



*Volume 2 of the Education and Training Monitor 2016 includes twenty-eight individual country reports. It builds on the most up-to-date quantitative and qualitative evidence to present and assess the main recent and ongoing policy measures in each EU Member State, with a focus on developments since mid-2015. It therefore complements the existing sources of information which offer descriptions of national education and training systems.*

*The structure of the country reports is as follows. Section 1 presents a statistical overview of the main education and training indicators. Section 2 briefly identifies the main strengths and challenges of the country's education and training system. Section 3 looks at expenditure on education, and demographic and skill challenges. Section 4 focuses on early school leaving, early childhood education and care, and basic skills as important areas related to tackling inequalities and promoting inclusion. Section 5 deals with policies to modernise school education, covering, inter alia, the teaching profession and digital and language skills. Section 6 discusses measures to modernise higher education. Finally, section 7 covers vocational education and training, as well as adult learning.*

*The manuscript was completed on 15 September 2016.*

*Additional contextual data can be found online ([ec.europa.eu/education/monitor](http://ec.europa.eu/education/monitor))*

# 1. Key indicators

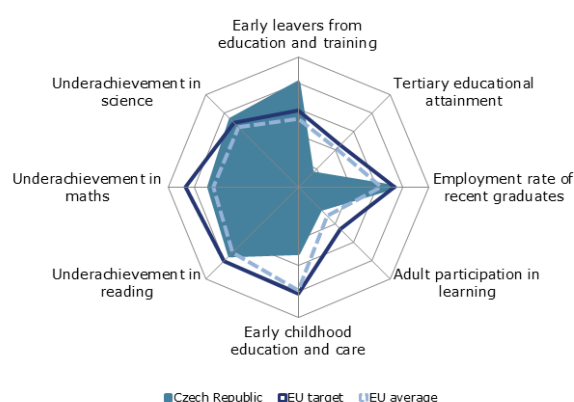
			Czech Republic		EU average	
			2012	2015	2012	2015
<b>ET 2020 benchmarks</b>						
Early leavers from education and training (age 18-24)	Total		5.5%	6.2%	12.7%	11.0%
Tertiary educational attainment (age 30-34)	Total		25.6%	30.1%	36.0%	38.7%
Early childhood education and care (ECEC) (from age 4 to starting age of compulsory education)			87.8% <sup>11</sup>	86.4% <sup>14</sup>	93.2% <sup>11</sup>	94.3% <sup>14</sup>
Proportion of 15 year-olds with underachievement in:	Reading		16.9%	:	17.8%	:
	Maths		21.0%	:	22.1%	:
	Science		13.8%	:	16.6%	:
Employment rate of recent graduates by educational attainment (age 20-34 having left education 1-3 years before reference year)	ISCED 3-8 (total)		82.3%	82.2%	75.9%	76.9%
Adult participation in lifelong learning (age 25-64)	ISCED 0-8 (total)		11.1%	8.5%	9.2%	10.7%
<b>Other contextual indicators</b>						
Education investment	Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP		5.1%	5.2% <sup>14</sup>	5.0%	4.9% <sup>14,p</sup>
	Expenditure on public and private institutions per student in € PPS	ISCED 1-2	€4.588	€4.526 <sup>13</sup>	:	:
		ISCED 3-4	€5.278	€5.297 <sup>13</sup>	:	:
		ISCED 5-8	€7.768	€7.430 <sup>13</sup>	:	:
Early leavers from education and training (age 18-24)	Native-born		5.5%	6.1%	11.6%	10.1%
	Foreign-born		9.3% <sup>u</sup>	10.7% <sup>u</sup>	24.9%	19.0%
Tertiary educational attainment (age 30-34)	Native-born		25.5%	30.4%	36.7%	39.4%
	Foreign-born		28.1%	24.4%	33.8%	36.4%
Employment rate of recent graduates by educational attainment (age 20-34 having left education 1-3 years before reference year)	ISCED 3-4		77.8%	81.6%	69.7%	70.8%
	ISCED 5-8		87.1%	82.7%	81.5%	81.9%
Learning mobility	Inbound graduates mobility (bachelor)		7.4% <sup>13</sup>	7.4% <sup>14</sup>	5.5% <sup>13</sup>	5.9% <sup>14</sup>
	Inbound graduates mobility (master)		9.6% <sup>13</sup>	8.6% <sup>14</sup>	13.6% <sup>13</sup>	13.9% <sup>14</sup>

