

DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION
EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE

Group of National Experts on Special Needs Education

COUNTRY REPORT FOR THE CZECH REPUBLIC
PATHWAYS FOR DISABLED STUDENTS TO TERTIARY EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

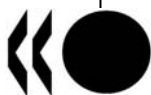
This document is the Country Report produced by the Czech Republic in the context of the EDPC activity on Pathways for Disabled Students to Tertiary Education and Employment. It is one in a series of Country Reports prepared by the countries participating in this activity. Each Report is published under the responsibility of the country that has prepared it and the views expressed in this document remain those of the country author(s) and not necessarily those of the OECD or its Member countries.

The Group of National Experts on Special Needs Education last met in 2008. However, the remaining outputs of the project "Pathways for Disabled Students to Tertiary Education and Employment" continue to be given this reference to maintain coherence to previous material produced by the Group.

For further information, please contact:

Deborah Roseveare [Tel: +33 1 45 24 17 54; email: deborah.roseveare@oecd.org]

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**Transitions to Tertiary Education and to Employment for Young
People with Impairments and Learning Difficulties**

Country Background Report – Czech Republic

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1. Definitions of disability

1.1. Legislative definition of people with disabilities and learning difficulties

Introductory remarks - note on vocabulary

In international terminology as used in Students with Disabilities, Learning Difficulties and Disadvantages (OECD 2007)¹, disadvantage relates only to social disadvantage, i.e. to cross national category (hereafter CNC) C. In the Czech Education Act (2005), the term medical disadvantage is used for what is a CNC B. Accordingly, in this report, what appears in the Czech educational documents as “medical disadvantage” is translated as learning difficulty.

It is all the more convenient to use the expression “learning difficulty” instead of verbatim translation of what belongs in the Czech education system under CNC B because the expression ‘medical disadvantage’ is used also for adults, beyond education, for a different situation (see section 1.3).²

¹ Allocation of Categories of Students with Disabilities, Difficulties and Disadvantages included in the Resources Definition to Cross-national Categories A, B and C based on 1999, 2001 and 2003 data returns – Czech Republic (Students with Disabilities, Learning Difficulties and Disadvantages, OECD 2007):

Cross-national category A

1. Mentally retarded. All students in the educational system with mental handicaps (in special schools, special classes, regular schools) who need reduced education or special educational plans. Children with serious mental handicaps in auxiliary schools, educated according to very reduced educational plans are also included in this category.

2. Hearing handicaps. Students with all types of hearing handicaps – deaf, partially hearing, etc. – who need special educational approaches (in special schools, special classes, and regular schools).

3. Sight handicaps. Students with all types of sight handicaps – blind, partially sighted, etc. – who need special educational approaches (in special schools, special classes, and regular schools).

4. Speech handicaps. Students with all types of speech handicaps who need special educational approaches (in special schools, special classes, regular schools).

5. Physical handicaps. Students with all types of physical handicaps who need special educational approaches (in special schools, special classes, regular schools).

6. Multiple handicaps. Students with all combinations of handicaps who need special educational approaches.

7. Students in hospitals. Hospitalised students, students attending school in hospitals and students in medical institutions.

9. Other handicaps. All other handicapped students (not defined in the other categories).

10. Children with poor health (pre-primary only). Children in poor health at pre-primary level who need special educational approaches.

12. Autistic. Autistic children and students (in special schools, special classes, regular classes).

Cross-national category B

8. Development, behaviour and learning problems. Students with all types of development, behaviour and learning problems (including dysgraphia, dyslexia, etc.), who need special educational approaches.

Cross national category C

11. Socially disadvantaged children, preparatory classes in regular schools. Children in special classes for socially disadvantaged children in regular schools, students from reformatory educational institutions for children and young people.

² Act on Employment 435/2004, § 67

Definition of and recognition of a handicap, disability, difficulty or learning difficulty is a continuously discussed issue for which there is no straightforward solution. The attempts to define these are usually based on a single point of view depending on the purpose of the definition and thus they offer an incomplete picture of this issue.

Legislative definitions certainly are not an exception. However, they undoubtedly are fundamental in understanding the position of people with disability or learning difficulties. Therefore, we will work predominantly with these definitions.

1.2. People with disability and learning difficulties in the Education Act

When referring to disability, learning difficulty and social disadvantage, the Act uses the term 'special educational needs'³.

For the purpose of this Act, disability shall mean mental, physical, visual or hearing impairment, language deficiency, multiple deficiencies, autism and development deficiency in learning or behaviour.

For the purpose of this Act learning difficulties shall mean a weak (substandard) medical condition, long-term disease or modest medical handicap resulting in problems in learning and behaviour which must be taken into account in education.⁴

The Declaration of Basic Rights and Freedoms guarantees all individuals the right to education as well as the duty to complete the compulsory school attendance for the period specified by the law. According to the Education Act, Education in the Czech Republic is based on the principle of equal opportunities; medical condition is, among other issues, an unacceptable reason for discrimination. When providing education to an individual, the needs of the individual have to be taken into account, basic⁵ and upper secondary education must be provided free of charge.

The final result should therefore be required to ensure school children with disabilities or handicaps appropriate conditions for learning, as well as those provided to children without handicap.

According to the Education Act, Head Teachers are obliged to preferentially register the pupils with permanent residence within the given school district.⁶ However, on the other

³ Section 16, para. 1 of the Education Act states: „A child, pupil or student having special educational needs shall be a disabled person, or a person disadvantaged in terms of health condition or social position.“

⁴ Section 16, para. 2 and 3 of the Education Act

⁵ primary + lower secondary

⁶ Section 36, para. 7 of the Education Act

hand, the Decree 73/2005 Coll. enables Head Teachers not to accept a pupil with disability; the Decree only requests Head Teachers to report their decision to the statutory representative of such a pupil, Regional Authority and the municipality of the pupil's permanent residence.⁷

With regards to children, pupils and students with special educational needs the Education Act states in Section 16 para. 6-7:

- The right to education, the content, form and methods of which correspond to their educational needs and abilities,
- The right to creation of conditions prerequisite to provision of such an education and to advisory assistance provided by the school and the school's advisory facility.
- When registering pupils and students with disabilities and learning difficulties, and when such pupils and students complete their education, adequate conditions corresponding to their needs shall be specified.
- Children, pupils or students with disabilities shall be, during their education, entitled to the free use of special textbooks and special didactical and compensatory teaching aids provided by the school.
- At the same time, the Act enables establishing of classes, departments or study groups with modified educational programmes for children, pupils and students whose disability requires such an approach. These classes, departments or study groups are connected with lower expectations on the content of study.
- The right to education in special basic schools is defined for pupils suffering from serious mental impairment, pupils with multiple defects and pupils with autism.

Current legal arrangements have now completely removed the earlier institute of "liberation" from compulsory school attendance, which was widely used especially for children with severe mental disabilities. Labelling a child as „uneducable“ made for parents impossible to place the child in any educational establishment.

The Act enables the schools to establish the post of a Teacher's Assistant. The existence of the post is under the discretion of a Head Teacher and is a subject to approval by the Regional Authority. The opinion of the School Advisory Facility is also required in case of health disabled or disadvantaged.

Education of pupils with special educational needs is further addressed by the Decree 73/2005 Coll. on education of children, pupils and students with special educational needs,

⁷ Section 9, para 4, of the Decree No. 73/2005 Coll.

and of exceptionally gifted children, pupils and students. The decree introduces the term 'supportive measures' that in children with special educational needs means "the use of special methods, procedures, forms and means of educating, compensatory, rehabilitation and teaching aids, special textbooks and didactic materials, inclusion of special education care subjects, provision of pedagogical and psychological services, procurement of a teacher's assistant services, reduction of a number of pupils in a class, department or study group or another adjustment to how education is delivered, taking into account special educational needs of the pupil."⁸

The decree awards the highest level of supportive measures to pupils with severe disability. These include:

- seriously visually impaired,
- children with serious hearing impairment,
- children with severe impairment of communication abilities,
- deafblind,
- children with multiple defects
- children with autism,
- children with severe physical or with severe or profound mental impairment⁹.

The decree distinguishes 4 forms of special education of pupils with disability¹⁰:

- a) individual integration - the pupil is educated in a mainstream school or, alternatively, in a special basic school intended for pupils with a different type of impairment than is that of the pupil,
- b) group integration - the pupil is educated in a class, department or study group established for pupils with disabilities within a mainstream school; or, alternatively, within a special school for children with a different type of disability,¹¹
- c) in a special school,
- d) a combination of these forms.

Should this correspond to the needs and capabilities of the pupil and, at the same time, to the conditions and capabilities of the school, education of pupils with disability should, according to the Section 3, para. 4 of the Decree, preferably take a form of individual integration in a mainstream school.

⁸ Section 1, para. 2 of the Decree No. 73/2005 Coll.

⁹ Section 1, para. 4 of the Decree No. 73/2005 Coll.

¹⁰ Section 3, para. 1 to 3 of the Decree No. 73/2005 Coll.

¹¹ It is actually NOT integration as it does not even place a pupil or student into a mainstream

The Higher Education Act has no special definition of disability and handicap. Approach to students with special educational needs is given in more general non-discrimination and facilitating access to education.¹²

1.3. Legislative definition of disability in the Act on Employment

Persons with medical handicap have, according to the act No. 435/2004 Coll. on employment the right to enhanced protection in the labour market. For the purposes of this act, person with a medical handicap is defined as a person¹³:

- a) recognized by the social security authority as fully disabled
- b) recognized by the social security authority as partially disabled
- c) recognized by the decision of the Labour Office as having a medical disadvantage.

