



Information on the Lifelong Guidance System in the Czech Republic



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[1] Summary

There are two main bodies responsible for career guidance and counselling in the Czech Republic: the **Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports** (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy*) and the **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs** (*Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí*). Both ministries operate networks providing day-to-day career guidance and counselling.

From the school level up to the tertiary professional level, career guidance and counselling services are regulated by the **Education Act**,¹ the **Government Decree on the Provision of Counselling Services in Schools and School Guidance Facilities**,² the **Act on Teaching Staff**³ and other related legislation. Career guidance and counselling for pupils and students is provided directly at schools and school guidance facilities. These provide standard guidance services free of charge on the request of pupils, their legal representatives, schools or educational facilities.

Under the **Higher Education Act**,⁴ universities are required to provide candidates, students and other persons with information and counselling services relating to their studies and to employment opportunities for graduates of study programmes. Most public universities provide this service through in-house Career Counselling Centres.

Under the **Employment Act**,⁵ the **Implement-**

ing Decree,⁶ and other related legislation, career guidance and counselling services for people requiring assistance in employment matters are provided by the Labour Office of the Czech Republic (*Úřad práce České republiky, ÚP*) and private employment agencies (*agentura práce*).

The activities of **both these guidance systems** are merged to provide counselling services to pupils leaving primary and secondary school. To a certain extent, both guidance systems use the same work procedures and sources of information. Although the official documents do not specifically state that this should be an integrated system of guidance services, the basis for such a system is being unsystematically, but progressively, developed in both sectors.

In addition to the Labour Office, **other actors** provide careers advice for adults, including NGOs, employer associations and private employment agencies. A wide range of services for specific target groups is provided by non-governmental organisations and funded by different sources, mainly on a temporary basis (e.g. the European Social Fund, the European Lifelong Learning Programme, etc.). Career counselling projects funded by EU sources have been expanded where delivered by external specialists, however these are not always well linked with other services and for the most part they operate independently of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Awareness of their activities is therefore fragmentary. However, those activities have contributed to the development of career guidance/counselling in the Czech Republic and have created a need for regulation of the whole range of career counselling services as a profession, with its own professional standards and training.

1 Act No. 561/2004 Coll., on pre-school, basic, secondary, tertiary professional and other education (the Education Act)

2 Decree No. 72/2005 Coll., on the provision of counselling services in schools and school guidance facilities.

3 Act No. 563/2004 Coll., on teaching staff.

4 Section 22 (d) of the Act on higher education institutions No. 111/1998 Coll.

5 Act No. 345/2004 Coll. on employment.

6 Decree No. 518/2004 Coll., implementing Act No. 435/2004 Coll., on employment.

[2] Key Challenges Addressed by the Guidance System

2.1 Employment rate

In 2014, the employment rate of the Czech Republic was 68% that of the EU-28 (for the population aged 15-64 OECD Economic Surveys: Czech Republic 2014). The higher employment rate is mostly related to lower unemployment, while activity rates in the CR are at the same level as in the EU-28. The employment rate of young people has been declining due to their increasing participation in ISCED 3A upper-secondary education and tertiary education. In contrast, the employment rate of people aged 50–64 is increasing as a consequence of the gradual postponement of the retirement age.

Compared to the EU-28, the Czech Republic shows a larger difference between the rate of **employment of men and women**, and this difference has been hovering at a stable level. The main reasons are the lower retirement age for women, the long period of maternity and parental leave in comparison with other EU countries and a low proportion of flexible types of work (such as part-time work, homeworking etc.).

The numbers of **early school leavers** in the Czech Republic are lower than in the EU-28. (according to the EU Labour Force Survey, it is about 5% (5.5% in 2014).⁷ However employment opportunities for people who leave the education system before getting a qualification are far worse.

Long-term unemployment constitutes a major problem within the context of the Czech

labour market. Furthermore, there are important local differences in the unemployment rate within the country. In 2007, when the overall unemployment rate reached its lowest values, the proportion of long-term unemployment represented 52%. A high proportion of long-term unemployment is closely related to the structural unemployment issues.⁸ An unemployment rate was 5.9% (October 2015, Czech Statistical Office).

2.2 Industries

The structure of the Czech economy changed considerably after 1989. The proportion of agriculture and heavy industry has decreased and, conversely, the share taken up by the service sector has grown. As compared to the EU-28, the proportion of manufacturing in the Czech Republic is significantly higher in terms of gross value added and employment. The figures for the business service sector are still lower in the Czech Republic, but rapidly growing.

A large proportion of industry has a long tradition, dating back to the end of the 19th century, and so has the related **vocational education**. The communist regime strongly supported the development of heavy industry in particular. Following its transition to a market economy, the CR became the target of extensive foreign investment – particularly in the **automotive industry and electrical engineering**. Foreign investors found a combination of a high level of technical education on the part of the labour force and low labour costs. The growing labour costs in the Czech Republic had a negative

⁷ See glossary term: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Glossary:Early_leaver_from_education_and_training, and more statistics: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=edat_ifse_14&lang=en.

⁸ http://refernet.cz/sites/default/files/download/vet_2013_cz_cr.pdf

effect on employment in some industries where the spatial proximity of suppliers is not so important a factor (e.g. the textile industry). The economic recession, which began in 2008, mainly impacted manufacturing and construction, while employment in the service sector grew even during the crisis. During the recovery period some manufacturing branches started to grow as well (e.g. metal products, machinery, automotive, repair and installation) and in 2012 the proportion of manufacturing was only slightly under the level of 2008.

2.3 Demographic balance

The Czech Republic covers an area of 78 900 km² and the population was 10.5 million as of 2015. The total population is expected to keep increasing until 2018 due to growing life expectancy, before subsequently starting to decline. Like most countries in Europe, the Czech Republic is facing the problem of **population ageing**. The proportion of the 65+ age group is due to increase from the current 16% to 24% by 2030 and will continue to grow thereafter. The total size of the economically active population is already in decline.

Population ageing will have consequences for **education and training systems**. The role of adult education and training will increase considerably and at the same time schools (especially the basic and secondary schools) will face the problem of low numbers of young students.

Although the proportion of young people in the population is decreasing over the long term, in the medium term there is a strong population surge of children born between 2002 and 2008. For a certain period of time, this population surge will place increased demands on the capacity of primary education (peaking in 2020) as well as on secondary education (peaking in 2027).⁹

⁹ http://refernet.cz/sites/default/files/download/vet_2013_cz_cr.pdf

During the course of 2014 the population of the Czech Republic increased by 25.856 thousand people to 10,524.783 thousand. This increase was caused both by a preponderance of live births over deaths (by 4.2 thousand) and the positive international migration balance (21.7 thousands).¹⁰

2.4 Skills gaps

A survey was carried out under the VIP Career II – Career Counselling project, entitled “**Professions and occupations that employers need**”.¹¹ The survey identified those professions or occupations where companies encountered on the one hand a lack of workers and on the other a lack of good quality young workers and occupations they felt to be promising for the future. The questionnaire survey was carried out among employers in industry (secondary sector), in services (tertiary sector), in the quaternary sector and in agriculture.

The results of the survey show that a total of 69% of respondents find that there is a shortage of workers in certain professions in the industrial sector, 54% in the tertiary sector and 41% in the quaternary sector.

At the same time, the greatest problem in relative terms concerns organisations operating in the building sector (which is paradoxical as the data analysis of unemployment in school-leavers shows a high level of unemployment in school leavers trained in building professions), followed by companies providing catering and accommodation services (where the unemployment rate for trained school-leavers is also above average), as well as in the area of information and communication activities.

¹⁰ https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/obyvatelstvo_lide

¹¹ www.infoabsolvent.cz/Temata/ClanekAbsolventi/4-1-10/Profese-a-obory-ktere-zamestnavatele-potrebuji/26

2.5 Strengths and weaknesses of the current career guidance and counselling system

2. 5. 1 in the educational sector

2. 5. 1.1 in schools up to the tertiary professional level

STRENGTHS

The legislative basis for school counselling services, defining their standard activities; distributing the performance of counselling services between the school and school guidance facilities, which have the relevant professionals and diagnostic tools and methods, and which generally serve a number of schools in any one region.

WEAKNESSES

Insufficient capacity of educational counselling to cover all standard types of operations, over-concentration of different types of tasks to be carried out by an educational counsellor, the insufficient capacity of most school guidance facilities, the regions' responsibility for educational counselling and methodological guidance from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS), which is not carried out to a sufficient extent, the non-systemic participation of counsellors in further education.

2. 5. 1.2 in higher education institutions

STRENGTHS

A legislative basis that gives higher education institutions the freedom to choose which guidance and counselling services are provided, active cooperation between higher education counselling centres under the Association of university guidance counsellors (Asociace vysokoškolských poradců).

WEAKNESSES

Non-systemic financial and material support from the state and higher education institutions themselves, inadequate staffing.

2. 5. 1.3 in non-formal vocational education and training

STRENGTHS

Not identified.

WEAKNESSES

A lack of legislation and systemic measures.



2.5.2 in the employment sector

Labour market information is provided in schools in cooperation with the local Information and Counselling Centres and schools also usually organise a number of visits for students to the centres. The services in these centres are **dependent on the numbers** of individual counsellors and centres are facing capacity problems due to staff reductions.

As for **career planning support for adults**, the Labour Office specialises in counselling for the unemployed. Career counselling is seen as inadequate due to the lack of a systematic framework and staffing deficiencies and its availability is generally uncoordinated. In both the regions surveyed by the case study, fewer than one quarter of the newly registered unemployed receive counselling during the first few months after they begin claiming benefits. Five months after becoming unemployed, an individualised action plan is developed for each jobseeker. The number of people receiving counselling varies according the composition of the registered unemployed and depends on the capacity of the public employment services (PES). The PES run a web-based national job matching service, which enables a jobseeker to select from vacancies notified to the public employment services. In addition, personal face-to-face counselling and placement services are available at some local labour offices, although these are intended mainly for jobs requiring low to medium skills as very few of the registered vacancies are for high skilled jobs.

