Country Assessment
and the Roma Education Fund's
Strategic Directions

Advancing Education of Roma in the Czech Rebublic

ROMA
EDUCATION
FUND

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Contents

Preface

This document is part of a series of REF Country Studies. It seeks to provide an analysis of the education systems and the ongoing education reforms – from the perspective of the inclusion of Roma children – in the countries taking part in the Decade of Roma Inclusion. The document also reviews the different programmes and activities the Roma Education Fund (REF) has carried out since its establishment in 2005, and highlights the thematic and programme areas REF is planning to concentrate on during the coming three years. The REF hopes that this document will offer a useful instrument for:

- ⇨ Policy-makers seeking to improve education policies that address the education outcome gap between Roma and non-Roma.
- ⇨ Civil society representatives who wish to improve the effectiveness of their educational programmes by making them more relevant to the overall education reform of their country.
- ⇨ The overall development and donor community, who needs to better understand the situation that Roma children are facing, so they can identify niche areas where support and contributions would be most needed and valuable.
- ⇨ REF, which needs to define the areas of policy change upon which it will focus.

The information presented in the document has been discussed with representatives of governments and civil society, through various consultative meetings, in order to ensure that the document realistically reflects the actual situation and the recommendations made are viable. This document reflects a situation at the time when the document was produced. Many countries are experiencing relatively fast changes and REF plans to update these assessments on a regular basis.

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The editors of the series are Tünde Kovács-Cerović, Roger Grawe, and Alexandre Marc. They have developed the model for the studies, provided oversight during the process of preparation and ensured coherence throughout the documents in the series.

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1. Executive Summary

Political, Economic and Social Context

The Czech Republic is a high income country with a gross national income per capita of $11,110 (GNI, Atlas method)[1] and a population of 10.2 million. The country has one of the highest income levels among the new member states of the European Union (EU). Recent economic developments have been favourable, with a strong recovery in growth, significant fiscal consolidation, low inflation, and favourable balance of payments. Inflows of foreign direct investment, among the highest in the region, have contributed significantly to the economy's strength. Despite this broadly favourable economic performance, long-term unemployment remains high. Moreover, pension and health reforms need to be started to prepare for the aging population.

According to unofficial statistics the Roma are the biggest ethnic minority group in the Czech Republic, with an estimate number of 160-300,000 or about 1.6-3% of the overall population. Similar to other countries, statistical information on Roma in the Czech Republic is very limited since the Roma are hesitant of declaring their Roma identity.

A 2003 UNDP report notes that the Roma in the Czech Republic are better off than in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and they also have better social and health conditions. This is due partially to a rather comprehensive system of social benefits and to the general economic context of the Czech Republic. Social exclusion, which is often called ghettoisation, continues to be a pressing problem, as it has negative consequences in all areas, including education.

The Roma's political representation is rather weak with no Roma in the Czech Parliament or in the cabinet of ministers. At the sub-national level, in each region, there is a Coordinator for Roma Affairs. On the municipal level, there are several dozen Roma working as Roma advisors in municipalities and as social workers. Many Roma and pro-Roma NGOs work at the regional and local levels.

The Czech Republic has still not adopted comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation. The Anti-Discrimination Act got rejected by the Senate in January 2006 and subsequently failed to pass the Chamber of Deputies in May 2006. The Anti-discrimination Act was meant to transpose the EU's Racial Equality Directive and replace the existing fragmented anti-discrimination legislation, which consists of more than 60 acts.

Discrimination in the Czech Republic is forbidden based on constitutional bans on discrimination and special sections in the Education Act, Labour Code and other pieces of legislation, as required by the Race and Framework directives 2000/43 and 2000/78. In practice, however, implementation is hindered by the lack of adequate enforcement mechanisms.

Education

The education of Roma in the Czech Republic has shown visible improvement lately. There are clear indicators of political commitment to improve the education of Roma children, such as the

[1] Source: World Bank Czech Republic Country Brief 2006.

Government Concept of Roma Integration, with a new focus and support for early childhood care (e.g. preparatory classes, teacher assistants, free kindergarten, secondary school scholarships, etc.), and the formal abolishment of special education schools targeting Roma. In addition, funding for the education of disadvantaged children is secured through the ministerial development programme replacing the previous irregular grants from private donors. However, the implementation of the different Government acts, regulations and programmes would need to be strengthened via more efficient enforcement mechanisms and enhanced institutional capacities.

The education system in the Czech Republic continues to be burdened by several barriers that exclude Roma from full and sustained participation.

1. Segregation:

   ⇨ The Czech education system does not have a clear response to residential segregation. There are no desegregation strategies. Roma children from remote settlements are educated in substandard schools and are left with no prospect to integrate into further education cycles.
   ⇨ The unusually early tracking that can take place at age 11 in the primary education level, affects Roma most, as the majority of them are enrolled into low quality or practical schools, without further prospects of a quality education.
   ⇨ Formal removal of special schools from the legal framework did not change the fact that Roma are educated in separate facilities, with an inferior curriculum and teachers with lower expectations.

2. Lack of acknowledgement of Roma language, culture and needs:

   ⇨ There are virtually no Roma teachers.
   ⇨ No attention is paid to inclusion, diversity, and equal opportunity issues in the training of head teachers and school managers.
   ⇨ The Czech Republic is one of the rare countries in the region were the Romanes language is not taught, even as an optional subject (with some exceptions as in specialized secondary school for Roma). The importance of Romanes is generally ignored by schools and most NGOs.

3. Implementation gaps:

   ⇨ The Decade Action Plan and earlier government strategies and action plans on Roma, including the Concept of Roma Integration, are not well integrated within mainstream policies, and their implementation is not effective enough.
   ⇨ Despite a recognized need for pre-school education for children from marginalized socio-economic backgrounds, the availability of pre-primary education is still limited.
   ⇨ Funding through open grant schemes and "development programmes" is not effective enough, evaluation of impact on Roma is hampered through insensitive data collection mechanisms.

REF's Activities in the Czech Republic in 2005-2006

By February 2007, REF had received 6 project proposals from the Czech Republic, out of which, it approved 2 projects and committed about 251,000 Euros.

REF has not received many project proposals from the Czech Republic. The first project approved, the Roma Think Tank is an initiative of the Dzeno association with the objective of forming and operating an expert group that would prepare education analyses, develop a partnership with the Czech Government representatives, and lobby for the National Development Fund to increase its budget for Roma education.

The second project, run by Athinganoi, intends to help to implement the Government Directive on Multicultural Education in elementary schools. The project elaborated an innovative material, "Bookmarks", which help teachers to access information on Roma culture and personalities. The project includes teacher trainings and work in eight elementary schools within the Czech Republic.

Strategic Directions for REF's Future Activities in the Czech Republic

Over the next three years, the REF will engage the Czech education authorities, Roma organisations, local governments and Roma communities in policy dialogue and will support in the following priority areas to improve Roma education outcomes in the Czech Republic:

1. Greater access of Roma to existing programmes and services:

   ⇨ Pre-school and kindergarten.
   ⇨ Preparatory classes.
   ⇨ Scholarships and other programmes of support.

2. Better use of EU funds to increase funding for Roma education:

   ⇨ Leverage resources through matching grants for counterpart funds and reimbursable grants for pre-financing.
   ⇨ Build capacity of local communities, governments and Roma NGOs to access EU funds.

3. Systemic changes to redress inequities affecting Roma in the following areas:

   ⇨ Early tracking and over-representation of Roma in basic practical schools.
   ⇨ Development of comprehensive approach to reduce segregation throughout the entire system (including isolated Roma communities).
   ⇨ Evaluation of effectiveness of development programmes regarding Roma.
   ⇨ Lack of cooperation between assistant of the teacher and teachers in the classroom.

Results Framework – Key Results/Indicators Anticipated by REF Activities

Based on the identification of REF strategic priorities, and on the REF's current projects and project pipeline, the results of REF activities should be visible in the next three to four years on the following levels:

1. Legal, financial, and administrative changes:

   ⇨ A more coherent legislative framework, as measured by implementation and enforcement of a new School Act.
   ⇨ An increased flow of EU funds to Roma communities, as measured by resources available to Roma organisations and local authorities in communities with high Roma populations.

2. Education indicators – results are expected in the mid-term, through improved education outcomes for the Roma. Key indicators for the Czech Republic would include:

   ⇨ Increased pre-school enrolment of Roma children.
   ⇨ Increased Roma enrolment in high school and tertiary education, with a commensurate increase in volume and amount of scholarship support.
   ⇨ Increased number of Roma staff in the education system.
   ⇨ Decreased impact of social-economic status on student performance.

3. Improved social cohesion:

   ⇨ Improved cooperation among schools, the Roma community, and Roma NGOs in the educational activities of schools.
   ⇨ Development of active networking between regional Roma coordinators, Roma social workers and pedagogical assistants.

2. Country Profile

As of the 2001 Census, the Czech Republic had a population of 10.2 million, and that number has remained stable to date. In 2005, the age group of 0-14 numbered 1,167,646[2] or 14.9 percent of the total population, which represents a steady decrease in the youngest group. For example, in 1995, the share of the Czech population in the 0-14 age group was 18.9 percent. The school age cohort at age 7 numbered 89,496[3] in 2005.

Gross domestic product per capita in 2005 reached $11,958. Real GDP growth has been slowing down, from 6 percent in 2006 to a projected 4.9 percent in 2007.[4] This compares with a steady growth trend in 2001-2005, which saw GDP rates of 1.9 percent, 3.6 percent, 4.2 percent, 4.7 percent and 6.1 percent in each consecutive year. The unemployment rate is decreasing and reached 7.8 percent in September 2006 – as compared with 10.3 percent in 2003, 9.5 percent in 2004, and 8.9 percent in 2005.

While the general government balance improved significantly in 2004 as the deficit dropped below 3 percent of GDP from in excess of -6 percent in the previous two years, recent fiscal performance has stagnated with a deficit around 3.5 percent in both 2005 and 2006 and improvements are not foreseen in 2007. The persistent deficit was behind the November 2006 decision not to join in the euro monetary union by 2010, which was the date set in the original time scale. Despite this respite, fiscal tightening will inevitably be a feature of the Czech public sector reforms in coming years.

Roma Population in the Czech Republic

According to official data from the 2001 census, the number of Roma is 11,718, down sharply from the 1991 census figure of 32,903.[5] Since 1991, the census has been based on self-declared ethnicity, making the Roma the least numerous minority after the Russians, who had a self-declared population of 12,369 persons or 0.12 percent of the population in 2001.

Experts' estimates the actual Roma population of the Czech Republic[6] to vary between 160,000 and 300,000 (1.6-3 percent of the population), but, clearly, the majority of Roma declares themselves as non-Roma in official surveys.

The census data indicates that the Roma population is relatively dispersed, but there are obviously higher concentrations of Roma in the following regions: Usti Region (Ustecko), Moravia-Silesia Region (Moravskoslezsko), and Middle Bohemia (Stredocesko).[7]

2 Number of children in year 2005/6 in the age 0-14. UIV. *Performance Indicators* (Výkonové ukazatele) 2005/06 – Tab. A1.1.8:. http://www.uiv.cz/clanek/431/363.

3 *Ibid.*

4 http://www.mfcr.cz/cps/rde/xchg/mfcr/hs.xsl/makro_pre.html.

5 The number did not decrease, but Roma are less willing to or more afraid to declare their Roma identity.

6 Cf. UNDP at http://roma.undp.sk/reports_contents.php?parent_id=1&id=198.

7 The official statistics can not be regarded as relevant in absolute figures, but they can be a valuable tool in terms of comparing relative numbers, such as concentration of Roma within regions. The official Roma

As in other countries, statistical information on Roma in the Czech Republic is very limited, and even governmental bodies rely on field research. Several such studies are mentioned in the Reports of the Government Office Councils.[8] The GAC Report,[9] which contained recent research on social exclusion and was funded by the European Social Fund, provides statistical information on 310 communities with a total population of about 60,000-80,000 Roma. The report, which is described in further detail below, is the current source for most of the available housing, employment and education indicators for the Roma in the Czech Republic. Availability of any other ethnic-specific data is extremely limited, due to both legal issues and a lack of research in this area.

The Czech Republic's National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion calls for improvements in data collection, with a focus on education data.