According to this Act, medical disadvantage is defined as a situation whereby the individual can be continuously employed but her / his ability to retain the employment is considerably limited due to her / his *long-term unfavourable medical condition*. The long-term unfavourable medical condition is such a medical condition that lasts or can be supposed to last over one year and limits either psychical, physical or sensory abilities and hence employment.

Opinion on the recognition of full or partial disability is developed Social Security Administration offices, which then decide on the granting of benefits. As a partially disabled person may be recognized if::

- a. because of the long-term bad health decreased its ability to continuous employment for at least 33%, or
- b. has a long-term bad health conditions, that significantly makes difficult life conditions.¹⁴

Fully disabled means, that:

- a. ability to continuous employment decreased for at least 66%, or
- b. because of disability is capable of sustained economic activity only under very exceptional circumstances¹⁵

Czech legislation does not have different definitions of disability for children and adults. The diversity of definitions is given by the areas covered - another definition is used in the field of

¹² Viz níže

¹³ Section 67 of the Act No. 435/2004 Coll. on Employment

¹⁴ Section 43 of the Act No. 155/1995 Coll. on Retirement Insurance

¹⁵ Section 39 of the Act No. 155/1995 Coll. on Retirement Insurance

education, another for employment and other social services in the area. In the law 108/2006 Sb. On social services are for the needs of the law defined the terms:

- **long-term unfavorable health status** - unfavorable health status, which, according to findings of medical science is to take more than one year, which limits the mental, sensory or physical abilities, and affects the care of oneself and self-sufficiency,
- **disability** - physical, mental, mental, sensory or combined disabilities, the impact is or may be a person dependent on the assistance of another person,

Qualify for assistance, support from the state is not bound by the age of the recipient, but on the support, the individual is not exposed to the risk of major changes in the assistance received in the adulthood.

2. Data

Publicly available data on the number of disabled persons in the CR comes mostly from the CSO estimates. As the school data, we face the fact that the law on personal data protection prevents the Institute for Information in Education, which deals with educational statistics, monitor individuals in transition from one educational level to another. Data on numbers of students who, after finishing primary school continue in education, are unfortunately not available. We can only watch the numbers of pupils with special educational needs in basic education and secondary education.

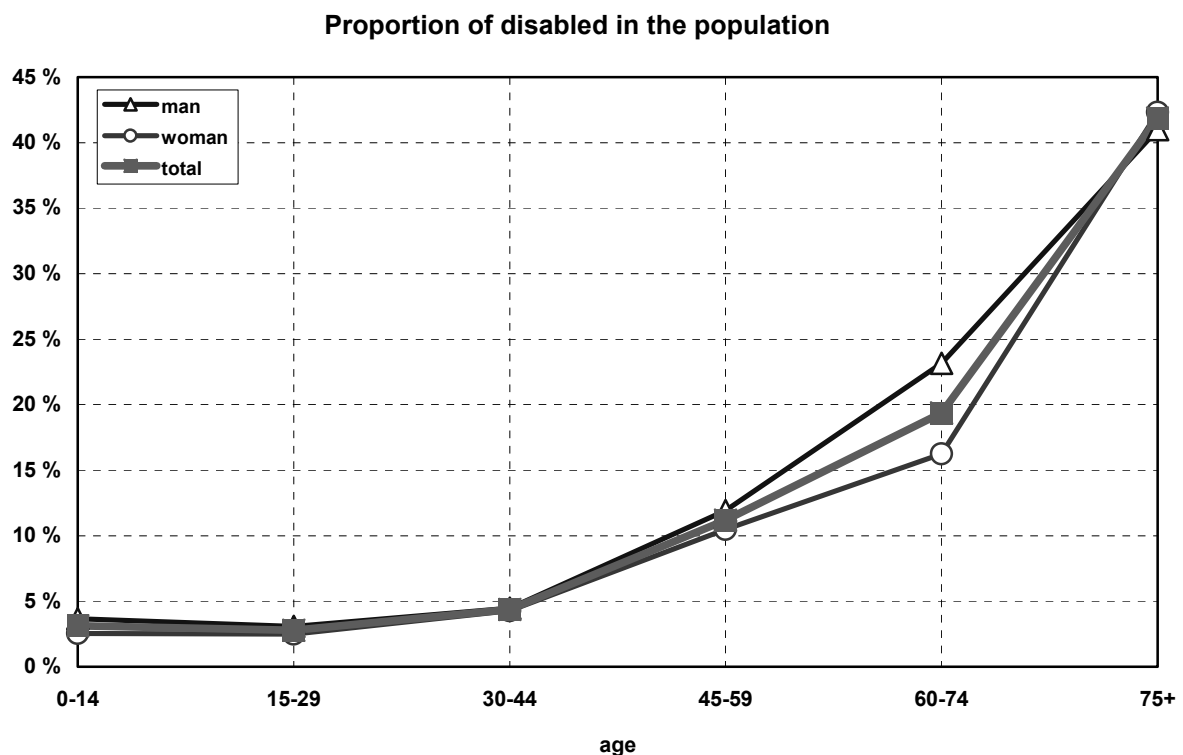
Even worse is the situation at the high school, they do not show the numbers of students with disabilities, or the number of graduates.

2.1. General overview

The precise number of people with disabilities cannot be ascertained; the available statistical data describe frequencies of specific disabilities in the population whereas more than one disability might occur in one individual concurrently. It is assumed that about 10%, i.e. over 1 million, of the Czech Republic population are people with disabilities, and their proportion increases with age. While the number of people with health disabilities in the youngest age groups is about 3%, it reaches 10% in the middle age group. The most significant increase is reported in the above 60 years age group, where the proportion of people with health disabilities reaches 23% and it escalates to 40% in the above 75 years category.

Tab. 1: Comparison of the basic identification data for people with disability and the general population of the Czech Republic¹⁶

	Population	Disabled
Total	10 287 189¹	1 015 548²
Gender		
Man	5 026 184	490 427
Woman	5 261 005	525 121
Age categories		
0 - 14 years	1 479 514	46 208
15 – 29 years	2 175 672	60 621
30 – 44 years	2 312 929	101 331
45 – 59 years	2 195 646	245 743
60 – 74 years	1 462 586	283 274
75 and above	660 842	276 744

Graph 1: Prevalence of disability in the population of the Czech Republic

It is also important to review the causes of disability according to age groups.

¹⁶ Czech Statistical Office (CSO), VOZP 07, page 7-8

Tab. 2: The cause of disability according to age and the type of disability

	congenital	causation			other	not specified	total
		injury	desease	age			
gender							
man	104 709	61 360	584 550	37 318	22 150	45 685	855 772
woman	91 799	40 463	682 903	95 694	15 208	56 163	982 230
total	196 508	101 823	1 267 453	133 012	37 358	101 848	1 838 002
type of impairment							
physical	58 159	67 962	354 063	37 069	8 911	24 243	550 407
visual	17 912	7 700	47 081	7 711	2 226	4 809	87 439
hearing	13 779	2 619	37 634	13 954	1 604	5 110	74 700
mental	62 257	5 207	25 502	7 123	1 041	5 569	106 699
intellectual	13 835	4 253	78 821	11 383	8 307	11 466	128 065
internal	30 567	14 082	724 352	55 773	15 269	50 649	890 692
total	196 509	101 823	1 267 453	133 013	37 358	101 846	1 838 002*

*more than 1 answer was possible.

Congenital developmental defects as a cause of disability are more frequent in men (53%) and, with respect to the type of disability - in the first place – in people with various levels of mental impairment, frequently accompanied by chronic health problems and delayed development (32%).

Injury leads more frequently to disorders of locomotive apparatus than to other types of disability (67%). A disease is the most frequent cause of internal organ impairments (57%). Advanced age and the related degenerative changes to the organism are a predominant cause of internal, particularly the cardiovascular (42%), systems disorders.¹⁷

Inconsistent use of disability classification represents an important weakness to the available data.

¹⁷ CSO, VOZP 07, page 17

Tab. 3: The main characteristics of people with disabilities in the Czech Republic¹⁸*Thousand persons*

Indicator	Total	Age groups					
		0-14	15-29	30-44	45-59	60-74	75+
People with disabilities	1 016	46	61	101	246	283	277
<i>Males</i>	490	28	34	53	130	153	93
<i>Females</i>	525	18	27	48	116	45	184
Highest education attained¹⁾	967						
<i>No education</i>	62	-	16	15	14	8	9
<i>Basic</i>	372	-	26	26	82	99	140
<i>Secondary without the state examination</i>	232	-	8	28	73	76	47
<i>Secondary with the state examination</i>	190	-	8	23	52	62	46
<i>Higher professional</i>	13	-	1	1	4	4	2
<i>University</i>	63	-	1	7	16	24	15
<i>Not found</i>	35	-	0	1	5	11	18
Employment status¹⁾							
<i>Child, pupil/student</i>	22	-	22	0	-	-	-
<i>Employees, self-employed persons</i>	125	-	10	36	67	11	1
<i>Unemployed</i>	43	-	6	11	22	4	0
<i>Retired inactive person</i>	689	-	16	37	122	248	266
<i>Retired active person</i>	35	-	1	6	14	11	2
<i>Homemaker, incl. parental leave</i>	8	-	1	3	2	1	1
<i>Other</i>	25	-	5	5	11	3	1
<i>Not found</i>	22	-	1	3	7	5	5
Type of disability²⁾							
<i>Physical</i>	550	17	26	43	128	153	184
<i>Visual</i>	87	8	6	8	13	19	34
<i>Hearing</i>	75	3	4	5	11	15	37
<i>Mental</i>	107	12	23	19	20	13	19
<i>Intellectual</i>	128	5	9	22	35	24	33
<i>Internal</i>	572	22	21	35	119	186	188
Degree of disability							
<i>Mild</i>	189	22	17	22	42	53	33
<i>Moderate</i>	418	14	17	44	112	122	109
<i>Severe</i>	302	6	17	23	70	80	105
<i>Very severe</i>	104	4	10	12	21	28	28
<i>Not found</i>	3	-	-	0	0	1	2
Degree of self-help¹⁾							
<i>Full</i>	428	-	30	59	152	136	51
<i>Assistance up to 4 hours a day</i>	341	-	10	26	67	106	133
<i>All-day assistance</i>	123	-	8	8	17	27	62
<i>No self-help</i>	75	-	12	8	9	14	31
<i>Not found</i>	0	-	-	-	0	0	0

¹⁾ People with disabilities aged 15 and over only²⁾ One person may have more disabilities

The most frequent type of disability in the up to 15 years of age group is impairment (disorder) of internal organs. Physical disability and mental impairment follow. The same disabilities but in a different order are found in the 15 to 29 years age group: physical – mental – internal organ disorders.