Since January 2013, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has sought to provide better and more extensive career advice and assistance, not only to jobseekers but also to employers, municipalities and social partners. Better communication and information transfer between the local contact offices and the regional branches of the Labour Office and employers is expected to increase vacancy notifications. A new methodology and standards of work are being developed for better counselling services and more funding has been made available.

In 2012, the profession “career counsellors” (ka-riérový poradce), was included in the **National Register of Occupations** (*Národní soustava povolání, NSP*); this covers four types of position, which are more specifically detailed, although evaluation standards for these professions are still needed. Hopefully, once these standards have been incorporated into the **National Register of Vocational Qualifications** (*Národní soustava kvalifikací, NSK*), a training programme for career counsellors will be developed. To date, no formal training has been established for career counsellors.

Job profiles are mapped at the national level by sector councils and described in the **National Register of Occupations** – a database that has provided information about labour market needs by describing the generic and professional competencies of occupations since 2007. It has been developed through a series of projects financed from the European Social Fund and has not yet been completed. This system is linked to the National Register of Vocational Qualifications.¹²

2.5.2.1 provided by the public employment services

STRENGTHS

The legislative basis of counselling services at labour offices¹³ as part of the active employment policy measures, which can be purchased from an external supplier, the availability of counselling services, which are free of charge, focussing on a wide spectrum of clients, qualifications, expertise, professionalism and the high level of motivation of counselling practitioners, the range and quality of the guidance services provided, cooperation with other departments and social partners, the existence of an autonomous counselling department, the technical and IT background for the counselling department, Information

¹² www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?d-n=WCMSTEST4_116649

¹³ Act No. 345/2004 Coll. on employment

and Counselling Centres and their central support functions.¹⁴

WEAKNESSES

The lack of a career system, systematic further vocational education, insufficient staffing, no guarantee for the quality of the counselling services, supervision, increased bureaucracy, insufficient time to work with clients, an accumulation of functions, no unification of methods and approaches to client-oriented work, significant differences between labour offices: in the organisation of client-oriented work, in the numbers of clients per staff member, in terms of technical equipment and office space, an administrative approach to elaboration of the individual action plan, underestimation of the importance of guidance and counselling within the labour office: counsellors are seen as office workers, a lack of coherence between the world of work and education – career choice, an incomplete offer of vacancies, insufficient support for the exchange of experience and good practice in cooperation with clients and employers.

2. 5. 2.2 provided by private employment agencies

STRENGTHS

Not identified.

WEAKNESSES

Legislation, quality of the counselling services provided, staff training,

2.6 Key challenges addressed by guidance in the Czech context

The OECD report on Employment and Skills Strategies in the Czech Republic is specific about the various challenges facing career guidance and recommends **supporting the development of a career counselling system for youth and adults and promoting greater cooperation among career counselling stakeholders.**

An effective career counselling system should assess individuals' acquired skills and propose ways of enhancing or acquiring new ones. Career guidance in the Czech Republic is seen as inadequate for both young people and adults. Educational counsellors tend to have limited knowledge of current labour market needs and job profiles. Career support for youth in schools needs quality assurance mechanisms, adequate resources and more systematic cooperation with LOs and other institutions in acquiring labour market information.

The labour offices can play a significant role in career advice. Since early 2013, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has sought to provide better and more extensive career advice and assistance to jobseekers, employers, municipalities and social partners, and to improve communication between local contact offices.

While addressing the development of career guidance will be a long term challenge for the Czech Republic, the increased emphasis is welcomed. The government could consider developing tools (e.g. early assessment, profiling), organisational changes (setting client zones) and additional resources (staff numbers, training, additional funds).

Other actors such as private agencies or NGOs can play a more significant role in the delivery of counselling services to specific target groups. For example, the new Regional Information and Education Centre in the South Moravian region could be used as a nationwide model

14 FREIBERGOVÁ, Z. *Informačně-poradenské služby veřejných služeb zaměstnanosti podporující pracovní uplatnění občanů: popis stávajícího a návrh nového modelu*. Praha: Národní vzdělávací fond, 2008.

to address the needs of adults and promote continuing education activities. Greater cooperation between career counselling providers at the regional level would be beneficial in making such services more accessible for various adult groups and mapping their provision.

Job profiles are mapped at the national level by sector councils and described in the National Register of Occupations. The National Register of Vocational Qualifications recognises skills and competencies and the certification of skills is important in terms of career mobility. It is important to strengthen this link between labour market needs (defined by employers) and the qualifications being developed through the National Register of Occupations.¹⁵

To ensure financial sustainability, there is a need to acknowledge guidance and counselling as an integral part of education and employment services and set up conditions and capacity for the provision of quality guidance and counselling services.

The **National Guidance Forum** has formulated the following goals to ensure a solid and stable basis for guidance and to set out educational and employment strategies:

- to recognise the importance of lifelong guidance as a tool for decreasing unemployment rate and supporting social justice.
- to promote awareness of the benefits of guidance and counselling in the potential target group.
- to establish conditions for functional cooperation between the main public bodies dealing with counselling and other relevant associations, institutions, and organisations as well as with other guidance subjects. Closer links between counselling services leading to easier orientation for clients.
- to provide access to guidance services for

all citizens during their life span; this access is related to better promotion of guidance services for particular target groups as well as to their accessibility (local, financial, etc.).

- better implementation of projects carried out in the field of guidance and counselling.
- to set up quality education and further training for counsellors. Moreover, (future) teachers need to be trained in career development.
- to ensure the quality of service provision.
- to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of guidance services.
- career education and career guidance need to focus on the development of Career Management Skills.

Statistics for the education system are collected by the **Ministry of Education Youth and Sports**. The guidance and counselling services at schools and school facilities up to the tertiary professional level are evaluated by the **Czech School Inspectorate** (*Česká školní inspekce*). Both the Labour Office and educational institutions have their own methods of monitoring/evaluation.

Some NGOs have either developed their own system of monitoring/evaluation or have transferred proven methods from abroad (e.g. SROI – Social Return on Investment, SRS – Social Reporting Standard, MSC – Most Significant Change). Since 2007, a number of new projects focusing on the development of career counselling services for different target groups have emerged. These projects are run by a variety of actors, e.g. schools, universities, the **Labour Office**, non-profit organisations, employers, trade unions and the private sector. Many new educational and guidance centres have been established. These projects have been funded by different financial sources, mainly fully or partly co-financed by European funds such as the ESF, LLP (Lifelong Learning Programme) etc. – the number of those activities varies over time.

¹⁵ www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/SearchResults/index.htm?xskpCountry=CZE

[3] Key Data, Statistics

3.1 Monitoring / evaluation of career guidance and counselling in the educational sector

3. 1. 1 at schools up to tertiary professional level

A decree¹⁶ based on the Education Act¹⁷ requires the MEYS to prepare a **long-term plan for education and the development of the education system** in the CR every 3 years, which provides a basis for the drafting of a long-term plan by each of the 14 regions. One of the strategic focuses of these long-term

plans is the system of guidance and counselling services. One of the deficiencies of the above mentioned decree is the fact that it does not require individual schools to include a chapter on educational counselling in the annual report on the school's activities. In their self-evaluation, schools describe the manner in which support is provided to pupils and students and how they cooperate with parents, but not how they actually perform educational counselling.

The guidance and counselling services provided at schools up to the tertiary professional level and school guidance facilities are one the subjects of **evaluation by the Czech School Inspectorate** (*Česká školní inspekce, ČŠI*). It is primarily activities carried out within the framework of the educational process that are evaluated.

See **TABLE № 1**

TABLE № 1: Number of pupils / students, schools and approximate estimation of the school educational guidance counsellors (school year 2012/2013)¹⁸

Number of	School			Total
	Basic schools	Secondary schools	Tertiary professional schools	
pupils / students	807 950	474 409	28 980	1 311 339
schools	4 095	-	-	-
classes	41 739	-	1 002	-
school educational guidance counsellors (estimation of persons)	6 500 practitioners (including 4 000 educational counsellors, special needs teachers and psychologists)		-	-

16 Decree No. 15/2005 Coll., laying down the requirements for long-term aims, annual reports and the self-evaluation of schools

17 Act No. 561/2004 Coll., on pre-school, basic, secondary, tertiary professional and other education (the Education Act)

18 <http://vdb.czso.cz>

3. 1. 2 at higher education institutions

Most higher education guidance and counselling centres report on their activities to the management of the higher education institution in which they operate. In addition, counselling centres are monitored by the Association of university guidance counsellors (*Asociace vysokoškolských poradců*)¹⁹, which is classified as an association under the Civil Code and has no authority over either these centres or higher education institutions. Higher education

institutions must be accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

See **TABLE Nº 2**

3. 1. 3 within non-formal vocational education and training

The provision of career guidance and counselling within non-formal vocational education and training is not monitored or evaluated.

TABLE Nº 2: *Number of students, higher education institutions and career guidance and counselling centres (2013)* ²⁰

Number of	Higher education institution		
	Public and state	Private	Total
BA students	180789	25886	206675
MA students	98263	10000	108265
PhD students	21310	94	21404
total students	302317	39819	341599
higher education institutions	28	42	70
career guidance and counselling centres ²¹	72	2	74

¹⁹ www.asociacevsp.cz/

²⁰ <http://vdb.czso.cz>

²¹ www.asociacevsp.cz/photos/files/Informacni%20a%20poradenska%20pracoviste%20na%20VS%20-%20verze%2019.12.2013.pdf

3.2 Monitoring / evaluation of career guidance and counselling in the employment sector

3. 2. 1 provided by public employment services

The Labour Office covers 14 regional offices and about 225 contact points. Every labour office has established an Information and Counselling Centre (ICC), which it runs. There are 79 ICC in the country as a whole, providing career counselling to pupils (in cooperation with schools) and adults (unemployed and other citizens). During the first half of 2014, ICC provided services to more than 370 thousand clients.

