The Situation of Children and Young People at the Regional Level in the Czech Republic

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1. Introduction

The Czech Republic is now divided into 14 territorial-administrative units at NUTS level 3 (regions) and 79 units at NUTS level 4 (districts). This structure is relatively new (since 2001); previously, i.e. throughout the 1990’s, the Czech Republic was divided into 8 regions, whereas the number of districts was the same as now. The change in territorial-administrative structure was guided by desire to bring decision-making processes closer to the population and to achieve savings (districts have today no administrative apparatus, which is at the level of regions and individual municipalities). At NUTS level 5 are municipalities – roughly 6 200 in total in the Czech Republic. Municipalities have only minimum apparatus (mayor and councillors), which in small municipalities work part-time at the most.

In January 2003, new „Administrative Districts of Municipalities with Extended Powers“ (205) were established – from European perspective they can be classified as local units (1).

### Selected data on the CR and its regions (in 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of region</th>
<th>Area (km²)</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Number of municipalities</th>
<th>Number of municipalities with town statute</th>
<th>Share of population in municipalities with 2000 and more inhabitants (%)</th>
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<td>5 535</td>
<td>1 262 660</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>85.1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(1) See Annex

2. Population and demographic change

Between 1993 and 2004 (as at 1 January), the population of the Czech Republic decreased by more than 1% (from 10 326 thousand to 10 211 thousand). At the sub-national level, population grew only in three regions. Quite insignificantly in Karlovarsky and Liberecky Regions and sizeably (by 2.3%, i.e. nearly 26 thousand) in the Stredocesky Region. The latter is caused, inter alia, by changes in the way of housing. People are leaving Prague (population shrank by more than 4%) for exurbs in the vicinity but outside Prague, which are located in the Stredocesky Region. In
the other regions, particularly in Moravia (i.e. Jihomoravsky, Olomoucky, Zlinsky and Moravskoslezsky Regions and partially also the Vysočina Region), population decreased.

As regards structural changes, female population dropped more (-1.4%) than male population (-0.8%); in the reference period, life expectancy of men extended by 3.3 years and of women by only 2.2 years.

The children population (up to the age of 17) fell dramatically – by more than a quarter. At the level of regions, the decrease is highest in Prague and lowest in the Stredocesky Region. On the other hand, elderly population (65+) grew considerably (+7.1%). This applied to all regions except for Prague (-3%), in particular to Karlovarsky, Zlinsky and Moravskoslezsky Regions. The relation between increase of elderly citizens and decrease of young people shows that Karlovarsky, Zlinsky and Moravskoslezsky Regions are ageing fastest. On the other hand, Stredocesky, Liberecky, Ustecky, Prague and Kralovehradecky Regions are ageing slowest.

Also the size of working-age population develops unfavourably and dropped by 4.5% in the reference period. This population shrank most in Moravskoslezsky, Pardubicky, Vysocina and Prague Regions. Conversely, lowest decreases were recorded in Stredocesky, Kralovehradecky, Plzensky and Jihocesky Regions.

(1) For actual territorial division of the CR see the map in appendix.

As regards the urbanisation level, a decrease of one percentage point (from 74.8% to 73.8%) was reported for the Czech Republic. Urbanisation level went up only in the Stredocesky Region (yet the population of large towns fell there too). On the other hand, urbanisation rate decreased most in Liberecky, Jihomoravsky, Zlinsky and Moravskoslezsky Regions.

Fertility rate in the CR dropped from 1.67 to 1.18 in the period in question. Lowest decreases took place in Prague, Ustecky (with the highest birth rate), Stredocesky and Karlovarsky Regions, highest in Vysocina, Jihomoravsky, Pardubicky and Zlinsky (with the lowest birth rate) Regions.

Life expectancy of men extended by 3.3 years between 1993 and 2003. The longest is in Prague, Kralovehradecky and Vysocina Regions. Karlovarsky, Stredocesky, Jihocesky and Kralovehradecky Regions report highest increases.

The shortest life expectancy is in the Ustecky Region (69.7 years), where it grew least (+2.7 years).

Life expectancy of women grew by 2.2 years and reached 78.5 years. Women live longest in Jihomoravsky (79.3 years), Vysocina, Prague and Zlinsky Regions. Karlovarsky, Plzensky and Stredocesky Regions reported highest increases in the reference period. On the other hand, life expectancy was shortest in the Ustecky Region. Vysocina, Kralovehradecky and Ustecky Regions recorded lowest increases, compared to 1993.

Crude birth rate dropped by 2.5 percentage points in the reference period; least in Prague (-0.8 p.p.) and most in the Vysocina Region. It found its peak in the Ustecky Region (10.2 p.p.) and bottom in the Zlinsky Region (8.7 p.p.).

Crude death rate fell by 0.5 p.p. to the level of 10.9 p.p. The highest drop was in the Stredocesky Region, lowest (by 0.1 p.p.) in Zlinsky and Ustecky Regions. The Moravskoslezsky Region reported even a 0.1 p.p. increase. The lowest rate was recorded for the Karlovarsky Region (10.2 p.p.).

The rate of natural increase went down from 0.3 to -1.7 in total at the national level. The lowest is in Prague (-3.0) and relatively highest in the Karlovarsky Region.

Very high dynamics were reported for divorce rate. It grew by 46.5%, compared with 1993, most in Zlinsky and Moravskoslezsky Regions, and least in Prague (where it is lower than the average). Maximum levels were in Karlovarsky and Ustecky Regions, minimum in the Vysocina Region (52.2%). To be able to consider tendencies in this area in a comprehensive way, we should
know more about consensual unions (which are becoming considerably more numerous over last years).

In 2003, just like ten years earlier, net migration balance was active (growing from 5,476 to 25,789). The highest was in Stredocesky and Prague Regions, but Moravskoslezsky, Pardubicky and Zlinsky Regions reported negative figures, i.e. emigration was higher than immigration. The highest numbers of persons coming in and going out was reported in both 1993 and 2003 for Prague, which was followed by Stredocesky and Jihomoravsky Regions.

Below are other items of information concerning the demographic situation.

DIFFERENCES IN FAMILY SIZE AMONG THE REGIONS

- The family size in the CR is on the decrease. There are two underlying reasons for this: (i) the number of one-parent families is growing, and (ii) the number of children in families is falling. As a result, the average number of persons per family dropped by 0.15 between 1991 and 2001. In general, larger families are in regions with higher shares of population declaring religion. The biggest families are, therefore, in Vysocina and Zlinsky Regions, and also in the other regions of Moravia, than in the regions of Bohemia (smallest families are in Prague, Karlovarsky and Ustecky Regions).

- Similar relations hold for the shares of one-parent families in the total number of families, lowest being in Vysocina (15.2%), Pardubicky (16.9%) and Zlinsky (17.0%) Regions; this share exceeded 20% in four regions – Liberecky (20.8%), Ustecky (21.1%), Karlovarsky (24.1%), being highest in Prague (27.4%, i.e. more than one family in four is one-parent family).

ETHNIC STRUCTURE

- The ethnic structure of the population saw no significant changes since 1950. In view of the territorial distribution of ethnic minorities, the structure is historically established. The proportion of persons of other than Czech nationality ranged between 5 and 6%, of which more than half were citizens of Slovak nationality (as a result of being together in one state). Their numbers increased up to 1980, and has been falling since. Persons of Slovak nationality live in all the regions, but they are more represented in Karlovarsky (4.6%) and Ustecky (2.7%) Regions, as a result of the populating of the Czech border regions after World War II. A high share of Slovaks is in the Moravskoslezsky Region (3.4%), where they in most cases found jobs in the 1960s and remained.

- Polish ethnic minority is concentrated in the north Moravian districts of Frydek-Mistek and Karvina (persons of Polish nationality account for 3.1% of the total population of the Moravskoslezsky Region). Highest shares of persons of German nationality are in the border districts of west Bohemia (mainly in the Karlovarsky Region – 2.9% of the population and in the Ustecky Region – 1.2%).

- The above-mentioned shows that Karlovarsky, Ustecky and Moravskoslezsky Regions have the highest proportions of persons of other than Czech nationality; on the other hand, lowest shares of these persons are in the central part of the republic – in Vysocina and Pardubicky Regions.

