Country Report on Education: Czech Republic
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ABOUT EDUMIGROM

Ethnic Differences in Education and Diverging Prospects for Urban Youth in an Enlarged Europe is a collaborative research project that aims to study how ethnic differences in education contribute to the diverging prospects of minority ethnic youth and their peers in urban settings. Through applying a cross-national comparative perspective, the project explores the overt and covert mechanisms in socio-economic, political, cultural, and gender relations that make ethnicity a substantive component of inequalities in social status and power. The project involves nine countries from old and new member states of the European Union: the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. EDUMIGROM began in March 2008 and will run through February 2011. The project is coordinated by the Center for Policy Studies at Central European University in Budapest, Hungary.

ABOUT THE PAPER

The first research phase of EDUMIGROM focused on background studies on education and ethnic relations in the domestic contexts of the project’s target countries. During this phase, research teams gathered and processed macro-level data and information with three adjacent goals in mind: to supply the comprehensive country studies on education and ethnic relations; to inform cross-country comparisons on minority ethnic youth in education; to provide ample information for the multi-level selection of samples for surveys, community and school case studies. A total of 16 studies were prepared, and their publication is intended to share valuable knowledge and stimulate discussion on issues related to the education and integration of minority ethnic youth in Europe. These reports made available to the wider public may no longer contain specific information on the sites and schools selected for the EDUMIGROM field research. The relevant chapters have either been excluded or anonymised in order to protect the identity of the researched schools, communities and individuals.

This Paper was prepared by the research team from the Faculty of Social Studies at Masaryk University, Czech Republic.

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CENTER FOR POLICY STUDIES
CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

Nádor utca 9
H–1051 Budapest, Hungary

info@edumigrom.eu
www.edumigrom.eu
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1. Overview of the Educational System in the Czech Republic

1.1 General Structure of the Educational System

The institutionalised levels of education in the In the Czech Republic are the following:

1. **Pre-school education**: *Nursery schools and pre-school special preparatory programmes*

2. **Basic education**: *Basic schools and special basic schools*, divided into:
   2.1 First stage of basic education
   2.2 Second stage of basic education

3. **Secondary education**: *Secondary schools*
   3.1 Grammar schools (gymnasia), secondary technical schools and secondary professional schools: *These types of schools issue the GCE (General Certificate of Education – i.e. they are concluded by 'maturita', a school-leaving exam*
   3.2 Secondary vocational schools: *issue the Apprenticeship Certificate (AC)*
   3.3 Secondary education vocational programmes: *Concluded by a final exam without formal certificate*
   3.4 Conservatoires: *secondary art schools*

4. **Postsecondary non-tertiary education**
   4.1 *Shortened study with GCE*
   4.2 *Shortened study with AC*
   4.3 *Extension study*

5. **Higher education**: *Universities and higher professional schools (undergraduate programmes, graduate programmes, and doctoral post-graduate programmes; only universities can provide graduate and post-graduate programmes)*.

At the national level, the education system in the Czech Republic is governed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS). By law, levels one to four and higher professional schools are regulated by the *Education Act*. Universities are regulated by the *Higher Education Act* (a different, specific legal norm).

All these levels of education and respective institutions will be specified in this chapter (sections 1.3-1.7). Given the character of our project, attention will especially be paid to the Basic Education level, and, to a lesser extent, to Pre-school and Secondary Education. At all levels of education, there are both non-private (public, free-of-charge) and private (fee-paying) schools. As both kinds of educational institutions have to observe the same general rules, we will not take this distinction into account in the following sections on the particular levels of education. We will return to this issue in the sections on operating and funding the school system (1.9 and 1.10).

1.2 Typical Pathways through the Educational System

Children *may* be placed in a *pre-school* facility (nursery school) at the age of three. It is not obligatory to place a child in a nursery school, but it is widely practised by parents. At the age of five or six, children also *may* be signed up for a special pre-school preparatory programme (class). If a child is placed into

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1 In the official terminology, this level of education is called ‘middle education’ (st edni vzdělání). Since this term may be misleading if translated literally, we use the term ‘secondary education’ for this level.
such a programme at the age of six, they enter the basic compulsory education (school) at the age of seven. There also is the possibility to place a child in such a special pre-school programme at the age of five, and keep them there until they are seven. In the latter two cases, the official terminology speaks about the ‘postponed school attendance’. (See section 1.3 for a deeper description of all of these points.)

The compulsory basic education typically starts at the age of six, but in some cases (e.g. for children born near the start of the regular school year, on September 1) parents may apply for an exception and place their children in a basic school at the age of five or seven. These cases are decided upon by the particular school authority (the school director). There also is the possibility of a ‘postponed school attendance’ (see above), where children enter basic education at the age of seven. Basic education typically takes nine years: five years at the first stage, and four years at the second stage of basic education. There is no formal transition from the first to the second stage of basic education, which is typically at the age of 11, at least from the viewpoint of pupils and their parents. Except that this is the first moment in individual educational pathways at which pupils can enter an eight-year (classical) gymnasium (or a conservatoire) and become students. There is a tenth year of basic education, conducted by the basic schools at the second stage, for ‘pupils with special educational needs’ (see section 1.4 for more). Regardless of this, students who are unable to finish full nine years of basic education before they reach the age of fifteen (either due to failures or illness) continue longer at the basic level of education, but cannot attend basic school longer than until the end of the school year in which they reach the age of seventeen.