Career guidance and counselling provided by public employment services is monitored and evaluated by the General Directorate of the Labour Office (*Generální ředitelství Úřadu práce České republiky, GŘ ÚP*). One of monitoring tools is a national system of monitoring indicators. It also includes performance indicators for guidance counselling involving job brokering and performance indicators for special guidance. The General Directorate of the Labour Office also monitors the International PES Benchmarking indicators²² recommended by the European Commission.

Furthermore, organisations operating as “registered social services providers” provide career counselling and they are guided by standards, which also regulate monitoring/evaluation processes (in the *Quality Standards of Social Services*²³).

3. 2. 2 provided by private employment agencies

Yearly as of 31st January, private employment agencies registered by the MLSA are required to submit an overview of their activities for the previous year to the General Directorate of the Labour Office. The overview provides neither the number of persons nor the methods of providing guidance counselling services.



22 www.pes-benchmarking.eu/

23 www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/11911/vyhlas-ka_505-2006.pdf

[4] Legal Basis / Policies

4.1 Legislation governing the educational sector

The Czech education system operates in accordance with the **Education Act** (561/2004, in force since 2005) which regulates education from pre-primary to upper secondary and tertiary professional and school services, including guidance and counselling, the Act on Teaching Staff (563/2004, in force since 2005) and the Decree on in-service training of teaching staff (317/2005) which regulate the teaching profession at the same levels of education. Details on guidance and counselling are set out in Decree No. 72/2005.

The Act on Pre-school, Basic, Secondary and Tertiary Professional Education²⁴ sets out the principles and aims of education and the education system – composed of schools, which organise education according to framework educational programmes, and school facilities, which provide education and services complementing or supporting education at schools. The Act also regulates the administration: the legal status of schools, their registration, financing, status and responsibilities of different levels of administration, e.g. municipalities, regions, and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, or other relevant ministries.²⁵

The Act on Teaching Staff and on amendments to certain Acts²⁶ regulates requirements for the performance of educational staff's duties, their in-service training and

career progression. Teaching staff responsible for guidance services at schools up to tertiary professional level include:

- educational counsellors,
- school prevention specialists,
- school psychologists,
- special needs teachers.

Their activities include assistance in preventing pupil failure, dealing with socially pathological phenomena, support for pupils with special educational needs and special talent and career guidance. Schools can work with educational and psychological guidance services or (in the case of disabled children) special educational centres.²⁷

The Act on Institutional Education or Protective Education in the Provision of Schooling and on Preventive Educational Care²⁸ stipulates the requirements for the education of children and adolescents lacking proper family support or those with behavioural problems and for children with judicially ordered institutional or imposed juvenile detention.²⁹

Higher education is regulated by the **Higher Education Act** (111/1998), in force since 1999. Public higher education institutions are bound by the Act to provide counselling services.

²⁴ Act No. 561/2004 Coll., on pre-school, basic, secondary and tertiary professional and other education (the Education Act)

²⁵ The Education System in the Czech Republic. MEYS. Prague. 2012.

²⁶ Act No. 563/2004 Coll., on teaching staff.

²⁷ The Education System in the Czech Republic. MEYS. Prague. 2012

²⁸ Act No. 109/2002 Coll., on institutional care or protective care in school facilities and on preventive care in school facilities and on amendments to other Acts.

²⁹ The Education System in the Czech Republic. MEYS. Prague. 2012

The Higher Education Act³⁰ amended several times, extended the non-university and private sectors of higher education. The majority of these are no longer state institutions (with the exception of military and police higher education institutions which are entirely state-funded) but public institutions (state-subsidised) that manage their own property and have wide-ranging autonomy.³¹

The Act on the Verification and Recognition of the Results of Further Education³² opened up a new pathway for adults to obtain a certificate for qualifications attained in practice without formal education.³³

4.2 Legislation governing the employment sector

The **Employment Act** (Act No. 435/2004 Coll.) regulates the provision of the state's employment policy, the goal of which is to attain full employment rate and to protect against unemployment, fair treatment and ban on discrimination for persons asserting their right to employment, the activities performed by Labour office and their powers, the assessment of natural persons' health condition and healthcare providers' cooperation with the assessment of their health condition, the right to employment. Active employment policy measures also include *counselling*, which is provided or organised by the Labour Offices for the purpose of determining the personal qualities and level

of qualification of natural persons in order to choose a career, to broker a suitable employment, to select vocational training for disabled persons and to choose suitable active employment policy instruments.

In 2011, the **Act on the Labour Office of the Czech Republic and on amendments to related Acts** (Act No. 73/2011 Coll.) was adopted; it institutes a General Directorate of the Labour Office which is responsible for public employment services (PES) in the Czech Republic.

Despite of all existing legal basis providing an operating ground to guidance and counselling services in the world of education and work, terms such as "career guidance/counselling" and "career counsellor" are not introduced in the Czech legislation.

4.3 Lifelong learning, employment and social inclusion strategies and implications for guidance

Recently, the Czech Republic has striven to increase the quality and accessibility of education by formulating new long term goals. After being approved by the Government in July 2014, the new **Education Policy Strategy of the Czech Republic for 2020**³⁴ came into effect. This comprehensive document strives, among other things, to overcome the problems resulting from the fragmentation of strategic planning and management in the field of education policy. From a conceptual point of view, the strategy defines the basic priorities of the development of the educational system of the Czech Republic to be followed by authorities and policy makers. The strategy is, in line with

30 Section 22 (d) the Act on Higher Education Institutions No. 111/1998 Coll.

31 The Education System in the Czech Republic. MEYS. Prague. 2012

32 Act No. 179/2006 Coll., on the verification and recognition of the results of further education and on amendments to certain Acts (Act on the recognition of further education results).

33 The Education System in the Czech Republic. MEYS. Prague. 2012

34 www.vzdelavani2020.cz/images_obsah/dokumenty/strategie-2020_web.pdf

the Education & Training 2020 framework, based on the concept of lifelong learning aiming at contributing to the achievement of the main goals of education: personal development contributing to improving the quality of human life, maintenance and development of culture as a system of shared values, development of active citizenship creating conditions for a socially cohesive society and democratic governance, and preparation for employment. The strategy formulates three key priorities:

1. to achieve the significant decrease in inequality in the education system in the following years
2. to support teachers as the key prerequisite of a high-quality education system
3. to introduce effective and accountable governance of the education system.

In relation to fulfilling the goals of the **Europe 2020 Strategy**, corresponding **national goals of the Czech Republic** were set. The main targets for education and training and employment, which should be achieved by 2020, have been identified as:

- The government of the Czech Republic will present the European Commission with a national goal of an overall employment level of 75%.
- The national sub-goal of employment among women: 65%.
- The national sub-goal of employment among older workers: 55%.
- The national sub-goal of decreasing the level of unemployment among young people (15–24 years old): a one-third decrease compared to 2010.
- The national sub-goal of decreasing the level of unemployment of persons with low qualifications: A one-quarter decrease compared to 2010.

- The national sub-goal for decreasing the administrative burden on businessmen compared to 2005: 30%.
- The national sub-goal for increasing labour productivity compared to 2010: 20%.
- The government of the Czech Republic will present the Commission with a national goal of a ratio of university-educated people between the ages of 30 and 34 of 32%.
- The government of the Czech Republic will present the Commission with a national goal of the ratio of students prematurely leaving educational institutions of 5.5%.

Measures aimed at reaching those and other priority targets are formulated annually in the **National Reform Programme of the Czech Republic**³⁵ (adopted in 2014); among others, it includes support for guidance and counselling within the education and employment sector as well as need for close cooperation between these two areas. With regard to career guidance, employers should be empowered to become more involved and the relevance of education at the secondary and tertiary levels should increase in relation to demands of the labour market and employers.

4.4 State of implementation and impact

As the European Council Recommendation of 14 July, 2015 on the National Reform Programme 2015 of the Czech Republic states, the overall level of employment is currently high, but certain disadvantaged groups remain underrepresented in the labour market. These include parents with young children, low-skilled workers, people with disabilities and Roma.

³⁵ www.msmt.cz/vyzkum-a-vyvoj/narodni-program-reforem-cr-pro-rok-2014

Some steps have been taken towards strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of public employment services. The level of employment among young people is increasing, and public employment services try to target their services towards young people in particular. The lack of affordable and quality childcare services and the limited use of flexible working-time arrangements make it difficult for women with children to participate in the labour market. Steps have been taken towards increasing the availability of childcare but policies supporting public childcare for the youngest children are still insufficient.³⁶

The quality and labour market relevance of the Czech education system are a cause for concern. The Czech Republic's educational outcomes have improved in recent years but structural challenges still remain. Participation in tertiary education has increased rapidly, but concerns have emerged in relation to the decline in skills of younger tertiary education graduates. It is hoped that the overdue higher education reform planned to be adopted in 2015 will introduce institutional accreditation, stronger internal quality assurance and greater use of profiling of students, and improve financing systems. More teachers need to be recruited into the compulsory education sector, but low salaries and a negative perception of the profession make it difficult to attract talented candidates. A new career system designed to improve both the recruitment of teachers and their professional development should be finalised in the first half of 2015, to be introduced in September 2016. Its overall impact will, however, largely depend on available funding.

A comprehensive approach to evaluating and supporting low-performing schools and pupils is, meanwhile, still lacking. The introduction of such an approach could help improve efficiency and equality in the education sector. Limited progress has been made in making education more inclusive, despite the Government's adoption of a comprehensive strategy for edu-

cation. Young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds, including Roma, are shown to be less successful in education and on the labour market.



³⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/csr2015_council_czech_en.pdf

[5] Main Bodies, their Scope of Action, Infrastructure

5.1 National authorities influencing the provision of career guidance and counselling in the educational sector

The **Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports** (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy, MŠMT*)³⁷ MEYS maintains the integrated national educational policy by formulating the long-term policy objectives (*Dlouhodobý záměr vzdělávání a rozvoje vzdělávací soustavy*). Above all, the MEYS is responsible for the planning, status and development of the education system, including the area of science, youth and sports, and for the state's education financing policy – for producing the education budget and determining the principles for its allocation. One of the strategic issues is also a counselling system. The Ministry of Education accredits higher education institutions (ISCED 6–8) and their programmes.

The Ministry of Education supervises a number of state-funded organizations of which the following are engaged in career guidance and counselling:

- **The National Institute for Education, School Guidance and Counselling Facilities and Facilities for Continuing Teacher Training** (*Národní ústav pro vzdělávání, školské poradenské zařízení a zařízení pro další*

vzdělávání pedagogických pracovníků, NÚV)³⁸.

The NÚV is public, non-profit organisation managed directly by the MEYS. The main tasks of the National Institute of Education are: creation of framework of educational programmes, support in developing schools educational programmes, further education for teachers and other pedagogical staff, pedagogical-psychological counselling, career guidance, equal access to education, acquisition of qualifications, comprehensive information about schools and fields of study. It runs several projects dealing with guidance and counselling, e. g. UNIV2 Kraje³⁹, VIP Kariéra⁴⁰. The first phase of the VIP Kariéra project was primarily focused on the development and improvement of educational counselling at schools and school facilities. The second phase of the project was devoted to the development and use of an **e-learning programme** to train guidance counsellors and to develop a **career guidance information tool** ISA+⁴¹. The system provides information on education and work employment possibilities of graduates and further information supporting educationalist and counsellors in their work. The Institute also runs the **Centre for Career Counselling** which provides counselling services via e-mail, phone, and personal consultations.

37 www.msmt.cz

38 www.nuv.cz

39 www.nuov.cz/univ2k/projekt

40 www.nuov.cz/projekt-vip-kariera-pomohl-ke-zlepseni-psychologickeho,
www.nuv.cz/cinnosti/projekty/karierove-poradenstvi

41 www.infoabsolvent.cz/

— The **Centre for International Cooperation in Education** (*Dům zahraniční spolupráce, DZS*)⁴² is a state-funded organisation, established by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, performing tasks relating to ensuring educational, training and other relations with foreign countries under the instructions of the ministry. In 2007 it also incorporated the National Agency for European Educational Programmes (NAEP). The NAEP was responsible for implementing the Lifelong Learning Programme (Comenius, Erasmus, Grundtvig, Leonardo da Vinci, Transversal Programmes and Jean Monnet). The DZS is responsible for Erasmus+ and other educational programmes in the Czech Republic (eLearning, EEA/Norwegian Financial Mechanism Fund, ASIA-LINK, etc.). It is also the contact point for non-EU students wishing to study at Czech universities.

The DZS also encompasses the **Czech Euroguidance Centre**, a member of the European network operating in **34 European countries** and linking together career guidance systems in Europe. The main target group of Euroguidance is to provide guidance for practitioners and policy makers from both the educational and employment sectors in all European countries. **The Euroguidance network** promotes mobility, and guidance for counsellors and individuals to better understand the opportunities available to European citizens throughout Europe. Above all, Euroguidance creates opportunities for experts in the counselling field to meet and share their knowledge and experience. By organizing conferences, seminars, job shadowings, study visits, Euroguidance helps to spread examples of good practice.⁴³

The Czech Republic is administratively divided into **14 regions** (higher territorial self-governing units). The regions are responsible for education within their area. Every three years

the regional authorities produce long-term policy objectives for their area in compliance with the national objectives. Generally, the regions are the organising bodies for upper secondary schools (*střední škola*, ISCED 3), tertiary professional schools (*vyšší odborná škola*, ISCED 6) and pedagogical and psychological counselling in each region. Such counselling is provided by pedagogical and psychological counselling centres (*pedagogicko-psychologická poradna, PPP*) primarily for young people up to 18 years of age.

The individual **municipalities** are responsible for compulsory schooling, they establish and administer basic schools (*základní škola*, ISCED 1+2) and nursery schools (*mateřská škola*, ISCED 0).

5.2 National authorities influencing the provision of career guidance and counselling in the employment sector

The **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs** (*Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí, MPSV*)⁴⁴. The MLSA is responsible for social policy (e.g. people with disabilities, social services, social benefits, family policy), social security (e.g. pensions, sickness insurance), employment (e.g. labour market, employment support, employment of foreigners), labour legislation, occupational safety and health, equal opportunities of women and men, migration and integration of foreigners, European Social Fund and other social or labour related issues.

The MLSA supervises a number of state-funded contributory organisations of which the following are engaged in career guidance and counselling:

42 www.dzs.cz

43 www.euroguidance.cz

44 www.mpsv.cz

— **The Labour Office of the Czech Republic** (*Úřad práce České republiky, ÚP*)⁴⁵

The Labour Office is an administrative body with nationwide authority.⁴⁶ The Labour Office is headed by Labour Office General Directorate (*Generální ředitelství Úřadu práce, GŘ ÚP*), which runs 14 regional Labour Offices. The regional Labour Offices deal with tasks in the areas of employment, protection of workers when their employers become insolvent and state social support. Subordinate branch labour offices operate in all 14 regions. The labour offices provide a wide range of guidance and counselling services to job applicants, jobseekers, young people and others concerned and employers.

— **The Fund of Further Education** (*Fond dalšího vzdělávání, FDV*)⁴⁷

The FDV was established in 2011 and provides guidance and counselling services in close cooperation with the MLSA and labour offices through projects co-financed by the European Social Fund and the state budget of the Czech Republic. The FDV aims to implement and coordinate activities in the area of further education, to facilitate better employability of Czech citizens in the labour market and to effectively help to reduce existing structural and sectoral qualification deficiencies and to reflect the educational needs of the Czech labour market.

— **The Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs** (*Výzkumný ústav práce a sociálních věcí, v. v. i., VÚPSV*)⁴⁸ is a public research institution. The institute's principal activity is applied research on labour and social affairs issues at a regional, national and international level; this research is formulated in line with the current require-

ments of state government authorities and possibly non-profit or private entities. The institute also provides consulting services for the users of research outputs, organises seminars and conferences and publishes specialist materials. Research projects are planned every year in collaboration with the institute's founder and other concerned parties and take into account the continuity of the development of science and research in the areas in question. The institute's main areas of research are: the labour market and employment; social dialogue and labour relations; social protection; the family; equal opportunities; incomes and wages; social policy theory.

— **The National Training Fund** (*Národní vzdělávací fond, o. p. s., NVF*)⁴⁹ is a non-profit organisation established in 1994 by the MLSA but independent on MLSA funding. The NVF promotes the development and restructuring of human resources in accordance with the requirements of economic and social reforms in the Czech Republic. It also provides analytical and research work focused on labour market and education issues. One of its departments is the **Guidance Services Support Unit** (*Středisko podpory poradenských služeb, SPPS*). It is actively involved in applied research and other kinds of projects focused on career guidance and counselling development both in education and employment.

5.3 National guidance forum and career guidance and counselling associations

The National Guidance Forum (*Národní poradenské fórum, NPF*) was established on May 13, 2010 by mutual agreement between the

45 www.uradprace.cz/

46 Act No. 73/2011 Coll., on the Labour Office of the Czech Republic.

47 <http://fdv.mpsv.cz/>

48 www.vupsv.cz

49 www.nvf.cz/

Minister of Education, Youth and Sports and the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs. The NPF is an advisory body for both ministries in lifelong career guidance and counselling. The NPF does not replace the coordination structures already existing in the field of career guidance and counselling, but realises its goals through member organisations, working groups and project partnerships. Through the NPF it is possible – given the potential of its members – to ensure the inter-ministerial coordination of activities and project plans implemented in the field of lifelong guidance.

The majority of guidance and counselling practitioners' associations act in the **education sector**. They are:

- **The Association of Educational Counsellors in the Czech Republic** (*Asociace výchovných poradců*), which has been operating since 2006.⁵⁰ The Association brings together educational counsellors at basic, secondary and tertiary professional schools, counsellors at higher education institutions, labour offices and other school and guidance facilities providing educational, information and guidance/counselling services connected with the study and future work placement of graduates of study programmes.
- **The Association of University Guidance Counsellors** (*Asociace vysokoškolských poradců*)⁵¹ was established in 2008. The Association brings together academics and other staff working in higher education institutions providing educational, psychological, special-educational counselling, career guidance and other related types of guidance, information and facilitation services for university students and other persons interested in studying at university and other clients to whom those services are intended.
- **The Association of Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling Centres**

(*Asociace pracovníků pedagogicko-psychologických poraden, o. s., ApPPP*)⁵² connects professionals from pedagogical and psychological counselling centres in the Czech Republic. It facilitates the development of guidance and counselling activities, deals with operational matters of the centres and responds to legislative changes relating to education. The association addresses the needs of professionals in these centres, including issues concerning their education and qualifications. It is also concerned with the implementation of organisational, conceptual and methodical changes relating to pedagogical and psychological counselling in the Czech Republic.

