities in order to ensure their function even after the financing from the structural funds runs out.

2.2.5. Are specific groups targeted by ALE provision? Which ones?

These issues are addressed in the currently prepared Implementation Plan for the Lifelong Learning Strategy in the Czech Republic which will be submitted to the government for approval before the end of 2008.

2.2.6. Are there benchmarks in relation to participation in place? If yes, which ones? If not, what would be realistic benchmarks for participation in your context?

Czech Republic did not set any specific benchmark, it relies on the 15% benchmark for the EU for 2010 in terms of the indicator “Lifelong learning – percentage of population between 25 and 64 years participating on the education and training,” which however Czech Republic expects not to fulfil.

2.3. Monitoring & evaluating programmes and assessing learning outcomes

Assessing learning outcomes is crucial for any educational undertaking. Measuring the outcomes of adult education is, however, complex as outcomes relate to a wide range of aspects such as personal development, socio-economic and cultural factors and involves both competences and attitudes. For this reason this section should cover a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation perspective taking into account the programmatic and individual level.

2.3.1. Do you assess the learning outcomes of ALE programmes (national, regional and local community perspective/programme perspective) and learners’ achievements (learner perspective)? If so, what methods do you use?

In the Czech Republic there are no assessment procedures on learning outcome of ALE in place at this time.

2.3.2. What tools and mechanisms are used to monitor and evaluate programmes to ensure good quality?

Czech Republic does not have data relevant to this point available.

2.3.3. To what extent are the results used for a) legislation, b) policy formulation, and c) programme development?

Due to the absence of the assessment procedures not results can be discussed in this respect.

2.3.4. Are benchmarks in relation to outcomes of ALE in place? In your context, what would be realistic benchmarks related to outcomes?

There is no special benchmark set for the Czech Republic at present time.

2.4. (Adult educators/facilitators' status and training)

The status of the educators of adults is not in the Czech Republic anchored in legislation. Any person older than 18 years who substantiates his/her good standing may begin to operate as an entrepreneur in this field. There are no qualitative criteria which condition these activities. Carrying out the activities as an individual is likewise not subject to any special conditions. Preparation in terms of a formal schooling is available at universities within the framework of certain liberal arts professions or (most often) within the framework of the program for specialized pedagogy (andragogy – [education of adults]). There are a number of educational activities within the system of informal education which provide various types of certificates which are however not recognized on the territory of the Czech Republic or interconnected with the initial education.

Verification of the quality of the lecturers who educate adults is carried out on voluntary basis in the form of certification. In the EU the predominant form of certification at present is carried out in the sense of the standard ČSN EN ISO 17 024 which is based on the national accreditation criteria complying with this norm.

Certification of the lecturers in the Czech Republic is not at present very widespread. To date, there have been only certain partial activities realized in the Czech Republic (such as certified course for the lecturers and managers of adult learning programs – AIVD; the up-to-date list of certified lecturers at www.aivd.cz includes 251 names).

The possibility of the utilization of the personnel certification according to the above mentioned ISO standard was brought about by the systemic project entitled “Quality in further professional education” (QFPE). The outcomes of the QFPE project include the promotion procedures and provision of general information (information system) on the certified persons, their expertise and experience. Due to the recency of the completion of the project it would be somewhat premature to assess the outcomes of this project whether by the experts or by its clients.

As indicated above, without regard to the fact that several activities were realized in the field of the further education none of these activities were fully functional and the new measures taking place (such as the QFPE project) have only been prepared to further implementation. For these reasons it is necessary to support and create such new measures so as the accreditations of the educational programs and certification of personnel carrying out such programs would attest to the competent use of financial funds from the state budget and that such programmes were utilized in the broadest scope possible.

2.4.1. What educational qualifications/training are required for adult educators/facilitators? What continuing/in-service training measures are in place?

There is no special qualification required for the educators of adults in the Czech Republic at present time. Some of the institutions (or their associations) require further education and have built a system of acquisition, deepening and updating of the qualifications of the educators. In order to commence operation as a commercial educational institution it is necessary to demonstrate good standing, provide identification of the subject [who will carry out the activities] and be at least of 18 years of age.

2.4.2. Is adult education considered as a specific profession, and are there higher education institutions providing such qualifications?

The university system in the Czech Republic provides education in the field of “andragogy”, which is a specialization within the area of pedagogy which prepares professionals for the education of adults. These programs are often focussed in the knowledge and skills of the persons who will in the future educate adults (especially the bachelor degree courses). This specialization is taught by at least three universities in the Czech Republic: by the Charles University in Prague, Jan Amos Komensky University (private institution), and Palacky University in Olomouc.

