



Overcoming School Failure

Background Report for the Czech Republic

June 2011

Prepared by Jana Straková, Jaroslava Simonová and Pavla Polechová
Institute for Information on Education

Table of Contents

Executive summary.....	3
SECTION I: POLICIES AND PRACTICIES FOR OVERCOMING SCHOOL FAILURE...	6
Chapter 1: Structure and governance.....	6
Chapter 2: Fair and inclusive education.....	11
Chapter 3: Fair and inclusive practices.....	20
Chapter 4: Fair and inclusive resourcing.....	22
Chapter 5: Challenges in overcoming school failure.....	28
Appendix 1.....	30
Appendix 2.....	31
SECTION II: TEN STEPS IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONNAIRE.....	33
References.....	50

Executive summary

The Czech Republic has a long tradition of a highly differentiated education system. Tracking occurs very early. At primary level, it is possible for parents to choose, apart from mainstream basic schools, schools for students with special educational needs (attended by 5 % of the age cohort), schools/classrooms with extended curricula in selected subjects (attended by 9 % of the age cohort) or other specialized schools or classrooms (e.g. schools for gifted pupils, bi-lingual schools) for their children. At lower secondary level students can apply for a long academic track called “multi-year grammar schools (*gymnázia*)” (attended by 13 % of the age cohort). At upper secondary level, students who have completed compulsory education at basic school can choose between the general track (four-year grammar schools - attended by 10 % of the age cohort) and the technical track (attended by 50 % of the age cohort) - both leading to a school-leaving examination necessary for transition to tertiary education. They may also opt for a vocational track (attended by 25 % of the age cohort) leading to an apprenticeship certificate and preparing students directly for the labor market.

In the past decade, the differentiation of educational pathways has been further increasing. It occurs at all levels of the system, both in public and private education, and takes on many diverse forms. The Education Act of 2004 launched curricular reform introducing a bi-level curriculum. A curricular framework is defined at national level, while schools are expected to design their own education programmes. These must be in line with the national framework and also take account of the specific needs of the local community. Many headmasters interpret the reform as an invitation to shape their educational profiles through optional subjects and to create selective classrooms of all sorts to offer parents special educational opportunities for their children. Besides classes with extended instruction in a particular subject, classes for the gifted and talented and classes offering bi-lingual and IT-assisted education have been emerging. Entrance exams are increasingly required in „prestigious” schools with a high surplus of demand over supply. This trend is further enhanced by a decline in the student population that leads to stronger competition between schools for students. Moreover, the differentiation is boosted by deterioration of student results shown by international comparative achievement surveys. This development is associated with a growing number of private basic and lower secondary schools and growing demand among affluent families for good quality education outside the public system. Many selective schools and classrooms are not visible in regular statistics; differentiation of the system is not monitored. The consequences of tracking in the Czech education system are not systematically studied.

International comparative studies, however, repeatedly show that the Czech Republic exhibits a stronger dependence of student achievement and educational attainment on family background as compared to most developed countries. The studies also point to a strong relationship between the educational track chosen, the study results and the socio-economic background of Czech students. Moreover, they reveal that there are increasing differences between individual schools with respect to student intake and educational achievement.

Czech society perceives the differentiation of educational pathways as appropriate and desirable. The intention of the Ministry of Education to abolish tracking at lower secondary level, declared in the *National Programme of Education: White Paper* (MEYS 2001), met with strong opposition from the Czech population. High tracks are seen as an important tool in the cultivation of elites and the topic of equal opportunities is dismissed, often with references to socialist ideas. In surveys carried out in 2009 among educators and parents of school children, only 17 % of teachers expressed an opinion that selective schools at lower secondary level should not exist or their number should be reduced. 76 % of parents supported the current practice of early selection. The same survey confirmed that children from families with a high socio-economic status are those who benefit most from school choice. Only 15 % of parents with limited resources make use of the opportunity to choose a school for their children, while 85 % of them send their children to a neighboring school. As concerns affluent parents, 60 % of them use their right to choose a school for their children. Distribution according to the level of education provides a similar pattern.

The Czech Republic is often criticized for the low educational opportunities of Roma students who, according to estimates, account for 1.5 % - 3 % of the school age population and represent the most socially and culturally disadvantaged ethnic minority in the Czech Republic. There is no monitoring of kindergarten attendance for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. A study of the educational pathways of Roma children shows that approximately 40 % of Roma children currently attend kindergartens, and this number has not changed much over time. Due to the rise in the birth rate in recent years there is currently a shortage of places in pre-school institutions. While in 2005 the refusal rate was 2 %, in 2008 it was 6 %. There are no data documenting whether this shortage has any effect on the attendance of Roma children.

Preparatory classes may be established for socially disadvantaged and Roma children, running throughout the year prior to their commencement of compulsory schooling. The classes comprising 10-15 pupils may be established in basic, nursery and special schools. In the academic year 2009/2010 there were 178 preparatory classrooms in basic schools and 73 classrooms in special schools. The fact that special schools can establish preparatory classes is a subject of criticism from NGOs supporting Roma children. They argue that when students complete their preparatory education in special schools they usually continue studying in special schools. The original purpose of preparatory classes was, indeed, to prepare children for mainstream schooling.

Czech education statistics do not contain data on the number of Roma students educated outside mainstream schools. According to estimates, between 40 % and 70 % of Roma children are educated outside mainstream education in schools or classrooms with reduced curricula. The annual report of the Czech School Inspectorate for the academic year 2009/2010 describes many problems regarding the mechanisms for placing students in schools or classrooms where they are educated according to the *Supplement to the Educational Programme for Students with Slight Mental Retardation*. Many Roma students were recommended to these schools by counselling centres without a diagnosis of mental retardation or any other disorder. CSI highlights that 35 % of Roma students are classified as mentally retarded and describes this fact as discriminatory. So far, schools have been entitled to ask for higher funding for disabled students but not for socially disadvantaged students. This was perceived as the main reason for diagnosing Roma children as mentally retarded. In 2011 a definition of a socially disadvantaged child was incorporated into the relevant legislation. Taking effect from the academic year 2011/2012, schools can ask for higher funding not only for students with special needs (disabled) but also for socially disadvantaged students.

Students educated according to reduced curricula are entitled to continue studies at upper secondary level. However, according to NGO reports, this happens very rarely. The Czech Republic is characterized by a high proportion of students completing upper secondary education (94 %), Roma children, however, often leave upper secondary education early or finish their education immediately after completion of compulsory schooling.

Schools that educate students with special needs can ask regional authorities for funding for a teacher assistant. Teacher assistants are managed by teachers and their role is to help students with special needs in their learning, to assist physically disabled students and to help culturally disadvantaged families to communicate with the school and their children to adapt to the school environment. The demand for assistants significantly exceeds the offer, and the same applies to school psychologists and other assisting professionals in schools. There are several grant schemes financing the education of disadvantaged children. There are also many NGOs working with socially disadvantaged and Roma children. However, co-operation between schools and other institutions including NGOs is often insufficient, which is perceived as one of the main barriers preventing effective care of disadvantaged children.

In the school year 2009/2010, a new national project entitled Inclusive Education Support Centres - IESC (funded from the ESF and the national budget) was launched. This three-year project is expected to define and test the conditions for inclusive education in basic schools in the country. There are 9 centres supporting inclusive education that will, in cooperation with 342 schools, map the needs of schools with respect to inclusive education, help the schools to create their support programmes, and offer them advice on how to overcome barriers to learning on the part of individual pupils. Every

centre includes a team of professionals consisting of a psychologist, special needs teacher, teacher, cultural anthropologist and social workers.

Inclusive education in the Czech Republic is hindered not only by the attitudes of the society and insufficient staffing, but also by prevailing school practices. The Czech school builds on summative assessment and extrinsic motivation. Teachers are not trained to deliver formative assessment and adjust teaching and learning to the needs of individual students. There is also lack of methodological materials that would help them to master this difficult task.

SECTION I: POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR OVERCOMING SCHOOL FAILURE

Chapter 1: Structure and governance

*Structure of the Czech education system*¹

Over the last 20 years Czech society has been experiencing a significant population decline. From 1990 until 1996 life births declined by 30 % (from 130, 000 to 90, 000), between 2001 and 2008 there was an increase that reached its peak of 120, 000 life births in 2008. Since then, life births have again been slowly declining. Only in the most positive scenarios the number of inhabitants during the first half of the 21st century will be growing, but this would be caused more by immigration than by natural population development (CSO 2009). Population decline has strongly affected the education system. Between years 1990 and 2010 the number of students attending basic schools declined from 1,235,714 to 789,486 and number of students attending secondary schools declined from 626,022 to 532,918. In 2008, the number of people aged between 0-29 was 3,609, 369 (34.48 % of the total population of 10,467,542). The number of children of compulsory school age (from 6 to 15 years old) was 842,030 (8.04 % of the population).

The official language of instruction is Czech. There are no schools with other languages of instruction besides Czech except for Polish, although Roma, Ukrainians, Slovaks, Vietnamese and Russians are today more abundant than Poles² and live in stronger concentrations in some regions and particularly in Prague. For historical reasons and due to new territorial breakdown after the First World War, there had been Polish schools for the Polish minority (initially the majority in some areas) in Czechoslovakia since the beginning of its existence. The proportion of Polish people in the Czech territories has been declining over time, with the fastest decline in the 1920s. In 2009/10 there were 25 nursery schools, 21 basic schools (providing comprehensive compulsory schooling) and 3 upper secondary schools (1 general and 2 technical) teaching in Polish. Today these schools belong to the Czech school system and are subject to inspection by the Czech School Inspectorate.

The nursery school offers pre-primary education to children aged from 3 to 6³. It is not compulsory, but attendance is very high – more than 90 % of children of the relevant age in the last pre-school year⁴. Crèches are intended for children up to the age of 3. They are not integrated into the education system but come under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health. Although the ministry responsible for crèches is different from the one that has nursery schools within its purview (and this is reflected in separated laws and rules), the educational aims of the two systems of institutions are very similar. In view of the system of a three-year maternity leave⁵, crèches are attended by only 1 % of the relevant age group⁶.

Compulsory school attendance lasts 9 years (6–15 years of age⁷, ISCED 1+2 educational levels). Pupils (almost 80 % of the relevant age band) attend basic schools divided into two stages (5 years of

¹ Statistical data included in this chapter come from Statistical Yearbook on Education 2009/2010, if not stated otherwise (ÚIV 2010).

² In 2009, the most abundant nationalities in the total population of the Czech Republic were as follows: Ukraine (1.26 %), Slovakia (0.70 %), Vietnam (0.58 %), Russian Federation (0.29 %), Poland (0.18 %). The proportion of Roma is estimated at between 1.5 % to 3 % of the total population.

³ Even younger children are allowed to attend nursery schools, but this is very rare.

⁴ In the academic year 2003/2004 nursery schools were attended by 80 % of 3 year-olds, 94.4 % of 4 year-olds and 96 % of 5 year-olds. Due to the increase in birth rates in the 2001 - 2008 period and due to insufficient capacity of nursery schools, attendance rates were lower in the academic year 2010/2011: 75.6 % of 3 year-olds, 86.7 % of 4 year olds and 91.2 % of 5 year-olds. Non-attendance is not monitored according to family background or nationality.

⁵ Maternity leave is not paid by employers. Parents can get money from the sickness insurance system (37 weeks) and state social support during two, three or four years.

⁶ Between 1990 and 2005 the number of places in crèches dropped from 39,829 to 1,671, number of facilities dropped from 1,043 to 54 (Kuchařová, Svobodová 2006).

primary education and 4 years of lower secondary education). The organisation of the primary stage within basic school differs from the organisation of the secondary stage. Children in classes at primary level are educated by one main teacher, sometimes with one or two teachers specialized in a foreign language and/or another subject, e. g. mathematics, whereas at lower secondary level there are specialized teachers for every subject. Both stages work under the same management.

Starting with the second stage, there is the possibility of continuing compulsory schooling in secondary general schools: in eight-year secondary general programmes after the 5th year, or in six-year secondary general programmes or conservatoires after the 7th year. Admission is based on entrance examination. The six-year and eight-year secondary general programmes are called “multi-year grammar schools” (*gymnázia*), to distinguish them from four-year grammar schools that are an option after completing all 9 years of basic school. Multi-year grammar schools are attended mainly by students from families with a high socio-economical status. In 2009, 54 % of multi-year grammar school students in the final year of compulsory education had at least one parent with ISCED 5A education, whereas the figure was only 16 % among basic school students⁸.

After completing compulsory schooling, 96 % of the population (in relation to the age cohort of 15 to 18-year-olds) continue studies in non-compulsory upper secondary education. This may take place in upper secondary grammar schools that, apart from the eight-year and six-year programmes mentioned above, offer four-year programmes (more than 20 % of the age cohort)⁹, in four-year secondary technical programmes¹⁰ leading to a school-leaving examination¹¹ (48.5 %), in two or three-year courses leading to an apprenticeship certificate (23 %) or in other courses and conservatories. 94 % of the population aged 25-34 years has acquired at least upper secondary education (ISCED 3). Children that do not complete upper secondary education are mainly from families with a low socio-economic status and many of them are Roma (Trhlíková, Úlovcová 2010a).

Those who have completed apprenticeship courses (ISCED 3C level) can continue in ISCED 4A follow-up courses that lead to a school-leaving examination, or they may extend their qualifications in shortened study courses.

Those who have passed a school-leaving examination (ISCED 3A or 4A), i.e. over 72 % of the population, can continue studying at tertiary level, namely at tertiary professional schools (ISCED 5B), or at higher education institutions (ISCED 5 and 6). In 2010, approximately 55 % of secondary school graduates enrolled in tertiary education. Apart from that, school-leavers who have passed the school-leaving examination have the opportunity of extending their qualifications in post-secondary programmes at secondary schools (in shortened study courses).

⁷ Even 5-year-old children can attend primary school provided they have permission from a paediatrician or psychologist. On the other hand, about a quarter of 6-year-old children do not start their compulsory schooling as their parents ask for a deferment of their school attendance.