- **The School Psychologists Association** (*Asociace školní psychologie, AŠP*) aims to promote the appropriate use of psychology in the context of education and schooling, to promote the services of school psychologists in all types of schools and educational institutions and to create and introduce educational programmes to ensure a high level of professionalism in school psychologists etc.
- **The Czech Association of School Prevention Specialists** (*Česká asociace školních metodiků prevence, ČAŠMP*)⁵³ is a professional non-political organisation associating school prevention specialists. It primarily focuses on methodical and educational activities, providing guidance and counselling services, educational activities on healthy lifestyle issues, the prevention of risky behaviour and the enforcement of school prevention specialists' interests.
- **The Association of Private Guidance Counsellors** (*Asociace soukromých poradenských pracovníků, ASPP*) is a voluntary independent association of graduate professionals, who deal primarily with issues concerning specific learning disabilities and behavioural issues in general, from

50 www.asociacevp.cz/

51 www.asociacevpsp.cz/english

52 www.apppp.cz

53 www.casmp.cz

prevention and diagnostics to re-education, providing assistance in assuring educational tolerance of pupils in nursery, basic and secondary schools.

There are three relevant associations in the sector of **employment**, although their members do not focus on provision of guidance and counselling services:

- **The Association of Employment Agencies** (*Asociace agentur práce, APA*)⁵⁴ is a non-profit professional organisation associating employment agencies mostly providing temporary help.
- **The Association of Providers of Human Resources Services** (*Asociace poskytovatelů personálních služeb, APPS*)⁵⁵ is an independent and voluntary interest group. Its prime goal is to shape conditions for the favourable development of a stable market of labour potential in the Czech Republic. In order to realise this goal, the APPS communicates with the competent institutions and state authorities. The APPS supports the professional development of its members, advocates personnel-consultancy services, provides its members with information and counselling as well as materials and organises joint activities, conferences and seminars.
- **The Association for Bilan de Compétences** (*Asociace bilanční diagnostiky, ABDg*)⁵⁶ is a voluntary, non-governmental, non-profit, independent organization associating counsellors and other persons serving for the benefit of bilan the competences.

54 www.apa.cz

55 www.apps.cz

56 www.asociace-bilancni-diagnostiky.cz/

5.4 Career guidance and counselling hotline

The only nationwide counselling hotline is run by the **MLSA Call Centre** - 844 844 803, which provides general information within the scope of the following legislation:

- Act No. 435/2004 Coll., on employment
 - guidance on brokering employment
 - employment of people with disabilities
 - registration and benefits for the unemployed and those retraining
 - retraining
 - labour market
 - active employment policy
 - targeted programmes for dealing with employment
 - brokering employment through job agencies
 - employment of foreigners and the European Employment Services (EURES)
 - information on job vacancies
- Act No. 118/200 Coll., on worker protection in the event of the insolvency of the employer and on amendments to certain Acts
- Act No. 262/2006 Coll., the Labour Code
 - Selected provisions relating to Act No. 435/2004 Coll., on employment
 - No labour law guidance provided
- Act No. 117/1995 Coll., on state social support
- Act No. 110/2006 Coll., on the living and subsistence minimum
- Act No. 111/2006 Coll., on assistance in material need
- Act No. 329/2011 Coll., on the provision of benefits to persons with disabilities

[6] Public Awareness, Funding, ICT in Guidance

6.1 E-Guidance

There are around twenty on-line sources providing information on study and work opportunities for free that are most frequently used. They are widely used by educational counsellors and other guidance counselling practitioners and also by pupils, students and their parents. These public portals and web sites are run either by state, private, non-profit bodies or even by individuals:

- <https://portal.mpsv.cz>
(Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs)
- www.atlasskolstvi.cz
(Schools' Atlas – run by P.Fart)
- www.budoucnostprofesi.cz
(Czech Future Skills – National Training Fund)
- www.eu-dat.cz
(Database of Further Training – Trexima)
- www.gwo.cz
(Guide to the World of Occupations – DHV CR, 5D software)
- www.infoabsolvent.cz
(National Institute for Education)
- www.ispv.cz
(Average Earnings Information System – Trexima)
- www.istp.cz
(Integrated System of Typical Working Positions – Trexima)
- www.najdivs.cz
(Find a college – SCIO)
- www.narodnikvalifikace.cz
(National Register of Vocational Qualifications – National Institute for Education, Trexima)

- www.nsp.cz
(National Register of Occupations – Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs)
- www.seznamskoly.eu
(choice of secondary schools – just4web.cz)
- www.stredniskoly.eu
(choice of secondary schools – Michaela Košková)
- www.stredniskoly.cz
(choice of secondary schools – Vojtěch Janda)
- www.vejska.cz
(overview of higher education opportunities – vejska.cz)
- www.vysokeskoly.com
(overview of higher education opportunities – AMOS – www.kampomaturite.cz)
- www.vysokeskoly.cz
(overview of higher education opportunities – LMC)

The most frequently used portal among educational counsellors at basic and secondary schools is www.atlasskolstvi.cz as documented by the findings of the survey run in the framework of the VIP Kariéra – Career Counselling Project⁵⁷. The second most frequently used on-line information source, according to guidance and counselling practitioners, is www.infoabsolvent.cz and www.stredniskoly.cz is ranked third. Educational counsellors at secondary schools most frequently use www.vysokeskoly.cz.

Some on-line information sources provide also information on careers or educational choices.

⁵⁷ www.skoly-online.cz/data/PORADCI_SKOLY_FINAL_pro_www_opr.pdf

The most frequently used information sources are:

- www.scio.cz
- www.superkariera.cz
- www.fakulta.cz
- www.studujvpk.cz
- www.aprace.cz
- www.kampomaturite.cz
- www.kamnaskolu.cz

Counsellors use various tests to detect their clients' interests and aptitudes. Some on-line tools have great potential for offering various career choice procedures, including an option for testing levels of interest both for totally undecided clients and for those who are able to make a choice but have not entirely decided, or those who have almost decided and are seeking information about a specific occupation:

- www.infoabsolvent.cz/profitest
- www.psychotesty.psyx.cz/proforient/vedma0.php
- www.zkouskaosobnosti.cz
- www.test-osobnosti.cz
- <http://test-osobnosti.primat.cz/>
- www.gwo.cz
- <http://demo.comdi.cz/nabidka.php>
- www.proskoly.cz
- www.psychotesty.psyhoweb.cz
- www.psychotestyzdarma.cz

6.2 Costs

Counsellors working at schools and school facilities are paid from the state budget and their services are free of charge. Counselling centres at higher education institutions are funded from the budget of the particular institution and from specific projects. Their services are free of charge for clients.

Counsellors in public employment services (PES) are partly financed from the state budget and partly also from other sources, usually from the European structural funds, mostly the European Social Fund. Services provided by the Labour Office are free of charge both for jobseekers and the companies searching for potential employees.

Most of the existing guidance and counselling services provided by NGOs are similarly funded by different public sources such as the ESF, LLP, etc.

Private employment agencies have to provide their brokering employment services free of charge for jobseekers. Services that do not involve brokering employment but are provided to jobseekers may be a subject to a fee.

To ensure the financial sustainability of services driven by a real demand, there is a need to recognise guidance and counselling as an integral part of education and employment services and to establish conditions and staffing capacity for the provision of quality guidance/counselling services.

[7] Sectoral Approaches

7.1 Early childhood

Counselling services for pre-school children are provided by school counselling centres, which comprise pedagogical and psychological counselling centres (*pedagogicko-psychologická poradna, PPP*) and specialised educational centres (*Speciálně pedagogická centra, SPC*). At the request of the parents, the PPP will assess whether pre-school children are mature enough to attend school or will respond to other specific requests relating to education and childcare. The SPC provide guidance and counselling services to pre-school children with disabilities.⁵⁸

Pre-school education curricula offer a basis for the development of **Career Management Skills (CMS)**. The main education areas – *The child and his/her psyche, the child and the other, the child and society, and the child and the world* – provide space for the development of self-knowledge, positive self-concept, effective communication with others, understanding the functions of society, etc.

7.2 Basic, secondary and tertiary professional schools

Guidance and counselling services are required by law to be provided at all basic schools (*základní škola*), secondary schools (*střední škola*) and tertiary professional schools (*vyšší odborná škola*).

Guidance and counselling services at all basic

and upper secondary schools and school guidance and counselling facilities are provided by qualified educational staff: **educational counsellors** (*výchovný poradce*) and **school prevention specialists** (*školní metodik prevence*) – **teachers with a further qualification** obtained through in-service training. At some schools, **psychologists** (*psycholog*) and **special educational needs specialists** (*speciální pedagog*) also provide guidance and counselling support. Sometimes, although rarely, **teaching assistants** (*asistent pedagoga*) can also cooperate in guidance and counselling activities.

These activities include assistance in preventing pupil failure, dealing with socially pathological phenomena, supporting pupils and students with special educational needs and special talent and career guidance.

If there is a need for deeper or more intensive care, schools cooperate further with pedagogical and psychological counselling centres – *pedagogicko-psychologická poradna* – for all pupils, special education centres – *speciálně pedagogické centrum* – for disabled or disadvantaged pupils, educational care centres – *středisko výchovné péče* – for pupils with behaviour disorders and those who are at risk of these (high-risk pupils).

The most important individual as regards career counselling is the educational counsellor (*výchovný poradce*). A school prevention specialist, a school psychologist and a special needs teacher resolve specific issues facing pupils and class groups and, if necessary or upon request, may also be involved in addressing career issues for pupils and students.

