

Vocational education and training in the Czech Republic

Thematic Overview

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Table of contents

01	General policy context – framework for the knowledge society	5
0101	Political and socio-economic context.....	5
0102	Population and demographics	5
0103	Economy and labour market indicators.....	6
0104	Educational attainment of population.....	7
02	Policy development – objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities	8
0201	Objectives and priorities	8
03	Institutional framework – provision of learning opportunities	11
0301	Administrative framework	11
0302	Legislative framework for vocational education and training.....	13
0303	Role of social partners.....	15
04	Initial vocational education and training.....	17
0401	Background to the initial vocational education and training system and diagram of the education and training system	17
0402	IVET at lower secondary level.....	21
0403	IVET at upper secondary level (school-based and alternance)	21
0404	Apprenticeship training	24
0405	Other youth programmes and alternative pathways	24
0406	Vocational education and training at post-secondary (non-tertiary) level.....	24
0407	Vocational education and training at tertiary level.....	25
05	Continuing vocational education and training for adults.....	28
0501	Background information on continuing vocational education and training	28
0502	Publicly promoted CVET for all	32
0503	Training for unemployed people and others vulnerable to exclusion in the labour market.....	33
0504	CVET at the initiative of enterprises or social partners.....	34
0505	CVET at the initiative of individual.....	36
06	Training VET teachers and trainers	38
0601	Types of Teachers and Trainers in VET	38
0602	Types of Teachers and Trainers in IVET	39
0603	Types of Teachers and Trainers in CVET.....	42
07	Skills and competences development and innovative pedagogy	45
0701	Mechanisms for the anticipation of skill needs	45
0702	Bridging pathways and new educational partnerships	46
0703	Renewal of curricula	47
08	Validation of learning – recognition and mobility	49
0801	Validation of formal learning – general concepts and schemes	49
0802	Validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning	51
09	Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment.....	53
0901	Strategy and provision.....	53
0902	Target Groups and modes of delivery	57

0903	Guidance and counselling personnel.....	58
10	Financing – Investment in Human Resources	60
1001	Background information concerning financing arrangements for training	60
1002	Funding for initial vocational education and training	61
1003	Funding for continuing vocational education and training, and adult learning	64
1004	Funding for training for unemployed people and other groups excluded from the labour market.....	66
1005	Perspectives and issues: from funding to investing in human resources.....	67
11	European and international dimension – towards an open area of lifelong learning	71
1101	National strategies related to policy priorities, programmes and initiatives at EU level.....	71
1102	Impact of Europeanisation/internationalisation on education and training	72
	List of abbreviations.....	74
	List of acronyms	75

01 General policy context – framework for the knowledge society

0101 Political and socio-economic context

The Czech Republic (*Česká republika - ČR*) came into being in 1993, as a result of a split of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic. The ČR is a parliamentary democracy and the head of the country is the president. In 2004 the ČR became a member of the European Union. It is a member of the North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). As regards its administrative system, the ČR has since 2000 been divided into fourteen administrative units called regions (*kraje*) (NUTS 3). They are governed by regional authorities: Regional Assembly (*Zastupitelstvo kraje*) is elected by citizens and has a decision making power. Regional Council (*Rada kraje*) is elected by the Assembly and has an executive power. It is headed by regional governor (*hejtman*).

0102 Population and demographics

The Czech Republic (*Česká republika - ČR*) covers an area of 78 900 km² and the population was 10.2 million in 2004. Following the change of social system in 1989, there was a steep decline in the birth rate, which since the mid-1990s has hovered at a minimum level in European as well as global terms. In recent years the number of births has been growing slightly, but the birth rate remains far below the reproduction rate (the number of births per one woman of child-bearing age was 1.28 in 2005). There are long-term positive trends as regards life expectancy (in 2005, life expectancy for men was 72.9 and for women 79.1). The low number of births has resulted in a natural population decline, which was only partially set off by migration. The population in the ČR has been declining since 1994. As late as 2003, after nine years, an overall increase in population occurred, but only thanks to raising immigration figures (in 2005 the population growth was about 0.3%).

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

Population ageing will have consequences to education and training systems. The role of adult education and training will increase considerably. On the other hand, due to demographic decline, schools (especially basic and secondary schools) will face the problem of low numbers of young students. This process already started and secondary VET schools are supported by national and regional authorities and by European structural funds to develop their capacity for adult education.

Population structure by age groups

Age group	Population		Population structure (%)	
	2004	2025	2004	2025
0 – 24	2 892 928	2 319 205	28.3	22.7
25 – 59	5 311 130	5 044 361	52.0	49.4
60 +	2 016 519	2 853 634	19.7	27.9
Total	10 210 577	10 217 200	100.0	100.0

Source: Population Projection of the CR up to 2050. ČSÚ 2003. Own calculations.

0103 Economy and labour market indicators

The structure of the Czech economy changed considerably after 1989. The proportion of agriculture and industry has decreased and, conversely, the proportion of services has grown. However, as compared to the EU-25, the Czech Republic (*Česká republika* - ČR) still shows lasting structural disproportions. The proportion of industry and construction in terms of gross value added and employment is significantly higher in the ČR than in the EU-25. On the other hand, the figures for the service sector are lower in the ČR. The importance of the service sector has been growing constantly. However, the importance of industry has risen slightly in recent years, mainly due to the manufacturing industries where foreign companies operate.

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

	Gross value added				Employment			
	EU-25	ČR			EU-25	ČR		
	2004	1995	2000	2004	2004	1995	2000	2004
Agriculture	2.1	4.6	3.9	3.3	5.0	6.0	5.2	4.4
Industry and construction	26.5	39.9	38.5	37.9	27.9	39.9	39.9	39.3
Services	71.5	55.5	57.6	58.8	67.1	54.1	54.8	56.3

Source: EUROSTAT – Structural indicators and Labour Force Survey (employment in 2nd quarter), (24.4.2006), own calculations.

The rate of employment in the Czech Republic is still higher than in the EU-25, but it has been declining, with slight oscillations, since 1989. Since the 2nd half of the 1990s this decline has been combined with increasing unemployment and a growing number of economically inactive people (the rate of economic participation of the population decreased from 61.5% in 1995 to 59.4% in 2005). Compared to the EU-25 the ČR shows a larger difference between the rate of employment of men and women, and this difference has been hovering at a stable level.

Employment rate (15-64 age group, %)

	EU-25	ČR		
	2004	1995	2000	2004
Total	63.3	69.4	65.0	64.2
Men	70.9	77.9	73.2	72.3
Women	55.7	61.0	56.9	56.0

Source: EUROSTAT – Structural indicators (24.4.2006), own calculations.

The unemployment figures fluctuation in Czech Republic in the transformation period differed considerably from that in other countries in transition because of delay in restructuring of the Czech economy. The rate of unemployment in the ČR started to grow considerably only as late as 1997 (until then it was around 4%). Unemployment reached the highest level (according to the ILO definition) in 2000 (8.7%). Although after 1999 the economy entered a growth stage, the more favourable economic situation did not result in a major decline in unemployment which oscillated and amounted to 8.3% in 2004. In this period enterprises restructured their employment and increased labour productivity. At present the dynamics of the economic growth, which was 6% in 2005, begin to affect the rate of unemployment which dropped to 7.9% in 2005. The differences in the rate of unemployment between men and women are greater in the ČR compared to the EU-25. There

is growing unemployment in the ČR in the age group up to 25 – it exceeded the EU-25 level in 2005.

Unemployment rate (% , ILO/EUROSTAT definition)

	EU-25	ČR		
	2005	1995	2000	2005
Total	8.7	4.0	8.7	7.9
Men	7.9	3.4	7.3	6.5
Women	9.8	4.8	10.3	9.8
< 25 years	18.5	..	17.8	19.2

Source: EUROSTAT – Structural indicators and Long-term indicators (24.4.2006).

Public expenditure on education as a proportion of GDP decreased in the ČR from 4.6% in 1995 to 4.0% in 2000. Since 2000 there has been a slight increase in this proportion which stabilised at 4.4% (2002). (in the EU-25 the proportion is higher – 5.2%). Although public expenditure per one pupil/student has been growing steadily, the level is still approximately twice as low as that in the EU-25 (57% in 1999 and 55% in 2002) (Source: EUROSTAT, Structural indicators 24.4.2006). There is a considerable imbalance as regards expenditure per student in tertiary education. While the index of student number increase was 162 compared to 1995, the index of expenditure increase was only 103.

0104 Educational attainment of population

The educational attainment of the Czech population (aged 25-64) shows a considerably lower proportion both of basic ISCED levels and tertiary education. On the other hand, there is a very high proportion of the population with secondary education (ISCED 3). The low share of those with tertiary qualifications is attributed mainly to the still insufficient provision of tertiary education, particularly short study programmes at ISCED 5B level and bachelor programmes at ISCED 5A level.

Population structure by educational attainment, 2005 (25-64 years, %)

	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6
EU-25	29	48	23
ČR	10	77	13

Source: EUROSTAT – Labour Force Survey (2005, 2nd quarter) (24.4.2006).

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

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

	2003	2004	2005
EU-25	16.2	15.6	14.9
ČR	6.0	6.1	6.4

Source: EUROSTAT – Structural indicators (4.1.2006).

02 Policy development – objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities

0201 Objectives and priorities

In 1999 an Outline of policy in the area of education was presented for public discussion (see chart of the education system in 0401). 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 national level the Government Council for Human Resources Development (*Rada vlády pro rozvoj lidských zdrojů* – RV RLZ) was formed as a government body with advisory and co-ordination functions. In 2005 the Council developed the Programme for Implementation of the HRD Strategy for the ČR for 2006-2010 which elaborates various measures and identifies responsibilities for their implementation. The programme focuses to six priority areas: to increase flexibility of the education system, to increase education attainment level of adult population, to generate sufficient numbers and adequate structure of the labour force, to increase the labour market flexibility, to formulate job motivation policy, to enhance strategic management of HRD. At regional level similar functions are performed by regional HRD councils.

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 shift from memorising facts to the development of key competencies, such as work with information and information technologies, foreign language and communication skills and others, and on contacts between schools and the labour market. This trend will be reflected in a two-level development of curricula, where national curricula (*rámčové 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 (see 0703).

- **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. (See 0801, paragraph 12)

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 nation-wide part and a profiling/vocational part. A national wide part of the examination will be centrally administered and evaluated (from 2007/8) 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. (See 0801, paragraph 10).

- **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 (see 0901).

- **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 (see 0302) 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.

As for the CVET development, a law on verification and recognition of the outcomes of CVET (*Zákon o ověřování a uznávání výsledků dalšího vzdělávání*) has been adopted (2006) and its major provisions will become effective on 1 August 2007. The law creates a framework for the recognition of qualifications acquired through non-formal and informal learning. The law will make it possible to acquire a generally recognised certificate of a specific professional competence level regardless of how it was acquired. To obtain the certificate, those interested have to take an exam with an authorised commission (or individual). A list of full or partial qualifications which can be validated and recognised along with the relevant evaluation standards will be part of the National System of Qualifications (*Národní soustava kvalifikací*) which is under development.

03 Institutional framework – provision of learning opportunities

0301 Administrative framework

Initial vocational education and training

The governance and administration of initial VET were strongly affected by public administration reform launched in the area of education in 2001. The major principles of the reform included decentralisation, strengthening the role of regional administration and support for school autonomy. The system of funding shows similar trends. All schools providing initial VET (except higher education institutions), are funded by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy* – MŠMT) via regional authorities, which allocate the resources to individual schools. Private schools included in the school register are funded in a similar manner from public resources, and only a smaller part of their revenues comes from private sources (for details see 1002, paragraph “Private VET schools”).

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

- development of national education policy and strategy, primarily in the form of the Long-term plan for the development of education and the education system, and provision of methodology for and coordination of long-term plans for the development of education in regions;
- development of curricular policy and care for the quality of education on the basis of the objectives and content of education, set as part of an approved system of vocational education fields and approved national curricula (*rámcové vzdělávací programy*); operation of a system for monitoring and evaluation of student and school performance;
- coordination of public administration and funding in the area of education, including communication with social partners at national level; issuing decrees regulating educational conditions in schools; initiation of developmental and innovative schemes, etc.

At regional level **self-governing bodies – regional assembly and regional council** (*zastupitelstvo kraje, rada kraje*) - were set up. The regional assembly, which has decision-making powers, is obliged to form a commission for education and employment, which has its say on e.g. the number and the structure of the schools and their educational provision, the quality of schools, the funding of education in the regions, etc. The regional council (9-11 members) is elected by the assembly and holds executive powers. It forms expert commissions in various areas that have an advisory function. One of the commissions is normally concerned with young people and education. Regional self-governing bodies are directly responsible for establishing and closing down VET schools and school facilities. Established schools must be approved by the MŠMT and ranged into the school register for being eligible for funding from public sources. Regional bodies administer the schools and cover their capital and operational costs. They appoint directors of the schools set up by them based on appointment procedures and upon ministerial approval.

A regional body of state administration is a **regional authority** (*krajský úřad*). One of its departments deals with education, youth and sports. The authority is responsible for the execution of state administration in the region, and its main tasks in the area of education include, above all, the development of a regional long-term plan for the development of education and the education system, and a report about the situation in education in the region. Moreover, the regional authority allocates resources from the state budget to schools to cover pedagogical staffs' wages and direct educational costs, and checks upon their use.

As schools' autonomy has been extended, school **directors** hold significant powers. They are responsible for implementation of approved curricula, for the quality of pedagogical work and human resources policy, for educational management and efficient use of financial resources. A school council as a consultative body is established at schools. Its members include representatives of the school founding body, pedagogical staff and parents (possibly pupils of age).

Continuing vocational education and training

As regards CVET, the responsibility is fragmented and borne by various ministries.

The education of adults provided by secondary schools and tertiary professional schools is under the responsibility of the **Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports** (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy* - MŠMT). Adult education provided by higher education institutions – i.e. distance and lifelong learning including the “Third Age University” - fall within the competence of higher education institutions (*vysoké školy* – VŠ). In 2005 MŠMT assumed overall responsibility for the acquisition of qualifications in the system of continuing education and training, including their testing and recognition. (See 0302, last paragraph).

The responsibility for retraining is borne by the **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs** (*Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí* - MPSV) which determines the conditions under which training organisations providing retraining courses operate (must be accredited by the MŠMT). Retraining is organised by **labour offices** which determine the types and nature of the courses depending on the needs and requirements of regional labour markets, or potential employers.

The systems of statutory training (normativní vzdělávání) (see 0501, paragraph C) administered by ministries are subject to the law, regulations and decrees of the relevant ministries (e.g. the Ministry of Health responsible for training of health staff, Ministry of Interior Affairs responsible for public administration staff training, MŠMT responsible for pedagogical staff training). The situation is similar as regard the training of specific occupations provided by organisations with nationwide operations (e.g. in energy). The regulations are binding for all employers.

The provision of **training services on a commercial basis** is not governed by any regulatory body. One exception is institutions which want to have the right to award certificates of CVET with nationwide validity (they ask the relevant ministerial body for accreditation), and institutions providing language education (they ask the MŠMT for accreditation).

In early 2003 the **Government Council for Human Resources Development** (*Rada vlády pro rozvoj lidských zdrojů* – RV RLZ) was set up as a body of the government with consultative, initiation and co-ordination functions in the area of strategic management of human resources development. The Council co-operates with local self-administration bodies, trade unions, non-government and non-profit organisations, the business sector, VŠ and other entities. In 2005 the Council adopted the Programme for Implementation of the HRD Strategy, which was also approved by the government. The programme sets out priorities and measures linked to the country's economic strategy which aim at increasing the competitiveness of the Czech labour force. Various ministries have been made responsible for

their implementation. There are also recommendations for regional self-administration authorities.

0302 Legislative framework for vocational education and training

Initial vocational education and training

Initial vocational education and training (IVET) up to the level of tertiary professional schools is governed by the law on pre-school, basic, secondary, tertiary professional and other education – **School Act** (*Zákon o předškolním, základním, středním, vyšším odborném a jiném vzdělávání – “Školský zákon”*). Since 1 January 2005 a new School Act has come into effect. It replaced the existing law and other scattered, incoherent and many times amended legal regulations. The new act stipulates the conditions under which education takes place in schools and school facilities, defines the rights of individuals and legal entities in education, and establishes the responsibilities of bodies executing state administration and self-administration in education. At the same time ministerial decrees and other regulations entered into force which elaborate on the stipulations in the law in more detail.

