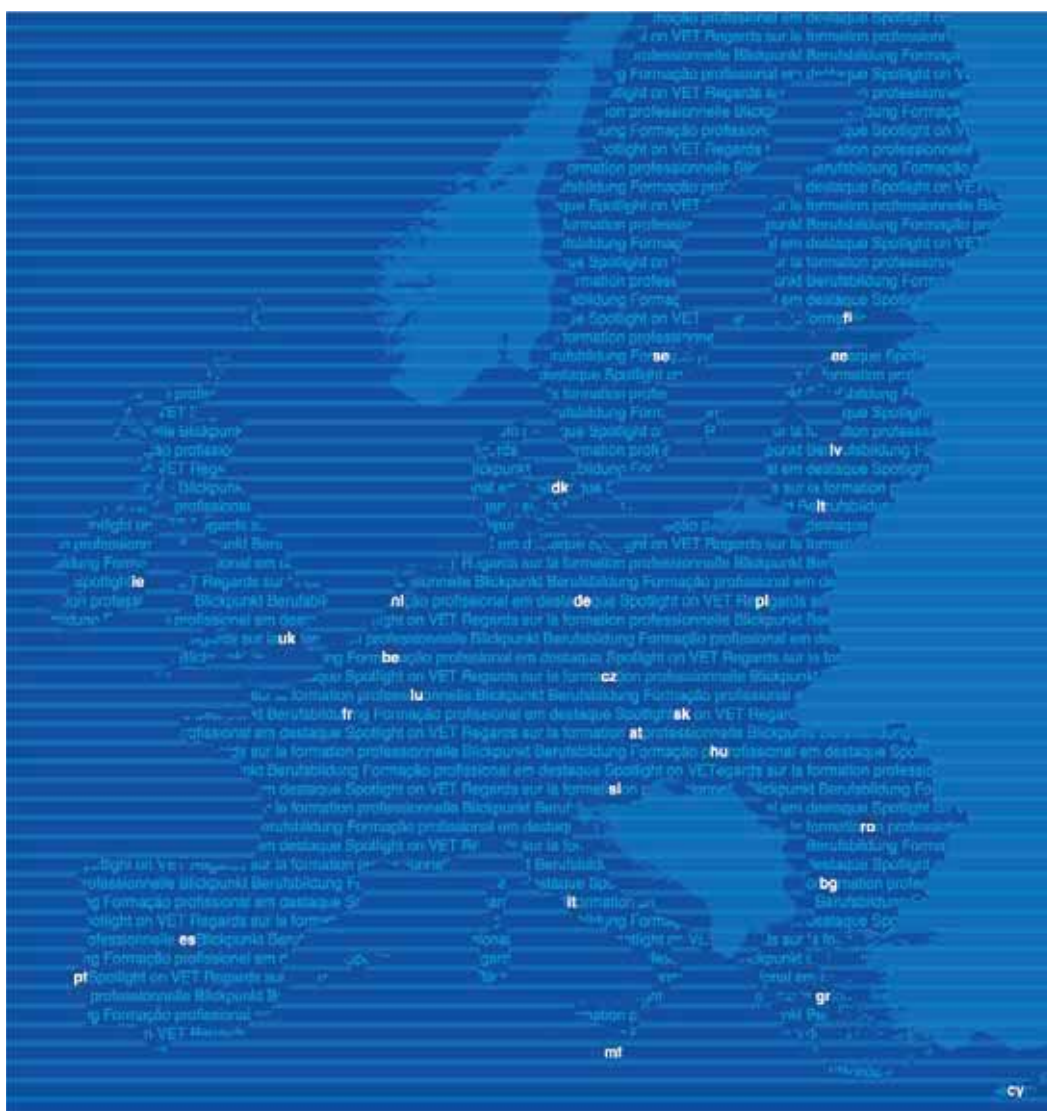




Spotlight on VET

Czech Republic



Tradition and modernisation

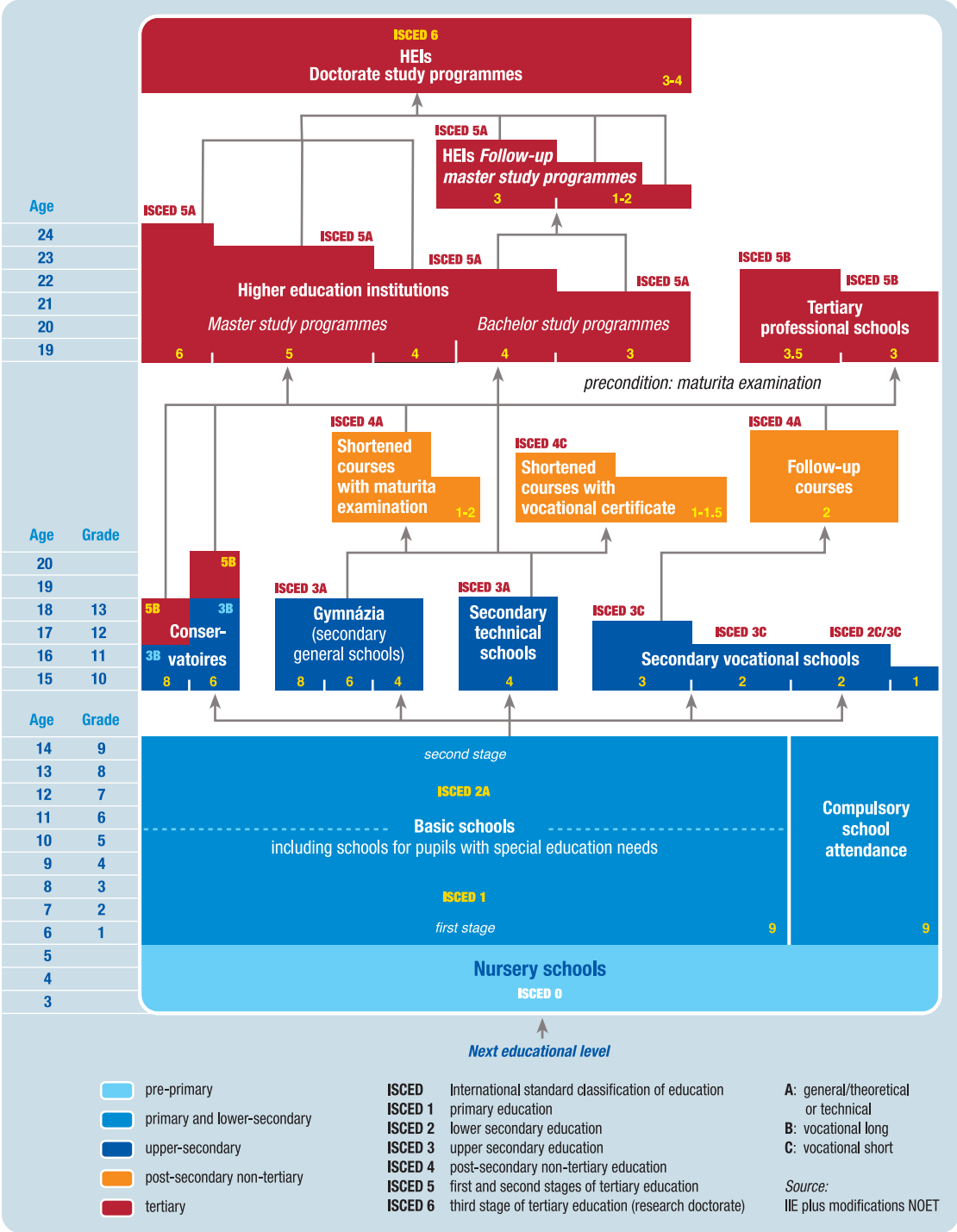
VET has always been a fundamental part of the Czech education system. Besides having a tradition of quality, it has developed intensively over the last decades. Key features include:

- diverse educational pathways with many choices and highly esteemed;
- long tradition and good opportunities to study VET at all levels (including higher education) making VET very attractive;
- esteemed universities providing highly specialised study programmes, carrying out research and development, also targeted at mastering practical application of research outcomes;
- modernisation processes of VET: curricula development, quality assurance, support for development of tertiary education and recognition of learning outcomes of CVET.