The other key moments are the points of transition from basic school to secondary school, and from secondary school to a higher professional school or university. The transition from basic to secondary education typically takes place at the age of 15 (after finishing nine years of basic education), and less frequently at the age of 16 (if entering basic school at the age of seven or for pupils with special educational needs reaching the tenth grade). But, this transition can also take place as early as after the fifth (at the age of 11) or seventh (at the age of 13) year of basic education, when ‘more gifted’ pupils can transfer to the so-called multi-year gymnasia. These have been legally and factually established during the first half of the 1990s; there are six-year and eight-year gymnasia. Secondary schools (and institutions of higher education) are selective, and entering them requires passing an admission procedure (admission exam). Today, applicants can apply to more than just one of these schools and institutions simultaneously.

Secondary schools concluded with the GCE are four-year programmes (except multi-year gymnasia). Vocational schools concluded by an Apprenticeship Certificate (AC) are three- or two-year programmes, while vocational schools concluded by just a ‘final exam’ (without issuing the AC) are two- or one-year programmes.

The transition from secondary to higher education then typically takes place at the age of 19. Only students with a GCE can apply to a university or another higher education institution programme. Graduates of vocational schools (with an AC) can continue for two years of study at an ‘extension study’ programme (typically provided by professional and technical secondary schools), and after gaining a GCE they can apply to a higher education programme.

Information in sections 1.1 and 1.2 is summarised in Table 1.

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2 The same opportunity – to leave basic education earlier at the age of 11 – also applies to conservatoires (secondary art schools). They can either be attended for eight years (when entering at the age of 11) or six years (when entering at the age of 15). After six or four years of study respectively, however, students continue (if they do continue) to study at the university level. Given the specifically complicated structure and their highly selective (elitist) character, we will largely leave this type of schools out in our further description.
### Table 1: Czech Educational System and Points of Transition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISCED Level</th>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Typical age</th>
<th>No. of years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 0           | Pre-school education | - nursery school  
- special nursery school  
- preparatory classes for children with learning disabilities  
- preparatory classes for socially disadvantaged children | 3–6  
5/6–6/7  
5/6–6/7  
5/6–6/7 | 3  
1–2  
1–2  
1–2 |
| 1           | Basic education: first stage | - first stage of basic school  
- special basic schools | 6–11  
6/7–11/12 | 5  
5 |
| 2           | Basic education: second stage | - second stage of basic school  
- special basic schools | 11–15  
11–16 | 4  
5 |
| 3           | Secondary education | - eight-year gymnasium  
- six-year gymnasium  
- four-year gymnasium  
- secondary technical or professional school  
- secondary vocational school with AC  
- secondary vocational programme | 11–19  
13–19  
15–19  
15–19  
15–17/18  
15–16/17 | 8  
6  
4  
4  
2–3  
1–2 |
| 4           | Postsecondary non-tertiary education | - shortened study programme concluded with a General Certificate of Education (GCE)  
- shortened study programme concluded with an Apprenticeship Certificate (AC)  
- extension study | varying  
varying  
varying | 1–2  
1–1.5  
2 |
| 5           | Higher (tertiary) education: first stage | - university  
- undergraduate level  
- graduate level  
- higher professional school | 19–var.  
19–21  
19–21  
19–21 | 3  
2  
3 |
| 6           | Higher (tertiary) education: second stage | - university  
- doctoral studies | 23–26/27  
23–26/27 | 3–4 |

Additionally, there are different kinds of voluntary schools or programmes which may or may not issue their own certificates for their students: typically art schools, language schools, etc. These schools are either open for children and/or youth (3–18 years old), or they are generally accessible regardless of age. As a rule, the students pay for their training here. These schools are regulated by the Education Act, but they are not a regular part of the educational system. Therefore we are not going to discuss them any further, and we are also largely leaving out various programmes for re-qualification or ‘upgrading’ qualification, typically offered to adults by different types of training institutions (including, e.g., universities, higher professional schools, secondary technical and professional schools, but also independent consultation firms, etc.). These are also not a part of the regular educational system, and are often a profit-seeking activity.

**1.3 Pre-school Education**

Besides nursery school, which is the typical and most frequent institution at this level, the pre-school education system also includes:

1. nursery-specialty Schools: designed for children with serious mental or physical (blindness, deafness, paralysis, etc.) handicaps;
2. preparatory classes for children with mental or physical disadvantages: designed for children
with learning dysfunctions (dyscalculia, dyslexia, etc.); and

3. preparatory classes for socially disadvantaged children.

Preparatory classes (points 2 and 3) are organised – typically jointly for both categories, that is, as one class (group) – by accredited basic schools, and it is up to the director of a school whether they will apply for this kind of specifically subsidized programme.

In general, these schools and programmes (including the nursery schools) provide children from the age of three to six, with a very basic education, teaching skills and social competences, and it serves to prepare them for the further educational process. Even though the attendance of nursery schools is not obligatory, and it has to be partially paid for (but this can not exceed 50% of the expenses spent by the provider for one child, the rest is subsidized, typically by the respective municipality), it is very much sought-after. In school year 2006-2007, 90% of children from this particular age cohort (three- to six-year olds) have attended a nursery school, and 95.8% of them have attended pre-school facilities in general. The last year of pre-school education before the transition to basic education is free of charge (see ‘Pathways’), since it is considered as a pre-school education proper, and therefore as a right (to education).

Special pre-school programmes (points 1-3 above), available for children five years of age, are especially important for us, since they educate (or are intended to educate) a relatively large part of our target population (Roma children in particular). We will therefore return to this issue again in section 2.3. These programmes are formally considered to be a part of the basic education system, and therefore they also are free of charge, although not compulsory (same as with the last year in nursery schools). As indicated above, preparatory classes for mentally or socially disadvantaged children are provided by basic schools. Nursery-specialty schools, designed for children with serious mental or physical handicaps, may either be independent institutions or run by a Basic-Specialty School. Preparatory classes of both kinds are organized by Basic Schools. They open such a class if the minimum number of pupils (seven) have applied for the respective programme.