2.4.3. Please Indicate the proportion of adult educators/facilitators in relation to the overall number of teaching personnel in your country.

Unfortunately the numbers of the educators of adults are not available in the Czech Republic.

2.4.4. What are the terms of employment and remuneration in ALE?

This profession is not monitored in the statistical records related to employment and unemployment. For this reasons the data are not available. In the fourth quarter of 2007 median value of the monthly gross salary in the Czech Republic reached CZK **28 400** and oscillated between CZK 18 500 and 48 100.

3. Research, Innovation and Good Practice

3.1. Research studies in the field of adult learning

3.1.1. Which key studies in adult education have been undertaken in your country recently (within last five years)?

3.1.2. What were the major questions addressed and prompted by these studies?

3.1.3. What are the key findings?

3.1.4. To what extent did these findings inform policies and practice? How did they influence practice? Please, give examples.

Impact of ICT on the Continuing Education (2006)

The study is a part of the research project provided by the National Training Fund and financed by the Ministry of labour and Social Affaires.

Title of the project: Knowledge Society – Requirements on Human Resource Skills and Continuing Training

Major questions:

The study deals with the impact of ICT on the forms, content and access to continuing education. The analytical part explores the degree to which households in the CR have a PC and the Internet connection – both in terms of comparison with the EU-25 average and in terms of differences between household types, locations and regions. Attention is also paid to digital literacy expressed as computer and Internet literacy. Two approaches to measuring the levels of these two literacy types are used: an indirect approach – the use of a PC and the Internet, and a direct one – self-evaluation of individual competencies. Digital literacy is examined with regard to the age, educational attainment and position in the labour market. Furthermore, the study deals with the use of the Internet in education and the use of PCs by teachers.

Key findings:

- The necessary prerequisite for the use of ICT in learning is the easy access to the corresponding technical equipment. Even though the levels of the deployment of computer equipment and internet access are rising, the households in the Czech Republic continue to fall behind the average of EU-25 countries. In 2005 the number of household in the Czech Republic computers reached only 52 % of the EU-25 average, and in terms of internet access only 40 %. Czech households with computers rose in 2006 to 36 % in comparison with 24 % in 2003; internet access was installed in 2006 in 27 % of the households, in 2003 only in 15 % of the households.
- Another necessary prerequisite for the use of ICT in education is digital literacy. In 2005 the number of people who never used a computer in the Czech Republic reached

50 %, the average in EU-25 is only 34 %; the internet was not used at least once a week by 74 % of the population in the Czech Republic, in the EU-25 only 57 %. Low computer literacy is reflected on the lower participation in the educational courses which are focussed on the use of computers. In the Czech Republic, the courses that take at least 3 hours were attended by 33 % of the population in the 16-74 age group, the average in the EU-25 is however 41 %.

- Use of the internet by adults for educational activities does belong into one of the most frequent purposes to which it is used. The most active segment of the population in this respect is the youngest age group (25-34 years), where 10 % use the internet in connection with their studies, 21 % in connection with education connected with their employment and 20 % for education from personal interest. The least active is the 55-64 age group which is caused especially by the fact that an insignificant percentage of people in this age pursue additional education in schools but also by lower internet literacy and by limited access to the internet which is then reflected in limited use of the internet in education out of potential personal interest. In the use of the internet for educational purposes this age group is on comparable level with the other age groups.
- Use of the internet for education is closely related to the level of attained education; persons with tertiary education use internet for educational purposes the most, whether out of personal interest or in connection with their employment, but in connection with studies the most active are the persons who took the leaving exam [upon leaving secondary schooling], which is most probably linked to the expansion of their education.
- The use of ICT in education is dependent not only on the equipment of the households but also of the institutions providing education with the relevant technical equipment and the digital literacy of the educators themselves. Pedagogues in the Czech Republic who are active in grammar, secondary and higher professional schools used computers for the presentation or demonstration of the discussed material in 2006 in a larger degree than what is the average in EU-25. In the Czech Republic the computer was used for these purposes by 71 % of the pedagogues, the average in EU-25 was 63 %. The data relevant specifically to further education are not available; nevertheless we may assume that in the mentioned types of schools the computer was used in the same manner and frequency during the education of adults.

To what extent did these findings inform policies and practice:

The study is a part of the research project commissioned by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The results were disseminated via publications, conferences, websites.