Poverty and Inequality

According to the latest United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report, 4.9 percent of the population was earning less than 50 percent of the median income in 1999-2002.[10] An earlier UNDP report, from 2003, mentions that the Roma in the Czech Republic are better off than Roma in other parts of Central and Eastern Europe, and as a result they have a better social and health status. This finding of comparative well-being is due partially to a rather comprehensive system of social benefits, and it may be also related to the general economic context in the Czech Republic.

Employment

According to the GAC report, the most frequent estimate of the unemployment of Roma in the 310 localities researched was 90-100 percent – as compared to the average national unemployment rate of

population of 11,718 can be multiplied 15-20 times to give a rough idea of the real picture. Thus, the estimates for the regions would be as follows: Usti Region, 16.3 percent of the total Roma population in the Czech Repulic – i.e. only 1,905 persons officially, or approximately 20 times that number, i.e. an estimated 38,000 persons; Moravskoslezsky Region, 15.3 percent of the Roma population (1,797 officially or an estimated 35,940 persons); Stredocesky, 12 percent (1,416 officially and 28,320 estimated). Prague is home to 5.6 percent of the total Roma population (653 officially or an estimated 13,000 persons). The multiplication index of 20 seems to be indicative if we hypothesise that at least half of the Roma do **not** live in the socially excluded localities researched in the GAC Report. That report provides the following estimates of Roma population in excluded localities: Usti Region, 21,000-22,000 Roma in 63 localities; Morovskoslezsky Region, 10,000-10,500 Roma in 28 localities; Stredocesky Region, 3,000-3,500 Roma in 36 localities; and Prague, 9,000-9,500 Roma in six excluded localities.

8 Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, Secretariat of the Council for National Minorities, Prague (2006): *Report on the Situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2005*; and (2005): *Report on the State of Roma Communities in the Czech Republic in 2004*.

9 GAC Report (also called the Gabal Report), full name Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and Communities and the Absorbtion Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field. (Analýza sociálně vyloučených romských lokalit a absorpční kapacity subjektů působících v této oblasti), 2006, MPSV, at http://www.esfcr.cz/mapa/index.html and http://www.gac.cz/documents/brozura_4.pdf. See also „Roma ghettos – hundreds, not dozens?" http://romove.radio.cz/en/article/20955.

10 *The 2006 Human Development Report, h*ttp://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_CZE.html.

9.2 percent in January 2006. Continuing social exclusion – which is often associated with ghettoisation (geographical segregation) and sometimes takes the form of forced relocation of whole communities by the local government – is a very pressing problem, as it has negative consequences in all areas, including education. Discrimination in employment is illegal, but it still persists. Several cases of direct discrimination in access to employment and public places have been successfully prosecuted.

Housing

Until 2006, it was widely believed that most of the Roma, especially those who came to the Czech Republic before 1989, lived integrated among the majority population. The GAC report suggests that many Roma who lived in an integrated setting now live in segregated localities. One alarming finding of the report is that 35% of these excluded localities emerged in the last decade.[11]

According to the report, socially excluded Roma localities originate primarily as a consequence of three phenomena:

- ⇨ Poor Roma families "naturally" migrate to locations with more affordable housing.
- ⇨ Roma families are forced out of desirable flats and allocated alternative housing in locations with a high percentage of Roma inhabitants.
- ⇨ Those who do not pay rent, or those who are considered "inadaptable" or "troublemakers," are ordered to move-usually by a municipality-to lodging houses or to "holobyty" (a specific term denoting "bare apartments").

The Report confirmed clearly that the problem of social exclusion of Roma can no longer be denied, because it has been described and quantified. The research revealed that social exclusion is not an accidental phenomenon. On the contrary, it is influenced by the socio-economic development of the Czech Republic. To a large extent, this exclusion derives from unemployment, market dynamics and the state of elementary education system, which helps perpetuate the problem by transferring social exclusion to new generations.

[11] The most recent case took place in 2006 in Vsetin, where the local mayor moved dozens of Roma to other locations (first to Jesenik and later to Prostejov). This act helped him get elected to the Senate.

3. Political, Economic and Social Situation

Government Structure, Mandate, and Finance

The Parliament of the Czech Republic consists of two chambers: the Chamber of Deputies, which has 200 members elected for a four-year term by proportional vote, and the Senate, which has 81 senators with a six-year mandate, who are elected by majority vote. One-third of the senate seats are up for election every two years.

The last election for the Chamber of Deputies, which took place June 2-3, 2006, produced a dead heat:[12] The Civic Democrats (ODS), Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL), and Greens (SZ) took 50 percent of the seats, while their opponents, the Social Democrats (ČSSD) and Communists (KSČM), made up the other half of the chamber. After a prolonged political deadlock, on January 19, 2007, a centre-right government won a parliamentary confidence vote, with a three-party coalition of the ODS, the KDU-ČSL, and the SZ.

The new coalition government created a new position of minister without portfolio in charge of human rights and national minorities. This minister is in charge of the government councils for Roma affairs, national minorities, human rights, and nongovernmental organisations, as well as the committee for disabled people. The new minister plans to support the adoption of the Anti-discrimination Act and creation of an agency to prevent Roma "ghettoes."[13]

The previous prime minister's government also included the Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party and the Freedom Union – Democratic Union. The Social Democrats were in power from July 1998 until June 2006 under various leaders.

There are no Roma in parliament or serving on the ministerial level. There are Roma in the government advisory bodies, which are described below.

Sub-National Political Structure

At the sub-national level, a reform in 2004 resulted in the formation of 14 sub-national units – self-governing regions (SGRs), including one in the capital city of Prague. The main responsibilities of SGRs are in the areas of secondary education, health, social affairs roads and transport, regional planning, regional development, and culture. SGRs are almost exclusively responsible for secondary education in terms of establishing secondary schools.

At the municipal level, the basic territorial units are municipalities and corporate towns. In the past, a total of 77 districts were dissolved, and their power was conferred to regions and certain municipalities. Currently, there are 6,249 municipalities in the Czech Republic. Municipalities have two types of competencies: "original" competencies, belonging to them on the basis of decentralisation legislation and "transferred" competencies, funded by various state bodies. Key "original" municipal responsibilities include pre-schools, (basic) primary schools, art schools, social

[12] http://www.answers.com/topic/chamber-of-deputies-of-the-czech-republic.
[13] Source: http://www.romea.cz/english/index.php?id=servis/z_en_2007_0004.

services, healthcare, roads, public transport, public parks, sanitation, environmental protection, communal waste, sewage, utilities, territorial planning, construction permits, local development, birth and death records, housing.

Government Finance

Recent years have seen a decline in general government expenditure as a percentage of GDP from 47.3 percent in 2003 to 44.1 percent in 2005. Further fiscal tightening as the Czech Republic prepares to join the European Monetary Union is likely to require further expenditure cuts. Education is funded from the state budget and from funding provided on the regional and municipal levels. Details about the formula for education financing are given below, in the section on education. Educational expenditures have been kept stable at 4.4 percent of GDP since 2002. Special funding for projects to help Roma, including projects targeted at Roma education, is allocated from the state budget for the Implementation of the Concept of Roma Integration, which has a total allocation of CZK 110 million per year.

Responsibility for Education

The current Education, Youth, and Sports Minister is from the Green Party (SZ). She took this position in January 2007, so it is too early to appraise the orientation she will pursue. However, based on preliminary information, the ministry seems likely to proceed with school reforms.

Roma Representation in Government/Parliament

There are currently no Roma in the Czech Parliament or in the cabinet of ministers. The first Roma parliamentary deputies were elected into the Czechoslovak Parliament in June of 1990. Six Roma were made members of the newly constituted Czechoslovakian Federal Parliament, four more were in the Czech National Parliament, and one was in the Slovak National Council. All were elected from the lists of larger non-Roma parties: the Czech-based Civic Democratic Forum, VPN in Slovakia and the Party of the Democratic Left. In 1998-2002, one Rom served as a member of parliament for the Union of Freedom.[14]

Roma are not represented in the Czech government. In 1997, the Council for Roma Community Affairs, then called the Interdepartmental Commission, was established as a central government office. The council initiated a series of "Conceptions of Roma Integration". The first conception was approved by the government in April 1999, the most recent in 2005. Since January 2007, the Council for Roma Community Affairs has been chaired by the Minister in charge of human rights and national minorities. The other members of this council are the human rights commissioner of the Government of the Czech Republic, deputies of 12 ministers, and 14 representatives of Roma communities – one for each region.

There are also three Roma in the Council for National Minorities of the Czech Government Office, whose members are representatives of public administration authorities and 11 national

[14] Monika Horakova Mihalickova.

minorities. The Committee for the Decade of Roma Inclusion was set up within the Council for Roma Community Affairs in 2004.

As a result of the Political Training of Roma Women programme,[15] three Roma stood on the candidate lists in the local election in November 2006, and one of them, won a seat for the European Democrats party.[16]

At the sub-national level, in each region there is a Coordinator for Roma Affairs, whose role is to coordinate the efforts of all stakeholders in their region. Seven of the 14 regional coordinators are Roma. On the municipal level, there are several dozen Roma working as Roma advisors in municipalities and as social workers.

Status with Key International and Regional Partners

In May 2004, the Czech Republic became a member state of the European Union. The Czech Republic is also a member of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, NATO, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Council of Europe, the Visegrad Group, etc.

Anti-Bias and Anti-Discrimination Legislation

The Czech Republic has still not adopted comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation. The Anti-discrimination Act, as approved by the government in December 2004 and by the Chamber of Deputies in December 2004, was rejected by the Senate in January 2006 and subsequently failed to pass the Chamber of Deputies in May 2006.[17] The Anti-discrimination Act was meant to transpose the EU's Racial Equality Directive and replace the existing fragmented anti-discrimination legislation, which consists of more than 60 acts.

Formally, discrimination is forbidden based on constitutional bans on discrimination and special sections in the Education Act, Labour Code and other pieces of legislation, as required by the Race and Framework directives 2000/43 and 2000/78. In practice, however implementation is hindered by a lack of official enforcement mechanisms. In fact, most of the successful discrimination cases were prepared and managed by NGOs. A case of discrimination in education is on appeal at the European Court for Human Rights in Strasburg (*D.H. and Others vs. the Czech Republic*).[18]

[15] Organised by Athinganoi and funded by the Open Society Institute's Roma Participation Project: http://www.athinganoi.cz.

[16] Kristina Alda (2006): *Roma Eye Political Roles*, The Prague Post: http://www.praguepost.com/articles/2006/10/04/roma-eye-political-roles.php.

[17] At the end of May 2006, the governmental proposal for the new Anti-discrimination Act failed to gain the necessary majority in the Lower House of Parliament to override the Senate's veto. The Senate had vetoed the proposal earlier this year, arguing it was vague and included equivocal and empty formulations difficult to put into practice. http://www.psp.cz/cgi-bin/win/sqw/historie.sqw?o=4&T=866 and http://www.senat.cz/xqw/xervlet/pssenat/hlasy?G=5804&O=5.

[18] http://www.justiceinitiative.org/, http://www.justiceinitiative.org/db/resource2?res_id=102627, and http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=2591.

Civil Society

The majority of the Roma populations in the Czech Republic are Rumungre Roma of Slovak origin who have been immigrating since the post-World War II period. Initially, this immigration occurred through organised job recruitment. Later, it occurred in more or less spontaneous waves. Only a few hundred of the Czech and Moravian Roma, the Czech Republic's original Roma population, survived the holocaust. Other groups of Roma in the country are the Vlachika Roma and a small number of Sinti. The most widespread dialect of Romanes in the country is the eastern Slovak one, which is used by almost 70 percent of the Czech Republic's Romanes speakers. The second most widespread dialect is that of the Vlachika Roma.

Many Roma and pro- Roma NGOs work at the regional and local levels. Officially, there were 381 Roma organisations, mostly civic associations, in 2005. About 20 percent of these exist only formally, and some of them were established to achieve a single purpose but have never been dissolved.[19] There are many smaller Roma NGOs, with different degrees of activities and funding. Among the major organisations are the Association of Roma in Moravia, Dzeno, Athinganoi, Romodrom, and Romea, to name a few. The contact list of major national Roma and pro-Roma NGOs is available on line[20] as well as the list of regional and local Roma and pro-Roma NGOs.[21] Local Roma organisations can be also reached through the Regional coordinators for Roma affairs.[22]

Since 2004, the Delegation for the Decade of Roma Inclusion has played an important role: three delegation members are represented in the Committee for the Decade, within the government Council for Roma Community Affairs.

