

Country Report CZECH REPUBLIC

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1. Background and country context

National economy

The Czech Republic underwent major transformation processes after 1989. Beside social changes also the economy changed which resulted in a decreasing agriculture and industry and a growing service sector. As well as in other European countries the structure of the national economy in the Czech Republic is shaped by large numbers of employees working in the service sector, although the proportion is not as high as in the EU-25. While the service sector is smaller than in other European states the proportion of industry and construction lies above the European average (EU-25).

Economic productivity is developing quite well in the Czech Republic. Compared to the nine other candidate countries which accessed the European Union in 2004 the performance levels of the Czech economy are among the best. Only Slovenia and Cyprus are performing even better in terms of GDP per capita. Since 2000 the gross domestic product per capita in the Czech Republic has risen by 44 per cent. According to EUROSTAT the gross domestic product in 2006 was EUR 18,700 (EU-27 EUR 23,400) with expectations to increase by 7 per cent in 2007 against 4 per cent for the EU-27 average.

In addition to the accelerating economic growth the employment situation also proves to be relatively good compared to other transition countries. Overall employment indicators according to EUROSTAT are nearly in line with the EU-27-average. For example, the employment rate of people aged between 15 and 64 years in 2006 accounted for 65.3 per cent compared to a 64.3 per cent average of the EU-27. Even the high youth unemployment rate of 17.5 per cent is in line with the EU-27 average of 17.4 per cent.

General political context

The Czech Republic came into existence in 1993 by the separation of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic. As a parliamentary democracy the Czech Republic is headed by the president. It is composed of 14 regions which are self-administrative units with a regional governor. The population of the Czech Republic was 10.2 million in 2003 and shows very similar demographic characteristics like most other European countries. After the change of the economic system in 1989 the birth rate started to decline while the proportion of older people increased. Those structural changes in population are of great importance on the current political agenda.

Role of the social partnership

Social partners in the Czech Republic are involved in vocational education and training on a voluntary basis, which means that their participation is not legally regulated. At the national and regional level the social partners contribute to recommendations, government papers, legal regulations and cooperation between VET schools. As the activities of the social partners in the CR are manifold they are also involved in collective bargaining. Furthermore, social partners are represented in so called 'field groups' which cover all occupations and aim to foster synergies between the VET and the labour market. The new School Act prescribes that the social partners are represented in the

examination board of final examinations in vocational certificate programmes. At company level social partners cooperate with schools and companies which employ graduates (e.g. implementation of new technologies in schools) or plan and implement training in companies (collective agreements). At the sectoral level the social partners participate in developing the general frameworks for CVET. In contrast to national and regional issues where the social partners only assume advisory functions, they are decision makers at the sectoral and company level.

The Czech education system in brief

Compulsory education starts at the age of six and lasts for nine years until the age of 15. After finishing compulsory school initial vocational education and training of mostly three or four years can be started. Besides general secondary schools various types of vocational schools exist in the Czech Republic. Especially secondary technical schools (STS) and secondary vocational schools (SVS) offer education in general subjects as well as in vocational subjects and practical training. These school types can be completed by passing the secondary school leaving exam (maturita) which provides general access to Higher Education. Apprenticeship training as specified in the European Union does not exist in the CR. In line with the focus of the EUROTRAINER study the following sections explore further to role of secondary technical and secondary vocational schools for IVET training.

IVET in companies

IVET training at the workplace does not refer to apprenticeship training, which is not established as an educational pathway. Vocational education that is roughly comparable with apprenticeship training is related to the two- or three-year-programmes of **secondary vocational schools (SVS)**. These programmes can be distinguished as follows:

- **Two- or three year programmes** provide a vocational qualification on the ISCED 3C-level which leads to perform manual work and similar occupations. In 2003 38 per cent of all secondary school-leavers were graduates of these programmes. Concerning the proportion of general subjects, vocational subjects and practical training the ratio for three-year-programmes is 30-35 per cent for general subjects, 20-30 per cent on vocational subjects and 35-45 per cent on practical training.

Pupils of this programme may be practically trained in special training facilities or workshops, but also in companies by the IVET trainers who are called instructors. Instructors are employed by a company but have no pedagogical assignments. They provide practical training which means that they encourage the work experience of the trainees by integrating them in the day-to-day working process. According to a country report for the CR only 35 per cent of SVS-students complete their practical training in a real workplace.

The training is based on a contract between the company, the VET school and the instructor as the contractual parties. In the contract the three parties agree upon their rights and duties concerning the provision of the practical training. The instructors are recruited by the company and are separately paid for their work. They have no particular professional background and do not follow a professional role.

