



spotlight on VET CZECH REPUBLIC

VET in the Czech Republic

VET has always represented a fundamental part of the Czech education system. Besides gaining from a tradition of quality, it has developed intensively over the last decades. Within the past five years curricula have been reformed and modernised. VET predominantly begins following completion of compulsory education usually at age 15 and is mainly provided at upper secondary and tertiary levels.

Structure

The main body responsible for IVET is the Ministry of Education (MŠMT). Most VET schools are public and founded by regions. IVET is school-based with a large proportion of practical training (at schools, in workshops, practical training centres, and authorised companies) and/or work placements. Representatives of employers are involved in sector skill councils and field groups that set occupational and qualification standards.

Lower secondary level IVET programmes (ISCED 2C/EQF 2-3) represent a marginal segment of secondary VET, as they are designed primarily for students with special needs. These programmes are provided by secondary vocational schools (SOU) or practical schools.

Upper secondary level vocational and technical programmes (ISCED 3C/EQF 3-4) are provided by schools offering three- or four-year programmes:

- three-year vocational programmes at ISCED 3C/EQF 3 (completed by a final examination leading to apprenticeship certificate) enable graduates to enter directly the labour market and perform manual work and similar occupations (such as bricklayer, hairdresser). They are usually provided by SOU. Graduates of a three-year programme can undergo a two-year follow-up programme (ISCED 4A/EQF 4) and pass a *maturita* examination, which opens a path to higher education. SOU may also provide a small number of four-year programmes completed by *maturita* (ISCED 3A/EQF 4);
- four-year technical programmes (completed by a *maturita* examination, ISCED 3A/EQF 4) are

usually provided by secondary technical schools (SOŠ) and entitle their graduates to apply for higher education or perform mid-level technical, business and other similar jobs (such as civil engineering technician, IT system administrator). SOŠ also offer lyceum programmes with a high proportion of general education (up to 70% of the curricula) preparing their graduates for studies at higher education institutions;

- conservatories are a specific type of secondary school with a different regime, preparing students for performing demanding artistic activities in music, dance, singing and drama. Studies are either completed by *maturita* (secondary education – ISCED 3B/EQF 4) or by *absolutorium* (tertiary professional education – ISCED 5B/EQF 6).

VET at tertiary level

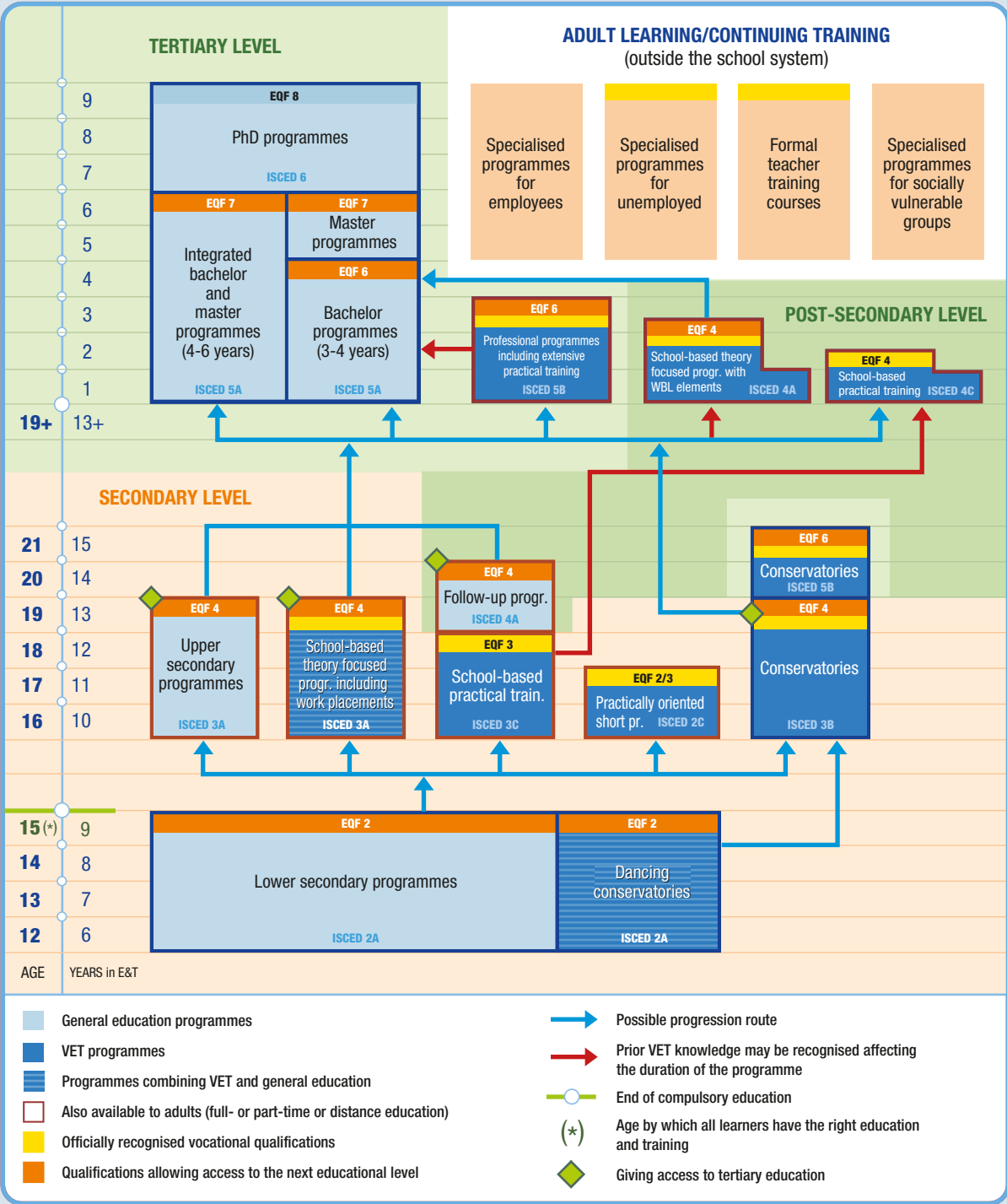
Tertiary professional schools (VOŠ) provide education to secondary school graduates (with a *maturita* certificate) and prepare them for qualified performance of demanding professional tasks (such as nutritionist, dental assistant). Studies last three to three-and-a-half years and are completed by *absolutorium* (ISCED 5B/EQF 5-6).