Structure

- VET predominantly begins following completion of compulsory education at the age of 15. Schools providing VET at secondary and tertiary levels (ISCED 2-6) are distinguished by the level and field of education. The typical age of students at upper secondary level (ISCED 3) is about 15 to 19. There are the following types of vocational schools.
- **Secondary technical schools** (*střední odborné školy – SOŠ*) provide four-year vocational programmes completed by a *maturita* examination (ISCED 3A). These schools have two main tasks: to prepare students for mid-level technical, business and other similar jobs and/or to prepare them for further studies at a higher level.
- **Secondary vocational schools** (*střední odborná učiliště – SOU*) provide two- and three-year vocational programmes completed by a vocational examination (ISCED 3C). Graduates are prepared to perform manual work and similar occupations. They can either enter the labour market directly or undergo a two-year follow-up programme (ISCED 4A) and take a *maturita* examination. Secondary vocational schools also provide a small number of four-year programmes completed by *maturita* (ISCED 3A), providing a qualification to perform demanding manual work and technical occupations. They may also offer shorter programmes (ISCED 2C) for pupils with learning difficulties.
- **Conservatoires** (*konzervatoře*) prepare students for demanding artistic activities in music, dance, singing and drama. Typical age of students is 12 to 21. Studies are either completed by *maturita* (secondary education – ISCED 3B) or by *absolutorium* (tertiary professional education – ISCED 5B).
- **Tertiary professional schools** (*vyšší odborné školy – VOŠ*) provide education to secondary school leavers with a *maturita* certificate and prepare them to qualify for demanding professional tasks. The typical age of students is 19 to 21. Study lasts three to three-and-a-half years and is completed by *absolutorium* (ISCED 5B).
- **Higher education institutions** (*vysoké školy – VŠ*) provide education to school-leavers with a *maturita* certificate in three types of programmes: bachelor (ISCED 5A), master (ISCED 5A) and doctorate (following on from master programmes – ISCED 6). Typical age of students is 19 to 24 (27 for doctorate studies). Almost all VŠ have university status and are internally divided into faculties and branches preparing students for a wide range of highly specialised professions.

The Czech education system in 2008/09



Characteristics

- **Early choice.** Pupils choose between general and vocational educational pathways after completion of compulsory schooling at upper secondary level at the age of 15.

Virtually all (95 %) who complete compulsory education continue studying at upper secondary level. Most of these students (79 %) acquire a vocational qualification recognised by the labour market by the age of 17 to 19. Drop-outs of secondary schools are very low (3 to 4 %).

- **Opportunity to study at all levels.** Each student finishing an upper secondary vocational programme has the opportunity to apply for a qualified job or to continue studies leading to a higher education degree. This increases the attractiveness of VET pathways.

For tertiary education entry requirements, vocational programmes at ISCED 3A level are recognised as equal to general education in *gymnázium*. Graduates of two- or three-year vocational programmes at ISCED 3C level may undergo a two-year follow-up programme and after passing a *maturita* examination are able to apply for tertiary education.

- **Esteemed higher education.** Higher education represents a substantial part of tertiary education. Traditionally higher education institutions (mostly universities) provided only long, five- or six-year programmes leading to a master or doctorate degree. In the 1990s the process of splitting these programmes into bachelor and master programmes started. The share of higher education attainment in the population is quite low compared to other EU countries, but over the last decades the share of young people entering higher education has been growing significantly. This is partly due to development of bachelor studies (Bologna process).
- **A new component: tertiary professional schools.** Schools providing more practically-oriented tertiary education and closely linked to social partners were established in 1995. Rethinking their position within the system and their planned differentiation was the subject of policy discussions in 2008 and 2009.
- **The first step to recognition of non-formal and informal learning.** In 2007, a law on validation and recognition of the outcomes of CVET came into effect. The law makes it possible to acquire a generally recognised certificate for a specific professional competence regardless of how it was acquired.