Currently, the Czech Republic is concerned with the renewal of the two- or three year programme of SVS due to growing demands on the labour market for skilled workers. The new system, which presumably will be introduced in 2009, shall foster the integration of private companies with a stronger focus on practical training. It is expected to be targeted at about 300,000 young people.

- The **four-year programme** finishes with the ‘maturita’ examination (ISCED 3A level) and entitles for access to Higher Education (e.g. universities). In 2003 about 5.4 per cent of all school-leavers at secondary schools have chosen this programme.
- **One- or two-year programmes** (ISCED 2C) are targeted towards pupils who have completed compulsory schooling but have special learning needs or for those who have finished remedial or auxiliary programmes in basic school. The percentage of young people having completed this programme accounted for less than 1 per cent in 2003.

In addition to the SVS programmes, **secondary technical schools (STS)** offer a four-year education programme which is completed with a secondary school leaving exam. Pupils are prepared for higher education as well as for mid-level technical, business and similar jobs. In 2003 about 35.6 per cent of all secondary school leavers completed this programme. Regarding the proportions of general and vocational subjects most of the time is devoted to vocational subjects (55 per cent). During the education programme students have to follow **work placements** which last on average six to eight weeks and support young people to gain practical work experience and establish contacts with employers. The programme is completed with a school leaving exam (maturita certificate) which is usually well accepted by employers. The percentage of pupils following work placements (92 per cent) is significantly higher than in secondary vocational schools (35 per cent).

In summary, IVET in the Czech Republic mainly takes place in schools and not in companies. Thus also trainers very rarely work in the IVET context. This area is unchangingly dominated by teachers, whereas CVET is the main segment for trainers.

CVET in companies

The training of employees in enterprises is a new professional area which only has developed over the last 15 years. Compulsory training of employees in specific occupations has a longer tradition and is also legally regulated. Due to the economic transformation training activities decreased in the early 1990s. Companies were either restructured or went bankrupt. In the years after 1994 training activities increased again and the situation gradually improved with the inflow of foreign capital which also encouraged investments in human resources development.

CVET trainers train adult trainees in companies or training institutions in all contexts of non-formal learning. Organisations, companies, training centres, cultural centres and schools are only a few of the various wide-ranging places where CVET trainers perform their job. In the Czech Republic several categories of CVET trainers can be found:

- *Trainers – entrepreneurs*: They are self-employed running their own business. They perform part-time or full-time training activities and work on the basis of a trade certificate (trade licence).
- *Trainers – employees*: These are CVET trainers who train either in companies or in educational institutions thus providing in-company training outside the company.
- *Managers and experts*: They carry out training tasks either in addition to their profession or as an auxiliary service, i.e. as a part-time job. Frequently managers and experts work in enterprises which organise training activities for employees in the company.
- *Trainers – volunteers*: They are employed by non-profit organisations and carry out useful public activities on a voluntary basis.

Both instructors and CVET trainers are affected by the national VET policy and international trends. The implementation of strategies for the development of VET (IVET and CVET) may have significant effects on the work of trainers.

VET policy in the Czech Republic

According to the National Programme of Development of Education System and the following Long-Term Plan of Education and Development of Education System in 2002 new priorities, strategies and policies for the development of VET have been elaborated and are being implemented. In addition, several other documents are concerned with enhancing and improving continuing vocational training such as:

- The National Employment Action Plans (NEAPs);
- The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion for 2004-2006;
- The National Programme concerned with Preparation for Population Ageing for 2003-2007;
- State Information and Communication Policy – e-Cesko 2006.

Based on these documents several strategies are developed in order to enhance the development of CVET. On the practical side, the implementation often only slowly progresses. Reforms concern:

- *Reform of curricula*
- Developing key competences (e.g. ICT, language skills, communication skills) has become a major requirement in education and training. In order to respond to the demands of the labour market a curricula reform has been started.
- *Reform of final vocational examinations*
- New standards for final examinations leading to a vocational certificate (ISCED 3C) will be established. The development of standardised examination contents and implementation of evaluation standards are crucial points in this reform. The new final exams will be tested on a pilot basis by the end of 2008.
- *Lifelong Learning*
- Continuing vocational training has increased substantially during the 1990s and after 2000. Despite growing CVET activities in the last years the CR has not yet reached the CVET participation rate of 12.5 per cent stipulated by the European Union. According to EUROSTAT in 2006 only 5.6 per cent of the population aged between 25 and 64 years participated in continuing training activities within the last four weeks before the survey.

Since CVET is not properly regulated by law, proposals are being prepared for realising an act on CVET. Implementation of lifelong learning and recognition of non-formal and informal learning is enhanced through the development of methods and instruments for verification and recognition of informally acquired competences.