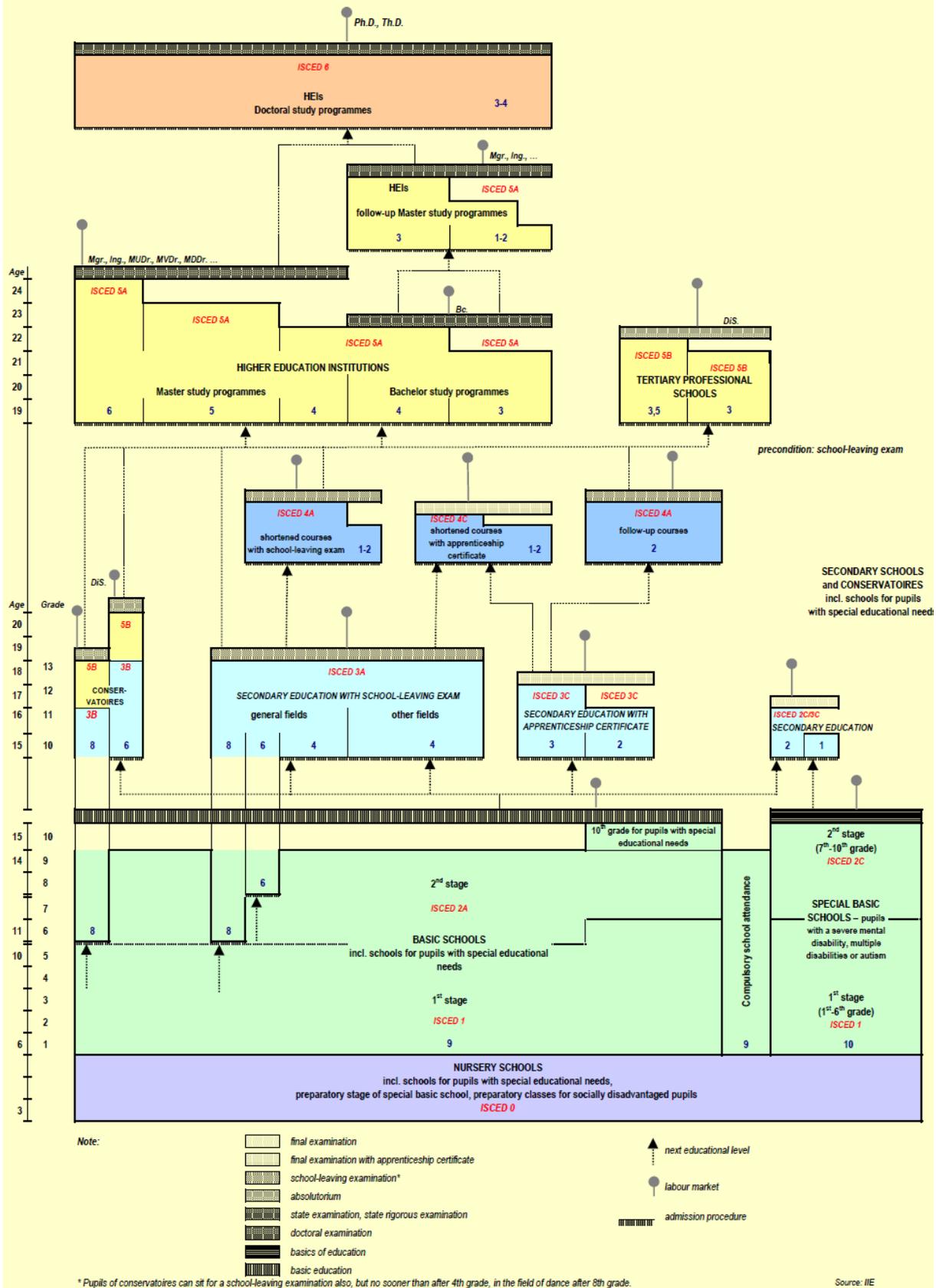
⁸ Source: PISA 2009.

⁹ See the diagram: secondary education with school-leaving exam – general fields.

¹⁰ See the diagram: secondary education with school-leaving exam – other fields.

¹¹ The school-leaving examination taken at secondary schools providing technical/vocational education at ISCED 3A level and at conservatoires consists of an examination in Czech language and literature, an examination in an optional subject, a theoretical examination in vocational subjects and a practical examination based on practical vocational training (practicum). The school-leaving examination taken at secondary general schools is comprised of an examination in Czech language and literature, an examination in a foreign language and an examination in two other optional subjects. The examination in Czech language and literature includes a written thesis/essay on a given topic. Other examinations are typically oral. This “school part” of the leaving examination is the responsibility of individual schools. In the academic year 2010/2011 all leavers of ISCED 3A programmes for the first time also passed a “state” standardized examination in Czech language and literature and either mathematics or a foreign language. Students could also choose up to 3 optional examinations in the following subjects: Czech language and literature, mathematics, foreign language, civics and social sciences, biology, physics, chemistry, history, geography, and history of arts. The range of subjects offered as optional to students in individual schools was determined by the school heads. In compulsory subjects students chose from two levels of difficulty, while most optional examinations were offered only at the higher level of difficulty. School-leaving certificates from all ISCED 3A programmes are of the same value.

Diagram of the education system of the Czech Republic 2009/2010



In the academic year 2009/10 there were 4,826 nursery schools, 4,125 basic schools, 1,433 upper secondary schools, 17 conservatories, 184 tertiary professional schools and 71 universities.

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

Governance structure

Since 1 January 2005 the Czech education system has been operating on the basis of new acts: the Education Act that regulates education from pre-primary to upper secondary and tertiary professional education and its public administration, and the Educational Staff Act which regulates the teaching profession at the same levels of education. The Higher Education Act with 19 amendments has regulated higher education since 1999.

Schools are administered within the framework of general administration. Responsibility is divided between the central government, NUTS3 regions (of which there are 14) and municipalities. Regions are given a high degree of autonomy.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports preserves an integrated state educational policy by formulating *Long-term policy objectives of education and development of the education system* every four years; this document is then submitted to the government. For higher education, long-term plans have been formulated for 2006-2010, and are updated annually.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) is, above all:

- responsible for the overall strategic direction, state and development of the education system; determines the content of education: approves framework educational programmes which are the basis for the development of school educational programmes; accredits educational programmes for tertiary professional schools and for higher education institutions;
- responsible for state financing policy in education – for drawing up the education budget and for determining the nature of its allocation;
- in charge of the school register which has official implications: only a registered institution has the right to provide recognized education and receives public resources;
- the organizing body of institutions for the in-service training of teachers and manages facilities for institutional care.

Regions are responsible for education in their territories. Regional authorities formulate long-term policy objectives for their territories in compliance with national objectives every four years. Regions establish and administer upper secondary schools and tertiary professional schools (i.e. serve as organizing bodies for these schools).

Municipalities are responsible for compulsory and pre-primary education. They establish and administer basic and nursery schools.

All schools have had the status of legal entities since 1 January 2003. Head teachers have full responsibility for the quality of the educational process, for financial management of the school, for appointing and dismissing teachers and for relations with the community and the public. The head teacher may be any individual who meets the qualification requirements set for educational staff and has the required work experience (e.g. head teacher at basic school is supposed to have 4 years of experience as teacher). Furthermore, the head teacher's post may only be held by an individual who, within two years of taking up the post, has acquired knowledge in education management through completion of a programme for head teachers at schools as part of a professional development programme. Organising bodies evaluate head teachers from the perspective of employers and each regional authority has its rules for head teacher appraisal. By law, the school organizing body must

establish a School Council enabling parents, pupils, educational staff (except for the school head) and the public to participate in the administration of the school. Organizing bodies appoint school heads on the basis of a tender; they can be dismissed only for reasons defined by law.

The criteria for establishing private and denominational schools are the same as for public schools that enable the school to be registered in the Register of Schools and Schools Facilities¹². Private schools have been established since 1990. They are mostly non-confessional; the usual legal form is a for-profit or non-profit grant-aided organization.

The Czech School Inspectorate is a central supervisory and evaluating body that is directly subordinate to the MEYS. It is responsible for monitoring the work of schools and school facilities. It scrutinizes the conditions they set for education and the results they achieve, and it focuses on the quality of management, the efficiency of using funds and compliance with binding regulations at all levels except for higher education institutions.

The funding of public schools comes from two sources: capital and running costs are funded by the organizing bodies (regions and municipalities using regional/municipal budgets), educational costs (salaries and teaching aids) are allocated from the state (central) budget by the MEYS via the regional administration. The funding of private schools is based on the same per capita principle as for public schools. Basic subsidies (50-80 % of the amount granted to similar public institutions, according to their type) can be increased to 80-100 % if the school meets a set of criteria specified by the Czech School Inspectorate¹³. Denominational schools receive the same funding as public schools directly from the MEYS.

For schools, the per capita amount is determined at central level for 4 age groups corresponding to the relevant levels of education (ISCED 0-3, 5B) and distributed to regions according to the number of pupils of the relevant age. Regions specify the per capita amounts provided to various schools. Schools receive a larger amount of funding per student for students with special needs.

Schools can also apply for funds as part of a scheme entitled “*Support for schools that implement inclusive education and education of socially/culturally disadvantaged pupils and children*“ that is run by the MEYS on a regular basis. The purpose of this scheme is to increase the pay increments of teachers in relation to the education of socially disadvantaged pupils and children. The funds offered within this programme can be used to reward teachers who repeatedly achieve excellent results in the area of inclusive education of socially disadvantaged pupils and children regardless of the length of their employment. The way in which the financial amounts are distributed to concrete recipients depends on the total number of applications. The evaluation panel also takes into account the proportion of socially disadvantaged pupils in each school.

Higher education institutions receive funds from the state budget both for running and capital costs. Running costs are funded mainly on the per capita principle: institutions are financed mostly on the basis of formula funding where the level of funding depends on the coefficient for the given programme and the number of students studying it. Resources for R&D are allocated mostly on a contractual basis. The allocations are adjusted every year, making it possible to influence the activities of higher education institutions in accordance with the relevant developmental priorities.

Private higher education institutions have been established since 1999. They must be non-profit-making to be eligible for a state grant.

¹² The body maintaining the Register of Schools and School Facilities may refuse to register a school if its application does not meet the data requirements as stipulated in the Education Act and if such deficiencies have not been redressed within a specified time limit at the request of the body in question. The body maintaining the Register of Schools and School Facilities may refuse, in part or in full, to register a school if it ascertains during the assessment process that: a) the application is not in compliance with a long-term goal of education and development of the educational system in the Czech Republic and of the relevant region; b) there is an absence of the preconditions for the due execution of activities of a school or school facility in terms of human, material, and financial resources; and c) the application contains incorrect data or mentions activities to be carried out by the school or school facility that would not be in compliance with legal regulations.

¹³ Evaluation criteria to be used by the CSI are issued by CSI and approved by MEYS for each school year.

Chapter 2: Fair and inclusive education

Pre-primary education

Attendance at pre-primary education is not compulsory; nevertheless it covers approximately 85 % of the total age group (3-6 years), 91 % in the pre-school year. The final year of pre-primary education (before commencement of compulsory schooling) is free of charge and children have a statutory right to attend it. Parents can be asked to pay a maximum of 50 % of the running (not educational) costs. The amount differs in different schools and regions. The fee is not required from families that receive social benefits upon their request.

Admission to nursery school falls within the purview of the school head. Admission criteria vary, while preference is normally given to older children of employed parents. In the current situation where demand exceeds supply, children of unemployed parents who have younger siblings (which is frequently the case of Roma families) stand little chance of being admitted.

Following parents' complaints the admission criteria have been analysed by the ombudsman. He appreciated the fact that the criteria are normally made public in advance, although this is not required by the legislation. The most frequent criteria are the child's age and health condition, the parents's relationship to the municipality and public authorities, their employment situation, their permanent residency and whether or not they have other children. In his analysis the ombudsman pointed to a discriminatory nature of some criteria (e.g. rejection of a child due to his/her physical disability or parent's maternity/parental leave). He also drew attention to an undesirable favouritism when preference in admission is given to children of civil servants (e.g. parents employed by the school's organising body or other organisations within its area of administration). Moreover, the ombudsman described as inappropriate those criteria that ignore the primary importance of nursery school's educational function and reduce it to a childminding service provided to parents (e.g. the employment situation of parents). He stated that the general application of these criteria violates the right to education guaranteed by the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms and that it hinders or precludes access to education. This also concerns the general application of the age criterion which, in some localities, limits younger children's access to education. Furthermore, the ombudsman pointed to a possible violation of the Charter in cases where parents are required to have permanent residency in the given municipality and stressed that participation in preschool education is the right of the child and it is in his/her interest, and not in the interest of his/her parents or municipality (Ombudsman 2011).

There is no monitoring of the attendance of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. A study concerned with the educational pathways of Roma children shows that kindergartens are currently attended by approximately 40 % of Roma children; this number has not changed much over time. The reasons are a low level of motivation on the part of kindergartens to participate in resolving the issues of the education of Roma children from socially excluded localities and a low level of motivation on the part of Roma parents to enrol their children into kindergartens (GAC 2009).

The MEYS annually runs a development scheme aimed at supporting schools (and pre-school facilities) that implement inclusive education and education of socially/culturally disadvantaged pupils (see page 10). The purpose of this programme is to reward teachers and their assistants in basic schools and kindergartens that have educated at least 10 % of socially disadvantaged children in kindergartens or at least 25 % socially disadvantaged children in basic schools for a minimum of 3 years. There is also a scheme run each year that supports NGOs working in the area of pre-school and basic education.

Analyses of good practice examples generated through the projects as part of these schemes reveal that there are three major components of success: (1) services concerned with support for and education of parents in disadvantaged families, (2) child-centred pedagogy and (3) street social work including screening. These components were incorporated into the Action Plan for Implementation of System of Early Care for Disadvantaged Children (approved by government in 2009) and the National Action

Plan of Inclusive Education (approved by government in 2010). A national project concerned with the establishment and implementation of a system of inclusive education is being prepared in 2011.

Due to the rise in the birth rate in recent years there is currently a shortage of places in pre-school institutions. While in 2005 the refusal rate was 2 %, in 2008 it was 6 % (20,000 applications). The refusal rate depends on the age of the child. The pre-school year has an absolute priority so no child in the final pre-school year can be denied enrolment. The state supports alternatives to pre-school education and childcare such as childminding arrangements agreed between parents and neighbours.

Preparatory classes may be established for socially disadvantaged children that run throughout the year prior to their commencement of compulsory schooling at basic schools. Classes with 10-15 pupils may be established in basic, nursery and special schools. In the academic year 2009/2010 there were 178 preparatory classrooms in basic schools and 73 such classrooms in special schools. Research shows that, in the vicinity of socially excluded localities, preparatory classes were established in 20 % of mainstream basic schools and in 40 % of special basic schools in the school year 2007/2008 (GAC 2009). Hence, according to this analysis, in the vicinity of socially excluded localities preparatory classes are established outside mainstream twice as often as they are within mainstream. Preparatory classes (originally established for Roma children) are only attended by a small number of Roma children¹⁴. Non-Roma children use these classes even less often. The two integration instruments, i.e. kindergartens and preparatory classes, are, as a rule, mutually exclusive; most parents only choose one. Only nine per cent of parents used both instruments. In general, the analysis estimates that one of the two instruments is being used by approximately 48 % of Roma children (GAC 2009). In conclusion, Roma children are prepared for mainstream education in pre-primary education to a considerably smaller extent than non-Roma children.

The fact that special schools can establish preparatory classes is a subject of criticism from NGOs supporting Roma children. They argue that when students complete their preparatory education in special schools they usually continue in special schools; only very few children move to mainstream education. Indeed, the original purpose of preparatory classes was to prepare children for mainstream schooling.

Compulsory education

Selection takes place from the beginning of compulsory education. Some basic schools are designated as schools with extended curricula (347 out of 4,087 basic schools in 2009/2010, attended by 8.9 % of basic school students). Students used to sit entrance exams to these schools at the end of the second grade, but recently some schools have organized entrance examinations even earlier, at the point of entry to compulsory education. The Education Act of 2004 launched curricular reform introducing a bi-level curriculum: at the national level the curricular framework is defined while schools are expected to design their own educational programmes while observing the national framework and also taking into account specific needs of the local community. Many head teachers interpret the reform as an invitation to determine their educational profiles through optional subjects and to create selective classrooms of all sorts to offer parents special educational opportunities for their children. Schools and classes for “talented children” and selective bilingual (mainly Czech-English) schools have recently appeared in the education system (both public and private). Children are accepted into these classes on the basis of entrance examinations. Each school designs its own examinations.

Within the system of basic schools there are special basic schools designed for pupils with various disabilities and there are special needs classrooms in mainstream schools¹⁵. Special schools are also

¹⁴ 18.3 % in 2005/2006 (GAC 2009)

¹⁵ Special schools have a long tradition in the Czech education system. They have been attended by about 5 % of compulsory school students. Special school leavers used to have limited educational opportunities, since the final certificate from a special school was not of the same value as a certificate from a basic school. The Education Act of 2004 enacted that special schools were renamed basic schools or practical basic schools, and they are currently supposed to provide their students with proper basic education and give them equal educational opportunities. However, students in these schools may be educated according to the *Supplement to the Framework Education Programme for Children with Mild Mental Retardation* (VÚP 2007). This reduced

allowed to educate up to 25 % of students without any disability¹⁶. In 2009/2010, 4.8 % of compulsory school students were educated in special schools or classrooms. Students are placed in special schools on the basis of an examination in a pedagogical-psychological guidance centre and with parental consent. Special schools are discussed mainly in relation to the education of Roma children¹⁷. After finishing compulsory education in special school students can, in principle, apply for any upper secondary school. However, they most often go on to one or two-year vocational schools where they finish their studies without a vocational certificate. No official statistics on the educational attainment of Roma children are available. Research shows that successful completion of upper secondary education is very rare for these children.