CHILDREN WITH MOTHER TONGUE OTHER THAN CZECH

- These data were not processed for 1991, so that differences cannot be compared in time. Census 2001 defined mother tongue as the tongue which respondent, as a child, was talked to by his/her mother or upbringing persons. The Czech language as mother tongue was given for an overwhelming majority of children aged 0-14, a mere 1.6% children had a different mother
tongue. On top of the regions with the highest proportions of persons of other than Czech nationality (Karlovarsky and Moravskoslezsky Regions with 3.0% of children having mother tongue other than Czech), this share was highest in Prague (3.3% of children). In most of the regions these shares were 1-2%, only Vysocina, Pardubicky and Zlinsky Regions reported less than 1%.

- The number of children (up to 14 years) of other than Czech nationality was slightly higher than the number of children with other mother tongue than Czech. These numbers were similar in most regions, the most marked differences were in Karlovarsky (the number of children of other than Czech nationality is by 45% higher than the number of children with other mother tongue than Czech) and Ustecky (the difference being 30%) Regions.

- The following facts apply in general to children up to 14 years in the Czech Republic:
  - number of children of Slovak nationality is by half higher than number of children with Slovak mother tongue,
  - number of children of German nationality is by more than twice as higher as number of children with German mother tongue,
  - number of children of Roma nationality is by a third lower than number of children with Roma mother tongue,
  - number of children of Russian nationality is by a third lower than number of children with Russian mother tongue.

**SETTLEMENT STRUCTURE**

- There were 6,249 municipalities in the CR in January 2004. More than 70% of inhabitants live in towns and cities (in Czech statistics defined as a municipalities with town status), the majority of municipalities have only 200-499 inhabitants (a quarter of municipalities are smaller than 200, and almost 80% of municipalities have population not exceeding 1,000). The CR belongs to a group of countries with the most atomised settlement structure in Europe (e.g. like France).
- Stredocesky and Vysocina Regions have predominantly a rural character (urban population do not exceed 50%).
- The most uneven settlement structure (measured as a proportion of population living in municipalities that are remarkably different in size from the average municipality on a given territory – in terms of population number) is typical of former industrial regions – Moravskoslezsky and Ustecky. On the other hand, the lowest concentration of population is in the Zlinsky Region.
- We are witnesses to shifts in population growth. In all regions (except for Prague and Zlinsky Regions), rural population is slightly increasing, the opposite tendency can be seen in large cities. More important role in recent regional population change was played by migration.
- During the 1990s, a significant change in the direction of migration streams occurred. The former migration loss in the smallest municipalities (below 500 inhabitants) has been replaced by gains. The opposite trend can be seen in many cities, which are losing population through migration. Small towns (1-3 thous. inhab.) represent today a settlement category with the highest relative migration growth (mainly due to the developing sub-urbanization process).

**DEMOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

- There exist important disparities in size among the 14 regions – four (Moravskoslezsky, Prague, Stredocesky and Jihomoravsky) have population above 1,000,000 (concentrating together 46% of CR population), the other regions are smaller – from ½ to ¼ of the biggest region.
Distinctiveness of the capital city can be easily illustrated by data describing the labour market, overall economic performance or state of the environment. The outstanding position of Prague in the field of demography and social structure is not so clearly developed.

The basis of the current regional demographic picture was laid decades ago (the urbanization process at the turn of 19th century, displacement of almost 3,000,000 of Germans from the Czech borderland after World War II and the subsequent resettlement, redistribution of population as well as jobs in the period of centrally planned economy).

The total population of the CR declined by 1.6% between 1990-2003. With the exception of the Stredocesky Region (increase by 1.4%, mainly due to sub-urbanization), it declined in all the regions, especially in Prague a Plzensky Regions (by 4.4% and 2.3%, respectively, due to unfavourable age structure) and also in Moravskoslezsky and Ustecky Regions (by 2.9% and 2.1%, respectively, mainly due to migration loss).

Foreigners (with permanent or long-term residence) still make up only 2.3% of the population (as to January 2003); ten years ago, it was about 0.5%. Among foreigners, the highest shares (by citizenship) form Slovaks (26%), Ukrainians (25%), Vietnamese (12%), Poles (7%) and Russians (6%). They all represent more than ¾ of all foreigners in the CR. They are located unevenly, they have the highest shares in population in Prague and Karlovarsky Regions (4-5%). Strongly spatially concentrated are Poles and Slovaks; on the other hand, Ukrainians are scattered relatively evenly.

Disparities in the total fertility rate (TFR) among regions are in fact very small. The sharp slump in fertility that occurred during the 1990s struck all regions with similar intensity (in 1991 TFR in the whole country was 1.86, in 2003 only 1.17). The lowest TFR in the late 1990s was recorded in Prague (1.06), the highest in Vysocina and Pardubicky Regions (1.21). When we analyse fertility structure, more significant regional disparities appear (e.g. average age of mother at childbirth, proportion of children born outside marriage).

Regional disparities in mortality are not sharp (but they are more significant than in the case of fertility). Disparities are historically based, they remained during the transformation period (in the 1990s). Both Prague and the districts on the Bohemian-Moravian borderland are typical of the highest life expectancy (for both men and women). Contrary to this, unfavourable situation remains in northwestern Bohemia (where short life expectancy and high infant mortality are influenced by social structure of the population, life style, as well as the state of the environment). The difference between regions with the highest and lowest figure is 2.5 years for women and almost 4 years for men.

Regions in northwest Bohemia (Karlovarsky, Ustecky and Liberecky) suffer from a high concentration of “social pathology“ (measured by high divorce, abortion, extramarital fertility or crime rates). The social structure of population was negatively affected by intensive (organized) labour migration during socialism (mainly in the 1950s and 1960s).

The volume of total internal migration dropped sharply during the 1st half of the 1990s, it did not change much since 1995 (in 1990 245 thou. people migrated to another municipality within the CR, in 2000 only 200 thou.). More rapid decline affected labour force migration, especially at longer distances (between regions). A gradual increase in regional disparities (wages, unemployment), as well as an increase in the number of municipalities (from 4 thou. to 6 thou.) did not prevent internal mobility from decline.

When regional migration is fixed at a relatively low level, commuting plays a more important role (as an equilibrium mechanism for spatial mismatch between jobs and housing). In 1991, 33% of employed persons commuted to work between municipalities, in 2001 it were 37%. Commuting at longer distances has grown more rapidly.
3. Regional economic disparities in the Czech Republic

The Czech Statistical Office (CZSO) has performed, since 2000, a regular monitoring of regional disparities in the Czech Republic. In the following section we try to summarize the key results (structured by selected domains) of regional monitoring:

PERFORMANCE OF REGIONAL ECONOMY

- Regional disparities in GDP per capita are mainly caused by the huge polarity between Prague and other regions. The dominant position of Prague is caused by series of subjective and objective factors. Among them, important role is played by a different employment structure as well as intensive commuting to work (mainly from the surrounding Stredocesky Region). Disparities among other regions (excluding Prague) are still relatively low.
- The dominant position of the capital city in GDP/inhab. (in 2002 2.3-times higher than the national average) is typical of the majority of European countries (especially transitive economies).
- Regional disparities in the CR are gradually increasing (in 1995, the most successful region had GDP/inhab. 2.4-times higher than the one lagging behind most, in 2002 this ratio was 3; another indicator says that the coefficient of variation (among 14 regions at NUTS level 3) increased by 50% between 1995 and 2002).
- When evaluating 13 regions (excluding Prague), we also see indications of growing disparities, but the diverging tendencies are not that clear (standard deviation between 1995 and 2002 increased by 30%, but the coefficient of variation has not changed significantly).
- The Olomoucky Region (since 1998) occupies the bottom position among regions (before 1998 the most lagging region in terms of GDP/inhab. was the Stredocesky Region).
- When we compare GDP/inhab. with the national average, position of many regions is gradually getting worse. Only Prague and Stredocesky Regions are getting relatively richer. In addition, only small decreases (1995-2002) took place in Jihocesky, Kralovehradecky, Liberecky and Jihomoravsky Regions.
- When expressing GDP at constant prices (1995), the slowest growth (1995-2001) was recorded in Karlovarske, Ustecky and Moravskoslezsky Regions.