Major strategies to foster the position and qualification of VET trainers are defined in the "Strategy of Human Resources Development for the Czech Republic" (Prague, 2003) which includes the following aspects:

- Standardised certification of tutors, educational programmes and institutions to enhance the quality of adult training and guarantee minimum competences and skills levels.
- Support trainers in the e-learning process which includes the development of new ICT programmes and effective teaching methods in order to facilitate further training and self-directed learning of trainers.

2. Organisation

Through the socio-economic change after 1989 state-led regulation gradually ceased and market mechanisms based on the supply of and demand for education began to predominate. This change also affected the role of trainers. Due to the transformation international and market-oriented educational institutions were set up and profit and non-profit organisations appeared on the domestic market. However, since 1990 legislation has not changed significantly and there is still a lack of legal regulations in many aspects. Retraining is regulated by parts of the *Employment Act* and legal definitions and guidelines for in-company training are found in the *Labour Code*, but no law regulates the role and position of trainers in adult training and the system of training.

Organisation of IVET training in companies

The practical training for pupils attending secondary vocational schools takes place in companies. Instructors are employees of a company who provide practical training based on a contract between the school, company and instructor. Requirements for becoming an instructor are not legally defined. As there is no tradition of apprenticeship training IVET trainers in companies typically have completed a particular school level and have a formal qualification. As the education level of instructors may vary strongly the qualification of trainers in companies mainly depend on their schooling background and practical experience. Since also the pedagogical training of instructors is not regulated by law the quality of their pedagogical competences vary and for large part depend on individual ambitions and commitment apart from company guidelines. Pedagogical courses are provided by schools and are accredited by the MoEYS.

Organisation of CVET training in companies

Except for specific training of employees in certain occupations or industries CVET generally is not regulated by law. In healthcare, energy, public administration, transport and interior and defence training is legally regulated. These regulations are binding for all employees. Ministerial training institutes carry out training and assume several training functions such as the development of study plans and the organisation of courses. The training institutes within the administrative areas of certain ministries provide specialised trainings for employees. The organisation of these training units varies from ministry to ministry. Concerning access requirements mostly there are no prior education certificates requested except for some specific professions or the training of staff within the administration of ministries.

Companies typically decide upon the training of their employees. Most training activities are outsourced and organised by external training institutions; only very little training is provided by company-owned training facilities. These are designed to meet the company's training needs and to fulfil legal requirements and company guidelines. Certificates acquired in the framework of in-company training are only recognised by the respective company.

Since 1996 the social partners, especially the Confederation of Industry of the CR, the Economic Chamber of the CR and the Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions have been involved in CVET issues. Their activities aim at changing financial aspects of training in order to encourage enterprises to provide more training for their employees and to become more involved in IVET and the school-system. However, the role of the social partners is limited as they are not real decision makers but rather active players in the consultation process. As far as consultative functions are concerned also the Government Council for Human Resources Development which was set up in 2003 plays an important role. This body assumes initiation and coordination tasks in HRD.

In 2004 a draft act on CVET was elaborated and followed by some concrete propositions. At the moment there is no clear information about the present status of this initiative. The legal regulations that currently affect CVET in companies are:

- Labour Code
- Act on employment
- Decree on retraining of job seekers and employees
- Act on investment incentives
- Act on pedagogical staff
- Act on technical standards
- Act on state expert supervision
- Act on the conditions concerning the acquisition and recognition of professional and specialised competences to perform the occupation of physician, dentist and pharmacist
- Act on trades

3. Economy

Financing of IVET training in companies

Secondary vocational and technical schools which offer practical training in companies are mainly publicly financed. The largest proportion of the financing is borne by the regions which are responsible for the administration of the majority of secondary and higher professional schools as well. Decentralisation of public administration was introduced in 2001 and, according to this reform, responsibilities for secondary and higher vocational schools were delegated to the regions.

Public expenditure on education increased by 10 per cent between 1997 and 2002. Expenditures on secondary vocational education rose by 1.6 per cent compared to 27 per cent for tertiary education. Existing data on the financing of IVET training, i.e. practical training in companies is very vague. The Thematic Overview of CEDEFOP states that IVET trainers are remunerated for their work. However, no data can be found on whether there are incentives for companies arranging work placements for students, pupils are paid for their work at the company or if enterprises receive supported financing by the state budget.

Financing of CVET training in companies

Continuing vocational training in enterprises is not funded publicly but by the employer. Provided that the training meets the company's needs, the employer finances the training activities of employees by covering the necessary fees and granting the employee paid leave. The employer may also agree on a co-funding scheme with the employee. It can be assumed that financing of training of CVET trainers in companies follows similar rules although there is no precise information.