Higher education institutions (*vysoké školy – VŠ*) are governed by the **Act on higher education institutions** (*Vysokoškolský zákon*) of 1998 which has changed their legal status and provides for the establishment of private VŠ. They have become so-called public VŠ (*veřejné vysoké školy*), while the amendment of 2001 provides them with the opportunity to pursue business activities using their own property and collect tuition fees for courses within the framework of lifelong learning. In addition, an other amendment of 2006, has further refined the funding system of VŠ. The level of contributions from the state budget for education, science, research, development, artistic and other creative activities of each VŠ will more depend on the results achieved in these areas. Moreover VŠ can make profit and transfer the financial resources to the following financial year. The amendment also makes it possible to implement study programmes in co-operation with a foreign institution of higher education and to award joint degrees.

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

As of 1 January 2005 an **act on pedagogical staff** (*Zákon o pedagogických pracovnících*) entered into force which stipulated a new definition of the position of pedagogical staff and lay down requirements for the performance of their occupation, their continuing training and career system.

Continuing vocational education and training

There is no comprehensive legislation regulating continuing vocational education and training (CVET). There are single regulations (acts or decrees) covering its parts or regulations fostering other areas, but touches upon various aspects of CVET. Three types of regulations may be distinguished:

- **Laws covering initial education and training** which lay down the ways in which, at every level, schools may provide adult education;
- **Regulations concerning labour and employment:** the Labour Code, the act on employment and the binding decree on retraining of job seekers and employees; the act on investment incentives and changes to other acts and government regulation on material support for the creation of new jobs and the retraining of employees;
- **Other laws and decrees** (e.g. the act on pedagogical staff; the act on technical standards and the act on state expert supervision; the act on the conditions concerning the acquisition and recognition of professional and specialised competencies to perform the occupation of physician, dentist and pharmacist; the act on trades, etc.).

A step forward represents a **law on the testing and recognition of the outcomes of CVET** (*Zákon o ověřování a uznávání výsledků dalšího vzdělávání*) which has been adopted in 2006 (its major provisions will become effective on 1 August 2007). The law creates a legislative framework for the recognition of qualifications acquired through non-formal and informal learning. At the same time, work has been launched on the establishment of necessary institutional conditions for the law to be effective. This includes, above all, the development of a National Qualifications System (a list of national qualifications including qualification and evaluation standards), the setting up a network of institutions authorised to test the qualifications and issue the relevant certificates, etc. (See also 0802.)

IVET Governance and Administration

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

0303 Role of social partners

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

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

In general, as regards the **regional** level, social partners are represented in Regional Councils for Social and Economic Agreement (*Rady hospodářské a sociální dohody*) and Councils for HRD (*Rady pro rozvoj lidských zdrojů*). However, the situation varies region by region. In practice social partners are involved in changes to the structure of VET provision.

At **sectoral** level there are some examples of good cooperation between social partners and VET schools. This cooperation is usually initiated by economic chambers, rarely by trade unions. The level of cooperation depends on the importance of the relevant industry for the regional economy.

At **enterprise** level cooperation occurs mainly between schools and companies which employ graduates. Education in VET schools is designed to prepare an individual for specific occupations or occupational clusters rather than for a specific job. On-the-job introductory training is entirely up to companies. Cooperation between schools and business sector is also beneficial by providing schools access to state-of-the-art technologies used by companies.

Social partnership also involves the process of **collective bargaining** both at ministerial level and at corporate and institutional levels. This process is provided for in the Czech legal system (Act on Collective Bargaining). At present the agreements include positive examples that affect participation in lifelong learning. This concerns particularly collective agreements concluded in large, mostly trans-national companies. The Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions (*Českomoravská konfederace odborových svazů* – ČMKOS) is striving to bring about changes in legal regulations so as to stimulate companies and individuals to increase their participation in continuing education and training.

One positive development, as regards the pursuit of harmony between the content of IVET and labour market needs, is representation of social partners on so-called “branch groups” that are involved in development of national curricula (*rámcové vzdělávací programy*). The formation of the groups in 1998 was authorised by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy* – MŠMT) and they contribute to the identification of objectives and the content of IVET. There are currently 23 “branch groups” covering the entire spectrum of occupations which those who complete secondary VET schools and tertiary professional schools may perform. Another important step embedded in the new School Act is that social partners are obliged to take part in final examinations.

Various programmes (mainly the Leonardo da Vinci programme) support projects of social partners' involvement in VET. These projects may serve as examples of good practice.

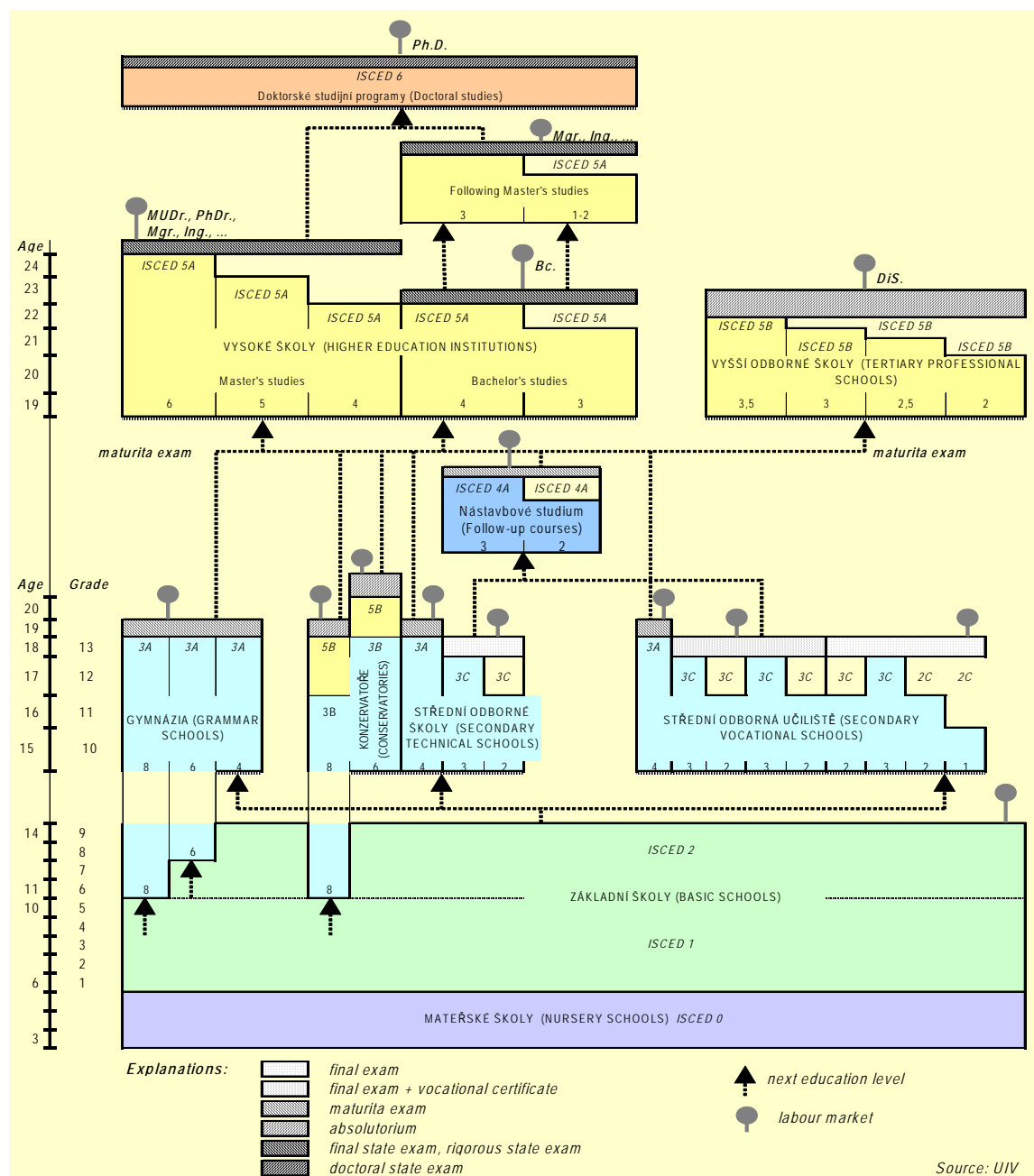
	Responsibilities of social partners in VET area	Type of role (advisory/decision-making)
National level	Formulation of and comments on legal regulations and government papers	advisory
Regional level	Formulation of, recommendations to and comments on strategic documents at regional level	advisory
Sectoral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

04 Initial vocational education and training

0401 Background to the initial vocational education and training system and diagram of the education and training system

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

Education system of the ČR



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

Secondary schools

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

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

Secondary schools are attended mostly by students aged 15-19. The lower age limit is determined by completion of compulsory education. The participation of the 15-18 age group in education was 96.2% in 2004/2005. Secondary schools have two tasks: to prepare students for performing various occupations in the national economy, administration, culture, arts and other areas, and to prepare them for further studies at a higher level.

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

One important change at this level has been the establishment of private and church schools. The development of private schools at all levels started virtually from zero and became dynamic in the 1990s. In the academic year 2004/05 the proportion of private and church schools was 20.6% of all secondary schools.

Secondary schools between school year 1989/1990 and 2004/2005 – proportions according to the founding body

School year	1989/90	1992/93	1995/96	1998/99	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Secondary schools - total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0 %
- public	100.0%	87.7%	76.5%	75.9%	78.0%	78.0%	78.0%	79.4%
- private	0.0%	10.7%	21.5%	22.2%	20.0%	20.0%	19.9%	18.5%
- church	0.0%	1.5%	2.0%	1.9%	2.0%	2.0%	2.1%	2.1%

Source: ÚIV database.

Admission to a secondary school is conditional upon the completion of compulsory education and the passing of entrance proceedings. Students normally take entrance examinations (written or oral) at the school for which they have applied. The admission criteria include student performance at the entry examinations (normally in the Czech language and mathematics, sometimes also in a foreign language; at art or sports schools in the relevant related subject), the basic school record and, sometimes, the results of psychological tests.

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

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

a) gymnázium is a general secondary school (grammar school) and its name is in line with Central European tradition. It provides general secondary education completed by a "maturita" examination (ISCED 3A), and prepares students primarily for higher education. The studies may last four years (upper secondary), six or eight years (lower and upper secondary). In 2004 *gymnázium* leavers accounted for 19.7% of all secondary school leavers;

b) secondary technical school (*střední odborná škola* - SOŠ) provides secondary technical education in four-year programmes completed by a "maturita" examination (ISCED 3A), which entitles graduates to apply for higher education and to perform mid-level technical, business and other similar jobs. In 2004 secondary technical school graduates accounted for 35.9% of all secondary school leavers.

c) secondary vocational school (*střední odborné učiliště* - SOU) provides a vocational qualification in two- and three-year programmes, entitling those who acquire it to perform manual work and similar occupations (ISCED 3C). In 2004 the proportion of those who completed these programmes was some 37.9%. Secondary vocational schools also provide a small number of four-year programmes completed by "maturita" (ISCED 3A), providing a qualification to perform demanding manual work and technical occupations and opening up the path to higher education. In 2004 the graduates of these programmes accounted for 7.4% of all secondary school leavers. Secondary vocational schools may also provide one- and two-year programmes (ISCED 2C) for pupils who completed compulsory education but failed to complete all nine years of basic school, for young people with special learning needs, and pupils who completed special (*zvláštní*) or auxiliary (*pomocné*) schools. In 2004, the proportion of graduates of ISCED 2C programmes were only 0.7% of all the secondary school leavers.

Secondary schools¹ – students in full-time programmes (according to type of school and ISCED levels) - 2004/2005

Type of study	Secondary technical schools	Secondary vocational schools	Gymnasia ²	Secondary schools – total
Total	208 703	189 702	100 133	498 558
- proportion (%)	41.86%	38.05%	20.09%	100.00%
with “maturita” (ISCED 3A)	203 648	32 150	100 153	335 951
without “maturita” (ISCED 3C)	2 586	138 513	x	141 099
follow-up (ISCED 4)	2 469	19 039	x	2 508

Notes: ¹ Secondary schools excluding conservatoires.

² Students at upper secondary level.

Source: Statistical Yearbook on Education 2004/2005, ÚIV.

Secondary schools¹ – numbers of students, teachers, schools and relative data - 2004/2005

	Gymnasia	Secondary technical schools	Secondary vocational schools	Secondary schools -total
Full-time students	100 133	208 703	189 702	498 558
- proportion %	20.09%	41.86%	38.05%	100.00%
Teachers	10 993.4	19 041.1	9 810.3	39 844.8
Instructors and training supervisors	x	x	11 481.3	11 481.3
Number of schools	349	927	707	1 983
Number of students per teacher	13.0	10.9	17.9	13.2

Note: ¹ Secondary schools excluding conservatoires.

Source: Statistical Yearbook on Education 2004/2005, ÚIV.

Conservatoires (konzervatoře)

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

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

Tertiary professional school (vyšší odborné školy - VOŠ)

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

Higher education institutions (*vysoké školy - VŠ*)

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

0402 IVET at lower secondary level

Secondary vocational schools may provide one-to-two-year programmes at **ISCED 2C** level for students with mental disabilities of various severity, vocational training programmes for students who completed compulsory education but failed to complete all nine years of basic school, and programmes preparing special school leavers for the performance of simple tasks as part of manual occupations. Practical training takes place in the relevant companies (outside school). At the end of these programmes students take final examinations and obtain a vocational certificate (*výuční list*).

Secondary vocational schools also offer programmes preparing students for the performance of auxiliary tasks in services or manufacturing. Those who complete them (mostly people with rather severe mental disabilities) only obtain a certificate of the completion of basic education.

Secondary vocational schools also offer programmes preparing students for the performance of auxiliary tasks in services or manufacturing. Those who complete them (mostly people with rather severe mental disabilities) only obtain a certificate of the completion of basic education.

0403 IVET at upper secondary level (school-based and alternance)

Secondary vocational education in the Czech Republic (*Česká republika - ČR*) has a tradition of over a hundred years. Moreover, before 1989 it was supported by the official education policy which restricted general secondary education in favour of vocational programmes. Even after 1989 the status of vocational education remained high, particularly as regards programmes completed by “maturita”, which makes it possible either to enter the labour market or to continue studying at tertiary level. The proportion of vocational education at secondary level is traditionally high. Despite a partial decrease in recent years it reached 79% in 2003, which is far more than the EU-25 average (46%). For this proportion the CR even ranks 1st of all old and new EU countries (see table 0403 in Annex).

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

Extensive **curricular reform** is currently under way, consisting in the development and ensuing application of newly designed **national curricula** (*rámcové vzdělávací programy - RVP*) (stressing key competencies) for various branches of education, which will be implemented along with the new School Act entering into force (2005). Following on from

the national curricula there will be **school-based curricula** (*školní vzdělávací programy - ŠVP*) designed by schools (see 0703). The objective of this two-level development of curricula is to allow for a more flexible shaping of graduate profiles in line with regional needs, the development of the relevant field and the interests and capacities of students. In parallel with the curricula, professional requirements are being drafted as part of the “Integrated System of Typical Working Positions”, which will define the requirements for the performance of various occupations, and should also ensure comparability with the relevant requirements in the European Union.

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

- secondary technical schools
- secondary vocational schools
- conservatoires

Secondary technical schools (*střední odborné školy - SOŠ*) may be public, private or church owned. Education at public schools is provided for free, while private and denominational schools may collect tuition fees. In 2004/05 there were 804 secondary technical schools in the ČR, of which 558 were public, 200 private and 16 church owned. The average number of students per school was 258.4.