Inequalities of adults access to continuing education (2006)

The study is a part of the research project managed by the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the CR (part of the project focused on continuing education is provided by the National Training Fund) and financed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Title of the project: Unequal Access to Education: the Extend, Sources, Social and Economic Consequences, Policy Strategies

Major questions:

The study focuses on an analysis of participation of individual social groups of adult population in CVT according to the different forms of education (formal, non-formal and informal education). It contains an international comparison where the position of the CR

among the EU-25 is identified. Answers are being sought to the question of the roles of gender, age, the level of initial education, position in the labour market and the nature of the region where the individual lives, and of the extent to which these factors are reflected in inequalities in access to education in the CR and the EU. The second part of the study presents a more detailed analysis of specific groups and selected aspects of participation in continuing education and training, which is based on the use of Czech data sources. Attention is paid to the influences related to the nature of employment and self-employment.

Key findings:

- The participation of the adult population in CVT in the CR is not in line with current European trends. In EU-25 there are on average 42% of people aged 25-64 involved in some form of continuing education – in the CR it is only 29 %. The CR lags behind not only developed EU-25 countries, but also most new member states. It ranks among the bottom group of EU countries for participation of adults in *formal education* (1.4%). The age groups over 45 virtually do not participate in this form of education in the CR at all, and there is also a very low proportion of people with upper secondary qualifications participating in formal education – only 1.1%, which is five times less than the EU average.
- The *non-formal education* of adults takes the form of participation in various training courses at the workplace as well as outside it. On average 17% of the population in the EU take part in this form of education and some 13% in the CR. The lagging behind the EU average here is not so severe as in other forms of education. However the length of courses is considerably shorter in the CR compared to other EU countries. The rate of participation of women in non-formal education in the CR is lower than that of men. This is particularly true of the youngest and oldest age groups (25-34 and 55-64 respectively). This pattern is not common in the EU. It points not only to a relatively lower willingness of Czech women of a typical age for having a family and before retirement to embark on further learning, but also to the negative attitudes of employers who organise a major part of non-formal training. On the other hand, self-education is pursued almost equally by Czech women as Czech men.
- *Retraining of unemployed* is less extensively implemented in the CR compared to developed EU countries. Of the total number of unemployed only less than 10% undergo retraining, while in most countries it is two to four times as many. The causes of this low proportion are linked to a large degree to the negative attitudes of the job seekers, but there are also financial, organisational and legislative difficulties in the implementation of an active employment policy.
- *Informal education* consists of a wide variety of self-education modes. On average in EU-25 terms every third adult pursues self-education, while in the CR it is every fifth person.
- To improve the low participation of adults in continuing education, it is necessary to create an environment that would stimulate both the demand for continuing education and the supply of suitable programmes. Important also is the expansion and enhancement of information and counselling services. On the supply side the challenge is the quality of the programmes which is not, with the exception of school education and retraining, subject to systematic evaluation. It is necessary to inter-link the existing activities concerned with accreditation and certification into a coherent system.

To what extent did these findings inform policies and practice:

The study is a part of the research project commissioned by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The results were disseminated via publications, conferences, websites.

Barriers to participation in continuing education (2007)

The study is a part of the research project managed by the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the CR (part of the project focused on continuing education is provided by the National Training Fund) and financed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Title of the project: Unequal Access to Education: the Extent, Sources, Social and Economic Consequences, Policy Strategies.

Major questions:

This study aims at the analysis of barriers which hinder individual social groups' access to continuing education. Analysis is based on the results of individual survey provided among the Czech adult population (2,987 persons aged 25 to 64) in 2005/2006.

In terms of employability and the ability to succeed in the labour market, people who do not participate in any form of education at all are in particular at risk. Therefore the survey was aimed to identify these risk groups according to their labour market position, gender, age, level of education, place of residency, personal income and professional status.

Key findings:

- Factor analysis was used for identification of differences and similarities in non-participation of individual social groups in continuing education. This analysis revealed that there are four basic groups of people who are not participating in education. The first group represents the people who are interested in continuing education but are not realising this interest because of "actual barriers" (these barriers have external character and are connected mostly with first category of reasons, i.e. lack of information, insufficient training courses supply and financial constraints). The second group represents the people who are not interested in continuing education because of lack of time or difficult family situation. Third group involves people who think they do not need further training, and last group represents the people who have completely given up on continuing education.
- An analysis has shown that individual social groups face barriers that are interrelated and their combination constitutes a specific situation that hinders their participation in continuing education. This specific combination of factors must be taken into account when designing the policy tools. In addition to actual barriers related to finances, balancing one's working and family life, the quality of available education courses, and guidance services, a large problem is unwillingness to participate in continuing education. This unwillingness can result both from a self-complacency as well as resignation. Combined with real barriers, the population's negative attitudes thus create a vicious circle for which the Czech policy should find an effective escape as soon as possible. In view of the fact that a different combination of factors is typical of each social group, policy measures must respect these specificities if they are to be effective.