People with disabilities stay longer in education than the general population, although this is not reflected in the highest level of education attained.

¹⁸ CSO, 2007

Tab. 4: Economic activity of people with health disabilities in comparison to the general population

Age	Economic activity					
	child, studying	Employed, self-employed	unemployed	Inactive retired	Active retired	homemaker
Disabled(in %)						
15-19	96,56 %	0,63 %	0,77 %	1,80 %	0,00 %	0,25 %
20-34	8,66 %	29,34 %	11,99 %	41,25 %	4,55 %	4,21 %
35-49	0,00 %	36,51 %	12,79 %	42,33 %	6,81 %	1,56 %
50-64	0,00 %	21,84 %	6,84 %	64,97 %	5,52 %	0,83 %
65+	0,00 %	0,43 %	0,17 %	97,21 %	1,85 %	0,34 %
Population (in %)						
15-19	69,77 %	2,38 %	1,43 %	0,01 %	0,00 %	26,40 %
20-34	6,57 %	73,34 %	10,18 %	1,20 %	0,14 %	8,57 %
35-49	0,00 %	85,73 %	7,32 %	3,81 %	0,50 %	2,64 %
50-64	0,00 %	48,73 %	3,53 %	41,20 %	5,71 %	0,83 %
65+	0,00 %	0,24 %	0,00 %	95,68 %	4,05 %	0,03 %

The most significant differences between people with disability and the general population are in the proportion of employed/self-employed in the 20-34 years and 35-49 years age groups. Similar differences are found in the numbers of people in these age groups receiving the full invalidity-based pension. As a result, people with disabilities are not unusual contributors to the statistics on unemployment.

2.2. Basic education (primary and lower secondary schools)

Furthermore, statistics on education provide predominantly figures pertinent to people with disabilities; statistics on children with learning difficulties are usually published under the developmental disorders category.

Nevertheless, let's review at least some of the data on education and children with health disabilities and disadvantage. Children with disability or disadvantage in the Czech Republic may be educated either through individual integration into the mainstream schools or through group integration (i.e. special classes within mainstream schools) or at special schools, as described above.

The state prefers integration of these children in mainstream classes. The following statistics show development of the various types of education of health disabled or disadvantaged children.

Tab. 5: The total number of pupils with disability in the mainstream education

YEAR	Mental	Hearing	Visual	Speech	Physical	Combined	Autism	Develop. disorders	Total number of handicapped	Total number of pupils
1993	1634	494	818	1673	1666	1671	0	20551	28507	1 061 396
1994	783	360	495	971	1183	959	0	24901	29652	1 027 734
1995	0	283	344	539	770	869	0	25188	27993	1 004 565
1996	0	356	463	602	899	731	0	32733	35784	1 100 096
1997	0	389	405	589	915	770	0	36199	39267	1 092 476
1998	0	421	481	715	947	543	0	40692	43799	1 082 415
1999	0	455	472	592	1012	624	0	45097	48252	1 071 318
2000	124	470	470	641	1093	844	0	48227	51869	1 056 860
2001	230	477	449	680	1086	812	0	49858	53592	1 027 827
2002	256	476	482	667	1111	788	0	49493	53273	994 130
2003	274	510	399	571	1119	859	0	46956	50688	956 324
2004	389	519	384	508	1070	734	0	45317	48921	917 738
2005	697	556	414	542	1079	784	138	41346	45556	881 676
2006	825	537	401	533	1066	682	187	35740	39971	842 249
2007	962	562	373	610	1070	632	271	31593	36073	812 833
2008	1069	570	381	660	1006	733	411	29520	34350	784 622

Tab. 6: Individual integration into mainstream classes of mainstream basic schools

Type of impairment		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
		¹⁾	¹⁾				
Individually integrated pupils		53 550	51 587	45 556	39 982	36 085	34 350
within	mental	383	557	697	825	962	1 069
	hearing	557	556	556	537	563	570
	visual	436	416	414	401	373	381
	speech	671	644	542	542	621	660
	physical	1 235	1 178	1 079	1 066	1 070	1 006
	combined	1 100	836	784	682	632	733
	developmental disorders	49 168	47 400	41 346	35 742	31 593	29 520
	autism	.	.	138	187	271	411
% of the total number of pupils		5,60%	5,62%	5,17%	4,75%	4,44%	4,38%

Source: ÚIV
database

¹⁾ Pupils with autism are included within mental impairments in 2003/04 and 2004/05 statistics.

The following table offers comparison of the proportions of group or individually integrated pupils within the total number of pupils at primary schools. While the proportion of children in specialized classes has not changed significantly over the last five years, the proportion of individually integrated children slightly decreases.

Tab. 7: Pupils with disability in basic schools (primary + lower secondary education)

		2003/04 1)	2004/05 1)	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Disabled pupils		99 386	96 263	89 527	82 080	76 294	72 854
within	Special classes ¹⁾	46 268	45 006	43 971	42 098	40 209	38 504
	Individually integrated	53 550	51 587	45 556	39 982	36 085	34 350
Proportion within the total number of pupils							
Special classes		4,6%	4,7%	4,8%	4,8%	4,8%	4,7%
Individually integrated		5,4%	5,4%	5,0%	4,6%	4,3%	4,2%

Source: ÚIV database

¹⁾ In 2003/04 and 2004/05 including specialized classes for pupils with developmental disorders. Now they are integrated in special class either in special schools or basic schools. .

Tab. 8: Special classes within mainstream basic schools

Type of impairment		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Total number of disabled		46 268	45 006	43 971	42 098	40 209	38 504
within	mental	28 248	27 626	27 450	26 304	25 279	24 416
	hearing	944	937	763	739	708	694
	visual	602	569	306	383	367	339
	speech	1 382	1 402	1 025	1 274	1 228	1 414
	physical	841	896	413	420	363	308
	combined	2 916	2 756	3 906	3 934	3 989	4 023
	autism	377	471	553	650	711	787
	developmental disorders	10 958	10 349	9 555	8 394	7 564	6 523
Disabled girls totally		17 533	17 020	16 601	15 830	15 044	14 344
within	mental	11 516	11 254	11 050	10 546	10 085	9 689
	hearing	403	388	304	298	282	276
	visual	251	232	130	161	138	140
	speech	453	443	312	389	367	408
	physical	359	379	165	172	151	119
	combined	1 165	1 087	1 535	1 511	1 527	1 535
	autism		126	149	161	180	193
	developmental disorders	3 276	3 111	2 956	2 592	2 314	1 984

Source: ÚIV database

1) Special classes including classes at special schools.

These tables imply that approximately half of children with disabilities or disadvantage are integrated through individual integration into mainstream classes and half attends special classes – either as part of mainstream basic schools or at special schools for children with special educational needs. Overwhelming majority of children with mental impairment are placed in the special classes (96% of the total number of children with mental impairment followed up were in special schools) as are children with multiple defects (85%). On the other hand, the majority of children with developmental learning or behaviour difficulties (82%) are integrated in the mainstream classes.

2.3. Upper secondary education

Tab. 9: Total number of students with disability/disadvantage at upper secondary education institutions

Type of impairment	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
mental	10 708	11 433	84
hearing	523	516	121
visual	301	345	81
speech	38	26	6
physical	770	737	318
combined	828	773	48
learning disorders	236	234	216
behavioral disorders	5 203	5 252	3 610
autism	91	51	18
total	18 698	19 367	4 502

The schools within the secondary education system in the Czech Republic (provide education to students aged 15 to 19) were attended by the total of 18 698 children with disability or disadvantage in the 2008/09 school year. The largest was the group of children with mental impairment, followed by children with developmental learning difficulties.

Tab. 10: Individual integration into mainstream classes of upper secondary education institutions

Type of impairment		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Individually integrated¹⁾		4 003	4 509	4 164	4 502	4 729	5 158
within	mental	–	–	48	84	102	89
	hearing	139	131	109	121	121	136
	speech	.	.	.	6	15	21
	visual	116	102	61	81	74	78
	physical	321	325	213	318	262	338
	combined	93	59	40	48	78	81
	autism	.	.	13	18	21	34
	developmental disorders	3 334	3 892	3 680	3 826	4 056	4 381
% within total number of students		0,71%	0,80%	0,72%	0,78%	0,83%	0,91%
Individually integrated girls¹⁾		1 141	1 380	1 419	1 504	1 557	1 777
within	mental	–	–	19	21	37	29
	hearing	69	74	66	76	66	77
	speech	.	.	.	2	4	8
	visual	45	53	38	48	37	31
	physical	152	161	110	177	131	159
	combined	35	26	20	23	32	38
	autism	–	–	1	3	4	7
	developmental disorders	840	1 066	1 165	1 154	1 246	1 428

Source: ÚIV database

¹⁾ Students in full time education only.