The annual report of the Czech School Inspectorate for the academic year 2009/2010 describes many problems regarding the mechanisms for the assignment of students to schools or classrooms where they are educated according to the *Supplement to the Education Programme for Students with Mild Mental Retardation*. CSI disclosed weaknesses in the diagnostic procedures and in receiving parental consent. CSI also states that students educated according to the programme for students with mild mental retardation have very limited opportunities to return to mainstream education. Many Roma students were recommended to practical basic schools by counselling centres without a diagnosis of mental retardation or any other disorder. CSI highlights that 35 % of Roma students are classified as mentally retarded¹⁸ and describes this fact as discriminatory.

CSI stated that school education programmes in special schools were not in accordance with the Framework Education Programme in 80 % of cases. Some schools also educated students that were not diagnosed as mentally retarded according to the *Framework Education Programme for Children with Mild Mental Retardation* (CSI 2010).

At the end of grade 5 or 7 students can sit entrance examinations for eight-year or six-year grammar schools. In 2008/2009, 12.3 % of the relevant cohort¹⁹ left basic schools for either multi-year grammar schools or conservatories. In recent years the proportion of students leaving basic schools for multi-year grammar schools has been slightly increasing (in 2004/2005 the proportion of multi-year grammar school students was 9.4 %). The proportion is far from being the same across the country: in Prague, 30 % of students left basic schools for multi-year grammar schools in 2009/2010.

The entrance examinations are not standardized, their form and content are set by individual schools. The grade point average and performance in knowledge competitions in various subjects are often

curriculum lays emphasis upon manual activities (35 lessons vs. 9 lessons for students in mainstream schools) and reduces the content of other subjects (e.g. 4 foreign language lessons vs. 21 lessons in mainstream schools). This supplement to the educational programme is also used for students integrated into mainstream classrooms or attending special classrooms established within basic schools. The term “special school” in this text is understood to be synonymous with “practical basic school” or any other school where are students educated according to the *Supplement to the Framework Education Programme for Children with Mild Mental Retardation*.

¹⁶ Decree No. 73/2005 Coll. This regulation has come under criticism from various stakeholders. Amendment to this decree of 2011 defines a socially disadvantaged student as “a student without proper educational family support including a lack of co-operation between family and school, or a student with insufficient knowledge of the language of instruction”. It states that a socially disadvantaged student can be educated in a setting for disabled students for a maximum of six months. It also states that a student without a disability can not be educated according to the *Supplement to the Framework Education Programme for Children with Mild Mental Retardation*.

¹⁷ Czech education statistics do not contain data on the number of Roma students educated outside mainstream schools. The estimates vary to a large extent. Roma NGOs state that more than 70 % of Roma children are educated in special schools. A survey of Roma children in excluded areas carried out by the Ministry of Education in 2008 (GAC 2009) showed that Roma children are 10 times more likely to be educated outside the mainstream than are other children, and that more than 40 % of Roma students are educated in special schools.

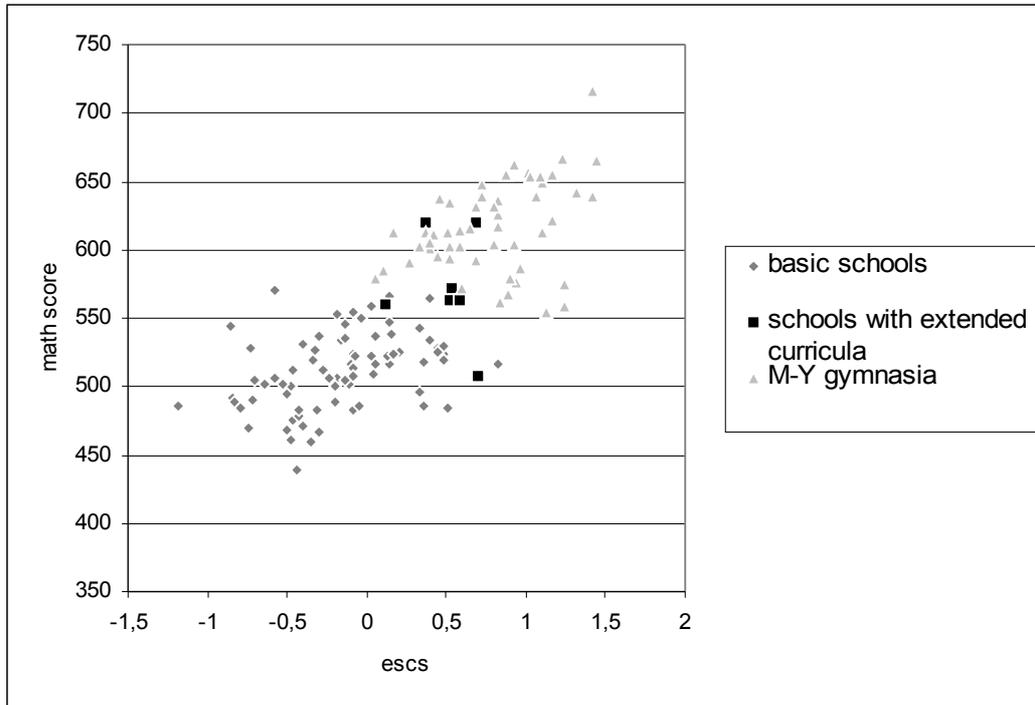
¹⁸ In some regions this figure is even higher: in the Ústecký region 53 % of Roma students were classified as mentally retarded, in the Karlovarský region 53 % and in the Liberecký region 42 % of Roma students were classified as mentally retarded (CSI 2009/2010).

¹⁹ The cohort of grade 5 served as the reference group.

included. Other criteria such as proximity to the school or attendance of siblings are not taken into account.

Figure 1 shows that students' division into tracks at ISCED 2 level corresponds well to their socio-economic status. Multi-year grammar schools are attended by students with the highest achievement levels and the highest socio-economical status.

Figure 1 School profiles for Czech schools for grade 8 (TIMSS 1999)



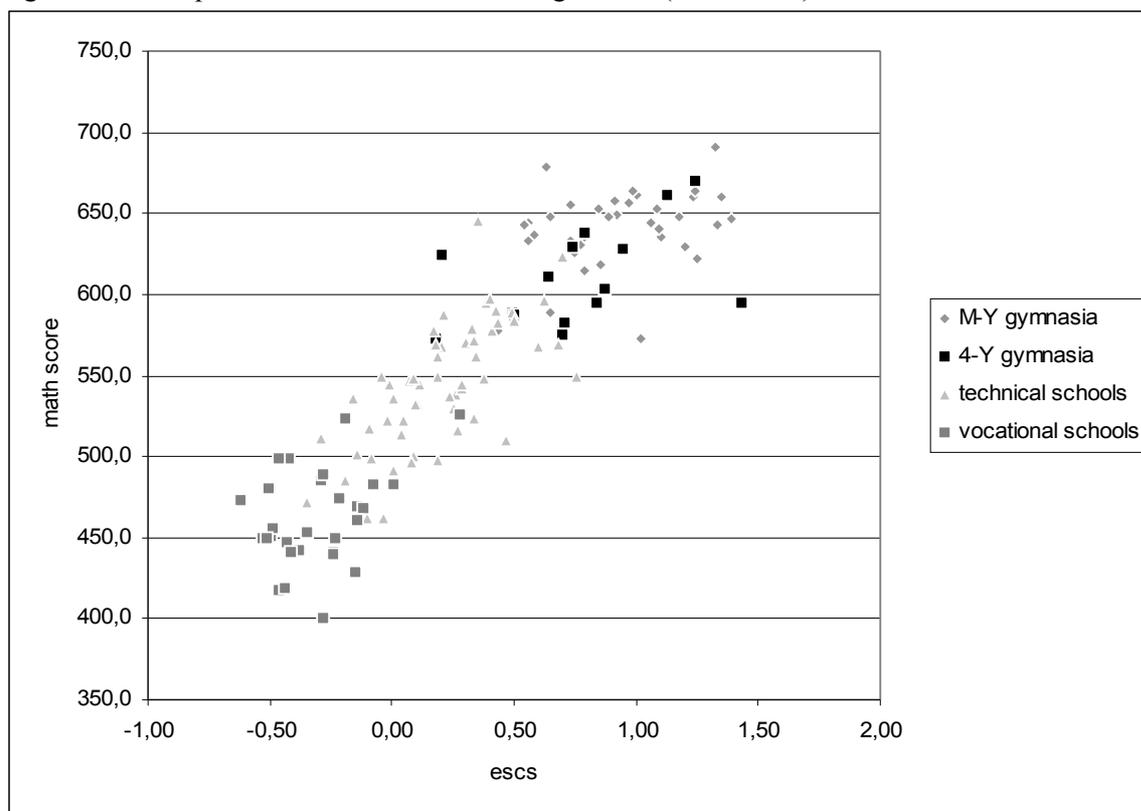
Source: Straková 2007

The next selection process occurs at the end of compulsory education when students choose between four-year grammar schools, technical schools leading to an ISCED 3A qualification and vocational schools leading to an ISCED 3C qualification.

Upper secondary education

At the age of 15 students choose between general and technical tracks leading to a school-leaving examination, or they may opt for a vocational track leading to an apprenticeship certificate. In 2009/2010, 20 % of students chose general education. In spite of the population decline, the proportion of students in general education has been relatively stable since 1989 and is one of the lowest among OECD countries. The population decline has been apparent in the proportion of students in vocational (apprenticeship) tracks that has been gradually decreasing since the 1990s (from approximately 60 % in 1989 to approximately 25 % in 2009/2010) in favour of technical schools. Figure 2 shows that, as with ISCED 2 level, students at ISCED 3 level are distributed to individual tracks according to their socio-economic status. Here the relationship between the average achievement and the average socio-economic status at school level is even stronger.

Figure 2 School profiles for Czech schools for grade 10 (PISA 2003)



Source: Straková 2007

The Ministry of Education has set out a target in its most recent *Long-term policy objectives of education and development of the education system* of preserving the proportion of students on vocational tracks at a minimum level of 25 % (e.g. to prevent a further decrease in the proportion of vocational students as there is concern that the occupations that used to be covered by vocational tracks will not be covered sufficiently in the future). However, research carried out by the Institute of Technical and Vocational Education shows that a significant proportion of graduates from vocational schools (who either chose the wrong track deliberately or were not admitted to ISCED 3A programmes) would have preferred to be on study tracks leading to ISCED 3A qualifications, as they do not feel sufficiently prepared for the labour market, especially in foreign languages and ICT (Křížová et al. 2008). The curricula of technical tracks contain about 60 % of general education, while the curricula of vocational tracks contain 30 % of general education. While the proportion of general education in technical school curricula has been increasing, its percentage in vocational school curricula remains stable (Kofroňová, Vojtěch 2007).

In principle students can change tracks, but this happens very rarely. Students who finish vocational programmes with an apprenticeship certificate can continue in follow-up courses to gain a secondary school-leaving certificate that is a prerequisite for applying for tertiary studies. More than one third of vocational graduates continue in follow-up full-time courses and another third go on to study follow-up extramural courses that enable them to learn and be employed at the same time. The dropout rate, however, is very high: in full-time courses it is 30 % and in extramural courses it is as high as over 50 % (Trhlíková, Úlovcová 2010b).

About 6-8 % of students drop out during secondary education (Trhlíková, Úlovcová 2010a). These students can, in principle, re-enter the system on the same basis as before. No special second chance schools exist in the Czech education system. These young people can also utilize retraining schemes organized by labour offices. Moreover, they can obtain a qualification without attending school or

course by passing the relevant examinations. Recently, procedures concerning recognition of non-formal and informal learning have been piloted, involving a few hundred candidates who succeeded in acquiring a partial or full qualification in various fields such as cookery, waiting, baking, shop assistant. The main objective of the pilot has been to support transformation of vocational schools into lifelong learning centres, including the training of teachers for new professional roles and tasks related to the recognition of informal learning. The procedures concerning the recognition of prior learning have been set up in accordance with the National Qualifications System.

Forms and mechanisms of selection

In the Czech education system selection occurs both within schools and between schools. As concerns the education of children deemed as gifted and talented, as well as the education for children labelled as having special needs, in some cases specialised schools or classrooms within mainstream schools are established. In all cases selection is based on academic abilities. These are determined by means of either psychological or educational testing.

Before the start of compulsory schooling children undergo an enrolment procedure. The nature of the procedure is exclusively the responsibility of school management – it can be playful and relaxed, or strict and rather formal. The child's ability to concentrate on a given task and his/her vocabulary are the aspects that are normally observed. Some schools test the knowledge of colours and a simple drawing. It is also up to each particular school what level of the child's maturity (or the lack of it) it is ready to accept. In some basic schools children may be asked to do various tasks as part of a game while walking through the school, some schools prefer an interview with a teacher. Some schools prepare materials for parents to inform them what will be required. In general, children are observed for their preparedness for (the particular) school, and if the teachers observing the child are uncertain about the child's school readiness, they can recommend that the parents consult a psychological guidance centre. The system of testing for school readiness is not standardized in these centres. The centre can recommend that parents should seek a postponement of schooling²⁰ for their child, or enrol their child in a classroom or school outside the mainstream (see footnote 15). The final decision is in the hands of the parents. An amendment to Decree No. 73/2005 of 2011 stipulates, among other things, an obligation on the part of the school to require from parents an informed consent to having their child placed outside the mainstream, with specific details the consent should contain. Roma parents sometimes require that their child be educated in a special school in the first place, as their other children or themselves attended it and appreciate the friendly climate of a special school and its milder demands (GAC 2009).

At the end of grades 5 and 7 students can sit entrance examinations for the long academic track (multi-year grammar school). The examinations focus on academic abilities. Most often they consist of tests in the Czech and English language and mathematics. Frequently there are also tests of study abilities or general knowledge. The entrance examinations are under the responsibility of each school. About one third of the relevant age cohort sits entrance examinations during their compulsory education.

Some students sit entrance examinations also at the end of compulsory education in grade 9. However, due to population decline most upper secondary schools accept students without examinations, just on the basis of their grades in compulsory education.

Formal grouping between and within schools with more demanding or less demanding curricula based on entrance examinations occurs at all levels of primary and secondary education. Informal grouping (streaming or setting) occurs mainly at lower secondary level and also in higher grades of upper secondary education. It is intended to help students to specialize and to prepare better for the next educational level in specific subjects of their interest. Informal grouping is based on the judgment of

²⁰ Parents have a legal obligation to make sure that their child undergoes the compulsory schooling enrolment procedure. As part of this procedure parents may apply for postponement of schooling in writing, and this has to be supported by two specialist recommendations (from a paediatrician and a specialist in a psychological guidance centre). On the basis of the written request and the two recommendations, the head teacher decides about the postponement.

teachers or school grades. Sometimes students are split into permanent classrooms (for example class A is a so-called “study class”, class C a “non-study class”). Sometimes schools set students according to their abilities only in some subjects (mainly mathematics, mother tongue, foreign languages). This setting, however, occurs rarely. Permanent grouping – streaming – is the prevalent arrangement at both primary and secondary levels.

Since 1990 parents in the Czech Republic have enjoyed the right to choose basic school for their children. During communist rule parents were supposed to register their children with schools according to catchment areas. Currently, catchment areas are still defined and basic schools are obliged to prioritise children from their catchment area. School choice is used to a larger extent by parents with high socio-economic status while parents with low socio-economic status more often send their children to neighbouring schools (STEM/MARK 2009)²¹.