Students admitted to the first year must have completed compulsory education (15-year-olds). The educational provision at secondary technical schools is in compliance with curricular documents approved by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy – MŠMT*). However, school directors can adjust these documents. The study plan may be changed in line with regulations in place – normally up to 10% of the overall number of teaching periods. Subject syllabi may be modified to the extent of up to 30% of the teaching periods allocated to each subject (the adjustment is due to new technologies, modernisation of the field, regional conditions and the requirements of social partners). Schools may also develop their own curricula, but their application is subject to approval by the MŠMT. Study plans include general subjects (Czech language and literature, a foreign language, mathematics, natural sciences, civic education, history and physical education), and vocational subjects, depending on the relevant programme. Vocational subjects include practical exercises, laboratory work, etc. The study plans at SOŠ also include work placements in companies and other institutions. The length of these placements depends on the nature of the programme. The proportions of general and vocational subjects vary depending on the fields of study and grade. The ratio is around 45:55 in favour of vocational subjects. Work placements (on average 6-8 weeks altogether), during which students experience a real working environment, facilitate contacts between the students and employers.

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

SOŠs carry out both continuous and final assessment of students. The “*maturita*” examination in four-year programmes at SOŠ consists of Czech language and literature, an optional subject and vocational subjects. The examination in vocational subjects is composed of a theoretical and a practical part. Upon successful passing of the “*maturita*” students are awarded a “*maturita*” certificate (*vysvědčení o maturitní zkoušce*).

Secondary vocational schools (*střední odborné učiliště - SOU*) prepare students (in line with the legislation in place) for vocational tasks corresponding to the relevant programmes. The involvement of companies in vocational training occurs primarily at school level. In order to

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

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

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

SOU may be public (424 – 89% of students), private (89 – 10.8% of students) and church (1 – 0.1% of students). Education in public SOUs is provided for free, whereas private and church schools may collect tuition fees. An average sized SOU provides education for approximately 300 full-time students.

The study plans include general subjects, vocational subjects and the practical training. The vocational subjects selection depends on the nature of the programme. The proportions of general and vocational subjects and practical training vary depending on the programme. In three-year programmes - which are the most common - the proportion of the instruction time for general subjects, vocational subjects and practical training is 30-35%, 20-30%, 35-45%, accordingly. In four-year programmes the ratio is about 40%:30%:30%.

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

Continuous assessment is applied at SOUs. The final examination (“*závěrečná zkouška*”) in three-year programmes is a vocational examination where the students demonstrate their preparedness for the performance of the relevant tasks and occupations. It consists of a practical examination and a theoretical examination related to vocational subjects. Upon a successful passing of the final examination students get a final examination record (*vysvědčení o závěrečné zkoušce*) and a vocational certificate (*výuční list*). (See 0401, Secondary schools, paragraph c). In four year programmes, the final assessment is ensured by the *maturita* examination and students are awarded a *maturita* certificate (*vysvědčení o maturitní zkoušce*).

Conservatoires are a specific type of secondary school with a different regime. Students with music, dance and drama talents take an aptitude test as part of the admission proceedings.

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

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

0404 Apprenticeship training

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

0405 Other youth programmes and alternative pathways

Alternative educational approaches within the system of IVET, which, pursuant to the existing School Act, provides exclusively formal education, are applied in specifically designed educational programmes. The new School Act effective from January 2005 provides for various educational routes (e.g. in order to achieve the same qualification). It will also be possible to combine formal (school) and non-formal education. Alternative programmes facilitating the acquisition of a professional qualification are implemented mainly in the form of retraining courses (for details see 0503).

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

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

In justified cases the school director may grant exceptions in a regular, approved educational programme (e.g. may recognise parts of a different programme). Apart from formal education, young people may undertake various forms of leisure education.

0406 Vocational education and training at post-secondary (non-tertiary) level

At present, the only form of vocational education at post-secondary level is the so-called **follow-up studies** (ISCED 4). This type of education may be taken by pupils who have acquired a vocational certificate (*výuční list*) (ISCED 3C). Follow-up courses in the relevant field can be organised by secondary schools which provide “*maturita*” courses in the same field. Follow-up programmes take two years and are completed by a “*maturita*” examination. The numbers of graduates of vocational programmes who are interested in completing their education via follow-up courses tend to grow. In the academic year 2004/2005, about 28% of the total number of graduates of three-year vocational courses entered in follow-up courses.

0407 Vocational education and training at tertiary level

Non-university studies

For the last 8 years, **tertiary professional schools** (*vyšší odborné školy* - VOŠ) have been operating in this sector, providing education at ISCED 5B level. Most of them were established at secondary technical schools and, together with them, form one legal entity. Some of them are private (out of the total number of VOŠs 66% are public, 27% private and 7% church). Only about one quarter of VOŠs operate on their own. Some of them have recently acquired the status of higher education institutions of a non-university type. The objective of VOŠs is to offer students the opportunity of obtaining a vocational qualification for the performance of demanding professional activities, or of enhancing the qualification they have already achieved.

Tertiary professional schools – number of students, teachers, schools and study groups - 2004/2005

Full-time students	25 033
Students - total	29 759
Teachers	2 261.5
Study groups	1 280
Number of schools	174
Number of students per teacher	13.1
Number of students per study group	19.55

Source: Statistical Yearbook on Education 2004/2005, ÚIV.

VOŠ provide study programmes lasting 2 to 3.5 years. The longest programmes include practical training in the form of a work placement over three months long. VOŠs, including public ones, may collect tuition fees. Applicants must have completed upper secondary education with “*maturita*” (normally 19 and older). The school director may decide whether an entrance examination should be part of admission proceedings, and what its content should be. The average number of full-time students per one school was 144 in 2004/2005.

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

The curricula are designed by individual schools. However, they must be approved by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy* - MŠMT) based on a recommendation issued by the Accreditation Commission for tertiary professional education. The ratio between general, general vocational and specific vocational subjects is roughly 20:40:40. The number of teaching periods per week in full-time programmes ranges from 26 to 33 compulsory and compulsory/optional subjects. Practical training in a specific field constitutes an important component of this type of study. It may last up to one year during which students work on a paper or project which is then evaluated jointly by the school and the relevant company or institution. The teaching methods are similar to those applied in higher education. The instruction consists of lectures and seminars, practicals, laboratory exercises and work placements.

The assessment of learning outcomes and marking are fostered by assessment regulations designed by each school, which must be in line with the relevant legislation and approved by the MŠMT. The assessment regulations provide for a marking scale (mostly four grades), and assessment methods. It is also stipulated in the regulations which of these methods will be applied to particular subjects. The school also regulates the organisational details concerning

examination retakes, including the deadlines for fulfilling school duties due for one term or academic year. The studies are completed by “*absolutorium*”. “*Absolutorium*” is a vocational examination consisting of an examination in the theory of vocational subjects, a foreign language, a graduate thesis and its defence. The composition and number of vocational subjects in which the exam is taken are determined by the relevant curricula. The defence of the graduate thesis may include a test of practical skills. Upon a successful passing of “*absolutorium*”, the student of the VOŠ attains tertiary professional education and the title of “*diplovaný specialista*” (specialist with a diploma, abbreviated as DiS. and stated behind the name).

Graduates from tertiary professional schools find employment in various fields and are required to master qualified activities of an advanced nature. They may further enhance their qualification by studying at higher education institutions on the same conditions as apply to secondary school leavers who hold a “*maturita*” certificate.

University studies

University-type programmes predominate in tertiary education. Universities provide both general and vocational education, in the framework of accredited study programmes and lifelong learning programmes.

Bachelor study programmes are designed to prepare students for the performance of an occupation and for further studies in a Master study programme. They last 3-4 years (ISCED 5A). **Master study programmes** focus on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge in line with modern science, research and development, on mastering its practical application, and on nurturing creative activities. In arts disciplines it is focused on demanding artistic training and the development of talents. Master study programmes have a standard duration of 1-3 years (ISCED 5A) and usually they follow on Bachelor programmes. If the nature of the study programme so requires, a Master programme can be accredited, even if it is not based on Bachelor programme. In this case it lasts 4-6 years.

Doctoral study programmes are accessible only after the completion of a Master programme. These programmes focus on research and independent creative activities concerned with research and development, or on independent theoretical or creative work in arts. The standard length is 3 years (ISCED 6).

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

Approximately 48% of the applicants admitted for the first time to a university are *gymnázium* graduates, 46% come from secondary technical schools (*střední odborné školy – SOŠ*) and 5% completed secondary vocational schools (*střední odborné učiliště – SOU*) where they achieved secondary education with “*maturita*” (2004/05 data). In consequence of the applicants’ growing interest universities are only able to accept about 58% of the applications. Still, admission figures have been constantly increasing.

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

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

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

05 Continuing vocational education and training for adults

0501 Background information on continuing vocational education and training

There are different categories of adult education which differ in terms of provision and target group:

A. Adult education in schools, leading to qualification

In terms of legislation which will enter into force in the mid-2006, education in schools which leads to the acquisition of the relevant qualification is not considered to be continuing education. It is part of initial education. However, it forms an important component of adult education.

- Adults can study at secondary vocational schools (střední odborná učiliště - SOU), secondary technical schools (střední odborné školy – SOŠ) on a “denní” (full-time) or part-time basis (Part-time study includes: “Večerní” education (afternoon and evening classes several days per week totalling 10-18 teaching hours per week), “dálkové” education (self-study plus some 200-220 consultation hours in one school year), “distanční” education (also self-study mainly or entirely via IT and possibly consultation hours), and “kombinované” education (a combination of full-time education and one of the part-time forms). Adult learners mostly opt for part-time courses which may be combined with employment. Full-time education is rare. The content of the studies and completion requirements are identical in all forms of study, and graduates get the same certificates of the education acquired. This education is regulated by the law no. 561/2004 – Schools Act (Školský zákon). Access is open for all applicants who have completed compulsory education and fulfilled the admission requirements.
- At tertiary professional schools (vyšší odborné školy – VOŠ) adults can get tertiary qualifications. This education is regulated by the Schools Act and adults may choose between full-time and part-time programmes as in secondary education. The content of the studies and completion requirements are identical in all forms of study and graduates get the same certificates of the education acquired and the title DiS. (specialist with a diploma). Access is open for all applicants who have completed secondary education with “maturita” and fulfilled the admission requirements.
- Studies at higher education institutions (vysoké školy – VŠ) are regulated by the law no.111/1998 – Higher Education Act (Vysokoškolský zákon). There are three forms of study: “prezenční” (daily attendance), “distanční” (distance) and “kombinované” (combined). The content of the studies and completion requirements are identical in all forms of study and graduates get the same certificates and the same academic titles. Access is open for all applicants who have completed secondary education with “maturita” and fulfilled the admission requirements.
- Studies at conservatoires are regulated by the Schools Act and adults can get a secondary qualification (3A) or a tertiary qualification (5B) in music, singing and drama. Adults study under the same conditions as other pupils. Their previous education in general subjects can be recognised and they can study either on a regular (full-time and daily attendance) or combined basis.

Since not every school (SOU, SOŠ, VOŠ and VŠ) is possessing with the necessary facilities and range of programmes in addition to the regular/full-time studies, the availability of part-time programmes is also limited.

Adults who failed to complete all nine years of compulsory education can complete their basic education in courses provided by the relevant schools. The number of participants in this education has been constantly decreasing. However, it is important to retain this opportunity, as completed basic education is a prerequisite for a successful transfer to vocational education and training.

B. Retraining

The provision of retraining is fostered by the law no. 435/2004 – Act on Employment (*Zákon o zaměstnanosti*) and the related Decree no. 519/2004 on retraining. There is no legal entitlement to retraining. The following individuals may take part in retraining:

- Job seekers (unemployed) registered at labour offices,
- People at risk of becoming redundant – employees of companies undergoing restructuring,
- Job applicants (people who wish to change their job and who register at the labour office with the aim of finding a new job),
- Other applicants.

Retraining is provided for free to registered job seekers and sometime to job applicants. The costs of the retraining of people who are at risk of becoming redundant are covered by their employer and the labour office. Other applicants may take part in retraining for a payment.

Retraining courses may only be provided by those entities which have been accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy – MŠMT*). Accreditation is subject to Decree no. 524/2004 on the accreditation of facilities. Both schools and other educational institutions (organisations) may apply for accreditation. Retraining is completed by a final examination and graduates obtain a nationally valid certificate of retraining.

C. Training in enterprises

The obligations of companies in relation to the training of employees are regulated by the Labour Code (*Zákoník práce*). Most of the training in companies is provided by external training organisations and consultancies. To a lesser degree training courses are delivered by companies' own training facilities. In recent years there has been a tendency to place these facilities on an independent footing outside the company structure. A very small part of training in companies is provided by secondary or tertiary schools. The certificates acquired via company training are only valid within the particular company. The scope, content and form of the continuing training of employees depend on the enterprises' human resources development policies.

For some professions and industries specific CVET is required by legal regulations. The professions cannot be practiced without the relevant formal certificate and the training has to be undertaken in certain intervals. It is so called statutory training (*normativní vzdělávání*) and concerns various professions in public administration, healthcare, maritime transport, railway transport, electrical engineering, etc.

D. Individual training

Adults have the following opportunities for individual training:

- Demand driven courses offered by commercial training providers or consultancies. Usually there are no entry requirements except for the payment of the course fee.

Graduates get a certification of course completion which is issued based on attendance or upon passing an examination or test.

- Courses and programmes offered by public institutions such as regional and local culture and training centres, libraries, museums, etc., or by church establishment. The range of courses is very wide and this education is accessible for all those interested in the relevant subject area who, at the same time, can meet certain requirements (in terms of time, finance, etc.).
- Specialist courses, courses in various subjects or subject areas, and “post-maturita” specialisation courses focused on acquiring additional general and vocational knowledge and skills necessary for the practice of a profession. These courses may be offered by secondary schools and tertiary professional schools for a payment. They are normally run by the school teachers. Access is open for all applicants who meet the entry requirements (if applicable). A certificate is awarded upon successful completion of a course.
- So-called lifelong learning programmes focusing on a profession or being part of leisure activities. These programmes may be provided for free or for a payment. Graduates get a certificate. Detailed terms of the provision of lifelong learning programmes are set by internal regulations of each VŠ (including entry requirements – if applicable). The programmes are run by members of the academic staff (university teachers).
- Courses offered by other institutions which are part of the schools system (basic art schools, state language schools, leisure centres). Their range is wide and they are provided for a payment. Access is open for all applicants who pay the relevant course fee.

The general strategy/concept of adult education and training

Although the main priorities for CVET system development were formulated in several strategic and policy papers, the progress in practise is very slow. There were identified following strategic areas:

- introduction of a system of financial and non-financial incentives for employers and individuals to motivate them to participate in CVET. (Among non-financial incentives could be mentioned for example flexible working schemes, training leave, Investors in people certificate, etc.)
- introduction of comprehensive mechanisms for the certification of trainers, programmes and educational institutions,
- establishment of a network of counselling and information sources/providers,
- introduction of a system of qualification recognition.

In the **past years legislative measures** were adopted making it possible for schools to offer continuing/lifelong learning courses facilitating the acquisition of a partial qualification or a secondary qualification on the basis of self-study and non-formal and informal learning. The Schools Act effective from 2005 makes it possible for:

- secondary schools and tertiary professional schools to offer the adult population
 - specialist courses,
 - courses in various individual subjects or subject areas,
 - “post-maturita” specialisation courses to acquire additional general and vocational knowledge and skills necessary for the practice of a profession.

- applicants to acquire
 - a partial secondary vocational or technical qualification by passing an examination in one subject (subject area) that is part of a final or “maturita” examination,
 - a full secondary qualification by passing examinations in all subjects for all years, and a final or “maturita” examination.

The law on verification and recognition of the outcomes of continuing education (*Zákon o ověřování a uznávání výsledků dalšího vzdělávání*), which will enter into force on 1 August 2007, makes it possible for adults to acquire:

- a certificate of a partial qualification/qualifications based on passing the relevant examination,
- the relevant level of education (qualification) – secondary or tertiary ISCED 5B – by means of acquiring all partial qualifications confirming the professional competence for carrying out all working activities within a profession, and by means of passing the final examination, “maturita” or “absolutorium”.

The Higher Education Act (*Vysokoškolský zákon*), effective from 1998, makes it possible for VŠ to provide lifelong learning programmes either as part of professional education or leisure.

Adult education is **supported from both public and the EU resources** as part of various programmes. Funding may be obtained for the development of retraining, training in enterprises and also for the training provided by regional centres. New forms of education – particularly distance education and e-learning – are being developed by VŠ as well as secondary schools. The provision of commercial training organisations in this area is also expanding.