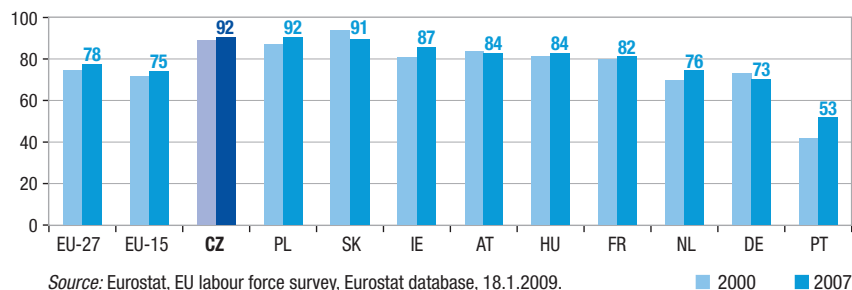
Challenges

Some of the main challenges also expressed in political documents include:

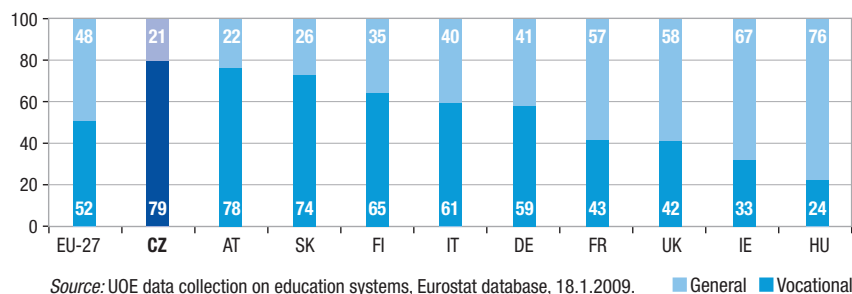
- **Maintaining and improving the quality and attractiveness of secondary vocational education.** After political and economical changes in 1989 the close link between secondary VET and the production sector ceased. The current aim of VET policy is to establish new ways of cooperation between employers and VET.
- **Completing curricular reform.** The goal of the reform launched in 2005 and set to end in 2011 is to modernise education and support development of key competences. The reform also allows schools to shape their educational programmes to the needs of students and to specificities in regional labour markets.
- **Fostering evaluation of schools.** A coherent system of monitoring and evaluation of schools is under development.
- Developing a **national qualifications framework** and completing reform of **final examination in upper secondary education**.
- **Developing tertiary education.** The planned reform should improve participation, permeability, quality and financing of tertiary education.
- **Developing CVET as an integral part of lifelong learning.** Coherent legislation regulating this sector should be set up to create a framework for quality assurance, financing and finalising an overall system of recognition.

Education and training in figures

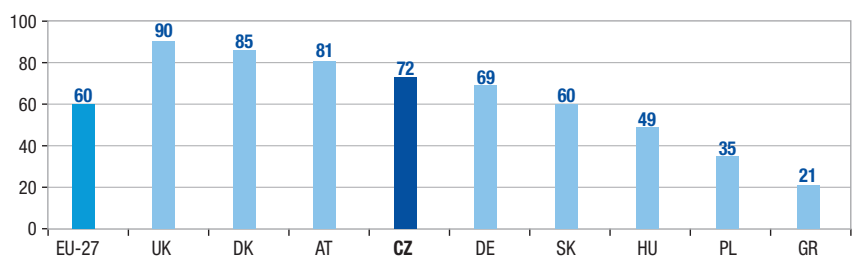
Youth education attainment level
Population aged 20-24 having completed at least upper secondary education (2000 and 2007, %)



Students in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational and general programmes
% of all students in upper secondary education (2006)



Enterprises providing any form of continuing vocational training
% of all enterprises (2005)



Educational attainment

Population aged 25-64 by ISCED level in the Czech Republic and in selected European countries (2007, %)

Country	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6
Czech Republic	9	77	14
Slovakia	11	75	14
Poland	14	68	19
Sweden	15	53	31
Germany	16	60	24
United Kingdom	25	40	30
France	31	42	27
Portugal	73	14	14
Malta	73	14	13
EU-27	29	47	23

ISCED: International standard classification of education

ISCED 0-2: Primary and lower secondary education

ISCED 3-4: Upper secondary and post-secondary education

ISCED 5-6: Tertiary education

The countries are listed by the percentage of their population educated at least to level 3.

Source: Eurostat, EU labour force survey, Eurostat database, 18.1.2009.

