



Completed National Reports and National strategies for Social Dimension should be sent to the Bologna Secretariat by email (secr@bologna2009benelux.org) no later than 1st November 2008.

PART I

Bologna Process Template for National Reports: 2007-2009

Notes

BFUG members are strongly encouraged to consult other stakeholders about the contents of their National Report.

Please complete your National Report in English using this template (shaded areas) and return it to the Secretariat by email. Where appropriate, please, include precise web references to legislation or other documentation. Please add comments as appropriate under each question to describe the current situation. Please try to keep text brief, while aiming to answer all questions comprehensively.

National reports will be posted on the Bologna website in their original form.

Information from National Reports will form the basis of the Stocktaking Report to be presented to Ministers when they meet in April 2009.

Details

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Datum	November 2008
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1. Main developments since London 2007

Please describe the important developments relating to the Bologna Process, including legislative reforms and changes in institutional structures, since London meeting in 2007.

Important changes in relation to the Bologna process, including legislative reforms and changes in the institutional structure (since 2007)

Since 2007 there have been several important changes related to the Bologna process. These include, above all, tertiary education reform, finalisation of the OECD project "Thematic Review of Tertiary Education", reform of the research, development and innovation system in the CR, and developments in the area of quality assurance. Last but not least, a successful use of financial resources from EU structural funds also plays an important role.

1. Reform of tertiary education is based on recommendations formulated in the OECD report on Czech tertiary education (Tertiary Education Review, 2006). The report has identified the main problems of higher education in the Czech Republic and recommended a rough outline of some reform steps. As a follow-up to the analysis of OECD experts, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has been drawing up a White Paper on Tertiary Education since 2007. The text is currently subject to a national public discussion where experts comment upon it. The Paper should be presented to the government in December 2008 and a new law on tertiary education should be prepared by the end of 2009 and followed by a law on student financial support.

The main changes proposed consist in increasing the autonomy and accountability of higher education institutions, diversification of HEIs, elimination of social and other barriers in access to tertiary education and the possible transformation of existing tertiary professional education, which is governed by legislation on secondary education, into tertiary sector institutions (professionally oriented study programmes). Moreover, the proposed changes entail an emphasis on cooperation with employers, strengthening the responsibility of institutions and students for the quality of instruction, highlighting the role of lifelong learning, enhancing the quality of university research and, last but not least, a larger flow of financial resources into the tertiary sector.

2. The OECD project "Thematic Review of Tertiary Education", which brought about important recommendations on the further development of higher education institutions (end of 2006) and stimulated efforts to reform higher education in the Czech Republic, was finalised in 2008. As part of the project a number of major analytical documents were produced and a series of seminars for the academic community were held in 2007 and 2008 (e.g. concerning quality assurance, management of higher education institutions and academic careers). It came to a head in the final study "Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society, OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education: Synthesis Report" in which all 24 participating countries were involved.

3. Reform of the research, development and innovation system in the Czech Republic was approved by the Czech government at the end of March 2008. It will be gradually implemented in the upcoming years. The essence of the reform in the area of higher education is to support excellence in research and development at HEIs and other research and development institutions, and to support their mutual cooperation (particularly cooperation between HEIs and the Academy of Sciences of the CR), as well as cooperation with R&D institutions in the private sector. The objective is therefore to develop a clearly and transparently structured system for funding R&D from public funds (and linking it to the outcomes of basic and applied research of the given HEI with an emphasis on targeted funding), and to support funding R&D at higher education institutions from private sources in the business sector. One of the other objectives of the reform is to establish conditions enhancing transfer of knowledge, commercialisation of research results and intellectual property protection. Individual reform steps also require that institutions be responsible for the quality of their work, for setting up research teams based on proven high quality results and for building excellence in this area.

4. Progress has also been made in the gradual implementation of standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area. The quality of higher education in the CR is the responsibility of the Accreditation Commission (AC) which evaluates the activities of HEIs and the quality of accredited activities, and makes evaluation outcomes public (for both private and public higher education institutions). The AC is also concerned with evaluation of groups of faculties providing education in related study programmes. When private HEIs are established the AC issues a position statement on granting state approval. Since 2007 the Accreditation Commission has carried out self-evaluation. The results of self-evaluation are also made public.

Since 2006 the AC of the CR has been cooperating with the Slovak Accreditation Commission as part of a project aimed at developing quality assurance mechanisms in line with ESG, and it prepared a project of internal and external evaluation of both Accreditation Commissions.

Recently the Accreditation Commission began to involve students in the activities of its working groups (in cooperation with the Student Chamber of the Council of Higher Education Institutions) as part of the evaluation of HEIs and their accredited activities. Their contribution is seen to be very beneficial.

In 2007 the first National Student Survey was carried out by the Academic Centre for Student Activities. The survey covered the whole of the Czech Republic - all public and selected private higher education institutions that organise quality evaluation by students. The objective was to involve the largest possible sample of respondents in order to obtain comparable data on basic factors that affect study conditions, and to launch a process of periodic surveys of this kind. The results of the survey were published at the beginning of 2008 and offered to the Accreditation Commission for utilisation.

For more information see: <http://www.acsa.vutbr.cz/nasest/index.php>.

5. In 2007 and 2008 the European Commission approved operational programmes for the CR that will be funded from EU structural funds in the 2007-2013 period and that support the development of higher education and its professionalization both as regards teaching and research and development (OP Education for Competitiveness and OP Research and Development for Innovation). Both operational programmes form a consistent whole that contributes to the development of human resources via education in all its diverse forms. Emphasis is placed on a comprehensive system of lifelong learning and the development of an environment conducive to research, development and innovation activities, and encouragement of cooperation between educational institutions, research and user sector.

2. Partnership

Please describe the structure which oversees the implementation of the Bologna Process in your country.

The Bologna process is being implemented at several levels. The first level involves the development of a national strategy for higher education as part of the Bologna process. This strategy is part of the Long-Term Plan for Scholarly, Scientific, Research, Development, Artistic and Other Creative Activities that has been developed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the CR (hereinafter referred to as the "strategic plan of the Ministry") for a five-year period (the most recent five-year period is 2006-2010). The strategic plan of the Ministry is annually updated. Pursuant to subsection 92 (3) of Act No. 111/1998 on Higher Education Institutions as amended (the "Higher Education Act"¹) the Ministry discusses the strategic plan and its updates with representative bodies of higher education institutions, i.e. with representatives of the Czech Rectors' Conference and the Council of Higher Education Institutions, before they are published. Representatives of other institutions dealing with these issues on a long-term basis are also invited to take part in the discussion.

The Ministry develops its strategic plan and its annual updates so that the Bologna process can be implemented within this framework². Higher education institutions develop their own strategic plans and update them annually. The Ministry supports priorities set out in the strategic plans and their annual updates by means of development schemes, as part of which HEIs submit their development projects. For 2009 the development schemes include, for example, a scheme to support implementation of the national qualifications system at the level of individual HEIs, a scheme to support evaluation of the restructuring of degree programmes and their innovation, a scheme to support the two-way mobility of students and staff of higher education institutions, a scheme to support young people facing social, economic and health-related disadvantages at the point of entry/during studies/after graduation, etc. As a result of negotiations between the MoEYS and HEIs subsequent one-year contracts are being developed between the institutions and the Ministry.

In addition to this strategic and implementation level of the Bologna process, the monitoring system involves an expert group providing good quality information and consultations to higher education

¹ The Minister and the representative bodies of higher education institutions will discuss proposals and measures that have a significant impact on higher education institutions (Act No.111/1998).

² The current strategic plan of the Ministry is designed for the 2006-2010 period.

institutions. The activities of the group are carried out primarily within the Bologna Experts project. In the academic year 2008/09 the group consist of 14 experts from the academic environment (rectors, vice-rectors, deans, experts in ECTS and DS implementation, a representative of ENIC/NARIC and representative of students) who deal with specific areas – recognition, quality assurance or the degree system. A number of academic staff are at the same time members of the Council of Higher Education Institutions or the Accreditation Commission. The work of this group is coordinated by the Czech representative in the BFUG.

Regular seminars for representatives of HEIs provide a platform for the provision of information, training, sharing of good experience and warning against potential risks.

There is a website on the Bologna process available both in Czech and English at www.bologna.msmt.cz.

a) Does your country have a national working group for Bologna follow-up³

Yes

b) Does your national Bologna follow-up group include representatives of

Ministry	yes
Rectors´ conference	yes
Academic staff	yes
Students	yes
Staff trade unions	no
National Quality Assurance Agency	yes
Employers	no
Other (please specify)	no other members

c) Does your country have a Bologna promoters´ group⁴

Yes

d) Does your national Bologna promoters´ group include representatives of

Ministry	no
Rectors´ conference	yes
Academic staff	yes
Students	yes
Staff trade unions	no
National Quality Assurance Agency	yes
Employers	no
Other (please specify)	no other members

Please add any additional comments if necessary: no additional comments

DEGREE SYSTEM

3. Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle

a) Please describe the progress made towards introducing the first and second cycles.

In the academic year 2007/08 there were 74 higher education institutions in the Czech Republic - 26 public, 46 private and 2 state HEIs. 28 HEIs are of a university type (24 public, 2 state and 2 private HEIs), 46 are of a non-university type (2 public and 44 private HEIs). There are over 41,000 students enrolled in private higher education institutions, which is nearly 12% of the overall number of higher education students. The number of students at state HEIs is relatively stable – some 4,000 students. Overall, there were slightly fewer than 360,000 students at all levels (Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctoral) at higher education institutions in this academic year.

³ A group that develops policy proposals for implementing the Bologna Process

⁴ A group that supports/advises HEIs on implementation of the Bologna Process.

The 2001 amendment to the Higher Education Act⁵ laid down an obligation of re-accreditation of all Master's study programmes by the end of 2003. This means that higher education institutions could admit applicants for long-cycle Master's programmes only until this date. Most Master's programmes were accredited for the new period in the short form (1-3 years). Long-cycle Master's programmes that do not follow upon Bachelor's studies are only allowed provided that the nature of the study programme so requires.

The largest portion of work on the degree system was therefore carried out in 2001-2003. Nevertheless, the quality of the degree programmes and their development are supported, over the long term, by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports via development schemes that follow from the strategic plan of the Ministry and its updates (for details see Question 2). The current strategic plan is designed for the 2006-2010 period and, as regards the degree system, it places an emphasis on the quality of individual cycles, transferability within and between them and their relevance for the labour market (both in terms of fields of study and key competencies). The 2009 update of the strategic plan of the Ministry deals with support for evaluation of the restructuring of the degree programmes and their innovation.

The Czech Republic is currently drawing up the White Paper on Tertiary Education that will become a foundation for the new law on tertiary education (for details see Question 1). A separate chapter of the White Paper deals with the system and structure of tertiary education, regulates accreditation of various degree programmes and recommends, apart from other things, that short-cycle programmes should be included in the integrated system of tertiary education.

b) Please give the percentage of the total number of all⁶ students below doctoral level enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09.

Unfortunately, the data on the number of students in the academic year 2008/09 was not available when this questionnaire was being filled in. Therefore we present data for the previous two academic years.

Table 1 clearly shows that the number of students in Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes is growing, while the number of students in the long-cycle Master's programme is decreasing. 80% of all students were studying in the two-cycle degree system in 2007/08. The remaining 20% of students still study in long Master's programmes. These are students who are completing long Master's programmes and also students who study programmes that have not yet been structured. As 5 years have elapsed since 2004, when most higher education institutions no longer admitted new students to long programmes, the numbers of students in 2008/09 will better reflect the actual number of students in structured programmes.

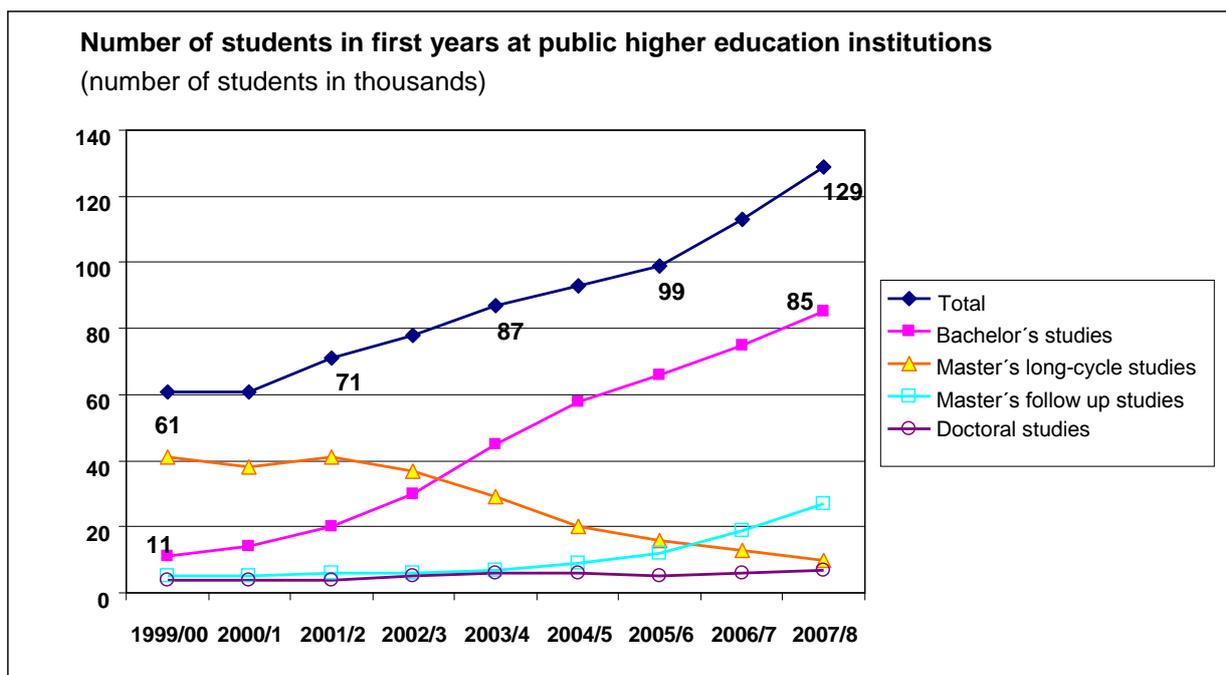
Table 1: Number of studies⁷ in the academic years 2006/07 and 2007/08 (as at 31.10.2006 and 2007 respectively), divided according to degree level

	Total number of all students below doctoral level	Number enrolled in the two cycle degree system % of total	Bachelor's/ Total number % of total	Master's (follow-up) Total number % of total	Master's (long-cycle)/ Total number % of total
2006/07	313, 475 100%	229, 685 73 %	191, 851 61 %	37, 834 12 %	83, 790 27 %
2007/08	344, 183 100 %	290, 126 80 %	220, 783 64 %	54, 057 16 %	69, 343 20 %

⁵ Act No. 147/2001 that amends Act No. 111/1998 on Higher Education Institutions and on Amendments and Supplements to Some Other Acts.