To what extent did these findings inform policies and practice:

The study is a part of the research project commissioned by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The results were disseminated via publications, conferences, websites.

Support of elderly people employment (2005-2007)

Major questions:

Research ordered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs was aimed to describe and evaluate current and expected conditions as concerning older people employment in a wide context, including the issues of life-long learning. The project was led by Research Institute of Labour and Social Affairs, and National Observatory of Employment and Training was particularly involved in the parts related to education and training. These parts of research assessed different approaches to support older workers' training as a precondition for preserving their employability in the labour market. It provided an overview and evaluation of current conditions in the Czech Republic creating both legal framework and programme support for further education and training of adult population, especially older workers. Special attention was paid to policy support and levers that have been implemented in foreign countries including description of good examples.

Four surveys were carried out, all including also items related to adult learning: (i) Questionnaire survey focusing on the attitudes and experience of individuals aged 15 to 74; (ii) Questionnaire survey focusing on the attitudes and experience of older employees (aged 50-64); (iii) Questionnaire survey focusing on the attitudes and experience of employers; (iv) Qualitative survey among experts at labour offices

Key findings:

- Low participation of older workers on education is influenced both by the insufficient support of employers and low interest of older workers. Participation as a result of these two factors depends further on the age, level of education attained, job performed, size and branche of the employer. Key barriers are low motivation and self-confidence. Motivational aspects are underestimated in the re-qualification courses for the unemployed. Courses specifically designed for the older people should be provided – better connected to practical training in the workplace.
- In general, employers do not consider older workers as un-attractive workforce, but they see serious insufficiencies in their qualification level and in their willingness to continuously update their knowledge and skills. About a half of the employers estimate the ability of older workers to cope with the quick development in their profession as low. The insufficient qualification is seen as major problem, even more serious than health condition problems or salary or working time requirements of older workers. However, on the other hand, the willingness of employers to invest in older employees' training gets quite low after the age of 55. The care of older workers therefore should be compensated by financial incentives that can grow with higher age of the employee.
- The absence of continuing education system is considered as the main insufficiency of the Czech education policy towards older workers. The study therefore outlines the possible ways and tools that could be implemented in the CR for system support of older workers, especially financial and non-financial tools influencing individuals, employers as well as training providers. Each potential policy tool is assessed as concerning possible odds and drawbacks.

To what extent did these findings inform policies and practice:

The research was conducted following the order of Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to explore and describe the situation. All the outcomes including recommendations for policy were delivered to the Ministry. It can be assumed that it probably serves as the background material for present decision making process, but so far (august 2008) no apparent measures related to the research outcomes have taken place.

Innovating companies' approach to human resources development (2004-2005)

Title of the project: Knowledge Society – Requirements on Human Resource Skills and Continuing Training

Major questions:

- Are there differences among individual type of innovating companies (i.e. strategic, irregular, modifying, adoptive) in their approach to human resources development (HRD)?
- Do innovating companies apply systemic approach towards determining training needs
- Do innovating companies evaluate the training quality?
- Do innovating companies assess the training outcomes?

The researcher - National Training Fund in cooperation with the research agency MEDIAN conducted the survey in 2004/2005. A total of 327 fully completed questionnaires were received.

Key findings:

- Innovating companies (IC) pay greater attention to the development of their employees than the average. Only 3% of innovating firms did not train their employees during the previous year but more than one third of all companies.
- Approach to human resources development has a relatively strong correlation to the type of innovating firm. The more important innovation is for a company, the more attention is paid to training. The most active are strategic IC, i.e. firm where the innovation is a key factor in competitive strategy, internal research and development are performed systematically.
- Education via professional courses regardless of form was focused primarily on technicians (ISCO 3), followed by professionals (ISCO 2). The least (almost equal for both categories) amount of intensity was focused on courses for less demanding positions (ISCO 4-9) and for senior officials and managers (ISCO 1). Companies prefer training in the CR to training abroad, in-house training to training outside the company.
- The level of engagement of IC declines at the higher stages of the systematic approach towards determining training needs. Only 3% of IC have not defined the requirements for qualification, knowledge and skills for individual job positions. These are companies with a small number of employees. About 7% of IC do not perform regular employee assessment; and a total of 13% of IC do not determine the gap the position's requirements and the employee's capability. A full third of IC companies does not elaborate individual development plans. The most active in this systematic approach

are strategic companies; least active are adoptive companies (i.e. companies where innovations are introduced by adopting innovations developed by the other companies).