Financial instruments and fees

It is stipulated in the Education Act that education is free of charge in public schools. Private schools receive subsidies from the state budget via regions. The subsidy is calculated to finance non-capital expenses related to education and running costs. Capital expenditure is covered by the organising bodies. Private schools usually charge fees. The amount depends on the economic situation in the region (the fees charged in Prague differ significantly from the fees charged in other parts of the country). In some denominational schools parents pay so-called voluntary fees. Some private schools, at both primary and secondary level, are perceived as elite schools or they offer specific pedagogical approaches and are chosen by affluent families. The majority of private upper secondary schools are, however, attended by students who were not successful in entrance examinations for a public school. On average, the achievement level of private school upper secondary students is worse than that of students attending public schools.

With respect to equity it is important to note that some basic schools charge parents for high-quality foreign language education taught as part of the curricula. This education is usually organized by language schools²². In basic schools that offer foreign language education organized by language schools, students are frequently divided into separate classrooms based on whether they participate in this extra foreign language education (i.e. based on their parents’ payments).

Parents are also supposed to pay for field trips and enriching educational activities organized by the school. Most schools try to keep the prices very low in order to make the trips accessible to all families. In some schools, however, this is not the case, especially when schools organize trips abroad. Some schools apply for grants to cover the expenses of those in need or use funds collected by parents for these purposes. Some schools do not consider the needs of poorer students and just accept parents’ apologies for their child not taking part in a trip or activity for financial reasons.

Guidance and counselling policies and practices

Each school has an educational counsellor (this is a part-time job carried out by a teacher, his/her workload depending on the size of the school) who deals with various study and behavioural problems and also informs students at their request about possible educational pathways.

Recently several projects financed by European Structural Funds have been aiming at improving the quality of counselling and guidance practices. In pilot schools counselling centres were established that employed psychologists, special education teachers, social workers and offered a variety of services to students and parents. Special sites were also established to train and continuously support educational counsellors.

²¹ 69 % of parents with ISCED 2 education sent their children to neighbouring schools, while among parents with ISCED 5 education it was only 34 %. Similar data result from classification of parents by economic status (85 % of needy families and 41% of affluent families send their children to a neighbouring school).

²² Schools that offer paid foreign language education to adults and to students as a free time activity.

The aim of the aforementioned projects is to overcome the lack of inter-departmental cooperation that is apparent not only in the case of fragmented early childhood education and care. Moreover, there is problematic cooperation concerning issues that fall within the purview of various bodies (departments) at lower levels of public administration. For instance, according to Section 57 of the Child Social and Legal Protection Act (No. 359/1999 Coll.), institutions dealing with child social and legal protection refuse to share information they learn in connection with implementation of this protection. That means that there is only one-way communication between schools and these institutions (IPPP 2010).

A special web-based information system (www.infoabsolvent.cz) was developed to provide its users with a wide range of information concerning education and the labour market. A call centre was established to provide parents, students, teachers and counsellors with an individual consultancy service. Lower secondary school students may take a subject called “career choice”, giving them an opportunity to receive information about various professions and also to explore their strengths and weaknesses and personal preferences.

Care provided to students with special needs

The annual report of the Czech School Inspectorate for the academic year 2009/2010 states that the majority (98 %) of nursery schools were able to provide their special needs pupils with sufficient guidance and support. The only weakness was the inability of the nursery schools to guarantee sufficient speech therapy support. Much less satisfactory was the situation in compulsory education. There was enough support provided to pupils with special needs in only 57 % of cases. According to the report, schools have difficulties identifying socially disadvantaged students. All schools lacked information, did not provide organised support and many teachers were not prepared to integrate students with special needs into mainstream classrooms. Individual educational plans were used only to a very limited extent and teacher assistants were used in less than 10 % of inspected lessons (CSI 2010).

Students with learning difficulties are allowed to study according to an individual study plan and can be assessed according to special criteria. Beside these commonly used practices the care of weaker students is entirely dependent on the attitudes and competencies of individual schools and teachers. Some schools and teachers organize remedial education for their students. Some schools also lend socially disadvantaged families money so that their children can participate in field trips and enriching educational activities together with their classmates. Some schools permanently employ a psychologist or a special education teacher that can help students with difficulties.

Schools that educate students with special needs (including students who are socially and culturally disadvantaged) can ask the relevant regional authority for a teacher assistant. The decision is made on the basis of a recommendation by a special education centre or pedagogical-psychological counselling centre and depends on the available budget of the regional authority. Teacher assistants are managed by teachers and are supposed to help students with special needs with their learning, to assist physically disabled students and to help culturally disadvantaged families to communicate with the school and their children to adapt to the school environment. For students with severe physical disabilities the head teacher can hire a personal assistant – a social worker that helps a particular child. The personal assistant is not supposed to help the student with learning. These personal assistants are hired, trained and supervised by NGOs²³.

Several NGOs also organize remedial education for socially disadvantaged students (they focus mainly on Roma students) and try to improve communication between schools and families. Some schools offer their own remedial education to their students. These remedial classes, however, are not meant to help children on a day-to-day basis. Some schools organize “school clubs” for their students where they can be involved in free time activities but also can get help with their schoolwork. This assistance, however, is not available to all schools and co-operation between NGOs and schools is often problematic. Some schools organize remedial education on a student-student basis. All these activities depend on the initiatives and attitudes of individual schools and teachers.

²³ These NGOs also organize education and counselling for teachers.

In the school year 2009/10, a new national project entitled Inclusive Education Support Centres - IESC (funded from the ESF and the national budget) was launched. This three-year project is expected to define and test conditions of inclusive education in basic schools in the country. There are 9 centres supporting inclusive education that will, in cooperation with 342 schools, map the needs of schools with respect to inclusive education, help the schools to create their support programmes, and generally offer the schools consultancy on how to overcome barriers to learning on the part of individual pupils. There will be three yearly reports about the state of inclusive education in the Czech Republic between 2010 and April 2012. Every centre includes a team of professionals consisting of a psychologist, special education teacher, teacher, cultural anthropologist and social workers (more than 90 people in total). All these people receive continuing education provided by the IESC project.

Schools receive higher funding per student for students with a health disadvantage. For socially and culturally disadvantaged students no increase in funding has been provided until now. This will change from September 2011. It was stated above that basic and special schools that educate children from socially and culturally disadvantaged families can open preparatory classrooms for these students and ask for a teacher assistant. Special schools have equipment for physically disabled students. Assistance offered to special needs students in mainstream schools often depends on the attitudes and initiatives of individual schools and teachers. School heads have to secure money for additional teaching aids for these children.

Chapter 3: Fair and inclusive practices

Czech society perceives the differentiation of educational pathways as appropriate and desirable. The intention of the Ministry of Education to abolish tracking at lower secondary level, as declared in the *National Programme of Education: White Paper* (2001), met with strong opposition from the Czech population. High tracks are viewed as an important tool in the cultivation of elites and the topic of equal opportunities is dismissed, often with references to socialist ideas. Inclusive education is not required by the society. In surveys carried out in 2009, among educators and parents of school children, only 17 % of teachers expressed an opinion that selective schools at lower secondary level should not exist, or that their number should be reduced (Factum Invenio 2009). 76 % of parents supported the current practice of early selection (STEM/MARK 2009).

Teachers who intend to teach inclusively find themselves in a very difficult situation as parents are not in favour of this approach and the system has not created the necessary support for teachers.

In the Czech Republic, the education of weaker students has traditionally been the domain of special schools where there is a lower number of students per classroom, students learn according to less demanding curricula and are taught by teaching staff with special qualifications (“special education”). The care of weaker students in mainstream classes depends on the beliefs and practices of individual teachers.

The Czech education system has traditionally been very selective. The role of teachers has been to grade students fairly and to divide them to tracks according to their aptitudes. Inclusive practices are only marginally being taught at most of teacher training faculties. Faculties of education have full autonomy in the Czech Republic. Education programmes for future teachers vary to a large extent. In some universities the issue of inclusive education receives more attention than in others. Future teachers with specialisations other than special education, however, do not receive systematic preparation for education of special needs students in any of the faculties. As concerns the in-service education of teachers, it is rather common that schools only have a list of available courses from which each teacher chooses according to her/his interest and preferences, instead of a proper planning process that takes account of the needs of the pupils educated in the particular school (IPPP 2010). According to the findings of CSI, 50 % of basic schools participated in in-service training focusing on special education in the academic year 2009/2010, and 65 % of schools were involved in training in pedagogy and psychology (CSI 2010). However, there is no information available about the content and scope of the training.

In the Czech Republic, family has traditionally played a very important role in education. Parents have been supposed to help children with their homework and school preparations. School performance and classroom behaviour have been perceived as family responsibility. Relationships between parents and teachers have traditionally been very formal – the teacher has been perceived as an authority figure and his/her instructions have not been questioned. On the other hand, parents have not been used to co-operating with school on a voluntary basis. Over the last two decades the situation has been very slowly changing. Parents’ meetings tend to be organized more on a partnership basis, and parents more often assist in organizing school events. Also, they more often argue with teachers and complain about teachers’ attitudes. However, close co-operation with parents in specific issues related to the education of individual children is still rare, and the same applies to, for example, individual teacher-parent meetings or student-teacher-parent meetings.

The situation is slightly different in schools attended by the majority of disadvantaged or Roma children. Here many teachers invest a lot of energy in reaching parents and ensuring their co-operation. Nevertheless, even in these schools the extent of co-operation depends on the initiative and expectations of individual teachers. Teachers in schools where teacher assistants operate often use the assistants for securing co-operation with parents. Many NGO’s also focus on encouraging parents from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to take interest in their children’s education. The forms of co-operation between school and family and its extent differ considerably from school to school.

International comparative studies show that typical Czech instruction is more teacher-centred with a low level of student activity (e.g. Roth et al 2006). This type of instruction does not provide opportunities for individualized education. Teachers are not used to differentiate teaching according to the performance of individual students, nor do they have differentiated materials at their disposal (Mullis et al. 2003). Moreover, teachers lack methodological support for providing students with a proper formative assessment – they do not have proper training in formative assessment, and no assessment rubrics, reading inventories or developmental continua are available to Czech teachers. Educational objectives are defined in rather general manner. Teachers do not have any standards or sample tasks documenting the desirable performance of students in particular grades. In the academic year 2010/2011 development of target standards was initiated by the Minister of Education. However, these standards will be mainly used for summative purposes.

The majority of teachers do not have teacher assistants or any other assistants who could provide special needs students with specific support. Most schools do not have their own psychologist. Some teachers offer students remedial education after classes. Remedial education and assistance with homework for disadvantaged students is also provided by NGOs – however, this remedial education is often delivered without co-operation with the school. Reading recovery programmes are not provided.

Although multicultural education and education promoting the development of social and personal competencies became part of the National Education Framework and schools are obliged to incorporate them into their School Education Programmes, teachers often have difficulties fulfilling this duty properly as the methodological support in these areas is very weak. This means that, in many cases, students are also insufficiently prepared for inclusive education, since they (and their parents) are not ready to be educated in diverse groups. In the situation of a “scramble for pupils” due to the population decline schools do not work with parents’ prejudices. Without proper support from regional authorities, schools therefore opt for a market model of educational services, while ignoring or even accepting the prejudices, rather than a community leadership model. The Report about the State of Inclusive Education (IPPP 2010) also admits that inclusion can be stigmatizing for schools due to the prejudices of local communities.

Czech language courses that are free of charge are made available for immigrant children in designated schools. Many schools offer their own language courses and remedial education to immigrant children (so that they do not have to travel to designated schools). Sometimes these courses are provided for a payment and sometimes they are free of charge.

In the Czech education system, repeating a year does not seem to be a serious problem. This practice is used for students that do not fulfil the relevant requirements²⁴, but it is limited by law: students can only repeat a year once during primary and once during lower secondary school. In 2009/2010 the repetition rate in compulsory education was 0.9 %. In recent years the repetition rate has been more or less stable and hovers at around 1 %.

²⁴ Students receive a report twice a year with marks on a five-point scale (1 - “excellent”, 5 - “fail”). If a student achieves 5 in a subject and fails a re-sit, he/she has to repeat the grade, unless he/she has already repeated a year at the relevant level (primary or lower secondary).

Chapter 4: Fair and inclusive resourcing

Schools are legal entities and they have full responsibility for financial management, for hiring teachers and for choosing and purchasing learning materials.

The funding of schools comes from two sources: organizing bodies and the central state budget. Capital costs are funded by the organizing bodies (regions and municipalities from regional/municipal budgets). Most running costs (textbooks and teaching aids, in-service training of educational staff and activities connected with school development, direct educational costs, i.e. salaries and taxes and other deductions from salaries) are allocated from the state (central) budget by the MEYS via the regional administration (in the case of denominational schools directly by the MEYS). Other running costs are covered by the organizing body, while in the case of private or denominational schools they are covered from the state budget²⁵.

Public schools can ask regional or local authorities for additional resources, both material and personnel. Regional or local authorities examine school requirements for additional financing and also finance specific educational activities they regard as important. For example, some Prague districts give their schools extra money for foreign language education (for hiring native speakers as teachers and for student trips abroad). These extra subsidies are dependent on the levels of wealth of particular regions/municipalities.

There is no national assessment in the Czech Republic. The quality of schoolwork is evaluated by school inspectors and some organizing bodies. The Czech School Inspectorate can, in principle, propose closure of a school that does not comply with the assessment criteria. This, however, happens very rarely. For example, in the academic year 2008/2009 the chief school inspector presented a proposal for deletion of 5 schools from the school register.

The allocation of educational resources is not primarily related to the socio-economic intake of students, their ethnic origin or mother tongue. Schools educating students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds can get resources for preparatory classrooms and for teacher assistants. These schools can also ask for additional resources for organizing after-school activities and hiring special staff (psychologists, social workers, etc.). This money is allocated via regional authorities from the central government and the head teachers have to apply for it.

Schools and NGOs can bid for grants provided by the Ministry of Education and local authorities to fund activities aimed at establishing better conditions (both material and personnel) for the education of children from families with a disadvantaged background. The Ministry of Education has launched various development schemes for this purpose. Some of them focus on socio-economically disadvantaged children. Appendix 1 provides the numbers of schools participating in particular development schemes in 2009/2010.

Recently schools have been able to apply for grants within the framework of the Education for Competitiveness Operational Programme that is funded by European Social Fund (85 %) and the state budget (15 %). Other institutions (NGOs, educational institutions, organising bodies) also apply for these grants and consequently support schools in a specific field of school activity. Some of these grants are directly focused on helping disadvantaged students. The grants are tied only to socio-economic background. MEYS has introduced a simplified application process for primary and secondary schools (except schools in Prague).

NGOs and schools receive grants from the ministry, local authorities and also from companies (corporate social responsibility) to design programmes for Roma students. These programmes try to establish the pre-primary education of Roma children, facilitate communication between schools and

²⁵ Money is allocated on a per-student basis, but schools receive greater funding per student for students recognized by the relevant counseling facility as children entitled to additional assistance due to their special needs. The extent of funding depends on the type of special need and on the region and type of school. There is a different amount for children educated in special schools and a different sum for children integrated in mainstream education. Each region designs its own system of levels of funding whereby it determines funding for individual types of schools and types of special needs. The funding also depends on the school size.

families, organize remedial education to maintain Roma students in mainstream schools, help Roma students with preparation for entrance examinations to secondary schools and help them to comply with the requirements of secondary schools.

Schools can also apply for grants from the MEYS for educating students in minority languages.

Annual expenditure by educational institutions per student for core services (2007) in USD, converted on the basis of using PPPs for GDP, according to level of education and based on full-time equivalents, is as follows: pre-primary education 3,485, primary education 3,070, lower secondary education 5,191, upper secondary education 5,010, tertiary education 6,738. The average expenditure per pupil for the whole period from primary to tertiary education is 4,825 (OECD 2010).