The position of an educational counsellor is taken by a school teacher with the necessary qualifications. In addition to direct teaching duty, he/she also provides 1–5 hours a week of educational counselling, depending on the number of

⁵⁸ http://wiki.rvp.cz/Knihovna/1.Pedagogick%C3%BD_lexikon/

pupils in the given school (1 hour for 150 pupils and 5 hours for over 800 pupils) as set out in the given Government Regulation⁵⁹. A Decree⁶⁰ provides for a wide range of standard educational counselling activities, including practical activities and methodological guidance in the following areas:

The **standard activities** carried out by the educational counsellor also include visits to the Labour Office Information and Counselling Centre (*Informační a poradenské středisko Úřadu práce, IPS*). Guidance and counselling in a school is focused on:

- prevention of failure at school
- primary prevention of socio-pathological phenomena (or risky behaviour)
- career guidance and counselling integrating education; informative and supportive help on the choice of educational paths and subsequent careers
- expert support in the integration and education of pupils with special educational needs (including pupils of different socio-cultural backgrounds and those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds)
- overseeing the education of gifted and exceptionally gifted pupils
- continuous and long-term care of pupils with low academic achievements and creation of conditions for improvement
- methodical support for teachers in the application of psychological and special educational knowledge and skills to the school educational activities.⁶¹

59 Government Regulation No. 75/2005 Coll. specifying the scope of direct pedagogical, educational, special pedagogical and pedagogical-psychological activities carried out by pedagogical staff

60 Decree No. 72/2005 Coll., on the provision of counselling services in schools and school guidance facilities

61 https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfs/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Czech-Republic:Guidance_and_Counselling_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education

The standard activities of an educational counsellor include:

- career guidance and counselling on pupils' further educational and career paths
- providing or arranging (entrance and continuous) diagnostics of special educational needs and interventional activities for pupils with special educational needs
- creating conditions for the integration of pupils with disabilities into a school; coordination of counselling services provided to the pupils by a school and school guidance establishments, and coordination of educational measures for the pupils
- passing on professional information from the area of career guidance and care for pupils with special educational needs to school educational staff.

Pupils and students may also use the services of school counselling centres. For example, on request the PPP will assist pupils on issues concerning their first choice of occupation. They are equipped with various psycho-diagnostic and other tools to identify their interests, educational and vocational orientation and discuss the results with minor children in the presence of their parents. Unlike the IPS, PPP do not have information on the labour market. SPC only occasionally provide career counselling and then only to pupils who are their clients.

The empowerment of **Career Management Skills** within the primary school curricula is realised through following education areas: *Man and his/her world, Man and society, and Man and the world of work*. Similarly, CMS are developed at the secondary level of education. Since the academic year 2010/11, the secondary school curriculum has included a subject entitled "Introduction to the world of work" and lower secondary education has introduced a subject entitled "Career path selection". In addition, pupils may attend various educational fairs, open days at schools, job brokering events, etc.⁶²

62 http://refernet.cz/sites/default/files/download/vet_2013_cz_cr.pdf

7.3 Apprenticeships

Within the Czech education system, apprenticeship falls under the secondary school system and is described in paragraph 7. 2.

7.4 Adult learning / continuous training

Educational guidance and counselling for adults is primarily carried out by education institutions, which provide all the information related to the courses they offer, and possibly also to further education courses offered in a given region. Adults can, if they are interested in applying for higher education, use the educational guidance and counselling services provided by higher education institutions, or they can address the pedagogical and psychological counselling centre established by the region. Higher education institutions offer adults different courses within the lifelong learning programme (in accordance with the Higher Education Act), while upper secondary schools and tertiary professional schools do so in the form of further education. Upper secondary schools and tertiary professional schools also organise accredited retraining courses according to the National Framework of Qualifications and other educational programmes (e.g. ICT courses, communication, languages, labour law).

Since 2006, a system of schools has been created under the **Act on Verification and Recognition of Further Education Outcomes**⁶³. These schools are entitled to assess the professional skills that the applicant has acquired outside the formal education system and to issue a certificate recognising this qualification on the basis of an appropriate examination. In accordance with the implementation of the lifelong-learning concept, these schools are also required to create an information system listing the further education programmes they offer (formal, non-formal and

informal). The new system enables the recognition of knowledge and skills obtained outside the school system for adult applicants, allowing them to supplement partial or complete qualifications easily and quickly and facilitating their subsequent participation and success in the labour market in their chosen field.

Psychological counselling for the adult population is provided by state or private health care facilities and private counselling agencies or consultants. Guidance and counselling in the health sector is funded from health insurance funds.

Career guidance for adults is provided by different institutions such as the Labour Office of the Czech Republic, employment agencies, educational institutions, professional and interest associations or organisations for disabled and socially disadvantaged persons.⁶⁴

In last 10 years after the country's accession to the EU, the scope of guidance and counselling services has significantly extended thanks to national projects co-financed by the European Social Fund. These projects are often run by NGO and are almost exclusively targeted at **disadvantaged groups of persons and their actual needs**. These organisations primarily operate services not provided by bodies dependant on the ministries or regional authorities. These activities are not monitored and therefore awareness about them is fragmentary. The Czech National Career Guidance Awards Competition organised by the Czech Euroguidance Centre is a solitary attempt to raise awareness of the variety and quality of the guidance and counselling services provided not only by state-funded organisations but also by organisations operating outside or independently of the state administration.

Good examples of such projects might be "Delta and Bravo programmes" (www.smlrov.cz/projekty-esf/bravo)ⁱ and "Career choice without prejudices" (www.genderstudies.cz/publikace/publikace.shtml)ⁱⁱ or "Take and give" (www.empl-cons.cz/projekt6.html)ⁱⁱⁱ

⁶³ www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/dalsi-vzdelavani/zakon-c-179-2006-sb

⁶⁴ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Czech-Republic:Guidance_and_Counselling_in_a_Lifelong_Learning_Approach

7.5 Higher education

Higher education and education at tertiary professional schools is regulated by a variety of Acts and regulations. Guidance and counselling for **tertiary professional education** is organised by the same bodies and institutions and in the same way as at secondary schools (see chapter 7.2)

Study Departments of higher education institutions are the main source of information for those applying to study at a higher education institution and they also provide study support. Study issues at the higher education institution level are dealt with by a Rectorate (vice-rector for study affairs) and at the faculty level by a Dean's Office (vice-dean for study affairs).

In addition, some higher education institutions offer **academic guidance service centres**. The legislative basis for these was laid down by the Higher Education Act, passed in 1998⁶⁵, according to which public higher education institutions are obliged to offer information and guidance/counselling services connected with the study and future work placement of graduates of study programmes (similar guidance/counselling services are usually also provided by private higher education institutions) to applicants, students and other persons.

They **provide both educational guidance, and psychological counselling or vocational / career guidance, possibly legal advice or social counselling**. The specialisation of the guidance and counselling centre is based on the specialisation of staff, who work in the centre, and especially on the status of guidance and counselling in the structure of the higher education institution.

The most frequent form is **psychological counselling**, followed by career and educational guidance and counselling for all students in all forms of study.

Educational guidance is provided to applicants before and during the first months of study at a higher education institution. The guidance and counselling service centres help students to choose or to change their branch of study according to their personal interests and abilities, to work out their study plan, to develop study skills they may lack, etc. The centres can set and evaluate tests of study skills or other tests of special abilities. Under the educational guidance system, support is provided for priority topics for higher education institutions such as student mobility (in the form of regular seminars for students about opportunities for studying abroad or the processing of information publications on the subject).

In addition to guidance centres, higher education institutions organise **Open Days** during which the prospective students find out about the institutions and the way the studies are organised.

Applicants may also gather valuable information from an **annual fair of post-secondary education** options called Gaudeamus (www.gaudeamus.cz)^{iv} and from on-line sources containing information on higher education institutions and their study programmes such as www.infoabsolvent.cz, www.vysokeskoly.cz, www.atlasskolstvi.cz or www.kampomaturite.cz.

The target groups for specific supportive measures during higher education studies are not explicitly laid down by the law. However, support services are provided to foreigners, exceptionally gifted students, students with physical or sensory disabilities and to students on low incomes, the scope and manner of which may differ according to the individual institution.

Teaching methods and special materials for the education of the disabled are usually provided by specialised academic guidance centres. The Help Centre for the Disabled, which was established at the Department of Special Education of the Faculty of Education of Palacký University in Olomouc or the Academic Advisory Board For Enabling High Education to Handicapped People at the Technical University in Liberec can serve as examples. They provide complex

⁶⁵ Section 22 (d) of the Act on Higher Education Institutions No. 111/1998 Coll.

guidance, technical, and therapeutic services to students and staff with communication difficulties, visual or hearing impairments, mobility disorders, with specific learning disorders and behavioural disorders and with multiple disabilities. The services may include personal assistance (e.g. sign language interpretation, ensuring the mobility of students with physical or visual impairments), adaptation of study materials (conversion into Braille tactile lettering, transcribing audio recordings), consulting (with teachers, family, among the disabled and the non-disabled, etc.), providing financial support, publication and educational activities and more. However, the availability of such services is not mandatory.⁶⁶

7.6 Employment

The **Labour Office** provides career guidance and counselling for a wide range of issues. Jobseekers are guided by employment brokers, can obtain individual or group career guidance if they need help with searching a job, psychological support if they need learn more about themselves and their working potential, guidance for retraining if they are not sure how to increase their employability, guidance for work rehabilitation if they suffer from a disability and would like to know which profession would be suitable for them and EURES guidance for those seeking to work abroad.

Special attention is paid to young people in their last year of basic and secondary schools when they are about to choose further studies or transfer to paid employment. There is an **Information and Counselling Centre** at each regional labour office or a selected contact centre (*Informační a poradenská střediska pro volbu a změnu povolání, IPS*), which work together with schools and educational counsellors. Its main task is to provide assistance as regards career choice for young people and adults. IPSs have various sources of information on jobs, on

options for further education and the situation on the labour market such as: job descriptions, videoclips about occupations, applications to test personal features and characteristics important for career choice, information on education and work opportunities, psychodiagnostic tests and others. They provide group and face-to-face counselling and on-line and phone counselling. The main target group of these centres are jobseekers, people who seek alternative employment, school leavers and other groups at risk of unemployment. Visits are also organised for pupils from the top classes of basic schools. In recent years, extensive austerity measures followed by the reorganisation of employment services has led to a reduction in financial as well as human resources which has also affected the counselling services provided by branch labour offices. Counselling is provided at a lower level and is often outsourced.