There are many pro-Roma organisations, such as Slovo 21, Nova Skola, People in Need, Step by Step CR , League for Human Rights, the IQ Roma Service, etc. Civil society has played an important role in different aspects of design and implementation of policies related to Roma, including: the introduction of Roma teacher's assistants (Association of Roma in Moravia and Nova skola); the introduction of street social work (People in Need); the support of Roma students (Athinganoi and Slovo 21); and research on discrimination in testing (Poradna pro obcanstvi a lidska prava). The communication between government and civil society has improved in the past decade, as the government slowly begins to recognize that NGOs can help them solve pressing issues[23] and NGOs learned more constructive methods of criticism.

[19] *Report on the State of National Minorities in 2005*, Czech Republic Council for National Minorities.

[20] GAC Report on line. Chapter 6.5 Vybrané nadregionálně působící NNO. http://www.esfcr.cz/mapa/kontakty_nnonad.html.

[21] GAC Report on line. Chapter 6.4 Adresář relevantních NNO http://www.esfcr.cz/mapa/kontakty_nno.htm.

[22] Their contact list is also available on line at http://www.esfcr.cz/mapa/kontakty_kordi.html.

[23] There are still problems: In 2006 the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports objected to the nomination of a human rights lawyer for membership in the Council of Human Rights. As a consequence, two other members resigned, and both of them had an excellent record of Roma support.

4. Education System

Governance Structure

The state's administration of education, including schools of vocational education and training, is carried out by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports. In special cases, other central government bodies, such as the Ministry of Defense, are responsible for certain branches of specialized schooling. Public administration in education is highly decentralised. Different levels of administration, and the schools themselves, have a high degree of autonomy. The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports has retained the responsibility for general educational policy, while the responsibility for the establishment of schools and normal administration is held by regions and municipalities.

The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports is divided into the minister's offices and five divisions. The minister's offices, which are directly managed by the minister, include the department of internal audit and control, the department of external relations and communication, and the department of conceptions and strategies. The five divisions are run by deputy ministers, one of whom is appointed first deputy minister. The divisions are broken down into sections and departments. Sometimes sections are further divided into smaller departments. Sections and the minister's office are managed by section directors and departments are managed by department directors.

Prior to 1998, issues of Roma education were only dealt with by the Special Needs Education Section 24. At present, Roma education falls within Section 22 for Pre-school and Basic Education and its Department 221 for Education of National Minorities and Multicultural Education. There are two Roma in Department 221: Both sections fall under the control of a Deputy Minister.

There are a wide range of background institutions supporting education in the Czech Republic. They are directly accountable to the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, and include:

- ⇨ Czech School Inspection (CSI), http://www.csicr.cz.
- ⇨ Institute for Information in Education (UIV), http://www.uiv.cz.
- ⇨ Institute of Educational and Psychological Guidance (IPPP), http://www.ippp.cz.
- ⇨ National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education (NUOV), http://www.nuov.cz.
- ⇨ Research Institute of Education (VUP), http://www.vuppraha.cz.
- ⇨ National Institute for Further Education (NIDV), http://www.nidv.cz.
- ⇨ Centre on Measurement in Education (CERMAT), established in 2006 based on section 80 of the new School Act, http://www.czvv.cz.

Financing

Education is funded from the central state budget and from the budgets of regions and municipalities. The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports retains the operational responsibilities for funding, and money for direct educational costs is allocated to the regions. Schools also obtain resources from their own economic activities and from their participation in international programmes. There is a

clear effort to increase the level of contributions from families. Meanwhile, the state budget allocated for education has also been increasing.

In 2006 the expenditures to regions and municipalities increased by 5 percent and reached CZK 67.6 billion. The per capita normative for a pupil 6-14 years of age was CZK 37,907 per year, which represented an increase of 8.2 percent more than in 2005. For 2006, the ministry allocated a further CZK 380 million for the development programme, which pays for teachers' assistants, in-service teacher education, education of asylum seekers and foreigners, etc.

The funding mechanism changed fundamentally in 1992, from giving financing to institutions to distributing funds on a per-capita basis. This change was further strengthened by the new School Act of 2004. The per-capita method has been developed and adjusted since its introduction, so that it is now more firmly entrenched in the system: The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports set a maximum fixed amount that schools can use for labour costs. This means that, along with setting per-capita funding, the ministry also establishes the maximum salary volume and number of employees in the education sector every year. As regions posses a great deal of autonomy in education and the school network, and the costs in regions are not balanced, a new element, the so-called national (aggregate) per-capita amount, was introduced in 2003. The aggregate per-capita is set by the central authorities for four basic levels of education, on the basis of age: pre-primary 3-5; basic 6-14; upper secondary 15-18; tertiary, non-university 19-21. These aggregates were designed as a percentage of the total sum of direct non-investment costs from the state budget, as determined by the total number of students from the various age groups in schools, pre-schools and other educational establishments. Aggregated per-capita amounts are set on the basis of the previous year and related to financial determinants and the expected performance – which is based on the number of pupils in the relevant age groups and changes like the two-hour extension of the primary school timetable established in 2004. The number of employees per 1,000 pupils is also a part of the aggregated per-capita funding.

Correction factors are determined for every region, to ensure that, in the next period, the standard of education offered, and its costs, are balanced out.[24] The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports allocates resources according to the following formula: The number of students in each category is multiplied by the national (aggregate) per capita amounts and corrected by a relevant regional coefficient. Every regional authority determines its own system of per-capita amounts for particular types of studies at schools and other educational establishments within its territory, with guidance from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Regions distribute resources to municipalities and schools according to the formula described above. Denominational schools are also funded directly by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports under the same conditions and to the same extent as public schools. But the ministry does not give resources for the maintenance of property that does not belong to the state.

Funding for teaching assistants is based on a specific allocation and not on a formula basis.

Kindergartens require a parental contribution in addition to government funding. A per capita amount[25] is usually charged for children with regular daily attendance. Parents of children who attend school irregularly pay half this amount, and the parents of those who attend special kindergarten must pay a higher figure. The new School Act of 2004 made the last year of pre-school free of charge.

[24] Announcement for Regional Normatives 2005/492 Sb. MŠMT č. j.: 28 768/2005-45 ze dne 12. prosince 2005.

[25] The amount varies from EUR 6-16 (CZK 170-460) in different regions. Comparison of Regional Normatives, http://www.msmt.cz/ministerstvo/porovnani-krajskych-normativu-oniv-v-roce-2006.

Basic schools, which provide compulsory education, are run by municipalities.[26] The municipalities cover the total capital costs and operational costs of these schools – with the exception of salaries, teaching aids and textbooks, which are covered by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports. The ministry's per capita funding for basic schools, which varies according to region, also depends on the size of the school and whether it is a complete school, providing all nine years of basic education, or a school that provides less than nine years of classes. Per capita funding is also different for schools where more than one year is taught in one class, as sometimes happens in small municipalities.

The proportion of individual funding sources and financial flows differs in regional schools, tertiary education and in-service education.

Facilities

The school network has seen limited rationalization over the past few years, even though the demographic decline is clearly visible. In the first stage of primary schools, the total number of students has declined from 605,007 in 2001 to 482,377 in 2005.

Parents have a free choice as to which school they will send their children, and restrictions based on neighborhood are illegal. Nonetheless, free choice in the vicinity of Roma neighbourhoods often results in "white flight", in which all the non-Roma move away, so that the nearest schools become Roma-only. Efforts by Roma parents to use the principle of free choice to enroll their children in non-Roma schools are usually discouraged by school management.

Language of Instruction

The country's language of instruction is Czech, but education in minority languages is formally guaranteed to all minorities, including Roma, if their population is large enough in a given municipality. In practice, classes are not taught in Romanes. One frequent reason given for the lack of Romanes classes is that Roma are not geographically concentrated, like other ethnic groups, such as the Poles. It is also said that the Czech Republic's Roma cannot speak, or do not want to speak, their language, which is often described as the Slovak ethnolect of Romanes. There are two Roma schools at the upper secondary level, one private and one denominational, where Romanes is taught as a subject and is included in the school leaving examination. Romanes is seldom taught as an extra-curricular or optional subject, and its role is still being denigrated. The main argument against using Roma in school seems to be that it is not useful in the labour market. In those cases where Roma teacher's assistants speak Romanes, and use the language informally or formally in the education process, it has a positive impact on student achievement. Unfortunately, teachers often dislike having a language they cannot understand being used in the classroom, and this attitude may negatively influence their opinion of teacher's assistants in general.

Although the law guarantees that if seven minority students in a class request education in their language, the school is obliged to provide the subject as an extra-curricular activity, this option is virtually not used at basic schools.

[26] Schools can also be operated by other subjects, such as churches or private persons.

Education Cycles, Progression Criteria and Examination System

Education is provided in four cycles: the pre-school, primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Compulsory education lasts nine years, is usually from the age of 6 to 15.[27]

Pre-school education, from the ages of 3 to 6, is optional, and parents have to contribute to the cost of this education. The new school act made the final year of pre-school free of charge, and this change is expected to have a positive impact for Roma children, and help prepare them to better cope with the requirements of regular primary education.

In addition to this change, in 2004, preparatory classes, intended for children from disadvantaged socio-cultural backgrounds, were introduced, in an effort to prevent educational problems later.[28] These classes are provided at basic schools, for children who have been allowed to postpone compulsory school attendance, and, in exceptional cases, for 5-year-olds. The classes follow a special curriculum, and each child is given their own individual educational programme. The classes cover intellectual education-divided into language and communication skills, numeracy and knowledge development-music, art, practical and physical education, as well as the development of cultural-social and hygienic habits. These preparatory classes are provided for a minimum of seven students and a maximum of 15. If the number of students falls below seven, the class is dissolved.

Basic schools cover compulsory education in grades one through nine. Grades one through four comprise primary school and grades five through nine make up lower-secondary school. There are three educational tracks for children aged 11-15:

- ⇨ Lower secondary in basic schools: grades five through nine.
- ⇨ Lower secondary: gymnasiums and art schools.
- ⇨ Basic practical schools: formerly special schools, targeting children with "manual" skills.

Shortly after 1990, tracking of more talented children started in lower secondary education, and in 2005, new school legislation institutionalised the tracking system by introducing practical schools.

Currently almost 10 percent of the compulsory school population is tracked to receive higher quality education that offers better life chances (table 1).

Basic practical schools are part of mainstream basic education,[29] so that students who go to these schools are formally guaranteed progression to further education cycles. However, the teaching staff in basic practical schools is predominantly special pedagogues. The curriculum in basic practical schools is very similar to the curriculum of the formally abolished special schools for the mentally disabled. The new curriculum after 2007[30] will relay on the annex to the educational programme for

27 Compulsory school attendance starts at the beginning of the school year following the child's sixth birthday, unless he/she is granted a postponement.

28 In 1993, the government created the framework for experimental programme of so called preparatory classes (zero classes) to prepare disadvantaged children for their first year in school. Many districts with a high concentration of Roma participated in the programme, which was funded solely by local authorities. In 1998 there were nearly 90 such classes operating in the Czech Republic. School Act No. 561/2004 institutionalised this provision.

29 Diagram of the education system of the Czech Republic 2005/2006, http://www.uiv.cz/clanek/235/148.

30 The framework Programme RVP ZV LMP started to be piloted in September 2006 and will be compulsory from September 2007. (Source: Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání – příloha upravující vzdělávání žáků s lehkým mentálním postižením, VÚP Praha 2005). For more information see ttp://www.rvp.cz/clanek/298/347.

basic education, a new framework educational programme for basic education adopted for children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), in other words, mild mental disabilities. The framework timetable stipulates that children taking this curriculum have a much higher allocation of hours for manual work rather than language and sciences.[31] It is difficult to estimate the current number of practical schools, as they do not yet appear in any official statistics,[32] but they can be identified through the school web pages.

Three streams of regular upper secondary education exist: gymnasiums (and art schools[33]); secondary specialized (professional) schools; and vocational schools.

Most of the pre-schools and basic schools, consisting of primary and lower secondary schools, are operated by municipalities, with a small number being run privately as denominational or regular private schools. Secondary schools, which are schools for children aged 15-18, are operated by self-governments of the 14 regions or by denominational and private operators.