To place a child into any one of these programmes, an explicit consent (application) of the parents (or a designated statutory representative of the child) and the recommendation of an expert are needed. These experts typically are:

1. a doctor (in the case of seriously physically or mentally handicapped children);
2. a Special Pedagogical Center (in the case of physically or mentally disadvantaged children);
3. a pedagogical-psychological counsellor (in the case of socially disadvantaged children).

These all are typically contacted by parents, often upon recommendation of a particular nursery school (its director) or a community worker. It is the basic-school director who makes the final decision on who will be accepted to such programmes, but both of the necessary conditions (parent's application and an expert recommendation) have to be met.

Each pupil enrolled in the preparatory class has an individual education plan, which is designed according to the Framework Educational Plan for basic Schools (FEP BE, see next section) so that it prepares involved children for a smoother transition at the age of 6 to the educational system at the basic level. In school year 2007/2008, 1929 pupils attended 164 preparatory classes. So far, demand has exceeded supply: more than 10% of applicants had to be rejected due to the lack of capacity.

For the least advanced children in these programmes, the so-called ‘postponed school attendance’ may be arranged. In this case, they either enter a pre-school preparatory programme at the age of six or they remain there for two years. In both of these cases, then, they start their basic education at the age of seven. The procedure of selecting these pupils is the same as in the case of

accepting them into the preparatory class programmes: parent's application, expert recommendation, and basic-school director's decision.

1.4 Basic Education

Since the level of basic education is the major area of our concern in the project (besides, to some extent, the secondary schools), we pay particular attention to this subject.

Compulsory basic education applies to the Czech and EU citizens and their dependants, foreigners with a permanent or provisional (long-term visa) residential permit in the Czech Republic, and immigrants who have been granted asylum or have been officially seeking asylum.

As indicated and described above, basic education is formally divided into two stages: the first stage (five years), and the second stage (four years). The division into the two stages of basic education (basic schools) serves mostly organizational purposes within schools: different teaching staff (and required qualification), different methods of teaching, sometimes different facilities used within the same building or complex, etc. A pupil who finishes the first five year of basic education (first stage) continues automatically to the second stage. There is no formal threshold (exam, interview, etc.) in the transition between the first and the second stages of basic school. In smaller places (villages,) there may only be a first-stage basic school, and after finishing the fifth year of basic education pupils have to commute to a nearby larger place (town), i.e., to a basic school with the second stage, where there are integrated into the classes. Recomposition of classes at the second stage, however, often takes place within the same school (and its own pupils from the first stage), i.e., the class collectives from the first stage are divided into several different classes in the second. This happens, for example, when there are more classes (more pupils, smaller classes, etc.) at the second stage than at the first one. The recomposition is often simply guided by alphabetical order (according to the pupils' initials), but sometimes special classes (like those oriented to sports, mathematics, languages, etc.) are formed at this level according to the pupils' interests or talents.

The school year for basic schools starts on 1 September and finishes on 31 June the next year. July and August serve for school holidays. One class lasts 45 minutes, and children attend school five days a week. The number of classes gradually increases throughout the course of primary education – it starts with 19 hours in the first year and finishes with 32 hours in the ninth year. Schooling takes place mostly in the morning hours, typically starting at eight, much less frequently, or rather exceptionally, an hour earlier or later. Most schools reserve the afternoon hours for pupils' leisure activities organized by the school and/or in the school building. The number of pupils in the class typically ranges from 15 to 30 (on average there were 20.6 pupils in classes in 2007/2008).

Pupils are evaluated on a five-grade numerical scale, from one (best) to five (worst). Their overall results are summarised in a final school report at the end of every semester (typically at the end of January and the end of June). A verbal evaluation has been possible since 2005, and if a school adopts this way of final evaluation, it may either combine it with numerical grading or substitute the numerical grading by it. Two-fifths of basic schools do not use verbal evaluations in their school reports; the rest of them use it mostly for selected pupils. Pupils' performance and behaviour are discussed with parents at regular meetings with class-teachers and also other teachers. If the final evaluation (at the end of the school year, i.e., at the end of June) shows one or more five marks ('failed'), the pupils take a 'reparation exam', and if they fail to pass this, they have to repeat the current class-year in the following school year. In this case, they are integrated into a class one-year younger.
Pupils do not have to pass any special final exam at the end of their basic schooling. In the last year of their compulsory education (or after the fifth or seventh year, in the case that they intend to transfer to a multi-year gymnasium or a conservatoire), the school issues a ‘final evaluation of the pupil’. The main content of this final evaluation is a statement on the final level of accomplished education, and it typically suggests (implicitly or explicitly) an appropriate path for further education or qualifications. It also evaluates the pupil’s behaviour throughout the course of the compulsory schooling, and possibly also information relevant to the pupil’s performance (family situation, special talents or problems, etc.).