ECONOMIC SECTORS AND REGIONS

- Proportions of primary, secondary and tertiary sectors in GDP produced in the CR between 1990 and 2003 changed from 47.42 : 8.20 : 44.38 to 37.88 : 3.08 : 59.04, which represents decreases of 9.54 percentage points and 5.12 p.p. for secondary and primary sectors, respectively, and a growth of 14.66 p.p. for services.
- Fastest structural changes took place in Ustecky (where the share of the primary sector is second lowest after Prague) and Stredocesky Regions. Conversely, the sector structure of regional product changed slowest in Liberecky, Zlinsky and Vysocina Regions.
- Highest shares of the tertiary sector are recorded for Prague, Jihomoravsky and Karlovarske Regions. On the other hand, highest shares of the primary sector are in Vysocina, Jihocesky and Olomoucky Regions.
- Liberecky, Zlinsky, Moravskoslezsky and Vysocina Regions report highest shares of the secondary sector.
According to the results of the Population Census 2001, we can evaluate – in regional view – equipment of households with the following fourteen consumer durables: refrigerator, freezer, automatic washing machine, tumble dryer, dish washer, microwave oven, colour TV, video recorder, fixed phone, cellular phone, personal computer, Internet access, passenger car and weekend house.

Generally, the highest equipment rate was found for refrigerator (98.5), the lowest for tumble dryer (2.9%). Bohemia reported a higher equipment level (on average 49.3% of all consumer durables examined) than Moravia (45.7%). The highest figure among regions was found for Prague (where 7 items were most represented), followed by the Stredocesky Region (with 4 items at the top). On the other hand, equipment of households was worst in Olomoucky (7 kinds of durables being least represented) and Vysocina Regions (3 items at the bottom).

Equipment with some of the consumer durables is closely connected with life style prevailing in the region. For example, nearly 30% of households in Prague own a weekend house (national average is 12.8%). Conversely, regions with lower urbanisation show higher equipment with freezers – almost 80% in the Jihocesky Region, and only 75.6% in Prague; the national average is 75.0%.

4. Regional standards of living

Information below shows regional disparities in employment, income, and infrastructure.

EMPLOYMENT

- The size of economically active (EA) population dropped during the 1990s, mainly because of population ageing, increasing involvement in tertiary education, and decreasing employment rates of women and working pensioners.
- Intensity of economic activity (at working age 15-59) varies sharply among regions – it has west-eastern gradient (the highest level in south-west of the CR and in Prague, the lowest figures in north-east).
- The share of women in EA population dropped significantly in all regions.
- Jobs for elderly people (aged 60+) are concentrated to cities and big towns, mainly in Stredocesky, Liberecky and Kralovehradecky Regions. Economic activity of pensioners living in Moravia (eastern part of the CR) is traditionally lower.
- The highest rate of entrepreneurial activity (self-employed per 100 EA) can be found in Prague, Stredocesky and Liberecky Regions, the lowest is in Moravskoslezsky and Ustecky Regions (struck by high unemployment and low purchasing power).
- Educational structure of EA persons is best in Prague and worst in the northwestern border districts (in Karlovarske and Ustecky Regions).
- The highest share of EA involved in agriculture, forestry and fishery is in the Bohemian-Moravian highlands (Vysocina Region 10%); contrary to this, intensive industry located to Liberecky and Zlinsky Regions (almost 40%).
- The share of employment in the primary sector dropped in all regions (the highest fall in 1991-2001 was recorded in the Zlinsky Region: from 15% to 4%).

UNEMPLOYMENT

- Development of unemployment in the CR can be summarized into three phases; phase of low unemployment (up to 1996), phase of increase (1997-1999) and phase of stabilization (since 2000 to date) of relatively high unemployment.
In June 2004, Labour Offices registered almost 520 thous. unemployed persons. Unemployment rate was 9.9% with significant regional disparities (3.1% in the district of Praha-zapad, 24.2% in the district of Most). The number of unemployed found by the Labour Force Sample Survey (harmonized with international methodology of ILO) was lower: 450 thous., which resulted in an unemployment rate of 8.7% (4.4% in Prague, 15.5% in the Moravskoslezsky Region).

Unemployment disparities among districts kept on (after a significant growth in 1997-2000) in 2001 fixed at a high level (the standard deviation was twice as high as in 1996).

The lowest intra-regional disparities were (besides Prague) in Jihocesky and Kralovehradecky Regions, highest in Jihomoravsky and Moravskoslezsky Regions. In each region, we can identify prospective parts, intra-regional disparities did not correlate closely with overall unemployment level in a given region (in other words, marked disparities can appear also within a region with a low unemployment rate – i.e. Stredocesky Region).

In European perspective, the CR belongs to a group of countries with high regional (NUTS-2) unemployment disparities. They are roughly comparable to disparities in adjacent Poland or Germany, but higher than in Austria or Hungary. Higher disparities than those in the CR can be seen in Slovakia (in some districts of central or eastern Slovakia unemployment rates exceed 30%).

In a view of employment structure, the highest unemployment in the CR can be detected in districts where traditional heavy industry (iron, steel, mining) or declining light industry (textile, leather or clothing) is concentrated. An important role is also played by geographical position - regional centres and metropolitan areas in Bohemia have a more favourable position. The difference between Bohemia (with lower unemployment) and Moravia is gradually widening.

The share of graduates as well as persons with reduced capacity to work in the unemployed in total (registered by Labour Offices) is decreasing. Opposite to this, the share of the long-term unemployed is gradually increasing (this tendency did not stop in last years, despite the fact that overall unemployment did not change significantly). In December 2001, almost 30% of the unemployed in the Moravskoslezsky Region did not work for 2 years, in Prague or Jihocesky Region it was only 12%. In June 2004, almost 25% of the total of unemployed persons in the CR did not work for 2 years (in Moravskoslezsky Region almost 35%).

Regional differences in unemployment are similar in all types of education. Higher education reduces the risk of being pressed out of employment as well as its regional variability.

The Moravskoslezsky Region suffers also from severe lack of jobs (unemployed/vacancy ratio in June 2004 was 35; contrary to this, in Prague only 2.5). Unfavourable situation remains almost in all Moravian regions and in northwestern Bohemia.

WAGES

The overall wage level in Prague exceeds almost by 40% the national average. In the course of time, the gap between the capital and other regions is widening, Prague permanently witnesses the highest growth rate of wages among regions.

Regions located in Bohemia have higher wages than those in Moravia. The lowest wage growth rates are seen in the following regions: Jihocesky, Plzensky, Liberecky, Kralovehradecky, Jihomoravsky and Vysocina.

A relatively high wage level persists in the branch of industry in Moravskoslezsky and Ustecky Regions (by 5-10% higher then national wages in the industry), despite the fact that overall wages in these regions are below the national average (since the mid-1990s) and tend to diverge. Above-the-average wages in the mentioned regions are historically based (both
regions used to be the centres of post-war „socialist industrialization“ characterised by massive investment directed mainly to preferred heavy industry).

- The highest wage differentiation (measured as difference between the level of the 1st and 9th wage deciles) is in the Vysocina Region, followed by Jihomoravsky, Pardubicky and Prague Regions.
- Wages correlate with educational level attained, notably in Prague and in the Jihocesky Region. This correlation is looser in the Moravskoslezsky Region where employed workers with lower education receive relatively „high“ wages (in relation to employees with tertiary education working in the same region).
- Young employed persons (aged 19 or younger) receive the highest wages in the Liberecky Region. Conversely, old workers (at the age of 50 and more) have lowest wages in the Vysocina Region.
- Non-manual workers are paid well in Prague, worst in the regions located in Moravia. The worst wage ratio (non-manual/manual) is in the Moravskoslezsky Region (due to relatively „high“ wages of blue-collar workers in the industry).
- Women earn on average less than men (by about 25-30%), the gap between sexes is most developed in the Jihocesky Region (32%); on the other hand, relative parity is in the Kralovehradecky Region (22%).