Higher education institutions provide education to school graduates (with a *maturita* certificate) in three types of programme: bachelor (ISCED 5A/EQF 6), master (ISCED 5A/EQF 7) and doctoral (following on from master programmes – ISCED 6/EQF 8).

Continuing vocational education and training (CVET)

Any adult can study any VET programme in the formal school system. There are also many programmes designed to be combined with working life. The wide variety of CVET programmes provided outside the formal school system is not generally regulated and is subject to the free market; nevertheless, a system of validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes has been gradually developing since 2007.

VET in the Czech Republic's education and training system



NB: ISCED 1997 was used on the chart. Conversion to ISCED 2011 is ongoing.
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Czech Republic.

Distinctive features of VET

- Early choice: pupils choose between general and vocational educational pathways at upper secondary level at age 15. By age 17 to 19, most VET students acquire a vocational qualification recognised on the labour market.
- All IVET programmes are school-based. However, practical training and work placement is an integral part of curricula.
- General subjects are a very strong component of education in all types of VET programmes. The proportion of general and vocational subjects vary depending on the programme: it is usually 30 to 70% of the instruction time.
- The number of early school-leavers is very low (around 5%), inter alia, due to diverse educational pathways and various education choices combined with a high level of permeability.
- Tertiary professional schools: schools providing more practically-oriented tertiary education and closely linked to employers were established in 1995. Although they prepare graduates primarily for entrance to the labour market, vertical permeability to higher education institutions also exists; graduates who, on completion of their studies, continue in bachelor programmes at higher education institutions, may have their subjects and exams from tertiary professional school recognised.
- Higher education: the higher education attainment share in the population is quite low compared to other EU Member States, but in the past decades, the share of young people entering higher education has grown significantly, which is, among other things, due to development of bachelor studies.
- Recognition of non-formal and informal learning: since 2007, a law on validation and recognition of outcomes of CVET has been in force. The law makes it possible (after passing the assigned exams) to acquire a generally recognised certificate for a specific professional qualification regardless of how knowledge, skills and competences have been acquired.
- In the demographic change context (decrease in number of learners), schools are gradually transforming into lifelong learning centres, which provide IVET and CVET at the same time. This results in a wider offer of CVET for the general public while improving school teachers' skills in adult education, and helps to increase young as well as adult learners' awareness of CVET as an integral part of life.

Challenges

The most important challenges are:

- maintaining and improving quality and attractiveness of secondary vocational education by encouraging practical training and work placement in companies;
- promoting evaluation of schools. A coherent system of monitoring and evaluation of schools should be developed;
- further developing the national qualifications framework to include all levels of education;
- improving quality, permeability and financing of tertiary education;
- developing CVET as an integral part of lifelong learning by setting up coherent legislation regulating inter alia financing and quality assurance, and by further developing overall recognition and the career guidance system;
- improving foreign language skills and mobility of learners as well as teaching staff;
- implementing ECVET with special focus on supporting both international and domestic mobility; encouraging social partnership.