⁶ „All“ = all students who could be involved in 2-cycle system i.e. NOT those in doctoral programmes and NOT those in short HE programmes. NB Student of ALL study fields are taken into account.

⁷ This is a number of all study programmes in which students are enrolled – i.e. if a student is enrolled in 2 study programmes, he/she is calculated twice.



Source: SIMS

c) Please add comments which accurately describe the current situation regarding implementation of the two cycle system in your country.

As described above, the so-called long study programmes are still in the process of completion. The study of general medicine, dental medicine, veterinary medicine, pharmacy, some artistic fields, law and teaching at Stage 1 of basic school has not been structured into a two-cycle system. At present there is debate on the structuring of the study programme in psychology. Essentially all programmes have been structured in accordance with the principles of the Bologna Declaration. This fact is illustrated in Table 2 which shows that of the total of 263 long-cycle Master's study programmes only 28 will not be structured, 235 are being phased out and instead there are 548 short Master's study programmes. Bachelor's studies in particular should now be evaluated in terms of implementation of the principles of the Bologna process – primarily as regards the situation of graduates in the labour market or continuation in a follow-up Master's study programme.

Table.2: Number of study programmes in 2008 (as at August 2008)

Number of study programmes in 2008			
Bachelor's study programmes	Master's study programmes, follow-up	Master's study programmes, long-cycle	
		Unstructured, phased out	To remain unstructured (estimate)
665	548	235	28

4. Stage of implementation of the third cycle

Please describe the progress made towards implementing doctoral studies as the third Bologna cycle.

Please include:

- the percentage of doctoral candidates following structured doctoral programmes including both taught courses and independent research
- the normal length of full-time doctoral studies

- other elements⁸ apart from independent research that are included in doctoral study programmes
- the supervisory and assessment procedures for doctoral studies
- information on whether doctoral studies are included in your country's qualifications framework and linked to learning outcomes
- information on whether interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills are integrated in doctoral studies
- information on whether credit points are used in measuring workload in doctoral studies
- information on the status of the doctoral students (students, early stage researchers, both)

Doctoral studies have been in line with the requirements of the Bologna process for this type of study since as early as 1990. In 1990 the so-called "research training candidature" (a type of study common in countries that, in the previous 40 years, were under the influence of the former Soviet Union) was integrated and doctoral studies were introduced. From that time all doctoral study programmes had to be accredited and they observe the principles and conditions of the Bologna process.

Pursuant to Act No. 111/1998 on Higher Education Institutions and on Amendments and Supplements to Some Other Acts (the Higher Education Act) doctoral *degree programmes are aimed at scientific research and independent creative activities in the area of research or development, or independent theoretical and creative activities in the area of the fine arts. The standard length of studies is no less than three and no more than four years. Studies within the framework of Doctoral degree programmes are subject to individual curricula under the guidance of a supervisor. Doctoral studies are completed with a doctoral state examination and the defence of a doctoral thesis. These are intended to show the ability of the candidate to carry out independent activities in the area of research or development, or independent theoretical and creative artistic activities. The thesis must contain original as well as published results or results accepted for publication. Graduates of doctoral degree programmes are awarded the academic degree of "Doktor" ("Doctor", abbreviated as "Ph.D.", used after the name), or "Doktor teologie" ("Doctor of Theology", abbreviated as "Th.D.", used after the name) in the field of theology. Studies within the framework of doctoral degree programmes are monitored and evaluated by a doctoral studies board appointed in compliance with the internal regulations of a higher education institution or one of its constituent parts that offers the accredited degree programme in question. Higher education institutions or their constituent parts may agree on creating a common doctoral studies board for degree programmes in the same area of studies. Members of the board choose the chair by voting from among its members.*

Students on doctoral degree programmes are guided during their studies by a supervisor appointed by the doctoral studies board. The supervisor provides regular annual written assessments for the institution that offer an overview of examinations taken, data on publication activities, involvement in projects, participation at conferences and other activities of the doctoral candidate. The assessment serves as a basis for the continuation of studies, for the granting of special dispensation when the student faces personal problems and also as background material for meetings of the board.

This means that all doctoral candidates study in structured study programmes in accordance with the principles of the Bologna process (see above). The candidates (regardless of whether they study in an on-site, combined or distance mode) have student status because Act No. 111/1998 does not permit any other status. Nevertheless, only students up to 26 years of age are entitled to a state grant. This limit on state support for students older than 26 is generally considered to be unfair, and a change to this provision is currently being discussed. The MoEYS is seeking consensus in negotiations with other ministries (particularly the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Finance). Many students also work – teach at "their" higher education institutions. Nevertheless, this is subject to an agreement between the university and the student.

As regards transferable skills and interdisciplinary training within the framework of a doctoral degree programme, the acquisition of transferable skills is facilitated, above all, by the following: presentations at conferences (training in communication, discussion, argumentation), publication activities (training in writing, developing a coherent expert paper, its publication), and teaching obligations (training in presentation skills and explanation of a specialist theme). Moreover, compulsory subjects include those focusing on general principles of research work (work with resources, searching, classifying and

⁸ E.g. taught courses in the chosen discipline, other taught courses, teaching activities (if these are required as part of the doctoral studies), etc.

processing information). Apart from this, students can normally choose, as part of their degree programme, some subjects aimed at training in these skills. Interdisciplinary training tends not to be part of doctoral degree programmes with the exception of subjects focused on general principles of research work.

Doctoral studies will be included within the National Qualifications System so that they will correspond to Level 8 of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, and to the third cycle of studies within the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (the Bologna process). Credits (ECTS) are not generally used in doctoral degree programmes. They are being discussed and introduced at some higher education institutions (Masaryk University, VŠB – Technical University of Ostrava), but these institutions form a minority.

5. Relation between higher education and research

- a) Please describe the main trends in the role of higher education institutions in research in your country.

The text below deals with public higher education institutions, as the sector of private HEIs is very young in terms of research activities and forms a minority (only 2 out of 46 of these institutions have accredited doctoral degree programmes).

The role of higher education institutions in research is regulated, in general terms, by the Higher Education Act⁹. In terms of funding it is regulated by the Research and Development Support Act¹⁰.

The Higher Education Act characterises higher education institutions as centres of education, independent knowledge and creative activity that play a key role, among other things, in the scientific development of society. Higher education links to research activity mainly at the level of Master's and Doctoral degree programmes.¹¹ Research at higher education institutions is carried out by the academic staff (who also teach). At the strategic level science and research at HEIs are fostered by the Scientific Board¹². A higher education institution can also establish institutes of higher education that will deal with research and that can, at the same time, take part in the implementation of accredited degree programmes.

The other law mentioned regulates support for research and development from public funds. This means that it does not deal exclusively with the position of HEIs in research, but rather provides financial support for research and development from public resources for which public HEIs, among other entities, can compete. Higher education institutions may therefore submit a project and compete for financial resources as part of targeted support (from National Research Programmes, programmes of the Grant Agency of the CR or in public tenders), or make use of institutional support that is provided for drawing up a research plan, developing international cooperation or specific research at HEIs.

These very resources that are designed for specific research – i.e. research that is directly related to education and in which doctoral candidates or students in the last year of a Master's programme participate – constitute the only exclusive source of funding of research and development from public resources for HEIs. The level of such support depends on the number of students in various types of accredited study programmes, the qualification structure of the academic staff, the success of the relevant HEI in public tenders in research and development, and success in the application of research and development outcomes.

Table 3 below sums up the total expenditure on research and development from the state budget in 2006, 2007 and 2008, and the proportion that funds research and development at higher education institutions.

⁹ Act No. 111/1998 on Higher Education Institutions and on Amendments and Supplements to Some Other Acts (the Higher Education Act)

¹⁰ Act No. 130/2002 on Research and Development Support from Public Funds and on Amendments to some Related Acts (the Research and Development Support Act)

¹¹ See Sections 1 and 2 of the Higher Education Act

¹² The Scientific Board is established by a public higher education institution. Members of the Scientific Board are members of the academic community and other representatives in fields in which the public higher education institution carries out teaching, scholarly, scientific research, development, artistic and other creative activities (the Higher Education Act, Section 11). It discusses the strategic plan the public higher education institution, approves degree programmes and exercises competency with regard to the procedures for the appointment of professors and for conferring "*venium docendi*" (habilitation).

Table 3

Expenditure on research and development from 2006-2008			
Year	Total expenditure on R&D from the state budget	Institutional support for HEIs	Targeted support for HEIs
	In thousand CZK	%	%
2006	18, 371, 983 ¹³	19.4	16.8
2007	25, 100, 293 ¹⁴	16.1	10.5
2008	23, 121, 447 ¹⁵	x	x

Source: Czech Statistical Office: Research and Development Indicators 2006, the Budget of Chapter 333 MoEYS for 2006, 2007

The level of funding of research and development at higher education institutions is expected to grow – both that from the state budget and, particularly, through funding from private (business) sources and foreign sources in line with the Lisbon strategy and the Barcelona objectives.

As for the research work and education of students HEIs cooperate with the institutes of higher education mentioned above, with public research institutions and also with the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic.

- b) Please outline any measure to improve co-operation between higher education institutions and other private and public institutions that undertake research. Please include:

At the level of funding cooperation between higher education institutions and other private or public institutions that undertake research and development, support comes both from national resources (public and private) via R&D support schemes, and from programmes funded from EU structural funds (the OP Education for Competitiveness and the OP Research and Development for Innovation).

In line with Government Resolution No. 287 of 26 March 2008 on Reform of the Research, Development and Innovation system in the CR and in line with the White Paper on Tertiary Education that is in the making, a number of common objectives have been set for the immediate future in these two areas. The objectives should contribute to enhancing cooperation between higher education institutions and public research institutions (particularly those of the Academy of Sciences of the CR) and the private sector. The objectives are as follows:

- Linking financial support for research and development to the results of basic and applied research at a given higher education institution
- The institutional support provided until now under the heading 'specific research at public HEIs' will be replaced by targeted financing. This funding method should support participation of doctoral candidates in research, development and innovation activities of the relevant higher education institution. Moreover, this concept of funding should promote the training of a new generation of scientists at HEIs for research purposes. Both these steps should take place as soon as possible after the amendment to Act No. 130/2002 comes into force and in line with the progress of the Reform in the period until 2012.
- Strengthening cooperation between higher education institutions and the Academy of Sciences (a public research institution) in the development of doctoral degree programmes.
- Supporting mobility of academic staff (between countries and between various sectors of institutions and with employers, etc.).
- Cooperation between institutions and business entities concerning doctoral degree programmes and projects.

¹³ Total real expenditure on research and development from the state budget

¹⁴ Total approved state budget expenditure on research and development for 2007 (including expenditure on programmes co-funded from the budget of the European Union worth 3.6 billion CZK)

¹⁵ Total approved state budget expenditure on research and development for 2008 (including expenditure on foreign programmes worth 125 million CZK)

- Strengthening cooperation with the user sector in the development of innovation centres and technology structures, in funding research and development projects with the involvement of private business resources.
- Increasing the so far very low level of funding of R&D at higher education institutions from private business sector resources.
- Increasing the so-called "third role" of a higher education institution while strengthening links to the region and cooperation with the private and public sectors; a shift towards entrepreneurial culture at some HEIs as they carry out the basic tasks in education, research and development

• Statistical information

Total expenditure on research and development at higher education institutions in 2007 (a sum total of all sources of funding – private, public, own, non-profit sector, foreign): 9, 158, 401, 000 CZK which is 16.9% of total R&D expenditure in the Czech Republic.

Of this amount (the funding of research and development at HEIs) the business sector accounts for 0.73%, the public sector for 91.6%, HEIs own resources amount to 3.2% and foreign resources make up 4.5%.

Table 4

Overall sources of financing of research and development carried out at HEIs in 2006				
Source of financing	2006		2007	
	In thousand CZK	%	In thousand CZK	%
Business sector	54, 645	0.70%	66, 955	0.73%
Public sector	7, 165, 555	90.50%	8, 387, 279	91.58%
Own resources of HEIs	343, 596	4.30%	293, 502	3.20%
Private non-profit sector	198	0.00%	0	0.00%
Foreign sources	354, 338	4.50%	410, 665	4.48%
Total	7, 918, 332	100.00%	9, 158, 401	100.00%

The data above confirm, in particular, the low level of funding of R&D at HEIs from private business sector sources.

The following tables state both the sources of financing of research and development in the Czech Republic in 2006 and 2007 (Table 5), and the sectors into which financial resources for research and development flow (Table 6).