The trends of **CVET development for 2005-2008** are anchored in the National Reform Programme for 2005-2008. In line with the Long-Term Plan for Education and Development of the Education System in the Czech Republic 2005 (National Programme for Education) it places emphasis on:

- effective development of lifelong learning accessible for all groups of the population,
- links between initial and continuing education,
- need for completion of the National Qualifications System, which is considered to be the foundation for enhancing quality, accessibility and recognition of qualifications in the labour market,
- support for the CVET provided by schools,
- transferability between various levels of tertiary education (making it accessible at any age),
- development of combined and distance studies, design of multi-media learning aids and application of e-learning.

There is no coherent system for the **planning of CVET** either at national or sectoral level, nor is there such a system for identification of training needs – there are only various isolated activities. Attention paid to this issue has increased since the ČR’s accession to the EU. Some regions are developing forecasts of employment in their administrative areas. Labour offices pinpoint the existing skill shortages in the relevant regional labour markets. Several large companies also address the issue of forecasting future skills needs.

0502 Publicly promoted CVET for all

Administrative structure

Publicly promoted adult education for all who meet the entry requirements (if applicable) is provided by schools either:

- in the form of initial education of adults leading to the acquisition of the relevant level of education (qualification), or
- as part of non-formal education leading to a certificate of completion of CVET (in the case of secondary schools and tertiary professional schools) or a certificate of completion of a lifelong-learning programme/courses (in the case of higher education institutions).

Although non-formal training programmes/courses may be provided for a payment, they are part of publicly promoted education, because the purchase and the operation of the school facilities and equipment used are covered from public resources.

Since 2003 public resources have been available to support computer literacy. Applicants (mainly elderly and disadvantaged citizens) can take two-hour courses for a symbolic price where they can learn basic computer and Internet skills. According to statistical data the participants mainly fall in the 40+ category. In 2005 the scheme was expanded to include a programme specifically focused on disabled citizens.

Support for CVET at regional and local levels depends on the initiative of the relevant regional and local authorities, their financial situation and priorities. Support is usually targeted to culture and training centres, libraries and museums. In addition to finance, there are other forms of support, such as non-commercial lease of buildings, facilities and equipment for training activities.

Target groups

Publicly promoted CVET is accessible for all those who meet the entry requirements. This concerns, above all, entrance examinations in the case of formal education. In other cases no specific knowledge or skills are required. One requirement is, in most cases, the payment of the course fee which, however, it does not cover all costs of the course. As regards computer literacy courses, the price is subsidised up to 80% of the costs.

Statistical data about the rate of participation in this type of education are not available.

Types of provider and types of course/qualification

The following entities provide publicly promoted CVET:

- schools included in the schools system and higher education institutions (vysoké školy – VŠ);
- regional culture and training centres, libraries, museums;
- training and consultancy organisations and independent consultants and lecturers providing courses supported from public programmes or grants.

With the exception of the initial adult education in schools, CVET does not lead to the acquisition of a formal qualification. Upon completion of a course the relevant certificate is awarded.

Quality assurance mechanisms

The quality of educational provision is guaranteed by the state in the case of accredited courses. For instance retraining courses are accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy* – MŠMT), Ministry of Interior (*Ministerstvo vnitra*) accredits courses of continuing education of public administration workers. Accreditation is a unrepeated process of quality evaluation and there is usually no continuous evaluation.

Quality assurance in non-accredited courses is fully within the competence of the provider. Market forces are expected to resolve this.

0503 Training for unemployed people and others vulnerable to exclusion in the labour market

Administrative structure

The responsibility for retraining is borne by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (*Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí* – MPSV). The provision of retraining is regulated by the law no. 435/2004 on employment (*Zákon o zaměstnanosti*) and the related decree no. 519/2004 on retraining. Participation in retraining is recommended to individuals registered at labour offices by the offices' staff and it is financed from their budgets. Retraining is also organised by labour offices in co-operation with companies which are undergoing restructuring.

Target groups

Retraining is designed for:

- Job seekers registered at labour offices,
- Individuals at risk of becoming redundant – employees of companies undergoing restructuring,
- Job applicants - individuals registered at labour offices who seek to change a qualification and a job
- Other applicants.

There is no legal entitlement to retraining. Retraining is implemented based on an agreement between the labour office and the job seeker or an job applicant. The labour office pays the retraining costs for the participant and can also offer a contribution to cover documented necessary costs related to the retraining. This usually includes transport, accommodation and meals if the course is not held in the participant's place of stay. In the case of a disabled person participating in retraining, the costs incurred by the accompanying person may also be covered.

The retraining of employees aiming to ensure that they can perform other jobs as part of their employment is based on an agreement between the employee and the employer. The employer, or the retraining provider, may conclude an agreement with the labour office on the coverage of the relevant retraining costs.

Types of provider and types of course/qualification

Retraining can only be provided by entities accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy* – MŠMT). The granting of accreditation is subject to decree no. 524/2004 on accreditation of establishments – this

concerns schools as well as other educational institutions or organisations. The retraining is completed by a final examination and the graduate gets a certificate.

The content of retraining courses varies widely. Labour offices focus primarily on courses designed to cover the existing skills shortages in regional labour markets.

There are two types of retraining:

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

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

Quality assurance mechanisms

The quality of retraining is, to a degree, guaranteed by the state, as every establishment providing retraining must have a valid accreditation of the MŠMT. Accreditation is granted based on assessment of the human, material and technical resources available for the given course. The methods of testing the knowledge and skills acquired are also subject to evaluation. There is only a one-off evaluation as part of accreditation or re-accreditation.

Continuous evaluation of the quality of retraining is carried out indirectly via statistical monitoring of the situation of graduates of retraining courses in the labour market. Attention is paid to the percentage of those who have found work and to the time necessary to find a job after retraining. It is up to the initiative and capacity of labour offices whether or not they carry out individual inspections during retraining. There are no national standards or procedures for evaluation of the quality of this type of training.

The quality of retraining is the responsibility of the provider who seeks to retain revenues from this activity. It is therefore expected that providers pay a maximum level of attention to the quality of their services and monitor and evaluate their clients' responses. Labour offices select retraining providers based on references and previous experience.

0504 CVET at the initiative of enterprises or social partners

Government regulation and administrative structure for enterprise provision of training

Training in enterprises is partially regulated by the Labour Code (*Zákoník práce*) (85/2001) which stipulates the obligation for employers to:

- train employees to ensure their health and safety at work;
- ensure appropriate practical experience for employees – graduates of secondary schools and higher education institutions (vysoké školy – VŠ) (graduates are individuals within two years of completion of education);
- provide introductory training for all employees who enter into employment without a qualification;

- provide initial training for an employee who has transferred to a new workplace or is supposed to do a different type of work (if needed).

It is exclusively up to the companies which human resources policy they choose to apply within these stipulations. The state supports training in enterprises via programmes funded from the state budget or co-funded from European structural funds. The application procedure is open for either all companies, companies in a particular industry or SMEs. The eligible companies are always listed in the relevant programme annexes.

Co-operation between companies in the training of employees is supported by the Structural Funds (Operational Programme Industry and Enterprise). Companies may get finance for the purchase of equipment for a training centre or for its refurbishment or modernisation. Support is also provided for the purchase of educational aids and programmes. Applications for funds may be filed by the companies listed in the relevant programme annex, and by companies providing training for these.

The aforementioned Operational Programme also supports the establishment of clusters where the training of employees is also involved. Based on assessment of training needs it will be possible to establish whether it is more efficient to train the employees of individual organisations separately or jointly.

Target groups within enterprises

The training in some sectors or industries and the necessary requirements for the practice of certain professions are regulated by laws and decrees. This particularly concerns healthcare, schooling, public administration, maritime transport, railway transport, and electrical engineering. According to these laws (decrees) the acquisition of the relevant certificate is conditional either on completion of vocational training or on passing prescribed examinations. It is not possible to carry out the relevant activity without a formal certificate. The training is normally provided by sectoral/industry institutes which are set up and run by the relevant ministries.

There is a specific programme for the training of SMEs' employees entitled Guidance. It is funded from the state budget and offers subsidies for training and guidance services. This training and guidance are designed for beginning entrepreneurs (0-2 years in business) and entrepreneurs who are at the development and growth stage (over 2 years in business).

The training in some companies is encouraged as part of support for the creation of new jobs in regions with above-the-average rates of unemployment. Subsidies are available for:

- large investors operating in manufacturing (the investment must exceed CZK 100 million – i.e. EUR 3.3 million) who, based on the law on investment incentives, can get a subsidy for retraining and training of their employees, provided their investment is placed in a region with above-the-average unemployment.
- smaller investors operating in industry or the services sector (the investment must exceed CZK 10 million – i.e. EUR 0.3 million), provided that they place the investment in designated regions and apply for funding as part of the “Programme for Support for New Jobs Creation in Regions Most Stricken by Unemployment”.

Main types of providers

Training courses in enterprises are provided by:

- External training organisations and consultancies
- Companies' own training facilities,
- Secondary schools and VŠ,

- Sectoral/industry training institutes,
- Independent consultants and lecturers.

Most courses are provided by external organisations, although the proportion of training provided by secondary schools and VŠ is negligible. In recent years companies have tended to put their training facilities on an independent footing, which further strengthens external provision. The specific training of workers in various sectors/industries is normally provided by the relevant institutes which not only provide the courses, but also develop the relevant methodologies and operate as centres for verification of qualifications. The institutes differ in terms of management and operations. Some are directly managed by the relevant ministries, others are organisations providing training and guidance services on a commercial basis. Examples of institutes directly run by ministries include the Institute of Post-Graduate Education in Healthcare, which is managed by the Ministry of Health, or the National Institute for Continuing Education, which provides teachers training and is administered by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy – MŠMT*).

Training enterprises as a proportion of all enterprises

In the Czech Republic (*Česká republika – ČR*) the average of 69% of companies provided some form of training for their employees (figures are related to 1999). The proportion of companies providing such training grows along with their size. Out of the overall number of companies employing 10-49 people only 62% provided training for their employees. The figure was 84% for medium-sized companies and 96% for companies with over 250 employees. In all these indicators the ČR scored better than the average for the EU-25, although in the case of large companies the difference was only 1 percentage point.

0505 CVET at the initiative of individual

Adults have several **opportunities for individual training**. The range of courses is very wide. Access is open for all applicants who pay the relevant course fee:

- courses offered by commercial training organisations or consultancies;
- courses and programmes offered by public institutions such as regional and local culture and training centres, libraries, museums, etc., or by church establishment;
- specialist courses, courses in various subjects or subject areas, and “post-maturita” specialisation courses focused on acquiring additional skills necessary for the practice of a profession. These courses may be offered by secondary schools and tertiary professional schools for a payment;
- so-called lifelong learning programmes focusing on a profession or being part of leisure activities. These programmes may be provided for free or for a payment by higher education institutions;
- courses of leisure education offered by other institutions which are part of the schools system. This type of education (for both – adults and children) could be provided by:
 - basic art schools (*základní umělecké školy – ZUŠ*) providing courses in arts (music, dance, fine arts, literature/drama);
 - leisure centres (*střediska volného času – SVČ*) providing courses in languages, computer skills, fine arts, music, photography and a range of other areas;
 - state language schools (*státní jazykové školy – SJŠ*) providing language education.

CVET on the initiative of individual is **not statistically monitored**. Some information is provided by the Labour Force Survey – Ad hoc Module on Lifelong Learning implemented in 2003. The survey identified whether individuals attended their first (only) continuing learning course in the previous year mainly **for personal or social reasons**, or for job related reasons (it is supposed that job related training is on the initiative of employer).

Table 1: Reasons for participation in a continuing learning course according to age (in %), 2003

Age	Mainly for job related reasons	Mainly for personal or social reasons
15-24 years	43.8	56.2
25-34 years	76.9	23.1
35-49 years	85.4	14.6
50-64 years	89.9	10.1
25-64 years	83.7	16.3
Total (15-64 years)	76.3	23.7

Source: ČSÚ, Labour Force Survey - Ad hoc Module "Lifelong Learning", 2003, 2nd quarter

- Personal or social reasons were behind the participation in lifelong learning of nearly one quarter of the respondents (23.7%), while over three quarters of them participated for job-related reasons (76.3%).
- The proportion of those with job reasons increases with the age of the respondents. In the 15-24 age group personal or social reasons predominate slightly (56.2%), in the age group over 25 years job related reasons are highly predominant (76.9% - 89.9%).

06 Training VET teachers and trainers

0601 Types of Teachers and Trainers in VET

Teachers work almost exclusively in the IVET context, above all in the context of formal learning. A special category of educators in IVET are **IVET trainers** (*instruktoři*), who lead the training of students (apprentice) from secondary vocational schools in companies.

Overview on roles and activities of VET teachers:

- creation of curriculum
- teaching
- methodical activities
- assessment
- consulting
- conceptual activities
- administration
- operative activities
- partnership and involving into public life
- self-development
- participation on the development of teachers profession

Trainers work predominantly in the CVET context, in the context of non-formal learning. CVET trainers are a very heterogenous group of professionals, they provide very heterogenous educational services.

Basic segmentation of educators in VET

main types of educators	Czech equivalent	provider of VET	target group	defined by law
IVET teachers ¹	<i>učitelé odborných předmětů, odborného výcviku a odborné praxe</i>	VET schools (ISCED 3, 4, 5)	apprentice, students	yes
IVET trainers	<i>instruktoři</i>	schools in cooperation with companies	apprentice, students	no
CVET trainers	<i>lektori</i>	companies, training institutions or individual trainers	adult trainees	partly
CVET teachers – teachers at institutions for the further education of pedagogical staff	<i>učitelé v zařízení pro další vzdělávání pedagogických pracovníků</i>	institutions for the further education of pedagogical staff	teachers	yes

Note: ¹Beside VET teachers, teachers of general subjects work at vocational schools

Differences between teachers and trainers

teachers	trainers
segment: IVET (schools, there are exemptions)	segment: CVET (educational institutions, enterprises)
high rate of legislative regulations	low rate of legislative regulations
high formal prerequisites for the performance of profession	low formal prerequisites for the performance of profession

On January 2005 the **act on pedagogical staff** (*Zákon o pedagogických pracovnících*) entered into force. It stipulates a new definition of the position of pedagogical staff and lays down qualification requirements for the performance of their occupation and fosters their continuing training and the career system. The law links the continuing training of teachers to a career system.

There is no professional standard for the teaching profession – its development is underway. The standard will define the competencies for the practice of the teaching profession and the ways of their acquisition.

The training of CVET trainers is not governed or supported by any regulation.

0602 Types of Teachers and Trainers in IVET

Types of Teachers in IVET¹

subcategories	Czech equivalent	place of teaching/training	character of subjects
teacher of vocational subjects at secondary school	<i>učitel odborných předmětů střední školy</i>	secondary technical schools (<i>střední odborné školy – SOŠ</i>); secondary vocational schools (<i>střední odborná učiliště – SOU</i>)	theoretical vocational subjects
teacher of practicum	<i>učitel praktického vyučování</i>	secondary technical schools (SOŠ)	practical vocational subjects
teacher of vocational training	<i>učitel odborného výcviku</i>	secondary vocational schools (SOU)	vocational training
teacher of artistic subjects at secondary technical school and conservatory	<i>učitel uměleckých odborných předmětů ve střední odborné škole a konzervatoři</i>	secondary technical schools (SOŠ) and conservatories	artistic subjects
teacher of vocational subjects at tertiary professional school	<i>učitel odborných předmětů na vyšší odborné škole</i>	tertiary professional schools (<i>vyšší odborné školy – VOŠ</i>)	theoretical vocational subjects
teacher of practicum and vocational training at tertiary professional school	<i>učitel praktického vyučování a odborné praxe na vyšší odborné škole</i>	tertiary professional schools (VOŠ)	practicum
Teacher of religion	<i>učitel náboženství</i>	can be at all types of schools	religion

Note: ¹ Beside VET teachers, teachers of general subjects work at vocational schools

Pre-service training for IVET teachers

Teaching qualification for all types of IVET teachers consists of two components: vocational and pedagogical. Teachers should gain both of these components within the framework of their pre-service training.