**Drop-out rates:** In the past few years, more than 90% of pupils have regularly completed basic education successfully in nine years, and left basic school (and in most cases transferred to the secondary level of education) at the age of 15 (or 16 in case they started basic school at the age of seven). The others continue at the basic level, either within a programme for pupils with special educational needs (these may form separate classes or may be integrated in regular classes and individually approached – see below), or they continue studying within regular classes (mostly in the same basic school, sharing classes with younger classmates) until they finish the equivalent of the ninth year, or until they are 17 years of age. The proportion of pupils who fail to advance to a higher class-year has been consistently decreasing in the past years. While at the end of the 2001/2002 school year the drop-out rate (percentage of those who failed to advance to a higher class) was 1.11% of all pupils at basic schools, it was 0.75% at the end of the 2006/2007 school year. This proportion again slightly increased at the end of the 2007/2008 school year, when 0.81% of all pupils at basic schools did not make it to a higher class. What may be of interest is the fact that the drop-out rate in the transition between class-years has been especially decreasing at the first stage of basic education (1.00% in 2001/2002, and 0.57% in 2007/2008), while it has decreased to a lesser extent at the second stage of basic education (1.25% in 2001/2002, and 1.10% in 2007/2008). As for those who had not been able to finish the equivalent of the ninth class-year of basic education before they reached the age of seventeen, the general drop-out rate in 2006/2007 was 3.25% of all school-leavers, while it was 4.25% at the end of the previous school-year of 2005/2006. These are those who leave basic school with an ‘incomplete basic education’.

Table 2: Basic Education: Basic school leavers from 2005/06 according to class-years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leaving basic education</th>
<th>Number of basic school leavers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class-year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>117,921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from which, are special schools</td>
<td>7,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS for students without Special Educational Needs</td>
<td>112,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS for students with Special Educational Needs</td>
<td>5,884</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data from 30 September 2006
Source: Database of ÚIV (Institute for Information on Education)*

Since 2005, all basic schools have designed their curricula according to individual School Educational Programmes (SEPs), and they have done so under the guidance of the Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education (FEP BE), issued and guaranteed by MEYS. The FEP BE defines nine main educational areas and six cross-curricular topics:

5 The FEP BE and SEPs schemes apply to all pre-school educational facilities and programmes as well.
The educational areas are:

- Language and communication,
- Mathematics and its application,
- ICT,
- People and their world,
- People and society,
- People and nature,
- Art and culture,
- People and their health, and
- People and the world of work.

The cross-curricular topics include:

- Personal and social education,
- Education for democratic citizenship,
- Education towards thinking in the European and global contexts,
- Multicultural education,
- Environmental education, and
- Media studies.

The SEP then divides the general curriculum into particular years (or other compact parts e.g. modules) and into subjects for each school. One educational area can form part of one or more subjects (courses) or the different areas can be integrated in an 'integrated subject (course)'. Importantly, it is through their SEPs that schools create their individual profiles. The SEP not only allows for putting different emphases on different areas at different schools, but it also makes it possible to reduce or increase the average workload and intensity of education for pupils, making thus some schools more and some less demanding. For example, teaching a foreign language usually starts in the third year of basic education, but the school director can decide to start with this as early as the first year. Such a decision is made after consultations with, and with the consent of the parents, represented by their delegates in School Boards, which by law exists at each basic, secondary, and higher professional school. (See section 1.8 for more on School Boards).

This scheme has also made it possible for schools to create either extended or limited curricula, which go beyond or under the general requirements of the FEP BE, and this is either for the whole school or some selected classes of pupils. In both cases, they have to apply for an exceptional status to the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports. While schools have been more successful in applying for the limited curricula for the whole school (Basic–Practical Schools), no school with only extended curricula was approved by MEYS until 2006, that is, under the Social Democratic government. The first (private) school with extended curricula for the whole school was approved by MEYS in 2007. Its name is 'Road to Success', the monthly fee is 2,900 CZK (cca 120 EUR), children are selected through a psychological test, and to our knowledge, it is the only school of this type in the country to date. It is designed only for the first stage of basic education, as the expectation is that the pupils will mostly continue their study at an eight-year gymnasium (see section 1.5) – and the less successful will continue their study at another basic school.

In principle and by law, pupil's parents can choose a basic school for their child according to their own will. There is the institution of 'catchment areas', each with its own 'catchment school', and the director of the catchment school is obliged by law to give preference to pupils who permanently

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reside in the respective (catchment) school area. That is, the catchment school has to accept each new pupil from the respective catchment area. In case a school carries out only the first stage of basic education, pupils from its catchment area continue at a higher order catchment school for their area. That is, they continue at a school which conducts classes at the second stage of basic education, and which also incorporates in its catchment area (for the second stage) those nearby basic schools which do not provide education at this level. There are three exceptions from the ‘catchment system’:

1. Basic-Special Schools, which educate children with serious mental or bodily handicaps;
2. Basic Schools for national minorities, which conduct classes in the respective national minority language (see section 2.2); and
3. Basic Schools with either extended or limited curricula for all pupils.

Parents mostly choose the catchment school for their children, especially in smaller towns or villages where there are not many other opportunities at hand. If they do not, they are supposed to give a reason for placing their child into a school in an area different from their catchment one. Typical reasons relate to the child’s talent (for more demanding schools) or family reasons (parents work nearby, a sibling already studies at the school). It is the school directors who decide whether to accept these applications, and they are not obliged to give reasons for their decision in each individual case, although they may (and usually do) if asked, e.g., by the founder (an authority that runs the school, see section 1.8). The director can also recommend (but only recommend) to parents to send their child to another school if he sees this beneficial for the school (too many pupils already and less elsewhere) or for the child (special educational needs, etc.). But, as Czech schools have been experiencing rather a shortage of pupils in the past few years, children from other catchment areas are mostly welcome today, since this affects the school’s budget and the interests of parents/children legitimizes its existence.

Pupils with special educational needs are formally divided into three categories:

1. ‘Pupils with physical (health) handicaps’: serious bodily or mental handicap, blindness, deafness;
2. ‘Pupils with physical (health) disadvantages’: chronically ill, bodily or mental disadvantage, developmental learning disorders like dyslexia or dyscalculia, but also behavioural disorders; and
3. ‘Pupils with social disadvantages’: children from families with a low social-cultural status, children exposed to pathological phenomena, pupils from children’s homes or custody centres, children of asylum seekers, children with a mother tongue other than Czech.