Table 5

Expenditure on research and development in 2006, 2007 according to sources of financing						
Source of financing	2006			2007		
	In thousand CZK	%	% HDP	In thousand CZK	%	% HDP
Business sector ¹⁶ (private business resources)	28, 398, 973	56.90%	0.88%	29, 289, 815	53.96%	0.83%
Public sector - government (public resources)	19, 445, 162	39.00%	0.60%	22, 361, 967	41.19%	0.63%
Higher education institutions (own resources)	521, 930	1.00%	0.02%	420, 429	0.77%	0.01%
Private non-profit sector (own resources)	5, 602	0.00%	0.00%	2, 291	0.00%	0.00%
Foreign sources	1, 528, 604	3.10%	0.05%	2, 209, 130	4.07%	0.06%

¹⁶ Financial expenditure that the business sector invests in research and development.

Total expenditure on research and development from all sectors in the CR ¹⁷	49, 900, 270	100.00%	1.55%	54, 283, 633	100.00%	1.54%
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Table 6

Expenditure on research and development in the CR according to sector of performance				
Sector of performance	2006		2007	
	In thousand CZK	%	In thousand CZK	%
Business sector	33, 023, 287	66.18%	34, 647, 997	63.83%
Public sector	8, 755, 073	17.55%	10, 278, 291	18.93%
Higher education institutions	7, 918, 332	15.87%	9, 158, 401	16.87%
Private non-profit sector	203, 578	0.41%	198, 944	0.37%
Total expenditure on research and development in the CR in all sectors of implementation/performance	49, 900, 270	100.00%	54, 283, 633	100.00%

Source: Czech Statistical Office: Research and Development Indicators 2006, the Budget of Chapter 333 MoEYS for 2006, 2007

• **Details of funding mechanisms for doctoral students in your country**

The educational activities of higher education institutions in doctoral degree programmes are funded in the same way as the two lower cycles of tertiary education (Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes). For this reason we present general rules of funding of HEIs while providing a number of minor specificities concerning doctoral programmes. The text is also focused primarily on the rules of funding at public HEIs as, according to the Higher Education Act, private HEIs procure financial resources for their operations independently (with the exception of some state subsidies for scholarships). Another reason is that their involvement in doctoral programmes has been rather short-lived so far and of minor importance (only 2 out of 46 private HEIs have accredited doctoral degree programmes and none of them has yet produced any graduates of these programmes).

Pursuant to the Act mentioned above the sources of funding of public higher education institutions include the state budget – i.e. a block grant and a subsidy from the state budget; and other sources – i.e. study-related fees, income from property owned by the institution, income from supplementary activities and income from donations and bequests. The amount of the block grant is determined according to the type and relative costs of the accredited degree programmes, the number of students, the results achieved and the basic grant per student derived annually from the level of expenditure on higher education.

Table 7 (see below) presents financial resources provided to public higher education institutions from 2005 – 2008. The overall resources of public HEIs consist of an amount that is calculated using two algorithms. The first is a product of the basic grant per student, the number of students and the coefficient of financial demands of degree programmes. This calculation is the same for all three levels of structured studies. Similarly, the second algorithm that has been used since 2005 is a product of the basic grant per graduate, the number of graduates and the coefficient of financial demands. The basic grant per one graduate is increased by 50% for doctoral degree programmes. Nevertheless, the basic grant per graduate is lower than the basic grant per student (about one third) and it has tended to decrease in recent years. As the basic grant per student has been stagnant in 2007 and 2008, the aggregate indicator of the two grants, the average basic grant, has shown a declining tendency in recent years (see Table 8).

Table 7

Year	Total resources of public education institutions (all resources including own)
------	---

¹⁷ GERD: total expenditure on research and development (in all sectors): consists of total expenditure (recurring and capital) designed for in-house R&D carried out in business entities on the territory of a given state regardless of the source of funding.

#/	In thousand CZK	%
2005	33,262,441	20.8
2006	37,166,888	11.7
2007	41,312,613	11.2
2008	40,500,000*/	0.8*/

Table 8

Year	Basic grant per student		Basic grant per graduate		Average basic grant *)	
	CZK	%	Kč	%	CZK	%
2005	33,320	1	6,825		34,245	3.8
2006	33,986	2	13,050	91.21%	35,998	5.1
2007	34,325	1	12,916	-1.03%	36,287	0.8
2008	34,325	0	10,415	-19.36%	35,914	-1

Source: MoEYS

#/ The percentage states a year-on-year increase between year X and year X-1. */ estimate

The largest portion (80%) of financial resources provided from the state budget for teaching and scholarly activities of higher education institutions in doctoral degree programmes (the resources allocated to the Ministry of Education) comes from the formula funding described above. Institutions also get financial resources for students' social welfare. These account for some 10% of their budget. 7.5% of financial resources comes from MoEYS development schemes and approximately 2.5% from international cooperation schemes. The structure of funding is similar at lower levels of tertiary education.

Moreover, the state budget earmarks financial resources for HEIs at regional level (territorial administrative units) or in the form of projects at national level (applied for through the Grant Agency of the CR). Higher education institutions can also generate income from their own activities. In 2007 HEIs received 72% of their resources for educational activities from the Ministry of Education, 4% from other public sources (including regional institutions), and 24% from their own activities.

The mechanisms of funding research at HEIs in which doctoral candidates participate are described in the first part of this question.

As regards financial support for doctoral candidates, public higher education institutions receive a subsidy from the state budget for scholarships for doctoral students in on-site programmes within the standard length of studies. In 2007 the annual subsidy was 86,190 CZK per one student. In 2008 it was 88,775 Kč¹⁸. Other advantages resulting from student status include an accommodation subsidy (according to home address and distance from the institution), cheaper public transport and discounted meals in student canteens and other facilities operated by the given public higher education institution.

c) Is there any tracking system to follow the further career of doctoral graduates?

Yes

If yes, please specify: The Czech Statistical Office carried out a national pilot survey among holders of doctoral titles. The survey is part of the joint project of the OECD, Eurostat and UNESCO Careers of Doctorate Holders. It was conducted in March and April 2007 and the results were published in early 2008 on the website of the Czech Statistical Office at <http://www2.czso.cz/csu/redakce.nsf/!/>.

A large majority of higher education institutions do not have independent and comprehensive strategies for tracking doctoral graduates. These activities take place more at the level of departments that maintain contacts with their graduates at various levels (e.g. questionnaire surveys, polls, personal contacts, involvement of graduates in teaching and scholarly/research activities). HEIs often have portals facilitating communication between graduates (not only doctorate holders) and the

¹⁸ The amounts that the MoEYS uses to calculate the level of scholarship per one student in a doctoral degree programme. A higher education institution may adjust this amount for individual students, or to complement it from other sources in accordance with its Scholarship and Bursary Regulations.

institution. However, the question is to what extent the graduates use this communication channel. HEIs agree that most doctoral graduates continue working in their field, which facilitates communication between them and the institution at an informal level.

As regards the tracking of the further career of doctoral graduates, only a minority of HEIs monitor it systematically at the level of the institution as a whole and not merely at the level of individual departments. This is not necessarily an integrated communication system, but rather a regular collection of data. Some institutions are developing a comprehensive and systematic monitoring system.

6. Access¹⁹ and admission to the next cycle

Describe the arrangements for access between the first and second cycles and between the second and third cycles.

6.1 Access and admission between the first and second cycles

Admission requirements for study in a Master's degree programme following on from a Bachelor's degree programme are stipulated in the Higher Education Act. The basic requirement is proper completion of studies in a Bachelor's degree programme. A higher education institution or a faculty may set further requirements for admission to studies that concern specific knowledge, capacities, aptitudes or study results, proximity of fields of study or a number of credits acquired during studies in selected subjects. The setting of selection criteria (or the absence of an entrance examination) is the responsibility of each higher education institution. This means that admission requirements to Master's degree programmes may vary between institutions.

Please indicate:

- a) The percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the second cycle

100%.

Note: Pursuant to the Higher Education Act all Bachelor's degree programmes (i.e. 100%) allow for continuation into the second cycle. Although there are Bachelor's degree programmes that do not have a direct connection to Master's degree programmes (some 15%), students may continue in the second cycle in related programmes.

- b) Any first cycle qualifications that do not give access to the second cycle (please specify).

- c) Any special requirements for access to a second cycle programme in the same field of studies: please tick whether graduates must:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| - Sit entrance exam | in some cases |
| - Complete additional courses | in some cases |
| - Have work experience | in some cases |

If the answer to the last point is "yes", please specify what type of work experience is required: ----

- d) Any further special requirements for access to a second cycle programme in the same field of studies:

None.

- e) To which students the above special requirements apply (please tick):

- | | |
|---|-----|
| - All students | yes |
| - Holders of particular first cycle qualifications | yes |
| - Students of the same field coming from other HEIs | yes |

- f) Which of the requirements apply to students coming from other fields of studies (please tick)

¹⁹ Access as defined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention: „Access: the right of qualified candidates to apply and be considered for admission to higher education.

Master's degree programmes (long-cycle)	19, 106	19, 506	17, 949
Doctoral degree programmes	1, 891	2, 010	2, 218
Total	44, 339	53, 597	63, 805

The Czech Republic therefore does not face the problem of unemployment or poor employability of graduates of Bachelor's degree programmes. It faces the problem of a very low number of graduates – Bachelor's degree holders who complete education at this level and leave for the labour market. The reasons for this may include the short history of Bachelor's degree programmes and a conservative environment in the labour market that was “used” to Master's degree holders and doctoral graduates and that is still reluctant to accept Bachelors.

The measures that the Czech Republic has taken to support the quality and employability of graduates of Bachelor's degree programmes consist, above all, in financial support for HEIs as part of development schemes (support for cooperation between HEIs and employers in the design of study programmes and their accreditation, defining graduate profiles, specific knowledge and skills, cooperation in teaching, work placement opportunities, etc.). Moreover, there is support for top-level regular meetings of experts from industry and higher education institutions, efforts to clearly define Bachelor's study programmes so that they are comprehensible to industry and provide high quality education. Last but not least, the measures include the development of a National Qualifications Framework with a clear definition of Bachelor's degree programmes. The White Paper that is under development and the law on tertiary education that will follow support the notions mentioned above and introduce more systematic cooperation between employers and higher education institutions in the areas of funding, research and development and quality assurance.

Table 10 presents statistical data on the employability of graduates of all cycles. It reveals that in 2007 there were about 689 thousand individuals with higher education qualifications in the labour market - i.e. some 14% of all employed citizens²³. Approximately, 36 thousand of all employed citizens (0.7%) have a Bachelor's degree (*ISCED 5A short*), 623 thousand (12.7%) have a Master's or a comparable degree (*ISCED 5A long*) and 30 thousand (0.6%) have a Doctoral or equivalent degree (*ISCED 6*). However, in the same year the overall educational profile of those who completed their education and entered the labour market was very different. In 2007 approximately one third of those who left the system of initial education achieved the level of higher education. The proportion of higher education graduates is rapidly increasing year by year.

Table10

Employed citizens in the economy in the CR according to their education 1995-2007 (in thousands)								
	1995	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Bachelor's - ISCED 5A	0,0	14,4	27,4	18,1	25,8	29,9	30,9	36,4
Master's (and equivalent) - ISCED 5A	534,0	536,9	550,9	567,9	571,1	598,6	616,4	622,9
Doctoral - ISCED 6	0,0	13,6	0,0	35,5	35,3	33,4	32,3	29,6
Total	4 984,6	4 731,5	4 760,2	4 731,0	4 705,7	4 763,8	4 827,8	4 921,4
Employed citizens in the economy in the CR according to their education 1995-2007 (in %)								
	1995	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Bachelor's - ISCED 5A	0.0%	0.3%	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%
Master's (and equivalent) - ISCED 5A	10.7%	11.3%	11.6%	12.0%	12.1%	12.6%	12.8%	12.7%
Doctoral - ISCED 6	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%
Total	100.0%							

- b) To what extent there is a dialogue in your country between higher education institutions and employers on:

²³ The total number of all employed citizens in 2007 (4 921,4 thousand) does not coincide with the total number of all economically active population in 2007 in the Czech republic (7 391,4 thousand).

- Curriculum design **some**
- Work placement **significant**

In most cases both public and private higher education institutions assessed the dialogue with employers on the placement of graduates in the labour market as being extensive.

- International experience **some**

The most frequent answer that both public and private HEIs presented was that the extent of the dialogue was average.

- Accreditation **a little**

Accreditation of study programmes is provided for by the Higher Education Act. The methods and intensity of cooperation between HEIs and employers are not defined by the law. However, one of the prerequisites for granting accreditation to a degree programme is a graduate profile in the relevant fields of study, which also includes career opportunities. For a field of study to meet the existing labour market requirements it is desirable that HEIs consult over its content with industry (e.g. some technical higher education institutions may develop a field of study directly to order from the industry in a given region). However, this is not an approach pursued by the majority of institutions.

There is cooperation between representatives of HEIs and employers within the Accreditation Commission of the CR (which is composed of representatives of both these groups). However, it is limited by the low number of employers' representatives in this institution.

- Quality assurance **some**

- University governance **some**

- c) Are first cycle graduates able to pursue careers in the public service on an equal footing with other graduates?

Yes

The number of Bachelor's degree holders in the Czech labour market has been growing for the last ten years: from zero in the mid-1990s to nearly 40 thousand at present. However, the proportion of first cycle graduates in the workforce as a whole is still very low, being less than 1% of all employees (0.7%). This is caused by several factors of which the most important is perhaps the fact that a large portion of first cycle graduates continue studying a follow-up Master's programme. A certain increase in the flow of Bachelors entering the labour market directly will probably appear in years to come.

Public administration is defined by the international (ILO ISIC) and Czech (NACE-CZ) classification of economic activities as L (75). There are roughly between 320 and 340 thousand people working in public administration in the Czech Republic, which is some 6.7-7.0% of all people employed in the entire economy. At present about a quarter of all employees in public service have higher education qualifications. This proportion is growing quite quickly. In the mid-1990s it was only 16.5%.