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, HOUSING STOCK

- The overall volume of total housing construction in the CR dropped significantly in the early 1990s. From 1995 indications of recovery appeared in all regions. In 1990, 45 thous. dwellings were completed in the whole CR, five years later they slumped to 12 thous., in 2003 this figure reached 30 thous.
- High intensity of housing construction (completed dwellings per capita) between 1996-2001 was recorded in Prague and in the Stredocesky Region (reflecting their high general attractiveness, in terms of both labour market and residence conditions).
- Contrary, regions in northwestern Bohemia and northern Moravia recorded low intensity, reflecting bad economic performance, outward migration, but also availability of the relatively well-developed housing stock (due to a high intensity of housing construction in the 1970s and 1980s).
- Regions in the southwest of Bohemia are typical of high intensity of dwellings under construction.
- Habitable area in completed flats is increasing in all regions but Prague (smaller units are preferred due to high prices of newly completed dwellings). The largest habitable area is recorded in the Stredocesky Region (due to a strong preference of family houses).
- According to the last Population Census (2001), 4 366 thous. flats were counted in the CR. More than 12% of them were unoccupied (550 thousand). Part of them is used for recreational purposes, but a significant share of flats is unoccupied only “de jure“ (no one has permanent residence there), but in actual fact they are used for permanent housing (tenement flats often for foreigners). In a sum, there were 375 permanently occupied dwellings per 1 000 inhabitants.
- The number of permanently occupied dwellings increased in the CR by 3.3% between 1991 and 2001; regional disparities were limited (Prague 0.2%, Kralovehradecky Region 5.2%). A more important fact is that the growth rate of permanently occupied dwellings exceeded the growth of the total population, but was lower than the growth of census households (this was true in all regions expect Prague where the population loss was accompanied by a stagnation in the number of both dwellings and households).
• In 2001, there were 89.5 permanently occupied dwellings per 100 census households in the CR (in 1991 it was 92). A high housing shortage in 2001, measured by this index, was in Karlovarsky, Zlinsky and Jihomoravsky Regions.
• More than 40% of all flats in the CR are in family houses, particularly in rural regions (Stredocesky and Vysocina – 60%, contrary to Prague – 15%).
• The average age of the permanently occupied housing stock was 41 years (in 2001), the highest being in Prague and districts in south(north)-western Bohemia (45-55 years).
• Nearly three quarters of inhabitants live in houses connected to the public sewage disposal system and almost two thirds have gas from the public gas network. Regional disparities are significant – a low level of housing amenities is in rural regions with the atomised settlement structure (mainly Stredocesky Region). An interesting fact is that households in the districts of southeast Moravia have high equipment with gas (although they are not located in a highly urbanized area of the CR).
• As to housing tenure in 2001 – more than 50% of dwellings are owner-occupied, about 30% are tenement (a significant part of them is still owned by the state or more often by municipalities), the rest is a „mixed“ ownership (mainly housing/tenement associations). Regional disparities are important: in Prague, almost 50% makes up the tenement-housing stock (with a high proportion of private-tenement flats – especially in central neighbourhoods).

AVERAGE HOUSING SPACE PER PERSON

• Housing standards are characterised, _inter alia_, by variables such as the numbers of persons per dwelling and per dwelling room or housing space per person. As more households live together and families have more children in the regions of Moravia, there are more persons falling on one dwelling there (nearly 2.9 persons per dwelling in Vysocina and Zlinsky Regions, more than 2.7 persons per dwelling in Jihomoravsky, Olomoucky and Pardubicky Regions). On the other hand, this figure is only 2.5 in the Ustecky Region and 2.3 in Prague.
• Housing space per person living in the dwelling is a variable often used for housing standards. On average at the national level, this figure is 18.6 m², i.e. by 2 m² (nearly an eighth) more. No big regional differences occur – the highest housing space per person is reported for Stredocesky and Plzensky Regions (over 19 m²), while the lowest for Karlovarsky and Moravskoslezsky Regions.
• Census 2001 found out that less than one person live in one dwelling room on average. Nevertheless, in the Karlovarsky Region it is more than one person; in Prague, Vysocina and Moravskoslezsky Regions it is just one person. In the other regions were more dwelling rooms than persons living in, the Stredocesky Region being at the top (0.94 persons per dwelling room).
• These housing standard variables show that family houses provide better housing quality. For example, housing space per dwelling in family houses is by more than half (by 23.6 m²) larger than in multi-dwelling houses. This relation applies to all regions. The largest difference between housing space per dwelling in family houses and multi-dwelling houses is in Prague and Karlovarsky Regions (1.7 multiple – these regions have at the same time the largest housing space of dwellings in family houses), the smallest difference then in Kralovehradecky, Pardubicky and Olomoucky Regions (1.5 multiple – these regions have below-the-average housing space in family houses and above-the-average housing space in multi-dwelling houses).
• Higher average numbers of persons living in dwellings in family houses somewhat reduce the differences between family houses and multi-dwelling houses in average housing space per person, still one person living in family house has available housing space that is by 6 m² (i.e. by 38%) larger on average than that in multi-dwelling house. Average person living in a family...
A house in Stredocesky, Jihocesky and Karlovarsky Regions has available housing space that is by nearly a half larger than person living in a multi-dwelling house.

- Largest housing space per person in both family houses and multi-dwelling houses is in Prague, then in the Ustecky Region. The territorial distribution of this variable in family houses is interesting – it is below the average in the regions of Moravia and in Pardubicky and Kralovehradecky Regions, whereas the remaining regions of Bohemia report above-the-average values.
- There are by 0.2 persons less falling on one dwelling room in family houses than in multi-dwelling houses. This variable by kind of house does not differ much among regions (the Vysocina Region reports most persons per room in both family houses and multi-dwelling houses, Prague is at the opposite end of the scale), the Karlovarsky Region is an exception (having the second lowest number of persons per room in family houses and the second highest number of persons per room in multi-dwelling houses). ----- Extract from the analysis “Regional Differences in Housing” (code 4126-04) published in June 2004. The analysis contains also a chapter on housing amenities.

TRANSPORT ON ROADS

- We can see a west-east gradient in the number of cars per capita (the highest figures in Prague and the Stredocesky Region, the lowest one in the Moravskoslezsky Region).
- Cars are often used for commuting to work, mainly in Prague and Stredocesky Region (above 50% of commuters to work outside the municipality of current residence use their cars). In Moravia, more commuters use public transport.
- The overall number of cars is increasing steadily. In 1996, there were 315 (passenger) cars per capita in the CR, in 2002 this figure was 355. The lowest growth rate was recorded in Prague (mainly because of a high total level in 1996), the highest in the adjacent Stredocesky Region (almost 100 thous. EA commute to work to Prague from the Stredocesky Region, many of them use their cars).
- The share of (passenger) cars in the total number of motor vehicles in the CR is increasing; in 2001, the highest share was recorded in Prague (83%), the lowest in the regions of the Bohemian-Moravian borderland (below 70%) where we witness a relatively high proportion of motorcycles.
- Regions with atomised settlement structure show high density of roads (per sq. km). It is mainly the case of Stredocesky, Pardubicky and Kralovehradecky Regions.
- Total outputs of road transport (kilometres per day) correlate with the population of the regional capital (e.g. centripetal effect). During the 1990s, output accelerated in all regions, mainly in Prague and its adjacent region.
- Using the index of total road output per 1 km of roads, we can measure the intensiveness of road use. Not surprisingly, the position of Prague is highly dominant (intensiveness 10 times higher than the national average). Above-the-average intensity can be also seen in the Jihomoravsky Region (50% above the average) and in Moravskoslezsky and Zlinsky Regions.

Crime grew by 26% between 1991 and 2003 nationally, but the highest increases were observed in Pardubicky (+65%), Jihomoravsky, Kralovehradecky and Prague Regions, whereas a decrease of 17% took place in the Moravskoslezsky Region. The national crime rate (share of detected crimes related to population) being 35.0, Prague registered 85.3 (the highest figure) and the Vysocina Region 16.8 (the lowest level). Compared to 1991, crime rate grew by 27% nationally, most in Pardubicky (+66%), Jihomoravsky (+65%) and Prague (+60%) Regions. Jihomoravsky and Karlovarsky regions saw decreases.
5. Education

Education structure of the population is still improving, which is proved by increasing proportions of population with both secondary (+8.1 percentage points to 66.4%) and higher education (+1.7 p.p. to 8.9% of all population aged 15+). Nevertheless, the share of population with higher education is still very low.