Monitoring equity in education

There is a Prevention, Special Education and Institutional Education Department with a Special Inclusive Education Unit. The Czech School Inspectorate assesses schools according to several equity criteria. The criteria are defined for each academic year. For 2010/2011 the following criteria were defined in the area of equal opportunities in education:

- The school provides clear and correct information about its provision and entrance procedures in a way that is accessible to all applicants.
- The school adopts measures in line with the needs of children, pupils and students on the basis of recommendations of the relevant counselling facility and in compliance with its own assessment of individual needs.
- The school identifies children, pupils and students with special educational needs and talented children in school documentation and takes effective measures to create conditions for their successful development.
- The school takes into account the external environment (social, regional), the actual school conditions and means available that could influence the success of children, pupils and students.
- The school has effective prevention systems focused on elimination of risky behaviour (mainly bullying, drug abuse, truancy), school injuries and school failure, and monitors their success.

Tables 3a – 3d in Appendix 2 include proportions of schools classified into various assessment categories in the academic year 2009/2010 (CSI 2010).

The goals for primary and secondary education are set out in *Long-term policy objectives of education and development of the education system*. This document is developed at the national level and serves as a guide for regional development plans. It is issued for a four-year period. The long-term plan designed in 2007 sets the following goals in the area of equity:

- Create conditions for improving the outcomes of socially disadvantaged students with a lack of stimulation based on family background.
- Create conditions for multiculturalism in school education in order to prevent xenophobia and racism and early school leaving.
- Create conditions for improving the education of students with health disabilities and disadvantages.
- Create diagnostic instruments to help identify special talents, and instruments for teachers to identify such talents and develop appropriate educational procedures.
- Create school counselling facilities to manage comprehensive care within the framework of educational-psychological counselling services and career guidance, including prevention of socio-pathological disorders.

- Create an information base for school leavers to understand the workings of the labour market.
- Create a favourable school environment with a view to eliminating socio-pathological behaviour.
- Improve programmes of specific and primary prevention implemented by education institutions and NGOs.

The document lists specific measures to reach these goals. However, it does not set any quantitative or otherwise objective indicators.

NGOs also try to safeguard fair and inclusive practices. For example The League of Human Rights²⁶ launched a programme in 2008 called *Fair School* that aims to make Czech schools a fair place for everyone, including students with physical disabilities, learning disorders and those who come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. The organization has begun awarding certificates to schools that meet strict criteria for inclusion and provide academic and social opportunities for all students including those with special needs. When awarding the Fair School certificates, the League of Human Rights evaluates cooperation between school heads and teachers, as well as among the teachers themselves, communication with students, multicultural themes in the lessons, elimination of prejudice on the part of both students and parents, efforts to motivate children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and public participation in events organized by the school. The Fair School programme team supports the participating schools by providing them with feedback and organising workshops before awarding the certificate. The certificate is valid for 3 years and then the school can apply for re-assessment. The programme covers the whole country. Currently there are 10 schools that have already received the award and 16 new candidates.

Figures on school failure are based on estimates. The Institute for Information on Education (IIE) collects data on students who dropped out of education in individual grades of compulsory and upper secondary education (the reasons for dropping out are, however, not available in all individual cases). IIE also has information about the number of students in every grade, making it possible to follow different age groups as they progress through the education system. The dropout rate at all levels up to ISCED 3 is estimated to be 6 %²⁷. This figure is confirmed by studies of the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education that collects data on early school leavers from labour offices (Trhlíková, Úlovcová 2010a).

Progress in overcoming school failure is not systematically monitored. The state and development of the system with respect to equity are not monitored either.

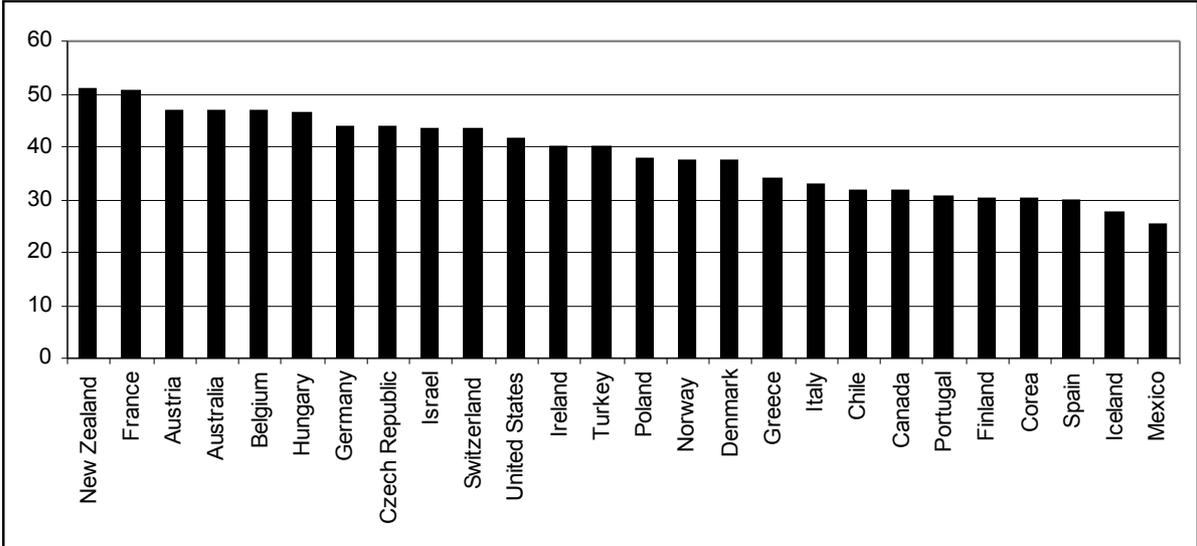
The Institute for Information on Education produces every year a statistical yearbook with data documenting the state and development of the education system. These yearbooks contain data on participation within different levels and types of education, grade repetition and enrolment of students with special education needs. The MEYS publishes every year its *Annual report on the State and Development of the Education System* based on the aforementioned statistical data. As mentioned above, the MEYS develops, every four years, the *Long-term policy objectives of education and development of the education system* in which it evaluates the extent to which the goals set in the previous long-term plan have been reached. Although the long-term plan sets goals in the area of equity, no specific quantitative indicators are set, and the evaluation is thus very limited. “Equal opportunities” are evaluated also in the *Annual Report of the Czech School Inspectorate* based on the observations of school inspectors. However, none of the previously mentioned reports includes data on the achievement levels of specific groups of students and their development, or data gained in surveys of Roma students.

²⁶ The League of Human Rights (<http://www.llp.cz/en/>) is a Czech non-governmental organisation using legal methods to protect the rights of children, patients, persons with disabilities, victims of racial discrimination, police maltreatment, domestic violence etc.

²⁷ Most of the students drop out during upper secondary studies. Participation in ISCED 3 studies is high and has been further increasing: in the academic year 2003/2004 upper secondary students constituted 90.7 % of the population of 15-18-year-olds, in 2010/2011 it was 96.6 %.

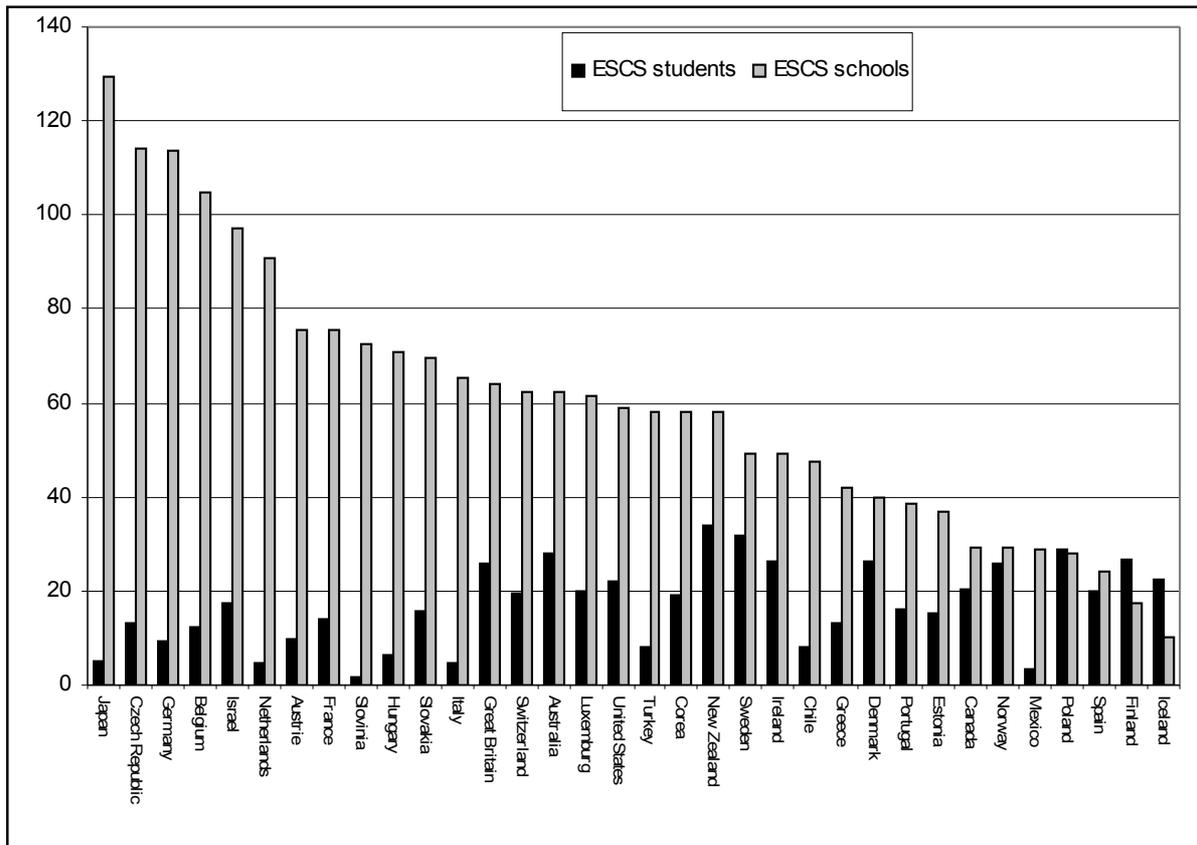
The Czech Republic, however, has several data sources that allow it to monitor certain aspects of equity. The country does not have any national assessment or monitoring system. However, it has participated in international comparative studies since 1995. The data from international comparative surveys provide information about the differences between students and schools and about the relationship between students' achievement levels and their socio-economic status in comparison with other participating countries. At the national level, they also give information about differences between individual tracks and make it possible to track development in all the above-mentioned indicators. The OECD publications show that the level of educational inequalities in the Czech Republic is relatively high (OECD 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010). Figure 3 illustrates the relationship between student achievement and socio-economic status at the student and school level. Figure 4 illustrates the relationship between student achievement and socio-economic status at the student and school level. National analyses show that the differences between schools with respect to student composition and student achievement have been increasing gradually since the 1990s (e.g. Straková 2010). This is illustrated in Table 1 which demonstrates the increase in variation between schools in terms of both student composition and PISA reading scores. Data from OECD PISA survey also show an increase in the proportion of students not reaching the minimal performance level. It increased from 14.7 % to 25.4 % in reading literacy between 2000 and 2009 and from 20.9 % to 25.0 % in mathematics between 2003 and 2009 (OECD 2010).

Figure 3 Reading achievement at the student level related to levels of economic, social and cultural status, PISA 2009



Source: OECD 2010

Figure 4 Increment of reading achievement at the school level related to levels of economic, social and cultural status, PISA 2009



Source: OECD 2010

Table 1 Intra-class correlation of ESCS index and reading score, 9th grade

	2000	2003	2006	2009
ESCS index	21.2	24.9	27.6	29.0
Reading score	33.8	40.6	49.1	48.0

Source: PISA

There are data in the Czech Republic that point to the disadvantaged state of Roma children in the Czech education system. The most recent large survey, which was launched by the Ministry of Education and carried out by the GAC survey agency (GAC 2009), monitored the educational pathways of 8,642 students in and in the vicinity of socially excluded areas, including 1,800 Roma children. It has revealed that Roma children are ten times more likely to be diverted outside mainstream education. GAC reported that 40 % of Roma children complete their compulsory education in special schools that were designed for mentally retarded children²⁸. The study also showed that only 30 % of Roma boys and 50 % of Roma girls finished their studies in the same classroom in which they had started education. The Czech Republic also has evidence that students who were moved to mainstream education with higher requirements achieved much better results (OSF 2001). Although the situation of Roma children is subject to criticism by international organizations, the achievement levels of Roma children are not systematically monitored.

The Institute for Information on Education carried out a pilot study within the framework of PISA 2009 that aimed at determining the differences in achievement levels of Roma students in various settings (schools with large and small proportions of Roma students, special schools) and students from the majority population. PISA tests were administered to students from 18 basic and special

²⁸ Other sources give even higher estimates saying that special schools are attended by 70 % of Roma children.

schools in excluded areas that participated in the GAC study in 2008. The survey showed large discrepancies in the results of Roma children and children from the majority population in all types of schools (including special schools) even after controlling for family background. The sample was nevertheless too small to generalize the results of the study. To confirm the findings it would be necessary to carry out such research on a representative sample²⁹.

This study also surveyed an extended sample of immigrant children. The results do not indicate statistically significant differences between immigrant pupils and Czech pupils, nor between different groups of immigrant children. Extensive research would be needed to confirm the finding.

Hardly any information is available on education outcomes of students with health disadvantages.

²⁹ The study included 68 Roma students and 210 non-Roma students in mainstream basic schools, and 32 Roma students and 16 non-Roma students in special schools. The differences in achievement between non-Roma and Roma were identified in both groups.

Chapter 5: Challenges in overcoming school failure

Growing inequalities and lack of information

The data from international achievement surveys show growing differences between schools with respect to both student composition and student achievement. Any development in the system, however, is not monitored, and nor is the impact of the increasing differentiation within the system between various groups of students. Not enough research studies are carried out in the field of education in general, nor specifically in the area of equity.

Lack of public awareness

The society is not aware of possible consequences of growing educational inequalities. The concept of school failure as envisaged in this study is unfamiliar to Czech society. Czech society perceives it as natural that some children fail at school and attributes this failure to lack of study ability and to the negligence of students and their families. Early selection is perceived as the best way to achieve good educational outcomes (e.g. STEM 2009, Factum Invenio 2009, Simply5 2009). This is reflected in schools' attitudes and awareness. At declaratory level, there is a consensus among schools about the necessity of promoting equal opportunities; at practical level this is not the case as there are serious misconceptions related to inclusive education (IPPP 2010).

Consequently, the issue of equal educational opportunities is not at the top of the list of educational priorities of the government³⁰.

Education of Roma students

The only problem that is recognized by society in the area of equity is the education of Roma students in special schools. The problems of the Roma minority are viewed as complex ones that cannot be solved solely within the education system. The problems are often attributed to Roma families that do not value education and do not properly look after their children.

On November 13, 2007, the final judgment of the Grand Chamber ("GC") of the European Court of Human Rights ("ECHR") was issued on the case *D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic* ("D.H. and Others"). It was the first time the court had considered a nationwide pattern of discrimination. In this case, the court shifted its focus from the violations of the individual applicant's rights to systemic discrimination. The case of *D.H. and Others* examined whether the disproportionately high placement of Roma students in special schools in the Czech Republic was a violation of their right, under article 2 of Protocol 1 read in conjunction with Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights ("European Convention"), to be free from racial discrimination in the realm of education. The plaintiffs in *D.H. and Others* were eighteen Roma students, born between 1985 and 1999, who were placed in special schools in the Ostrava region of the Czech Republic. The special school placements complained of in *D.H. and Others* took place between 1996 and 1999. At that time, the law governing schools in the Czech Republic was Law No. 29/1984, under which students who completed their basic education at special schools were unable to go on to mainstream secondary schools.