The children most frequently individually integrated into the mainstream classes of the secondary education schools are, once again, children with developmental learning or behavioural difficulties (80%). Nevertheless, the proportion of children integrated into the mainstream classes of secondary education schools in total is small - only 27% of children registered as having disability or disadvantage attend an mainstream class at a secondary education institution. The proportion of children with disability or disadvantage within the total number of school pupils decreases with each educational level.

Tab. 11: Special classes at upper secondary education institutions

Type of impairment		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Disabled^{1),2)}		16 407	16 340	16 463	16 239	14 638	13 540
within	mental	12 413	12 591	13 551	13 233	11 331	10 619
	hearing	377	392	401	392	395	387
	speech	.	.	.	12	11	17
	visual	371	349	335	289	271	223
	physical	813	860	679	495	475	432
	combined	1 545	1 252	604	549	695	747
	autism	14	10	14	24	30	57
	developmental disorders	874	886	879	1 245	1 430	1 058
Disabled girls^{1),2)}		6 516	6 653	6 704	6 673	6 145	5 665
within	mental	4 851	5 072	5 475	5 413	4 788	4 516
	hearing	178	183	178	172	159	165
	speech	.	.	.	4	5	12
	visual	202	143	166	149	138	113
	physical	420	488	319	200	194	174
	combined	617	504	300	249	299	311
	autism	7	5	2	4	9	13
	developmental disorders	241	258	264	482	553	361

Source: ÚIV database

¹⁾ Students in full time education only.

²⁾ Special classes including classes at special schools.

2.4. Tertiary education

Unfortunately, the Czech Statistical Office can not collect any data on students with disability or disadvantage attending higher education institutions. The only available data are concerning the number of integrated individual students at higher vocational schools. Percentage of students with disabilities, including students with learning disabilities is less than one percent.

Tab. 12: Number of disabled students in colleges and vocational schools

YEAR	total number of students	number of disabled students	within learning difficulties	within physical handicap
2005	28 792	21	4	11
2006	27 650	26	9	9
2007	28 774	21	4	8
2008	28 027	25	8	7

Access to tertiary education must, by law No. 111/1998 Coll. Higher Education be granted to everyone. In law there is no explicit statement concerning the promotion of education of disabled and disadvantaged students. Obligation to make learning accessible for everybody have only the so-called public universities, private universities do not have such obligation. Yet, in practice, we encounter the fact that a large part private universities created special educational programs for disabled students.

The process of integration of disabled and disadvantaged students in tertiary education very intensified in the last ten years. Schools created assistance centers to help students with specific educational needs. Effectiveness of these centers is not possible to measure. As already mentioned above, universities did not publish the number of students with special educational needs. The only measure, which shows the level of education of people with disabilities, is the educational structure contrasted with disabilities educational structure of the population.

Tab. 13: The structure of educational level attained by people with disabilities¹⁹

	Disabled²⁰	Population²¹	Difference
Without education	6,4%	0,1%	+6,3%
Basic education	38,5%	18,7%	+19,8%
Secondary education	24%	36,5%	-12,5%
Secondary education with school-leaving exam	19,6%	33,6%	-14%
Tertiary	9,1%	11,1%	-2%

The most important differences in education between the general population and people with disabilities are found in the number of people with basic and secondary education. While the proportion of people with no education in the general population nears zero, it is more than 6% among people with disabilities. Proportion of people with basic education only is by nearly 20% higher among people with disabilities. More than one third of the Czech Republic inhabitants have some kind of secondary education without the school-leaving exam; this corresponds to only one fourth among people with disabilities. Similar situation applies to people with secondary education completed with the school-leaving exam (33.6% in the general population vs. 19.6% in the disabled group). The least difference exists in the proportion of people achieving higher education; people with disability are lagging behind by 2% 'only'.

The previous practice of releasing people with severe mental impairment from compulsory education is contributing to the high numbers of people with disabilities with no education. At present, nobody is able to 'free' the child from his or her right to education. Every child has the right to education that is tailored to his or her abilities. Securing the role of a parent or statutory representative as the 'last arbiter' in the decision-making about the type of education for their child represents another important move forward.

¹⁹ Persons above 15 years of age.

²⁰ Czech statistical office, 2007, the 'not reported' category (3.6%) represents the remainder to 100%.

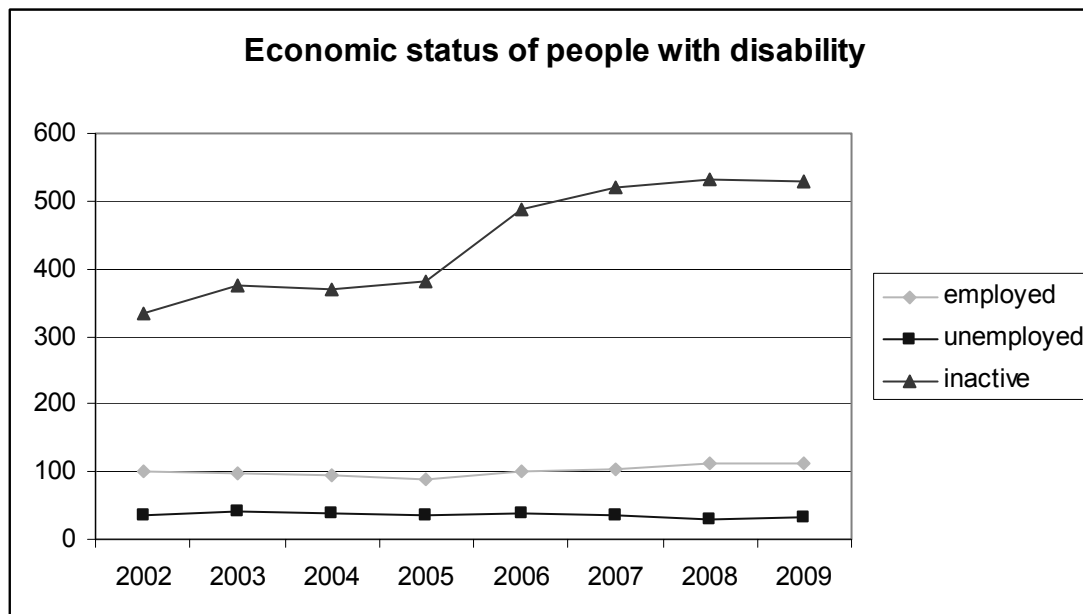
²¹ Czech statistical office, 2007

According to the available data from the Czech Statistical Office (CSO), transfer of people with disabilities from basic schools to secondary education institutions represents a significant problem - current numbers of children with health disabilities at the secondary education level do not suggest any change to this trend in the foreseeable future.

While the CSO reports the total number of pupils in basic schools to be 816 015 and, out of this, 72 857 to be children with disabilities or disadvantage (i.e. 9%), full-time study at secondary education institutions is, according to CSO, attended by 18 698 disabled children out of the total of 527 045 pupils in secondary education (i.e. 3.5% only).

2.5. Employment

The regular CSO survey shows that there is always an increase in disabled people who remain inactive in the labor market. Important role in these statistics plays indicator of age - the age category above 60 years has grown almost twice between 2002 to 2009. Small increase is also in the age groups 30-44 and 45-59. Number of non-active disabled in the age category 15-29 years remains at all times more or less stable.



Tab.14: Economic activity of young people (15-29 years)

	<i>status</i>	<i>counts</i>	<i>%</i>
Population	employed	924,1	43,8
	unemployed	110,2	5,2
	inactive	1076,6	51,0
Disabled	employed	8,3	22,3
	unemployed	2,9	7,8
	inactive	26,0	70,0

Compared to the general population, the level of employment of young people with disabilities significantly lower. While nearly half of young people without disabilities (44%) are employed, in the same age group only 22% disabled is working. The difference in the level of unemployment is not significant, reaching about 2.5%. Significantly higher proportion of the handicapped young people who are not economically active (70% vs. 51% in the general population). The available data unfortunately can not distinguish between the economically inactive students and young people without any major activity.

3. Policy

Support for the integration of citizens with handicap is determined by the attitude of the state towards this issue. Over the last twenty years, the Czech Republic had undergone a period of fundamental political and social changes, including a change to the perception of the role of people with a handicap in the society. Development of civil society and the emergence of many organizations and initiatives representing the interests of handicapped drew attention to many problems and questions related to the social position of these members of society.

A Government Board for People with medical handicap was established in 1991 in response to the need for conceptual approach to addressing the needs of health disabled and disadvantages. The Board still has a role of a governmental advisory body. At the same time, the first National Plan of Actions for the Handicapped Persons was adopted. The second National Plan of Measures to Reduce the Negative Impact of Medical Handicap was agreed upon in 1993. The third National Plan to Balance Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities was accepted in 1998. Foundation of the Czech National Disability Council, established in 2000 as an overarching organization for people with handicap in the Czech Republic, represents an important moment with respect to enforcing the interests of people with disability.

'Medium-term Concept of State Policy towards People with Medical Handicap', accepted in 2004, evaluated the current status and identified the main aims of the state policy for the future. The Concept assesses the contribution the National Plans made, particularly highlighting the many issues faced by the disabled people in the CR. However, the evaluation of the overall impact of the National Plans was generally unfavourable – consequent to the effort to include a wide range of areas in the National Plans, the Plans assumed a role of outlook plans with poorly defined objectives and highly unsatisfactory final review of their fulfilment.²² From 2002-2003, the National Plans were complemented with the so called Regional Plans to Balance Opportunities that should reflect the new regional administrative division following introduction of regions.