In addition to the Labour Office, counselling services are also provided by a whole range of **profit and non-profit institutions**, and these are not centrally recorded. One exception is natural and legal persons providing job brokering services, either free of charge or for a fee, which are required by law⁶⁷ to submit the MLSA an application for a permit to broker employment as a private **employment agency** (*agentura práce*).⁶⁸ Although 61% of registered employment agencies state that they provide counselling and information services regarding job opportunities in addition to brokering employment, this rarely constitutes career counselling. Their main activity concerns human resources – the recruitment and selection of employees to fill a relevant job vacancy.

Labour Offices also cooperate with social services in order to provide career guidance services to their employable clients. Therefore, relevant services within the social sector are not further described.

⁶⁶ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Czech-Republic:Support_Measures_for_Learners_in_Higher_Education

⁶⁷ Act No. 345/2004 Coll. on employment

⁶⁸ https://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zamest/zpr_prace

[8] Quality Assurance

8.1 Standards, indicators, accreditation systems

The school guidance and counselling facilities as well as schools must fulfil a set of requirements to be registered in the School Register. They are regularly evaluated by the Czech School Inspectorate⁶⁹ based on the Criteria for Evaluation of Conditions, Course and Results of Education^{70,71}. All school and school facilities guidance and counselling staff must have the qualifications laid down in the Act on Teaching Staff⁷² (see 8.2)

Higher education institutions and their programmes are accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports based on the opinion of the Accreditation Commission. However, there are no standards or an accreditation system specifically for the counselling centres established by the institutions.

Outside the education system, there is no accreditation system for the profession of career counsellor or counselling institutions.

8.2 Guidance professionals

8. 2. 1 Qualifications – requirements / standards

Qualification requirements and standards are regulated by legislation by the relevant sector under which career guidance is provided (education, employment). The educational staff responsible for guidance and counselling services at school and school facilities must fulfil qualification requirements given by the Act on Teaching Staff. They must also follow the “standard activities” stipulated in the Decree⁷³.

8. 2. 1. 1 Educational staff⁷⁴

8. 2. 1. 1. 1 Educational staff responsible for guidance in schools

Professional teaching qualifications for the relevant type or stage of school and completion of a **study programme for an educational counsellors** of at least 250 hours, completed by the defence of a thesis and final examination in front of the examining board, which is organised by the higher education institution as part of a life-long learning programme are

69 www.csicr.cz/en/home?lang=en-us

70 www.csicr.cz/cz/Dokumenty/Kriteria-hodnoceni/Kriteria-hodnoceni-podminek-prubehu-a-vysledk-%284%29

71 www.csicr.cz/getattachment/272d-d1ee-5a0d-4de9-8d5d-8b6cc47152d1

72 Act No. 563/2004 Coll., on teaching staff.

73 www.msmt.cz/dokumenty/narizeni-vlady-kterym-se-stanovi-rozsah-prime-vyucovaci-prime-vychovne-prime-specialne-pedagogicke-a-prime-pedagogicko-psychologicke-cinnosti-pedagogickych-pracovniku

74 https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Czech-Republic:Education_Staff_Responsible_for_Guidance_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education

the prerequisites for performing the specialised methodological activity and the more complicated counselling activities of a **educational counsellor**.

A **prevention specialist** is usually a teacher with the minimum of 2 years of previous teaching experience. In accordance with the law, these specialists operate generally at all basic, upper secondary and tertiary professional schools. The decree on in-service training of educational staff states that prevention of socially pathological phenomena is one of the specialised activities for which educational staff have to obtain **further qualifications** (a study programme of 250 lessons the content of which is strictly set).

Psychologists and school special educational needs specialists have the same qualification as those professionals at school guidance and counselling facilities.

The Act on Teaching Staff distinguishes **two categories of teaching assistant**. For each of them, a different qualification is set:

a) A teaching assistant who performs a direct pedagogical activity in a **classroom, in which pupils and pupils with special educational needs are educated**, or in a school providing education for children and pupils through the form of individual integration. Required qualification: higher education, tertiary professional or secondary education with a school-leaving examination in a pedagogical field or at least secondary education with a school-leaving examination in a different field supplemented by a programme of life-long learning at a higher education institution focused on pedagogy, by study of pedagogy or by study aimed at teaching assistants.

b) A teaching assistant who performs a direct pedagogical activity based on **supplementary educational work** in a school, in a school facility focused on special-interest education, in a school educational or boarding facility, in a school facility providing institutional or protective care, or in a school facility aimed at preventive and educational care. Required

qualification: apart from letter a), secondary vocational education with an apprenticeship certificate supplemented by study of pedagogy, secondary education in a field focused on teaching assistant training, secondary education supplemented by study of pedagogy or study aimed at teaching assistants, basic education and a study programme for teaching assistants are sufficient to perform the profession of a teaching assistant.

8. 2. 1. 1. 2 Educational staff responsible for guidance in school guidance and counselling facilities

A school **psychologist** must have a Master's degree in psychology.

According to the Act on Teaching Staff, a **special educational needs specialist** must have completed a Master's study programme in the field of pedagogical sciences focused on special needs pedagogy. From 1 September 2012, those who have completed their Master's study programme in pedagogical sciences focused on pre-primary pedagogy or teacher training for primary schools or teacher training of general subjects at secondary schools or educator training or who completed their Master's study programme in the field of pedagogy can also become special needs teachers. However, these persons also have to complete supplementary studies to broaden their qualification, carried out in a higher education institution within the framework of a life-long learning programme.

Prevention specialists in pedagogical and psychological counselling centres must acquire at least a Bachelor degree at a higher education institution.

Social workers must usually have completed upper secondary school, or a higher education institution in the field of social work.

Educational childcare staff of the centres for educational care are required to have completed a higher education course focused on special needs pedagogy for educators, or to have

extended the secondary or tertiary professional education prescribed for other educators by completing a Bachelor's degree or in a life-long learning programme with the focus on special needs pedagogy.

8. 2. 1. 1. 3 Staff responsible for guidance at higher education institutions

There are no qualification requirements for the **counsellors** at higher education institutions laid down by the law.

8. 2. 1. 2 Employment staff

There are no qualification requirements for staff responsible for information and guidance and counselling services in **Information and Counselling Centres of Labour Offices** laid down by law. However, for the position of a **counsellor** a Master's degree in humanities, preferably in the field of pedagogical sciences, with work experience in guidance and counselling or in the field of secondary education is commonly accepted and required. In case of two working positions at the Information and Counselling Centres, the second person is required to have completed at least upper secondary school in social and legal studies.

8. 2. 2 Institutions offering qualifications and training

In-service training courses for educational counsellors and school prevention specialists at schools are provided by higher education institutions or by institutions providing in-service training for educational staff, e.g. mainly the National Institute for Further Education (Národní institut pro další vzdělávání) and its 13 regional workplaces. Psychologists and special educational needs specialists gain their qualification in Master's programmes at universities (there is

also an alternative for special educational needs specialists – the Master's degree in teachers' programmes and special educational needs qualification in the life-long learning programme at the higher education institution.

There is no special initial training scheme for career counsellors working at **higher education institutions and outside the education system**. Career counsellors can use several specialised courses and seminars offered by educational institutions (NGOs, adult education organisations, associations etc.)

8. 2. 3 Curricula for the training of guidance professionals

Higher education curricula are developed by the institutions themselves, but must be accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Similarly, in-service training course programmes must be accredited, with the number of teaching hours and the method of certification laid down in Decree no. 317⁷⁵.

There are no official curricula for the training of career counsellors working at higher education institutions and outside the education system.

75 www.msmt.cz/dokumenty/vyhlaska-c-317-2005-sb

8.3 Career guidance counsellor occupational profile

The National Register of Occupation authorised and included the **occupation of a career counsellor**⁷⁶. The occupation is divided into 4 typical working positions:

- Careers advisor for academic and professional career⁷⁷,
- Employment career counsellor⁷⁸,
- Career advisor for endangered, risk and disadvantaged groups of population⁷⁹,
- Career counsellor for human resource development.

The three first mentioned positions of the career guidance counsellor are from 28 April 2015 also defined in **National Register of Vocational Qualifications** (Národní soustava kvalifikací, NSK). It is important step in area of career guidance and counselling qualification and corresponding vocational examination in accordance with Act no.179/2006 on the verification and recognition of results of further education and on amendments to the other Acts.⁸⁰



⁷⁶ http://katalog.nsp.cz/karta_p.aspx?id_jp=102332

⁷⁷ <http://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/en-us/qualification-1538>

⁷⁸ <http://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/en-us/qualification-1539>

⁷⁹ <http://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/en-us/qualification-1540>

⁸⁰ www.msmt.cz/dokumenty/zakon-c-179-2006-sb-o-overovani-a-uznavani-vysledku-dalsiho-vzdělávání-a-o-změně-některých-zákonů-1?lang=1

[9] Guidance Research

9.1 Research bodies

The National Institute for Education (NÚV) focuses among other activities on research, methodology and dissemination of information related to career counselling, and supports the teaching of subjects dealing with labour market issues. The **Department for Lifelong Career Guidance** of the National Institute for Education is responsible for methodological support for career counselling, the development of career guidance in the Czech Republic, cooperation with other subjects in the field of career guidance, promotion of career counselling, and analytical surveys (e.g. needs of career counsellors at the PES, needs of career counsellors at schools, etc.). The Institute provides specific training focused on counselling services and the development and introduction of new methods of diagnostics in the area. It also pursues development of the integrated information system (ISA) and the related website www.infoabsolvent.cz that gathers information on the situation and employment of school leavers in the labour market and thus provides a useful source of information for career decision making for students, counsellors and also adults. The NÚV has also provided e-learning courses for counsellors and teachers to improve their skills related to career counselling.