A complaint was first filed on their behalf in the Czech Constitutional Court by attorneys from the European Roma Rights Centre ("ERRC") and local attorneys. The European Court of Human Rights, sitting as a Grand Chamber, dismissed unanimously the Government's preliminary objection³¹; and held by thirteen votes to four that there has been a violation of Article 14 read in conjunction with

³⁰ The Ministry of Education views its primary goal as improving the educational outcomes of students by setting examinations so that only students who comply with the requirements enter selective educational pathways (ISCED 3A and tertiary education).

³¹ The Ministry of Education denied any discrimination and noted a tendency on the part of the parents of Roma children to have a rather negative attitude to school work. It asserted that each placement in a special school was preceded by an assessment of the child's intellectual capacity and that parental consent was a decisive factor.

Article 2 of Protocol No. 1. The decision in D.H. and Others has had an impact on the Czech Republic. On November 15, two days after the rendering of the final judgment in D.H. and Others, the European Commission called on the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic to take measures preventing future discrimination against Roma children in education (Devroye J. 2009).

In April 2009, a Report of the Czech government on the measures related to the Judgment of the ECHR in the case of D.H. and Others was submitted to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The Report was approved by a resolution of the government. The resolution included the requirement to submit to the government by January 31, 2010 a proposal for a National Action Plan of Inclusive Education (NAPIE). This task was fulfilled and the proposal was accepted by the government in May 2010. NAPIE in outline approved by the Czech government does not just deal with selective practice towards children with special needs, but influences the education of all children and aims at maximizing the chances of each and every individual learner by removing barriers to his/her best performance in its widest sense.

Due to a change of government and many organizational changes in the MEYS, NAPIE was for several months in what could be called a “standby mode”. In January 2011 NAPIE activities started again. As the Czech Republic and the former Czechoslovakia has had an extensively developed system of special schools, it is difficult especially for the practitioners to accept the idea of inclusive education. It is thus not clear whether NAPIE would be implemented in its full scope or whether it would be reduced to partial measures focused on specific groups of special needs students.

Low emphasis on formative assessment

The Czech school builds on summative assessment and extrinsic motivation. International comparative studies show a significant decline in primary and lower secondary student achievement over the last decade. The Ministry of Education intends to prevent further deterioration of student results by means of introducing standardized testing in grades 5 and 9. Representatives of NGOs and educational experts state that in addition to standardized testing, it is necessary to focus on formative assessment and education that would accommodate the needs of individual students and that would aim at improving the performance of every child. They require that the ministry should set the relevant standards and provide teachers with methodological tools that would help them to teach to the standards. They also stress the importance of training teachers so that they understand how to recognize performance corresponding to the standards, and learn the methods of formative assessments. They also call for a teacher standard that would include the skills mentioned above.

Appendix 1

Table 2 School participation in development schemes – academic year 2009/2010

Educational area	Project	Number of participating schools
Education of children of foreigners	Free preparation for inclusion of children of persons from EU member states in compulsory education	3
	Provisions for asylum children in compulsory education	3
	Activities in the area of integration of foreigners	1
Financing of teacher assistants	Financing assistants for children with health disorders	25
	Financing assistants for socially disadvantaged students	92
Education of national minorities, ethnic groups, multi-cultural education	Integration of Roma community	6
	Education in the language of national minorities and multi-cultural education	2
	Support for Roma students in secondary schools	79
Prevention of socio-pathological behaviour	Activities in the area of prevention of socio-pathological behaviour	118
Other	Support for schools that carry out inclusive education and education of socially and culturally disadvantaged students	9

Source: The Czech School Inspectorate

Appendix 2

Proportions of schools classified into various equity assessment categories in academic year 2009/2010 (CSI 2010)

Table 3a Evaluation of nursery schools according to the national criterion framework - academic year 2009/2010

760 evaluated nursery schools		Proportion of schools (%)			
		1	2	3	4
A. Equal opportunities in education	Equal access to education	0.1	1.7	81.9	16.2
	Taking into account individual educational needs	0.0	5.1	81.0	13.9
	Equal opportunities in graduation	0.0	0.3	99.5	0.3
	School counselling	0.0	2.4	91.3	6.3

1 – hazardous state; 2 - substandard; 3 – standard; 4 – example of good practice

Source: The Czech School Inspectorate

Table 3b Evaluation of basic schools according to the national criterion framework - academic year 2009/2010

799 evaluated basic schools		Proportion of schools (%)			
		1	2	3	4
A. Equal opportunities in education	Equal access to education	0.3	0.8	82.7	16.3
	Taking into account individual educational needs	0.4	5.0	79.6	15.0
	Equal opportunities in graduation	0.0	0.3	99.0	0.8
	School counselling	0.1	3.7	81.8	14.4

1 – hazardous state; 2 - substandard; 3 – standard; 4 – example of good practice

Source: The Czech School Inspectorate

Table 3c Evaluation of *gymnasia* according to the national criterion framework - academic year 2009/2010

170 evaluated <i>gymnázia</i>		Proportion of schools (%)			
		1	2	3	4
A. Equal opportunities in education	Equal access to education	0.6	3.0	80.5	15.9
	Taking into account individual educational needs	0.6	4.9	77.9	16.6
	Equal opportunities in graduation	0.0	1.4	98.6	0.0
	School counselling	0.6	3.1	83.4	12.9

1 – hazardous state; 2 - substandard; 3 – standard; 4 – example of good practice

Source: The Czech School Inspectorate

Table 3d Evaluation of secondary professional schools according to the national criterion framework - academic year 2009/2010

139 evaluated professional schools		Proportion of schools (%)			
		1	2	3	4
A. Equal opportunities in education	Equal access to education	0.0	1.4	88.5	10.1
	Taking into account individual educational needs	0.7	5.0	81.3	12.9
	Equal opportunities in graduation	0.0	3.7	96.3	0.0
	School counselling	0.0	5.0	79.9	15.1

1 – hazardous state; 2 - substandard; 3 – standard; 4 – example of good practice

Source: The Czech School Inspectorate

SECTION II: TEN STEPS IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

In the process of developing the background report for the Overcoming School Failure project the authors approached the MEYS's *Prevention, Special Education and Institutional Education Department, the Special Inclusive Education Unit* and the MEYS's institutes (*National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education, Research Institute of Education and Institute of Pedagogical-Psychological Guidance*) with request to describe their policies concerned with overcoming school failure. This section contains a description of projects that have been implemented by the aforementioned organisations with a view to enhancing equity in education and assisting disadvantaged groups of population.

Step 2: Manage school choice so as to contain the risks to equity

A. Title Development of school counselling centres
B: Description Pupils in the Czech Republic commence basic education at the age of six with the exception of gifted pupils who may start schooling when they are five. This provision of the Education Act is only executed in exceptional cases provided that counsellors at an educational-psychological guidance centre establish, based on a comprehensive examination of the pupil including that focused on their social maturity, that it is beneficial for them to enter schooling despite possible risks this may involve. As concerns the choice to study at six- and eight-year grammar schools the procedure is similar. An educational guidance and counselling facility normally expresses an opinion on the pupil's capacities, but this is not obligatory. The responsibility for placing a pupil in this type of education lies with the pupil's parents and the head of school. There are frequent cases where the transfer to a grammar school is deemed to have been premature. As part of the ESF individual national project within the Education for Competitiveness Operational Programme (IpN RŠPP-VIP II – The Development of School-Based Counselling Centres) school psychologists and special education teachers assist in carrying out objective assessments of pupils upon their entering basic education, during schooling and at the time they decide about further educational paths (e.g. multi-year grammar school).
C: Status ongoing
D: Scope and level <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Scope – The measures approved follow from national education policy.2. Level – The network of educational-psychological guidance centres in the CR assist in the identification of gifted pupils. There are at least 1-2 centres in each region (depending on its size) that are specifically designed to work with gifted pupils. The relevant experts undergo methodological guidance and training at the Educational and Psychological Counselling Institute of the Czech Republic (IPPP CR). The class-teacher, the school educational counsellor and the educational guidance and counselling facilities assist pupils in their choice of education. All these are state facilities.
E: Outcome and impacts <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Intended outcome Support provided by school psychologists and special education teachers leads to a more appropriate placement of pupils in educational programmes and reduces the incidence of premature transfers to six- and eight-year grammar schools. Consideration is also given to a possible lack of fitness for basic education (physical immaturity, illness, etc.). Enhancing the competencies of educational guidance and counselling facilities in the care of gifted pupils will enhance the education of this group of pupils, assist in addressing problems related to dual exceptionality and reduce the potential risk of their school failure.2. Impacts<ol style="list-style-type: none">A. School-based counselling centres have complemented the counselling system in schools. Their work has had the following major impact:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>the structure of services provided</i> by educational guidance and counselling facilities has changed considerably, since most activities related to the integration of pupils with special educational needs (including resolving associated problems) have been transferred to schools.• <i>Improving the quality of admission to 1st grade of basic school</i>, the number of cases where school attendance was postponed has been reduced, as schools can work more with pupils who might fail at the beginning of schooling (normally as a result of a social disadvantage).• The implementation of specific preventive activities and work with classrooms has acquired a major qualitative dimension, schools show a demonstrably <i>lower incidence of risk behaviour</i>, and they have resources to deal with problematic pupils and classes.

- School-based counselling centres are able to take better account of the *specificities of the given school* (as compared with educational guidance and counselling facilities), and deal with problems that are directly linked to study difficulties in a flexible manner.
- Experts also worked in schools as *consultants* in the process of developing individual educational plans and other educational measures, and also assisted in the development of SEPs.
- The work of special education teachers and psychologists in schools has also contributed to the process of self-evaluation of teachers and schools.
- All those involved *reported better communication within school* and also with parents. An open discussion about various problems was reported to be a commonplace in schools, and competent counselling services were provided without schools being concerned about the potential attitudes of the prospective pupils' parents.
- The core of career guidance has also been transferred to the school environment as it turns out that the school has more information about the pupil as compared to what can be obtained during one or two visits to a PPP or SPC. A school psychologist (special education teacher) may work with the pupil's portfolio.
- It is therefore possible to consider *adjustments to the standard activities in schools and educational guidance and counselling facilities*. The latter should get the status of entities whose services are fully used where there is no school-based counselling centre, and where such a centre does exist, they should only provide guidance when the school-based centre fails to redress the given problem.
- Moreover, educational guidance and counselling centres as the only entities in the system may present documentation for administrative decisions, particularly in relation to Section 16 of Act No. 561/2004 Coll., on Pre-School, Basic, Secondary, Tertiary Professional and Other Education (the Education Act).
- If a school psychologist is employed full-time by a school, it is possible to consider reducing the number of educational counsellors, or combining the work of a school psychologist with that of the school prevention methodologist.

B. The development of a network of educational guidance and counselling centres dealing specifically with issues related to gifted children has resulted in an improved quality of the care of this group of pupils. Moreover, it has led to a decrease in the number of gifted pupils commencing schools too early (mainly due to the parents' opinions on the child's talents without a realistic assessment of potential risks that are usually attached to physical and social immaturity).

3. Formal evaluation of impact – Evaluation in the project is based on monitoring the results of the work of school psychologists and special education teachers by means of monthly reports. Also, each specialist has their own methodologist who describes their activities ones in three months and evaluates their professional competencies. The quality of work is also improved via regular training (as part of the continuing training of educational staff scheme) that aims at the enhancement of professional competencies.

Evaluation of the work of counselling centres that focus on gifted pupils takes place on a continuous basis, as part of regular analyses of counselling work and also as part of methodological guidance designed for this group of specialists at the IPPP CR.

F: Policy conditions

The introduction of the possibility for gifted pupils to commence schooling earlier than six was influenced by the experience of other European countries, initiatives of gifted pupils' parents, the interest on the part of the media, and the willingness of the MEYS to accept this practice.

G: Research

Research was carried out focusing on the work of school psychologists and special education teachers working in schools (Š. Štech, J. Zapletalová, a kol: Činnost školního psychologa ČR, 2003; H.Šmejkalová: Činnost školního speciálního pedagoga, 2004). Both studies have contributed to the identification of activities these specialists are obliged to carry out in a school environment, and they constituted a starting point for the development of standards for the provision of counselling services

in schools and educational guidance and counselling facilities (the standards are included in Decree No. 72/2005 Coll.).

Moreover, longitudinal research on gifted pupils was conducted including a cross-sectional survey. The research was concerned with the identification of gifted pupils in Czech schools, description of their typical characteristics and social and family backgrounds, and formulation of educational policy approaches with regard to the nature of support for pupils with special educational needs and the optimal development of key competencies in gifted pupils. The research was also focused on identifying appropriate educational approaches for the maximum possible use of cognitive and social qualities of these pupils in the educational process.

In 2006 a survey was carried out focusing on the characteristics of the population of gifted pupils aged 2.5 to 7 in terms of their family background and social aspects (with an emphasis on peer-to-peer relationships). It intended to shed some light on the distribution of gifted pupils according to sex, their social position in the peer group and the quality of their family backgrounds. Questionnaires were used in the survey. The respondents were counselling psychologists – members of the working group concerned with gifted pupils at the IPPP. The outcomes point to a considerably heterogeneous population of gifted pupils in most areas under examination. From the social perspective, they are most frequently leaders, but there are also somewhat withdrawn individuals as well as those who are aggressive and hostile.

In 2007, following upon the results of the survey via questionnaires, we collected data from case studies for the purpose of longitudinal research. The conclusions are as follows:

- In terms of communication between school and family we identify situations of agreement, disagreement and conflict.
- Agreement may result in interconnection of school and out-of-school cognitive activities of the gifted pupils, but also in their splitting.
- Disagreement and conflict may be major identity factors for the pupils and may affect their motivation for school activities.
- It is assumed that the pupil whose talents are accentuated at the selection stage may show selective motivation (chooses tasks).
- Gifted pupils often feel different from their peers
- Gifted pupils have an increased need for self-assertion and acceptance by the environment
- In term of the gifted pupils' identity building in a school environment there are three major determinants: social, achievement and nomination.
- Gifted pupils often play the role of leaders in a peer group, hostility to peers is less frequent. A rather large number of gifted pupils do not have a distinct social position (they may be respected or ridiculed).

The education of gifted pupils in the existing school environment is controversial, while there is lack of relevant information in a number of areas. The area of social and identity characteristics is among those most demanding in terms of methodology. In the survey we attempted to outline some issues that may be useful for educational staff and may also serve as starting points for further research.

Other research activities were focused on the identification of instruments for teachers to be able to pinpoint gifted pupils.