There are two **models of initial teacher/trainer training**:

- integrative
- consecutive

The **integrative model** is characterising initial training of teachers of general subjects. In this model all components of teacher training – i.e. vocational subjects, pedagogical-psychological disciplines and practical training – is provided and integrated into one study programme. At the end of the studies students take final examinations on the subjects they will teach as well as on the related didactical, pedagogical and psychological disciplines. In this way they meet the requirements for vocational and pedagogical competencies.

Trainee teachers, trained within the integrative model take **accredited Master study programmes at higher education institutions**. The curricula are developed by individual faculties. Each study programme is subject to accreditation awarded by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy* - MŠMT).

The consecutive model prevails in initial training of teachers of vocational subjects. The student is first trained to become an expert in the chosen field. Therefore the choice of subject matter and teaching methods correspond to this objective. After passing the relevant state examinations, the student achieves the qualification of graduate in mechanical or chemical engineering, economics, agriculture, etc. If he/she opts for the teaching profession, the additional requirements for the so-called “pedagogical competence” must be fulfilled. This competence is achieved through **pedagogical studies** which may run either in parallel with undergraduate training in the specialised disciplines, or after completion of undergraduate studies.

With the exception of parallel studies, pedagogical studies are not provided on a full-time basis. Students mostly work as teachers of vocational subjects during their studies. Some VET schools - where the students of pedagogical studies work - provide resources to cover part of the studies.

Pre-service training for teachers of vocational subjects at SOU and SOŠ

These teachers are trained mainly within the framework of the consecutive model; they are rarely trained within the framework of the integrative model.

Pre-service training for teachers of practicum and teachers of vocational training

These teachers are trained only within the framework of the consecutive model.

Pre-service training for teachers of vocational subjects at VOŠ

A teacher of vocational subjects teaching at VOŠ shall acquire teacher’s qualifications through higher education by completing an accredited master’s degree programme in a field appropriate to the nature of the general subject or vocational subject to be taught.

Pre-service training for teachers of practicum and vocational training at VOŠ

A teacher of practicum and vocational training shall acquire teacher’s qualifications through: higher education or tertiary professional education or secondary education accomplished by a

school-leaving examination by completing an accredited study programme in a field appropriate to the nature of the subjects to be taught in practicum.

A person satisfying the following prerequisites may be a teacher (School Act). Such a person:

- shall have teacher's qualification
- shall be without a criminal record;
- shall be in good health; and
- shall prove his/her knowledge of the Czech language.

There is no formal profession standard for IVET teachers and no qualification standard as well. There is no specific regulation on the requirements for the pre-service training for IVET teachers. The curriculum of pre-service training is developed by each higher institution responsible for their implementation. The quality of the curricula is one of the major parts of the evaluation implemented by the Accreditation Commission. The accreditation is provided by the MŠMT.

In-service training for IVET teachers

The Act No. 563/2004 on pedagogical staff (*Zákon o pedagogických pracovnících*) states:

- Pedagogical staff are responsible for their own further education aiming at the renewing, strengthening, and supplementing their qualifications.
- Pedagogical staff may participate in further education increasing their qualifications which is understood as acquisition as well as extending of qualification.
- A head teacher has to organise further education of pedagogical staff in accordance with a further education plan, which takes into account the study interests of a pedagogical worker, the school needs and the budget.
- Further education of pedagogical staff shall be held
 - a) at higher education institutions, at institutions of further education of pedagogical workers and at other facilities (hereinafter referred to as "educational institutions") on the basis of accreditation granted by the MŠMT;
 - b) by self-education;
 - c) by the further education of medical staff under a special legal regulation in the case of teachers of medical subjects.

Continuing training programmes aim at knowledge updating, the broadening and deepening of professional competence of teachers. There are only few programmes for VET teachers. Apart from educational institutions, companies may also be involved in the training of teachers (particularly continuing training).

Trainers in IVET

category	Czech equivalent	work place	character of education
IVET trainer	<i>instruktor pro žáky středního odborného učiliště (SOU)</i>	companies and organisations	work experience

Practical training of students at secondary vocational schools takes place sometimes in enterprises - relevant to the students profile - under the leadership of IVET trainer (*instruktor*). Such a trainer is employed by the enterprise. Usually there is a contract between the school, the company and the IVET trainer. Information about remuneration for their work

with students is not collected. Recruiting of IVET trainers is carried out in companies and based on cooperation of school and companies. IVET trainer – instructor is not a special profession; it is only a professional role.

There is no qualification standard for IVET trainers. The qualification level which is necessary for performing the IVET trainers' role is not defined. There is no formal system of pre-service training for IVET trainers. Some schools provide short pedagogical courses for their IVET trainers.

There is no pre-defined level of teaching qualification necessary to become an IVET trainer, however, a vocational qualification is a requirement. Most schools utilise informal procedures to search for IVET trainers – these activities are not documented. The procedures for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning results or competences (acquired through experience) are not used.

No institutions assess, award or accredit formal qualifications for IVET trainers. Assessment has no formal framework.

Most schools provide quality monitoring of their IVET trainers by chosen VET teachers at these schools. These activities are not documented.

In-service training for IVET trainers

The continuing vocational training of IVET trainers (*instruktoři*) is compulsory within the company in which they are employed but only for the qualification which they need for the job. As far as their training activities are concerned, continuing vocational education is optional.

0603 Types of Teachers and Trainers in CVET

CVET teachers

The term „teacher“ is not used in the CVET context, it is used (nearly always) in connection with pedagogical work within the framework of schools and school facilities (IVET context).

But there is an exception: Within the framework of further education of pedagogical staff there exists a small group of CVET teachers – the exact name of this occupation (according to law) is „teacher at institutions for the further education of pedagogical staff“. But this group is very marginal. Most often the further education of teachers is provided by CVET trainers („lecturers“).

Pre-service training for CVET teachers

A teacher at an institution for the further education of pedagogical staff shall acquire professional qualifications through:

- a) higher education by completing an accredited master's degree programme in the field of pedagogical sciences; or
- b) higher education by completing an accredited master's study programme different to the programme stipulated in letter a)

and by pedagogical practical experience or practical experience in a field appropriate to the nature of educational subjects for not less than seven years and in a scope corresponding at least to half of the determined working hours per week.

There are no special training models for these teachers. Pre-service training is identical to pre-service training of IVET teachers of vocational subjects.

There is no special curriculum for these teachers. The curriculum is identical to the curriculum for IVET teachers of vocational subjects.

The occupation of „teacher at an institution for the further education of pedagogical staff” is completely newly defined by law, there is no system of assessment or quality monitoring.

In-service training for CVET teachers

No data available.

CVET trainers

subcategories (non-formal categorisation – these categories are not at legislation)	Czech equivalent	place of teaching/training
trainer – entrepreneur (self-employed persons)	<i>lektor – podnikatel (osoby výdělečně činné)</i>	all contexts of non- formal learning, marginally at schools ¹
trainer – employee	<i>lektor – zaměstnanec</i>	
manager and expert	<i>lektor – manažer, specialista</i>	
trainer – volunteer	<i>lektor – dobrovolník</i>	

Note: ¹Contexts, natures and work places, in which trainers work are very heterogenous: companies and organisations, training centres, culture centres, out-door, privat natures, schools etc.

- trainers – entrepreneurs: they are self-employed people working on the basis of a trade licence and performing trainer-type of tasks as a part-time or full-time job;
- trainers – employees: their working activity is mostly oriented towards the teaching and training of educational institution and company staff (in-company training, out-of-company training);
- managers and experts who perform teaching as a part of their professional activities or as an auxiliary activity;
- trainers – volunteers from non-profit organisations performing useful public activities based on a voluntary principle.

In addition to the above mentioned classifications it is possible to note further trainer classifications according to roles: trainer of management, mentor, coach, tutor, supervisor, facilitator etc.

The trainer’s job is regulated by the Trade Act (*Obchodní zákoník*). Trainer’s job is regarded as a so-called non-regulated profession which does not require the proof of any vocational or other competences. This job can be performed if certain basic requirements are fulfilled.

Statistical data (number of trainers, age distribution or gender balance) are not collected. There is no structure for attracting and recruiting people to become trainers.

Pre-service training for CVET trainers and other learning facilitators

There is no formal profession standard for CVET trainer and no qualification standard as well. There is no specific regulation on the requirements for the pre-service training for CVET trainers. Within this opened legislative space a few of pre-service training models work:

- master’s degree programmes including trainer’s qualification,
- bachelor’s programmes including trainer’s qualification,

- study courses for trainers at higher education institutions,
- courses focused on trainer's skills at CVET institutions.

There is no pre-defined level of qualifications necessary to become a trainer in CVET, however, particular CVET training institutions might define their own admission requirements – this information is not collected.

There is only one formal requirement for VET trainers – entrepreneurs, i.e. a trade certificate. But this certificate is unrelated to qualification or educational attainment.

Even though the qualification of trainers is not defined precisely, a higher educational qualification and practical experience in adult education are usually required. The requirements for trainers in public administration are defined and checked by the Ministry of Interior. There can also be special requirements by teaching profile – as far as the specific fields of public administration are concerned, the practical experience is an asset, while regarding general subjects the level of education is assessed.

The certification of trainers is being gradually developed. The standard for the qualification of trainers is used especially in foreign language teaching where the examination of trainers must correspond to the international certificates (e.g. examination in English or German). Another example is the Association of Institutions for Adult Education (*Asociace institucí vzdělávání dospělých* - AIVD) which organises courses for trainers leading to a certificate. Another certificate is issued by the Association of Management Trainers and Consultants (*Asociace trenérů a konzultantů managementu* - ATKM), which verifies the quality of those trainers as members of professional associations.

In-service training for CVET trainers

On the educational market there are several in-service, continuing training programmes for the development of CVET trainers' vocational and training skills. These are not regulated or centrally organised. Some CVET institutions have their own HRD strategy supported by sub budget and provide training for their trainers, but these activities are not documented.

07 Skills and competences development and innovative pedagogy

0701 Mechanisms for the anticipation of skill needs

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

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

So-called “branch groups” operating at the National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education based on an assignment of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy* - MŠMT), focus on qualitative changes in the content of skilled labour. These groups (there are currently 25) consist of experts in vocational programmes development, representatives of vocational and technical schools and employers. On the basis of available sources of information about the developments in various industries they follow development trends in groups of related occupations. The activities of the branch groups cover virtually all employment opportunities available to graduates of secondary VET schools and tertiary professional schools. One partial outcome of the work of the groups is 21 industry-focused studies which constituted a basis for the development of a comprehensive study published in 1999.

The monitoring of development trends in groups of related occupations will be repeated periodically. In 2004 and 2005 studies were published which were entitled “Development of Qualification Requirements in Groups of Related Occupations” for business and entrepreneurship, information services, gastronomy, hotels and tourism and performing arts.

The results of this exercise should directly influence the development of national curricula (*rámcové vzdělávací programy*) for VET.

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

The activities launched within the ISA project are now part of a European Social Fund project entitled “Education, Information and Guidance” which started in 2005.

In 2001 a **combined qualitative/quantitative methodology for forecasting** skill needs was developed as part of a project financed from the Leonardo da Vinci programme. It is based on experience gained in selected Western European countries and adjusted to the conditions in the ČR. The methodology includes a quantitative forecasting model which provides information about employment prospects in the labour market throughout the ČR over a five-year period for particular qualifications, and information about employers’ chances of finding prospective employees with such qualifications. There is also a methodology for the development of sectoral and regional studies complementing the quantitative information in the model by the qualitative aspects of the changes in sectoral/regional demand for qualifications. The methodology is being developed further and used in project supported by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (*Ministersvo práce a sociálních věcí - MPSV*) which will run until 2009.

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

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

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

0702 Bridging pathways and new educational partnerships

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

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

There have been rather sporadic cases where general and vocational education was integrated by means of integration of a *gymnázium* (school providing general education at upper

secondary level – see 0401) and a secondary technical school (*střední odborná škola – SOŠ*). *Gymnázia* (ISCED 3A) always promoted their profile as schools preparing for studies at tertiary level and were afraid to merge with SOŠ (ISCED 3A). In view of these SOŠ introduced, in the 1990s, general/vocational programmes of a **lyceum type** (technical, economic, science, pedagogy) which have a general focus and are designed for students who aspire to study at higher education institutions (*vysoké školy – VŠ*) of a technical and business nature. In the academic year 2003/2004 first year students at *lycea* accounted for 5.7% of students in first years at SOŠ. There are very good prospects mainly for technical *lycea* due to their cooperation with VŠ. Moreover, the establishment of *lycea* is supported by regional self-governing bodies. In view of the low number of *gymnázia*, *lycea* may constitute an alternative way of increasing the number of students with general as well as vocational education at ISCED 3A levels who, at the same time, will have the necessary preparation for higher education.

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

The **new qualifications framework** which is being developed as part of the ESF project “National Qualifications System” should contribute to the overcoming of barriers between various educational paths, mainly between initial and continuing vocational education. The system should incorporate all qualifications that may be acquired via formal, non-formal and informal education. As part of the ESF project “Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Education” the involvement of schools and their networks in the development of continuing education and recognition of prior learning outcomes should be tested. All this is embedded in the Act on validation and recognition of the outcomes of continuing education (see 0302 and 0802).

0703 Renewal of curricula

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

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

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

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

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

The School Act passed in 2004 enacts changes in curricular policy. At central level, so-called **national curricula** will be developed which reflect the efforts made towards curricula based on competencies and, in addition to the content of education, also set out the required targeted competencies of graduates. Before the end of 2003 over 20 national curricula had been developed covering approximately 70% of VET students, and they have been and will be tested on a pilot basis. The development of national curricula is co-ordinated by the National Institute of Technical and Vocation Education, who co-operate with the relevant “branch group” consisting of representatives of schools, social partners and, most importantly, employers. The development of national curricula is a demanding process involving several rounds of consultations with all stakeholders (teachers, school associations, social partners, professional associations, regional education authorities, etc.), until they are finally approved by the Ministry of Education. At present the development of school-based curricula in line with framework curricula is being tested as part of the ESF project ESF Pilot S. The project involves 30 secondary technical schools (*střední odborné školy – SOŠ*) and secondary vocational schools (*střední odborná učiliště – SOU*) from all over the ČR.

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

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

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

08 Validation of learning – recognition and mobility

0801 Validation of formal learning – general concepts and schemes

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

Formal IVET

Certificates issued in formal education are governed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy* - MŠMT) legislation. Apart from other things, these regulations stipulate evaluation procedures for the relevant programmes and rules for issuing certificates of their successful completion.

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

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

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

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

- formative as well as summative evaluation is applied during studies;
- there is no general description of student performance in relation to marking;
- there are no student assessment standards to be used in the course of studies;
- at the end of studies students take comprehensive final examinations. The law stipulates that the performance of the student during the examinations should be assessed with no regard to his/her previous performance;
- final examinations are not standardised (see below);

- assessment is therefore very subjective (a difference of 2 grades is estimated as possible – i.e. the performance of a student who at school A gets the mark “good” (3) may get “very good” (2) at school B and “sufficient” (4) at school C).

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

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

In view of the aforementioned drawbacks of certification – particularly the non-existence of student performance assessment standards – new regulations for the completion of VET studies have been prepared: final examinations (in vocational programmes ISCED 3C) and “*maturita*” examinations (ISCED 3A). A nationwide introduction of reformed “*maturita*” is envisaged for 2007.

A **reformed “*maturita*” examination** will consist of two parts – common and “profile-based”. The common part is the responsibility of the state as it is centrally developed and evaluated. It consists of an examination in the mother tongue, a foreign language and an optional subject (the student may choose from mathematics, basic civic and social issues, basic science/technology issues, basics of information technology). This concept makes it possible to standardise the examination, to improve its transparency and enhance the relevance of the “*maturita*” certificate to be used for entering further education – primarily at tertiary level. The “profile-based” component is the responsibility of the school director. It takes account of the nature of the discipline, the graduate profile, targeted competencies and the relevant programme. This part of “*maturita*” will make it possible for the school to shape its profile distinctly, which, particularly in VET, is important. (See also 0201, paragraph 7.)

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

A comprehensive approach to the issue of completion of training in vocational programmes at ISCED 3C level is supported by a systemic project entitled “QUALITY – Development of a Comprehensive **System for Monitoring and Evaluation**, including establishment of a Centre for Identification of Educational Results”. The project will be implemented by the MŠMT and its partners with the support of the European Social Fund. The starting point for the project is evaluation standards which set professional competencies for various programmes and criteria for their evaluation. In the project evaluation standards will be combined with the development of the uniform final examinations. By the end of 2008 they will be drafted and tested on a pilot basis at all ISCED 3C level programmes.