Sources: Eurostat (see section 9 for more details); OECD (PISA).

Notes: data refer to weighted EU averages, covering different numbers of Member States depending on the source; b = break in time series, d = definition differs, p = provisional, u = low reliability, 11 = 2011, 13 = 2013, 14 = 2014.

Further information can be found in the relevant section of Volume 1 ([ec.europa.eu/education/monitor](http://ec.europa.eu/education/monitor)).

**Figure 1. Position in relation to strongest (outer ring) and weakest performers (centre)**



Source: DG Education and Culture calculations, based on data from Eurostat (LFS 2015) and OECD (PISA 2012).

Note: all scores are set between a maximum (the strongest performers, represented by the outer ring) and a minimum (the weakest performers, represented by the centre of the figure).

## 2. Highlights

- Educational outcomes and the employability of school and higher education graduates are generally good. But the national early school leaving rate, although still outperforming the EU average, has been worsening over the past years.
- Pupils' socioeconomic background strongly influences educational performance, and the participation of Roma in mainstream education needs to increase. Authorities have taken major measures to support the implementation of the pro-inclusive legislation adopted in 2015.
- Teachers' salaries remain low compared to other countries and the teacher population is ageing, requiring further measures to increase the attractiveness of the profession to talented young people.
- Levels of tertiary educational attainment continue to increase rapidly and the long-awaited reform of higher education was adopted.
- On-going reforms have been subject to extensive consultations and awareness-raising campaigns. These aim to make best use of the knowledge and expertise of subject experts and stakeholders and increase ownership by actors on the ground.

### Box 1: The 2016 European Semester country-specific recommendation on education and training

The 2016 European Semester country-specific recommendations (CSRs) to the Czech Republic (Council of the European Union 2016) included a recommendation on education and training:

Raise the attractiveness of the teaching profession and take measures to increase the inclusion of disadvantaged children, including Roma, in mainstream schools and pre-schools.

## 3. Investing in education to address demographic and skill challenges

General government expenditure on education as a share of GDP was 5.2 % in 2014, surpassing the 4.9 % EU average.<sup>1</sup> The relatively high employment rates of adults aged 25-64 who had completed upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (78.9 % in 2015) and tertiary education (84.8 %) decrease sharply for those who had completed lower secondary education at best (41.9 %).<sup>2</sup>

Teachers' salaries increased by 3.3 % from November 2015 and again by 8% from September 2016. Nevertheless teachers' salaries remain relatively very low. This is the case both relative to salaries of other workers with similar educational levels — teachers at primary and secondary level earn less than half of other workers' salaries — and in comparison with their counterparts in other countries (OECD 2015).<sup>3</sup> These factors are part of the reason that talented young people are not attracted to the profession. The Minister for Education does support requests from the sector that salaries be increased up to at least 70 % of salaries of workers with similar qualifications. Additional budget was also allocated to strengthen capacity in early childhood and care and primary education.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Eurostat, General government expenditure by function (COFOG) database, table gov\_10a\_exp.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Eurostat, Employment rates by sex, age and educational attainment level (%), table lfsa\_ergaed.

<sup>3</sup> The ratio of primary, lower and upper secondary teachers' salaries to the earnings of full-time workers with similar educational levels were the lowest among OECD and partner countries in 2014 (latest data).