Step 3: In upper-secondary education, provide attractive alternatives, remove dead ends and prevent dropout

A: Title Career guidance and counselling in the context of curricular reform
B: Description The project develops a system of information, methodological and educational support as part of career guidance designed for pupils at basic and secondary schools (ISCED 2 and ISCED 3 levels) including those with special educational needs and those at the risk of dropping out of education. This has involved the development of a web-based information system at www.infoabsolvent.cz that provides comprehensive information about education and the labour market to a broad spectrum of users. There are other related activities carried out as part of the project: setting up a call centre in order to provide individual counselling not only for pupils and parents but also for counsellors and educational staff, and an e-learning scheme aimed at supporting the training of career counsellors.
C: Status Under development.
D: Scope and level Scope: National level. The objective of the project is to develop a policy concerned with career guidance and counselling at schools including extended support for pupils with special educational needs and prevention of dropout. The formation of a publicly accessible information system - containing comprehensive information about educational provision, the labour market situation of individuals who completed various programmes and levels of education, various occupations and ways of addressing study-related problems – affects the quality of guidance services and decisions taken by users at various levels. The target groups are pupils and parents, school counsellors, schools and governing bodies (the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports – MEYS, regional authorities). The web-based information system is an accessible source of information for pupils and parents who face a career choice situation or need to address study-related problems. Individual guidance services are offered by the call centre as part of the project. As regards the target group of counsellors and educational staff, the project expands the system of information, educational and methodological support within career guidance. This is done through the provision of comprehensive, up-to-date information about educational provision and the labour market situation of school leavers (data from labour offices and Czech statistical office) via the web-based information system, and also through a system of training support based on e-learning. Schools get feedback in the form of data about the labour market situation of school leavers (e.g. the rate of unemployment, employment prospects in various fields), and about their satisfaction concerning their readiness for employment. Schools may use this information when designing their provision. Secondary users (i.e. regional authorities, the MEYS and employers) may, in their decision-making, use statistical information about the distribution of pupils according to fields of study and regions, comprehensive data about educational provision, data about school leavers' employment situation and other detailed information.
E: Outcome and impacts 1. Intended outcome The main objective of the project is to develop an integrated system of career guidance, to increase the quality of career guidance and counselling services, to enhance the accessibility of comprehensive information related to the choice of secondary education, including information concerning pupils with special educational needs, and to assist in addressing study-related problems and dropout prevention. The major instruments for improving the quality of guidance services include: a career guidance policy that will lead to a better use of the existing and future counselling capacity, the development of the training of career counsellors via an e-learning support scheme (eKariéra), the implementation of a web-based information system (www.infoabsolvent.cz) and the establishment of an individual counselling facility (a call centre). The comprehensive information system being developed as part of the project aims to support pupils

in deciding about their educational paths. There are a number of instruments for this purpose: the provision of information about the existing educational provision (including the educational content), organisation of psychological tests focused on career choice, and presentation of short videos describing various occupations. Moreover, the information system contains data about the demand for labour and various aspects related to the employment situation of school leavers (the rate of unemployment, level of satisfaction, employment prospects in the field studied, evaluation of the competencies acquired, etc.), which makes it possible to adjust the pupils' choice to external conditions.

From the perspective of pupils and parents the increased accessibility of information about educational content and employment prospects shall reduce the risks of study failure related to a bad choice of programme and the resulting problems when entering the labour market. Support for pupils with special learning needs is an integral part of the project, as well as assistance in addressing study-related problems and preventing dropout. Another major outcome should be the availability of feedback for schools and governing bodies in the form of information about school leavers' satisfaction and employment situation, which will facilitate more informed decisions about shaping the educational provision and adjusting it to labour market requirements.

2. Impacts

The development of the information system and the activities aimed at enhancing the quality of guidance services shall have a far-reaching impact on the target groups and the guidance system as such. The effects may be expected over the long term.

3. Formal evaluation of impact

As part of evaluation the usage of the system at www.infoabsolvent.cz is monitored. The results show that this information system is the dominant source of information related to career choice in the Czech Republic. Another form of evaluation consists in workshops attended by the system users. The level of satisfaction with the e-learning scheme on the part of career counsellors is also traced.

F: Policy conditions

The project has been approved by the MEYS and it is funded from the ESF and the national budget. Information about the web-based system is quite often presented in the media in connection with career choice topics.

G: Research

Not planned.

H: Comments

The VIP Kariéra II project, the implementation of which is planned for 2010-2013, follows upon VIP Kariéra I carried out in 2005-2008. In the first part of the project the www.infoabsolvent.cz website was developed (available only in the Czech language). It consists of 4 sections – choice of school and field of education, school leavers and the labour market, guide to occupations including illustrative videos, and study-related problems. The further development of this system as part of the VIP Kariéra II follow-up project aims, above all, at the provision of information about educational programmes on offer in the context of the ongoing curricular reform. The project also responds to the need for the development of career guidance designed for pupils with special educational needs, as well as instruments for dropout prevention. The system shall also include psychological instruments supporting decisions on the choice of education (“profi tests”) and the development of on-line individual counselling. A greater emphasis is also placed on information about tertiary education.

A: Title

Prevention of Dropout from Education and Support for the Secondary Education of Pupils from Socio-Culturally Disadvantaged Backgrounds (PROPOS)

B: Description:

The PROPOS project focused on educational-psychological and social support for the secondary education of pupils facing social disadvantages. The educational-psychological assistance concerned study aspects (preparatory courses for entrance and final examinations, trial /“mock”/ tests, intensive boarding courses, remedial classes, development of teaching materials), and relationships/motivation (encouraging pupils to improve their attitude to school and motivation to complete their education by means of individual and group consultations, trips, competitions, activities enhancing the

relationships with classmates and teachers, etc.). Social support included direct financial assistance to pupils from poor families (to cover the costs of accommodation, meals and transport related to secondary education) and contributions for material and technical resources in schools to motivate pupils to study there.

C: Status:
Completed

D: Scope and level:

1. **Scope:** national
2. **Level:**
The following schools providing upper secondary education – particularly to pupils with social disadvantages – were involved in the PROPOS project: Tertiary Professional School and Secondary pedagogical school and Business Academy in Most, Secondary School of Prof. Zdeněk Matějček in Ostrava, Secondary Vocational School and Practical School in Lipová Spa and Secondary Vocational School of Construction in Přerov. The aforementioned project activities affected pupils in both on-site and distance programmes and teachers of these schools.

E: Outcome and impacts

1. **Intended outcome and impacts**
The PROPOS project mapped the reasons for pupils dropping out of secondary education and tested, on this basis, the overall system of preventive activities focused on the dropout of socially disadvantaged pupils while taking account of all these reasons (motivation, school success, relationships in school, insufficient learning support in the family, poor financial situation of the family, etc.).
2. **Formal evaluation of impact:**
 - Evaluation reports and the results of mapping the dropout rate in the schools involved (prepared by the project methodologists);
 - Monitoring reports;
 - Final report of the PROPOS project.

F: Policy conditions
The PROPOS project was supported from the ESF and the national budget of the Czech Republic. They were implemented by the IPPP CR in partnership with the MEYS.

G. Research

- The reasons for pupils from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds dropping out of secondary education, IPPP CR 2008
- An analysis of the specificities related to the education of pupils from various ethnic backgrounds who attend schools and school facilities in the CR, IPPP CR 2008
- An analysis of counselling services provided by educational counselling and guidance facilities and schools, IPPP CR 2009
- An analysis of assessment methods used in career guidance, IPPP CR 2010
- An analysis of assessment and intervention methods most frequently used in educational counselling and guidance facilities, a proposal for complementing the set of instruments used, IPPP CR 2010

A: Title

Framework Education Programme for One-Year Practical School Education
Framework Education Programme for Two-Year Practical School Education³²

B: Description

One-year programmes at practical school complement and expand the theoretical knowledge and practical skills gained by mentally retarded pupils in compulsory education. The educational process is focused on the development of communication skills and on achieving the highest possible degree of independence while respecting the individual specificities and abilities of pupils. It provides training in manual skills for carrying out simple tasks in all areas of practical life that facilitate the

³² See secondary education (ISCED 2C, 3C) in the diagram of the Czech education system. Secondary practical schools will teach according to these frameworks from September 2012.

students' integration into society.
 Two-year programmes at practical school complement and expand the scope of general education achieved during compulsory schooling. The educational process is focused on acquisition of basic work skills, habits and procedures necessary in daily situations and employment in the future. It provides the basics of vocational education and manual skills in the relevant field that lead to employment. The skills acquired may also be used in further education.

C: Status

Completed.

D: Scope and level

1. Scope

National level

Pursuant to Section 4 (3) of Act No. 564/2004 Coll. on Pre-School, Basic, Secondary, Tertiary Professional and Other Education (the Education Act), as amended, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports publishes the Framework Education Programme for One-Year Practical School Education 78-62-C/01 and the Framework Education Programme for Two-Year Practical School Education and releases them in order to initiate a two-year period designated for the development of school education programmes.

2. Level

The Framework Education Programme for One-Year Practical School Education is designed for pupils with severe mental disabilities, multiple disorders and autism who completed basic education at a special basic school.

The Framework Education Programme for Two-Year Practical School Education facilitates the attainment of secondary education for pupils with moderate mental disabilities, or mild mental disabilities combined with another physical disorder, that prevent them from attending another type of secondary school.

Individuals who completed one-year practical school may, in line with their individual capacity, do various auxiliary jobs in services and manufacturing (e.g. healthcare, social and community services, manufacturing companies, agriculture), or in sheltered facilities.

Individuals who completed two-year practical school are trained to carry out simple tasks in services and manufacturing (e.g. in social and community work, healthcare, manufacturing companies, agriculture), or to continue their education.

E: Outcome and impacts

1. Intended outcome

The objective of education in practical school (both one-year and two-year programmes) is to make it possible for pupils to complement and expand the theoretical knowledge and practical skills acquired during compulsory education and to provide them with basic skills and habits to perform simple tasks in various areas of life. Pupils may use the skills in continuing education as part of lifelong learning.

Education in one-year and two-year programmes at practical school is completed by a final examination. The level of education attained is documented by a certificate of final examination. The final examination, through which secondary education is achieved, consists of an oral exam in the theory of vocational subjects and a practical exam. The content and organisation of the final examination are subject to the respective legal regulations.

2. Impacts

Pupils placed in these education programmes attend school regularly and they are part of the relevant group in the classroom. There they develop their social skills that facilitate their integration into society, job seeking and common interaction with other people.

3. Formal evaluation of impact

No formal evaluation has been carried out yet. The programmes were sent to schools this school year.

F: Policy conditions

These programmes were adopted in line with the policy pursuing inclusive education and equal opportunities in the Czech Republic. They follow upon the Framework Education Programme for Special Basic Education that was adopted in 2008.

G: Research

No research has been carried on so far.

H: Comments

In line with the new principles of curricular policy set out in the National programme for the Development of Education in the CR (so-called “White Paper”) and in Act No. 564/2004 Coll. on Pre-School, Basic, Secondary, Tertiary Professional and Other Education (the Education Act), as amended, a new system of curricular documents has been introduced. The documents are developed at two levels – state and school level. Those developed at state level include the National Education Programme and Framework Education Programmes (FEPs). The national programme elaborates on the objectives of education laid down in the Education Act and defines the main areas of education and the relevant educational content, as well as the resources necessary to achieve these objectives. FEPs are published for various fields of education that define the mandatory content, scope and conditions of educational provision, and they are binding for the development of School Education Programmes (SEPs) that represent the school level. Each school develops its own SEP in line with the relevant FEP and provides education accordingly.

Education in one-year and two-year programmes at practical school is provided on a daily basis. In view of the pupils’ special educational needs the provision should be organised so that respect be given to their individual specificities and mental, physical and social capacities. In exceptional cases the head of school may extend the length of education by a maximum of two years.

One-year and two-year programmes at practical school strive to meet the following objectives:

- to expand and enhance the knowledge pupils gained in basic education; to strengthen and further develop pupils’ key competencies, to enhance their knowledge and skills and to shape their attitudes;
- to encourage pupils to think in a creative manner;
- to guide pupils to use communication skills (possibly alternative modes of communication) and to communicate effectively and openly; to guide pupils towards democratic discussion;
- to develop pupils’ physical, intellectual and specific capacities and skills;
- to teach pupils to perceive and protect their health as a balanced state of mental, physical and social well-being;
- to develop relationships with other people and to care about the environment and nature;
- to guide pupils to act in line with sustainable development principles;
- to guide pupils to develop a responsible attitude to fulfilling their obligations and observing the rules set;
- to guide pupils to adopt an assiduous and conscientious approach to both teamwork and independent work; to guide pupils to acquire knowledge and learn about work procedures and to prepare them for carrying out work activities in line with their capacities (one-year programme).
- to guide pupils to acquire knowledge and learn about work procedures, and to prepare them for carrying out work activities as part of future employment in the relevant field (two-year programme).

Step 4: Offer second chances to gain from education

<p>A: Title UNIV Uznávání výsledků neformálního vzdělávání a informálního učení v sítích škol poskytujících vzdělávací služby dospělým Validation of non-formal education and informal learning in the network of schools providing adult education</p>
<p>B: Description ESF project carried out by the National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education NUOV. The main aim of the project was support to secondary and upper vocational schools with regard to accreditation of prior learning. The procedure of validation of prior learning has been set up in accordance with the National Qualification System (Národní soustava kvalifikací – NSK).</p>
<p>C: Status Completed.</p>
<p>D: Scope and level 1. Scope National (the project had been carried out in 6 out of 14 regions of the Czech Republic). 2. Level The project activities targeted all types of technical and vocational schools.</p>
<p>E: Outcome and impacts 1. Intended outcome The main intended outcome of the project has been to support the transformation of vocational schools into lifelong learning centres, including teacher training for new professional roles and tasks related to the validation of informal learning. 2. Impacts The project implementation involved a number of vocational schools whose staff received training relevant to adult education. The process of validation of non-formal and informal learning had been piloted by a few hundred candidates who succeeded in acquiring a partial or full qualification in such fields as cook, waiter, baker, shop assistant. 3. Formal evaluation of impact The project was conducted in accordance with the formal ESF regulations including a regular monitoring of the process as well as of the quantitative indicators.</p>
<p>F: Policy conditions The project had been designed and carried out at the time when the first parts of the National Qualification System were created. At the same time the national Lifelong Learning Strategy was adopted. These circumstances provided favourable conditions for implementation of such a project which utilised the systemic environment secured through the National Qualification System and the Lifelong Learning Strategy.</p>
<p>G: Research The main project activities were supported through surveys of qualification needs in the regions involved in the project.</p>
<p>H: Comments A follow up project, UNIV2 regions (UNIV 2 – kraje) has been launched with the full title Changing Secondary Schools into Centres of Lifelong Learning. The aim of the project is to transform secondary schools into centres of lifelong learning, i.e. open institutions which – besides initial education and training – will offer various forms of continuing education for a variety of interested persons. Activities of the project will focus on creating the best possible conditions for this change. In all regions involved, schools providing continuing education will be networked or integrated into the existing networks of such schools. Staff (educators) of the schools involved will participate in a number of educational workshops aimed at developing their professional competences in selected areas (esp. in adult education, designing</p>

modular programmes, lifelong career guidance, continuing education marketing, and the like). Each of the schools involved, in co-operation with appropriate social partners, will create at least three continuing education programmes, at least one of which will be implemented within the project. Regarding the literacy training issue it should be noted that illiteracy has been rather rare in the modern Czech Republic. Completion of the compulsory education level (ISCED 2) has been provided by schools in all regions of the country. The procedure has been regulated through the main legal act on education, The Education Act, Section 55. The particulars of the process, including the type of study (on-site or distance courses), organization of the final exams etc. have been regulated by Decree No. 48/005 Coll., Sections 12 and 13. Similarly the full secondary education level (ISCED 3 – 3A) can be completed through the courses, organized as full attendance (on-site), external or distant courses. At the moment there are no work-based training programmes offered in the Czech Republic.

Step 6: Strengthen the links between school and home to help disadvantaged parents help their children to learn

Step 7: Respond to diversity and provide for the successful inclusion of migrants and minorities within mainstream education

<p>A: Title SIM – Střediska integrace menšin (Rozvoj poradenství, vzdělávání a podpůrných služeb pro žáky se sociálním znevýhodněním) MIC - Minorities Integration Centres – SIM (Development of guidance, education and support services for socially disadvantaged pupils)</p>
<p>B: Description The main aim of the ESF-funded SIM project had been the establishment and piloting of six Minorities Integration Centres which provided educational and counselling support to schools, educational and counselling professionals as well as to minority and immigrant pupils and their families.</p>
<p>C: Status Completed.</p>
<p>D: Scope and level 1. Scope national 2. Level The target group of the project were pupils and students at primary, lower and upper secondary level as well as their families. The organizations affected included schools, educational-psychological counselling services and NGO's working in related fields.</p>
<p>E: Outcome and impacts 1. Intended outcome The intended outcomes included three main targets: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. professional training of educational and counselling professionals working at SIMs; 2. building school and counselling service capacities for effective work with the target group (through education and training courses for teachers and other staff and through methodological support to schools and counselling services); 3. support to the target group by the means of personal assistance. 2. Impacts The impacts of the project can be traced at all three of the above-mentioned levels: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a robust training programme was conducted for SIM staff resulting in the training and specialisation of nearly 70 professionals in various fields including psychology, special education, social work and cultural anthropology; 2. schools and counselling facilities included in the project implementation substantially increased their capacity for work with the given target group; 3. a substantial number of immigrant and Roma children received direct educational and counselling support. 3. Formal evaluation of impact The project was monitored on a regular basis following specific quantitative indicators (e.g. number of participating schools, number of persons receiving training, number of students receiving support) set up at the outset of the project. Internal process evaluation was also carried out.</p>
<p>F: Policy conditions The project was received with high levels of enthusiasm among ethnic associations, NGOs, school and counselling services, which welcomed any qualified help with working with the target group. On the other hand the political reception of the project was somewhat mixed with various political forces that had an influence on education policy having different ideas about the issue. This caused certain tensions during project implementation.</p>
<p>G: Research During the implementation of the project research was carried out on the social position of the target groups with regard to education issues. This research helped produce better targeting of the project</p>

activities.