The Guidance Services Support Unit – GSSU (*Středisko podpory poradenských služeb - SPPS*)⁸¹ is a unit of the **National Training Fund** that primarily carries out **research in the field of guidance and counselling**. The GSSU has replaced the National Resource Centre for the Vocational Guidance agenda (Euroguidance nowadays) which had been transferred to the Centre for International Cooperation in Education. The activities of the GSSU are especially

focused on support for **guidance services within the labour market sector** (close cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic) and **monitoring of guidance services in the education sector**, particularly in higher education. Participation in projects is focused on **support of the European dimension in the provision of guidance services**, its improvement and **the promotion of co-operation** between providers of guidance services at a national level. The Unit supports **publication activities** focusing on educational and vocational guidance and organises information and specialized events.

The **National Observatory of Employment and Training** (*Národní observatoř zaměstnanosti a vzdělávání*)⁸² is another analytical section of the **National Training Fund**. The Observatory provides information **about the development of human resources**, collects data **and analyses trends in education and the labour market** against the background of social and economic changes. As part of the analyses extensive surveys are conducted, the results of which facilitate up-to-date information concerning specific areas that are not covered by regular statistical data. One of the main activities of the Observatory is **forecasting skill needs**.

Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs (*Výzkumný ústav práce a sociálních věcí*)⁸³ conducts applied research on labour and social affairs issues at a regional, national and international level; this research is formulated in line with the current requirements of state government authorities and possibly non-profit or private entities. One of the spheres of activity is **labour market research**, in this context **related to guidance and counselling**. It focuses mainly on employment policy, its objectives and instruments, the institutions implementing

⁸¹ <http://en.nvf.cz/stredisko-podpory-poradenskych-sluzeb>

⁸² <http://en.nvf.cz/narodni-observator>

⁸³ www.vupsv.cz/?p=index&site=en



it and problems associated with minimising unemployment. Attention is therefore paid to assessing the efficacy of active labour market policy instruments from both the national and regional perspectives. Developments on the labour market are also monitored, above all the labour supply and demand and work-related migration. Long-term attention is paid to the standing of selected social groups (the disabled, seniors, foreign nationals) on the labour market.

Research dealing with guidance and counselling is also carried out in part at several **Czech universities**, e.g. Masaryk University in Brno, Charles University in Prague.

9.2 Funding for research

Funds coming from the **state budget** for research in the field of guidance and counselling are distributed either directly through ministries (it concerns almost exclusively MEYS and MLSA) and their directly supervised institutions (e.g. the Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs and the National Institute for Education) or through grant agencies (the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic and the Technological Agency of the Czech Republic). In case of research supported by the Euroguidance centre, funds come from both the state budget and the European budget. A rather marginal option available to those wishing to pursue research activities is to apply for **financial assistance**

from EU funds. The applicant has to submit an application under a relevant call complying with the given area of intervention. The current European programme Erasmus+ has provided some opportunities for such thematic research, whereas the Czech Operational Programmes co-funded by the state budget have not.

There has been one additional, and rather exceptional, way for **European Funds to support guidance and counselling research.** This was an opportunity **opened exclusively to state-funded institutions** supervised by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (the national projects directly allocated to the National Institute for Education and co-financed by the state budget and the European Social Fund called VIP-Kariéra⁸⁴ and the National Register of Vocational Qualifications⁸⁵) and by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (the national projects directly allocated to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and co-financed by the state budget and the European Social Fund called the "Labour Market Institute – Supporting a System of Employment Services and Development of the National Register of Occupations and Sectoral Councils as a Tool for Employers to Affect Human Resources Development in the Czech Republic"⁸⁶).

⁸⁴ www.nuv.cz/cinnosti/projekty/karierove-poradenstvi

⁸⁵ www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/

⁸⁶ www.nsp.cz

[10] Partnerships at the EU and International Level

The current system of international cooperation in the field of guidance and counselling dates back to 1997 when the Czech Republic became involved in the European network of National Resources Centres for Vocational Guidance, today known as the **Euroguidance Network**⁸⁷. Euroguidance is a European network of national resource and information centres for guidance⁸⁸ and operates in about 34 countries. The main aim of Euroguidance is to provide guidance for practitioners and policy makers from both the educational and employment sectors in all European countries. All Euroguidance centres share two common goals: to promote the European dimension in guidance and to provide quality information on lifelong guidance and mobility for learning purposes^{vi}.

Today, the Czech Republic is also involved in other networks which also relate to this area to a certain extent, such as:

- **European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN)**⁸⁹ aims to assist the European Union Member States (and the neighbouring countries eligible for the EU Lifelong Learning Programme) and the European Commission in developing European co-operation on lifelong guidance in both the education and the employment sectors⁹⁰.

87 www.euroguidance.cz

88 www.facebook.com/Euroguidance

89 www.elgpn.eu/

90 Czech members: the National Institute for Education (www.nuv.cz), the Labour Office of the Czech Republic (www.mpsv.cz/en/), the Centre for International Services (www.dzs.cz), the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (www.msmt.cz/index.php?lang=2)

- **Eures**⁹¹ provides services to citizens who are interested in seeking employment in EU member states.
- **Europass**⁹² was developed to increase transparency in vocational education and training. In every country (European Union and European Economic Area), a National Europass Centre coordinates all activities related to the Europass documents. Europass provides a clear overview of the skills, work experience, learning and qualifications of a person^{vii}.
- the **European Qualifications Framework (EQF)**⁹³ is a translation tool that helps communication and comparison between qualifications systems in Europe. A network of the EQF National contact points aims to relate national qualifications systems to the European Qualifications Framework^{viii}.
- the **European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQA-VET)**⁹⁴ is a community of practice bringing together Member States⁹⁵, Social Partners and the European Commission to promote European collaboration in developing and improving quality assurance in VET by using the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework.
- the **European Credit System for Voca-**

91 www.eures.cz

92 www.europass.cz/

93 www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/european-qualifications-framework

94 www.eqavet.eu

95 The National Contact Point is at the National Institute for Education (www.nuv.cz)

tional Education and Training (ECVET) is a technical framework for the transfer, recognition and (where appropriate) accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes with a view to achieving a qualification^{96, ix}

- **ReferNet**⁹⁷ is a network of institutions created by Cedefop in 2002 to provide information on national vocational education and training (VET) systems and policies in the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. Each national partner is a key organisation involved in VET in the country it represents⁹⁸.
- The **Eurydice Network**⁹⁹ provides information on and analyses of European education systems and policies. As of 2015 it consists of 41 national units¹⁰⁰ based in 37 countries participating in the EU's Erasmus+ programme (EU Member States, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey). It is co-ordinated and managed by the EU Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency in Brussels, which drafts its studies and provides a range of online resources.
- **Eurodesk**^{101, 102} is the main provider of information on European policies and

opportunities for young people and those who work with them.

- **PES to PES Dialogue**¹⁰³ is the European Commission's mutual learning support programme for public employment services (PESs) in the European Union. It aims to contribute to the implementation of the priorities of the Europe 2020 strategy and the Employment Guidelines by helping to increase the capacity and effectiveness of PESs.

The Czech Republic is involved in various researches run by **OECD**, such as PISA, PIAAC, etc.

96 National Contact Points: Erasmus+ National Agency (www.naerasmusplus.cz) and ECVET National Coordination Point at the National Institute for Education (<http://www.nuv.cz/projekty/ecvet>)

97 www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/refernet

98 Czech ReferNet National Coordinator at the National Training Fund (www.refernet.cz/en)

99 <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/>

100 The Czech National Unit at The Centre for International Cooperation in Education (www.naep.cz, www.dzs.cz)

101 www.eurodesk.org

102 The Centre for International Cooperation in Education (www.eurodesk.cz)

103 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=964&langId=en>

Endnotes

ⁱ These programmes enforce social and work skills of persons cumulatively disadvantaged in the labour market such as people 50+, people taking care of a relative, long-term unemployed etc.

ⁱⁱ It is the handy methodological guide usable in career education of pupils in basic school that evolves critical thinking and reflection of gender stereotypes.

ⁱⁱⁱ This project helps to solve social and work integration of immigrants without shelter by taking advantage of what they know and can use in the new country.

^{iv} The Gaudeamus fair is the biggest annual Central European Education and Study Abroad Exhibition where Czech and other international higher education institutions, language schools and providers of life-long-learning opportunities offer the most of study opportunities for students from central Europe.

^v The Czech National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance was established within the National Agency of the Leonardo da Vinci program as a unit of the National Training Fund. Leonardo da Vinci, the European vocational training program that was as the first European programme opened already in 1996 to 10 pre-accession countries including the Czech Republic. Since 2006, the Czech Euroguidance Centre operates within the Centre for International Cooperation in Education of the MEYS.

^{vi} The Euroguidance network maintains and facilitate portal Learning Opportunities and Qualifications in Europe that provides information for students, jobseekers, parents, teachers and guidance and counselling professionals on study opportunities in Europe

^{vii} Europass is a personal electronic portfolio of documents. Europass consists of an electronic Curriculum Vitae (CV) model, and a portfolio: European Skills Passport, which compiles your other Europass documents, such as language passport and diploma supplements, or other important documents e.g. work certificates.

^{viii} Its eight common European reference levels are described in terms of learning outcomes: knowledge, skills and competences. This allows any national qualifications systems, national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and qualifications in Europe to relate to the EQF levels. Learners, graduates, providers and employers can use these levels to understand and compare qualifications awarded in different countries and by different education and training systems.

^{ix} ECVET aims to support the mobility of European citizens, facilitating lifelong learning (formal, informal and non-formal learning) and providing greater transparency in terms of individual learning experiences, making it more attractive to move between different countries and different learning environments.



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