No regulations exist to stipulate the level of expenditures for continuing training except in the case of mandatory training requirements for employees in certain professions. No nationwide financial incentives or benefits encourage employers to support the continuing training of their employees. However, it is planned to provide some financial support for enterprises in the future. At the moment companies may subsume their training costs under their deductible costs or receive a contribution from the labour office for organising the retraining of their employees. These present investment incentives are targeted at large investors who are granted a subsidy for training or retraining of employees (at most 35 per cent of their training costs). Small investors may receive a similar subsidy of a maximum of EUR 1,000 per employee participating in training or retraining activities if

those support the creation of new jobs in regions with high unemployment rates. There is no data about how much money is allocated for the training of trainers.

Although financial incentives for training are underdeveloped in the CR, the Second Vocational Training Survey (CVTS 2) shows that high costs for continuing vocational training activities do not keep companies from providing CVET for their employees. According to a survey in 2002 that focused on training in companies over 70 per cent of 248 companies organised training for their employees and 40 per cent offered financial support even if the training activity was outside the scope required by the employer.

CVTS 2 also showed that in 1999 the overall budget Czech companies allocated to the training of employees accounted for 1.9 per cent of the total labour costs (the EU-15 average being 2.3 per cent). These percentages only include direct training costs. Looking at different branches the largest budget was recorded for the electricity, gas and water sector (5.8 per cent). This is partly due to the fact that in this sector companies have to follow compulsory CVET activities as legal regulations require training for certain professional groups. The lowest budget was found in mining, woodworking and furniture manufacturing, textile and leather. The smallest companies spent the least resources whereas the largest share referred to medium-sized companies. Differences were noted also in terms of company ownership in that foreign-owned enterprises spent more money on training than Czech companies.

4. Selection and allocation of trainers

Selection and allocation of IVET trainers in companies

Instructors train students of secondary vocational schools in companies. They are employed by the company. Instructor is not a profession but a training role. The recruitment of instructors is done by the employing company according to company guidelines and the cooperation between vocational school and the company. Schools often make use of informal procedures to look for suitable instructors.

In the school year 2003/04 there were 5,720 instructors in the Czech Republic. No data is available on their age, gender, distribution across different sectors and whether this number meets or does not meet the current demand. Also for CVET trainers this information is not available.

As the pre-service training of instructors is not formally regulated the instructor cannot be regarded as a profession, but is rather a role taken on by a worker in a company who has a contract with a school. The qualification needed to carry out this role is not defined or specified. Instructors optionally may attend pedagogical courses provided by some schools but these activities are neither assessed nor documented. The structure and content of these courses comprises basic pedagogical and psychological skills and knowledge. Overall, the instructor may be a person who has completed a vocational qualification. Although the possibilities for the recognition of non-formally and informally acquired competences have been improved they are still not used very much by instructors.

Selection and allocation of CVET trainers in companies

No characteristic pattern or structure predominates as concerns the recruitment of employees, managers and experts as CVET trainers in companies. The results of the EUROTRAINER study show that they may be recruited either internally or externally.

CVET trainers in companies are usually employees of a company who assume training functions. According to the EUROTRAINER target group and the classification of CVET trainers found in several existing papers CVET trainers in companies either are employees, managers or experts who take on training functions. Mostly they are full-time employees who carry out training tasks part-time. This means that CVET trainers perform a certain job and in addition they are in charge of training employees.

Similarly to the instructors no formal qualification and professional standards exist for CVET trainers in companies. Thus companies define their own requirements which may differ significantly from enterprise to enterprise. Only CVET trainers who are self-employed need a trade certificate as a formal requirement for carrying out training tasks. Similar to the instructors CVET trainers often have acquired a school leaving certificate and a vocational qualification. Since there are no legal and uniform regulations for the qualification of CVET trainers, informal learning plays an important role. The Czech Republic is currently concerned with enhancing the possibilities for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes (see 7. Innovation).

CVET activities of Czech enterprises – results of CVTS 2

According to CVTS 2 in 1999 (Second Continuing Vocational Training Survey) 67 per cent of 31,529 Czech enterprises provided some kind of CVET activities for their employees referring to various forms of training at the workplace or another place. Compared to the other nine candidate countries which entered the European Union in 2004 the CR had highest percentage. Companies not providing training to their employees stated that the skills of their employees were sufficient. Only 14 per cent of all companies not supporting training stated that the high training costs were the main reason.

Big differences can be noted among the different sectors. The electricity, gas and water industry (90 per cent), manufacturing transport vehicles (87.9 per cent), finance and insurance (85.6 per cent), post and telecommunications (81.3 per cent) recorded the largest proportions of companies providing CVET. Companies with little CVET activities were found in catering and accommodation (45.8 per cent), woodwork, furniture manufacturing and the waste industry (50.9 per cent), retail and consumer goods repairs (57.2 per cent) and the textile, clothing and leather industry (59.4 per cent). Those sectoral differences are due to different intensities of innovation, varying levels of financial support for training and diverse proportions of mandatory and non-mandatory training according to special regulations.