Besides regular Basic Schools and basic education programmes, pupils with special educational needs can be educated in and through other schools or programmes. These are: Basic–Special Schools; and Basic–Practical Schools.

- Basic–Special Schools, dissimilar from the previous, now abolished Basic–Special Schools (see note 10), are designed for children with a serious physical handicap (category 1). They may either be independent institutions or they may operate jointly (as a separate sub-unit) with another regular basic school. Basic education here takes ten years (six years at the first stage, and four years at the second stage), which is the only exception from the regular nine-year basic compulsory education, besides the special ten-year programmes at other basic schools mentioned in the following paragraph.
- Basic–Practical Schools are designed for children with physical (health) disadvantages and learning and behavioural disorders (category 2), who can and often are integrated and educated into regular Basic Schools, either (decreasingly) in special classes within regular Basic Schools, or (increasingly) through an Individual Plan of Education (IPE) in
regular Basic School classes. This plan is supposed and intended to correspond to the child's individual learning abilities and special educational needs.7

It is also worth noting that:

- There are no (and never were, from the formal-legal point of view) special schools nor classes for socially disadvantaged children (category 3), and they can only be specially educated through an IPE in regular Basic School classes.
- All kinds of basic schools can establish for the less advanced children with special educational needs a ten-year programme of basic education, again, either as a special tenth class (year) or a ten-year IPE.

Children can only be placed into these programmes with explicit consent from their parents or a designated statutory representative (e.g., the children's home director). To place a child into one of these programmes, an expert recommendation is also needed: from a doctor (category 1), from a Special Pedagogical Centre (category 2), or from a certified pedagogical-psychological counsellor (category 3). Special Pedagogical Centres use a test of learning abilities of the children to select them for the respective special programme. A school (director or class teacher) can recommend a pupil from a regular class and without an IPE for an expert check by one of these expert bodies, but only with the explicit consent of their parents.

Schools may (but they do not have to) create the function of a special pedagogical counsellor for these pupils and their parents, and majority of them do it. They work individually with children with special educational needs and they are also at the disposal to their parents. This mostly takes place in the form of special consultation hours, for which pupils and/or their parents may at times be invited, but their (pupils’ and parents’) participation is usually only recommended rather than strictly required. It is not expected from the special pedagogues to provide in-depth extra-curricular tutoring or remedial classes, which is rather the agenda of teaching assistants. These counsellors – regularly special pedagogues with teaching obligations at the school – also work with pupils who do not fall under the category of pupils with special educational needs. They also take part in cases when the school has to solve educational or behavioural problems by law and in cooperation with external authorities (e.g., long-time absentees, problems with drugs, physical violence, thefts, etc.). The same applies to school psychologists, who are especially employed (often part-time) by basic schools with special classes or a sufficient number of pupils with special educational needs. There may also be teaching assistants employed by the schools, and they are either present in actual classes with these pupils, taking special care of them, or they work with them individually to improve their performance and help them acclimate to the school environment. But teaching assistants are more typical for basic-practical schools. Most regular basic schools do not seek the opportunity to establish such positions with extra financial support from MEYS, which offers a special scheme exactly for this purpose. In 2006, there were only 375 teaching assistants working in Czech basic schools, mostly in Basic-Special Schools and Basic-Practical Schools.

As stated above, Basic-Practical Schools posses a special status which has to be granted by MEYS. If they are granted the exceptional status, they can bring the workload and intensity of education below the minimal level prescribed by the FEP BE. And they are also entitled to additional funding, coming from MEYS and often also (another addition) through the European Structural Funds (ESF) scheme. This makes it more possible for them, among other things, to lessen the number of pupils in classes and to hire teaching assistants, special pedagogues, or a school psychologist. The official label

7 ‘Basic-Special Schools’ for children with learning and behavioral disorders were abolished, along with the Special Schools (see note 10, this section, for short description of both), by the legal provision of 2005. Yet, they both have been in a sense replaced by the Basic-Practical Schools, and we are going to return to this problem later in this chapter.
'Basic-Practical School' sometimes remains explicitly stated only in the 'Founding Document' and grant applications. Some of these schools do not advertise themselves as 'practical' and publicly (e.g. the name of the school above the building entrance), they present themselves as just basic schools – not to discourage those who may fear stigmatization of putting their children into these schools.

Basic-Practical Schools have, in a sense, replaced both the former Basic-Special Schools and the Special Schools (see also note 8, this section). Special Schools had been under much criticism and were abolished (both) by the amendment of the Education Act in 2005, along with the implementation of the FEP BE and SEPs arrangements. Although the Basic-Practical Schools are designed for children with 'physical (health) disadvantage', they especially thrive in the areas with a concentration of a socially deprived population, of which Roma families often represent a substantial part. They also attract children with similar family or social backgrounds from other areas of the particular city or town, and sometimes even from nearby towns and villages which do not have Basic-Practical Schools.

In some of the Basic-Practical Schools located in rather deprived urban areas, a large majority of pupils are of Roma origin. In the two Basic-Practical Schools most known for this ethnic composition in the inner city of Brno, for example, the rough estimate (ethnicity-based statistics are not allowed by law) is 90% of Roma pupils. Among these, many are from other catchment areas, and they are brought here by their parents often wilfully (individual approach, less work and competitiveness and stress, siblings already here, 'their own people' around, etc.), and sometimes also upon the initiative of a pedagogical-psychological counsellor, a Special Pedagogical Centre (SPC), or a director of their particular catchment school. One of the former two instances (a certified pedagogical-psychological counsellor or a SPC) has to issue a formal recommendation. We expect to find Basic-Practical Schools with over-represented Roma pupils in Ostrava, too.