The Government has approved a long-standing reform of funding for regional education to support the optimisation of the school network is progressing. The reform is necessary to:

- reduce current regional differences in funding levels;
- react to decreasing numbers of students in the relevant cohorts; and
- better support vocational education and training (VET) programmes that best meet labour market needs.

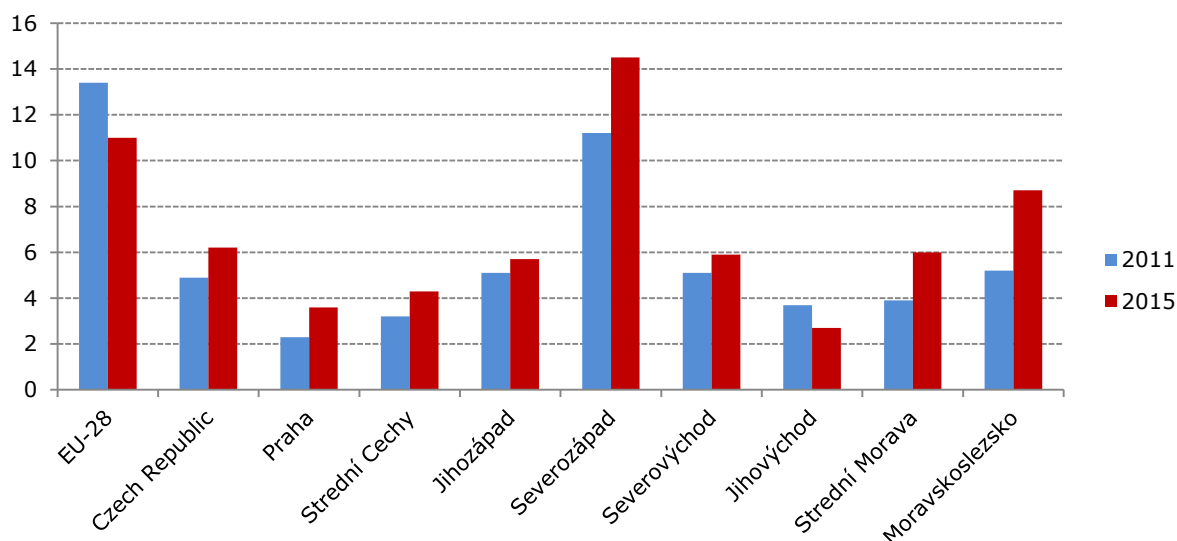
The idea is to shift from per capita financing to funding per number of hours taught and other parameters. The reform also allow for teachers to be paid for extra-curricular activities, to enable schools to offer these free of charge, which is likely to bring benefits in terms of equity. The reform is being supported by an ongoing OECD review on the effectiveness of resource use in schools.

On-going reforms to improve inclusive education and introduce a new career system for teachers will need to be supported with substantial increases in the corresponding budgets to realise their full potential. Currently, there is disagreement over the level of additional funding needed to ensure appropriate implementation of these measures in the medium term.

## 4. Tackling inequalities and promoting inclusion

The national early school leaving rate remains low. However, it increased from 4.9 % in 2010 to 6.2 % in 2015, exceeding the country's 5.5 % national target for 2020. Regional disparities are high, with regional rates ranging between 2.7 % and 14.5 % (see Figure 2 below). Of particular concern are the estimated 72 % of Roma children who leave school early, which has a significant impact on their future labour market and social inclusion prospects (European Agency for Fundamental Rights 2014).

**Figure 2. Early leavers from education and training by NUTS 2 regions in the Czech Republic**



Source: Eurostat, online data code: *edat\_lfse\_16*.

The participation rate in early childhood education and care (ECEC) is low but increasing, at 86.4 % in 2014 compared to the EU average of 94.3 %. Latest figures estimate that only 26 % of Roma children attend ECEC, the second-lowest rate among countries surveyed. This low rate negatively impacts Roma children's future educational outcomes. The number of ECEC places is insufficient and effective coordination for matching supply and demand is made difficult as a result of responsibility being shared between central, regional and local levels of government (Institute for Democracy and Economic Analysis, Economic Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences 2016).