Although both the overall number of Bachelor's degree holders in the Czech labour market and the number in public administration is still low, one fifth of them work in public administration. The proportion of first cycle graduates working in public administration is the highest of all groups defined according to their educational attainment. People with post-secondary qualifications and tertiary professional qualifications rank second, as every seventh employee in public administration falls into this group. In any case the proportion of first cycle graduates who work in public administration (almost 20%) is significantly higher than the proportion of holders of other higher education qualifications and lower qualifications. For these reasons it would be inappropriate to say that there are barriers to the employment of first cycle graduates in this sector (see Table 11).

Table 11

Public administration employees (NACE-CZ category L) according to education 1995-2007 (in thousands)								
	1995	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Bachelor's - ISCED 5A	0,0	2,7	3,5	3,3	4,0	6,0	5,6	7,2
Master's (and equivalent) - ISCED 5A	50,1	57,0	54,5	63,3	63,0	65,8	70,2	65,4

Doctoral - ISCED 6	0,0	1,1	0,0	4,5	3,1	3,0	3,4	2,3
Total	304,5	344,9	325,9	332,7	323,5	333,9	327,1	327,4
Public administration employees (NACE-CZ category L) according to education 1995-2007 (in %)								
	1995	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Bachelor's - ISCED 5A	0.0%	0.8%	1.1%	1.0%	1.2%	1.8%	1.7%	2.2%
Master's (and equivalent) - ISCED 5A	16.4%	16.5%	16.7%	19.0%	19.5%	19.7%	21.5%	20.0%
Doctoral - ISCED 6	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	1.4%	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	0.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Public administration employees according to education as a proportion of all employed citizens in the entire economy of the CR (in %)								
	1995	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Bachelor's - ISCED 5A		19.0%	12.7%	18.4%	15.6%	20.1%	18.0%	19.7%
Master's (and equivalent) - ISCED 5A	9.4%	10.6%	9.9%	11.1%	11.0%	11.0%	11.4%	10.5%
Doctoral - ISCED 6		7.8%		12.8%	8.7%	8.9%	10.5%	7.9%
Total	6.1%	7.3%	6.8%	7.0%	6.9%	7.0%	6.8%	6.7%

- d) Have you aligned recruitment procedures and career structures in the public service to take account of the Bologna changes?

Yes

Along with the introduction of structured studies the Czech Republic has aligned recruitment procedures in public administration by means of structuring the jobs within public administration. Each public administration body recruits and assesses its employees on the basis of the skills and competencies (level of qualification) that are required for the given job. According to a Government Regulation of December 2006 on the pay of employees in public services and administration, each institution appraises their employees according to job category. There are roughly 4 categories pertaining to each level of qualification and employees may progress through these categories depending on their experience and qualifications. This means that public administration does offer a degree of career progression, but in terms of comparison with the private sector the financial and career incentives in public administration are lower.

8. Implementation of national qualifications framework

Please answer the questions below. Please add comments which accurately describe the current situation in your country.

- a) Has the national qualifications framework been prepared²⁴?

Yes

Comment:

The decision to develop a National Qualifications Framework for tertiary education that will be compatible with the Overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA was taken by the MoEYS in 2005. The MoEYS made the development of this framework a priority objective in its strategic plan for 2006-2010. In 2006 Act No. 179/2006 was passed. It laid a legal foundation for the National Qualifications System and for recognition of the results of non-formal and informal learning. In 2005-2008 the National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education implemented a systemic project commissioned by the MoEYS and entitled "The Development of the National Qualifications System Supporting Links between Initial and Continuing Education and Training". The project was co-funded from the ESF and dealt with qualifications at lower levels of education. The development of the National Qualifications System for Tertiary Education will follow closely upon this project.

- b) Does the framework or proposed framework include generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences?

²⁴ A national framework of qualifications compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA

Yes

Comment: These generic descriptors will follow from the Dublin descriptors while taking account of the EQF descriptors and the needs of the Czech education system.

- c) Does it include ECTS credit ranges for the first and second cycle?

Yes

Comment: These ranges are in line with those in the Overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA.

- d) Has the NQF been nationally discussed with all stakeholders?

Yes

Comment: As an introduction to the discussion the MoEYS issued, in cooperation with the Centre for Higher Education Studies, an information leaflet. Moreover, seminars will be held in autumn 2008 to facilitate this discussion. Further discussion is expected as the work progresses. Detailed discussions will be held in so-called "sectoral (branch) boards" composed of representatives of higher education institutions, tertiary professional schools, accreditation commission, employers and graduates in the respective fields.

If the answer to d) is No, please answer question e)

- e) Has a timetable been agreed for consultations with stakeholders?

If the answer to d) is Yes, please answer the following question

- f) Are all formal arrangements/decisions for implementing the framework in place and have the necessary formal decisions for establishing the framework been taken?

Yes

Comment: Formal decisions necessary for implementing the framework were taken as early as 2005-06 and they are described in the comment to question a). The conditions for implementing the framework are provided for by the existing legislation on HEIs and tertiary professional schools. The main task is to comply with these provisions and put them into practice.

- g) How far has the implementation of the national qualifications framework progressed (please tick one)

Work on implementation the framework has not yet started but a timetable for implementation has been agreed

- h) What is the stage of progress on the self-certification of compatibility with the EHEA framework?

Not yet started

- i) Has the self-certification report been published?

No

Please add any additional comments if necessary:

Implementation of the framework is one of the priorities of development schemes of the MoEYS. Some higher education institutions are preparing centralised development projects for 2009 where several HEIs of similar orientation will jointly prepare graduate profiles for various fields of study so that they are in line with national descriptors.

NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EHEA (ESG)²⁵

9. Reviewing the QA system against the ESG²⁶ and national support for implementation

- a) Has your national QA system been reviewed against the ESG?

²⁵ <http://www.bologna2009benelux.org/documents/Standards-and-Guidelines-for-QA.pdf>

²⁶ ESG = Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

Not yet, but such a review is planned in 2008/2009.

- b) If a review has been undertaken or is planned, please give further details of the review process.

Review of the quality assurance system is planned in the following terms: a joint project with the Slovak Republic concerning internal and external evaluation by accreditation commissions; establishing an independent expert group that will evaluate the Accreditation Commission of the Czech Republic and that of the Slovak Republic using the same criteria. .

- c) If a review process has been undertaken, did it result in any of the following:

It has not yet been undertaken.

- d) If incentives and/or other measures have been introduced with the aim of improving the internal quality assurance processes in institutions, has any evidence of the impact of these changes been gathered?

No.

If yes, please give details of how evidence of the impact of the changes was gathered, and of the main outcomes that it demonstrates.

9.1 Internal quality assurance in higher education institutions

Describe the internal QA systems in place in your HEIs:

In most institutions the system for internal quality assurance is implemented at the ordinary levels of governance, and it is complemented by student evaluations (surveys). These evaluations take various forms and are of varying quality. This means that only some HEIs are at the initial stage of implementation of a comprehensive internal evaluation (including, for example, management processes, links between the institution and the region, activities in the area of internationalisation, the employability of graduates in the labour market), while other institutions are not implementing such a system. The White Paper on Tertiary Education that is under development stresses the need for a shift from accreditation of study programmes to accreditation of higher education institutions – i.e. towards the development of an effective quality assurance system.

Please comment in particular on the following aspects, giving references to relevant websites

- a) How many HEIs have published a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality?

All HEIs

Pursuant to the Higher Education Act higher education institutions are obliged to develop a strategic plan that follows from the strategic plan of the Ministry. Since the strategic plan of the Ministry emphasises both quality and strategic planning of quality, HEIs are obliged to make strategic plans in this area as well. Some HEIs go beyond the framework of these general requirements and develop independent and more extensive strategies concerning quality (some 40%).

- b) How many HEIs have arrangements in place for the internal approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards?

Most HEIs

Periodic monitoring, which mainly takes the form of students assessing the quality of educational activities (typically an anonymous questionnaire survey with varying rates of return), is implemented at public HEIs as follows: 17 HEIs implement it (65%), 1 HEI is developing a system for periodic monitoring, 1 HEI does not implement it, and other HEIs (27%) apply these monitoring instruments only at some of their faculties.

Most private higher education institutions implement a system of internal monitoring and periodic review (26 HEIs out of 30 that replied – 15 institutions did not reply). The system mainly consists of questionnaire surveys among students (qualitative and quantitative), evaluation of academic staff and their research work and publication standards.

The resulting measures typically include curriculum modification and innovation of individual subjects.

- c) How many HEIs have described their programmes in terms of learning outcomes?

All HEIs

The fact that all HEIs present the learning outcomes of their study programmes is the result of an obligation to describe graduate profiles in terms of expected learning outcomes in the questionnaire presented as part of accreditation proceedings. In this respect these are not learning outcomes such as conceived in the project "Tuning Educational Structures in Europe", and the specification of various graduate profiles in similar/identical study programmes often varies.

Nevertheless, it must be mentioned that a number of HEIs are preparing a detailed specification of learning outcomes (particularly as part of their preparation for acquiring the ECTS Label), and in the case of study programmes preparing for regulated professions comprehensive learning outcomes are in most cases already in place.

- d) Are student assessments at HEIs designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes (based on published criteria) applied in a consistent way?

Most HEIs

Please describe how the above is achieved:

85% of higher education institutions ascertain learning outcomes by means of continuous (formative) assessment and also through final (summative) assessment at the end of the academic year and upon completion of studies (final state examination).

- e) How many HEIs publish up to date, impartial and objective information about the programmes and awards offered?

All HEIs

10. Stage of development of external quality assurance system

Describe the external quality assurance system operating in your country.

The quality of higher education in the CR is the responsibility of the Accreditation Commission that 1) evaluates the activities of HEIs and the quality of accredited activities, and makes public the results of this evaluation; 2) adopts and publicises its standpoint on applications for accreditation of study programmes. The system of external quality assurance has a long tradition in the CR. The Accreditation Commission was set up (as one of the first institutions of its kind in Europe) in 1990. Every study programme in the CR must be accredited. Accreditation is granted for a limited period (at most 10 years). Before it expires, the higher education institution applies for its validity to be extended.

Please include:

- a) The stage of implementation of your external quality assurance system

The system of external quality assurance is well developed. All study programmes are subject to accreditation. The Accreditation Commission also evaluates the quality of higher education institutions and their accredited activities.

- b) Does your external quality assurance system operate at national level

Yes

If No, please specify: -----

- c) Does your external quality assurance system cover all higher education²⁷

Yes

If No, please specify which types of institutions or programmes are not covered by your external quality assurance system:-----

- d) Which of the following elements are included in your external quality assurance system:

- Self-assessment report **yes**
- External reviews **yes**

²⁷ Higher education: all types of courses of study, training or training for research at the post secondary level which are recognised by the relevant authorities as belonging to a country's higher education system.

- Publication of results yes
 - Follow-up procedures yes
- e) Has a peer review of the national agency(ies) according to the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA already taken place?

No.

If No is there a date set for the review? Yes. A peer review of the national agency (the Accreditation Commission) was launched in autumn 2008. It is expected to be completed in the course of 2009.

11. Level of student participation

From the following, please indicate all aspects of quality assurance in which students are involved:

- a) In governance of national agencies for QA No
- b) As full members in external review teams Yes
- c) As observers in external review teams No
- d) As part of the decision making process for external reviews No
- e) In the consultation process during external reviews (e.g. arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students) Yes
- f) In internal quality assurance (e.g. periodic review of programmes) In some cases
- g) In preparation of self-assessment reports No
- h) In follow-up procedures No

Please add any additional comments, especially if students are not involved in any of the aspects: ---

12. Level of international participation

In which of the following is there international participation in quality assurance

- a) The governance of national agencies for quality assurance Yes
- b) The external evaluation of national quality assurance agencies Yes
- c) Teams for external review of institutions or programmes, either as members or observers Yes
- d) Membership of ENQA Yes

The Accreditation Commission has been a full member of ENQA since 2002. In 2008 the vice-chair of the Accreditation Commission was elected a member of the ENQA Board.

- e) Membership of any other international network Yes

CEEN, INQAAHE

Please add any additional comments, especially if there is no international involvement in any of the aspects:---

RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND STUDY PERIODS

13. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement

Describe the stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement in your country. Please include the percentage of all students graduating in 2009 who will receive a Diploma Supplement (if less than 100%, please explain)

100%

From 1998 the Diploma Supplement has been issued by higher education institutions in line with the provisions of the Higher Education Act at the request of the student (graduate). From 1 January 2006 the Higher Education Act has defined the Diploma Supplement as a document that, together with the

diploma, verifies successful completion of studies in an accredited degree programme. The Diploma Supplement is issued automatically, free of charge and in a format proposed by EU/RE/UNESCO in a Czech-English version.

a) Is the Diploma Supplement issued to students graduating from::

- 1st cycle programmes Yes
- 2nd cycle programmes Yes
- 3rd cycle programmes Yes
- Remaining “old type” programmes Yes
- Short higher education programmes Not applicable

b) Which of the following apply to Diploma Supplements issued in your country:

- Issued in a widely spoken European language Yes
Please specify the language both Czech and English
- Issued free of charge
- Issued automatically
- Corresponds to the EU /CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format Yes
- A national Diploma Supplement is used that is different from the EU /CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format:----

13.1 Use of Diploma Supplement for recognition of qualifications

Please describe the way in which the Diploma Supplement is used for the recognition of foreign qualifications (or studies). Please comment in particular on the following aspects, giving references to any relevant websites and documents:

a) The Diploma Supplement is used as the reference document when admitting holders of foreign qualifications to the second and third cycles

Yes

Comment: The diploma and the Diploma Supplement are the principal documents according to which the recognition body assesses a higher education qualification for the purpose of granting recognition for access to further studies.

b) Holders of foreign qualifications who present a Diploma Supplement in a widely spoken language do not have to provide official translations of their qualification

Yes

Comment: Pursuant to the provision of the Higher Education Act, recognition bodies (i.e. higher education institutions or the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Defence or the Ministry of the Interior) can require that the documents presented for the purpose of recognition be translated. If the document is issued in English, German or Russian, translation is normally not required.

c) Holders of foreign qualifications who present a Diploma Supplement in a widely spoken language do not need to prove through other documents the validity in the qualifications in the awarding country (for further studies or employment in the non-regulated part of the labour market)

Yes

Comment: In most cases a Diploma Supplement in a foreign language is deemed sufficient by both employers and HEIs for the purpose of recognition of a qualification. Nevertheless, they are authorised to require additional documents.

d) Specific action has been taken at a National and Institutional level to enhance the use of the Diploma Supplement as a communication tool towards the labour market

Yes

Comment: The Diploma Supplement is being promoted by the MoEYS in cooperation with ENIC/NARIC and Bologna experts (before Bologna promoters) by means of seminars held for professional recognition bodies. There are also events held for the professional public including representatives of employers. An information campaign held as part of a EUROPASS project was also one major dissemination instrument.