Like in many other European countries larger companies are more engaged in providing CVET to their employees than smaller enterprises. Concerning the forms of training 61 per cent of the Czech companies provided in-service-training via training courses, while 59 per cent used other forms (e.g. on-the-job training, job rotation, self-learning). External courses (94 per cent) are far more often used than internal courses (37 per cent).

In terms of cost the CR spent 1.13 per cent of the total labour costs on training of employees. Training expenditures were especially high in the electricity, gas and water industry as well as in the finance and insurance sector.

5. Qualification

Qualification of IVET trainers in companies

There are no legal regulations for the pedagogical training of instructors, i.e. their qualification level is not defined by law. However, a non-regulation of the qualification does not imply that no qualification is needed. The selection of instructors depends on the agreement between the relevant vocational school and the company. Schools usually use informal procedures to recruit practical instructors.

Although legal qualification standards mostly do not apply instructors have the opportunity to acquire the necessary trainer skills and competences by attending short courses. These are forty-hour courses which focus on psychological and pedagogical issues. The courses are provided by schools and the contents are approved by the Ministry of Education, Youths and Sports (MoEYS).

Whereas for CVET there are two specialised institutions which train, assess and accredit the qualifications of CVET trainers, there are no equivalent institutions for instructors. The only quality monitoring mechanism is through VET teachers of vocational schools who have signed a practical training contract with the enterprises. Instructors are obliged by the employing company to follow continuing training activities. However, this obligation only refers to their subject-specific qualification but not to their training tasks. Thus, instructors have to update their professional skills and competences but enhancing their pedagogical and didactic knowledge is only on a voluntary basis.

As formal qualification standards do not exist, the development of opportunities for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning becomes increasingly important for instructors.

Qualification of CVET trainers in companies

Similar to IVET also CVET in companies does not relate to specific regulations, although the area of CVET trainers can be regarded as partly defined by law through the Trade Act. However, since legislative regulations for trainers are largely underdeveloped also the training of trainers in CVET is not consistently required.

Although CVET trainers belong to the group of non-regulated professions which are not required to possess specific qualification levels, some basic requirements must still be fulfilled. CVET trainers mostly are expected to have completed higher levels of education and have some practical experience in adult education. Unfortunately there is no data available on the concrete structure of these requirements which are mostly defined by the companies.

Continuing training and professional development of CVET trainers is determined by the framework of the educational market. In-service-training for CVET trainers is offered by several institutions. How much continuing training is pursued depends on the individual trainer and on his/her commitment to learning and updating of knowledge. Various programmes aim to enhance CVET trainers' vocational and training skills and competences. An institution which offers such training programmes for CVET trainers is the Association of Adult Education Institutions (AIVD). They train trainers in subjects like socio-economic and psychological basics of adult education, methodology, assessment, new technology, and presentation and communication. Other training courses offer coaching or supervision or rhetoric and presentation techniques.

In the Czech Republic knowledge and skills acquired in CVET generally are not evaluated or certified within an integrated system. Participants of CVET courses usually receive a course attendance certificate some of which are recognised (e.g. formal IVET qualifications acquired within CVET, compulsory CVET in certain professions). The

certification of CVET trainers is under constant development. Currently, CVET trainers have the opportunity to acquire a certificate which certifies their training qualifications. Two special institutions issue these certificates: the Association of Adult Education Providers (AIVD) offers trainer courses combining regular with distant learning and training. Regarding management trainers the Association of Management Trainers and Consultants (ATKM) is the relevant training institution.

6. Integration

Social recognition of IVET and CVET trainers in companies

According to the EUROTRAINER study results the recognition of the work of both IVET and CVET trainers in society is rather modest. This may be due to the lack of qualification and professional standards. The work of trainers probably would be better socially recognised if there were suited legal definitions and regulations. Both IVET and CVET trainers do not have to comply with standardised requirements in order to become a trainer. Furthermore, the further training of trainers is as unregulated as pre-service training. Certificates that are acquired within CVET, i.e. outside the formal school system, are not recognised. No transparent national system of qualifications can facilitate the recognition knowledge, skills and competences acquired via informal learning.

The CR is aiming to improve this situation by identifying the characteristics of appropriate basic education as well as the requirements of vocational education. The Integrated System of Typical Working Positions (ISTP) contains information about occupations, which is used as a basis for the creation of a national system of qualifications. Further developments will also include information about CVET, creating linkages between IVET and CVET and establishing an integrated qualifications system. (see also 7. Innovation). At the moment, only the following educational outcomes are recognised at national level:

- The outputs of formal IVET and IVET qualifications acquired within the framework of adult training provided by schools;
- The outputs of 'normative' education as professional updates or prerequisites for certain activities (e.g. driving licence, welding licence, judicial licence);
- The outputs of accredited retraining courses for jobseekers.