The results of the 2012 OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) were good at national level (OECD 2013). They nevertheless highlighted that students' socioeconomic background had a very strong impact on educational outcomes. In particular, the proportion of Roma children being placed in 'practical schools' (which have lower learning standards) is much higher than the corresponding proportion of non-Roma children (The Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation, 2015). Data from the Czech School Inspectorate does note a decreasing proportion of Roma in special/'practical' education over the past years, however. This is likely due to measures taken by the authorities (see box 2) (Open Society Justice Initiative). More generally, the Czech Republic has the lowest rate for intergenerational mobility in education in the OECD, with 71 % of 25-34 year olds having the same level of education as their parents, compared to an OECD average of 52 % (OECD 2015). The OECD's recent economic review confirmed the negative impact of early streaming on inequalities linked to a student's social background in terms of educational outcomes<sup>4</sup> (OECD 2016).

The proportion of teachers participating in professional development activities related to teaching heterogeneous groups or student guidance and counselling is one of the lowest among countries surveyed by the 2013 OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS): 23.8 %, compared to the OECD average of 31.7 % (OECD 2014).

Further amendments to the Education Act were adopted in 2016, in line with the Roma Integration Strategy 2020, the Action Plan for Inclusive Education and the pro-inclusive legislation adopted in 2015 (see box 2). The amendments introduced compulsory early childhood education from the age of five from September 2017 and allowed for the gradual entitlement to a place for younger children in future years. Since the PISA survey confirmed the impact of participating in ECEC and of socioeconomic background on educational outcomes, the measure is likely to bring particular benefits for disadvantaged students. Appropriate targeted measures to ensure actual attendance and genuinely inclusive ECEC will maximise these impacts.

The Fund for the Development of the Capacities of Kindergartens and Primary Schools continues to fund projects to increase and modernise capacity in pre-school and primary school education in 2016, with co-financing from EU funds. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is piloting a project to care for children aged 6 months to 4 years in 'micro-crèches'.

### Box 2: Education of Roma children and inclusive education

Inclusive education of children with special educational needs, which in the Czech Republic includes children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, is currently subject to major reform.<sup>5</sup> The reform affects children from socially disadvantaged or culturally different backgrounds, disabled children, those with a health disadvantage, and exceptionally gifted pupils. It was triggered by growing inequalities and international criticism of unequal treatment of Roma children. This includes infringement proceedings against the Czech Republic, launched in September 2014 by the European Commission, concerning discrimination against Roma children in education, in breach of Directive 2000/43/EC on Racial Equality. The reform is being supported by an expert team that brings together representatives of the education sector, civil society and teaching faculties.

The Education Act was amended in 2015. It now guarantees the right of pupils with special needs to free individual support measures in mainstream education. Gradual implementation started in September 2016.

Authorities have taken implementing measures since 2015 to:

- identify five types of individual support measures (related to staff, organisation and methodology);
- improve the assessment of pupils' cognitive abilities by educational advisory facilities;

<sup>4</sup> Initial tracking takes place when pupils are aged 11, when some of them leave regular schools for 'long' programmes in grammar schools.

<sup>5</sup> The Czech expression used for 'inclusive education' translates into 'common or shared education'.

- prepare methodological guidance for advisory facilities on how to assign support measures in a harmonised way throughout the country;
- abolish the framework/national curriculum for pupils with mild mental disabilities, in favour of individual educational plans (schools or classes affected will have a transitional period of two years to adapt their school curriculum).

They also organised numerous awareness-raising and training activities across the country, together with intense communication via the websites of the relevant Ministry and Agencies. These focused on school representatives, regional and local authorities, pedagogical and advisory staff, and the general public. They are being supported by EU-funded projects.