All these special schools and programmes are extra-funded, most typically by regional governments, according to the number of pupils with special educational needs (about five percent above the norm per each such pupil) at a particular school. However, pupils with social disadvantage are not counted in, and we will explain why this is so and point to some consequences later in this chapter. Each basic school has to create an IPE for its pupils with special educational needs. Not every school has separate classes for such pupils: either because there are just a few of them at the school and of different ages, or because it chooses the strategy of integrating such pupils into regular classes. Before 2005, schools were subsidized to maintain these programmes according to the number of classes for pupils with special educational needs at the particular school, which made some of them (with professional resources, i.e., special pedagogues) specialise as the Basic-Special Schools for children with learning and behavioural problems.

The new legal norm of 2005 stressed the general strategy of MEYS to support integration of such pupils into regular classes and provide extra funding according to the number of pupils with special

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8 Founding Document is the fundamental legal document which legalizes the school's existence, endows it with official accreditation to provide a particular type of education, demarcates its responsibilities and obligations, and regulates its relationships to authorities.

9 Special Schools were a traditional educational institution existing long before 1989, and they were designed for pupils with severe learning and behavioral problems, also labeled officially as those 'with a negative relationship to education'. These schools then often worked more as a 'house of correction' than an educational institution. Roma children had always (also before 1989) been largely overrepresented in these schools.

Basic-Special Schools for children with learning and behavioral problems were established after 1989 and abolished in 2005, and they were intended to approach such pupils more sensitively and individually by conducting smaller classes (which was also made possible by the fact that they were subsidized by the number of classes, and not by the number of pupils), employing special pedagogy and pedagogues, systematically cooperating with special pedagogical centers and psychologists, etc. Here, the ratio of Roma pupils was much lower than in the Special Schools. There was also a symbolic aspect at work here. Although we have no other reasonable option than to translate both of these former institution as 'special', in Czech there was a difference in that the Special Schools used the Czech version of the word (zvláštní, also translatable as 'particular' or 'distinct'), while the Basic-Special Schools used the internationalized version of word speciální, which suggests specialisation more than exoticism.
Many schools have since then abandoned the model with separate special classes, although some of them still keep these, especially those which have transferred from the abolished old Basic-Special Schools into regular Basic Schools. It is these Basic Schools with special classes for pupils with learning and behavioural disorders (and with some inherited tradition and expertise in special pedagogy), and not the Basic-Practical Schools, that the more ambitious parents usually look for in case their child is diagnosed, e.g., as dyslectic. In 2006, there were 44 136 children at Czech Basic Schools educated as pupils with learning and behavioural disorders, out of whom 35,742 were educated through the IPEs, and only 8,394 of them in special classes. Children diagnosed with a ‘developmental learning and/or behavioural disorder’ are of particular interest for us, as we will demonstrate in the following paragraphs. Special classes remain the major site of education for children with a mental, oral, or visual handicap, and for children with a speech impediment. In an overall picture, there were 82,080 pupils at Czech basic schools in 2006 classified as pupils with special educational needs – that is, 9.35% of all pupils registered at this educational level. The percentage of those diagnosed with developmental learning or behavioural deficiency was five per cent of all pupils at basic schools.

Table 3: Basic Education: Number of Schools, Classes, Pupils (pupils with special educational needs in special classes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Schools</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,199</td>
<td>44,527</td>
<td>24,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special classes</td>
<td>722²</td>
<td>4,956</td>
<td>2,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual plans only</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All *PSEN</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>4,956</td>
<td>2,351</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: database of ÚIV (Institute for Information on Education), 30 September 2006

*PSEN: pupils with special educational needs
M: data missing

In practise, there is a problem with diagnosing socially disadvantaged children from families with low social-cultural status and those exposed to pathological phenomena. There are no clear criteria at hand for this kind of categorization of pupils, and no specific legal norm works with this category, although it represents one of the three official categories of pupils with special educational needs (or rather a sub-category of the third category). Therefore directors, special pedagogues, school psychologists and teachers often tend not to work with this concept when arranging and managing special programmes of their school. And the fact that this category of pupils is not extra-funded, unlike those with mental and physical disadvantages or handicaps, certainly also plays a role here. Many of the school directors do not even know that such a sub-category of pupils with special educational needs exists at all. Those who know about it are mostly reluctant to explain how they recognise potential candidates for this classification, and it seems that they do not make much effort in this respect – regularly referring to the lack of clear criteria. The law prohibits them from investigating into the respective family’s financial situation and other intra-family matters as this is ‘personally sensitive information’. This is also why the schools can not obtain the identification of socially disadvantaged children from families who receive state social benefits, and neither can the schools receive special funding for their socially disadvantaged children, since they would not know who is entitled to benefit from it. So, the teachers can only judge from, e.g., whether a child comes to school regularly and prepared, how children are dressed, whether they bring snacks to school, whether their parents pay for extra-curricular school activities (trips, theatre shows, etc.) or for things that are not provided by the school (pens, crayons, water-colours, rulers, exercise books, etc.). Then they can recommend a child be checked by a pedagogical-psychological counsellor, if the parents agree. But they often avoid taking such action, unless the child also exhibits some learning or behavioural problems. As the latter is often
the case, then a check with a Special Pedagogical Centre is an option, often preferred by both the school and parents. Under these circumstances, most of the children who would qualify for the ‘socially disadvantaged’ category by common sense officially end up part of the pupils with special educational needs, just like those with developmental learning and behavioural problems, that is, under category 2.