Statutory training

The non-existence of a generally valid legal regulation fostering the recognition of non-formal education has resulted in the development of a number of specific sub-regulations within

decrees issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (*Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí – MPSV*) and other ministries (agriculture, industry and trade, health, the interior, and defence) which govern various specific types of CVET or qualification testing. These partial regulations are abundant and they concern, for example, the recognition of the professional competence of individuals working in electrical engineering (Act on professional competence in electrical engineering), crews of ships (Act on maritime transport), railways and railway transport operators (Act on railways), healthcare workers, etc. In line with the relevant regulations they are required either to have obtained the respective certificate, or to have passed the relevant examinations. What is most important in this respect is that it is impossible to perform the respective activity unless the individual holds the relevant formal certificate. (Statutory training - see also 0501, paragraph C.)

Retraining

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

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

0802 Validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning

Until 2005 there was no comprehensive legislation governing the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. This situation restricted transferability between initial and continuing education and participation in lifelong learning. What was particularly discouraging was the fact that, in adult education – and particularly in “second chance” education - adult learners, in order to acquire the relevant certificate of education, had to undergo the same comprehensive programmes as in initial education (only the form of studies was different). No account was taken of the diversity of prior formal or non-formal learning and the actual personal competencies of the learner.

The **new Schools Act** (*Školský zákon*)(law no. 561/2004) effective from 1 January 2005 was a first step forward, as it makes it possible for adults to acquire a partial qualification by passing a single examination as a part of final examination at secondary vocational schools (*střední odborná učiliště - SOU*) or a part of “*maturita*” examination at secondary technical schools (*střední odborná škola - SOŠ*). An individual can obtain a certificate of the single examination, regardless of how he/she has acquired the relevant knowledge and skills.

This single certificate, however, does not constitute a full qualification (level of education). A full qualification can be acquired without prior education in secondary or tertiary professional school based on passing examinations in all subjects for all years, and the final or “*maturita*” examination. It is obvious that the requirements for acquiring a full qualification are set so that, virtually, they cannot be met without a long period of self-study or without undergoing the entire programme (be it full-time or part-time).

Moreover, the law makes it possible for those who have secondary education with “*maturita*” (ISCED 3A) to get a second “*maturita*” certificate or a vocational certificate (*výuční list* – ISCED 3C) based on so-called shortened studies lasting 1 to 1.5 years. Neither of the opportunities is being made use of in view of the short validity of the law (effective from 1 January 2005) and the related lack of preparedness on the part of individuals and schools.

A more systemic step in terms of non-formal and informal learning recognition is the **Law on validation and recognition of the outcomes of CVET** (*Zákon o ověřování a uznávání výsledků dalšího vzdělávání*), which has been adopted in 2006 and its major provisions should become effective on 1 August 2007 (see 50101). The law creates a systemic framework for the recognition of qualifications acquired through non-formal and informal learning. It makes a distinction between partial and full qualifications:

- **partial qualifications** - verification of the partial competencies achieved will be done by means of contrasting the competencies demonstrated with the relevant evaluation standard. This validation of the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning should be done by a so-called “authorised person” (individual or organisation) appointed by an authorising body (relevant ministry). Authorised persons must meet formal and professional requirements relevant within the discipline for which the authorisation is awarded. The validation of partial qualification should be done by means of an examination for which anyone who has the necessary skills to pass it may apply. The examination should be performed at the presence of the “authorised person”, and it may be oral, written or practical, while its content should be in line with the job requirements. The acquisition and demonstration of professional skills is then confirmed by a certificate that corresponds to the relevant partial qualification. A list of the skills acquired should also be part of the certificate. These certificates acquired as a recognised outcome of non-formal or informal learning should be recognised both in the system of initial education and in the labour market.
- **full qualification** (level of education) - it may only be verified and awarded by schools included in the school registry. If an individual has acquired partial qualifications confirming his/her professional competence to perform all tasks within a particular occupation, he/she may acquire the relevant full qualification upon passing a final examination at SOU, “*maturita*” examination at SOŠ or “*absolutorium*” at conservatories (*konzervatoře*). This is a shift as compared to the existing legislation which requires that examinations be passed in all subjects for all years (see above).

A definition of qualifications (partial and full), qualification standards, evaluation standards and a list of authorised persons will be contained in the National Qualifications System which is currently under development.

The future use of the opportunities given by the law will depend on whether certain preconditions are established before the relevant date – i.e. the development of a National Qualifications System, and authorisation of individuals who will evaluate the professional competence of the applicants.

There is no direct binding link between individual jobs (the performance of specific tasks or occupations) and qualifications acquired in education and training (the only exceptions are specific regulated professions and activities defined by law for the performance of which a special certificate is required). It is therefore up to the employer to assess the qualifications of job applicants.

09 Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment

0901 Strategy and provision

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

Career counselling services provided at schools and school counselling facilities, which are the **responsibility of the MŠMT**, are primarily focused on solutions to problems children and young people face during their studies and in the process of choosing or changing their educational paths.

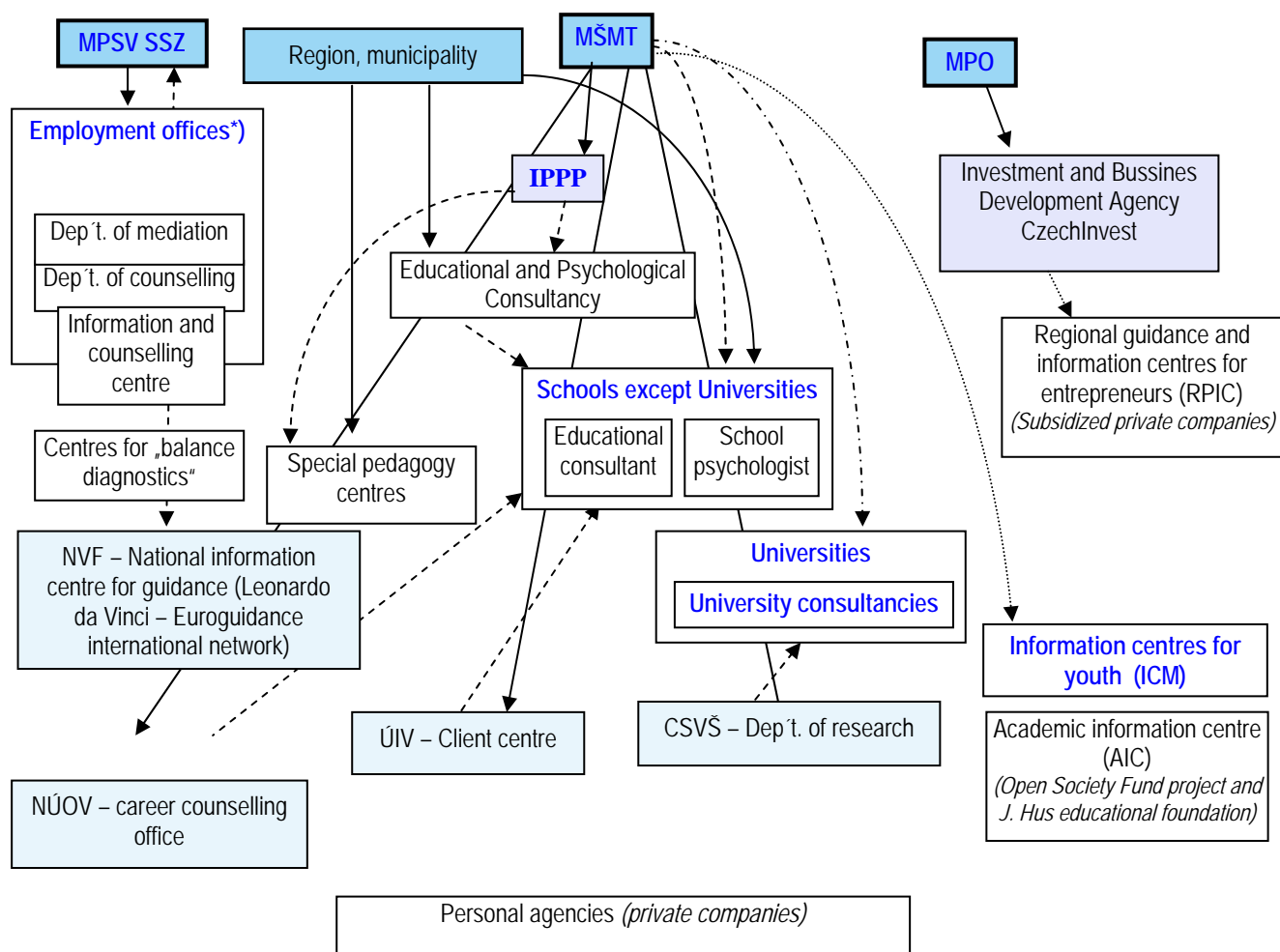
The MPSV (Employment Services Administration) **system of counselling services** is aimed at resolving problems related to the transfer from school to employment, and at supporting job seekers and job applicants to find a job and to increase their employability through retraining.

In addition to these two systems there is a number of **other providers** of counselling services, particularly private providers, employers' associations and counselling organisations which fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and other bodies.

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

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

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



Explanation notes:

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

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

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

The MŠMT counselling system

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

The MŠMT bodies are mainly responsible for issues related to policy, methodology and coordination as regards the development of the education system – i.e. also for career counselling. The **Institute of Pedagogical-Psychological Counselling** plays a major role in this respect. Its main tasks include coordination of career services in schools, and attending to the quality and efficiency of their provision. The Institute also provides specific training focused on counselling services and the development and introduction of new methods of diagnostics in the area of psychology, special pedagogy and pedagogy. The **National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education** focuses, apart from the development of VET policies and strategies for their implementation, on research, methodology and information related to career counselling, and supports the teaching of subjects dealing with labour market issues. One unit of the Institute is the **Centre for Career Counselling** which provides information about programmes offered by secondary VET schools and tertiary professional schools. The Institute also pursues the development of an integrated information system concerning the situation and eligibility of school leavers in the labour market (ISA), and provides information to various users.

Educational counsellors are coordinators of counselling services in **schools**. All basic and secondary schools are obliged by law to establish the position of educational counsellor. The counsellors also work as teachers. The teaching load of teachers-counsellors is decreased in line with the number of students at the school. The counsellors are methodologically guided by the relevant pedagogical-psychological guidance centre, and they address, in cooperation with other teachers, the school director, parents and specialised counselling facilities, the issues related to education and professional orientation of the students. Each school also employs a **school methodologist** concerned with the prevention of socio-pathological disorders, and there might also be **school psychologists** and **special pedagogues**.

From the academic year 2000/2001 the curricula for secondary schools include **subject entitled “Introduction on the world of work”**. It comprises a set of thematic areas designed to develop personal capacities as regards the understanding of labour market issues and flexibility. The thematic areas will be taught coupled with the provision of career services at schools. However, there are limitations as regards the teaching of this subject, as teachers lack appropriate training. This is why a methodological instruction for teachers and methodology for teaching the introduction to the world of work have been developed. The labour market topics are incorporated into the newly developed national curricula (*rámcové vzdělávací programy*) for secondary VET which will be gradually introduced in the form of a cross-sectional theme – Man and the World of Work.

From the academic year 2000/2001 lower secondary education has included the **subject: “career pathway selection”**. The objective is to prepare pupils for transfer from compulsory education to upper secondary schools and to the labour market. The subject is focused on developing the skills that improve employability and help the pupils understand various items of important career-related information. The thematic area “Man and the World of Work” is an integral part of the national curricula (*rámcové vzdělávací programy*) for lower secondary education.

Counselling services provided by schools are linked to the activities of **school counselling facilities** - i.e. pedagogical-psychological guidance centres, centres for special pedagogy, educational care centres and information centres for young people.

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

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

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

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

The MPSV counselling system

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

Counselling at labour offices (*úřady práce* - ÚP) may be distinguished as follows:

- **basic** – pervading all activities of the ÚP where there is a contact between the client and the staff;
- **professional** – provided mostly by information and counselling centres of ÚPs This concerns counselling related to career selection or change;
- **specific** – designed to assess the degree to which a career is suitable for an individual in terms of his/her capacities, needs, aspirations and overall orientation including social background and health condition. It is provided by professional counsellors, psychologists and a network of organisations dealing with diagnostics.

There is an **Information and counselling centre** at each ÚP and its main task is to provide assistance as regards career choice by young people and adults. There is a wide range of information materials and media available for this purpose – mainly used on a “self-service” basis (descriptions of occupations and leaflets on educational provision). There are also software products (particularly career choice programmes and programmes presenting educational courses available), and videotapes (films on occupations and vocational fields). Each centre employs a career counsellor who is ready to attend to clients’ needs.

In 2000, a principal network has been established bringing together **centres for “balance diagnostics”** operating at those labour offices which had been providing psychological services within specialised counselling. As personnel numbers at ÚPs are limited, the provision of “balance diagnostics” services has been expanded by means of the setting up of external centres (there are 25 of them at the moment). They have been authorised by the MPSV and are obliged to observe a uniform methodology for employment services and comply with a Quality Charter.

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

0902 Target Groups and modes of delivery

Services for young people

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

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

Services for adults

The provision of counselling services to adults falls primarily within the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (*Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí - MPSV*). Counselling services for adults are not provided within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy - MŠMT*). There are exceptions such as counselling centres operated by some **MŠMT's organisations** (Centre for Career Counselling at the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education; Customer and Information Centre at the Institute for Information on Education, Centre for Higher Education Studies) – these also provide information about continuing education opportunities. At present the MŠMT, as one of the institutions responsible for the implementation of state ICT policy in education and lifelong learning, pursues the task of developing a system covering general, relevant and reliable information about educational activities for young people and adults. Support for the development of this system is one of the policy priorities of the Ministry.

Within the responsibility of the MPSV services to adult clients as well as young people are provided by **labour offices** – particularly by their job brokering, counselling and retraining departments, **information and counselling centres**, job clubs, and, since recently, “**balance diagnostics**” centres. As regards the employment policy of the MPSV, the maintarget group

of these centres is job seekers. Another category includes people who seek alternative employment (they have a job but want to change it for various reasons or are at risk of redundancy). One important category is school leavers (within two years of successful completion of school at any level). Attention is also paid to the categories of citizens who have limited access to education for some reason (e.g. the disabled, ethnic minorities, citizens at pre-retirement age, etc.).

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

0903 Guidance and counselling personnel

The category of employees in the area of career services

Schools at ISCED 2 and ISCED 3 level	educational counsellors school psychologists teachers of careers and labour market related subjects
Pedagogical-psychological guidance centres Centres for special pedagogy	psychologists special pedagogues
Information and counselling centres at HE institutions	professional counsellors
Labour offices (job brokering and counselling departments)	job brokers professional counsellors
Information and counselling centres	professional counsellors
Centres for “balance diagnostics”	psychologists professional counsellors
Recruitment agencies, regional information and counselling centres and others	usually private entities the with a varying structure and personnel

Basic qualification requirements for the performance of professional activities of counsellors – MŠMT guidance system

- **Educational counsellor** – also works as a teacher. A master degree is complemented by post-graduate qualification studies focused on educational counselling. A requirement has recently arisen that educational counsellors should also undertake training in career counselling (many have already done so) to meet the demands associated with the career choice process.
- **School psychologist** – a four-semester post-graduate study (there are suggestions to make this programme part of undergraduate education). Psychological counselling may only be provided by an individual with a degree in psychology or in the combination of psychology and pedagogy. Independent diagnostic and therapeutic work may only be performed by an individual with at least one year of experience in counselling.

- **Psychologist** – a master degree at teacher training or philosophical faculties in accredited study programmes.
- **Special pedagogue** - a master degree at teacher training faculties in the relevant specialisation. Independent diagnostic and therapeutic work may only be performed by an individual with at least one year of experience in counselling at school.
- **Teacher of career path selection / introduction to the world of work** – is a teacher with a qualification in other subjects. Studies with this focus have not yet been included in the undergraduate training of teachers-to-be. Special courses are organised and methodological instruments developed to support the teaching of these subjects.