Social integration of IVET and CVET trainers in companies

The EUROTRAINER survey identified two main groups of cooperation partners relevant for trainers. Trainers hold close contact with other trainers in the company as well as with management. Particularly instructors who train students cooperate with teachers of vocational schools. There seem to be no contacts to social partners, trade unions, labour offices or economic chambers.

Unemployment rates of trainers are not statistically monitored. As both IVET and CVET trainers in companies carry out training functions in addition to their normal job, unemployment probably does not depend on the trainer status but on specific sectors with high or little unemployment and other general economic trends. Thus general unemployment trends also affect the group of VET trainers.

7. Innovation

Research on trainers in companies is largely underdeveloped in the Czech Republic. This topic is only touched by more general projects like lifelong learning studies or new VET system approaches. Therefore mainly overall aspects that affect VET trainers are pointed out in the following data collection.

In recent years – especially since the accession to the European Union in 2004 – the Czech Republic has increased VET development activities in order to enhance competitiveness and the quality of the national VET system. Thus innovative activities strongly refer to the enhancement of quality standards.

Innovative organisations and networks

Innovation strongly depends on the actors involved. Apart from several ministries in the CR vocational education and training is determined by specialised research and development institutes. The most important ones are listed below.

- *National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education – NUOV*
NUOV is concerned with research in VET on the secondary and higher level, development of curricula and labour market analysis. Furthermore the institute is establishing a National Qualifications System (National Register of Qualifications) in order to realise transparency of qualifications and to assure quality in education.
- *National Training Fund (NTF)*
The key tasks of the NTF include the preparation of drafts, strategies and analytical documents for reforms in the area of human resources development. NTF deals with a wide range of themes and projects among which lifelong learning plays an important role.
- *National Observatory of Employment and Training*
The National Observatory of Employment and Training was set up by the European Training Foundation (ETF) in Turin as an analytical section of the NTF which carries out research and development work in the area of human resources development, CVET etc. Since 2004 the National Observatory has been the coordinator of the National Consortium of the ReferNetwork.

At the moment the Czech Republic is implementing the Human Resources Development Strategy. The establishment of national and international networks is one of the measures towards the implementation of an HRD strategy and a milestone with crucial impact on continuing vocational education and training. The CR has set up a successful cooperation system which included cooperation partners like the National Observatory of Employment and Training, the Research Centre for Competitiveness of the Czech Economy and CEDEFOP (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training). Since June 2004 the Czech Republic is part of the European international expert network ReferNet and disseminates CEDEFOP publications to the National Consortium of ReferNet.

Quality assurance of IVET training in companies

There are no institutions which assess or award the work of instructors, i.e. the assessment of instructors has no formal framework but is informally carried out by the contracting vocational schools. As instructors are employed by a company and cooperate with secondary vocational schools for the training period an informal quality monitoring system has been established. Most schools monitor efficiency and quality of instructors by VET teachers at these schools. Unfortunately there is no further documentation about these activities.

The renewal of the national apprenticeship training system (referring to the two- or three year programmes of secondary vocational schools) has become a major concern due to growing demands at the labour market. The new system shall foster the integration of private companies which should ensure more practical training. It will be introduced presumably in 2009 and affect 300,000 young people.

In addition, the **attractiveness of IVET training** shall also be improved. The status of IVET is low partly because of the ineffective cooperation between vocational schools and enterprises in assessing VET outcomes. Students only partly become acquainted with the real working environment. Overall IVET is only adjusted slowly to emerging labour market demands. As schools are not obliged to organise work placements approximately 65 per cent of students in vocational programmes do not complete their practical training in a company, but practical training often takes place in facilities that are part of the school. The situation is somewhat better in secondary technical schools. They are more active in arranging work placements for their students and 92 per cent of students undergo practical training in a company. Nevertheless, work placements are often too short given the fact that 29 per cent of students spend at most three weeks in a company. The new legislation may provide a more favourable framework for enhancing practical training in companies.

Employers' evaluation of the skills of school leavers in the study MEDIAN – NOZV from 2002 has shown that individuals with vocational qualification without final school leaving exam (maturita) have deficits in the following competence areas:

- Language competences
- Computer skills
- Willingness to work overtime and flexible working hours
- Reliability and accuracy
- Honesty
- Integrity and loyalty.

These results may be a good starting point for improvements not only for teaching in schools but also for practical training in companies and the training of instructors.