Table 1: Number of Pupils in Compulsory Education (Age 6-15) and Their Position in the Education System

	2004-2005
Pupils in basic school total	917,738
Pupils in the 1st stage of basic school (grades 1-5, age 6-11)	482,377
Pupils in the 2nd stage of basic school (grades 6-9, age 12-15)	435,361
Pupils of gymnasium aged 12-15 (the age of the 2nd stage of basic school) – not counting those in special gymnasium	42,447
Pupils of art schools aged 12-15 (the age of the 2nd stage of basic school)	379
Total (without pupils of special schools)	960,564
Pupils in special education, including special educational provisions (grades 1-9)	39,798
Pupils participating in compulsory education, total (aged 6-15)	1,001,753

Source: Institute for Information on Education.

Progression in every year of primary and secondary school is conditional on not failing any required subjects. Students who fail may repeat grades, or be tested for placement in a special needs programme if a disability is suspected. About 1 percent of the pupils repeat grades at both stages of primary school each year, according to the Institute for Information in Education.

31 In the first stage of such education, children spend 15 hours on manual work, and in the second stage, they spend 20 hours on such work – instead of five hours and four hours respectively, for students in „normal" basic school.

32 http://founder.uiv.cz/virtodd/vyber.asp.

33 Art schools may start in the lower secondary or secondary levels.

Progression to (upper) secondary schools is subject to secondary entrance exams that are specific to each school. Many secondary schools with lower academic demands, especially vocational schools, accept all students who have completed grades one through nine of compulsory education. To proceed to a higher-education institution, a student is required to complete the state secondary school leaving exam and pass tertiary entrance examinations specific to each institution. Reforms in the school system brought about the new concept of a unified school leaving exam (maturita), which is to be introduced in 2007 as stipulated in the School Act. Since 1995, students have been able to take several unofficial and voluntary comparative examinations, such as SCIO, and some universities take the results of these into account.

Special Schools

The Czech Republic has historically been proud of its system of special needs education, which served as a positive example for many European countries in the past. This may be a reason behind the inertia against change that currently exists. Shortly after 1989, human rights activists, NGOs and international organisations began to criticise the segregationist features of the Czech Republic's special needs education. This criticism led to a change in the law in 2004. Integration and inclusion became widely used terms. The actual practice, however, is changing slowly. As the table below shows, the number of students in special education is not decreasing. There has even been an increase in the ratio of pupils diagnosed with learning difficulties,[34] up to 6.5 percent in 2005 as compared with 2.5 percent in 1990 and 1 percent in 1975.[35]

Table 2: Number of Pupils with Special Needs Education in Population

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Number of pupils in special schools	67,471	66,729	65,572	64,193
Population 3-18 years	1,887,116	1,842,347	1,801,514	1,780,253
Percentage pupils of special schools in population	3.6%	3.6%	3.6%	3.6%

Source: Institute for Information on Education.[36]

The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) undertook extensive research in the Ostrava region[37] that resulted in a legal case (*D.H. vs. CR*), which is now on appeal at the European Court of Human

[34] Information released on November 3, 2006 by the Institute for Information on Education (UIV).
[35] Prudce pribyva deti které se nemohou ucit (A sharp increase of children who can not learn) in MF Dnes, 3.11.2006, p. 1.
[36] Eurydice website, Czech Republic, 2004/2005, Chapter 10.8.1. http://www.eurydice.org, 30 November 2006.
[37] ERRC (1999): *A Special Remedy: Roma and Schools for the Mentally Handicapped in the Czech Republic*, (http://errc.org/publications/reports/).

Rights. The research showed that Roma children in Ostrava were 27.9 times more likely to be placed in remedial special schools than non-Roma children. Although Roma represented fewer than 5 percent of all primary school-aged students in Ostrava, they constituted more than 50 percent of the remedial special school population.

ERRC research in late 2002 in three Czech towns – Kladno, Teplice, and Sokolov–revealed that patterns of segregation of Roma in schools for children with developmental disabilities had not changed since the initial ERRC research in 1999.[38] According to official sources, in 1999, approximately 75 percent of Roma children in the Czech Republic were transferred to or directly enrolled in special schools.[39] Recent research documented in the GAC report revealed the extent of segregation in the 310 localities on which the report focused.[40]

If there are doubts about a child's future academic success, then her or his enrolment into primary education is conditional upon an assessment of that child's preparedness for school, which is informally called their "school maturity". This assessment is conducted in the Czech language and requires familiarity with paper and pencil and other mainstream culture-based competencies. Roma children often have low results on these tests and are then recommended to take a different curriculum programme, either within the same primary school that they were attending or at a separate, special primary school. Psychological testing can also lead to a referral to a less demanding curriculum, whenever the child is suspected of having learning or behavioral difficulties.

There is also an option to delay entrance into school, if a child proves to be unsuccessful after beginning school. In many cases, when this happens, the child leaves school and falls through the cracks of the institutional support network: No special care is provided by the school or counseling centres. Institutions still do not give parents who are deemed "unreliable" information about decisions that may be detrimental for their children. In some cases, children who are unsuccessful at the beginning of their school career are given preparatory classes, if these are available, which is not always the case.

The New School Act 2004 resulted in a higher number of pupils with special needs record to be integrated in the mainstream schools in 2005/2006.[41] It is however too early to evaluate its impact; moreover these cases of individual integration do not receive sufficient additional support.

Social Support for Students

The last year of pre-school has been free of charge since 2004. Unfortunately many Roma parents do not know this fact, as there are no information channels available. Moreover, parents still need to pay for school meals, which is a strong deterrent to pre-school, as the sum is not negligible for many Roma.

[38] ERRC: *Stigmata* (http://www.errc.org/db/00/04/m00000004.pdf, pp. 23, 103-106).

[39] Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, CERD/C/372/Add.1, (2000). *Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 9 of the Convention. Fourth Periodic Report of States Parties Due in 2000. Addendum: Czech Republic*, November 26, 1999, para. 134.

[40] GAC Report (also called the Gabal Report), 2006, MPSV, at http://www.esfcr.cz/mapa/index.html and http://www.gac.cz/documents/brozura_4.pdf.

[41] Eurybase. Education system in the Czech Republic. Chapter 10.8 http://www.eurydice.org/ressources/Eurydice/pdf/eurybase/2006_DNCZ_EN.pdf. 24 February 2007.

Scholarships and stipends are available for students in regular schools. Schools can ask for funding, in the form of grant allocations from the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports for Roma students in upper secondary schools. In the second term of 2005, schools applying for this support received approximately EUR 175,000 for a total of only 1,393 students. In 2006, the maximum amount per student for such support was CZK 14,000 (about EUR 500) – which meant CZK 7,000 for the January-June period and CZK 7,000 for September-December. Aside from having a small scope, this measure is not systematic, and it is quite demanding in terms of administration, both on the side of the claiming schools and the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports.

Roma students can, and often do, also obtain support from NGOs and private donors, such as the Verda Fund,[42] Slovo 21, etc.

Teacher Assistants

The position of teaching assistant was established in order to facilitate the adaptation to school of children from disadvantaged backgrounds – mainly Roma children, the children of asylum seekers, etc. The first assistants were employed unofficially in 1993. In 1998, their status was legalized. Their existence was systemised by School acts No. 561/2004. and No. 563/2004, regulating pedagogical staff. Under current laws, an assistant can also work in a class in which there is a student with special educational needs. The teaching assistant helps students adjust to the school environment and assists teachers with educational activities, communication with students, and cooperation with students' family and community. The head of the school is supposed to choose a teaching assistant who is familiar with the background of the majority of the students. The school head submits a request to employ a teaching assistant, giving a justification for the expense, to a regional authority.

Key Legislation and Other National Documents

The basic principles governing the provision of education in the Czech Republic are contained in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, which is a part of the Constitution. The charter says that everybody is entitled to education. Citizens have the right to free education at basic and secondary schools, and, depending on individual ability and the means available to society, also in higher education institutions."[43] The charter lays down conditions under which citizens are entitled to state assistance during their studies. It also says: "Citizens belonging to national or ethnic minorities are, under the terms set down by law, entitled to receive education in their own language."[44]

[42] Verda Endowment Fund http://www.verda.cz/.
[43] Art. 33.
[44] Art. 24, par. 2.a.

The Education Act

The Education Act,[45] came into effect from January 1, 2005. It replaced three previous and frequently amended acts: the School Act, the Act on State Administration and Autonomy, and the Act on Educational Establishments. In 2005, the Act was complemented with other legally binding documents: the Decree 73/2005 on Special Needs Education,[46] and the Decree 72/2005 on Psychological Counseling.[47] In comparison with the previous approach, the new act pays more attention to the educational process than it does to educational institutions. The Education Act is intended to increase transfers within the education system, to strengthen the inclusion of students with special educational needs and to enhance equal access to education. Free education in public schools was extended to the final year of pre-school education. School organising bodies of every type gained similar rights and responsibilities. The Education Act specifies the process of decentralisation through the long-term policy of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports and the regions, while also preserving a level of consistency throughout the system. In response to decentralisation, a new information system on students in the school network, called the school register, was established. The act also defines the role of social partners. And it specifies students' rights and responsibilities, which were previously set by regulations. A new legal form for schools was proposed, making schools legal entities. Furthermore, the act specified financial flows and made them more transparent. Meanwhile, participatory management was strengthened at all levels.

The Act on Educational Staff, which also came into effect on January 1, 2005,[48] consolidated earlier regulations. In 2005 the Act was complemented with Decree 317/2005 on continuous teacher education.[49] It defines categories of educational staff and the general prerequisites for carrying out their work. The Act on Educational Staff stipulates the ways in which various categories of educational staff can acquire professional qualifications. It also specifies, the qualifications of a teacher's assistant.[50] The act spells out the obligation of educational staff to undergo in-service training, and it provides conditions for this training, including giving staff study leave for 12 working days in a school year. The act sets up accreditation rules and bodies for relevant educational institutions and programmes of in-service training. And it institutes a career system that sets the rules of professional advancement and incorporates further education.

There are two strategic documents addressing education in the Czech Republic: the National Programme of the Development of Education in the Czech Republic (the so called White Paper)

45 ACT No. 561, of September 24, 2004, on Pre-school, Basic, Secondary, Tertiary Professional and Other Education.

46 73/2005 Vyhláška o vzdělávání dětí, žáků a studentů se speciálními vzdělávacími potřebami a dětí, žáků a studentů mimořádně nadaných, Decree 73/2005 Coll., on education of children and students with special needs and of talented students.

47 72/2005 Vyhláška o poskytování poradenských služeb ve školách a školských poradenských zařízeních, Decree 72/2005 Coll., on provision of counselling services at schools and at school advisory facilities.

48 Act on Pedagogical Staff and on the Amendment to Some Other Acts, 563/2004.

49 317/2005 Sb., Vyhláška o dalším vzdělávání pedagogických pracovníků, akreditační komisi a kariérním systému pedagogických pracovníků. Decree on further teacher education, on accreditation commission, and on teacher career system.

50 Section 20 lists qualifications at all levels and actually allows assistants to have only basic education if they have completed an accredited educational programme. This stipulation is especially convenient for Roma, whose careers had been limited because their educational level is lower as compared with other teaching staff.

and the Long-term Strategy of Education and Development of the Education System in the Czech Republic. The first long-term strategy was adopted in 2002, the most recent in 2005. The latest long-term strategy mentions equal opportunity to education as one of six strategic objectives. These objectives are further elaborated in section II.2.3, which discusses the Concept of Roma integration.[51]

Each region is supposed to develop and update (every two years) its own Long Term Objectives, which should include the issue of equal access to education.[52]

The only currently valid strategic document relevant to the education of Roma children seems to be the Concept of Early Intervention for Socio-Culturally Disadvantaged Children.[53] According to many NGOs and independent experts, this concept provides a more suitable framework for Roma children than the attempts to address social disadvantage in the Education Act and related documents, because it takes into account language and identity aspects.

Previous attempts to address the needs of Roma children seem to have been less effective. The Strategy for Improvement of Education of Roma Children of 2001 was not finalised, even as a document, and remained as a first draft only.[54] The government Concept of Roma Integration, which was initiated in 1999 by the Council for Roma Community Affairs, has been criticised as not being properly implemented.[55]

Status of the Education System: Key Indicators

According to the UNDP, the Czech Republic ranks 30th worldwide in both its Education Index of 0.93[56] and its combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary, and tertiary schools of 81 percent. The Czech Republic also has a comparatively high level of secondary school graduation. But a closer look at the indicators shows disparities and inequities: For example there is a much smaller percentage of students graduating from general programmes than from vocational programmes.