14. National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents²⁸ of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

- a) Does appropriate legislation comply with the Lisbon Convention?

Yes

If yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: The Lisbon Convention is part of the legal system of the CR. The procedures for recognition of higher education qualifications are stipulated in the Higher Education Act and the internal regulations of HEIs. At the request of the qualification holder the recognition body (a public higher education institution) issues a certificate of recognition of higher education or a part thereof. Procedures for recognition of foreign higher education qualifications are implemented in line with the relevant provisions of the Higher Education Act, internal regulations of the HEI and valid international agreements on recognition.

- b) Does appropriate legislation comply with the later Supplementary Documents:

- Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition

Yes

If yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: Specific recognition procedures are stipulated in the Higher Education Act and in internal regulations of HEIs. Apart from this recognition practices of HEIs are subject to methodological guidance and coordination on the part of the MoEYS that cooperates with ENIC/NARIC. Recommendations are used in the process of assessing qualifications.

- Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees

Yes

If yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: Procedures for recognition of joint degrees are the same as for other foreign HE qualifications. If a higher education institution that is part of the HE system in the CR is involved in the joint degree, the documents are automatically valid in the CR and recognition is not required (pursuant to the Higher Education Act).

- Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education

No

If yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: Recognition bodies address qualifications acquired at transnational institutions on an individual basis. When assessing these qualifications they make use of the ENIC/NARIC experience and contacts within the ENIC Network and NARIC Network.

- c) Which of the following principles are applied in practice

- Applicants' right to fair assessment

Yes

If yes, please describe how it is ensured at nation and institutional level: Apart from the legal regulations mentioned above, recognition of higher education qualifications is subject to administrative regulations that govern the procedural aspects and provide for regular as well as extraordinary review procedures (including an administrative judiciary).

- Recognition of no substantial differences can be proven

Yes

If yes, please describe how it is ensured at nation and institutional level: Recognition is ensured by the relevant provisions of the Higher Education Act and internal regulations of HEIs.

- Demonstration of substantial differences, where recognition is not granted

Yes

²⁸ Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition (2001); Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (2004); Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education (2001).

If yes, please describe how it is ensured at nation and institutional level: The process of recognition is subject to administrative proceedings that require that each negative decision should be justified.

- Provision of information about your country's HE programmes and institutions

Yes

If yes, please describe how it is done in practice: Information about HEIs and accredited higher education programmes is provided by the Ministry of Education at www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/studijni-programy and by ENIC/NARIC at <http://www.csvs.cz/databaze/vs2004/> in English, and also at www.naric.cz/HigherDB/index.php?Sezn=S1.

- Do you have a fully operational ENIC

Yes.

If yes, please describe the role of your ENIC in recognition and information provision a) nationally and b) internationally: ENIC is a methodological and advisory body for recognition bodies. It ensures compliance with international agreements on recognition and the principles of the Lisbon Convention and its accompanying texts in the recognition practices of HEIs. It develops positions on the status of foreign institutions and the assessment of foreign qualifications for recognition bodies, and provides information about higher education systems abroad. It provides information about the recognition process, legal regulations in place, the higher education system in the CR and other countries, HEIs, accredited study programmes and admission requirements. It represents the Czech Republic in the ENIC Network and cooperates with partners in this network for the purpose of the mutual exchange of information about HE systems, institutions and qualifications so that they may be fairly assessed. It cooperates with ENIC Network secretariats in UNESCO, CEPES and the Council of Europe. It is involved in international projects concerned with recognition. Its operations are governed by the ENIC/NARIC Charter.

- d) As additional information, please describe any actions to implement fully the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents.

The activities of the MoEYS and ENIC will continue focusing systematically on facilitation of the recognition process by means of organising methodological seminars and developing legislative proposals.

15. Stage of implementation of ECTS²⁹

Describe the implementation of ECTS in your country.

- a) Please include the percentage of the total number of higher education programmes³⁰ in which all programme components are linked with ECTS credits

75-99%

The ECTS system operates in virtually all public higher education institutions at Bachelor's and Master's degree levels. A number of HEIs state that the ECTS is applied to all students who began to study in the academic year 2006/2007.

- b) Are ECTS credits linked with learning outcomes³¹ in your country? Please tick one.

In the majority of programmes

In most programmes the award of credits is linked to learning outcomes. The system for awarding ECTS credits is distinctly different at various institutions/faculties. A subject may be assessed by means of credits when the relevant study programme/field of study is accredited. Credits may be linked to demands or acquired knowledge and competencies, or their award may be conditional upon passing an examination. The process is dynamic and it is still developing with a view to

²⁹ Please refer to definitions in the ECTS User's guide, http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/guide_en.html

³⁰ Except doctoral studies.

³¹ Clarification: Learning outcomes in the form of knowledge, skills and competences are formulated for all programme components and credits are awarded only when the stipulated learning outcomes are actually acquired.

making the best use of ECTS. In most cases the basic principles of the credit system are set out in the *Study and Examination Regulations* of higher education institutions/faculties.

- c) If you use credit system other than ECTS, please give details of your national credit system

Nearly all HEIs use the ECTS system. Some institutions use a different credit system which, however, cannot be described as national.

- Is it compatible with ECTS? **Yes**
- What is the ration between national and ECTS credits?

If a higher education institution has introduced a credit system other than the ECTS, it is in most cases a system that is compatible with ECTS, and institutions have the relevant converters. Some HEIs that are branches of foreign institutions use the British or American credit system, but the ECTS is used as a parallel system.

- d) Are you taking any action to improve understanding of learning outcomes?

Yes

If yes, please explain: There are no activities of this kind at national level. There is a nationwide discussion in connection with the National Qualifications Framework which is now being prepared by the MoEYS. Discussion also takes places within the activities implemented as part of the Bologna Experts project.

- e) Are you taking any action to improve measurement and checking of student workload?

No.

- f) Are you taking any actions to assist HE staff or other stakeholders in applying ECTS?

Yes.

If yes, please explain: Assistance to HEIs in relation to ECTS introduction is provided, above all, as part of the Bologna Experts project. Various seminars are organised for HEIs and the institutions may ask experts in this area for consultation. HEIs make use of this assistance particularly when they are preparing to file applications for the ECTS Label. Attention has also been paid recently to learning outcomes and their interconnectedness with the ECTS system. The Ministry provides long-term support for implementation of ECTS in its development schemes.

LIFELONG LEARNING

16. Recognition of prior learning

Describe the measures in place to recognise prior learning (RPL), including non-formal and informal learning (for example learning gained in the workplace or in the community).

- a) Do you have nationally established procedured in place to assess RPL as a basis for acces to HE programmes?

No.

If yes, please specify:

The attainment of full secondary education is a precondition for admission to a Bachelor's and long-cycle Master's study programme. In addition, applicants with tertiary professional education provided by conservatories may also be admitted to arts fields of study. Due completion of studies of a Bachelor's study programme is a precondition for admission to a follow-up Master's study programme.. Due completion of a Master's study programme (which in the arts also obtains an academic title) is a precondition for admission to a Doctoral study programme.

Recognising prior learning other than the above as a necessary precondition is fully within the competence of individual higher education institutions and may help the recognition of a part of a relevant study programme. In most cases formal learning is recognised, largely taking place at a foreign/domestic higher education institution or tertiary professional school. In a number of cases higher education institutions make it possible for graduates of tertiary professional schools merely to add some subjects and complete a Bachelor's study programme in a shorter than standard time.

Some HEIs also recognise non-formal or informal learning, but merely as proof of the applicant's interest in the relevant topic and thus they take account of it during the admission procedure.

- b) Do you have nationally established RPL procedures in place to allocate credits towards a qualification?

No

If yes, please specify:

The Higher Education Act enables recognition of credits obtained in prior learning; however, it does not specify the exact conditions, and an individual recognition policy is hence fully within the competence of the higher education institution that has admitted the applicant. In practice this mainly involves recognition of prior formal learning obtained at a tertiary professional school (see part a) or another HEI or as part of lifelong learning provided by HEIs. Most HEIs have an internal guideline prepared for this purpose, such as a Rector's guideline.

- c) Do you have nationally established RPL procedures in place to allocate credits for exemption from some programme requirements ?

No.

If yes, please specify:

The Higher Education Act does not clearly specify this field and thus it is fully within the competence of individual HEIs to determine their own policy, as described above.

- d) To what extent are any such procedures applied in practice?

A little

Please describe the current situation: Recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning, including the recognition of credits obtained through prior learning, is in accordance with the Higher Education Act and the Act on the Recognition of Further Education Results³².

Apart from artistic fields of study it is not possible to study an accredited programme at a HE institution without having completed a full secondary education programme.

Provided the above condition is met, recognition of prior learning, or recognition of credits obtained in prior learning for study purposes, is fully within the competence of individual HE institutions, as described above. The current legislation does not hinder schools in any way from recognising prior learning. Assistance in this area is provided to schools and individual applicants by the ENIC/NARIC centre.

17. Flexible learning paths³³

Describe legislative and other measures taken by your country to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education, to encourage participation by under-represented groups.

- a) Are there specific measures in place to promote flexible learning paths within the national qualifications framework

Yes.

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation: The Act on Higher Education Institutions enables accreditation of study programmes in the on-site mode as well as in the distance and combined mode. The distance and combined mode of study contribute to more flexible studies according to individual student needs. The on-site, distance and combined modes have equal status in law.

- b) Are there any measures to support HE staff in establishing flexible learning paths?

Yes

³² Act no. 179/2006 Coll., on the Verification and Recognition of Further Education Results as amended, hereinafter referred to as the Act on the Recognition of Continuing Education.

³³ In our view the term "flexible learning paths" covers any courses, distance learning, weekend and evening courses, adult education, etc. It thus covers forms of learning that defy the classical notion of on-site study.

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation: National support for higher education staff in establishing flexible learning paths is based on different financial schemes offered to HEIs - Higher Education Development Fund, development schemes of the MoEYS or EU Structural Funds. The priorities emphasized in the strategic plan of the Ministry for the years 2006-10 are as follows: support and further development of the combined and distance mode of study, creation and implementation of learning support (multimedia education), use of e-learning, interactive teaching programmes and materials for these modes of study, establishment of joint teaching labs, implementation of 'project' and 'problem-focused' forms of study and development of advisory and information centres. . Schools use these funds also for training their employees in using new forms of teaching (mainly creation of e-learning aids).

- c) Is there flexibility in entry requirements aimed at widening participation?

Yes

Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between the three Bologna cycles: The Act on Higher Education Institutions defines only the completion of full secondary education as a basic prerequisite for studying an accredited study programme. Determining other conditions for access to studies lies fully within the competence of a higher education institution. HE institutions use study aptitudes testing, knowledge testing and interviews or make their decision based on achieved results at a secondary school. Whether demand greatly exceeds supply also plays a major role.

- d) Are there any flexible delivery methods to meet the needs of diverse groups of learners?

Yes

Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between the three Bologna cycles: Study flexibility is possible in particular in relation to the mode of study; since individual modes of study are defined as having equal status. A certain degree of flexibility also exists where prolonging the length of study, having an individual study plan, work placement, e-learning, weekend learning, weekend and night opening of libraries, etc. are concerned.

Most private and public higher education institutions have accredited their study programmes in a combination of on-site and distance modes of study. As of 22/7/2008 a total of 352 Bachelor's study programmes (52% of all Bachelor's study programmes), 224 follow-up Master's study programmes (41% of all follow-up Master's study programmes), 92 long-cycle (non-structured) Master's study programmes (35% of all these programmes) and 800 Doctoral study programmes were accredited according to a distance or combined mode of study (100% of these programmes, since all are automatically accredited in all modes of study: on-site, distance and combined).

Flexible learning paths are used mainly by persons who study part-time, by mothers with small children, pregnant students, professional athletes or individuals with a physical disability or a social handicap who have limited opportunities for participating in full on-site learning.

- e) Are there modular structures of programmes to facilitate greater participation?

Yes.

Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between the three Bologna cycles: Numerous HEIs devise programmes as modules; the modules are created according to various criteria (mainly in relation to the field of study). A modular structure is being implemented with the objective of enhancing transferability between and within levels of education.

- f) If possible, please provide any statistics on the results of measures taken to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education, to encourage participation by under-represented groups.

Measures taken to create flexible learning paths have so far not been statistically monitored. For data on the number of study programmes in the distance or combined mode of study see part d) of this question.