Quality assurance of CVET training in companies

In the Czech Republic there are no common criteria for the evaluation of CVET trainers and thus quality assessment mainly follows internal standards of training institutions and companies. The developments during the last decade have led to the set up of several accreditation and evaluation institutions to establish a **quality monitoring system**. Although the focus lies on the accreditation of training institutions and their trainers, the opportunity for quality evaluation is open also to CVET trainers employed by companies.

In the course of reforming the public administration extensive educational programmes are being implemented for different group of clerks. Trainers in public administration are being assessed according to the following criteria: highest attained education, practical experience in the last 10 years and trainers' certifications.

The EUROTRAINER study also revealed some trends in evaluation and quality assurance of VET training. Typical instruments that companies apply for the evaluation of VET training are feedback reports, interviews with supervisors and cost-efficiency analysis. Furthermore, employees' satisfaction, reliability and validity of training contents are regarded as indicators for successful VET training.

Innovative R&D projects in VET

According to the ERO National Research Report 2006 and several other documents no research is available that particularly focuses on trainers in companies. However, the topic is sometimes addressed in various existing projects. As trainers are influenced by general changes of the vocational education and training system selected projects are listed below to provide an overview about present VET research in the CR.

- ***Towards a Lifelong Learning Society in Europe: The Contribution of the Education System – LLL 2010***

In 2005 NTF joined a five-year international research project focusing on adult education within the system of lifelong learning. The project aims at analysing existing policies, approaches and tensions in lifelong learning of adults in various European countries.

- ***Central European Initiative (CEI)***

The CEI was founded in 1989 as a regional forum of 17 countries with the focus on cooperation and its development among EU member states and countries which are in the process of becoming a member of the European Union. The forum currently comprises 18 working groups, one of which is engaged in HRD and CVET.

- ***ReferNet***

In the framework of the European “ReferNet Czech Republic” national and international publications are disseminated (see <http://www.refernet.cz/publications.htm>).

- ***Train SME – Innovative Vocational Training Approaches in Small and Micro Enterprises***

The project’s target is to improve VET-systems in small and micro enterprises through the provision of innovative and simple instruments for identifying training needs. The CR is a partner in this project (see www.trainsme.net).

- ***Recognition of informal and non-formal learning***

The Czech Republic is concerned with developing a validation system for non-formal and informal learning outcomes. As the trainer qualification is not formally regulated in the CR validation of informally and non-formally acquired competences plays an important role also for IVET and CVET trainers.

- ***Implementation of lifelong learning and recognition of non-formal and informal learning***

LLL is enhanced through the development of useful methods and instruments for verification and recognition of informally acquired competences.

- ***Analysing and forecasting labour market qualification needs***

- ***Human resources development and CVET analysis***

Research is carried out in these fields in order to improve the quality of human resources, enhancing institutional and systematic conditions in CVET in terms of quality assurance, recognition of learning outcomes etc.

- ***National System of Qualifications***

Qualification and evaluation standards are important quality measures which are expressed by a set of required competences and criteria and means for the evaluation of particular qualifications. The Czech Republic aims at enhancing these standards by encouraging the general recognition of qualifications. Therefore concrete operational programmes funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), which include precise action plans for the implementation of suitable recognition instruments, have been launched.

The **Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2004-2006** aims at establishing a National System of Qualifications by March 2008 on the basis of the Act on Recognition of Qualifications issued in March 2006. The law stipulates the elaboration of a National Register of Qualifications which serves as a register of recognised qualifications providing definitions of occupations and qualification requirements. The system is to be developed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs elaborating definitions of occupations and by the Ministry of Education, Youths and Sports focussing on defining qualification requirements. The register will comprise the following data on complete qualifications (IVET):

Extract of the Act on Verification and Recognition of Further Education Results:

- a) *the name and number ('the code') of a complete qualification;*
- b) *determination of the profession or professions which the relevant complete qualification relates to;*
- c) *in the event of a complete qualification broken down into partial qualifications, the list of all partial qualifications the attainment of which is a precondition for attaining the complete qualification ...*
- d) *evidence or a combination of evidence confirming attainment of the relevant complete qualification.*

The definitions shall be worked out in cooperation with sectoral councils and representatives of employers. Ministries will award the authorisations in their sectors and assess the definitions of the qualifications while individuals are entitled to organise exams and award certificates. The main coordination of the project and the final approval of the qualifications is taken over by the Ministry of Education, Youths and Sports (MoEYS). The register shall be maintained and published by the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education (NUOV) and include besides complete qualifications also partial qualifications (LLL) in order to meet the demands of the labour market. The National Register of Qualifications considers IVET as well as CVET. IVET qualifications relate to complete qualifications whereas partial qualifications concern continuing training and lifelong learning. Complete qualifications correspond to a particular education and the ability to perform a specific occupation. Partial qualifications refer to the ability to perform specific activities in the labour market.