51 In the same section, an overview of expected funding from European Social Fund is presented for the "Minority Project – Improving the conditions for the education of students from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds and minorities in mainstream basic schooling." The Minority 1 project, which involves research and piloting, is allocated CZK 30.2 million in 2005-2006, and the Minority 2 project, which involves implementation, is allocated CZK 60 million in 2006-2008. http://www.msmt.cz/files/PDF/JTDlouhodobyzamer05_appx.pdf.

52 For example: http://www.kr-moravskoslezsky.cz/sk_dokumenty.html, http://www.kr-ustecky.cz/soubory/450018/dz_iv_2.pdf , http://www.praha-mesto.cz/(thqmni55wvwoc2e2w0h2rk45)/default.aspx?ido=6842&sh=-837991269, http://www.kr-plzensky.cz/article.asp?itm=26301.

53 The Concept of the Project of Pre-school Care of Socio-Culturally Disadvantaged Children was adopted by the Government under Resolution No. 564 of May 11, 2005. http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/koncepce, (Koncepce včasné péče o děti ze sociokulturně znevýhodňujícího prostředí).

54 Strategie pro zlepšení vzdělávání romských dětí verze 2001, http://www2.msmt.cz/_DOMEK/default.asp?ARI=100627&CAI=2702, accessed on November 11, 2006.

55 See http://www.romea.cz/index.php?id=servis/z2006_0726, for material on a televised debate on this issue on November 5, 2006, with the head of the Government Human Rights Council.

56 The Education index is based on the adult literacy rate and the combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary school. (*The 2006 Human Development Report*, http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_CZE.html).

Table 3: Status of the Czech Education System

Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP), 2002-04[a]	4.4
Current public expenditure on education, pre-primary and primary (as % of all levels), 2002-04[a]	26.0
Current public expenditure on education, secondary (% of all levels), 2002-04[a]	51.3
Current public expenditure on education, tertiary (% of all levels), 2002-04[a]	19.5
Children reaching grade 5 (% of grade 1 students), 2003[a]	98
Tertiary students in science, engineering, manufacturing and construction (% of tertiary students), 1999-2004[a]	30
Data on adult literacy rate and enrolment ratios are not available.[a]	
Upper secondary and tertiary graduation rates (2004) total[b]	87
ISCED 3A[b]	55
ISCED 3C[b]	31
General programmes[b]	18
Pre-vocational/vocational programmes[b]	69
Tertiary graduation rates (2004)[b]	33

a Source: http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_CZE.html.

b Percentage of upper secondary and tertiary graduates to the population at the typical age of graduation, by programme destination and programme orientation.

Source: Education at a Glance 2006 – Tables.

Detailed education indicators for the year 2005/06 are available only in the Czech language.[57] The latest version of these indicators in English is for 2004/05, in the Statistical Yearbook of the Czech Republic 2005.[58]

Student Performance Based on International Assessments

The Czech Republic has participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA),[59] which is one of the most comprehensive international programmes to assess performance

[57] UIV: Performance Indicators (Výkonové ukazatele). http://www.uiv.cz/rubrika/98. 20 November 2006.

[58] Statistical Yearbook of the Czech Republic 2005 http://www.czso.cz/eng/edicniplan.nsf/kapitola/1001-05-2005-2100. Full version of Statistical Yearbook 2006 will be available from 1. 3. 2007.

[59] OECD (2004): *Learning for Tomorrow's World: First Results from PISA 2003*, Paris: OECD Publications (www.pisa.oecd.org).

of students approaching the end of general education. The PISA assessment was conducted in 2000 and 2003. The Czech Republic has not participated in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS).

The Czech students' performance is summarised in the two tables below (table 2 and 3):

Table 2: PISA 2003 Results

Area	Czech Republic		OECD		Diff. Czech R. - OECD
	Mean[60]	Mean stand. error	Mean	Mean stand. error	
Mathematics	516	3.5	500	0.6	+ 16
Reading	489	3.5	494	0.6	- 5
Science	523	3.4	500	0.6	+ 23

Table 3: Trends in Performance Over Three Years: PISA 2000 and 2003

Area	2000		2003		Diff. 2003-2000
	Mean	Mean stand. error	Mean	Mean stand. error	
Mathematics	498	2.8	516	3.5	+ 18
Reading	492	2.4	489	3.5	- 3
Science	511	2.4	523	3.4	+ 12

In 2003, performance on math and science is statistically significantly above the OECD average. In general, students can identify and solve real-life problems of medium difficulty. Increases in performance on these two scales between 2000 and 2003 are statistically significant, but tend to be driven by improvements only in the upper half of the performance distribution. In other words, the education system helped the better performing students to become even better.

Based on the PISA results, the impact of the students' socio-economic status[61] on their performance is high in the Czech Republic. The Index of SES explains 17.0% of variance in performance in mathematics which is one of the highest worldwide, and it indicates that, in the Czech Republic, educational attainment is tied to the social economic status of a student's family more than in other countries – in other words, that the education system is inequitable.

[60] The way results are reported in the PISA is as follows: In each assessment area, each student is awarded a score based on the difficulty of the tasks that she or he could perform reliably. The scales are constructed so that the average student score is 500 points and about two-thirds of the students score between 400 and 600 points – so there is a standard deviation of 100 points).

[61] The index of socio-economic status composed of variables that indicate economic, social, and cultural status of the student's family. It is expressed on a scale constructed such that the OECD average is 0.0 and the standard deviation is 1 (two-thirds of students are distributed between -1 and 1).

For example, the difference in performance between the bottom and the top quarter of students grouped by their Index of SES is 107 points, which is one of the biggest differences among all participating countries. Combined with the data describing the improvement of the performance of high achievers over time, these results show that the education policy in the Czech Republic is missing a large proportion of students who have relatively poor performance, and where a more appropriate socio-economic targeting would be needed.

Education Indicators for Roma

There is almost no official data on educational indicators for Roma, because Act 273/2001 Coll. on the Rights of Members of National Minorities forbids state administrative bodies from collecting data on ethnic minorities. The only official data on Roma education in the Czech Republic is contained in the so-called "Bratinka Report," published in 1997. The Bratinka Report acknowledged "hitherto prevailing practices which led to excessive numbers of Roma children being placed in special schools without any conclusive evidence as to their intellectual and learning capacity."[62] According to the publication Socioklub, more than 80 percent of the Czech Republic's Roma children were placed in special schools.[63] There is no recent research data on the education of Roma apart from the data contained in the GAC Report, which cannot be used to make more general conclusions.

Only some, less relevant descriptive statistics are available. Statistics from September 30, 2005[64] give the number of preparatory classes for the 2005/2006 school year and the number of children in these classes. There were 123 preparatory classes in 2005/2006. Of these, 79 classes were given at ordinary primary schools, 41 at practical schools, two at primary schools for the disabled, and one at a special-needs primary school. In all, 1,441 children received schooling in these preparatory classes. Compared to the previous school year, there was a moderate reduction in both the number of preparatory classes and the number of children attending these classes. There were 126 preparatory classes with 1,779 children in 2004-2005.

In 2005-2006 school year there were 306 assistant teachers in Czech schools.[65] There were 16 assistant teachers in nursery schools and 206 assistant teachers in primary schools. In comparison, the number of assistant teachers in basic practical schools was much lower, at 39, and the number of assistant teachers in special schools was 37. A total of four assistant teachers were employed at other types of schools.

62 "Bratinka Report", October 29, 1997, Recommendation 1(e). The full name of the document is "Report on the Situation of the Roma Community in the Czech Republic and Government Measures Assisting its Integration in Society", Office of Minister without portfolio, Czech Republic Government Office. The so-called "Bratinka Report," includes Government Resolution No. 686/97.

63 Socioklub (1999): *Romové v České Republice* ("Roma in the Czech Republic"), Prague: Socioklub, p. 350. states a "30 years long tradition of segregating Roma children into special schools".

64 Source: Report on the Situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2005, Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, Secretariat of the Council for National Minorities of the Government of the Czech Republic, Prague 2006, p. 52. Also available on-line (https://web2006.vlada.cz/scripts/detail.php?id=18934), December 4, 2006.

65 Most assistants can be found in the Moravskoslezsko Region (72), followed by the Ústecko Region (48), Jihomoravsko Region (33), and Olomoucko Region (33). The Plzensko Region has only three assistant teachers, and there are also very few in Vysocina (seven) and the Zlínsko Region (eight).

A look at the irregularities in compulsory school attendance, which are presented in the Annex to this report, also highlights inequities. Late enrolment and very early dropout–in which students do not finish basic education by the age of 15, usually the last year of compulsory education – are very much present in the Czech education system, and the problem appears to impact heavily on Roma.

Extent and Nature of Roma Segregation and Enrolment Barriers

There is no official data on Roma segregation in the Czech education system. Still segregation is the most prominent problem in the education of Roma children and youths in the Czech Republic.

Segregation in education has at least three major causes: housing segregation, as is described in the GAC report; the inability of Czech schools to provide quality education for all results in tracking Roma children into less demanding curriculum groups and practical schools; and the traditional "school maturity" testing system, which leads to enrolment of Roma in low-demand curriculum groups or special education from the very beginning of the education cycle. Children living in socially excluded communities tend to go to the nearest schools. Roma parents lack information about educational choices and tend to send their children to schools that they know. Often, they fear the discrimination that their children would face in mainstream schools.

The current percentage of Roma pupils being taught "on a modified (reduced) curricula" should also be regarded as discrimination. But the actual number is not measurable, due to 1) a missing anti-discrimination law that would allow the collection of data on ethnicity for positive purposes; and 2) changes brought in by the new Act on Education (2004) which resulted in a major category of special schools being now called "basic practical schools."

Roma children face several enrolment barriers. Pre-school education is regarded as expensive, and parents lack information about its benefits. Currently, there is no systematic work with Roma parents during children's early years. The government concept on Early Care has yet to be implemented. Most efforts to help young Roma enroll are provided by NGOs. There is no coordination of this work, and some local projects that are very successful halt their efforts due to a lack of funds. Preparatory classes and free provision of education in the final year of pre-school facilities are not sufficient remedies to make up for cultural, social and linguistic differences.

There are also barriers at the secondary and tertiary level of education. On the lower secondary level, Roma children are often tracked into basic practical schools. Entrance to secondary education is competitive, based on enrolment exams. The socio-economic status of the majority of Roma families is low, which has a double negative effect: The families cannot afford to send their child far from their community for studies, and families lack information about the benefits of a better education, because they believe that even educated Roma will face unemployment and discrimination.

Many poorer parents want their children to start contributing to the family budget as soon as possible, by applying for unemployment benefits. Instead of motivating children to continue education, some Roma parents may prefer that their children start going to the unemployment office as early as possible. NGOs regard this as a serious disincentive to continuing education.

Qualitative Assessment of the Status of the Education System[66]

The education system in the Czech Republic has recently gone through broad changes, including: decentralisation, resulting from public administration reform; curricular reform, as reflected in the White Paper;[67] gradual introduction and support of information and communication technology;[68] and adoption of the new Act on Education and other legal documents. Although most of the changes are viewed positively, their implementation is often criticised.[69] Reform of the curriculum will be completed by September 2007, giving a great deal of responsibility to the schools, which will start using their own "school educational programmes," based on the "framework educational programmes" prepared by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports and its bodies.

School Management

School management and governance has been decentralised and formally changed to include parents and municipal representatives in school councils.[70] One third of the members of these councils are nominated by the school maintainer, which is usually a regional authority, municipality, ministry, church or private person. Another third of the council is elected by parents or adult students, and the remaining third is elected by the school pedagogical staff. The key tasks of the school board are: to comment on the School Education Programme and its implementation, to approve the school's annual reports, to approve the school's code of conduct, and to approve the rules for student assessment.[71] Although the head teachers gained formal power through these changes, they may be still under pressure from municipalities and may be subjected to political lobbying and nepotism. The school management system and ethos is generally not hospitable for Roma children. Outside of several dozen pilot, innovative, or community schools, head teachers are seldom trained or encouraged to promote inclusive education. Roma and parents with a low socio-economic status are still treated in a paternalistic manner, and no measures are taken to monitor and combat everyday discrimination against Roma students. Non-Roma parents usually avoid registering their children in schools with a larger number of Roma students.

Teachers' Qualification, Selection, Education, and Training

The social status of teachers has improved in the past decade, and the typical teachers' salary is now 110 percent of the national average. Nonetheless, many graduates do not start teaching and instead search for other professions. Initial teacher training, especially for the second stage of primary school, lacks methodology and didactics, and there is no focus on teaching competencies.