Funding for inclusive education in 2016 will be provided through traditional channels, namely specific allowances and developmental programmes. The latter support the recruitment of teaching assistants for socially disadvantaged and disabled students, the purchase of supplementary aids, and free meals. Additional funding needed as of 2017 is subject to intra-governmental negotiations. Authorities are planning to amend the funding legislation by 2018. There are some concerns regarding the amount of funding estimated to be required and the availability of sufficient funding to support the reform.

While this is a very promising reform, the short deadline for implementation is challenging. One concern raised among Czech stakeholders is whether there will be sufficient and timely training of teachers in mainstream schools regarding teaching classes including pupils with special needs. It is also not clear at this stage if/to what extent specialised staff in special and 'practical' schools and regular teachers in mainstream schools will work together to make best use of their existing expertise. Another concern is that counselling facilities would not provide individual measures consistently across the country. More generally, overcoming resistance to inclusive education will be a challenge, as will the risk that non-Roma parents will withdraw their children from schools with large numbers of Roma pupils.

If specific measures to encourage the recruitment of teaching assistants from the Roma community are adopted, these could also usefully help:

- improve educational outcomes for Roma children — partly as a result of offering role models;
- increase participation in ECEC;
- reduce dropout and repetition (World Bank 2016); and
- support the success of the reform.

Strong career guidance and mentoring at transitional phases of education, in particular prior to entering upper secondary education, could support pupils in making better informed choices and help reduce the high early-school leaving rate among Roma students. Measures to incentivise the best and most experienced teachers to teach in challenging schools could bring additional positive impacts for equality and inclusive education.

If the new compulsory year in ECEC is mainstream, inclusive and non-segregated, the measure may also help bring about more inclusive education at higher levels of education. It may bring particular benefit to disadvantaged children, especially Roma children, and positively affect both their integration and their future educational outcomes.

## 5. Modernising school education

In addition to highlighting the low attractiveness of the teaching profession for talented young people (see section 3 above), the OECD TALIS Survey (OECD 2014) notes that teachers themselves perceive their status to be very low. This is a challenge for future recruitment, as more than a third of primary and lower secondary school teachers were older than 50 in 2014, rising to 47.3 % of teachers at upper secondary level.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Source: Eurostat, Distribution of teachers at education level and programme orientation by age groups, table educ\_uoe\_perd01.



The Czech Republic is one of the few EU Member States that still do not have a structured induction programme for new teachers. Authorities are piloting a project and adapting legislation to introduce a long-awaited new career system for teachers. The system aims to link professional development, career and remuneration. It introduces three standards for the profession and three possible career paths (based on roles, specialisations such as ICT coordination, and improving skills). The planned support for beginning teachers may help reduce the current high proportion of teachers who leave the profession. For the new system to produce tangible results, sufficient and sustainable funding to meet the cost of increased salaries will be essential. Funding plans for the period after 2016 remain unclear at this stage. Since January 2016, a new minimum length of 12 months for fixed-term contracts for teachers has been set by legislation, helping to improve conditions.

Against the background of a largely decentralised sector, the Ministry is adopting measures to strengthen central governance of evaluation. From 2016/2017, a new unified entrance examination for upper secondary schools will be implemented and the common parts of the school leaving examination will be strengthened and evaluated externally. From 2016, the Czech School Inspectorate will work on improving the evaluation of educational outcomes and linking internal and external evaluation of schools. Options to support low-performing schools will be explored (Office of the Government of the Czech Republic 2016).

In 2015, criteria for 'quality schools' were developed. They aim to help school managers create a positive environment in schools by encouraging cooperation between teachers, pupils and families. Encouraging teachers to work together may increase the quality and attractiveness of the profession.

Following a change to the curricula for secondary education, which made learning a second foreign language compulsory, the proportion of students at upper secondary level learning two or more foreign languages increased from 47.2 % in 2013 to 57.3 % in 2014.