The situation is different in the Basic-Practical Schools, where directors and teachers are more inclined to subsume under the category of socially disadvantaged pupils those children who are from families with low social-cultural status and exposed to pathological phenomena. While there is no extra-funding from the state or local governments for these pupils, Basic-Practical Schools get substantial contributions from the ESF (which for them is easier than for regular basic schools, even with special cases), and in this scheme, sponsorship of the education of socially disadvantaged pupils is possible. And the schools (directors) thus have the incentive to report a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs, including the socially disadvantaged, in order to gain or maintain their exceptional status. In the socially deprived areas, where these types of school usually reside, families with low social-cultural status are more readily expected. The Basic-Practical Schools (their directors) are also more open than regular Basic Schools to accept children who are socially disadvantaged, which often goes hand in hand with learning and behavioural problems, from other catchment areas. And, many of the socially-culturally deprived families (especially Roma families) from other catchment areas send their children to these schools, for reasons introduced above, sometimes upon the recommendation of an expert that this is to the benefit of the child. On top of this, the less socially-culturally deprived and more ambitious families from the catchment area of a Basic-Practical School prefer sending their children to regular Basic Schools outside the catchment area with special classes or individual programmes. For all this, however, a large part of pupils with special educational needs at this type of school falls under the category of those with learning and behavioural problems, regardless of the social and cultural status of their families.

To sum this up: the strategy of MEYS, which led to the amendment of the Education Act in 2005, was to achieve a higher level of integration of pupils with special educational needs (especially categories 2 and 3) into regular basic schools and regular classes. Therefore the amended Act abolished not only Special Schools, but also Basic-Special Schools for these categories of pupils (category 2 in particular), both which had largely operated outside the concept of catchment areas as they attracted disadvantaged pupils from much wider territories – although the parents’ consent and an expert recommendation were the necessary conditions for placing children into these institutions even before 2005. From the above description, however, it seems clear that the strategic goal of integrating disadvantaged children in regular classes has only partly been achieved so far. It works in Basic Schools with special programmes (classes and/or individual plans), where the composition of pupils with special educational needs is not only more diverse in terms of the character of disadvantage, but also the family background. Basic-Practical Schools, on the other hand, have become points of concentration for children disadvantaged with respect to learning and behavioural problems and their social and cultural background. In this sense, they have in a sense replaced the former Special Schools, although they are better equipped with resources in many respects (small classes, teaching assistants, external and internal expertise, finances, possibility of individual rhythms of education, etc.).

Programmes of special schooling at the level of basic education should therefore draw our attention, since our target population (Roma children in particular) seems to be clearly overrepresented among their pupils (notably in the Basic-Practical Schools). There are, however, no official statistics on the issue, since the Czech law prohibits the official classification of people according to their perceived ethnicity, unless they state this as their nationality in the national census (see section 2.4 for more on this issue).

1.5 Secondary Education

This section provides a general overview of the secondary education level in the Czech Republic. This section in brief, because our primary (although by no means exclusive) concern is schools at the basic level of education, and partly because some features of the school system at the basic and secondary levels are similar or the same, like, e.g., the organization of the school-year.
In the Czech Republic, there are four types of secondary schools:

1. Secondary education with a General Certificate of Education (GCE)
2. Secondary vocational schools with an Apprenticeship Certificate (AC)
3. Secondary vocational programmes (without an AC)
4. Conservatoires, or secondary art schools

There are no catchment areas for these schools, and those who complete primary education can apply to any of these institutions without restrictions. The admission procedure (tests, interviews) is organized on a competitive basis. But, the intensity of the competition, understandably, varies among the different schools of secondary education, conservatoires and selected gymnasia (especially well reputed multi-year gymnasia) being the most competitive, and vocational schools and some secondary vocational schools (especially technical professions: miners, machinists, etc.) being the least competitive. Although we do not have statistics on this, we can safely say that the majority of Roma pupils who leave basic education (often a basic-practical school or a basic school at the age of 16 or 17) apply to the latter kinds of secondary educational institutions.

1.5.1 Secondary Education with a GCE

In this category, educational institutions are divided into two types:

- Grammar schools (Gymnasia)
- Secondary technical schools and secondary professional schools

Gymnasia and Secondary technical and professional schools are four-year study programmes, concluded by a State Final Exam, or maturita in Czech. When students successfully pass this exam, they obtain the General Certificate of Education (GCE). Only students with this certificate (or its equivalent, DiS, issued by conservatoires) can apply to study at an institution of higher education, i.e., university or higher professional school.

Gymnasia provide an advanced general education, yet many of them are more specialised to in a particular area: mathematics, foreign languages, information and communication technologies, etc. Among these, the level of specialisation varies, as does the level of formalization: some gymnasia have their specific area specialisation stated in their Founding Document (see note 9, previous section), some only advertise (e.g., on websites) their special profile, and some are just generally known, among the interested public in the given locality, as being more oriented to a specific area of education. All gymnasia, however, have to follow a minimal educational programme, similar to the basic schools. It is from gymnasia that a large majority of university applicants are recruited.