On average three quarters of the population have at least secondary education. However, this average is affected by a high proportion of persons with secondary education in Prague (83.3%); only two other regions, Kralovehradecky and Pardubicky, are above the national average. On the other hand, the proportions in Karlovarsky and Ustecky Regions are below 70%.

Similar relations hold also for the share of persons with higher education. Only Prague (18.8%) and Jihomoravsky Regions (10.3%) are above the national average. All the other regions are below the national average, the lowest proportions being again in Karlovarsky (5.6%) and Ustecky (5.4%) Regions.

Information below makes comprehensive overview of the Czech school system more complete.

BASIC CHANGES IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM BETWEEN 1990 AND 2003

- **Primary level:**
  Since the year 1995/96, the first level of basic school is one year longer (five instead of four years – amendment to the Education Act).

- **Secondary level:**
  A change in the second level of basic school:
  - 1990: 5th-9th forms (9th form not obligatory, compulsory school attendance could be fulfilled at a secondary school)
  - since the year 1995/96: 6th-9th forms (9th form obligatory)
  **Multi-year grammar schools** start to be established since 1990/91 designed for academic pupils.

  **Secondary schools:**
  Secondary schools “missed” one year from 1996/97 as a result of obligatory school attendance (pupils remained in 9th forms and secondary schools actually enrolled only pupils who repeated a year at basic schools and pupils starting multi-year grammar schools).

A **reform of state administration** was started in 2001 and had a heavy impact on the school system.

EDUCATIONAL LAWS

The system of the following six basic laws forms the fundamental legislative framework of the school system laid down by the Constitution of the Czech Republic and by the List of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms:
- Act No 29/1984 Coll., on the system of basic schools, secondary schools and upper technical schools (the Education Act), as amended,
- Act No 76/1978 Coll., on school establishments, as amended,
- Act No 564/1990 Coll., on state administration and self-administration in education, as amended,
- Act No 109/2002 Coll., on execution of institutional care or protective care in school establishments and on preventive care in school establishments and on amendment to other Acts,
Act No 306/1999 Coll., on granting subsidies to private schools, pre-school and school establishments, as amended,
Act No 111/1998 Coll., on universities/institutions of higher education and on amendment to other Acts (the Higher Education Act), as amended.

In 2003, the Parliament of the CR passed three laws, which amend three of the following six basic laws:


Act No 29/1984 Coll., on the system of basic schools, secondary schools and upper technical schools, as amended, regulates the largest part of the school system – institutions from basic schools up to upper technical schools. The Act defines sections of the system of education, compulsory school attendance, and goals, position and links between individual levels of education, kinds and types of schools and types and course of study. This Act has undergone a large number of substantial changes – the last wording was published in the Collection of Laws under No 258/1996. In the reference period, it was amended by Act No 182/2003 Coll., which specified the status of church schools as legal persons, and by Act No 362/2003 Coll., which defines service relationship of pupils and teachers of secondary and higher police schools and fire prevention schools, as well as of secondary schools of the Prison Service (coming into effect on 1 January 2005).

Act No 76/1978 Coll., on school establishments, as amended, regulates parts of the system of education responsible for pre-school education, interest and extracurricular activities, as well as special-purpose school establishments that help provide pupils with material care or fulfil other tasks.

Act No 564/1990 Coll., on state administration and self-administration in education, as amended, most importantly amended by Act No 284/2002 Coll. – specifies the rights and duties of municipalities, municipalities with extended powers and regional education authorities. Some of modifications of Act No 284/2002 Coll. came into effect on the day of promulgation, some on 1 January 2003 and some on the day when agreement on the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union came into force. This Act was in the reference period amended by Act No 181/2003 Coll., which defines cases where the municipality has the duty to pay non-investment expenditures on a pupil who attends school (compulsory education) in another municipality.

Act No 109/2002 Coll., on execution of institutional care or protective care in school establishments and on preventive care in school establishments and on amendment to other Acts, regulates organisation and operation of school establishments for execution of institutional care or protective care and of school establishments for preventive care, which are particularly diagnostic institutions and children’s homes, the establishing of schools as parts of these establishments and the rights and duties of children placed in these establishments.

Act No 306/1999 Coll., on granting subsidies to private schools, pre-school and school establishments, as amended, which replaced previous amendments in form of government regulations of 1996 and 1998 effective up to November 1999. This Act laid down higher basic subsidies and made the conditions of their increases more rigorous and more precise.

Act No 111/1998 Coll., on universities/institutions of higher education and on amendment to other Acts (the Higher Education Act), as amended, was in the reference period amended by Act 362/2003 Coll., which defines service relationship of students of the Police College and enables students who are not members of the security forces to study at the Police College (coming into effect on 1 January 2005).

On 1 September 2003, the Minister of Education, Youth and Sports submitted to the Government a bill on pre-school, basic, secondary and upper technical education and other
**education** (the Education Act), which will replace the present Education Act, Act on state administration and self-administration in education, and Act on school establishments. At the same time, a **Teacher Act** was submitted to the Government.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM IN EDUCATION

From the point of view of public administration reform in education, 2001 was an important year. Based on preparatory steps taken in the 2nd half of 2000, “state” schools, pre-school and school establishments started to be transferred under Regions.

The legal framework of the transfer was laid down particularly by the following Acts:

- Act No 132/2000 Coll., on amendment to and revocation of some Acts related to the Act on Regions, Act on municipalities, Act on district authorities, and Act on the Capital of Prague,
- Act No 157/2000 Coll., on transfer of some rights and obligations from ownership of the CR to ownership of Regions,
- Act No 250/2000 Coll., on budgetary rules of territorial budgets,
- Act No 218/2000 Coll., on budgetary rules and on amendment to some related Acts.

Individual steps of phase 1 of the public administration reform were laid down, from the general point of view, by the “Scheduled Progress of Work on Preparing and Implementing the Transfer of Powers, Persons and Property connected with the Establishment of the Regional Level of Public Administration till the end of 2000”, approved by Government Resolution No 641 of 21 June 2000; from the point of view of education, the above document produced the “Schedule of Gradual Steps of the Public Administration Reform in Education for the Year 2001”, ref. number 30 690/2000-60.

Changes provoked by the public administration reform in education applied particularly to the transfer of powers, previously executed by state administration authorities, to Regions. This transfer of powers took place partly in favour of Regions’ independent terms of reference (execution of state administration), which was regulated mainly by part 26 of Act No 132/2000 Coll., amending, with effect from 1 January 2001, Act No 564/1990 Coll., on state administration and self-administration in education. According to this Act, education authorities, which were specialised bodies of state administration in charge of administration and methodology control of the regional system of education, ceased to exist as at 31 December 2000.

Changes in education had to be made without disturbing the operation of schools and school establishments with respect to organisation and economy.

However, the conditions of the establishment of regional authorities did not allow, for a number of reasons, full operation of regional authorities from 1 January 2001. Therefore, Act No 157/2000 Coll. was brought in, effective from 1 January 2001, which, especially with regard to property, made decisions by central administration authorities taken during 2001 the key element of the process of public administration reform.

Act No 157/2000 Coll., Article 1(2) last sentence says that, until the date a decision comes into effect, appropriate district authority executes the rights and duties of education authority, with the exception of establishing and closing schools and school establishments. In compliance with this, appropriate district authorities (in case of cities Brno, Ostrava and Plzeň appropriate city halls) took over and from 1 January 2001 executed the above mentioned rights and duties of education authorities until the transfer of “state” schools, preschool and school establishments or until a decision by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports embracing given schools and school establishments in the district, to Regions. It was only this decision that brought schools and school establishments under Regions and the Region began to execute the full extent of its rights and duties laid down in amended Act No 564/1990 Coll.
The transfer of employees of education authorities to the structure of district authorities and regional authorities was provided for by Government Resolution No 723 of 19 July 2000, which approved the limit of staff at regional authorities in charge of the execution of state administration for 2001 and a transfer of 220 employees from education authorities to the Czech School Inspection Authority.