JOINT DEGREES

18. Establishment and recognition of joint degrees³⁴

a) Describe the legislative position on joint degrees in your country

- Are joint degrees specifically mentioned in legislation?

Yes

Joint degree programmes are made possible by the Act on Higher Education Institutions.

- Does the legislation fully allow:
 - o Establishing joint programmes?
Yes.
 - o Awarding joint degrees?
Yes.

b) Please give an estimate of the percentage of institutions in your country which are involved in

- Joint degrees: 25-50%
- Joint programmes: 25-50%

c) What is the level of joint degrees/programme cooperation in your country

- In the first cycle little
- In the second cycle little
- In the third cycle little

d) In which subject areas/disciplines is joint degree/programme co-operation most widespread (please list if possible)?

Most joint programmes are provided in fields of study focusing on international trade, international finance, economics and technical fields of study.

e) Estimate the number of joint programmes in your country.

Currently Czech public HEIs provide 56 joint study programmes.

f) Describe any actions being taken to encourage or allow joint programmes.

The Ministry also supports the activities of HE institutions that lead to the creation of joint programmes from state funds, mainly within development schemes or as part of bilateral cooperation (e.g. in 2007 and 2008 a programme supporting joint Czech-French programmes was announced, funded by the Czech and French Ministries of Education; this programme is expected to continue in the future). In addition, higher education institutions have successfully engaged in a number of programmes focusing on joint programmes (e.g. Erasmus Mundus, CEEPUS, Erasmus).

The establishment of the Accreditation Commission (AC) criteria for the assessment of joint-degrees/study programme applications in September 2006 supplements the relevant provisions of the Act on Higher Education Institutions and provides major support for the creation of joint study programmes. AC stipulates that the part of the joint study programme taking place at a Czech HE institution has to meet the standards of the Czech AC, whereas the part taking place at a foreign HE institution has to be accredited in the partner country or otherwise recognised by the pertinent bodies in that country. This approach taken by the Accreditation Commission has greatly simplified the accreditation procedure of joint study programmes.

g) Are there any specific support systems for students to encourage joint degree cooperation?

Joint study programmes give students an attractive opportunity to study at several higher education institutions and hence obtain a prestigious education. Students show a considerable interest in these programmes, as they are mostly highly prestigious (e.g. programmes supported by the Erasmus Mundus programme). Students may also obtain financial support for their studies at partner HE institutions outside the CR from the Erasmus programme, development schemes, scholarship funds of HE institutions, etc.

³⁴ A joint degree is a single certificate of attained education granted by two or more institutions. This certificate is valid in all countries of the participating institutions and there is no need to additionally recognise it at national level.

MOBILITY

19. Removing obstacles to student and staff mobility

- a) What measures have been taken by your country both at governmental and institutional level to enhance student and staff mobility and overcome main obstacles?

One of the objectives of the strategic plan of the Ministry is to make it possible for every student who has the relevant aptitude and interest to spend at least one semester at a foreign higher education institution. HEIs may use, for this purpose of mobility within the EU, the ERASMUS programme, which is given additional funding from the state budget beyond EU funds. An overview of EU funds and state funds spent on the Erasmus programme can be seen in Table No. 12. In addition, mobility is supported within bilateral and multilateral programmes of a regional nature (CEEPUS, Aktion, DAAD programmes); HE institutions value the support provided by the Fulbright Foundation as well. Study in countries outside the EU is supported mainly by development schemes and bilateral programmes. A significant part of such study, be it within or outside Europe, is supported by scholarship funds of individual HE institutions.

Students consider a lack of funds, failure to recognise courses studied abroad and the greater challenges posed by studying in a foreign language as the main obstacles to mobility. So as to minimise these obstacles, considerable additional funds are provided from the state budget or from scholarship funds of HE institutions in order to encourage such study. Every year the ENIC/NARIC centre holds several informative and methodological seminars for HE institutions so as to prevent as far as possible any misinterpretation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. In 2007 the Student Activity and Academic Center organised a national student survey that showed that in a substantial number of cases one obstacle to such study is the fact that students work during their studies and do not want to lose their job; in other cases they have personal reasons for not studying abroad.

Private HEIs give students and/or academic staff financial support for study abroad depending on financial possibilities of different institutions. Support is provided in about 60% of cases on a case-by-case basis.

Table No. 12

Erasmus programme: co-financing of the EU and CR		
Year	EU budget (EUR)	National budget (EUR)
2000	2,100,000	1,691,692
2006	3,400,000	8,000,000
2007	5,200,000	9,680,000
2008 (estimate)	8,300,000	8,800,000

(the year 2000 is also given for the sake of comparison)

- b) Have arrangements for visas, residence and work permits been amended to enhance student and staff mobility?

No.

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation: Over the past two years the arrangements for visas, residence and work permits have remained unchanged.

- c) Is there financial support for national and foreign mobile students and staff?

Yes.

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation: Mobility of students and academic staff is a priority of the strategic plan of the MoEYS. HEIs may obtain additional financing for students and academic staff to cover study abroad through the above programmes and development schemes announced by the Ministry. In 2007 public funds allocated for these purposes amounted to EUR 9.7 million, i.e. over CZK 271 million. Further sources of support

include funds provided within cultural agreements and other types of agreements concluded at national level.

- d) Are study periods taken abroad recognised?

Yes.

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation: In the CR the recognition of prior learning for the purposes of further study is within the competence of higher education institutions. Public HEIs that implement a similar study programme are the competent bodies for the recognition of qualifications (diploma); provided recognition is in line with an international treaty, the Ministry is the competent body. If a HE institution does not recognise the applicant's qualifications obtained at a foreign HE institution, it has to justify its decision. The applicant has a right to appeal to the Ministry, which will issue a final and binding decision.

HE institutions use a Learning Agreement. Credits obtained from study abroad are either recognised as equivalents of compulsory subjects of the study plan or as optional subjects. In a number of cases this is done in particular subjects according to syllabi provided by the host school.

- e) Is there accommodation for mobile students and staff?

Yes.

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation: Higher education institutions organise accommodation for visiting students and academic staff as far as they can; accommodation is always offered at better than market rates.

- f) Have any measures been taken to increase outward student and staff mobility?

Yes.

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation: No truly new measures have been taken over the past two years at national level; however, there is still an opportunity to obtain support from public funds for additional financing of study abroad taking place within programmes and outside them from development schemes, as said above.

Support for international student and academic staff mobility greatly varies between individual institutions. The International Department in charge of mobility is at faculty level at many HEIs and actual support often depends on the individual initiative of teachers. Specific support for mobility involves e.g. holding courses in foreign languages, expanding the spectrum of study programmes taught in the English (or another foreign) language, supporting travel by academic staff and students in order to present major results of scientific work at international conferences, admitting foreign lecturers and host professors. The aim of increasing student and academic staff mobility is supported by various motivational interviews with students and academic staff, consultations related to the selection of a university abroad, travel organisation support, and a high level of information supported by presentations on web sites, the production and dissemination of press information and multimedia presentations. 'Buddy clubs' are also successful. As concerns the admission of foreign staff or creation of scholarship programmes for talented students, HE institutions have started to utilise the possibilities of development schemes to a greater extent, within which this activity has been supported over the past 3 years.

20. Portability of loans and grants

- a) Are portable grants available in your country?

Yes.

If no, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of grants.

The portability of scholarships (grants) abroad is governed by Higher Education Act (Section 91); the specific form is stipulated by the scholarship guidelines of individual HE institutions. This mainly applies to scholarships granted to students by a HE institution (merit scholarship, social scholarship, scholarship to study abroad, doctoral scholarship and others). In the case of study abroad it is therefore crucial to determine whether the applicant remains a student of a Czech HE institution during his/her course. However, the existing system does not make it possible to

provide the student with a scholarship to cover the cost of the entire study programme abroad (with the exception of some offers made by foundations).

As for state support in terms of social security and health insurance, students studying in the CR or abroad have their insurance covered by the age of 26 after they have demonstrated that they are studying at a particular institution.

Child benefit may serve as another form of financial support for a student. This benefit is paid out to parents, provided the qualifying income of a family does not exceed 2.40 times the minimum living standard of the family. Child benefit is granted to a child/student up to the age of 26 who is systematically preparing for future employment. Pursuant to a Decision of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (S. 12(1)(c) of Act No. 117/1995 Coll., i.e. Act on State Social Support), study abroad is also recognised as systematic preparation for future employment provided it is considered equivalent to studies at a secondary school or a higher education institution in the Czech Republic.

b) Are portable loans available in your country?

No.

If no, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of loans:

The CR does not have a system of student loans (supported and guaranteed by the state) and hence the portability of these loans abroad is not possible. Nonetheless, the introduction of such a scheme is being debated in preparation for White Paper on Tertiary Education, which proposes the drafting of an Act on Financial Support for Students that would tackle this issue.

As for commercial student loans, it is possible to obtain a special student loan from the commercial sector (Komerční banka: the Gaudeamus account; Česká spořitelna: the Student+ account, etc.). Specific terms and conditions differ between individual banks, but essentially the loan may be used for studies at both Czech and foreign HE institutions.

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE EHEA AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

21. Implementation of strategy

a) Describe any measures being taken by your country to implement the strategy “European Higher Education in a Global Setting”

The European strategy was adopted in 2007 and contains five main areas on which the Bologna member states were to focus in the previous period (i. improve information on the EHEA, ii. promote the EHEA worldwide, iii. strengthen cooperation based on partnership, iv. support a political dialogue, v. support the recognition of qualifications). Each country has also set forth its own tools for implementing this strategy.

The Czech Republic implements the strategy with the help of the internationalisation priority set forth in the strategic plan of the Ministry for the years 2006-10 and in the annual updates. The global context of higher education is also supported through cooperation with both European and non-European countries. For this reason the Ministry supports the development of cooperation with third countries at the level of HE institutions and offers a possibility of financing development projects of HE institutions in this field within the internationalisation priority. Basic measures for supporting cooperation comprise mainly:

- Programmes of the joint degree type, e.g. for future partnership in the Erasmus Mundus programme;
- Mobility to other than European countries (implemented mainly within the Erasmus programme, e.g. Northern and Southern America, Asia, Africa and Australia);
- Internal scholarship programmes for talented students from third countries;
- Projects for admission of foreign academic staff (host professors);
- Creation of ECTS packages as a tool of promoting HE institutions in Europe;

- Diploma Supplement in English or another foreign language (automatic and free of charge) and an attempt to expand study programmes conducted in a foreign language.

The Czech higher education system offers all students, regardless of their country of origin, the opportunity of studying in Czech free of charge, or in a foreign language subject to a charge (this also covers students from the CR). In this area the Act does not stipulate any differences between Czech students, students from EU countries or students from countries outside the EU.

Similar rules apply to the recognition of qualifications obtained in third countries. Higher education institutions are instructed to use the same principles to which the CR has bound itself in the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

For more on the promotion, recognition and strengthening of cooperation with third countries please refer to the text below.

b) What has your country done to:

- Improve information on the EHEA outside Europe?

The Czech Republic disseminates general information about the Bologna process and about the higher education system within the EHEA at its web site www.bologna.msmt.cz. As for specific information activities about the national system and study opportunities in the CR, the main role is played in that respect by HE institutions together with NAEP or ENIC/NARIC. Their activities are described below. They include web sites, participation in international conferences or seminars (mainly outside Europe) and attempts to establish new partnerships.

- Promote European higher education, enhance its world-wide attractiveness and competitiveness?

As far as promotion is concerned, the Czech Republic focuses on promoting Czech higher education as part of the EHEA.

The main marketing and promotional activities at national level are pursued by the National Agency for European Educational Programmes (NAEP), which is part of the Centre for International Services of the MoEYS. Among other things it pursues the following activities:

- Participation in international fairs: European promotional activities and participation in European higher education fairs (European Higher Education Fairs, EHEF), fairs funded by the Asia Link programme (e.g. fairs in China, Vietnam, Thailand, India), and cooperation with the European Commission initiative "Study in Europe". From 2009 the focus will be mostly on education fairs for professionals in higher education (EAIE, NAFSA, APAIE).
- Preparation and dissemination of information materials about study opportunities, namely "Study in the Czech Republic – Study programmes Offered in Foreign Languages" (a brochure and CD) and a student guide "Studying in the Czech Republic – Erasmus Guide". Information is available at the web site www.studyin.cz, at education fairs, in a network of CR embassies abroad, foreign embassies in the CR, and also thanks to Czech language lecturers or with the help of foreign branches of Czech HE institutions.

NAEP has also become involved in the international project "Building capacities of East-Central European national agencies to promote higher education outside the EU" as part of the Erasmus Mundus programme, whose aim is to transmit expert knowledge in promoting higher education.

Czech higher education is promoted at national level by the Centre for Higher Education Studies (CHES). It does expert work that maps out the whole higher education system in a comprehensive manner. It regularly publishes a booklet entitled 'Higher Education in the Czech Republic', which contains information about the higher education system in the CR and about individual HE institutions, their study programmes and fields of study. CHES also administers the ENIC/NARIC National Information Centre, which offers a database of HE institutions in English, accessible at <http://www.naric.cz/HigherDB/index.php?Sezn=S1> and provides information (also in English) about the conditions for admitting foreign students to studies, grant rules, etc. The web site www.naric.cz is available.

Both the above institutions provide information and advice to students interested in studying in the CR.

Promotional activities are also carried out by individual HE institutions at institutional level. These include participation in international conferences or seminars, administering quality web sites of the individual universities³⁵ or promotional activities carried out by students, who use their student web sites to report on opportunities to study and experiences of what studying in the CR is like. They also offer help to incoming foreign students through the 'buddy system'. Naturally, HE institutions do not simply passively participate or mediate information; they are also actively involved in international partnerships (for more information please see the following part of the question related to partnership).

Last but not least, the system of European higher education and its quality is supported by the activities of an expert group within the Bologna experts project.