- Besides type of IC, companies' approach to determining training needs also depends on company size. The survey revealed that (a) the larger the company, the larger the share of companies which are realising the individual steps for determining training needs, (b) the larger the company, the smaller the difference in the share of individual types of innovating companies, (c) the gap between medium-sized companies and large companies is smaller than the gap between small companies and medium-sized companies.
- Not all innovating companies which provide employee training assess its quality; around one third of companies do not do it. The most diligent approach to quality assessing of training is found again with strategic IC, on the other hand again adoptive IC are the most lax. Companies use especially questionnaire survey among course participants or tests of acquired skills/knowledge or inspection during the course.
- Nearly one fifth of IC (20%) do not assess the training outcomes. The most active are again the strategic IC, the less active again adoptive IC.

To what extent did these findings inform policies and practice:

The study is a part of the research project commissioned by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The results were disseminated via publications, conferences, websites.

Other projects

Comparative analysis of trends and development possibilities of continuing adult education in context of the European integration (2008-2010)

Examination, identification and analysis of decisive trends and possibilities of continuing adult education in context of the uniting Europe. Identification of system (conceptual, didactical and organizational) tools leading to utilization of the analysed trends for creation of possibilities for further development of adult education including contribution to professionalism of adults' educators (formation of a competencies model of lecturers and their professionalism within the system for specialized education).

Adult education in various stages of the life cycle: priorities, opportunities and possibilities of development (2004-2008)

The project deals with adult education in the framework of life-long learning. It maps and analyses the situation of the educational offer and needs of the Czech adult population, both generally and in particularities, as in view of dominant life roles.

The research of possibilities of systematic introducing of distance or combined form of study within the further education of teachers (2001-2003)

The research into possibilities of systematic implementation of distance or combined form of study in further education of teachers. The aims of the research is a comprehensive analysis of the existing system for further education of the teachers, comparison with systems used in selected European countries, exploring of the up-to-date offer of courses and study programmes, finding of the subject matters for up-dating and extending of the offer and creating of the new distance education products for further education of teachers, and finally

verifying that suggested conception is justified, in a field study among experts from the universities and outside of them.

3.2. Innovations and examples of good practice

3.2.1. Policy formulation, financing, teaching/learning methods

In 1999 an Outline of policy in the area of education was presented for public discussion. This resulted in the National programme for the development of education, the so-called White Paper, based on which the Long-term plan of education and development of the education system was prepared by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy – MŠMT*) in 2002 as a key strategic document. It is an instrument for ensuring coherence between state policy under the responsibility of MŠMT and regional policies in a situation where major responsibilities for governance and decision-making have been delegated from the state to regions. Following from the Long-term plan at state level, Regional long-term plans for the development of education were drawn up by regions (14) in 2003. The School Act (*Školský zákon*) commands the MŠMT (as well as the regions) to develop long-term plans once every two years when the progress made is assessed and the plans may be adjusted. The Long-Term Plan published in 2005 focused on education policy in the European context, taking particular account of the Lisbon objectives and lifelong learning concept. Long-term plans for the Czech Republic (*Česká republika – ČR*) are approved by the government and discussed in Parliament.

Concerning tertiary education, the Czech Government adopted the ‘**Higher Education Reform Concept**’ in 2004 (updated in 2005) which is aimed at the development of structure and quality of higher education.

The **Human Resources Development Strategy** for the Czech Republic, which was adopted by the government in 2003, sets out the main directions and recommendations for the development of continuing education. At regional level the councils for human resources development (*rady pro rozvoj lidských zdrojů – RRLZ*) were formed as a regional bodies with advisory and co-ordination functions.

The ČR’s **National Reform Programme for the 2005-2008**, which sets out the main national objectives concerned with the Lisbon strategy implementation, was adopted in 2005. The programme reiterates the priorities set out in previous documents and integrates them into more coherent units which relate to the economic- and employment strategy. As regards education it stresses curricular reform, enlarged access to tertiary education and transferability between its levels, support for co-operation between employers and educational institutions, links between initial and continuing education (accessible for all), expansion of CVET in enterprises and an increase in information literacy levels.