²² It was concluded in 2001, three years into the existence of the 1998 National Plan, that of the 92 goals, 45 were in the process of completion, 20 were successfully completed, 25 were not completed and 2 were to be recommended for deletion. (Medium-term Concept of the State Policy towards People with Disabilities, page 8)

3.1. Education

The key educational priority within the Medium-term Concept is securing equal access to education – i.e., in particular, facilitating education in the mainstream as well as special education that should, among other issues, serve as a prevention of social exclusion. Education should provide the individual with an opportunity for personal development, assist in shaping his or her position in the society and serve as a preparation for the job market. The following definition is then comprised within the component goals and measures:

The opportunity to choose either mainstream or the special education must be allowed even in the cases of severe disability although increased competence of the special education is presumed.

Goals and priorities for the development of special education system will be newly formulated, further to the systematic development and support for education of health disabled within the mainstream education. Activities of this educational stream will increasingly, in line with the progress of integration tendencies, overlap with the mainstream education. (...) In addition to the transformation of the existing special schools, special classes within mainstream schools as a specific form of integration will increasingly be used for the pupils with mental impairment."

National Plan for the Support and Integration of Persons with Disabilities 2006 - 2009

The National Plan approved in 2005 is the so far last Government document relevant to supporting people with disabilities and is based on the aims of the Medium-term Concept.

„The basic goal for the period in which the National Plan will be in force is to enable a larger number of children and pupils with disabilities to benefit from integrated education with children and pupils without disabilities while preserving a high standard of education.“

The selected specific measures in the area of schooling and education included:

- *Ensure the regular evaluation of quantitative indicators of the numbers of children and pupils with disabilities at individual levels of education, qualitative indicators of the conditions in individual schools and educational establishments for children and pupils with disabilities. To this end, make statistical reporting more precise for children and pupils with disabilities.*
- *Expand educational and vocational guidance to include an independent unit focusing on vocational opportunities for pupils and students with disabilities. To this end, introduce, by 2006, a system for the training of educational counsellors in*

schools, including an educational programme of work with pupils with disabilities, and – by 2008 – expand this system to all primary and secondary schools.

- *Ensure that the framework educational programmes respect the specific characteristics associated with the education of individual groups of pupils with disabilities, including a specification of the resources available for special-needs teaching support and the methods for the provision of these resources. Pay special attention to the provision of this support in educational programmes intended primarily for pupils without disabilities.*
- *Create conditions so that technical and compensatory aids specifically intended for groups of persons with disabilities and special textbooks and teaching materials that enable and support the education of children, pupils and students with disabilities are provided.*
- *In relation to the education of children and pupils with more severe disabilities, develop their social skills, especially by introducing alternative and augmentative forms of communication. Incorporate these requirements into schools' educational programmes in an appropriate manner.*
- *Draw up an analysis covering the organizational, economic, content, staffing and methodological aspects of a new method of education and the gradual expansion of educational opportunities for children currently exempted from compulsory full-time schooling. Create conditions for an enhancement in the quality of life of persons with severe and profound mental retardation, inter alia by setting up 'activation centres' in schools autonomously established for pupils with mental handicap in order to meet the educational and integration needs of persons who do not use the services of social facilities and are not capable of employment even in sheltered workshops.*
- *Improve the amenities of special-needs teaching centres for the visually impaired to include compensatory equipment which can be effectively lent to schools in the mainstream education which teach visually impaired children.*
- *For pupils who are unable to perceive the spoken word, as a matter of priority progressively provide education by means of sign language at all schools autonomously intended for pupils with special educational needs and at all schools in the mainstream education where such pupils are taught.*
- *Draw up a system for the further education of deaf and blind pupils following up on the framework educational programme of primary education.*
- *To develop educational conditions for autistic children, primarily by optimizing the network of classes for these children, pupils and students, and by continuing to implement systemic consulting services for autistic clients in all the regions of the Czech Republic.*
- *By means of the established "integrated support centres", exploit the existing capacity of schools designed for pupils with disabilities to coordinate methodological, counselling, diagnostic and special-needs teaching activities in the sphere of special-needs education with teachers from schools in the mainstream education.*

- *In connection with the development of the educational system, enable people with disabilities to further their education in the form of courses, including coverage of the economic aspect.*
- *Continue grant and subsidy support for universities in order to support projects making higher education accessible for people with disabilities.*
- *To draw up a proposal for unification of the scope of work of a Teacher's Assistant and a Personal Assistant.*

The attempts to enable the people with disabilities access to the mainstream education are apparent as soon as the first National Plan. Even though there is an important improvement in comparison to the pre-1989 period, the integration of children with disabilities still needs to be intensified and system conditions for such integration implemented. Gradual change to the climate within the schools is taking place, bringing changes to the roles of individual participants in education. Collaboration of all involved is increasingly emphasised, particularly the collaboration of pupils' statutory representatives, adult pupils, advisory institutions and a school as a partner on the way to fulfilment of the right to education.²³

The so called School Advisory Facilities that are, according to the law, responsible for evaluation of the needs of disabled or disadvantaged children, play an important role in the context of integration of people with disability or disadvantage. Changes introduced to the area of School Advisory Facilities are described in the supplement to the Medium-term Concept as follows: *"The bases for a **high quality advisory system in the area of special educational needs** have been established. To ensure that the special educational needs of disabled are fulfilled, the educational practice of the Czech Republic uses, for the purposes of disability diagnostics, services of the Special Education Centres or, alternatively, of Pedagogical and Psychological Clinics. The clinics are based in all district cities in the Czech Republic (77). Two thirds of the 120 Special Education Centres are the centres for children and pupils with mental impairment."*²⁴

Subsequently, however, the Concept highlights the need to better describe and systematically institute the process of establishing the special educational needs of an individual. *There is no legally binding directive that governs such a process. No requisites for submission of a proposal, obligatory specialist assessments, their interpretation for educational purposes, the rights and duties of the disabled citizens*

²³ Medium-term Concept of the State Policy towards People with Disabilities, Supplement 1, page 4

²⁴ Medium-term Concept of the State Policy towards People with Disabilities, Supplement 1, page 5

and their statutory representatives, appeal process, revision, transmission of expert opinions and potential obligatory force of their content have been defined."²⁵

Therefore, pivotal goal of such an advisory facility is to decide to either place the child within the mainstream education and integrate him or her into an ordinary class or to place the child in a special class or special school. The opinion of the advisory facility is not binding for the parents and the parents might insist on placing the child into an mainstream class. Even though, the decision of the advisory body plays a crucial role in determining the educational pathways of children with disability or disadvantage.

3.2. Employment

The conditions of employment of disabled are specified in the third part of the Act No. 435/2004 Coll. On employment. Persons with disabilities are characterized as a vulnerable group in the labor market, ie they are legally entitled to the extra care office work. In connection with disabilities Act introduces the term vocational rehabilitation:

„Vocational rehabilitation includes, in particular consultancy focusing on occupational choice, choice of occupation or profession, theoretical and practical training for a job or profession, mediation, maintain and change jobs, change occupations and creating appropriate conditions for employment or other gainful activity.

Office work in conjunction with a person with disabilities to establish an individual plan of vocational rehabilitation with regard to their medical fitness, the ability to perform continuous employment or other gainful employment and skills, and view the situation on the labor market is based on the observations of the expert working group (§ 7 para. 5)."²⁶

The Employment Act also defines the terms and conditions of sheltered employment and sheltered workshops.

²⁵ Medium-term Concept of the State Policy towards People with Disabilities, Supplement 1, page 5

²⁶ Employment Act, § 69 (para. 4,5)

„Protected job is a job created by the employer for a person with disabilities on the basis of a written agreement with the Labor Office. Sheltered employment should be operated for at least 2 years from the date stipulated in the agreement. The labor Office provides employer contribution for the establishment of protected working place.

Contribution to the establishment of protected job for a disabled person can make a maximum of eight times, for a person with more severe disabilities than twelve times, the average wage in the national economy for the first-third quarter of the previous calendar year. If an employer creates on the basis of one agreement with the Labor Office 10 and more protected jobs, the contribution to the creation of a sheltered workplace for people with disabilities make up ten and a person with more severe disabilities than fourteen times the above average wage.“²⁷

Special provisions concerning employers with more than 50% of employees with disabilities. These employers entitled by law to promote the contribution of the employment of disabled people.

„Employers with more than 50% of people with disabilities from the total number of their employees are receiving a contribution to support the employment of such persons. Competent authority for granting work contribution is an employment agency in whose jurisdiction is the office registered, (...).

Monthly contribution of real wage costs belongs to the employer incurred by a staff member who is a person with disabilities, including social security contributions to state employment policy and contributions for public health insurance, the employer has done for himself from the basis of employees, but not more than 8 000 CZK.“²⁸

Indirect support for the employment of disabled persons is the statutory quota for the employment of people with disabilities. If the employer fails to comply with the quota law, the obligation to compensate the other way - such as collection of goods produced in a sheltered workshop, or levy to the state budget. Use of financial contributions, which are used by employers the most, are not clearly specified by the law. The state is not forced to use the money only to promote the integration of disabled.

²⁷ Employment Act §75, para. 1,2

²⁸ Employment Act §79, para. 1,2

„Employers with more than 25 employees employed are obliged to employ persons with disabilities in the mandatory proportion of these persons to the total number of employees of the employer. Required proportion is 4%.