66 For a detailed qualitative assessment see table in Annex.
67 The White Paper on Education (Bílá kniha), National Program for Development in Education in the Czech Republic, Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, Praha 2001.
68 See State information policies for Education (Statni informacni politika ve vzdelavani SIPVZ) at http://www.e-gram.cz/.
69 See articles and comments at The Czech School, http://www.ceskaskola.cz/, or at Stolzova web for education tradition and continuity, http://www.stolzova.cz.
70 Sections 167 and 168 of the School Act.
71 Section 168 of the School Act.

In 2004, 25-30 percent of history teachers in primary schools did not have sufficient qualifications for teaching history. Almost 60 percent of the English-language teachers have no teaching qualification. Further education for teachers has been based on ad-hoc programmes accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports and offered by a wide variety of public, private, and non-governmental actors. Currently there are no standards in terms of teacher competencies. Issues of social justice are often ignored in teacher training.[72] Financing of these programmes is not transparent, and its ineffectiveness is not regularly evaluated.[73] NGOs are often critical about the low level of teacher education in anything other than their core subject.

Curriculum

In 2004 schools began to undertake curricular reform, with the aim of decentralizing the curriculum to the school level and decreasing its content-based and factual character. Implementation of the new school educational programmes should be completed by September 2007. Some experts warn that school staff have not been sufficiently trained to develop individualized curricula and that the diversity of curricula may present a problem whenever students transfer schools. At present, mastering the curriculum requires parent engagement or private tutoring, which is a common practice for some, but this discriminates against lower socio-economic status and less-educated parents. Most Roma families cannot offer the required support, and there is no legal provision for organizing additional classes for Roma students. Preparatory classes and teachers' assistants are helping some Roma pupils, however this support is not yet introduced on a large scale.

Textbooks

Textbooks that receive the endorsement[74] of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports are funded via the state budget and are provided free of charge. In principle the system of endorsement ensures that all textbooks contain relevant information on the Roma[75].Although the system of endorsement prevents any openly racist, xenophobic, or sectarian attitudes from being voiced in publicly funded textbooks, the system is not fully transparent: Reviewers are selected by the

[72] There are no standards for the specialized area of multi-cultural or inclusive education, as this area is not specified in Decree 317/2005. The topic is covered only in standards for Assistants and Advisors and is missing in the Standards for head teachers and teachers.

[73] Schools receive funds for teacher training from the Ministry based on the number of teachers per school. These funds can only be spent on accredited training events, provided by a variety of NGOs, businesses and academic bodies. No evaluation is required, the training content is copyright and can not be evaluated externally either.

[74] The system of endorsement, where independent experts are asked by the ministry to review the textbooks, seems to be equitable, however, some experts, often university professors, are able to review only the factual aspects and the contents of the textbook, while ignoring its didactic or methodological aspects. The list of endorsed textbooks is available at: http://www.msmt.cz/uploads/soubory/vzdelavani/MilKropZSSeznam_10_2006_web.xls.

[75] Although it is not a legal requirement, the recommendation in the Endorsment Guidelines effectively ensures that The publishers ask for a written opinion on the textbook´s compliance with ministerial requirement for religious and ethnic tolerance. One of the institutions that issues these opinions is the Museum of Romani Culture in Brno (next to Jewish, Christian, and Islamic expert opinion).

ministry and not by an independent body, and the reviews are not public. There are virtually no Roma textbooks used in schools.

Assessment and Evaluation

The creation of a school-leaving examination system at the secondary level was formalized by the Act on Education and should be introduced in 2007. Since 2005, unofficial comparative tests have been available.

At the primary level, formative assessment is rarely practiced. Summative assessment dominates, and it is not based on developed standards. Class-level assessment can be biased and unfair. Most Roma students end up as underachievers, so they are prevented from further advancement in education. The grading system relies heavily on oral exams, which are open to teachers' subjective judgments with a high likelihood of bias, given the widespread prejudices against Roma. Even when an assessment, both for enrolment and grading purposes, relies on more objective tests, it remains culturally and linguistically biased to the disadvantage of the majority of Roma students.

External evaluation is provided by school inspectors and controllers, officials of the ministry, educational departments of a region, and communities. School inspectors currently still lack openness[76] and do not focus on equity. School heads are responsible for the internal evaluation of a school.

Finances

Roma education is not financed systematically. The current grants system is neither systematic nor efficient. There are many small and scattered programmes, which are implemented by various actors and compete for funding. Cooperation is not encouraged, and applications demand much administration from both applicants and the ministry.[77] Because it is illegal to keep statistics on students' ethnicity, there is very little evidence about the influence of certain projects or "tools" in the field of education. Also, there are no incentives for inclusive education. The current formulae to support inclusion of special needs students into the mainstream are insufficient and relate mainly to health disability. Special needs in terms of cultural, linguistic or social difference or disadvantage are not systematically funded on a per capita index basis. Preparatory classes and teachers' assistants are funded from the ministry's development programmes, which are not systematic, so schools have to apply for the funds each year.

[76] Inspectors seldom provide any feedback to teachers even if head teachers are present, nor do they comment on school self-evaluation if that exist. Teachers complain that inspectors focus on formal aspects rather than on educational results. Inspectors ignore educational conditions and needs of Romani pupils (and parents) who do not comply with standard school requirements.

[77] Examples of the Open grant schemes and recent Calls for applications are available on line at http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/dotace-granty-1. They include the support of integration of Romani community, support of Romani students at secondary schools, funding of teacher assistants, and support for education in minority languages and multicultural education.

Summary of Systemic Strengths and Weaknesses Regarding Roma Education

Strengths

Education of Roma in the Czech Republic has shown visible improvement lately. There are clear indicators of political commitment to improve the education of Roma children, such as the government Concept of Roma Integration, the new focus on early childhood care, and the formal abolishment of special education schools. There are also successful practices, such as:

- **Preparatory classes:** Preparatory classes for children from disadvantaged communities have the goal of increasing the children's ability to adapt and to cope with the transition from a domestic to a distinctively institutionalized environment. In 2006 the Ministry funded 146 (increase from 123 in 2005) preparatory classes. The GAC Report identified 68 primary schools that run preparatory classes, out of 383 monitored primary schools throughout the Czech Republic.[78]
- **Teacher assistant:** The ministry has introduced the profession of pedagogical assistants to support children from disadvantaged communities. The pedagogical assistants mainly operate in schools with a high concentration of Roma children, and they work in partnership with teachers and parents. In 2006 the Ministry funded 326 PA (increase from 318 in 2005). For 2007 funding for 380 pedagogical assistants was approved.[79] The GAC Report mentions that, out of the 383 monitored primary schools, 127 employed pedagogical assistants.
- **Free kindergarten:** Free pre-school education in the final year of kindergarten, for children from disadvantaged communities, ensures better access of Roma children to pre-school.
- **Secondary school scholarships:** The number of Roma students in secondary and higher education is slowly increasing. Currently, there are about 1,800 Roma students in secondary school and 62 at the tertiary level.[80] The increase is due to the scholarship program for secondary school Roma students from disadvantaged communities, administrated by the Ministry.[81] Roma students can also apply to the regional school administration for free school supplies.
- **Abolishing special education:** The Act on Education removed the stigmatisation of lower standard education in special schools for mentally handycapped, which formally no longer exist.
- **Government documents:** The Decade Action Plan and, especially, earlier government strategies and action plans on Roma, including the Concept of Roma Integration, show a certain level of political will to improve education for Roma children.
- **Funding:** Funding from the ministerial development programme on the central level is better than the previous irregular grants from private donors.

[78] Gabal ananlyses and consulting, Praha, 2006.

[79] Approved donations in development programme on financing of pedagogical assistant for children and students from disadvantaged backround in 2007. (http://www.msmt.cz/uploads/soubory/zakladni/DSSchvalena dotacecelkem.xls.

[80] Information based on the number of students involved in the Romaversitas project of Athinganoi. The number may be higher. November, 2006.

[81] Programme for the support of Roma children in Secondary schools in 2007. http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/program-na-podporu-romskych-zaku-strednich-skol.

Weaknesses

Nonetheless, the education system in the Czech Republic is still burdened by several problems that exclude Roma from full and sustained participation. The barriers fall into three broad categories:

1. Segregation:

   ⇨ The Czech education system does not have a clear response to residential segregation. There are no desegregation strategies. Roma children from remote settlements are educated in separate schools and are left with no prospect to integrate into further education cycles.
   ⇨ The unusually early tracking that takes place at age 11, in the primary education level, affects Roma most, as many of them are placed into practical schools, without further prospects of a quality education.
   ⇨ Formal removal of special schools from the legal framework did not change the fact that many Roma are still educated in separate facilities, with an inferior curriculum and teachers with lower expectations. This situation is officially endorsed by the tracking system and implemented through the system of basic practical schools.

2. Lack of acknowledgement of Roma language, culture and needs:

   ⇨ The Czech Republic is one of the rare countries in the region were the Romanes language is not taught, even as an optional subject. With the exception of two private schools, and several courses at the higher education level, the Romanes language has not been encouraged or used in education as of 2006.
   ⇨ There is a daunting lack of data with respect to Roma, accompanied by frequent denials of the need to collect this data.
   ⇨ There are virtually no Roma teachers. Roma are mostly employed as teachers' assistant. There are cases when teachers' assistants face high level of prejudice from the teachers they are working with.
   ⇨ No attention is being paid to inclusion, diversity, and equal opportunity issues in the official standards for training of head teachers and school managers. Also, insufficient attention is given to these issues in the training of teachers.

3. Implementation gaps:

   ⇨ The Decade Action Plan and earlier government strategies and action plans on Roma are not well integrated within mainstream policies, and their implementation is not effective enough.
   ⇨ Despite a recognized need for pre-school education for children from socio-economically marginalized backgrounds, the availability of pre-primary education is still limited.
   ⇨ There are several concerns regarding funding through open grant schemes and "development programmes". They are not easily accessible to the Roma community, the application process is administratively demanding. There is a lack of information on their evaluation, standards, quality assurance built in these programmes, and there is no support for cooperation between applicants.
   ⇨ There is a conceptual vagueness on social disadvantage, socio-cultural disadvantage, special needs, additional support, and cultural and linguistic differences, and no attention is paid to how these issues overlap in the case of Roma. Legal and financial implications are not clearly

set. Decree 73/2005, which complements the Act on Education and re-establishes separate schools, ignores the issue of social disadvantage as stipulated in the act.

Knowledge, Data and Capacity Concerns Affecting Roma Education

Data and capacity issues are common across all countries where the Roma Education Fund (REF) is active. The original REF needs assessments highlighted these issues in each participating country, and, in most cases, little improvement has been registered. This lack of data is typical for the Czech Republic as well. It can easily be used to deny the existence of segregated education. The recent GAC Report revealed the extent of social exclusion (segregation) in housing and education. Such reports are intended to capture public attention, and influence further data collection as well.

In terms of human capacity, most of the pro-Roma activists, and a limited number of Roma activists and professionals, are working in the NGO sector.

5. Overview of Government and Partner Activities

Commitment to Roma Decade, Action/Progress to Date

Until the fall of 1997, the Czech government had not developed mechanisms related to education of Roma, and the main efforts in this field had come from NGOs funded by Phare and private donors. In October 1997, the government adopted the so called Bratinka Report on the Situation of the Roma Community and gradually started to take steps to address education concerns and other pressing problems facing Roma in the Czech Republic.

In April 1998, the first 20 teacher assistants were officially introduced into the school system. Previously, these assistants were working at schools on a semi-legal basis, funded by western governments or private donors.

Some good policies and practices were formulated a the central level. These practices included the introduction of the Roma District Advisors at the district offices. But this system was later dissolved as a result of public administration reform in which district offices ceased to exist. At present, there are 14 coordinators for Roma affairs on the regional level and street social workers on the local level.

Education of Roma is dealt with in the government Concept of Integration of Roma Community. The most recent version was adopted in 2005. The Decade Action Plan and its implementation actually re-affirm the Integration Concept.

The Czech Decade of Roma Inclusion was officially launched May 25-27, 2005 in Prague.

The Decade Committee was set up in March 2004, within the government Council for Roma Community Affairs.

In January 2005, the Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion, based on government Resolution No. 136, was prepared in cooperation with the ministries responsible for the fulfillment of individual tasks and the representatives of Roma communities. The Committee Chairman is the Decade's national coordinator. Other members are the representatives of ministries, selected members of the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs, representatives of Roma non-profit organisations and the Open Society Foundation.