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

• Curricular reform

This is primarily based on a focus shift from memorising facts and acquiring branch-specific skills to the development of transversal „key skills“ as well, such as work with information and information technologies, foreign language and communication skills and others, and on contacts between schools and the labour market. This trend is reflected in a two-level development of curricula, where national curricula (*rámcové vzdělávací programy*) will be

binding nationwide for a specific level and field of education, school-based curricula (*školní vzdělávací programy*) will allow schools to shape their distinct profiles, and to meet the needs of students and regional labour markets. In 2007, national curricula for the first set of IVET programmes has been finalised and given to the public discussion.

• **Ensuring quality, monitoring and evaluation of educational outcomes**

The relatively extensive autonomy of schools will be ensured by a systematic external and internal evaluation of educational outcomes. A coherent system of monitoring and evaluation of schools will be developed with the use of external evaluation and the introduction of a system for quality care based on self-evaluation and student assessment. Beside this, a reform of completion of upper secondary education is under development. Final examinations in vocational programmes ISCED 3C will be enhanced by rendering all their parts more objective (this concerns the written, oral and particularly the practical part of final exam, in which social partners should cooperate extensively). Reforming the *maturita* examination (ISCED 3A) will mean the introduction of a two-part examination, consisting of a nationwide part and a profiling/vocational part. A national wide part of the examination will be centrally administered and evaluated in three general subjects: Czech language, foreign language and optional subject (one of the following subjects may be selected: mathematics, the essentials of human sciences, the essentials of science and technology, the essentials of IT). The profiling/vocational part of the *maturita* will be set by individual schools, which will also be responsible for its implementation and evaluation.

• **The development of integrated information and counselling system in education**

The aim is to expand the school based services by integrating the present pedagogical-psychological counselling and career guidance services. Counselling standards have already been adopted for the purpose of quality assurance. A system for the provision of information about the situation of school leavers in the labour market is being developed to serve the needs of career guidance.

• **Ensuring equal opportunities in education**

The objective is to develop an integrative education system which takes account of children with special learning needs, socially disadvantaged children and gifted children. Mainstream schools are beginning to co-operate closely with special schools which are gradually being transformed into methodological centres. Measures and schemes are being implemented to support the education of Roma and immigrants and to eliminate pathological disorders.

• **Increasing the professional standards and social position of teachers**

The objective is to increase the quality of teachers, to prevent the ageing of pedagogical staff and to support their involvement in reform processes in schools. One important step was the adoption of the law on pedagogical staff (No. 563/2004) which links the continuing training of teachers to a career system. Work on a professional standard is under way defining the competencies for the practice of the teaching profession and the ways of their acquisition. Teacher training schemes are being implemented in relation to the introduction of curricular reform and support for innovation in teaching.

• **Support for the development of tertiary education**

The main objectives of the higher education reform are to complete and assess the transition to the three-level structure of higher education (bachelor's, master's and doctorate), support the establishment of public non-university higher education institutions, promote assessment of higher education institutions, support their internationalisation, their research and development as well as their share of lifelong learning programmes. The reform priorities are

implemented through the Long-term plan for the development of education, science, research, artistic and other creative activities of higher education institutions (for the period 2006-10). The long-term plan covers three areas: internationalisation, quality and excellence of academic activities, and the culture and quality of academic life. To carry out relevant projects, higher education institutions can receive state grants, possibly supplemented by EU funds.

As tertiary professional schools (*vyšší odborné školy – VOŠ*) are an integral part of tertiary education, compulsory accreditation of their programmes has been introduced (ISCED 5B). Programmes at ISCED 5B level are accredited by newly created Accreditation Commission for VOŠ. Moreover the VOŠ schools can apply to have their bachelor programmes (ISCED 5A) accredited and thus become public non-university higher education institutions. Programmes at ISCED 5A level are accredited by Accreditation commission for higher education institutions.

• **The development of CVET as part of lifelong learning**

The priority is to set up a coherent legislation regulating this sector, to increase investment in HRD and participation of people in CVET, to introduce mechanisms for quality assurance in CVET, and to finalise the development of the counselling/information system including databases of providers. All of these aims are in conformity with the EU policies resulting from the Lisbon strategy and covered by the umbrella of the European concept of LLL and the development and implementation of its instruments and tools in national conditions.