Obligation referred to in paragraph 1 is to be carried out by

a) employing,

b) purchasing products or services from employers employing more than 50% of employees who are persons with disabilities, or those employers procurement or purchasing goods or services protected by workshops run by civic associations, by the State registered church or religious society or a legal person registered under Law regulating the status of churches and religious societies or by a non-profit company, or procurement on or purchasing products or services from persons with disabilities who are self-employed and employ any employees, or award contracts to these persons or

c) levy to the state budget,

or a combination of a) to c).²⁹

From 1.1.2010 entry into force of the new law, which provides for the assessment of disability in accordance with the findings of medical science, as the current 15-year-old rules no longer satisfactory. Instead of partial and full disability will be assessed 3 degrees of disability - depending on the degree of deterioration of individuals' ability:

1. 1.degree – decrease of working ability of 35-49%
2. 2. degree – decrease of working ability of 50-69%
3. 3. degree – decrease of working ability of 70% and more.³⁰

Specified degrees of disability are relevant for the aid intensity (the amount of disability pension), not to pursue any gainful activity. Restrictions on the labor market are therefore given more practical operation of the market.

In the context of the services provided by the Labour Offices to people with disability or disadvantage, the Act introduces the term 'vocational rehabilitation', mostly

²⁹ Employment Act §81, para. 1,2

³⁰ <http://www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/7733/21102009.pdf>

understood as an advisory and support service in the process of accessing labour market (from the selection of a vocation to attainment and sustaining employment).³¹

Anti-discrimination law

The absence of anti-discrimination legislation has been a frequent target of criticism CR from the European Commission. Draft Law of April 2008, which passed a vote in both houses of parliament, was subsequently vetoed by the President. In June 2009 the House overrode a presidential veto and anti-discrimination law came into force from September 1, 2009.

Act is declared as the incorporation of the rules of European Communities and its aim is to define possible areas of discrimination, but the reasons and ways considered to be direct and indirect discrimination.

“Indirect discrimination on grounds of disability means the refusal or failure to take reasonable steps to have persons with disabilities access to a specific job to perform work or functional or other promotion in order to use the work counseling, or participate in other professional education, or can use the services for the public, unless such measures would constitute a disproportionate burden.

In deciding whether a particular action constitutes an undue burden must be taken into account

- a) rate the benefits that a person with disabilities from the implementation of measures*
- b) financial arrangements for the carrying capacity of natural or legal person who has to implement,*
- c) availability of financial and other assistance to implement measures and*
- d) alternative measures to meet the capacity needs of persons with disabilities.³²*

Anti-discrimination Act is establishing for its purpose another definition of disability:

„For purposes of this Act means a physical disability, sensory, mental, intellectual or other disabilities that may hinder or prevent persons their right to equal treatment in the areas defined in this Act, while it must be the long-term disability that lasts or is under knowledge of medical science at least one year.³³

³¹ Vocational rehabilitation - continuous activity aiming at acquiring and maintaining suitable employment for a person with a disability, provided and financed, upon application, by the Labour Office. In co-operation with a person with a disability the Labour Office will compile an individual plan for vocational rehabilitation. (Official website of Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, (<http://www.noviny-mpsv.cz/en/1612#sabfpwd>))

³² Anti-discrimination Act 198/2009 Coll., §3 para. 2,3

³³ Anti-discrimination Act 198/2009 Coll., §5 para. 6

4. Funding

According to the Ministry of Education accounted for by public spending on education in 2007 152 988.2 million CZK, which represents approximately 4.3% of GDP. Unfortunately, in the statements are not specifically monitored expenditures to support the integration of pupils with special educational needs.

The funding is based on the per capita principle. For schools, the per capita amount is determined at the central level for 4 age groups corresponding to respective levels of education (ISCED 0-3, 5B) and distributed to regions according to the number of pupils in the respective age. Regions determine per capita amounts of different schools. Regional and local education funding to non-performance by national per capita amounts, to cover the funds intended for development programs.

Higher education institutions receive funds from the state budget both for running and capital costs; the proportion was 95:5. Running costs are funded mainly on the per capita principle: institutions are financed mostly on the basis of their performance which is determined by extent of per capita amounts (annual unit costs of study in a study programme) and number of persons that undergo the study. Funding of R&D is allocated mostly on contractual principle. Regulation is adjusted every year which makes it possible to influence activities of Higher Education Institutions in accordance with developmental priorities.

The funding of private schools is based on the same per capita principle, as for public schools. Basic subsidies (50-80 % Czech Republic (August 2009) National summary sheets on education systems in Europe and ongoing reforms 3/9 of the amount granted to similar public institutions, according to the type) can be raised to 80-100 % if the school meets a set of criteria.

Private Higher Education Institutions must be non-profit-making to be eligible for a state grant.

Funding assistant teachers in primary and secondary schools subject to approval by the competent regional authority. Procedure of approving an assistant has been is described in the chapter devoted to legislation. On the contrary, the purchase of

equipment for training and funding of a personal assistant comes to social services and is financed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

Financing public universities represented in 2007 item 153 billion, equivalent to 0.8% of GDP. High schools can equalize opportunities for programs to draw the Ministry of Education and grants including funds ESF. As well as in secondary education we have no data about the amount spent on students with special needs.

It should be noted that in the Czech Republic is no public institution that would primarily address the issue of transition from secondary education. Therefore it is not possible to monitor the expenditure of individual institutions in this field.

The issue of finances refers not as much to the lack of it as it refers to inappropriate allocation of available resources. School financing depends on the school's founder; normative financing, on one hand, might work as a motivating factor for the Head Teachers to admit a pupil with disability or learning difficulty. Financing by the number of pupils at school might play an increasingly important role in situations when numbers of pupils in schools decline. However, on the other hand, integration of pupils with special educational needs represents potentially problematic increase to the school's costs. In case of the need for Teacher's Assistants, the schools are faced with a lack of finances from regional authorities. A school requests an Assistant based on the expert opinion provided by the Special Education Centres or Pedagogical and Psychological Clinic but the amount to be provided for such a position by the regional authority is not specified. Consequently, it is not rare that the resources the regional authority allocates for Teacher's Assistant-related expenses do not cover all the costs – schools are then faced with the decision: not to integrate or to obtain finances from their own sources. Both options are adverse and impede on the schools' motivation to integrate these children.

Citation from an in-depth interview:

"We have for example been told at the region not to integrate as it only means problems."

5. Provision

Since 1st January 2005, the Czech education system has been operating on the base of new acts: Education Act that regulates education from pre-primary to upper secondary and tertiary professional schools and its public administration, and Act on Educational Staff that regulates teacher profession on the same levels. Individual measures of the Education Act come in force subsequently. The Higher Education Act with 17 amendments regulates higher education since 1999.

Schools are administered in the frame of general administration. The responsibility is distributed among the central government, regions (which are 14) and communities. Regions are given a high degree of autonomy.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports preserves the integrated state educational policy by formulating long-term policy objectives of education and development of the education system every four years; then they are submitted to the government. For higher education, long-term plans are formulated now for 2006-2010, and updated annually.

Regions are responsible for education on their territory. Regional authorities formulate long-term policy objectives for their territory in compliance with national objectives every four years. Regions are organizing bodies for upper secondary and tertiary professional schools.

The communities are responsible for compulsory schooling. They establish and administer basic schools and also nursery schools which are not compulsory.

School attendance is compulsory for nine years, usually from the ages of 6 to 15. All pupils start in a comprehensive single structure institution called "*základní škola*", during the second stage it is possible to proceed to "*gymnázium*" – secondary school providing general education.

At compulsory education schools, preparatory classes for socially disadvantaged children may be established during the year prior to their starting compulsory school. The school head decides on the inclusion of a child on the request of the legal guardian and on the written recommendation of a guidance centre.

Primary education institutions

Institution	Typical age	ISCED level
<i>Základní škola</i> (single structure; primary and lower secondary education)	first stage: 6-10; second stage: 11-15	1+2
<i>Gymnázium</i> (general lower secondary education)	11/13-15	2

Secondary education institutions

Institution	Type of education	Length (years)	ISCED level	Theoretical age
<i>Gymnázium</i>	Upper secondary general education	4	3A	15-19
<i>Střední odborná škola</i> <i>Střední odborné učiliště</i>	Upper secondary technical or vocational education	4	3A	15-19
		3	3C	15-18
		2	3C	15-17
		1-2	2C/3C	15-16/17
All upper secondary schools	Post-secondary non-tertiary education	1-2	4A/4B	18-21

Tertiary education institutions

Institution	ISCED level	Length (years)	Theoretical age
<i>Vyšší odborná škola</i> (tertiary professional school)	5B	3 (3.5)	19-21/22
<i>Vysoká škola</i> (higher education institution, university and non-university type)	5A	3/4/5/6	19-22/26
<i>Vysoká škola</i> (university type) – Doctoral studies	6	3-4	-

Concerning the transition issue there is no systematic concept of support for students with special needs (as well as for other students). The process of needs assessment carried out in schools with educational and psychological consultation, guidance counselors - that relates to primary and secondary education. An individual plan is drawn up the student, the implementation of which parents should be able to control. Check of the school by Czech School Inspectorate in this regard is more formal administrative and real benefits individual plan for integrated students is not measured.

The most active support is available to university students, most schools in recent years set up assistance centers, which operate at the level of central administration and provide students with adequate tools to study, take exams and provide offer additional support in relation to the fulfillment of special educational needs.

Outside the school is a kind of personalized care provided to these people, the labor offices, the problem remains missing conceptual access to individuals. There is no functioning system of assessment of needs, assessment of needs beyond the school is limited to a purely medical approach to the person with disabilities. The resulting system of social care, as representatives of disabled warn, is for integration into the labor market rather demotivating.