EU-funded projects aim to:

- increase use of modern digital technologies in education;
- develop teachers' and pupils' digital skills
- improve infrastructure; and
- support innovative practices.

## 6. Modernising higher education

The tertiary educational attainment rate continued its rapid increase, reaching 30.1 % in 2015. This narrows the gap with the EU average of 37.1 %, as shown in Figure 3 below. The increase is particularly noticeable for women (35.9 %, compared to 24.7 % for men). The 32 % national target for 2020 seems within reach. The absolute number of students entering tertiary education is decreasing, due to a demographic decline, which has put pressure on higher education institutions that are fighting for students. The employment rate of recent tertiary graduates<sup>7</sup> has reversed its negative trend, rising to 82.7 % in 2015, compared to the 81.9 % average at EU level. Czech adults with tertiary education qualifications earn on average 75 % more than those who left education after completing upper secondary school (OECD 2015).

The Framework for the Development of Higher Education until 2020 notes increasing numbers of students dropping out of university and estimates that less than half of bachelor degrees started in 2012 will be completed successfully (comprehensive data on dropout and success rates is still unavailable). This delays any increase in the attainment rate and wastes resources. There is no national policy directly focusing on study success or dropout prevention. This is apparently partly due to the fact that some higher education representatives consider that high dropout rates may be linked to high quality standards. Interestingly, the 2 % of students who receive a scholarship designed to support socioeconomically disadvantaged students do show significantly lower dropout rates than other students (European Commission 2015).

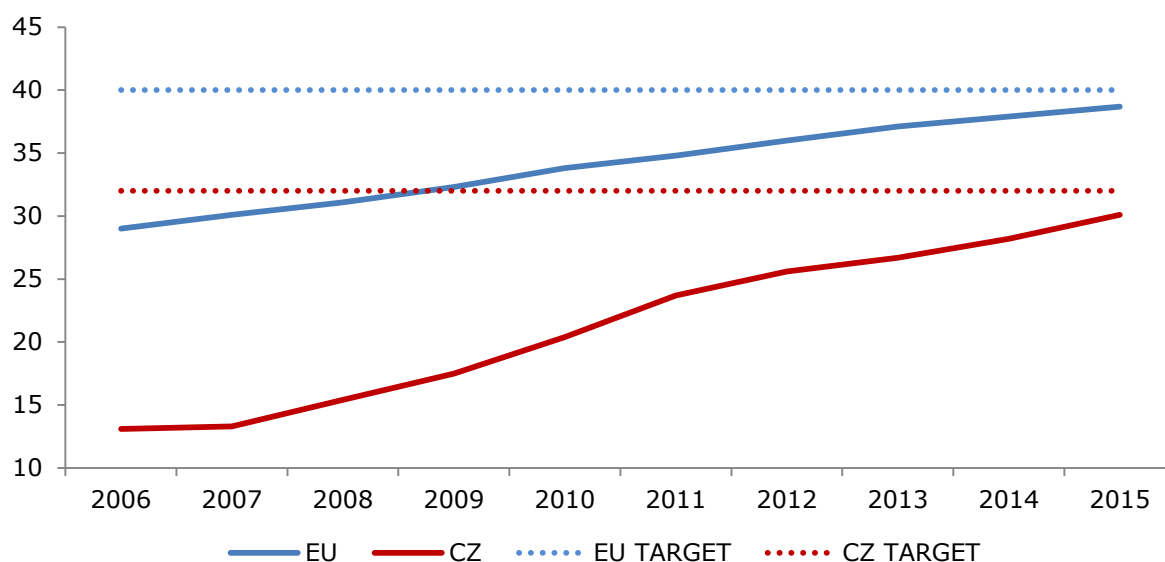
<sup>7</sup> People aged 20-34 who left tertiary education between one and three years before the reference year.