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

Basic qualification requirements for the performance of professional activities of counsellors - MPSV guidance system

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

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

10 Financing – Investment in Human Resources

1001 Background information concerning financing arrangements for training

The system of funding IVET is derived from the system of state administration and self-administration in education. There are also differences depending on whether the institution is private or public. In 2001, as a result of decentralisation of public administration and the strengthening of regional and local self-administration, the responsibility for founding secondary vocational schools (ISCED 3C) (*střední odborná učiliště – SOU*), secondary technical schools (ISCED 3A) (*střední odborné školy – SOŠ*) and tertiary professional schools (ISCED 5B) (*vyšší odborné školy – VOŠ*) was delegated to regions (regional authorities). Regions administer approximately 76% of SOU and SOŠ and some 66% of VOŠ (see Annex: The structure of schools providing secondary VET according to the founding body).

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

Founding body	Schools		Schools	
	Number	Proportion (%)	Number	Proportion (%)
	Secondary VET*		Tertiary professional education	
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	-	-	-	-
Ministry of Justice	1	0.1	-	-
Ministry of Interior	4	0.3	1	0.6
Ministry of Defence	4	0.3	-	-
Municipality	8	0.6	-	-
Region	1,003	75.6	114	65.5
Private	289	21.8	47	27.0
Church	17	1.3	12	6.9
Total	1,326	100	174	100

Source: Own calculations based on data in the Statistical Yearbook on Education 2004/2005, Performance Indicators, table A1.1.7, ÚIV.

Note: * includes secondary vocational schools and secondary technical schools.

The responsibility for funding is shared between the founding body and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy – MŠMT*) (see Annexes: Chart of financial flows in secondary VET, Chart of financial flows in higher professional schools). The funding of secondary VET schools and tertiary professional schools is governed by the School Act (*Školský zákon*).

The funding of higher education institutions (*vysoké školy – VŠ*) (see Annex: Chart of financial flows in higher education institutions) is regulated by the act no. 111/1998 on higher education institutions (*Vysokoškolský zákon*). Based on this law former state VŠ have acquired the status of public VŠ. State-owned assets necessary for teaching, research and public activities carried out by VŠ have been transferred into their ownership. A management board, which must be established at each public higher education institution, sees to the efficient use of these assets. On 1 January 2006 an amendment to the law on higher education institutions became effective. Among other things it provides for a change in the system of funding of VŠ: they can make profit and transfer part (5%) of the financial resources dedicated to the research and development projects to the following financial year.

Tuition fees are the source of revenues for private VŠ. If a private VŠ has the status of a public benefit organisation (Act no. 248/1995 on public benefit organisations and on changes to other acts), it may receive a subsidy from the MŠMT. The subsidy must be used to fund the teaching of accredited study programmes and lifelong learning programmes (see 0503) and to support creative activities associated with these programmes.

Staff training is financed by employers, employees, or by both. Upon meeting certain conditions the employer may obtain a certain amount of resources from the state budget as part of active employment policy schemes, or on the basis of the act on investment incentives (Act no. 72/2000 as amended). Before 2000 investment incentives were provided on an individual basis in line with government resolutions), or within the framework of various programmes (A programme for the support for the creation of new jobs in regions most afflicted by unemployment - Government's Resolution no. 566/2004. The Operational Programme – Human Resources Development, the Single Programming Document – Objective 3, Prague, etc.)

The retraining of job seekers is financed from the state budget (the budget of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) as part of an active employment policy (Act no.1/1991 on employment (*Zákon o zaměstnanosti*)). Retraining is organised by labour offices and the courses are delivered to participants for free.

1002 Funding for initial vocational education and training

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

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

Public VET schools at secondary level (ISCED 3C, 3A) and tertiary professional level (ISCED 5B)

There are secondary vocational schools (ISCED 3C) (*střední odborná učiliště – SOU*), secondary technical schools (ISCED 3A) (*střední odborné školy – SOŠ*) and tertiary professional schools (ISCED 5B) (*vyšší odborné školy – VOŠ*). The expenditure of **public schools** set up by regions is covered from the state budget via the budget of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy - MŠMT*) and from the relevant regional budget. The resources from the **state budget** are allocated to schools to cover their expenditure related to:

- industrial relations (wages and salaries, including social security and health insurance contributions, and a contribution for state employment policy),
- teaching tools, textbooks (which are provided for free),
- the continuing training of teachers and trainers.

Resources from **regional budgets** are allocated to schools for operational and capital costs. If a municipality is the school's founding body, operational and capital costs are covered from

the municipal budget. In line with its priorities and financial situation, a municipality may contribute resources for any costs incurred by schools in its administrative area. As regards schools set up by a ministry, the costs of teaching and operation and capital costs are covered by the ministry's budget.

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

Regions set so-called regional normative rates by means of which they distribute the overall amount of resources received from the state budget to individual schools in the relevant region. The regional normative rates are set taking account, above all, of

- the regional long-term plan for of education and development of education system;
- national curricula (*rámčové vzdělávací programy*);
- the scope of teaching;
- the number of pupils in classrooms.
- The region must observe a methodology developed by the MŠMT. The levels of national as well as regional normative rates are made public.

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

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

Private VET schools at secondary level (ISCED 3C, 3A) and tertiary professional level (ISCED 5B)

The state budget also provides financial resources for the activities of private schools and schools set up by registered churches or religious societies which are included in the schools register. The resources are provided on the basis of a contract between the school and the relevant regional authority. The contract specifies the activities for which the subsidy is provided – in general non-capital costs related to education are covered. The subsidy is set as a percentage of the "normative" per one pupil/student for a comparable programme and form of study provided within public education. The school may ask the region to increase the subsidy subject to the fulfilment of specific conditions. These are stipulated in the act on the provision of subsidies to private schools: good results from evaluation conducted by the Czech School Inspectorate (*Česká školní inspekce – ČŠI*), use the entire profit to pay for education, etc. The percentage of the normative and the level of the subsidy are illustrated in the following table. The proportions have been valid since 2000/2001.

The funding of private schools from the state budget

Type of school	% of the normative	increased % of the normative
SOU (ISCED 3C)	80	100
SOS (ISCED 3A) and VOŠ (ISCED 5B)	60	90

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

One partial source of the funding of private secondary VET schools, and also public VOŠ, is the fees these institutions collect for the provision of education or school services. The rules governing the level of the fees and a maximum fee for public VOŠ are set out in a MŠMT regulation. The level of tuition fees collected by private schools is fully at their discretion.

Public higher education institutions

The funding of higher education institutions (*vysoké školy – VŠ*) is governed by the act on higher education institutions (*Vysokoškolský zákon*). The revenues of **public VŠ** primarily consist of:

- contribution from the state budget;
- subsidies from the state budget;
- study-related fees;
- income from property;
- other revenues from the state budget, state funds and municipal budgets;
- revenues from complementary activities;
- donations and inheritance.

Each public VŠ is entitled to a contribution. This contribution is used to cover the costs related to the implementation of accredited study programmes and lifelong learning programmes, the costs associated with research, scientific, developmental, artistic and other creative activities (this activity must follow from accredited study programmes and lifelong learning programmes), and the costs of institutional development. The level of the contribution is derived from the long-term plan of the VŠ, the MŠMT's long-term plan for the development of higher education institutions, the type and financial demands of accredited study programmes and lifelong learning programmes, the number of students, the achievements in educational and creative activities and their demands.

Apart from the contribution, VŠ is entitled to a subsidy for development of higher education institution. It could cover students' accommodation and meals, etc. The level of the subsidy is derived from the long-term plan of the VŠ, the MŠMT's long-term plan for the development of higher education institutions.

The rules concerning the provision of contributions to public VŠ, which cover the calculation formula, as well as the level of contributions provided to individual VŠ are published in the MŠMT' Bulletin and on the Ministry's websites.

A public VŠ may collect study-related fees. Their level is derived from a "basic fee" (The basic fee is set at a level of 5% of total non-capital expenditure per one student which was provided to HE institutions by the MŠMT in the previous year), which is set by the MŠMT for each academic year. The basic fee for 2004-2005 is CZK 2 561 (cca EUR 85). Fees may be collected for:

- participation in admission proceedings at 20% of the basic fee;

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

The level of fees is announced publicly by the VŠ before the deadline for filing applications for studies. The fees (with the exception of the fee listed under the last point constitute an income to the scholarship fund. The rector may exempt some fees (fees related to exceeding the standard length of study, taking another study programme and studying in a foreign language), or defer their due dates taking into consideration the student's performance and social situation.

As part of its complementary activities VŠ may perform paid activities which follow from its educational and creative activities, or ensure a more efficient use of human resources and property. These complementary activities cannot endanger the quality, scope and availability of the main activities. Since 2006, VŠ can make profit.

Private higher education institutions (VŠ)

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

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

The overall expenditure on IVET is not monitored regularly. It is mainly data about private expenditure that are missing. The revenues of schools from complementary business activities are not accounted for either, but they are assumed to constitute a negligible proportion of the overall amount of resources.

Public resources spent on higher education (subsidies from the state and local budget for educational activities, accommodation and meals for students, research and development, capital spending) accounted for some 78% of the overall annual budget of VŠ. Revenues from the institutions' own activities (student services, accommodation fees, payments for student and staff meals, donations, renting, revenues from sales of own products, sales of property, fees for various training courses, symposia, etc.) account for around 22% of the higher education institutions' budget. Based on the data available it is impossible to distinguish between resources related to initial and continuing education provided by VŠ.

1003 Funding for continuing vocational education and training, and adult learning

Publicly provided CVET

The education of adults in schools (public and private) leading to the acquisition of a qualification (level of education) is, in legal terms, considered to be not continuing, but initial

education (this part-time education is subject to the same regulations as those in place for initial education).

Besides initial education schools may also provide so-called continuing education and training (*další vzdělávání* - DV) and so-called lifelong learning (*celoživotní vzdělávání* - CV). DV and CV can be included in publicly promoted education, because they are provided in relevant institution's facilities funded from public resources. They are provided by the following public schools:

- Secondary vocational schools (ISCED 3C) (*střední odborná učiliště* - SOU), secondary technical schools (ISCED 3A) (*střední odborné školy* - SOŠ) and tertiary professional schools (*vyšší odborné školy* - VOŠ) may provide specialist courses, courses in various subjects or subject areas, and “post-*maturita*” specialisation courses aimed at delivering general and vocational knowledge and skills necessary for a particular occupation. The courses may be provided for a payment.
- Higher education institutions may provide, as part of their educational activities, lifelong learning programmes (focusing on professional development or taken as a leisure activity) either for a fee or for free. The detailed terms are set out in the institution's internal regulations.

Enterprise-based CVET

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

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

Large investors (investment in manufacturing exceeding CZK 100 million (cca EUR 3.4 million) in regions with an above-average rate of unemployment) may, as part of investment incentive schemes, get a subsidy of up to 35% of their training or retraining costs. Smaller investors (investments exceeding CZK 10 million (cca EUR 340 000) in regions most afflicted with unemployment) may obtain a similar subsidy of up to CZK 30 thousand (cca EUR 1 000) per one employee participating in training or retraining. These subsidies are provided within the Programme for the support for the creation of new jobs in regions most afflicted with unemployment.

In the ČR there is no regular monitoring of the data on employers' spending on the training of employees. However, one-off surveys have shown that, in the 1990s, this expenditure accounted for less than 1% of total gross wages. Following the EUROSTAT survey CVTS 2 in 1999 this indicator was 1.13% - i.e. there has been a slight increase. This data only covers direct training costs. If we add the cost of the wages of the trainees, the proportion of the overall costs of training which companies pay is around 1.9% of total labour costs. This figure is the highest of the 10 new EU member states, but still fails to reach the EU-14 average (2.3%).

The average level of direct training costs hides the differences between companies of varying size and operating in different branches. The largest proportion of direct training costs in total

gross labour costs occurs in companies in the electricity, gas and water supply branches (5.8%). However, in these branches there is a high proportion of compulsory continuing training. An above-average level proportion of training costs is also shown by the financial intermediation (3.4%). On the other hand, the lowest proportions occur in companies in mining and quarrying, woodworking and furniture manufacturing (0.3%), and manufacturing in textile and leather (0.4%). In terms of company size, the smallest companies (up to 50 employees) spent the least level of resources on training (1.1%). The largest proportions of training costs in total costs occurred in medium-sized companies (250-499 employees – 2.6%). There are also differences according to company ownership. Surveys show that foreign-owned companies pay more attention to the training of their staff than Czech companies.

1004 Funding for training for unemployed people and other groups excluded from the labour market

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

Expenditure on retraining in 1993-2004 and the proportions in GDP and in total expenditure on active employment policy (AEP)

Year	Expenditure on retraining (1993=100%)	Proportion of retraining costs in total AEP costs (%)	Proportion of AEP costs in GDP (%)
1993	100.0	9.8	0.07
1994	140.9	14.4	0.06
1995	135.7	15.8	0.05
1996	125.4	16.6	0.04
1997	117.4	16.6	0.03
1998	189.4	16.3	0.05
1999	287.4	8.8	0.14
2000	437.1	10.2	0.17
2001	521.9	9.4	0.19
2002	558.9	10.6	0.15
2003	592.6	12.4	0.15
2004	700.4	15.8	0.14
2005	638.0	12.5	0.14

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

In connection with the ČR's joining the EU, resources are also drawn from the ESF to cover quantitative and qualitative expansion or retraining provided by ÚP. These resources are used to co-fund various activities in line with the relevant measures of the Operational Programme

1005 Perspectives and issues: from funding to investing in human resources

The Funding of Initial Education

Public expenditure on education has been at a very low level over the long term (in 2002 it reached 4.4% of GDP). After EU accession in 2004, education system development can be supported from European Social Fund. As part of the support for initial education large, systemic, central projects are being implemented at national level, as well as grant-funded (tendered) projects promoted by individual schools, municipalities and non-profit organisations. There are measures focused on:

- the improvement of the quality of education in schools and school facilities (modernisation of school curricula, development of the continuing training of teachers and educators, enhancing the conditions for the education of pupils with special learning needs, etc.);
- the development of the information and counselling system, as well as the system for quality assurance in education;
- providing support for tertiary education, research and development.

The objective of the ongoing reform of **higher education funding** is to introduce a performance oriented funding system for the public higher education institutions (*vysoké školy* – VŠ) encouraging the effective use of the resources; to diversify the funding mechanism; and to stimulate fundraising from the private sector and by commercialising the R&D results.

By 2008 public expenditure on higher education as a proportion of GDP should reach 1%. Although this is a considerable increase (in 2003 the proportion was 0.8%), the percentage will remain below the EU average (1.3% of GDP). Financial resources will not be increased identically in all VŠs, but will be differentiated and linked to:

- specific educational activities of individual VŠs with measurable outcomes;
- output parameters and parameters related to the effective use of public resources in an individual VŠ;
- the long-term plan for the development of the relevant VŠ within the framework of the development programme of the Ministry.

The increased funding will support development programmes (i.e. partnerships of VŠ in joint projects, etc.), and specific research and development activities at VŠ including a larger involvement of students. Besides, it will promote the output-oriented, effective operations of VŠ (e.g. employability of graduates) and the co-operation between VŠ and the public sector (companies, purchasers of R&D results, etc.).