The governmental level is also important, since it supports enhancing the competitiveness of higher education both home and abroad. A competitive and open Europe, a key ingredient of which is the support of education, research and development, will indeed be one of the five priorities of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2009.

- Strengthen cooperation based on partnership in higher education?

At national level, cooperation of Czech and foreign HE institutions outside Europe is supported by NAEP and the Bologna experts project; in addition, HE institutions themselves play a very important role. As said, the Ministry of Education regularly publishes development schemes, from which it funds projects of HE institutions, e.g. joint degrees in European and non-European countries or support for periods of study abroad. Other activities available to higher education institutions include the Erasmus Mundus programme, support for teacher mobility through programmes of the Fulbright Foundation and cooperation with North American schools in the CESP programme. Last but not least there are scientific exchange programmes for academic staff and doctoral students.

NAEP, which is active in education programmes at national level, disseminates information about Czech higher education abroad, mediates contacts for HE institutions, helps to search for partners among HE institutions for international projects and provides information about the new challenges offered by a number of programmes (Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, External Cooperation Windows, Atlantis, EU-Canada, etc.).

Cooperation between HE institutions and countries outside Europe is also supported by seminars held within the Bologna experts project or NAEP seminars that try to disseminate examples of good practice and the experience of individual HE institutions.

However, a key role is played by the HE institutions themselves, which also present themselves at international education fairs, festivals and displays. Partnerships are made thanks to long-term contacts between staff based on study visits, and these contacts often grow into institutional cooperation. Inter-university or faculty agreements on direct cooperation usually form the basis of long-term positive relations with partners outside Europe. HE institutions utilise the potential of international organisations (e.g. PIM, Partnership in Management) in higher education, inter-university networks and make use of the active support of diplomatic missions of the Czech Republic. A number hold international workshops, exchange stays and summer schools that in general improve cooperation and the establishment of new partnerships, including those outside Europe. Some higher education institutions also cooperate with not-for-profit organizations and offer studies on the basis of scholarships for selected young people from war-torn countries or from countries that have suffered a natural disaster or that are otherwise disadvantaged.

- Intensify policy dialogue with partners from other world regions?

The CR maintains a political dialogue with partners from third countries at governmental (ministerial) level through multilateral and bilateral agreements (currently for instance the preparation of agreements with Brazil and Argentina is under way). These agreements support dialogue over human rights, recognition, equivalence, legal assistance in civil matters, cultural or scientific and technical cooperation.

³⁵ The Ministry of Education supports the establishment of quality web sites of HE institutions through development projects, which is in line with the strategic plan of the Ministry and its updates. A list of web sites of HE institutions is available at www.msmt.cz.

Political dialogue also takes place at the level of the foreign development policy of the CR through development projects of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the field of education. In 2006-2010 the Czech Republic is focusing on programme cooperation with 8 priority countries (Angola, Zambia, Yemen, Vietnam, Mongolia, Moldavia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina). In 2008 the MoEYS granted two higher education grants: firstly, support for the development of study programmes at the Kisinev University and the aligning of their education system with EU standards (implemented by the Czech Agricultural University) and secondly the development of technical and economic fields of study at the Polytechnic of Namibia (implemented by the J. E. Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem).

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports also announced a subsidy programme³⁶ for granting governmental scholarships to support studies taking place in the English language at public HE institutions in the Czech Republic for 2008-2012. Selected fields of study are covered for citizens from selected countries, in the pilot phase from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Ethiopia, Ghana, Columbia, Moldavia, Mongolia, Serbia and Vietnam, subject to change based on upon evaluation a decision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Partnerships with third countries are also established by the higher education institutions themselves, which also conclude bilateral agreements and develop cooperation at institutional level. Students who come to study in the Czech Republic from a non-EU country most often come from post-Soviet countries (Russian Federation, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan and others) and also e.g. from Vietnam, Norway or Israel.

- Improve recognition of qualifications with other world regions?

Rules on the recognition of qualifications follow the Lisbon Recognition Convention and at national level the Act on Higher Education Institutions³⁷. Higher education and qualifications are in most cases recognised by a public HE institution or by the Ministry of Education (for countries with which the CR has a bilateral agreement and is empowered to provide such recognition). All applicants may file an appeal with the Ministry of Education. Recognition of education and qualifications in the CR is described in more detail in questions 13 and 14.

As recognition by a public HE institution is based mainly on the degree of knowledge of the foreign HE institution or knowledge and skills certified by a higher education qualification, the HE institution may better perform this task if it has an expert advisory body at hand or if it has wider experience from other HE institutions. Both these activities are provided for by the ENIC/NARIC National Information Centre. This centre gives advice both to institutions and to applicants and regularly holds seminars devoted to the issue of recognition. Information and basic documents are available at www.naric.cz. Recognition is also aided by the experience of HE institutions with their partner institutions and a Diploma Supplement (which is issued automatically and free of charge in the CR).

- c) What measures have been taken in your country to implement the OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education? Please describe.

The OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education have been debated in the CR at the level of the Accreditation Commission. However, full adoption of the guidelines would require an amendment to the valid Act on Higher Education Institutions from 1998 by introducing compulsory evaluation and accreditation of all study programmes provided in the CR by branches of foreign HE institutions (as a result, the Czech Accreditation Commission should then negotiate with the relevant evaluation or accreditation agencies from the country whose branches they are). The existing legal regulation (Civil and Commercial Code) does not stipulate that these branches of foreign institutions shall have evaluation and accreditation from the Czech Accreditation Commission, and their graduates are awarded a diploma only from foreign accreditation and evaluation bodies. Practising a profession in the CR is thus subject to the recognition of this foreign qualification pursuant to the Lisbon Recognition Convention. As the CR implements the Lisbon Convention and has an operational ENIC/NARIC centre, the study

³⁶ The subsidy programme covers four subsidy titles that follow from a Government Resolution as of 27 June 2007 No. 712, which makes provision with respect to the establishment of governmental scholarships for study at public higher education institutions in the Czech Republic for citizens from developing countries for the years 2008-2012; Government Resolution as of 25 July 2007 No. 847, which makes provision with respect to foreign development cooperation in 2008 and the medium-term funding outlook by the year 2010.

³⁷ Act No. 111/1998 Coll. on Higher Education Institutions and on Amendments and Supplements to Some Other Acts.

programmes/fields of study that comply with the conditions pertaining to recognition are recognised without any difficulties.

The Guidelines have therefore not been implemented. Nevertheless, the CR tries to cooperate in a similar spirit with the Slovak Accreditation Commission and is open to cooperation with foreign Accreditation Commissions in accrediting the study programmes of Czech HE institutions abroad (e.g. the German *ACQUIN* or the *Irish Higher Education Council*).

Currently the MoEYS is preparing a new Act into which the requirements of the OECD/UNESCO Guidelines should be incorporated so as to establish an adequate statutory framework for their implementation in the CR.

d) Are the OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education applied to:

- Cross-border provision of your education programmes?

No.

- Incoming higher education provision?

No.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

22. Main challenges for higher education

Give an indication of the main challenges ahead for higher education and the Bologna Process in your country in the short and long term.

At present higher education follows a strategy formulated in the Ministry's strategic plan for 2006-2010, which on the one hand draws on specifically national needs, and on the other on Bologna process priorities. A short-term challenge therefore is to implement priorities set for this period and in the medium-term to formulate new priorities for the years 2011-2015, so that they – together with the new Tertiary Education Act, reform of the system of research, development and innovations in the CR³⁸ and Operational Programmes of EU Structural Funds – help to develop a competitive higher education system in line with Bologna process priorities.

The main challenge faced by the Czech Republic in the short-term will be to prepare a new Tertiary Education Act, which should be completed and submitted to the Parliament of the CR by the end of 2009. The main objective is a successfully drawn-up reform, which will in the long run bring specific results in ensuring quality, structure and diversification of the system of higher education institutions, operation of HE institutions within a region, attempt at removing social barriers to admission of students at a HE institution and their successful completion of their studies. In the context of removing social barriers to the admission of students and successful completion of their studies one should highlight the aim of tackling this issue in a comprehensive manner, which should result in a draft Bill on Financial Assistance for Students. In addition, closer cooperation with employers and other stakeholders in the employability of graduates, creation of curricula, accreditation of study programmes, quality evaluation and also as concerns management and financing are also necessary. This should lead to a change of powers and responsibilities in the management and mode of financing of the institutions with a focus on increasing financial resources from the private sector.

As part of developing the system of higher education, the CR has recently paid much attention to ensuring quality, transition to an accreditation system of institutions and the internal quality evaluation of HE institutions as well as the progressive evaluation of structured study. It also aims to introduce a new approach to students of Bachelor's study programmes, and to define the place of professional tertiary education (including the inclusion of work placements within study plans). A priority for this as well as for the upcoming period is to prepare and introduce a functional national system of tertiary education qualifications, a thorough application of learning outcomes and of the ECTS credit system, including compliance with the lifelong learning strategy. Last but not least the CR supports the international dimension of higher education and encourages student and academic staff mobility through expanding the teaching of English and study programmes in foreign languages (as well as

³⁸ Adopted by the government of the CR in March 2008.

double degree or joint degree systems) and also by deepening cooperation with European and non-European higher education institutions.

PART II

Template for National Strategies on the Social Dimension of the Bologna Process

Practical instruction

The answer to this questionnaire will be included in the general national report on the implementation of the Bologna Process and reach the Bologna Secretariat (e-mail: secry@bologna2009benelux.org) by November 1, 2008. Please do not exceed the length of 10 pages for the national strategy on social dimension.

The questions in Annex C are not included in the questionnaire itself but are to be considered as reference material which could facilitate the drafting of the information on the national strategy.

I. Definition of the Social Dimension in the London Communiqué

“We strive for the societal goal that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our populations. We therefore pledge to take action to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity.”

II. AS IS SITUATION (Current state of affairs)

1. Which groups in society are still underrepresented in your national higher education system? What are the main obstacles to participative equity in terms of access and successful completion of studies?

In spite of major growth in the number of students at higher education institutions after 1989 (in 2007/08 a total of 353,000 students studied at Czech higher education institutions, i.e. a tripling compared with 1989/90), which has significantly increased the tertiary education enrolment rates from the pertinent age group, the Czech Republic is still one of the countries within the EU with the greatest social inequalities in terms of opportunities for enrolling at a higher education institution and hence also of attaining higher education. Studies that have been carried out even show that the Czech Republic is one of the countries where inequalities of opportunity for achieving higher education have been rising long-term. This conclusion has been drawn by various independent studies based on various data sources, the latest being e.g. a study by Matějů, Řeháková and Simonová³⁹ and by Koucký, Bartuška and Kovařovic.⁴⁰ Among other things, the latter study shows that the position of the Czech Republic has been gradually worsening among European countries in the index of inequalities in attaining higher education, which measures the education of the father and mother and socio-economic position of the father and chances of an individual attaining higher education; whereas e.g. the position of the Netherlands or Finland has significantly improved.

The latest representative Eurostat data (SILC survey from 2005) make it possible to compare the current state of inequalities of opportunity for achieving higher education with other EU countries. In the age group of people 16 to 30 years old in the Czech Republic, only 7% of individuals whose father is a manual worker either studied at a higher education institution or have already graduated from it, compared with 44.7% of individuals whose father is a professional. The inequality ratio in the CR hence stood at 0.17 (7/44.7). Taking the EU as a whole, this ratio was far more positive (0.32). Only Portugal was worse off than the CR, whereas Poland, Luxembourg, Hungary, Slovenia and Italy achieved more or less the same results. Countries like The Netherlands, Norway, Finland, Estonia, Sweden or the UK are well above the average from this perspective (see Chart 1).

³⁹ P. Matějů, B. Řeháková, N. Simonová: “The Czech Republic: Structural Growth of Inequality in Access to Higher Education”. Pp. 374–399 in *Stratification in Higher Education: A Comparative Study*, ed. by Shavit, Y., R. Arum, A. Gamoran. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.

⁴⁰ J. Koucký, A. Bartušek, J. Kovařovic: *Inequality and Access to Tertiary Education: European Countries 1950-2005*. Working Paper of the Education Policy Center, Faculty of Education, Charles University, Prague, 2007.

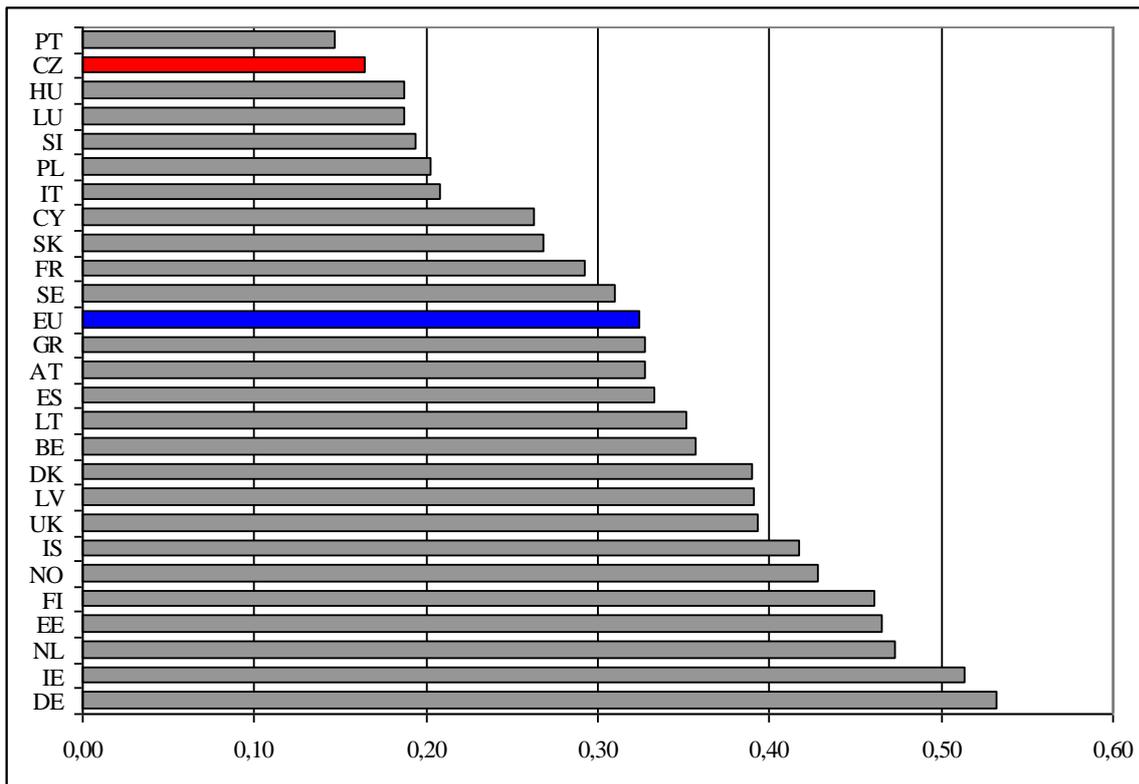
The Czech Republic has no inequality between men and women in this respect – their chances of higher education are even. The very low representation of persons of Roma origin still remains a big problem; however, there are no statistical data about the representation of Roma among students of higher education institutions.