The long-awaited higher education reform was adopted in early 2016. Its main objectives are to raise the accreditation and internal quality assurance standards and to support the diversification of study programmes by creating distinct academic and professional profiles for bachelor and masters programmes. An independent accreditation authority will be set up. Institutional accreditation will be introduced for universities with a functional system of internal quality assurance, providing more freedom for institutions while ensuring appropriate quality control. Grants to students in need will be increased, which is likely to help widen the social make-up of tertiary education graduates.

The Ministry of Education is working to improve quality-based funding for higher education institutions. It aims to use more output indicators linked to quality and labour market relevance. This could increase efficiency in using resources and help improve the offer of professionally-oriented programmes. If employers recognise future professionally-oriented degrees, then more and more students are likely to choose these programmes. This may help reduce the drop-out rate.

**Figure 3. Tertiary education attainment in the Czech Republic**



Source: Eurostat.

In line with documents adopted in 2015, detailing the strategy for the sector until 2020, EU-funded projects will provide support for increasing the accessibility of higher education for diverse groups, more internationalisation, and better profiling of institutions. A new portal aims to provide prospective students with better information about their options, so as to reduce future programme switching (European Commission 2015).

The Strategy for Research and Development Information Systems, adopted by the government in early 2016, is a positive step towards bringing academia and companies closer together. To date, the evaluation framework for public research institutions has not taken into account the level of cooperation with business. This has weakened links between academia and companies.

## 7. Modernising vocational education and training and promoting adult learning

The proportion of upper secondary<sup>8</sup> students in the Czech Republic in vocational education and training (VET) slightly decreased in 2014, to 73.4 %. The employment rate of recent VET

<sup>8</sup> ISCED level 3.

graduates<sup>9</sup> was well above the EU average in 2015 (81.5 %, compared to the EU average of 73.0 %). While employers complain about skills mismatches at times, there is no coherent system for forecasting labour market needs. Adult participation in learning (8.5 % in 2015) remains below the EU average (10.7 %).

In order to further promote technical and vocational programs, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport is working on changing the funding system for regional education, so as to better reflect the long-term employability of graduates in the labour market. The Government will amend framework educational programmes in secondary education to provide an emphasis on practical training in a real work environment, so that these programmes are more effective at improving the quality of VET and the long-term employability of graduates. Following the approval of the amendment to the Education Act, schools are required to use centrally prepared assignments for the final examinations in those secondary education fields that are completed with an apprenticeship certificate. For graduates from apprenticeship schemes, the new idea of a master examination is being developed. The role of employers in career counselling will also be strengthened. This will aim to increase students' motivation to study and put into practice professional skills, while increasing pupils' and teachers' awareness of the requirements for professions, work environments and job opportunities.

The Czech Republic continues to develop the concept of lifelong learning, particularly in further education. Tools to verify and recognise prior learning (Act 179/2006 Coll. on Recognition of Further Education) are being developed. A project to develop a national system of qualifications, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, finished in 2015. In October 2015, other standards of professional qualifications were approved. To address disproportions in individual segments of the labour market, sectoral agreements verified by a pilot project are being used.

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<sup>9</sup> The indicators show the employment rate of graduates aged 20-34, whose highest educational attainment is an upper secondary (ISCED 3) or post-secondary non-tertiary (ISCED 4) qualification, who graduated one to three years before the reference year and who are not currently enrolled in any further formal or non-formal education or training.

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## 9. Annex. Key indicator sources

Indicator	Eurostat online data code
Early leavers from education and training	edat_lfse_02 + edat_lfse_14
Tertiary educational attainment	edat_lfse_03 + edat_lfs_9912
Early childhood education and care	educ_ipart (2011), educ_uoe_enra10 (2014)
Employment rate of recent graduates	edat_lfse_24
Adult participation in lifelong learning	trng_lfse_01
Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP	gov_10a_exp
Expenditure on public and private institutions per student	educ_uoe_fini04
Learning mobility	educ_uoe_mobg03

Comments and questions on this report are welcome and can be sent by email to:  
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