A new scheme of financing regional education was started on 1 January 2001 because, in compliance with Government Resolution No 1218 of 4 December 2000, financial flows changed. The financing of schools, preschool and school establishments, which was up to education authorities till 31 December 2000, came under regional and district authorities.

The public administration reform did not directly apply to the content of education, but changed radically the following:
- execution of state administration and self-administration in education
- property rights relations
- way of financing

The main efforts taken by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports throughout 2001 were directed at ensuring all activities executed up to 31 December 2000 particularly by education authorities and minimising the impacts of the reform in progress on schools, preschool and school establishments.

Phase 1 of the public administration reform mainly applied to transfer of schools, preschool and school establishments founded by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports or by education authorities to regions. The schedule of this transfer broken down by regions and districts was fully met. As it was demanding with regard to administrative and technical aspects, the transfer was officially carried out in three stages:
- stage 1 implementation on 31 March 2001
- stage 2 implementation on 30 June 2001
- stage 3 implementation on 30 September 2001

This staging implied that schools, preschool and school establishments transferred in stage 1 came under the establishing and other powers of regions according to the law from 1 April 2001, in stage 2 from 1 July 2001 and in stage 3 from 1 October 2001.

Based on negotiations between the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Finance and the City Hall of Prague, the transfer of schools, preschool and school establishments in Prague took place already on 1 January 2001. The transfer applied to 231 entities and represented a “zero stage”.

As at 1 April 2001, the total of 589 schools, preschool and school establishments were transferred from 16 districts to 13 regions. The districts were: Kladno, Melnik, Praha-zapad, Ceske Budejovice, Plzen-mesto, Karlovy Vary, Usti nad Labem, Louny, Liberec, Hradec Kralove, Pardubice, Jihlava, Brno-mesto, Olomouc, Ostrava and Zlin.

As at 1 July 2001, 847 schools, preschool and school establishments were transferred from the following 31 districts: Beroun, Kolin, Nymburk, Mlada Boleslav, Cesky Krumlov, Pisek, Prachatice, Tabor, Domazlice, Tachov, Sokolov, Plzen-sever, Cheb, Chomutov, Most, Teplice, Jablonec nad Nisou, Rychnov nad Knezou, Nachod, Usti nad Orlici, Havlickuv Brod, Trebic, Brno-venkov, Blansko, Hodonin, Prostejov, Prerov, Novy Jicin, Karvina, Uherske Hradiste and Vsetin.

As at 1 October 2001, 728 schools, preschool and school establishments were transferred from 29 districts: Benesov, Pribram, Praha-vychod, Kutna Hora, Rakovnik, Jindrichuv Hradec, Strakonice, Plzen-jih, Klatovy, Sokolov, Decin, Litomerice, Ceska Lipa, Semily, Trutnov, Jicin, Svitavy, Chrudim, Zdar nad Sazavou, Pelhrimov, Breclav, Znojmo, Vyskov, Sumperk, Jesenik, Frydek-Mistek, Opava, Bruntal and Kromeriz.
All transfers of schools, preschool and school establishments were always carried out for the whole district. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports had the 4th quarter of 2001 as a float to resolve arising property, financial and legal relations. In total, 2 395 schools, preschool and school establishments were transferred to regions. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports retained 72 organisations of regional education, listed in annex 2 to Act No 157/2000 Coll., which came under direct control of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

The transfer of schools, preschool and school establishments to regions implied not only a change of the establishing power, but also a transfer of a large volume of movable and immovable property according to Act No 157/2000 Coll., as amended, i.e. property of the Czech Republic, to which appropriate schools, preschool and school establishments had the right of management. This property came to regions on the date of a decision of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Together with the property, all rights and obligations incl. rights and duties ensuing from labour-law relations were transferred to regions. On the day of transfer, regions started to fully execute activities prescribed by Act No 564/1990 Coll., as amended. In accordance with the above-mentioned Government Resolution No 723 of 19 July 2000, the transfer of property (incl. movable) was accompanied by a transfer of staff of education sections at district authorities to the structure of education departments at regional authorities, where they are in charge of activities assigned to regions by Act No 564/1990 Coll., as amended.

Before decisions proper could be taken, background materials necessary for making these decisions had to be prepared in advance. They were particularly documents on property, which were prepared by individual schools and school establishments and checked by district authorities and subsequently by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, which also classified them. These documents were annexed to the decision.

In a similar way as the transfer of “state” schools, preschool and school establishments from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to regions according to Act No 157/2000 Coll., also a transfer of agricultural vocational schools from the Ministry of Agriculture to regions was made. This transfer took place on 1 October 2001.

This way the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in 2001, in addition to all tasks incumbent, carried out successfully the public administration reform in education. From the beginning of 2001, the Ministry closely cooperated with regional authorities (at first with directors of regional authorities, subsequently also with education departments at regional authorities) and prepared an educational programme for staff of regional and district authorities, which at that time were in charge of state administration at these authorities. Under mediation of the Ministry of the Interior and the Institute for Local Administration, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports was involved in training of officials of regional authorities, district authorities and municipalities in compliance with Decree No 345/2000 Coll., on verification of qualifications of persons employed by municipalities, regions, Prague, city parts of Prague and district authorities, persons heading specialised bodies established by special Acts and chairpersons of commissions in charge of executing transferred powers (the decree on special qualifications).

STRUCTURE OF THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

Over the last decade, the structure of the Czech system of education in the area of regional education, i.e. education embracing stages from preschool education to upper technical education, saw the biggest changes in 1995, and in the area of higher education in 1998. In the year 2000 there were actually no changes from institutional point of view, but the system of state administration in education changed substantially. On the basis of Act No 347/1997 Coll., on establishment of higher territorial administrative units, Act No 128/2000 Coll., on municipalities, Act No 129/2000 Coll., on regions, Act No 131/2000 Coll., on the Capital of Prague and Act No 132/2000 Coll., on changes and revocation of some Acts related to the Act on regions, Act on municipalities, Act on
district authorities, and Act on the Capital of Prague, both the establishing functions in education and the system of state administration changed. Among the changes were the dissolution of education authorities as at 31 December 2000 and the establishing of the education section at district authorities (which were then cancelled as at 31 December 2002) and the establishing of education departments at regional authorities. Schools previously established by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and by the Ministry of Agriculture were in 2001 gradually delimited under regions and the Ministry retained the establishing powers only in relation to 72 schools and school establishments.

Other minor changes in regional education in 2002 were laid down by amendment to the Act on the system of basic schools, secondary schools and upper technical schools (by Act No 284/2002 Coll., amending Act No 564/1990 Coll., on state administration and self-administration in education) and amendment to the Act on school establishments (by Act No 109/2002 Coll., on execution of institutional care or protective care in school establishments and on preventive care in school establishments and on amendment to other Acts). However, these changes applied predominantly to state administration in education and to institutional care.

Just like in the past, the process of diffusing and gradual elimination of vertical boundaries within one educational level (in particular education of children and pupils with special educational needs and their integration both in mainstream classes and in special or specialised classes of mainstream schools). As the population curve is still on the decline and numbers of potential pupils are decreasing, schools make every effort to attract pupils and offer a considerably wider range of education programmes, incl. programmes of continuing education such as courses to complete basic education, to complete education provided by special and remedial schools; some secondary schools offer re-training courses or study of single or combined subjects.

Regional education is open to the private sector since 1989, when private and church schools began to appear. The number of private and church schools has become stabilised, but the establishing powers in state administration changed in 2001. Up to 2000, schools were established particularly by municipalities and by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports or, as the case may have been, by education authorities. In consequence of the changes in state administration, the establishing powers have had also regional authorities since 2001; they establish secondary and upper technical school, previously established by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and by the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports retained the powers of establishing mainly special schools, establishments for execution of institutional and protective care (incl. schools affiliated to them) and schools at the national level. Basic schools and nursery schools and related establishments continue to be established mainly by municipalities. In the area of higher education, the private sector entered the education market in 1999. Private institutions of higher education are building their position in the area of tertiary education.

The key features of the Czech system of education since 1989 are openness and permeability, i.e. the fact that there is a way to the next educational level open to anyone.