Further information

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www.msmt.cz	MMT – Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
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www.nuov.cz	NÚOV – National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education
www.nvf.cz	NVF – National Training Fund
www.czso.cz	ČSÚ – Czech Statistical Office
www.uiv.cz	ÚIV – Institute for Information on Education
www.rvp.cz , www.edu.cz	Czech education and information portals
www.vupsv.cz	VÚPSV – Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs
www.uiv.cz/clanek/29/148	Eurydice – Czech unit
www.refernet.cz	ReferNet national consortium of the Czech Republic
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu	Eurostat – Statistical Office of the European Communities
www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/default.asp	Cedefop – Detailed information on European vocational training systems

We wish to thank Věra Czesaná, Zdeňka Šimová, Hana Žáčková and Zdeňka Matoušková for their valuable contribution.

This brochure focuses on some of the main aspects of vocational education and training in the Czech Republic and does not claim to be exhaustive.

For further information, please contact Sylvie Bousquet, project coordinator.



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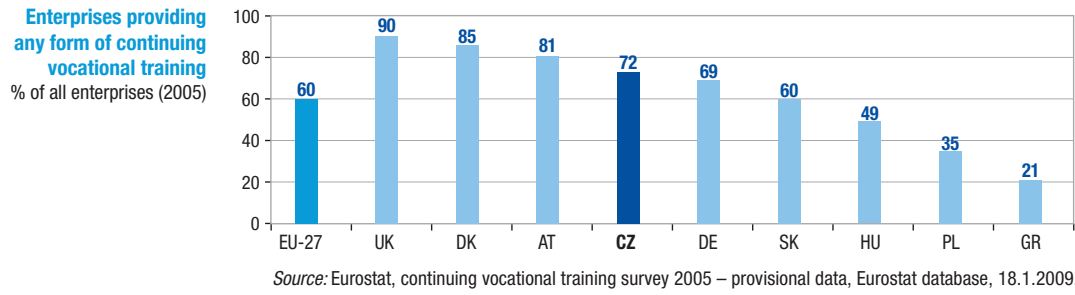
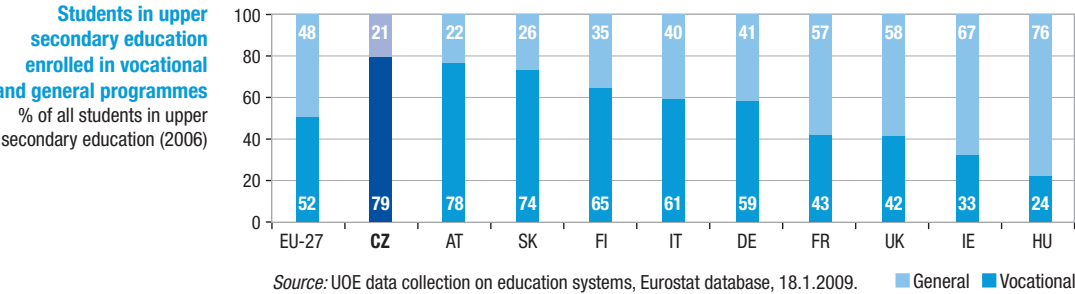
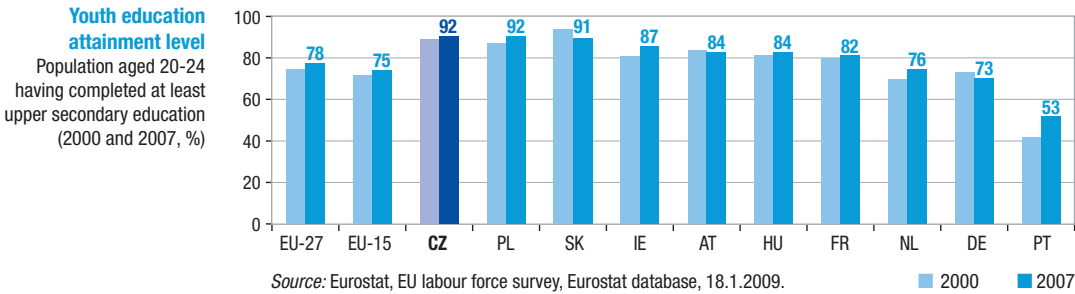
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www.vupsv.cz	VÚPSV – Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs
www.uiv.cz/clanek/29/148	Eurydice – Czech unit
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http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu	Eurostat – Statistical Office of the European Communities
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Spotlight on VET Czech Republic