6. Support services

Support for children in primary and secondary schools is provided in particular within the school. Appropriateness of support and assistance is assessed by the Educational and psychological counseling. Every school has its educational advisor and career counselor, at the elementary school is usually at least one special educator. The school provides children with special needs, particularly counseling and educational assistance, material assistance such as special equipment, are paid from the funds of social support.

Support system for children and young people with special needs can be complicated and disorganized. The method and amount of support is not related to the age of the recipient, as well as the definition of the support depends on the purpose of providing aid.

After completion of education is the main partner for the promotion to jobs, the labor office. The greatest intensity is getting employers with more than 50% of employees with disabilities, which unfortunately, in practice often led to abuse the law.

The above described support in the form of so-called vocational rehabilitation officials are themselves evaluated as very complex administrative process that is better not to offer candidates.

7. Training

Students of the pedagogical faculty are within the main theoretical base trained also in the special needs issue.

Themes include inclusion and professional training courses for educational staff. Greater emphasis is a result of government policy emphasis on the integration of children from socially disadvantageous environment.

For teachers without pedagogical qualification there are organized projects, usually ESF projects, helping them to get teaching qualification and pedagogical training. One of these projects is a project of Pedagogical faculty of ZCU in Pilsen „Reduction of barriers to obtaining teacher qualifications“.

BOX - Reduction of barriers to obtaining teaching qualifications

Project objectives are:

- Reduce barriers for emerging students and graduates non-pedagogical fields of study who wish to pursue higher education Bachelor's and Master's degree courses and teachers to gain teaching qualification as defined in Act No. 563 Coll.
- Extend opportunities for obtaining qualifications for unqualified teachers from Pilsen and Karlovy Vary Region.

Following the Bologna Declaration and the intentions of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in the field of tertiary education the Pedagogical faculty of ZCU Pilsen place teachers' training in a structured form. The three-year non-pedagogical Bachelor's program is followed by a two-year master's program, which receives a graduate teaching qualification. This created the conditions for increased permeability study programs at the UWB and the whole country. Structured study possible a teaching qualification and graduates non-pedagogical Bachelor's and Master's degree programs who have worked on school work as unqualified teachers or who are considering possible action in the school.

Practice shows that graduates of non-teaching programs are listed on entry into the follow-up studies and, possibly, in their studies of teaching programs, problems, because in previous studies did not attend the pedagogical and psychological disciplines, or did not get the basis for the second subject branch double play. The project creates conditions for fill in missing knowledge through variable study modules, from which the candidate chooses, what has not achieved in the previous study, or what he failed to complement study. Modules are offered in full-time study courses for students non-teaching programs and through lifelong learning graduates, who are already in practice. Modules are composed in particular as required by partners to meet the needs of the qualification structure of teaching staff in the Plzen and Karlovy Vary. Applicants for teacher training have the opportunity to choose modules in the preparatory courses for entrance exams and compensatory courses which are offered to students accepted on holidays and during the first year of study.

Project partners are Plzen and Karlovy Vary Region.

Training of special educators and assessment needs of the individual is still based more on the medical concept of disability.

8. Parental and community involvement

Support for integration of children with disability or disadvantage is within the scope (as the main aim or one of the aims) of many non-governmental non-profit organizations and associations. A range of projects takes place thanks to the financing from European funds (ESF in particular), some projects are supported or co-financed by the Czech Government through the respective ministries. Compiling an overview of all existing projects and not omitting any at all would be an arduous task. It is possible to conclude that, in the area of education, non-governmental organizations representing the interests of disabled and disadvantaged provide parents of these children with support and advisory services regarding their rights and the possible process of integrating children in mainstream classes.

It is not the aim of this chapter to provide an overview of all current activities aimed at supporting integration of children with disability or disadvantage. The presented programmes and projects are not unique but are interesting because of their outreach and because they might highlight the trends taking place in this field.

1. Dobromysl

The civic association "ARE WE OPEN?" runs an informational web-based server www.dobromysl.cz, the aim of which is to provide comprehensive information on the issues pertinent to disability - various forms of mental impairment and autism in particular - and the integration of people with this disability in the society³⁴. The server contains a special section dedicated to school integration.

The civic association "ARE WE OPEN?" itself focuses on supporting people with mental impairment in accessing the job market – it offers Vocational Training Programme and, subsequently, Transition Programme.

³⁴ <http://www.dobromysl.cz/o-nas>

2. Rytmus (Rhythm)

Another project concerned with the issues of integration of pupils with disability or disadvantage is the "Inclusion is..." project. This project is being implemented in the basic and secondary schools of one of the Czech regions (Central Bohemia) by the civic association Rytmus from November 2008 to April 2011.

The aim of the project is to, through increased and expanded professional competencies of teachers and teacher's assistants, support development of inclusive environment in mainstream basic and secondary schools of the Central Bohemia region, offer assistance and inspiration for implementation of optimal conditions for education of pupils and students with special educational needs, show the way to utilizing their true potential and thus support improved quality of their preparation and improved baseline position for their future employment.³⁵

The civic association Rytmus, together with Quip – Association for change, initiated 'A Week for Inclusion' last year that took place under the patronage of the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the Eurocommissioner Vladimir Spidla and the Czech Human Rights Minister.

3. Fair school

The League of Human Rights implemented under the guarantee of the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports the Fair School Certificate project. The Fair School project is a tool aimed at improving conditions in the area of human rights, discrimination and inclusive education in the Czech Republic. Through the Certificate, the League of Human Rights hopes to ensure that higher number of children have a chance to be included in the mainstream education and to fully develop their abilities. The Certificate is intended for the basic schools that are crucial for integration of disadvantaged pupils. The League of Human Rights wishes to protect the hundreds of children from being diagnosed with mental impairment at the onset of their educational career and condemned for attendance at basic schools with modified educational programme.³⁶

9. Future developments

Review of the current legislation and the activities of many non-profit organizations as well as state institutions suggest that integration (or inclusion) of pupils with disabilities or disadvantage in the Czech Republic has good starting conditions and the whole process is successfully taking on and expanding. To ascertain that this, indeed, is the case, a number of in-depth expert interviews were carried out with experts from the area of education, social care as well as representatives of associations etc. The aim of the interviews was to explore how the whole process

³⁵ <http://www.rytmus.org/index.php/organizace/projekty/aktualni-projekty/92-inkluzje-kdyz.html>

³⁶ <http://www.ferovaskola.cz/uvod.html>

operates and to identify the obstacles to integration and subsequent advancement of disabled and disadvantaged pupils to the next level of educational system.

The main topics discussed during the interviews together with the results of their analysis are complemented with some important relevant findings from published studies on the present subject.

9.1. PROCESS OF INTEGRATION (INCLUSION)

1.1.1. History

To understand the current situation with respect to education of children with health disabilities or disadvantage, we need to outline the history of education of these children in the Czech Republic. Expert opinion of As. Prof. Jan Michalik from the Palacky University in Olomouc provides a brief overview of post World War II period up to 1989.

"It is important to separate two periods: 1950 - 1970 and then 1970 – 1989. The system of 'uniform school' introduced during the first period meant, in some component indicators, improvement of educational opportunities for this group of pupils in comparison to the first half of 20th century. During this period, segregation of this group of pupils did not constitute a forceful element and was not meant so either. Overall, it is possible to say that, during this period, educational opportunities and the respective advisory assistance have just started to be developed in a systematic way. Significant and permanent divide between the Czech Republic (and the former block of socialist countries) and the developed countries of the so called Western Europe in policies related to system-based assurances for education of this group of pupils can be seen. This divide was not as much represented by differences in didactic and methodological approaches and the respective forms of education as it was represented by lasting undervaluation (or rather neglect) of human and legal aspects related to education of this group of pupils. While the 'western' countries started to vigorously develop systems of joint education for both groups of pupils (with special needs and intact population), massive segregation of both groups persisted in the Czech Republic. (...)

As part of the then developed model of education, the educational needs (in the narrow sense of the term) of certain groups of pupils - particularly with sensory

impairment (visual and partly hearing) were relatively well satisfied, less than the needs of pupils with physical disabilities and poorly (or not at all) the educational needs of pupils with mental impairment. (...)

With the exception of the section dealing with special schools (at that time this meant schools for adolescents requiring special attention), the law did not consider at all the option of integrating a child with disability in mainstream schools. The law endorsed existence of a wide network of special schools.³⁷"

1.1.2. Evaluation of the Czech educational system

Czech educational system after the reform could on the first sight be characterised as an educational system that inclines and is open to integration of pupils with disability or disadvantage. However, legislative framework and proclamations by experts from the field are influenced by other factors that impinge on certainty of such a statement. The question of financial resources is frequently overestimated in the circumstances of the Czech Republic. Lack of finances, or rather their unsuitable allocation, was one of the main themes of the in-depth interviews. A thorough review of issues pertinent to integration of people with disability or disadvantage into the mainstream education verifies the important impact of other matters.

Use of the term 'integration' predominates in the Czech environment over 'inclusion' that tends to be used on a theoretical level, and thus the term integration is to be used throughout the analysis.

Integration tends to be perceived here as a common process. It mainly involves children with learning difficulties whom the interview respondents did not at first perceived as a special group of pupils. Integration of a child with learning difficulties rests with the environment of a specific school as well as the child's parents.

Our educational system groups children with disability or disadvantage with pupils with special educational needs. Evaluation of these special educational needs is performed by Special Education Centres or Pedagogical and Psychological Clinics. The schools follow their expert opinion when educating the child (an individualized education plan is compiled, special educational aids and methods are consulted

³⁷ Jan Michalík: Educational advisory system in the Czech Republic, expert opinion. Faculty of Pedagogy Olomouc 2008, page 8-12

etc.). The need for the presence of a Teacher's Assistant in the class that integrates the pupil is established as part of the activities of the centre (clinic) as is the amount of hours he or she is to spend in the class. Collaboration with Special Education Centres and Pedagogical and Psychological Clinics has generally been evaluated very positively by the interview respondents.