- **Outline of the system of education in the Czech Republic**

  **Nursery school** is an establishment in charge of children’s preschool education. It is primarily designed for children from three years of age to the reaching of six years when they begin compulsory school attendance. In some cases nursery schools also care for younger children on the one hand, on the other hand relatively high percentage of children remain after the reaching of six years of age who have permission to postpone compulsory school attendance. In spite of the name, the law defines nursery school not as a school, but as a preschool establishment. Nursery school does not provide an educational level, it is only a complement to upbringing in the family and has a socialising function; the attendance is not compulsory. There are also special and specialised classes for handicapped children and for children with learning and behavioural disabilities. Handicapped
children can be integrated in mainstream classes among healthy children. In a way, also preparatory classes for socially disadvantaged children fall under the system of preschool education.

**Basic school** gives basic education, develops intellectual, ethical, aesthetic, working and physical abilities of pupils and prepares them for going up to secondary schools and for practical life. Basic school ensures compulsory school attendance for a very large section of given population. Basic school is divided into primary (5-year) and secondary (4-year) levels. Children enrol in basic school usually at the age of six. In cases of qualified school immaturity, they can be permitted a postponement of compulsory school attendance or they can attend preparatory classes for socially disadvantaged children. Basic schools teach in three basic educational programmes – the Basic school, General school and National school. A **system of home education** is being experimentally tested over last few years. Children with disabilities can enrol in special schools, but they can be integrated in mainstream classes or in special or specialised classes of mainstream schools. Children with mental handicaps can fulfil compulsory school attendance at special or remedial schools, children with severe handicaps can be exempt from attending school or even, for a certain time, exempt from compulsory school attendance. More academic children can attend schools teaching some of the subjects intensively or they can, having completed the 5th form (or the 7th form) the of basic school, continue fulfilling compulsory school attendance under eight-year (or six-year) programme of grammar schools or under eight-year programme of dance at performing arts schools. For the section of adult population who did not complete basic education or education at special or remedial schools are designed courses aimed at completing basic education or completing education provided by special or remedial schools.

**Secondary schools** have educational programmes to prepare pupils for their occupation and for next study. Secondary schools give either full secondary general education (grammar schools) or secondary technical and full secondary technical education (secondary technical schools and vocational schools). Secondary schools (except for multi-year grammar schools and dance study at performing arts schools) enrol pupils after the completion of compulsory nine-year school attendance at basic schools, usually at the age of 15. Study programmes at secondary schools usually take 3-4 years, depending on type of study (vocational schools mostly offer three-year programmes completed by final apprentice examination, whereas programmes at grammar schools, secondary technical schools, as well as secondary vocational schools with GCSE take predominantly four years). Secondary schools also offer programmes of extension study completed by GCSE designed for persons with apprenticeship and programmes of multi-year grammar schools and dance performing schools designed for academic and talented children. There are the following three types of secondary schools: grammar schools, secondary technical schools and secondary vocational schools.

**Grammar school** is a secondary school that gives full secondary education completed by GCSE, its study programmes contain predominantly general subjects. On top of four-year programmes designed for leavers of 9th forms of basic schools, grammar schools also offer eight-year and six-year study programmes. Pupils in lower forms of these “multi-year” grammar schools fulfil compulsory school attendance. There are also grammar schools with subjects taught in a foreign language – bilingual grammar schools (previously five-year “foreign language grammar schools”) – where the study usually takes six years.

**Secondary technical schools** give mostly full secondary technical education in four years completed by GCSE. Apart from this, secondary technical schools also offer study programmes to attain secondary technical education, but less than 1% of pupils are enrolled in these schools. The main goal of secondary technical schools is to prepare pupils for occupations particularly in the areas of technology (economy); pupils in programmes completed by GCSE can go up to a higher

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1 Preparatory classes for socially disadvantaged children are established with nursery schools, basic schools, special basic schools and special schools.

2 Basic education completing courses are given by basic, secondary and special schools.
professional school or university. A special type of secondary technical school is performing arts schools designed for pupils with musical, dancing or acting talent. Study at performing arts schools is finished by attaining leaving certificate (or GCSE) and takes six years for musical and acting programmes (school enrolls pupils after completing the basic school) or eight years for the dancing programme (pupils come after completing the 5th form of basic school).

**Secondary vocational schools** are secondary schools giving primarily secondary technical education usually in three-year programmes completed by final apprentice examination. School leavers receive certificate of apprenticeship and are prepared for the labour market. On top of programmes giving secondary technical education, vocational schools also offer four-year study programmes completed by GCSE that give full secondary technical education. This GCSE represents at the same time a document proving the ability of having a job where certificate of apprenticeship is required. It also makes possible for the school leaver to work in highly demanding blue-collar or operational positions.

**Training schools** are not formally regarded as secondary schools. They offer two-year training for pupils who left the basic school in a lower than 9th form, the study is completed by a final examination. In an overwhelming majority of cases, training school is part of a school where secondary vocational training makes up a pivotal part.

**Secondary technical schools** and **secondary vocational schools** also offer study in the programmes of **extension study**, which is designed for persons who completed three-year apprenticeship at secondary vocational schools. The study gives full secondary technical education, takes usually three years and is completed by GCSE.

Pupils who receive only theoretical training from the secondary vocational school, get manual training by **practical training centres** or **practical training workplaces**.

One of the alternatives for the organisation of schooling is the system of **special schools**, which are designed for children and pupils with physical, sensual or mental handicaps or those socially disadvantaged unless they can be integrated in mainstream schools. Special schools operate in the area of preschool education (special nursery schools), give basic education to pupils at the age of compulsory school attendance (special basic schools), and operate also in the area of secondary education (special grammar schools, special secondary technical schools, special secondary vocational schools). Teaching at these schools uses special methods of education under special educational programmes and pupils attain education fully comparable to mainstream education. Pupils with more severe intellectual and mental handicaps can be taught at special or remedial schools (incl. the preparatory level and the physiotherapeutic form), at vocational schools and practical schools. Special schools in last few years are attended predominantly by children and pupils with severe handicaps, because the possibilities of integration of handicapped pupils in mainstream schools are increasing; either integration in special or specialised classes or integration in mainstream classes among healthy children.

**Higher professional schools** offer study programmes completed by leaving certificate. They are designed for graduates from secondary schools with GCSE and prepares students for demanding professions – compared to university, the study is considerably less theoretical. Initial study takes two to three years, is completed by leaving certificate and graduates attain professional education.

**Universities/institutions of higher education** are designed for graduates from secondary schools with GCSE. Universities give higher education in bachelor and master’s programmes. Bachelor’s programme study takes three to four years and is completed by the final state examination, graduates receive title Bc, BcA. Study under master’s programmes takes usually four to five years; in the fields of medicine, veterinary medicine and architecture six years. Some universities offer two-stage programmes – having completed bachelor’s programme, students continue under a follow-up master’s programme taking two to three years. Master’s programme study is completed by the final state examination, graduates receive title Mgr, in artistic fields MgA,
in the fields of economics, technology and agriculture title Ing, in the field of architecture Ing.Arch.
Study in the fields of medicine and veterinary medicine is completed by the doctorate viva voce examination and graduates receive title MUDr and MVDr, respectively. The doctorate viva voce examination can be passed also by graduates from master’s programmes in the fields of natural sciences (title RNDr), liberal arts, pedagogical and social sciences (PhDr), law (JUDr), pharmacy (PharmDr), theology (ThDr or ThLic). Graduates from master’s study programmes can continue studying under doctor’s programmes and aspire for scientific and creative work. This study usually takes three years, is completed by thesis and the state doctor’s examination, graduates receive academic title PhD. Study at university may have an attendance form (previously initial study) or distance form (previously on-job study), or the two forms may be combined (combined study). Besides the standard types of study, universities offer also other forms of education (retraining study, study aimed at gaining teaching qualifications and the like). The private sector began to be engaged in higher education in 1999 and private institutions of higher education (non-university type) started to appear.