Looking at the causes of existing disparities, in line with opinions of leading experts on education systems we believe that as in other systems with a high rate of inequalities five main causes may be identified in the Czech Republic:

1. **High rate of selectivity at secondary schools**, due to which many pupils from families with lower social-economic status and education, whose aptitudes to study at a higher education institution are comparable with the abilities of pupils of more educated parents, are diverted at an early age into education routes that make subsequent enrolment at a higher education institution far more difficult;
2. **Insufficient diversification and hence also low levels of openness on the part of the tertiary education system**, leading to high competition for enrolment in the system, where for a number of reasons applicants from socially disadvantaged families tend to fail more often;
3. **The admission procedure to higher education institutions**, which emphasizes specific knowledge that the applicants gain to a different extent at different types of schools instead of relying on professional ascertaining of general study aptitudes that – compared with specific knowledge – are less dependent on previous education and thus also the social origin of the applicants;
4. **Weak or inefficient financial assistance programmes for students at higher education institutions** that do not make it possible to decide about studies or about continuing studies regardless of the economic situation of the family, which is one of the preconditions for children from low-income families enrolling in higher education institutions to a greater extent;
5. **The perception of the tertiary education system as relatively closed if not elitist** (due to insufficient diversification) **combined with inefficient financial assistance for students** serves as a barrier deterring socially disadvantaged children from aspiring to higher education regardless of their ability to study (this conclusion is based on an analysis of aspirations drawing on data analysis from the OECD PISA 2003 project).⁴¹

Chart 1: Ratio of higher education institution students or graduates from families with a manually working father and ratio of higher education institution students from families with a professional father. Age group of 16 to 30 years.

⁴¹ P. Matějů, M. Smith, P. Soukup, J. Basl. "Determination of College Expectations in OECD countries: The Role of Individual and Structural Factors". *Czech Sociological Review*, Vol. 43, Number 6, 2007, pp. 1121-1148, http://esreview.soc.cas.cz/upl/archiv/files/436_2008-2Mateju.pdf)



Source: SILC 2005 (Eurostat).

2. Please describe what measures your Government is taking to increase the representation of the groups identified in the question above. Please refer to the possible actions listed in the Bologna Working Group report on the Social Dimension and Mobility (see Annexes A and B to this document).

With a view to achieving greater equality of opportunity for attaining higher education, the existing system of financial assistance in the CR appears to be only marginally effective, namely on the following grounds:

- Czech legislation perceives a student of a higher education institution as a dependent (maintained) child, whereas in countries that have achieved greater participative equity a student is seen as an individual independent of the underlying family;
- A large share of costs related to studies is covered either by parents or by students from their own income;
- Direct financial assistance to students is at one of the lowest levels in Europe. With the exception of social scholarships for students of higher education institutions introduced in 2006, financial assistance for students is predominantly directed via parents and is to a decisive extent derived from the social situation of the family;
- A system of non-commercial student loans or study grants does not exist.

By using a classification given in Annex A, the instruments aimed at increasing the participation of still underrepresented groups may be described as follows:

- Tertiary education at public higher education institutions is provided without student co-payment (i.e. students at public higher education institutions pay no tuition fees). However, it has to be pointed out here that according to numerous OECD analyses student co-payment does not necessarily lead to greater equality of opportunity;
- Students from low-income families may apply for a social scholarship. A social scholarship is granted to students entitled to child benefits, i.e. provided the relevant income in a family ascertained for the purpose of child benefits does not exceed 1.5 times the subsistence level (minimum living standard) of the family. The scholarship stands at CZK 1,620 per month,

which represents approx. 7% of average income and is paid out for 10 months per year. Since the income level below which a social scholarship will be granted is very low and the scholarships are administered and disbursed by higher education institutions, social scholarships are at present received by only a very small number of students of higher education institutions (approx. 7%);

- Apart from social scholarships administered and disbursed by higher education institutions, families with a student up to 26 years of age whose income drops below 2.4 times the subsistence level receive child benefits of CZK 700 per month;
- In addition, individual higher education institutions may also provide merit scholarships;
- Since 2005, when subsidies for student halls of residence were abolished, accommodation scholarships have also been paid out. Individual higher education institutions determine the rules for paying out, administering and disbursing the scholarship. However, a student's social situation is not the fundamental criterion for the disbursement of the accommodation scholarship. Instead it is the distance between the place where the student studies and the student's permanent residence that counts;
- As for indirect forms of support, tax relief for parents may be seen as the main one. The annual tax relief for a parent for one studying child accounts for CZK 10,680 p.a.; the average monthly waiver of tax for parents having one studying child stands at CZK 890 (i.e. less than 4% of the average monthly income). In addition, there is tax relief for students from income earned (CZK 4,020 p.a.);
- The state covers health insurance for students up to the age of 26 and they have statutory social security insurance;
- Indirect support includes also subsidies for meals in refectories and discounts for transport.

There are no other financial or other measures in the CR aimed at increasing the participation of still disadvantaged groups.

3. Describe what measures are being taken by the Government to help students complete their studies without obstacles related to their social or economic background. Again, please refer to the possible actions listed in the Bologna Working Group report on the Social Dimension and Mobility (see Annexes A and B to this document). Please indicate whether the measures apply to all students or only to certain levels or types of higher education institutions.

The CR does not apply any further measures in addition to the ones mentioned above.

4. Does your country have statistical and/or other research evidence at disposal to underpin the identification of underrepresented groups and the main obstacles to participative equity (see Q 1) ? If yes, please specify. Or are regular student surveys organised with the aim to provide data concerning the social dimension?

Numerous surveys have been carried out in the Czech Republic, whose aim has been not only to identify those groups that are still significantly underrepresented among students of higher education institutions, but also to establish the main causes of large inequalities of opportunity for transition between secondary and higher education. In particular three projects have focused on this issue:

- ***Economic, social and cultural sources of educational inequality and determinants of life-success: The initial phase of a longitudinal study.*** This project, financed by the Grant Agency of the CR took place between 2002 and 2006. A longitudinal survey of pupils aged fifteen in the year 2003 (PISA 2003) was launched as part of the project. The aim of the PISA-L longitudinal survey was to monitor the passage of pupils through individual educational transitions (i.e. between primary and secondary school and also between secondary school and higher education institution) and to identify factors that have served as social barriers to attaining higher education;
- ***Obstacles to the implementation of a cost-sharing principle in financing university education.*** This project took place between 2003 and 2006 and was financed by the Grant Agency of the Academy of Sciences of the CR. The project focused on students of higher education institutions and aimed at identifying positive effects and potential risks of

implementing the cost-sharing principle in financing studies at a higher education institution. This project launched a longitudinal survey of students of higher education institutions (grade one students in the year 2004);

- **Unequal access to education: the extent, sources, social and economic consequences, policy strategies.** This project is financed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. It was launched in 2004 and will be completed in 2009. It continues to carry out the longitudinal monitoring of a panel of pupils from the PISA-L project and the longitudinal survey of students of higher education institutions from 2004. One of the goals of this project is to propose changes to the Czech education system that would result in reducing educational inequalities;
- The **Eurostudent** survey was carried out in 2005. Based on the results of this project the main parameters of the system of financial assistance for students that was under preparation were set; the system should be implemented as part of the prepared tertiary education reform;
- The CR plans to carry out the **Eurostudent** survey in 2009.

III. PROCESS TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM (strategy for the future)

5. How do you plan to tackle the challenges identified under Q 1 in the near future (2008-2010)?

At present the preparation of tertiary education reform is under way; its major part comprises using various instruments to improve participation in higher education by still underrepresented groups and by doing so achieve a reduction in social inequalities in terms of the opportunity for attaining higher education. One of the main goals of the reform is a major increase in the **diversification** of the tertiary education system that should, among other things, enhance the capacity of tertiary education institutions and thus provide greater opportunity for being admitted to higher education and to choose a type and focus of study to suit the abilities and interests of the applicant.

The fundamental principle of the reform of student **financing** lies in the transformation of predominantly *indirect* support to *direct* support. The proposed reform is based on three pillars.

The first pillar of the reform of financing students is the introduction of study grants and changes to the administration of social scholarships. First and foremost, the introduction of a universal study grant is being considered. Funds for paying out this grant will be obtained mainly from shifting tax relief, until now received by parents for supporting the student, into a system of direct and universal financial support of students. The study grant will become a loan if the student does not fulfil the requirements of study and prolongs studies beyond the determined standard length of study. At the same time the system of administering social scholarships will be changed. This aims at a situation where social scholarships really start to remove the economic barrier in access to higher education. The administration of social scholarships will now be dealt with as part of the draft harmonisation of the collection of taxes and insurance and in the context of establishing an institution administering a more extensive agenda of higher education financing.

The second pillar of the reform of financing costs related to studies will be low-interest loans provided by the state, which will at least partially cover student costs of living. Loans for costs related to studies will be repaid by graduates by means of an income-contingent system. In relation to the loans the introduction of savings for education with state financial support is being considered.

The third pillar of the reform will be making occasional student jobs more advantageous through a waiver of health insurance and social security insurance up to a limit whose amount will be automatically adjusted and from which the state will pay the health insurance for the students. It will be indirect state support for active students having a fairly substantial effect.

The existing **mode of admission to higher education institutions** is also one of the sources of educational inequalities. Although an ever higher ratio of higher education institution applicants undergoes study aptitudes testing, in those fields of study where demand greatly exceeds supply tests based on knowledge verification are used fairly often. Yet these tests often fail to meet the demands posed on testing. Earlier analyses have shown that in comparison with admission procedures based on *knowledge verification*, the application of *study aptitudes* testing may reduce the risk of failure caused by other than cognitive factors (stress, momentary indisposition, distance of the school from the place of residence, corruption, etc.) to a greater extent and thus increase the opportunities for

admitting applicants coming from less stimulating social environment who do not frequent elitist secondary schools that most notably prepare their pupils for studies at a higher education institution. **The reform will therefore try to stimulate the wider use of study aptitude tests as one of the main criteria for admission to studies at a higher education institution.** The implementation of this measure may also diminish the social barriers in access to higher education.

(a) Which concrete goals do you want to achieve?

Besides the main goal of the drafted reform, i.e. enhancing the overall effectiveness of the tertiary education system in the CR, the following goals have priority in the social field:

- Widen the range of tertiary education institutions and hence increase the opportunities for being admitted;
- Through greater diversification extend the range of possibilities of selecting the type and focus of study according to the abilities and interests of the applicant;
- By implementing a new financial assistance system for students reduce the role of economic factors in decision-making about studies and continuing studies;
- Reduce the overall social inequality level in terms of opportunities for being admitted to study and of decision-making about continuing studies.

(b) What actions are planned for the different target group identified above to overcome the obstacles in access, participation and completion of studies by students? Please refer to Annex B and to the suggested approach outlined in the 2007 report from the Bologna Process Working Group on the Social Dimension and Mobility (Annex C to this document).

Besides the above described tertiary education reform no other special actions have been planned so far.

(c) is there a specific budget for these measures for underrepresented groups? If yes, please provide details

The preparation and implementation of the reform is financed from the European Social Fund, specifically from the Operational Programme Education for Competitiveness.

d) is there a timeline for action? If yes, please provide details.

The preparation of the tertiary education reform was launched in spring 2007. At present its fundamental principles embodied in the White Paper on Tertiary Education are under public discussion. The reform will be implemented in 2008-2013.

6. What arrangements are planned for monitoring progress towards more equitable access, participation and success?

Between 2003 and 2007 numerous surveys depicting the situation before the reforms were carried out and similar surveys are expected to be carried out after the reform is implemented, which will make it possible to identify the changes that have taken place due to the reform steps taken. However, a well-known fact needs to be highlighted here, namely that changes in the participation and inequalities as a result of the reform steps will not become apparent in the short run.

IV. INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PREPARATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGIES

Please indicate which authority or other actor is responsible for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the national strategy and describe the way in which the various stakeholders are involved. Did your country designate (a) contact point(s) for the national strategy? If so, please add the coordinates of the national contact point(s).

The main body implementing the reform is the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, which closely cooperates with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Finance in preparing individual steps towards increasing the participation of still underrepresented groups. Leading experts (economists, social scientists) and leading research institutions cooperate in preparing the reform. The

reform is being prepared and will be implemented in cooperation with representatives from higher education institutions (Czech Rectors' Conference and Council of Higher Education Institutions), employers and other stakeholders.