Monitoring of the fulfilment of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) represents a difficulty in the process of evaluating educational needs of pupils. No evaluation criteria are available to enable assessment of the success of fulfilment of the special educational needs of children with disabilities and learning difficulties. Even though the Czech School Inspectorate is supposed to have the controlling role in this, its role in practice is, however, perceived more as a theoretical one – the inspectorate checks that the school has the required expert opinion, that an IEP for the child has been compiled, it might participate at a teaching session in the respective class but it is impossible for the Inspection to monitor long-term adherence to the plan.

Educational Advisors or, alternatively, Special Education Teachers who are present at schools have an important role in the integration of children with disability or disadvantage. However, their role at schools is more an advisory one; inclusion into the school management that has a decision-making authority is not compulsory and it depends on each individual school whether or not an Educational Advisor is included in the school management.

According to reports by schools representatives, acceptance of pupils with special educational needs is smooth and trouble-free. Despite this, representatives of health disabled perceive the fact that Head Teachers have an option of refusing to register a pupil with special educational needs from within their jurisdiction as a critical issue. Parents of disabled children or those with learning difficulties (in this case the disabled in particular) are discriminated against with respect to access to education for their children. A practical consequence of this is the need for an additional effort when searching for a school that will accept the child as well as increased costs, e.g. transport costs when transporting the child further than to the local school.

This has been confirmed by research conducted in 2006-2007 by the civic association Rytmus among the basic school pupils. According to their results, only one fourth of pupils with disability attended their local school³⁸.

In practice, the integration process is perceived as a positive initiative from the perspective of fulfilment of the needs of health disabled or disadvantaged children as well as from the perspective of their fellow pupils. An unequivocal inclination to integrate children with any type of disability continues to be a very rare attitude. Attitudes towards integration depend on the type of disability the pupil has. Predominantly negative attitude towards integration exists with pupils with severe hearing impairment and pupils with severe behaviour difficulties. Integration of these two groups into mainstream classes is currently very problematic, particularly because of the class sizes. The class size, or its limits, are, nevertheless, highly subjective and the ability to cope with a heterogenous classroom varies greatly among teachers and schools. It can be summarized that in most schools, more specialized care the child requires, lesser is schools' willingness to integrate them into mainstream classes. The opinion that integration is possible only for children who do not require a Teacher's Assistant can also still be heard from practitioners. The need for a Teacher's Assistant is then understood as an 'admission ticket' to a special school.

The practice with respect to the pupils with special educational needs was the subject to research commissioned by the Czech Ministry of Education and conducted at the turn of 2008. Probability of inclusive education is reflected in the analysis of School Educational Programmes (SEP): *Because of the specific care required, 19.1% of health disabled are long-term segregated from the mainstream education and, out of this, 7.1% are children with learning difficulties (teaching is performed in a class, a group or even a school specialized on learning difficulties), nearly 55% of the SEPs do not allow evaluation of practice towards pupils with learning difficulties.. (...)*

SEPs of the basic schools are the most open to admission of children from within the health disabled category; nearly 70% (35% as part of the concept and 33% without conceptualization) places no restrictions on admission of such children (most

³⁸ Within the research, this fact is reflected in the limited integration of health disabled into after-school activities of their schoolmates. (Kristína Holúbková, SPI civic association Rytmus, page 14)

frequently, however, this means problem-free admission of children with learning difficulties). Many SEPs declare restrictions in, for example, admission of pupils on wheelchairs due to barriers within the school facilities. However, some schools are able to solve such restrictions through reconstructions or through flexible provision of assistance when overcoming such barriers or temporary modifications of the school interior or exterior. The schools then announce these measures within their SEPs or their web pages. (...)

At the same time, about 17% of SEPs are rather reserved towards admission of disabled pupils; the SEP is modelled for the 'norm' without disability, or the schools select children according to a defined key (giftedness, sports specialisation etc.) that allow only exceptional admission of a disabled child. SEP is not open to the different educational needs of disabled. Or, alternatively, it predominantly admits children with disability (specialisation on a specific type of disability) and other pupils are admitted to a limited extent.

Approximately half of the schools declares preparedness to accept children with learning difficulties, 24% provides data that can be perceived as conceptual openness towards this category. However, at the same time, nearly half of the schools does not provide the public with sufficient information pertinent to admission of disadvantaged children and is indifferent towards this category of pupils. Nevertheless, this could be interpreted (here as well as in within other topics) so that this category of children is probably not perceived as 'problematic' and the schools are able to solve this group's needs flexibly and without significant impact on ordinary teaching and, consequently, they do not perceive it as important to emphasise these information externally³⁹.

The process of integration emphasises the need to truly individualize the needs of all pupils and this is still unsatisfactory in the Czech Republic. The success of integration does not depend merely on the abilities and skills of the child and the integrating school and, therefore, it is not possible to define a universal list of all aspects of care required by the given disability.

³⁹ Analysis of teachers' attitudes towards pupils with special educational needs. People in need, 2009, page 24-28

The association APLA CR that provides services to people with autism, warns in its declaration of 26.11.2008 against the other extreme⁴⁰ - i.e. integration in all circumstances.

“APLA CR advocates legitimacy of integrative and special approach irrespective of the level or type of mental impairment, requests individualized approach during the process of decision-making and perceives the decision, motivation and the overall situation of the family as fundamental. The role of an advisory worker is to explain to the family the advantages and disadvantages of each decision with respect to the personal characteristics of the child. APLA CR is strongly against universal abolishment of either integrated or special approach to education and, on the contrary, encourages collaboration between both streams (basic mainstream a special education) a securing inter-permeability of both systems.

Involvement of parents in the whole process of integration of their children is crucial. In cases where the child with disability or disadvantage comes from socially disadvantaging environment, the chances the child has for successful integration into a mainstream class are significantly reduced.

1.1.3. The main barriers to integration process

a. Attitudes

The society is still burdened by the pre-revolution segregation policy. Even though the perception of disabled is improving (out of all minorities, people are most sympathetic towards disabled), integration is not perceived as completely natural process. On the other hand, segregation of disabled children into special schools is seen by many as a matter of course and is not perceived negatively. Respondents' familiarity with segregation manifests itself through some entirely unexpected (and conflicting) views.

⁴⁰ As the other extreme to total segregation of pre-1989 period.

Citation from an in-depth interview:

"I think that the integration should be supported so that the healthy would see and would be grateful for their health but we need to also appreciate that there should be some limits to integration." (...) If the child is unable to work independently and needs an assistant then that is not acceptable."

b. Information

Lack of information was a frequently mentioned barrier to integration, particularly at three levels:

- a) parents' knowledge of the rights of their children (e.g. the right to attend the mainstream school, available services etc.)
- b) transfer of information about the pupil's needs between the individual education system levels
- c) reciprocal information and knowledge transfer between the authorities concerned with care for children, pupils and students with disabilities and learning difficulties

The in-depth interviews highlighted evident lack of continuity between individual ministries responsible for disabled (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Health), information is lacking even between departments within one authority. The whole process of support of disabled lacks comprehensive conceptualization; education of disabled is even more complicated as another ministry comes into the play (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports).

Conclusion

This project is concerned with transfer of children with disabilities or learning difficulties to higher level of education and to the labour market. Even so, the bulk of the description of the current situation involved basic education. The issues faced by the children and pupils with disabilities and learning difficulties (and their parents, respectively) when registering with a mainstream basic school are representative of the overall situation with respect to the support for disabled in the Czech Republic and have crucial impact on their further direction.

Statistics confirm that transfer from basic to secondary education is the most important problem. Secondary education has different rules than compulsory education and this impacts negatively on the schools' willingness to integrate students with handicaps. Voluntary nature of secondary education complicates obtaining of financial resources for compensation aids or services of an assistant for disabled or disadvantaged students at secondary education schools. Due to the common stereotypes, and lack of information about good practice examples showing individualization within classroom of a normal or even large size via clever management and "orchestrating learning", public perceives individualized approach and compensation of disadvantage/disability rather negatively as 'favouring' these students and introducing unequal opportunities. Even though student with a disability or learning difficulty manages to continue at a secondary education institution, the information about educational needs of this pupil are generally not transferred (similar situation, however, applies to transfer from primary to secondary level of the basic school - this stage is perceived as fundamental as the child does not anymore have one teacher for all subjects and his or her integration is thus more difficult).

Transfer to the tertiary education then appears to be least problematic. The majority of public higher education institutions (financed by the state) have programmes through which support is provided to those with disabilities and learning difficulties and they have or are willing to obtain appropriate aids.

Transfer to the job market then represents another problematic step. The current system of social support is evaluated by the representatives of disabled as demotivating (and this is corroborated by the statistics on economically active people with disability presented above). The efforts of the state to help employing of disabled by subsidizing sheltered workshops⁴¹ is frequently being misused by employers. Similar to education, this is consequent to the current lack of a conceptual framework under which the support to those with handicap would be provided. Once again, the issues pertinent to disability are under the jurisdiction of a number of different authorities and departments and these would need to act in coordination for the

⁴¹ A sheltered work position is a position created by an employer for an individual with a disability based upon a written agreement with the Labour Office. A sheltered work position must be maintained for at least 2 years from the day specified in the agreement. A sheltered workshop is an employer's work unit in which a minimum of 60 per cent of the employees are persons with disabilities.

support to best reflect the needs of an individual and provide the best results possible for her / him as well as the society.