H: Comments

The project has been followed up with a new project, currently under way, Inclusive Education Support Centres.

Step 8 Provide strong education for all, giving priority to early childhood provision and basic schooling

A: Title

Individual educational plans (diagnostics, teacher support)

B: Description

Education takes place on the basis of curricular documents that define binding frameworks for educational provision at various stages (Framework Education Programme for Pre-School Education – FEP PE, Framework Education Programme for Basic Education – FEP BE). School Education Programmes (SEPs) are developed in line with the relevant FEP that governs education at individual schools. In order to ensure equal access to education FEPs contain chapters specifically focused on the education of children and pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented children and pupils. These chapters set out general conditions that are specified in SEPs and further elaborated on in individual educational plans (IEPs) designed for various pupils. The IEP is a basic precondition based on which the head of school may apply for increased funding in order to meet the special educational requirements of these pupils. The IEP is normally developed by the class-teacher in cooperation with other members of the school's educational staff and the pupil's legal guardians, while taking account of the recommendation made by an educational guidance and counselling facility. The plan contains data concerning the content, scope and implementation of education, the pedagogical approaches recommended, the ways of assigning tasks and forms of evaluation. Special educational support is recommended in the form of special aids, the scope of support services, etc.). From pre-school education the child may be accompanied by a teacher assistant. These assistance services enhance the quality of education for a large number of pupils with special educational needs. There are assistance services available in the Czech education system that are in line with the specific needs of:

- ✓ pupils with physical disabilities
 - a) integrated in mainstream nursery, basic, secondary and tertiary professional schools
 - b) pupils with a severe disability in special schools

- ✓ pupils with social disadvantages (particularly a Roma assistant)
 - a) in preparatory classes in mainstream and special schools
 - b) in mainstream and special schools.

The employment of teacher assistants in schools and school facilities is currently limited, above all, by a lack of funding for their remuneration. Moreover, it is sometimes difficult to find a teacher assistant with an appropriate qualification and there is also a large degree of turnover in these positions. Addressing existing problems related to the provision of assistance services is one of the tasks of the Institute for Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling (IPPP CR). The IPPP CR regularly delivers training courses for teacher assistants leading to a qualification. A material entitled “Basic Information on Providing an Assistant Teacher for Classes Educating Pupil(s) with a Physical Disability” was published (2nd updated edition was released in 2010).

The IPPP CR's activities aim predominantly at strengthening expert counselling services in schools and educational guidance and counselling facilities. This is done mainly through the implementation of ESF projects: RŠPP – VIP II and CPIV (see Steps 3 and 10).

Moreover, the IPPP CR pays considerable attention to the development of professional competencies of specialists in educational guidance and counselling facilities as part of the continuing training of educational staff. This year, courses dealing with the preparation and implementation of education in line with an IEP were introduced and run several times as part of the in-service training (free of charge for educational staff).

The expert activities of the IPPP CR also focus on improving the quality of diagnostics methods in counselling centres and issues publications in this area: In 2010 a detailed Analysis of Diagnostics Instruments used in counselling centres was issued on the basis of which the missing instruments are being added and further steps implemented in order to enhance the quality of assessment processes in schools and educational guidance and counselling facilities.

There is another ESF project implemented by the IPPP CR as part of the Education for Competitiveness Operational Programme that aims at improving the quality of assessment (identification) procedures. Its title is Identification of Children and Pupils with Special Educational Needs and it is scheduled to be completed on 31.3. 2013). As part of the project instruments are being developed for the assessment - from the psychological, pedagogical and special education perspective - of pupils with special educational needs, including those coming from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds and gifted and talented pupils. The project activities will include modification of the existing outdated instruments, adaptation of foreign instruments including the development of national standards, development of original and brand new instruments, establishment of criteria for interpretation of the results for selected groups of children and pupils (foreign nationals, Roma, the gifted and talented, the disabled), development of the assessment tools and the training of the educational staff in using them.

The specialist staff at the IPPP CR participates in the preparation of legislative documents related to the education of children and pupils with special educational needs and gifted pupils. Currently they are working on an amendment to Decree No. 72/2005 Coll. on the provision of counselling services in schools and educational guidance and counselling facilities, and an amendment to Decree No. 73/2005 Coll. on the education of children, pupils and students with special educational needs and the education of gifted and talented children, pupils and students.

C: Status
ongoing

D: Scope and level

Scope – training takes place on a regular basis, the specialist activities mentioned above are currently taking place.

Policy documents:

- National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic – White Paper (Prague 2001)
- Long-Term Plan for Education and Development of the Educational System in the Czech Republic (Prague 2009)
- Government Resolution No. 253 of 29 March 2010 – National Plan for the Creation of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2010–2014

Acts of Parliament:

- Act No. 561/2004 Coll. on pre-school, basic, secondary, tertiary professional and other education (the Education Act), as amended (particularly by Act. No. 49/2009 Coll.

.Act No. 563/2004 Coll. on educational staff and the amendments to some other acts, as amended

Government Regulations:

- Government Regulation No. 75/2005 Coll. on determination of the extent of direct teaching and direct educational, special education and educational-psychological activities of pedagogical staff

Decrees:

- Decree No. 14/2005 Coll. on pre-school education, as amended by Decree No. 43/2006 Coll.
- Decree No. 48/2005 Coll. on basic education and some requisite of compulsory school attendance, as amended by Decree No. 454/2006 Coll.
- Decree No. 400/2009 Coll., amended by Decree No. 13/2005 Coll. on secondary education and the education at conservatoires, as amended by Decree No. 374/2006 Coll. (effective from 18. 11. 2009)
- Decree No. 10/2005 Coll. on tertiary professional education, as amended
- Decree No. 492/2005 Coll. on regional funding formulas (so-called “normatives”)
- Decree No. 72/2005 Coll. on the provision of counselling services in schools and school facilities
- Decree No. 73/2005 Coll. on the education of children, pupils and students with special educational needs and the education of gifted and talented children, pupils and students, as amended
- Decree No. 317/2005 Coll. on the continuing training of educational staff, the Accreditation Commission and the career system for educational staff, as amended by Decree No. 412/2006 Coll.

Information provided by the MEYS:
Information from the MEYS concerning the provision of education for children, pupils and students with special educational needs who need assistance support - No. 14 453/2005-24 (MEYS Bulletin No. 10/2005).

Level

The initiatives mentioned above aim at supporting the education of pupils with special educational needs and they have a nation-wide impact.

E: Outcome and impact

We assume that the conditions for the education of children and pupils with special educational needs shall improve both as a result of more accurate diagnostics criteria and methods, and also as a result of specific support measures related to the education of these children and pupils. The relevant activities are evaluated via questionnaires filled out by those who complete training programmes. As concerns the projects under the Education for Competitiveness Operational Programme, there are monitoring reports issued on a continuous basis.

F: Policy conditions

Educational staff are positive about and take great interest in the activities. The MEYS provides due support for their implementation.

A: Title

CPIV – Centra podpory inkluzivního vzdělávání
IESC - Inclusive Education Support Centres.

B: Description

The main aim of the ESF-supported IESC project is to implement inclusion in the Czech education system, and to prepare Czech schools, particularly basic and secondary schools, for integrating students with special needs. Considering these aims nine centres have been established all over the Czech Republic to provide counselling and support services in the schools participating in the project (342 schools in total). Every centre includes a team of professionals consisting of a psychologist, special education teacher, teacher, cultural anthropologist and social workers (more than 90 people in total). All these people receive further and continuing education provided by the IESC project.

C: Status

Underway (2009 – 2012)

D: Scope and level

1. Scope

national (the project was carried out in all regions of the Czech Republic)

2. Level

The primary target group of the project is teachers in nursery, primary and secondary schools, and special schools.

The secondary target group of the project is pupils and students in nursery, primary, lower and upper secondary education in special schools, the staff of educational-psychological counselling centres and other educational counselling facilities, the staff of organizations providing continuing education, and the staff of NGOs working in related fields.

E: Outcome and impacts

1. Intended outcome

The implementation of inclusion in the Czech education system involves many qualitative changes in terms of equity. The Czech education system indicates some features of selectivity (the system of elite schools, institutionalised segregation of Roma or unfair streaming of students). This selectivity implies that the quality of education provided by schools is very different, and that the number of school leavers with poor basic skills and early school dropouts is high. In addition, the Czech Republic has a high level of enrolment in special schools of the disadvantaged students, especially those from the Roma minority. In these schools students receive education from a more basic curriculum.

Inclusion is considered to be a way of reducing selectivity in the education system in general and the number of school leavers with poor basic skills and early school dropouts in particular, because an

inclusive school should be open to the entire target group, and as such take into account the individual needs of each child; therefore the main intended outcome of the project is to transform partner schools into schools following the idea of inclusion in the sense of following inclusive principles in their curriculum and teaching methods, increasing support for inclusion approaches among teachers, making available appropriate aids designed for students with special needs, and a working system of educational counselling facilities.

2. Impacts

The IESC project has completed its first year. The partner schools consider their participation in the project to have been very useful and fruitful. Nevertheless, final evaluation is planned only for when the project is completed.

3. Formal evaluation of impact

The project is being monitored on a regular basis with the use of specific quantitative indicators set up at the outset of the project. An internal evaluation process is being carried out as well.

F: Policy conditions

The implementation of inclusion represents one of the main features of current educational policy.

G: Research

During the running of the project, a series of analytical studies are being made. The most important analysis, "The report about inclusion in the Czech Republic", will be published for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012, and will describe the situation of inclusion in each year of the project.

H: Comments

The project has already entered the second year of its existence.

References

- CSI. 2010. The annual report for the academic year 2009/2010. Czech school inspectorate: Prague. <http://www.csicr.cz/en/85477-annual-report-for-the-2009-2010-school-year>.
- CSO. 2009. Projekce obyvatelstva České republiky do roku 2065. (Projection of Population of the Czech Republic till 2065). Czech Statistical Office: Praha.
- Devroye J., Northwestern University Journal of International Human Rights, Volume 7, Issue 1 (Spring 2009) European Court of Human Rights, GRAND CHAMBER, CASE OF D.H. AND OTHERS v. THE CZECH REPUBLIC (Application no. 57325/00).
- Factum Invenio. 2009. Analýza předpokladů a vzdělávacích potřeb pedagogických pracovníků pro zkvalitňování jejich pedagogické práce. Učitelé ZŠ a SŠ. (Analysis of prerequisites and education needs of pedagogues for improving their pedagogical work. Teachers of basic and secondary school). Factum Invenio: Praha.
- GAC spol s r.o. 2009. Final report of the research project Sociological research aimed at the analysis of the form and causes of the segregation of children, pupils and young people from the socially and culturally disadvantaging environment. GAC: Praha.
- IPPP. 2010. Zpráva o stavu inkluzivního vzdělávání v ČR 2010 (The Report about the State of Inclusive Education, IESC project). <http://issuu.com/cpiv/docs/>.
- Kofroňová, O., Vojtěch, J. 2007. Analýza školních vzdělávacích programů – 2007: Analýza ŠVP zpracovaných na základě rámcových vzdělávacích programů) v pilotních školách projektu Pilot S. (Analysis of school education programmes elaborated on the basis of framework education programmes). Volume 2, No. 1, pp 53-71.
- Křížová, E., Trhlíková, J., Úlovcová, H., Vojtěch, J. 2008. Přejít absolventů maturitních oborů SOU do praxe a jejich uplatnění na trhu práce. (Transition of ISCED 3A graduates of vocational programmes to labor market). NÚOV: Praha.
- Kuchařová, V., Svobodová, K. 2006. Síť zařízení denní péče o děti předškolního věku v ČR (The network of daily care facilities for children in pre-school age in the Czech Republic), Labour and Social Affairs Research Institute (VÚPSV): Praha.
- MEYS. 2001. National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic. White Paper. <http://aplikace.msmt.cz/pdf/whitepaper.pdf>.
- Mullis, I.V.S., Martin, M.O., Gonzalez, E.J., & Kennedy, A.M. 2003. PIRLS 2001 International Report: IEA's Study of Reading Literacy Achievement in Primary Schools, Chestnut Hill, MA: Boston College. http://timss.bc.edu/pirls2001i/PIRLS2001_Pubs_IR.html
- OECD. 2001. Knowledge and Skills for Life: First Results from PISA 2000. OECD: Paris.
- OECD. 2004. Learning for Tomorrow's World. First results from PISA 2003. OECD: Paris.
- OECD. 2007. PISA 2006. Science competencies for tomorrow's world. OECD: Paris.
- OECD. 2010. PISA 2009 Results: Overcoming Social background. Equity in Learning Opportunities and Outcomes. OECD: Paris.
- Ombudsman. 2011. Tisková zpráva z 16.2. 2011 (Press release from 16.2. 2011). www.ochrance.cz.
- Simply5. 2009. Elity a vzdělávání. (Elites and Education). Simply5: Praha.
- Rona, S., Lee, L.E.. 2001. Školní úspěšnost romských dětí (School success of Roma children). OSF: New York.
- Roth, K. et al. 2006. Teaching Science in Five Countries: Results from the TIMSS 1999 Video Study. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics: Washington.
- STEM/MARK. 2009. Sociologický výzkum zaměřený na analýzu struktury postojů a očekávání veřejnosti k oblasti školství, výchovy a vzdělávání. Část 2. Postoje rodičů a žáků ke vzdělávání. (Sociological research focused on analysis of public attitudes and expectations regarding education).: STEM/MARK: Praha.
- Straková, J. 2007. The Impact of the Structure of the Education System on the Development of Educational Inequalities in the Czech Republic. Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review, 2007, Vol. 43, No. 3: 589–610
- Straková, J. 2010. Development of achievement disparities in Czech primary and secondary education. Journal for Educational Research Online/ Journal für Bildungsforschung Online

- Trhlíková, J., Úlovcová, H. 2010a. Vliv rodinného zázemí na předčasné odchody ze vzdělávání a dlouhodobou nezaměstnanost mladých lidí. (Impact of family background on early school leaving and long-term unemployment) in Matějů, P., Straková, J., Veselý, A. (Eds) Nerovnosti ve vzdělávání. Od měření k řešení. Academia: Praha.
- Trhlíková, J., Úlovcová, H. 2010b. Učební obory – specifika vzdělávací cesty a uplatnění na trhu práce. (Vocational programmes – specifics of educational career and transition to labor market) in Matějů, P., Straková, J., Veselý, A. (Eds) Nerovnosti ve vzdělávání. Od měření k řešení. Academia: Praha.
- ÚIV. 2010. Statistická ročenka školství 2009/2010. (Statistical Yearbook on Education 2009/2010). Institute for Information on Education: Praha.
- VÚP. 2007. Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání (Framework Education Programme for Basic Education). <http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/framework-education-programme-for-basic-education>.