Extract of the Act on Verification and Recognition of Further Education Results:

...

- c) *complete qualifications shall mean professional qualifications of a natural person to duly perform all work activities pertaining to a relevant profession;*
- d) *partial qualifications shall mean professional qualifications of a natural person to duly perform a certain work activity or a set of work activities in a relevant profession or in two or more professions respectively, in the scope defined in a qualification standard;*

Good practice examples of VET in companies

1. A good practice example for IVET training is **Skoda Auto**, a company of the automobile industry or Trinecké ocelárny steelworks. The enterprise holds close contacts with vocational schools and assure high training quality.
2. The training institutes within the administrative areas of **certain ministries** provide specialised trainings for their employees. The organisation of these training units varies from ministry to ministry. The public administration institutes offer mandatory training courses for civil servants and training for officers in regional and local

administrative bodies at central level. The Pedagogical Centre Prague which belongs to the Ministry of Education, Youths and Sports provides training for pedagogical staff especially at basic and secondary school level. Furthermore there are training centres specialised for training in energy, transport, etc.

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CZECH REPUBLIC: Expert Interview

Expert 1: Key role in the TTnet network in the Czech Republic

1. Identify major issues / key challenges in a national perspective

Can you identify 3 major issues or big challenges that in-company trainers in your country face at the moment?

- *Improving the position of educational staff as a socio-professional group through improving the professionalization of their work;*
- *Establishment of an assessment or quality monitoring system;*
- *Extension of the used work methods.*

2. Common issues that may be of relevance across Europe in a national perspective

- Staff shortages of trainers and remedies
We have no signals of staff shortages, but we know that a lot of in-company trainers are not fully qualified. But in CR there are no defined qualification requirements and education programmes for the in-company trainers do not exist.
- Aging workforce – how is knowledge transferred to younger workers?
I don't know.
- Professionalisation of in-company trainers - Opportunities and motivation for continuing learning.
It is up to the company, the solutions of the motivation are varied.
- How do trainers cope with the accelerated pace of innovation?
There is not done any research in CR.
- How are trainers being prepared to implement new learning methods?
There is not done any research in CR.
- How are they being prepared to manage the diversification of trainee groups?
There is not done any research in CR.
- How and to what extent are trainers organised in professional bodies/associations?
The association exists (Association of Management Trainers and Consultants, web: <http://www.atkm.cz/n/>), but I have no information about the number of the participants of this association.
- How is the prior learning of trainers being accredited?
In the CR a system of the accreditation of prior learning does not yet exist. The new Act on Verification and Recognition of Further Education Results and on the Amendment to Some Other Acts (the Act on the Recognition of Further Education Results) No. 179/2006 will come into force on 1st August 2007.
- Status and attractiveness of the job
According to my opinion the job is attractive and it is at the level of middle management.

- Formal regulations / de-regulation
Do not exist.

- Recognition - self-recognition / awareness of being a trainer
I do not know.

- Recognition at the policy level (to support trainers)

In the CR different projects are financed from EU funds and from CR state budget. For example: Pomáháme lidem učit se - Rozvoj pokročilých dovedností trenérů a konzultantů managementu a personálu, zvláště ve strojírenské a stavební výrobě, se zaměřením na malé a střední podniky. (We help people to learn);

Pomáháme trenérům a konzultantům učit se - Rozvoj pokročilých dovedností trenérů a konzultantů managementu a personálu, zvláště se zaměřením na malé a střední podniky MSK (We help trainers and consultants to learn);

INTERNÍ TRENÉŘI - klíč k úspěchu malé firmy (In-company trainers – the key to the success of the small firm); web: <http://www.aivd.cz/show.php?page=1>

INOVAČNÍ CENTRUM PRO ROZVOJ DALŠÍHO PROFESNÍHO VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ (Innovation centre for the development of the further professional education); web: <http://www.aivd.cz/show.php?page=2>

- Recognition of competences and experiences
It is only done on the employer's level.

- Career of trainers (how do people become trainers – what are the effects of becoming a trainer on the career? Different career models / paths/ ways
A lot of these people have tertiary education, but the pathways are individual.

3 Good practice examples

Do you know of any initiatives or approaches that you would identify as a 'good practice example', maybe in relation how a company or a specific sector tries to account for the changing role and training needs of trainers?

I do not know, this area is not mapped in the CR.

4 Future trends

How do you see the evolving role of trainers in enterprises?

Discuss maybe those issues or some of them where this is of interest to the study

In practice, training of groups is becoming less common while training is more and more individualised. The need for training of the management, caring and service sector professions and people who work with the clients is increasing.