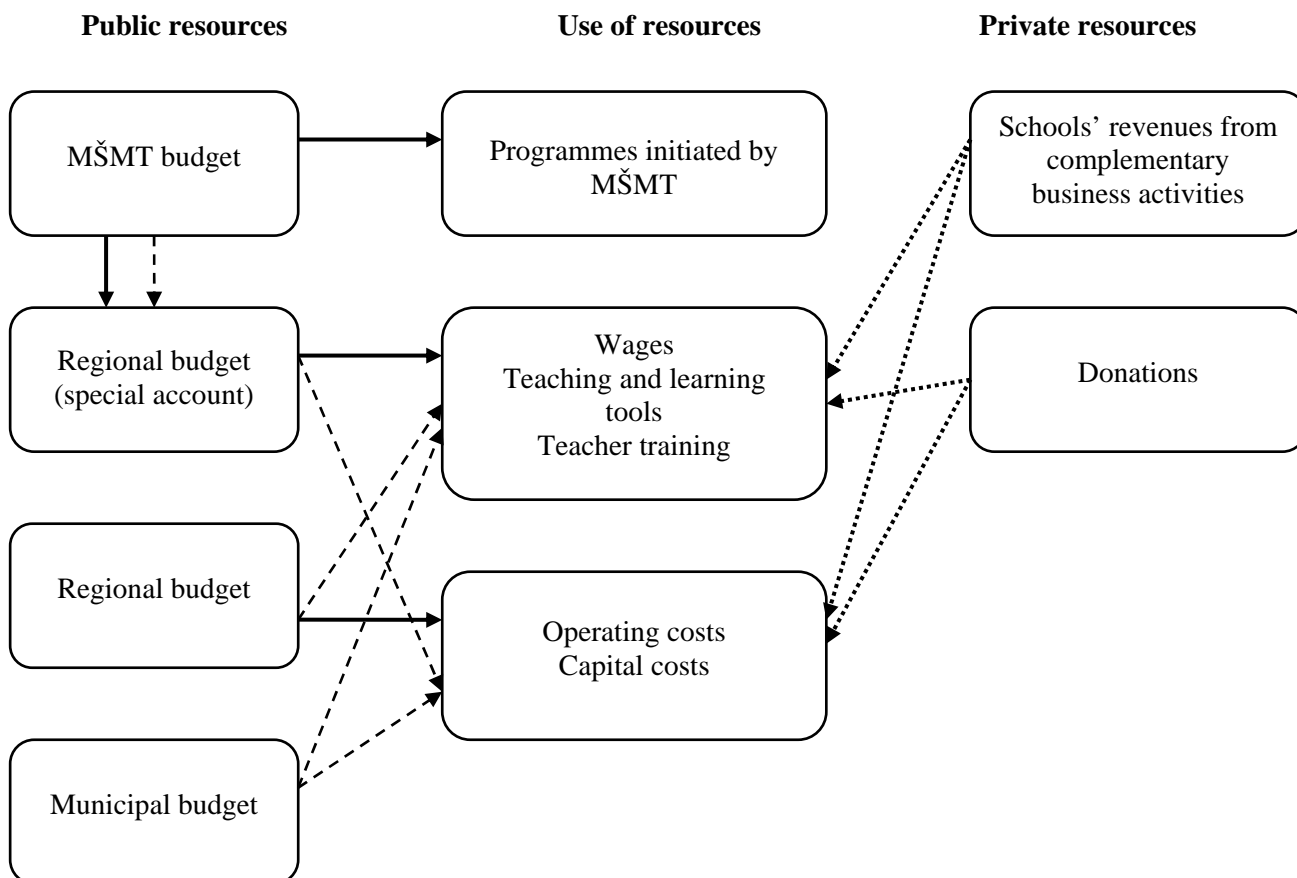
Investment in human resources in enterprises

There is no systemic approach related to the support for investment in human resources in companies. The state operates various support schemes to provide incentives to employers. The programmes funded from the state budget or from the European Structural Funds are based on the co-funding principle. In this way private investment is involved in human resources development and, also, its focus is influenced. Depending on the programme focus, grants within these schemes are available either for all enterprises, for companies in specific industries, or for small and medium-sized companies. The actual subject of training activities

depends on the needs of the individual companies and it is not specified in most of the programmes.

There is a specific programme focused on the support for companies striving for the “Investors in People” standard. Apart from enterprises, the support is also provided to continuing training providers.

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



—————> mandatory transfers from public sources

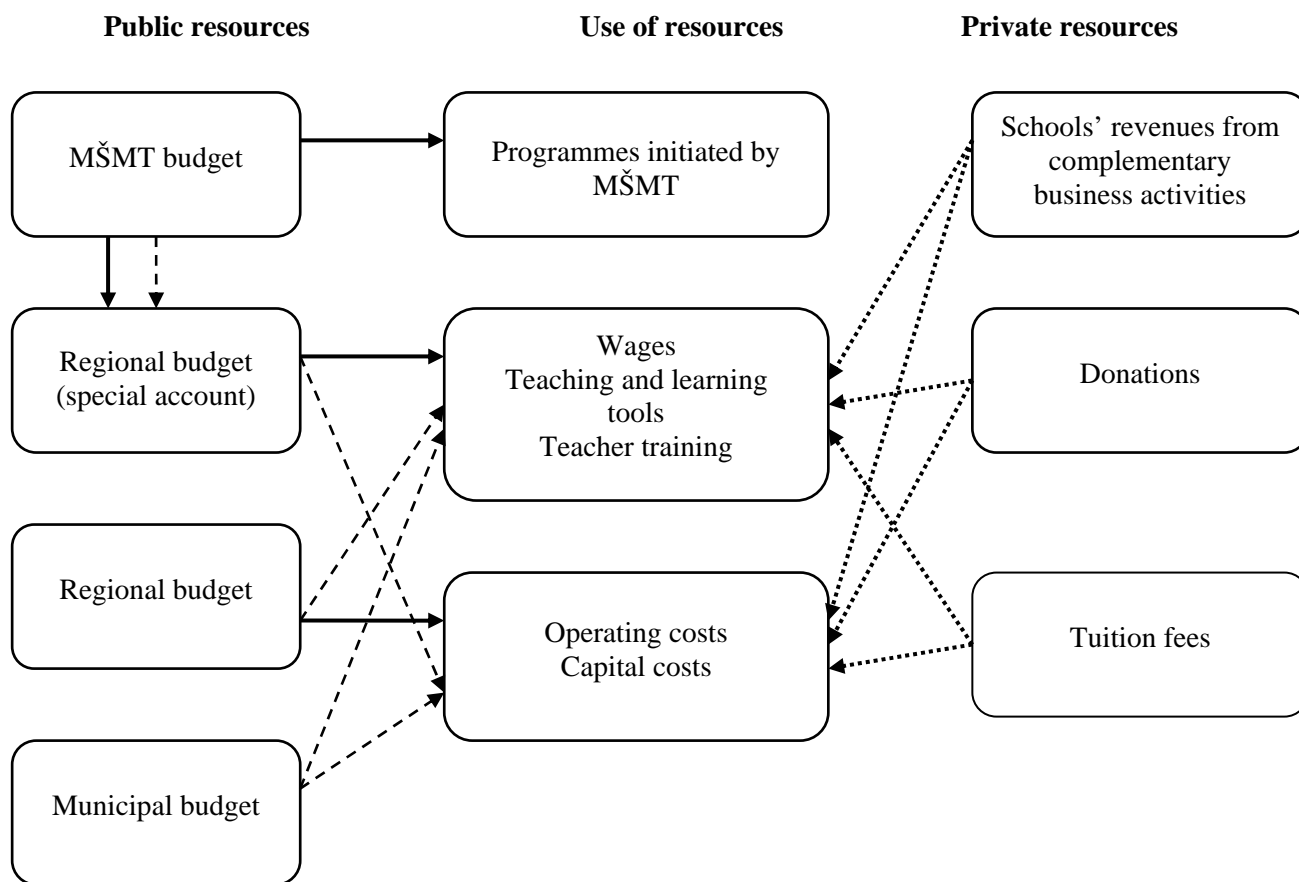
- - - - -> voluntary transfers from public sources

.....> transfers of private resources

MŠMT Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports)

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

A chart of financial flows in tertiary education – tertiary professional schools (VOŠ)



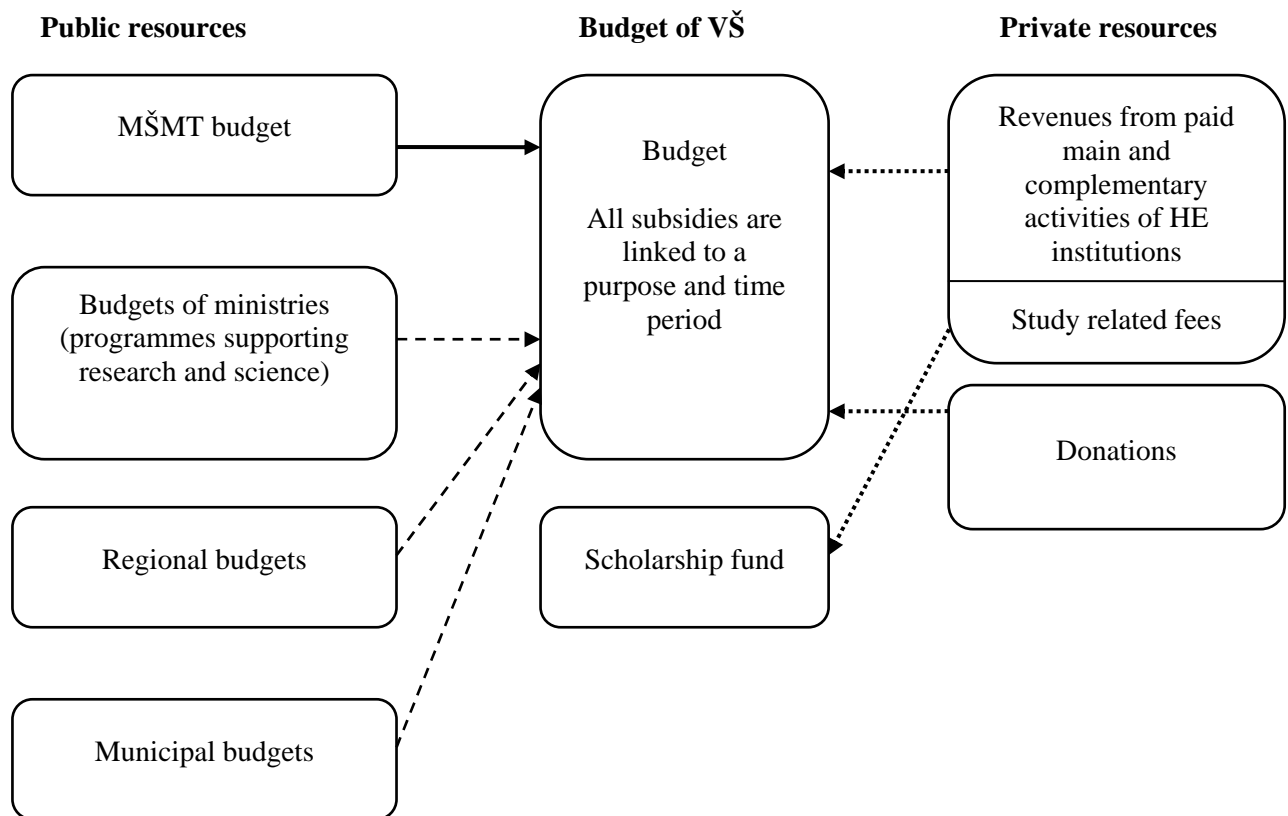
—————▶ mandatory transfers from public sources

-----▶ voluntary transfers from public sources

.....▶ transfers of private resources

MŠMT Ministerstvo školství mládeže a tělovýchovy (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports)

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



- ▶ mandatory transfers
- ▶ non-mandatory transfers
-▶ transfers of private resources

MŠMT Ministerstvo školství mládeže a tělovýchovy (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports)

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

1101 National strategies related to policy priorities, programmes and initiatives at EU level

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

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

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

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

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

Within the **Leonardo da Vinci programme** a total of 817 mobility projects have been approved and implemented, involving 8 313 participants. Of about these 70% were students at all types of vocational and technical schools and about 7% of teachers at these schools. Through participation in mobility projects the students' vocational and language competencies are improved, and this has a positive effect on their employability. The programme helps VET schools expand their international cooperation, improve their skills related to preparation and management of trans-national educational projects, and enhance the quality of their educational provision. Multi-year pilot projects within Leonardo da Vinci facilitate innovation in the objectives and content of vocational education. In 2000-2006 the European Commission approved 45 projects promoted by Czech organisations. Apart from this, some 80 Czech organisations take part annually in pilot projects and language competencies projects as partners of foreign organisations.

So far, 327 secondary schools and tertiary professional schools have participated in projects within the **Socrates programme** in which the ČR has been involved since 1997 (in only 4% of cases as project-coordinators). The total number of participants amounts to over ten thousand students, of which 786 spent a period of time at a foreign partner institution. Vocational training abroad has been undertaken until 2004 by 1 690 teachers, trainers and managers of the aforementioned institutions.

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

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

The **National Centre Europass ČR** at the National Institute for Technical and Vocational Training also provides a major support for mobility and the European dimension in education. Its main task is to disseminate information and co-ordinate all activities concerning the Europass documents in the ČR and, in this way, increase educational and occupational mobility of Czech citizens in the EU. The National Europass Centre ČR officially launched its operations on 30 March 2005.

Europeanisation of curricula

The ongoing curricular reform has a positive impact on VET, as the topic of "europeanisation"/internationalisation is included into the curricula as one of "cross-sectional" themes. One good example of cross-border co-operation is the opportunity for Czech students to study at the European Middle School (EMS) in Vienna. These courses,

which are focused primarily on language training and inter-cultural and European issues, are attended by students from Austria, the ČR, Slovakia and Hungary.

List of abbreviations

i.e.	that is (id est)
etc.	and so on (et cetera)
no.	number
vs.	versus (in comparison with)
p.	page
e.g.	for example (exempli gratia)
approx.	approximately

List of acronyms

AIC	Akademické informační centrum (Academic Information Centre)
AIVD	Asociace institucí vzdělávání dospělých (Association of Adult Education Providers)
ATKM	Asociace trenérů a konzultantů managementu (Association of Management Trainers and Consultants)
Cedefop	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
ČR	Czech Republic
CSVŠ	Centrum pro studium vysokého školství (Centre for Higher Education Studies)
CV	celoživotní vzdělávání (life-long learning – special learning course provided by higher education institutions)
CVET	continuing vocational education and training
CVTS	Continuing Vocational Training Survey
CZK	Czech crown (Czech currency)
ČMKOS	Českomoravská konfederace odborových svazů (Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions)
ČSÚ	Český statistický úřad (Czech Statistical Office)
ČŠI	Česká školní inspekce (Czech School Inspectorate)
DV	další vzdělávání (continuing education and training)
EMS	European Middle School
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
EU – 15	European Union before joining new member states in 2004 (15 states)
EU – 25	European Union after joining new member states in 2004 (25 states)
GDP	gross domestic product
HE	higher education
HRD	human resources development
ICM	Informační centra pro mládež (Information Centres for Youth)
ICT	information and communication technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPPP	Institut pedagogicko psychologického poradenství (Institute of Pedagogical-Psychological Counselling)
ISA	Informační systém o uplatnění absolventů škol na trhu práce (Information system on the situation of school leavers in the labour market)
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISTP	Integrovaný systém typových pozic (Integrated System of Typical Working Positions)
IT	information technology
IVET	initial vocational education and training
MPO	Ministerstvo průmyslu a obchodu (Ministry of Industry and Trade)
MPSV	Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs)
MŠMT	Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy - (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports)

NATO	North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NISP	Národní informační středisko pro poradenství (National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance)
NOZV	Národní observatoř zaměstnanosti a vzdělávání (National Observatory of Employment and Training)
NÚOV	Národní ústav odborného vzdělávání (National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education)
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
NVF	Národní vzdělávací fond (National Training Fund)
OP RLZ	Operační program Rozvoj lidských zdrojů (Operational Programme – Human Resources Development)
RISA	Regional Information System on the Situation of School Leavers in the Labour Market
RHSD	Rada hospodářské a sociální dohody (Regional Council for Social and Economic Agreement)
RPIC	Regionální poradenská a informační centra (Regional Counselling and Information Centres)
RVP	Rámcové vzdělávací programy (national curricula)
RV RLZ	Rada vlády ČR pro rozvoj lidských zdrojů (Government Council for Human Resources Development)
SME	small and medium-sized enterprises
SOŠ	střední odborné školy (secondary technical schools)
SOU	střední odborná učiliště (secondary vocational schools)
SSZ	Správa služeb zaměstnanosti (Employment Services Administration)
SŠVS	Sdružení škol vyššího studia (Czech Association of Schools of Professional Higher Education)
ŠVP	Školní vzdělávací programy (school curricula)
ÚIV	Ústav pro informace ve vzdělávání (Institute for Information on Education)
ÚP	úřady práce (labour offices)
VET	vocational education and training
VOŠ	vyšší odborné školy (tertiary professional schools)
VŠ	vysoké školy (higher education institutions)