As for the CVET development, a law on validation and recognition of the outcomes of CVET (*Zákon o ověřování a uznávání výsledků dalšího vzdělávání*) has been adopted (2006) and its major provisions became effective on 1 August 2007. The law creates a framework for the recognition of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) acquired through non-formal and informal learning with awarding the respective formal qualifications (certificates with nation-wide validity). Thus the law will make it possible for learners to acquire a generally recognised certificate of competence (specified in the respective qualification and assessment standard) regardless of how it was acquired. To obtain the certificate, those interested have to take an exam with an authorised commission (or individual). A register of full or partial qualifications which can be validated and recognised as per this law, along with the relevant qualification and assessment standards, will be part of the National System of Qualifications (*Národní soustava kvalifikací – NSK*) which is under development as the core element of the Czech national qualifications framework.

The system framework for the links between IVEC and CVEC is the National Qualifications Framework, the position of which is also confirmed by the key and umbrella document, Lifelong Learning Strategy in the CR (*Strategie celoživotního učení*). The strategy, approved in 2007, is a comprehensive concept of lifelong learning and the basic document for other sectional and partial concepts and policies in this area. It gradually sets attainable objectives that can be also supported from European funds during the programming period 2007 – 2013.

The stepwise development and implementation of the aforementioned main reform changes in the Czech non-tertiary E&T, i.e.

- curricular reform including reform of the final exam and Maturita exam in initial E&T,
- development and implementation of the NSK (NQF) and the institutional networks and procedures for the validation and recognition of prior learning in CVET as part of LLL,
- development of a counselling and guidance system and a quality assurance framework in the overall E&T system,

has been organised by the MŠMT in co-operation with National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education (Národní ústav odborného vzdělávání – NÚOV) in a coherent series of system projects co-funded by ESF.

Recently, the first phase (2005-2008) of the following projects has been terminated:

- in connection with curricular reform (initial E&T):
 - QUALITY 1 – reform of the National final examination (*Národní závěrečná zkouška – NZZ*), aimed at adapting Final examination in VET programmes with apprenticeship certificate (ISCED 3C) to the two-level curricular conception, similarly as it had been done before in case of Maturita examination (ISCED 3A);
 - PILOT S – an implementation project aimed at supporting VET schools providing ISCED 3C and/or ISCED 3A programmes in their new task of designing school-based curricula (*školní vzdělávací programy*);
- in connection with CVET and LLL (non-initial adult education/learning):
 - NSK – „The development of the National qualifications framework supporting links between initial and further education (NQF)“, aimed at developing the general model of the NSK (National register of Qualifications) and designing particular qualification and assessment standards for full and partial qualifications (in this phase at ISCED 3C level only);
 - UNIV – „Recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the network of schools providing adult education“, a pilot implementation project complementary to the NSK project, aimed at (1) networking schools providing adult education and (2) developing and piloting procedures of recognition of prior learning as per the Act on validation and recognition of the outcomes of CVET (with use and empirical verification of the standards designed in the NSK project);
 - VIP Career – Education, Information, Counselling and guidance, a project aimed at improvement of pedagogical-psychological counselling and career guidance at schools (including setting up counselling centres at schools that are in charge of the Institute of Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling) and developing the Information System on the Labour Market Success of School-Leavers (ISA).

For the next ESF planning period (2008-2013), continuation of some of these system projects (esp. NSK 2 and UNIV 2) is planned for, as well as the Concept project, aimed at elaborating and (if appropriate) modifying the Lifelong Learning Strategy in the CR and preparing its implementation.

3.2.2. Mobilization of learners, involvement of learners in programme design, emergence of learners as partners

In principle, mobilisation of learners is a part of the aforementioned provisions both in initial E&T and adult learning/education (especially CVET). It can be sub-divided into

- education to autonomy and age-adequate personal competency in all roles and situations one has to cope with (as a goal of personality development and its support through all educative action and as a source of internal motivation of persons, a.o. as learners) and
- enrolment mobilisation of potential learners through intended action of incentive system (external motivation of individuals and target groups).

Consequently, all aforementioned provisions can be seen as factors/tools contributing mostly to internal or external learning motivation respectively.

As internal motivation is concerned, it can be stated that

- the essential of all introduced reform changes is effort for a shift to education to autonomy and personal competency (that is why not only competence-based education and learning with focus on both transversal and branch-specific competences as learning outcomes is supported but also activating conceptions, forms and methods of teaching-learning process and counselling and guidance with situation- and age-adequate support of autonomous and creative problem solutions are preferred) and
- these changes are preferred to changes of the overall architecture of the E&T system (see Annex) which is, in principle, convenient from both legal and pedagogical point of view (see Annex).