The Report on the Implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, published in 2005, provides information on implementation of the following tasks:

1. Creating a comprehensive system of pre-school care for socially disadvantaged groups.
2. Introducing mechanisms facilitating access to education, including free attendance in the final year of nursery school, and incorporating these into the Act on Education.
3. Supporting a review of school funding.
4. Holding discussions with university representatives on a mechanism to support Roma students in universities.
5. Supporting the establishment of an education agency. This task has not been fulfilled yet.
6. Holding discussions with the representatives of universities on:
   - ⇨ the possibility of adapting the educational programmes of teacher training faculties so that they take into account the cross-cutting theme of multiculturalism (a task for the accreditation board);
   - ⇨ the possibility of adapting the further education of university teaching staff at teacher training faculties to changes in the curriculum; c) defining problems in the further training of teaching staff and using this information to create specific training programmes on multiculturalism.

The project on the Minority Integration Centres (SIM), which would, inter alia, support multicultural approaches in education including teacher assistants, with a CZK 80 million budget from the European Social Fund, has not been implemented as of November 2006.[82]

As mentioned above, Roma education is handled by open grant schemes administered by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports. This is illustrated by the following programmes:

1. Programme for the support of education in the languages of national minorities and multicultural education: CZK 1,854,850.
2. Programme to support the integration of the Roma community: CZK 10,099,770 for 128 projects.
3. Programme for the support of Roma students at secondary schools CZK 5,989,200 plus CZK 5,249,900 to support 1,393 students.
4. HRD OP Programme, of the European Social Fund: CZK 2,254,816 for two projects: Measure 3.3.1 – Improvements in the quality of education at schools and educational establishments and development of subsidiary systems in education; and Support Programme A – Improvement in conditions for the education of students with special educational needs.
5. Programme to fund assistant teachers for socially disadvantaged students at schools funded by registered churches or religious societies for 2005: CZK 1,877,202 approved for two projects.

In February 2007 the Minister announced that the Ministry will allocate a total of CZK 25 million for education of Romani children in 2007.[83]

Donor Funding: In-Country Programmes

Before the Czech Republic's accession to the European Union, there was substantial funding of activities of the government and NGOs for projects aimed at improving the situation of Roma in the Czech Republic. The donor institutions included:

- ⇨ PHARE (EU pre-accession funds).
- ⇨ Equal Initiative.
- ⇨ Open Society Institute.

[82] In the *Report on the Implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015*, published in 2005, the project is described as follows: "In 2005, as part of the European Social Fund, Human Resources Development Operational Programme, Measure 3.1 (Improving the quality of education at schools and educational establishments and development of subsidiary systems in education), the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports initiated the SIM (Minority Integration Centres) project. This project is coordinated and implemented by the Educational and Psychological Counselling Institute of the Czech Republic. The project focuses on the creation of a model educational programme, in order to improve the conditions of education of these pupils, as well as on a change in the general climate at schools, preparation of programmes to develop the multi-cultural didactic knowledge and competence of educators, creation of a system of integrated support, teacher training in multiculturalism, and the training of assistant teachers for children from a socially disadvantaged environment. This project includes the preparation and pilot testing of the Concept for a Project of Pre-school care for socio-culturally disadvantaged children."

[83] Czech Press Agency. 20.2.2007, 17:05, (ČTK Spor Čunka a Stehlíkové o Romy podle premiéra koalici nerozbije. Praha/Varšava,). http://www.romea.cz/index.php?id=detail&detail=2007_57.

- ⇨ Open Society Foundation.
- ⇨ Matra KAP programme of the Dutch government.
- ⇨ Embassy of the United States (USAID).
- ⇨ Embassy of Canada, and many international private donors.
- ⇨ Mott Foundation, Ford Foundation, Levis Strauss Foundation, etc.

After the Czech Republic joined the EU on May 1, 2004, many donor institutions gradually withdrew support. Following accession, the Czech Republic continued to draw from Phare and started to draw from other EU programmes, such as the Transition Facility and Structural Funds, which are currently the key source of external financing for Roma education issues.

The EU PHARE fund, the Equal Initiative and the European Social Fund have been key sources of external financing with respect to Roma issues. Between 2004 and June 2006, a total of EUR 20.17 million was drawn from the fund to pay for 66 Roma projects.[84] This funding was disbursed through the ministries of labour, local development, and education.

In 2004-2006, the key financial source in education was the Human Resources Development Operational Programme (HRD OP) of the European Social Fund,[85] which allocated EUR 97.4 million to be distributed through the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (24.5 percent of the total funding for HRD OP).[86] Additional funding comes from international and local foundations, as well as private donors.

A substantial part of the Phare and Transition Facility funds for Roma issues was disbursed by the Foundation for Civil Society (NROS), through open grant schemes, such as: Strengthening the Role of Advocacy and Monitoring Civil Society Organisations, Improvement of Long-Term Opportunities for Roma, Long-term Sustainability of Civil Society Development, Strengthening of Civil Society, Civil Society Development/Support to Roma Integration Initiatives Organisations in the Czech Republic, the Special Programme for Strengthening Civil Society and Preparing for Accession of the 10 Candidate Countries in Central and Eastern Europe, etc. Since 1993, a total of EUR 26,702,285 was disbursed by the NROS.

In 2007-2013, the Czech Republic is expected to draw EU funds corresponding to 12 percent of the state budget, i.e. CZK 774 billion, out of which CZK 132 billion will be administered by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports.[87] The Operational Programme for Competitiveness (OPKV), Part 1 has three priorities: increasing the quality of education; providing equal opportunities for students, including students with special needs; and in-service teacher training. This programme could be effectively used for improving the situation of Roma education. In October 2006, the Concept of a Socially Motivated Research Platform on Roma in Europe within the EU's Seventh Framework Programme, was presented by the Czech representative from the Technology Centre.[88] A coalition of partners for this project is being created now.

84 Information provided by the Decade of Roma Inclusion manager, J. Marousek, November 21, 2006.
85 See details at http://www.msmt.cz/eu/operacni-program-rozvoj-lidskych-zdroju.
86 http://www.msmt.cz/Files/HTM/BHRealizace3_1a3_2OPRLZ1.htm, http://www.esfcr.cz/clanek.php?lg=1&id=3227.
87 http://strukturalnifondy.cz/cms/.
88 http://www.tc.cz/home_/, http://www.fp7.cz/, http://www.sydsam.se/english/SMRP.asp.

6. REF Programme in Czech Republic

As of February 2007, the REF had received six project proposals from the Czech Republic, out of which two projects were approved. The total commitment of the REF in the Czech Republic was EUR 250,823 in 2006. The first project approved, the Roma Think Tank is an initiative of the Dzeno association with the main aim of forming and operating an expert group that will: work out necessary education analyses, develop a partnership with Czech government representatives, and lobby for the National Development Fund to increase its budget for Roma education.

The second project, run by Athinganoi, is intended to help implement the government directive on multicultural education in elementary schools. The project created innovative material, "Bookmarks," which help teachers' access information on Roma culture and personalities. The project includes teacher trainings and work in eight elementary schools within the Czech Republic.

Overall Strategic Framework and Levels of Engagement

An overall strategy for improving Roma education needs to engage stakeholders at three levels:

- ⇨ The government and national policy makers.
- ⇨ The school authorities, both national and local; and
- ⇨ Roma civil society, including NGOs and parents.

Table 4. lays out the key instruments and priorities.

REF Instruments and Priorities

Over the next three years, the REF will engage the Czech education authorities, Roma organisations, local governments and Roma communities in policy dialogue and support in the following priority areas to improve Roma education outcomes in the Czech Republic:

1. Greater access for Roma to existing programmes and services:
   - ⇨ Pre-school and kindergarten.
   - ⇨ Preparatory classes.
   - ⇨ Scholarships and other programmes of support.
2. Better use of EU funds to increase funding for Roma education:
   - ⇨ Leverage resources through matching grants for counterpart funds and revolving funds for pre-financing.
   - ⇨ Build capacity of local communities, governments and Roma NGOs to access EU funds.
3. Systemic changes to redress inequities affecting Roma in the following areas:
   - ⇨ Early tracking and over-representation of Roma in basic practical schools.
   - ⇨ Development of comprehensive approach to reduce segregation throughout the entire system (including isolated Roma communities).
   - ⇨ Evaluation of effectiveness of development programmes regarding Roma.
   - ⇨ Lack of cooperation between pedagogical assistants and teachers in the classroom.

Table 4: Levels of Engagement for Improving Roma Education Outcomes in the Czech Republic

Assistance and Support to the Roma Community	Implementation Support to Education Authorities and Schools	Policy Development with the Government
1. Support Roma parents in excluded communities: ⇨ Involve parents in early care projects. ⇨ Empower families in excluded communities and motivate them in education issues. ⇨ Support communication between Roma parents and local schools (SIM) and pre-school facilities. 2. Support Roma parents in general: ⇨ Motivate Roma parents in education issues. ⇨ Use examples of good practice as positive role models. 3. Support Roma students at higher levels, encouraging their networking and positive impact as role models. 4. Support Roma NGOs involved in educational activities to cooperate and strengthen their organisational, networking, and capacity building structures: ⇨ Motivate cooperation through joint projects and facilitate access and use EU funds effectively. ⇨ Ensure inclusion of smaller/isolated NGOs.	1. Support pre-school enrolment of Roma children: ⇨ Increasing pre-school enrolment of Roma children with the help of pedagogical assistants and pre-school authorities. 2. Motivate mainstream schools and gymnasiums to provide quality educations for Roma students at primary levels: ⇨ Decrease residential limitations. ⇨ Increase benefits for schools practicing integration. ⇨ Increase cooperation between pedagogical assistants and teachers. ⇨ Introduce education activities acknowledging Roma history, culture and language. 3. Increase transition to high school and tertiary schools: ⇨ Create systemic measures to support Roma students, including preparatory classes, after school activities, etc. ⇨ Provide scholarship support for secondary and tertiary students. ⇨ Increase school accountability for achievement.	1. Initiate revision of some legal provisions, such as Decree 73/2005 on special needs education (to remove practical schools from the system while improving mainstreaming of Roma). 2. Engage in revision of the per-capita formula for funding and evaluation of development programmes impact on Roma. 3. Initiate measures to ameliorate the negative impact of social exclusion, including the reconsideration of early tracking. 4. Support and ensure implementation measures for the Early Care Concept. 5. Revise effectiveness of the implementation of the Concept of Roma Integration in the area of primary and secondary school education. 6. Recommend to the NIDV to amend standards for teacher education so that they cover the concepts of inclusion, equal opportunity and social justice. 7. Recommend to the accreditation commission of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports to make the inclusion of a mandatory minimum course on equity, social justice and Roma issues a prerequisite for accreditation of syllabi at teacher training faculties.

5. Support networking among Roma professionals who work as pedagogical assistants, social workers and regional Roma coordinators.	4. Identify and implement sustainable approaches to second-chance and adult education: ⇨ involve Roma NGOs and community leaders; ⇨ ensure transitions to higher levels and the labour market. 5. Establish a comprehensive and trustworthy data collection system ⇨ Collaborate with Roma NGOs and local authorities in collecting and disseminating data for efficient targeting purposes.	

Results Framework Anticipated by REF Activities

Based on the identification of REF strategic priorities, and on the REF's current projects and project pipeline, the results of REF activities should be visible in the next three to four years on the following levels:

1. Legal, financial, and administrative changes:
   - ⇨ A more coherent legislative framework, as measured by implementation and enforcement of the new Education Act.
   - ⇨ An increased flow of EU funds to Roma communities, as measured by resources available to Roma organisations and local authorities in communities with high Roma populations.

2. Education indicators–results are expected in the mid-term, through improved education outcomes for the Roma. Key indicators for the Czech Republic would include:
   - ⇨ Increased pre-school enrolment of Roma children.
   - ⇨ Increased Roma enrolment in high school and tertiary education, with a commensurate increase in volume and amount of scholarship support.
   - ⇨ Increased number of Roma staff in the education system.
   - ⇨ Decreased impact of social-economic status on student performance.

3. Improved social cohesion:
   - ⇨ Improved cooperation among schools, the Roma community, and Roma NGOs in the educational activities of schools.
   - ⇨ Development of active networking between regional Roma coordinators, Roma social workers and pedagogical assistants.

Country Monitoring Framework

Monitoring of these expected results must be conducted through a matrix of organisations providing a variety of data sources. These organisations include:

1. The network of Roma NGOs engaged in education.
2. The State Statistical Office.
3. Databases of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, other government agencies, and donors with data collection routines.
4. Evaluation and monitoring activities designed and funded by each REF project.