The state of ethnical education is determined by the geographic diffusion of ethnic minorities across the Czech Republic. With the exception of Roma and Poles, ethnic minorities do not form integral territorial communities. Schools are established in areas with higher concentrations of ethnic minorities, particularly in the districts of Karvina and Frydek-Mistek (Polish ethnic minority – nursery and basic schools, a grammar school and classes with Polish teaching language at secondary technical schools). A basic school in Karvina served Slovak ethnic minority, but it was excluded from the network of schools, preschool and school establishments as at 30 June 2000. There are several schools for the Jewish minority, but they were founded as private schools. Schools with German teaching language are being established exclusively as bilingual schools (in combination with Czech) and they are open to Czech pupils. The Greek minority has no independent ethnic schools, the Greek language is taught as a facultative subject. Education of the Roma minority represents a specific problem. Schools enrol Roma children who are handicapped mainly in terms of language, they come from a different social and cultural environment and their adaptation to the school environment is often problematic. Just for these pupils are being established preparatory classes for socially disadvantaged children, the position of Roma assistants is gaining ground at nursery schools, basic schools and special schools; the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports supports alternative educational programmes.

Apart from schools engaged in teaching, and preschool establishments, also school establishments are part of the Czech system of education. The system of school establishments includes establishments for interest study (state schools of foreign languages), extracurricular activity establishments (children and youths’ free time centres, after-school care centres, school clubs), establishments for the execution of institutional care, protective care and preventive care (children’s homes, diagnostic institutions). Special-purpose school establishments help schools to fulfil their educational purposes and some of them also ensure material care of pupils. They are divided into establishments of pedagogical counselling (educational-psychological advisory centres, centres of educational care), establishments of catering (school cafeterias), accommodation (children’s homes, boarding houses), and establishments for continuing training of teachers. School establishments of all types are either independent or as parts of schools. On top of school establishments, also basic art schools offer interest study. However, the Education Act classifies them as schools and not as school establishments.

There are establishments standing outside the network of schools, preschool and school establishments. They serve the purposes of accommodation and catering provided for university students. They are affiliated to institutions of higher education – students’ canteens and halls of residence.

A system of life-long learning is gaining ground over last years. Its primary goal is developing individuals. In the last decade, life-long learning is receiving increasing attention of
most experts engaged in educational issues. At the national level, the Czech Republic focuses on life-long learning and continuing vocational training of employees mainly in the “National Programme for Development of Education – White Paper” and most recently also in a document in preparation “Long-term Plan of Education and Development of the System of Education in the CR” where the necessity of integration of continuing vocational training of employees in the system of education in the CR is mentioned. Life-long learning encompasses various forms of formal (school), informal (random) and non-formal (non-school) education. It includes a great number of various educational activities; each of them has a goal and purpose of its own. There are principally two basic stages of life-long learning: initial education and continuing vocational training. The former embraces all education before the learner comes to the labour market, i.e. basic education, general secondary education and initial specialised education (incl. tertiary education). The latter includes any training or learning after the person entered the labour market for the first time (regardless whether as employed or as unemployed). Continuing vocational training may be formal or informal. Training can have even forms in which predominantly initial education is given, with the aim of completing attained education. Naturally, various other interest educational activities belong to continuing vocational training too.

6. Health

There was a total of 66 668 beds in hospitals in the CR at the end of 2002, i.e. 6.53 beds per 1 000 inhabitants. This share was highest in Prague (9.07 beds per 1 000 inhabitants) and in the Jihomoravsky Region (7.35), lowest in the Pardubicky Region (5.02) and – due to the nearness of Prague – in the Stredocesky Region (5.13).

Paediatric beds were 6 211 in number (i.e. 9.3% of the total number), of which 2 250 neonatal beds. Compared to population in individual regions, paediatric beds are more evenly distributed. The only exception is the Ustecky Region (18% above the national average). What should be pointed out is that this region, which is characterised by coal mining and chemical industry, occupies the “top” or “high” places in a number of indicators (divorce rate, share of children born out of wedlock, induced abortions, crude death rate, infant mortality rate).

The density of health establishments and the number of beds are relatively high and the Czech Republic should think in terms of reduction of beds or specialisation and modernisation of health establishments rather than in terms of building new ones.

There were in total 33 343 doctors in the CR in 2003, i.e. 3.27 doctors per 1 000 inhabitants; the number of paediatricians and doctors taking care of youth was 3 237 (nearly 10% of the total). High above the national average is Prague (5.65 doctors per 1 000 inhabitants), the Zlinsky (only 2.54) and Stredocesky Regions (due to the nearness of Prague) being on the opposite end. The relative numbers of paediatricians and doctors taking care of youth are more evenly distributed across the Czech Republic (just like paediatric beds).

The infant mortality rate more than halved between 1993 and 2003. From the regional point of view, the highest decreases were seen in the Olomoucky Region and in Prague (with the lowest figure); on the other hand, infant mortality rate grew in the Karlovarsky Region where it is highest (all other regions reported decreases).

The number of deaths below the age of five dropped by more than 60% between 1993 and 2003. Most in the Jihomoravsky Region, in Prague and in the Vysocina Region (where it is lowest).

To illustrate the health situation at regional level, the standardised mortality rate (which eliminates the effects of age structure) is lowest in Prague, and Jihomoravsky and Zlinsky Regions report below the average figures. The highest figure is observed in the Ustecky Region.
7. Public budgets

In view of unprecedented organisation changes, it is very difficult to evaluate development in the area of regional budgets. The data are not available in the required time series (since 1990) and, as a result of organisation changes, they are incomparable (see order discrepancies among data in the relevant table). It is connected with the fact that regions took over health establishments and also some school establishments from the central level (the state). This process of changes in organisation and economy is not yet over.

8. Other facts relevant for

To illustrate regional disparities in the Czech Republic, here are a few items of information on the environment:

- The lowest share of forests in total area is recorded in Prague (10%), the highest share (45%), as well as growth rate, in the Liberecky Region.
- The share of arable land varies between the Karlovarsky Region (17%) on the one hand and Jihomoravsky and Stredocesky Regions (51%) on the other hand. During the 1990s, all regions saw decreases in their total area of arable land, mainly in north(south)-western Bohemia (most rapid, among districts, in Usti nad Labem -10%, among regions, in the Karlovarsky Region -6%). On the other hand, area of meadows and pastures has risen.
- The quality of the environment has improved markedly during the last decade, particularly specific emissions of key pollutants (mainly from big stationary sources) dropped significantly between 1994-2002: solid particles (about 85%), \(SO_2\) (80%), CO (55%), \(NO_x\) (30%). Despite the rapid improvement, severe problems in some regions still persist. It is mainly the case of Prague (emissions of solid particles, \(NO_x\), CO) and other big cities or agglomerations (mainly in the Ustecky Region – emissions of \(SO_2\)). In addition, specific emissions of \(NO_x\) and CO have increased since 2000 (mainly in Prague).
- The highest quantity of total waste per capita is produced in Prague, the lowest in the Liberecky Region (10 times lower than in Prague).
- Housing amenities also differ from region to region – the highest proportion of inhabitants living in houses connected to the public sewage disposal system is in Prague (almost 100%), the lowest in the Stredocesky Region (52%). As for connection to the public water supply system, Prague is at the top (100%) and Vysocina and Stredocesky Region (72%) at the bottom.
- The distribution of fixed assets acquired in environment pollution control projects also varies: in 1996-2000, the highest value of assets per capita was recorded in the Ustecky Region (most heavily environmentally disrupted region at the end of the 1980s). It was five times more than in the adjacent Liberecky Region, which reported the lowest value.
- Almost 16% of the territory of the Czech Republic is under environmental protection (national parks, protected landscape areas, small protected areas). From the European point of view, this percentage is relatively high.
APPENDIX

Areas (NUTS 2) and Regions (NUTS 3) of the Czech Republic
Oblasti (NUTS 2) a kraje (NUTS 3) České republiky

Note: At the levels of NUTS-2 and NUTS-4, the capital city of Prague has official name „Praha“, at the level of NUTS-3 it has name „Hlavní město Praha“ (abbreviated to „Hl. m. Praha“).
Title: Regions (NUTS 3) and Districts (NUTS 4) of the Czech Republic
Administrative districts of municipalities with extended powers in the CR
(new established in January 2003)