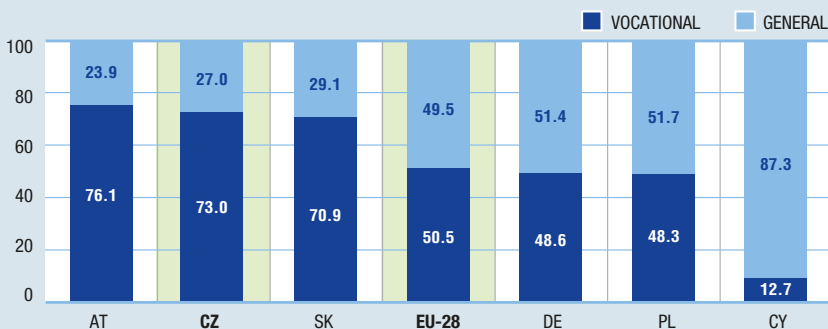
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Education and training in figures

Learners in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational and general programmes

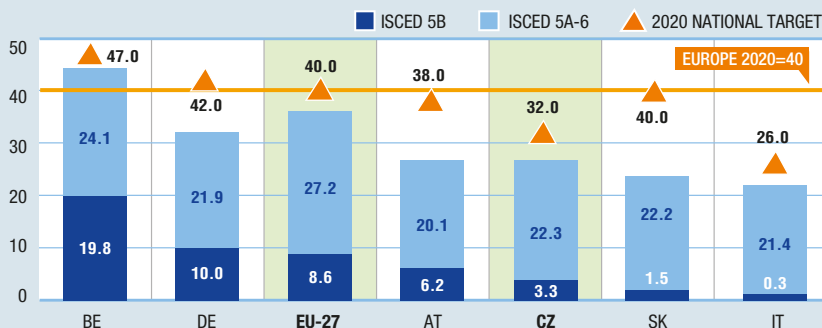
% of all students in upper secondary education, 2011



Source: Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 28.6.2013.

Tertiary education by type

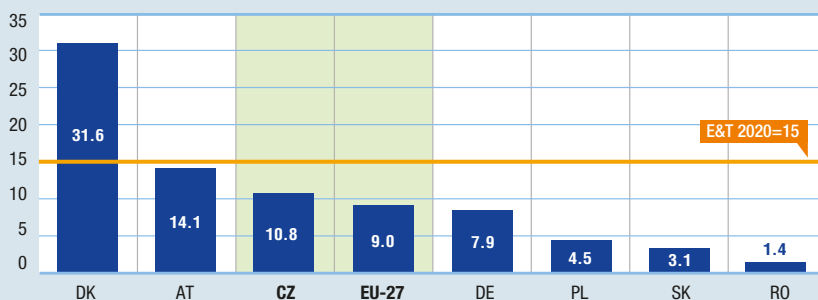
% of 30-34 year-olds with tertiary education by type, 2012



Source: Cedefop calculations based on Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 8.7.2013.

Lifelong learning

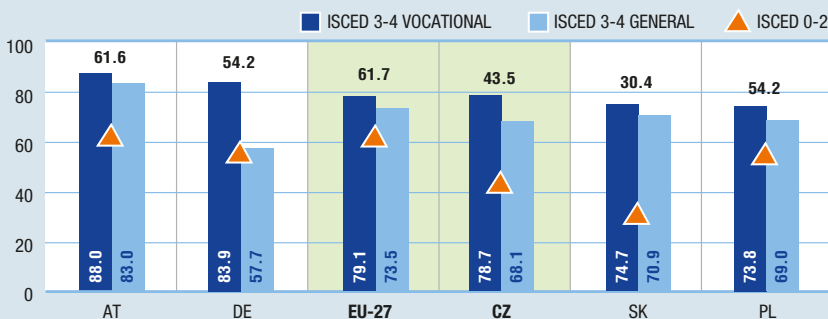
% of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2012



Source: Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 3.7.2013.

Employment rates by highest level of educational attainment

20-34 year-olds no longer in education by highest level of educational attainment, 2009



Source: Cedefop calculations based on Eurostat, 2009 ad hoc module of the EU labour force survey, date of extraction 19.9.2012.



Further information

- Cedefop ReferNet Czech Republic (2012). *VET in Europe: country report 2012*. www.refernet.cz/sites/default/files/vet_in_europe_2012_cr.pdf
- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (2007). *The strategy of lifelong learning in the Czech Republic*. Prague: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. www.msmt.cz/uploads/Zalezitosti_EU/strategie_2007_EN_web_jednostrany.pdf
- OECD (2009). *OECD reviews of tertiary education: Czech Republic 2009*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264049079-en>
- Kuczera, M. (2010). *OECD reviews of vocational education and training: a learning for jobs review of the Czech Republic*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264113756-en>
- Act No 561/2004 on pre-school, basic, secondary, tertiary professional and other education (the Education Act). www.msmt.cz/dokumenty/act-no-561-of-24th-september-2004

www.aivd.cz	AIVD – Association of Adult Education Institutions in the Czech Rep.
www.msmt.cz	MŠMT – Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
www.mpsv.cz	MPSV – Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
www.nuv.cz	NÚV – National Institute for Education, Education Counselling Centre and Centre for Continuing Education of Teachers
www.nvf.cz	NVF – National training fund
www.czso.cz	ČSÚ – Czech Statistical Office
www.edu.cz	Czech information portals on education, curricula and VET
www.vupsv.cz	VÚPSV – Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs
https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Czech-Republic:Overview	Eurydice – description of the Czech Republic education system
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/EN/Information-services/vet-in-europe-country-reports.aspx	Cedefop – Detailed information on European national vocational education and training systems
www.czechfutureskills.eu	Comprehensive information on skill needs in the Czech Republic