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Annex A

Irregularities in Compulsory School Attendance

Table 5: Delayed Entrance to School

Pupils entering the compulsory education later than at 6 years	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006
Number	26,914	25,842	23,333	21,341	21,554	21,462
Percentage	22.4	22.9	23.2	23.8	24.0	24.0

Table 6: Number and Percentage of Drop Outs in Základní Školy

Pupils ended compulsory attendance	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006
Before 7th grade	764	2,149	2,113	3,163[b]	2,275	1,405
In 7th grade	2,750	2,865	2,871	3,091[b]	0	–
In 8th grade	3,075	3,507	3,425	3,298	3,340	3028
Percentage of drop outs from successful pupils[a]	5.3	6.9	6.9	7.8[b]	4,97	4.1

a The basis for the calculation is the sum of number of successful school leavers of primary school and number of pupils who completed compulsory school attendance in gymnasium.

b The number is high due to a failure , it wrongly includes also pupils who left to secondary school.

Note: Pupils who end compulsory school attendance before ninth grade can continue their education and attain a qualification. The vocational branches with adapted curriculum especially at vocational centres (učiliště) are designed for them.

Table 7: Students Entering Vocational Centres

	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Pupils who entered vocational centres	2,075	1,918	1,645	1,580	1,287
Percentage of those pupils from drop outs of primary schools	31.5	22.5	19.6	16.5	19.2

A total of 339 pupils participate in home schooling in 2004-2005. Responsibility for their education is taken by six schools.

Source: Institute for Information on Education.

Annex B

Areas of Education Policy and basic facts	Basic Dimensions of Education Policy in Czech Republic				
	Openness	Measurability	Equity	Efficiency	Regulation
School management A school council's composition is one third municipal officials, one third parents or adult students, and one third teachers. In an already selective system, free choice of schools is a way of increasing selectiveness. This effect is strongest in poorer areas. The school climate is mostly not governed by the interests and needs of children but rather by the interests of teachers.	Management is accountable to the school council and the education sections of regional and municipal authorities. Student participation in management issues only exists in secondary and tertiary education, or in several dozen innovative or pilot primary schools. There are some good examples of small schools in rural areas improving openness. These often depend on the individual enthusiasm of head teachers (and overcoming immense obstacles in the overall system). Only a few community and full-day operated schools are open to parents and	School self-evaluation was introduced by the Act on Education: ⇨ Head teachers should be trained and motivated to include criteria on achievement and progress of socially disadvantaged children. ⇨ Effectiveness and equity should be monitored and evaluated in a mutual connection. ⇨ Neither of the above two points are guaranteed. Inspection should evaluate human rights and tolerance education (task B2), and equal opportunity in education (task B3).	Equity is generally not seen as an important part of the school ethos, and only innovative and pilot schools actively promote an inclusive ethos. Equity is usually not understood, and head teachers and inspectors often do not understand why they should devote special effort to get disadvantaged parents into a dialogue Head teachers usually do not understand the importance of supporting the Romanes language, where it still lives. The threat of being evaluated in a general way that does not take students' background into account discourages schools from taking disadvantaged	Management is improving but is not based on a child-centred paradigm. About 80% of schools are still managed in a hierarchical manner. Data on results/ impact of projects is not collected.	School councils are regulated by sections 167 and 168 of the School Act. Tasks B2 on Human Rights education and B3 on equal opportunity.

Areas of Education Policy and basic facts	Basic Dimensions of Education Policy in Czech Republic				
	Openness	Measurability	Equity	Efficiency	Regulation
	to children after school. Community schools tend to be Roma schools.	These are in the plan of main tasks of the Czech School Inspection for 2006/7. However, there are no criteria yet against which to evaluate progress. Data on discrimination is not collected.	students. Schools therefore try to avoid students who potentially require additional staff time. Roma and parents with a low socio-economic status are not elected to school boards.		

Areas of Education Policy and basic facts	Basic Dimensions of Education Policy in Czech Republic				
	Openness	Measurability	Equity	Efficiency	Regulation
Teachers A university degree is required for all teachers except pre-school level. There is no induction period. There are no competencies and standards set for the teaching profession, except for career advancement. In-service teacher training, was set up by the National Institute for Further Education (NIDV) in 2005. In-service training in a variety of subjects is also offered by businesses and NGOs in programmes accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, with funding from regional, national, private or European funds.	Teachers' conditions and social status have improved in the past decade, to where they receive about 110% of the average national salary. The Bologna process is not yet implemented in higher education, and no competencies are thus required from teacher students. Initial teacher education (especially for teachers of specific subjects) only exceptionally provides skills for child-centered and participatory approaches. In-service training offered by businesses and NGOs offers a wider range of skills. The participatory approach towards students and parents is not required from teachers, and not commonly practiced. Meaningful parent and student involvement or evaluation is rare, and only occurs in innovative schools.	Teacher training provision is diversified, with accreditation procedures standardised and conducted by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports. Standards being developed by NIDV should serve as accreditation criteria. Evaluation of effectiveness is rare, and there is the potential for financial abuses.	There is a lack of teachers qualified for minority education and a lack of Roma teachers. Roma teachers' assistants serve as positive role models. Their training standards are defined by the NIDV, and their position and qualification is regulated by law. Financing is not systemic and is only planned annually. There is little provision in pre-service teacher education for diversity, inclusion and equal opportunity issues. The NIDV prepared a concept for in-service teacher training, but there are no standards for the specialized field of multicultural education, because none are specified by law (Decree 317). Standards in multicultural education are only set for teacher's assistants and education advisors, but not mentioned for head teachers and school managers. Accredited in-service teacher training on diversity and multicultural issues are provided by many actors, and quality, equity, and effectiveness is rarely evaluated.	Teachers of specific subjects lack didactic and methodological skills, such as teaching/ learning skills and assessment skills. Teaching is often not efficient and not motivating. Children need to learn at home, often with the help of parents.	The Act on Education (School Act). The act on pedagogical staff. Decree 317/2005 on in-service teacher training, accreditation commissions, and the career system.

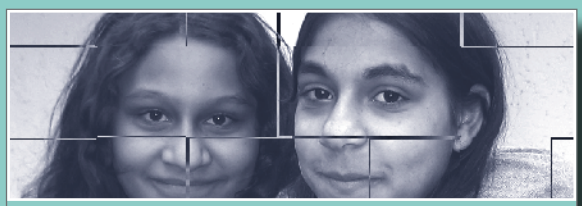
Areas of Education Policy and basic facts	Basic Dimensions of Education Policy in the Czech Republic				
	Openness	Measurability	Equity	Efficiency	Regulation
Curriculum Curricular reform is under way. School Education Programmes are fully in action in pre-school education. In 2004, the Framework Educational Programmes for compulsory education were introduced. In September 2007, all schools providing compulsory education should introduce their School Education Programme. A school can either adopt a sample programme or develop their own. Sample School Education Programmes of 16 pilot primary schools are available on the internet. There is a system of training coordinators and teachers on school education programmes. A similar situation applies for secondary schools, with a delay.	Development of school-based and competence-oriented curriculum is now in progress. In October 2006, the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports issued an overview of information sources for School Education Programme development. Still schools complain that they lack human resources to make their own programmes. Framework Education Programmes are being developed by the Research Institute for Education (VUP); with good support available via the Internet, on "Metodický portal." A new programme for practical schools is piloted during 2006/07.	Programmes aim to be learning-oriented, focusing on competencies and not facts. However there are no methods developed for measuring these competencies. CERMAT was established in January 2006 to develop measurement standards. There is a danger that a concern for measurable test results will undermine the process and results of curriculum reform, which also promotes the development of competencies which are not easily measured (e.g. social competencies).	The school profile definition is mandatory in the School. .Education Programme. There is no means to guarantee that the school profile will be an attempt to allow for maximum fulfillment of individual students' educational profile (via compulsory decisions on elective subjects). Such a guarantee would promote the students' ownership of their own education. Mastering the curriculum still requires immense parent engagement and private tutoring, which is still a common practice. This situation discriminates against parents with less education and a lower socio-economic status. Framework Education Programmes include a requirement that multicultural education and principles for education of socially disadvantaged children are cross-cutting themes[1]. But, the related resources do not address equity or social justice issues. The curriculum for practical schools is substandard. It has a disproportional high allocation of teaching hours to manual skills instead of language or sciences. The curriculum relays on curricula for special needs students.	PISA results are above average with an increasing trend. However, the increase is gained by raising only higher performers' scores. High SES impact on performance. The education system is not effective in targeting lower performers and children of poorer social-economic status.	School Act, RVP portal (www.rvp.cz)

[1] Framework Education Prgrams for basic schools includes a provision to lead students to tolerance and respect for other people, their culture and values, to teach them to live together with other people. The Framework Education Programme for basic schools also contains a cross-cutting theme promoting multicultural education and principles for educationa of socially disadvantaged students

Areas of Education Policy and basic facts	Basic Dimensions of Education Policy in the Czech Republic				
	Openness	Measurability	Equity	Efficiency	Regulation
Textbooks All subjects covered by textbooks.	There is a free market for textbook publishing. Selection is made at the school level. Textbooks, written from the majority perspective, still contain stereotypes, paternalism and ethnocentricisms. Roma seldom mentioned in the textbooks.	There are criteria for reviewing the textbooks that have applied for official endorsement in order to be financed from the state budget.	State criteria acknowledge tolerance (including knowing its limits) and plurality of views (based on scientific knowledge). The criteria ignore multiculturalism, equity or social justice issues. Only gender equality is addressed properly. Some materials, even those developed by NGOs, may very easily increase prejudices, stereotyping, and racism, instead of doing the opposite.	The system of endorsements could work if based on transparent and public procedures.	Textbook provision is deregulated and market based. Endorsement is needed to motivate schools and parents to select the book.
Assessment and evaluation This is part of current school reform and is still being developed. There is no school leaving examination system on the primary level. A standardized school leaving examination for students aged 18 is being intensively prepared.	Student assessment is mostly by oral examination. Assessment is still based on facts. No methods or criteria are developed to assess competencies. Evaluation of schools is through self-evaluation (under development) and through School Inspection.	An external examination at the secondary school leaving level is being prepared but not set up yet. Only research studies and PISA and TIMSS are available as measurements. CERMAT is in charge and in the process of developing measurement methods and criteria.	Assessment reflects family background and parental support, which discriminates against Roma. It is not guaranteed that school evaluation includes equity, social justice, and inclusion issues. PISA research, showing the connection between social status and learning outcomes is not properly taken as a feedback for the system. The PISA model of assessing learning outcomes together with equity is not used by CERMAT.	Assessment and evaluation is under reform. In effect, it is still traditional.	School Act.

Areas of Education Policy and basic facts	Basic Dimensions of Education Policy in the Czech Republic				
	Openness	Measurability	Equity	Efficiency	Regulation
Finances Financing is from the national budget – which covers salaries, textbooks and overheads – and the municipal budget. Per capita financing through formulae (normatives).	Development funds provide grants to cover costs related to teachers' assistants, preparatory classes and social disadvantage. Financing for separate schools is favorable in some regions, so schools get less per student for integration into mainstream education than they do for keeping them in separated classes or schools. Special schools still compete for students.	More transparent since 2005, though the formulae are complicated and understandable only to financial specialists, and not to teachers or parents. Grant allocation is made on a competitive basis. There is a lack of clear criteria for selection and evaluation.	Before the Act on Education (new School Act), socially disadvantaged children would be financially supported (only) by their enrolment in basic special schools. Although enrolment of Roma children in these schools was discriminating against them because of limited curricula and access to further education, the pupil/teacher ratio was better than that of the mainstream schools. Currently, only health disability or health disadvantage is financially compensated for, and it is funded per-capita. There is no financial support of culturally and/or socially disadvantaged children, support that would impact many Roma. Current funding does not increase equality of access to education for all.	Per capita financing is effective. Development programme funding is not systematic; its effectiveness needs to be evaluated.	School Act. Decree 2005/492 on regional normatives and related regulations. Regional documents on normatives.

Roma Education Fund



ROMA EDUCATION FUND (REF)

The goal of the Roma Education Fund is to contribute to closing the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma, through policies and programs to support quality education for Roma including desegregation of educational systems. The Roma Education Fund was created in the framework of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. Therefore, it also shares the goals of the Decade.

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