As external motivation (enrolment mobilisation) is concerned, it can be stated that

- the initial E&T and qualification system is functioning comparatively well mainly due to its characteristic overall path and outcome structure which, however, is not intended to ensure close links between particular occupations and branches of E&T preparing for one or more occupations (the fact that several graduates of VET programmes, even of those at ISCED 3C level with apprenticeship certificate, do not work in a branch they had been prepared for points to a strength rather than a weakness of the Czech IVET system, and this strength of IVET is to be conserved),
- the issue of matching the labour market demand and supply or preventing skills shortages and mismatches cannot be effectively solved by large-scale VET enrolment campaigns and representatives of sectors and/or individual employers should adopt more effective ways and means of covering their work force needs (tailored guidance and training of individual persons both within IVET and CVET in co-operation with VET schools and other VET providers, in-company training combined with validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning, etc.).

The described complex of running and/or prepared changes in VET (both IVET and CVET) is aimed at enabling this more promising way of HRD within LLL (acquiring more general or not too specific competences for social integration and employability within formal E&T incl. IVET in combination with tailored guidance and training of individuals in co-operation with employers already within IVET as well as within subsequent CVET).

Involvement of learners in programme design has been possible since long ago in the ČR (as individualisation of educational programmes or individual study plans within formal E&T incl. IVET), however, the above tailored guidance and training of individuals in co-operation with employers has not been very frequent yet. Emergence of learners as partners seems to be partially a generality which cannot be specified and (if appropriate) implemented without more detailed context.

3.2.3. Why are the above listed examples considered as innovations in your country?

The question is not very appropriate, as a quite coherent complex of reform changes has been described which forms a complex system innovation as a whole.

4. Adult Literacy

Functional literacy describes the ability of the people to adequately process information which they come into contact with. Monitoring of functional literacy does not mean whether an individual can read, write or compute but whether he/she is able to find information in the

document that he/she read, to compare and differentiate it from the similar but different information and whether he/she can apply this information correctly in subsequent work. These abilities are further divided into three basic components:

- **Literary literacy** refers to the ability to work with information contained in coherent and continuous text, i.e. ability which is necessary to comprehend and utilization of the information such as in newspaper articles, novels, poetry, reviews and similar.
- **Document literacy** refers to the ability to work with information which are set or presented in some standard structure or form i.e. to the comprehension and use of information in forms, questionnaires, payslips, graphs, tables, schemes and maps.
- **Numerical literacy** testifies on the abilities to work with numbers, how to choose and correctly use various mathematical operations in texts, tables, graphs and to correctly interpret them. An example could be balancing of a cheque book, calculation of interests on loans and their repayment, filling out order for goods and similar.

While in the field of literary literacy Czech Republic is about the average (17th from the 25 countries), in the area of the numerical literacy we belong to the very top of the monitored countries (4th from the 25 countries). In document literacy we occupy a position in the better half (10th from the 25 countries monitored) (*source: SIALS Survey*).

5. Expectations of CONFINTEA VI and future perspectives for ALE

It is obvious, regardless of the data coming from statistical surveys undertaken by Eurostat, that the Czech Republic is in the field of further education and adult education only at the starting line and thus any confrontation and potential cooperation with other countries in the world is entirely desirable. A summit on international level and comparison of the situation in other countries is fundamental in order to achieve any improvement of the sector in the Czech Republic.

Besides the international exchange of information, Czech Republic also expects an analysis of the ALE throughout the world, definition and delimitation of global trends and guidance toward their potential realisation.

The discussions and information on the themes of approaches to innovation, motivation and correct path of development and achievement of defined objectives will also be welcome.

We expect that CONFINTEA VI may in its own way identify the individual steps and the correct direction for the implementation of national strategies (Czech Republic is currently in the process of preparation of the Implementation Plan for the Lifelong Learning Strategy). CONFINTEA VI should emphasize the importance of the adult education and learning and to strengthen the general awareness of its exigency within the framework the further social and economic development of the entire world.

Annex

Ministry for Education, Youth and Sports: www.msmt.cz

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs: <http://www.mpsv.cz>

Institute for information on education: www.uiv.cz

National Training Fund: www.nvf.cz

Czech Statistical Office: <http://www.czso.cz/>

National Institute for Professional Education: <http://www.nuov.cz/>

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