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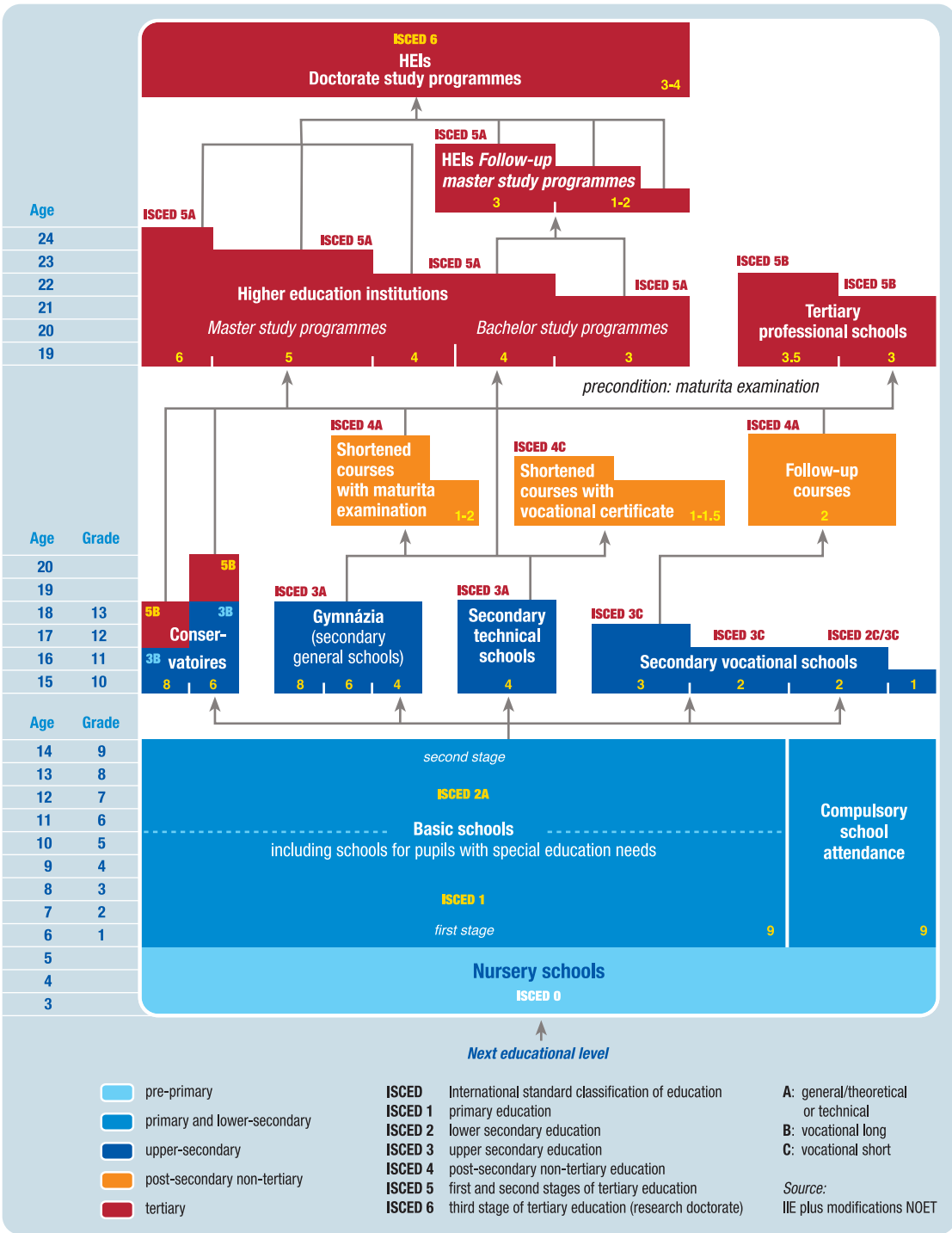
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