There are three types of gymnasia according to the number of years studied:

1. Four-year gymnasia: typically for students between 15 and 19 years of age
2. Six-year gymnasia: ages 13-19
3. Eight-year gymnasia: ages 11-19

Before the 1990s, only four-year gymnasia existed in Czechoslovakia, as the communist government abolished classical (eight-year) gymnasia soon after taking over the political power in the country in 1948. Eight-year gymnasia were re-introduced into the system of secondary education during the first half of the 1990s, along with the new type of six-year gymnasia. It is especially the six-year gymnasia that specialise in a certain area of education, although specialised gymnasia are no exception among the other two types. This specialisation takes place especially during the last four years of study (typically for students 15-19 years old), since multi-year gymnasia also have to follow minimal requirements of general education which correspond to the FEP BE (see above, basic schools)
before their students reach the age of 15, that is, the age at which they would have left basic school if they had stayed there. Understandably, the eight-year gymnasia are the most competitive among this category, while the four-year gymnasia are on the other pole of the competitiveness.

Since the multi-year gymnasia were established, a discussion has been going on in the media, academic circles, political arenas, and other public spaces as to whether they should be kept or abolished again from the Czech educational system. The major arguments against them are that:

1. they take the most talented pupils from the basic schools and thus contribute to lowering the quality of basic education (but also the quality of education at the four-year gymnasia, especially in bigger cities where there are more of these institutions; and
2. they select children at a very early age to put them on a more advantageous career orbit, and thus they contribute to the reproduction of social inequalities and cultural differences within Czech society.

The counter-arguments say that:

1. they take better care than the basic schools of gifted children, and thus make it more possible to develop their talents;
2. they are a challenge for basic schools and four-year gymnasia, and thus may be an incentive for the latter to work harder on their self-improvement.

And, it may also be argued that selecting children at an earlier age may be fairer in terms of respecting their actual talents, since the older they get, the more they are affected by the social and cultural environment (especially within the family), which makes those from families with low social-cultural status still more disadvantaged as they grow up.

Secondary technical schools and secondary professional schools form one official category. They only differ with respect to their practical orientation. The secondary technical schools (formerly called 'Industrial Schools') are oriented to areas like electronics, transport, mining, chemistry, construction industry, etc. The secondary professional schools (some of them call themselves 'academies') are oriented to, e.g., medical services, business, administration, languages, tourism and gastronomy, etc. They thus provide specifically oriented education, preparing their students for middle-rank or lower-rank but highly specialised positions in the respective industries. A small part of the secondary school graduates apply to study at a university, most typically in their areas of specialisation adopted at their secondary schools. It comes as no surprise that secondary schools pay less attention to subjects like foreign languages, history, Czech language and literature, geography, etc., although they are also obliged to follow a certain minimal level of education in these fields, and include a certain minimal part of the general subjects into their State Final Exams.

1.5.2 Secondary Vocational Schools

These educational institutions prepare their students for specialised (mostly manual) professions in different industries, ranging from auto-mechanics or electricians to cooking (especially popular today) or ceramics. Study programmes at these types of schools take three or (less frequently) two years, and they are concluded by a final exam and the Apprenticeship Certificate (AC) for those who pass it.

1.5.3 Secondary Vocational Programmes

This is a somewhat fuzzy category, since it is not tied to any particular type of school or educational institution. These are one- or two-year programmes designed for those who have concluded basic education, and mostly for pupils with special educational needs or those who seek re-qualification at an older age. These programmes are provided by different educational institutions: basic-practical or basic-special schools (additional study programmes after the ninth or tenth year of education), but also
by secondary vocational schools (programmes with amended, that is, reduced educational plans) or secondary technical or professional schools.

Respective of the two typical categories of students - pupils with special educational needs or those who seek re-qualification at an older age – the secondary vocational programmes are of two general types, although these are not formally distinguished (e.g., by the Educational Act). Secondary vocational programmes provided by and at basic-practical schools are usually less specialised in a particular qualification for the job market. Instead, they provide students (and the least advanced pupils leaving basic education) with general social and cultural competences which should assist them in handling the practicalities of daily life (looking for a job or housing, dealing with authorities, etc.). They also usually involve the teaching of some basic practical skills or information useful for manual professions in general (e.g., via excursions to different factories). It is here that the categories of children with learning and/or behavioural problems and socially disadvantaged children merge, which is also the reason why we may expect a large part of Roma children to continue their education in these types of programmes after leaving basic school.

Programmes provided by secondary vocational, technical or professional schools are typically oriented to the area of the particular school’s specialisation. They provide the students with basic practical skills in these areas to better their chances on the job market (in manual professions). And here, too, we may expect an overrepresentation of Roma youth, although we do not have any statistics in this respect. Both of these programmes are based on the assumptions that their students will (or may seek to) directly enter the labour market. They are not intended to prepare students for further study in secondary vocational or technical (professional) schools, although the students may apply to these, as can all those with completed basic education immediately after they finish basic school.

1.5.4 Conservatoires

Conservatoires offer eight- or six-year study programmes in the arts, most typically in musical arts, and less frequently also in acting. Pupils can start to study at a conservatoire at the age of either 11 (after finishing the first stage of basic education) or 15 (after completing the full basic education). In the first case, the study takes eight years, and it takes six years in the second case. After completing study at a conservatoire, students obtain a certificate (DiS – a specialist with diploma), which is equivalent to the GCE, and its holders can apply for further study at an institution of higher education. As stated above, admissions to conservatoires, which stress special talents, are among the most competitive at the secondary level of education.

1.6 Post-Secondary Non-Tertiary Education

The three programmes of post-secondary non-tertiary education – Shortened Study Programme with a GCE, Shortened Study programme with an AC, and Extension Study – can only be entered after finishing the secondary level of education and having gained either a GCE or an AC. That is, they are not open to those who leave secondary vocational programmes without an AC. They are entered either while between the ages of 17-19 or, more typically, at an older age, e.g., for a more profound (compared to secondary vocational programmes) professional re-qualification or for an upgrade of one’s general (formal) qualifications. They are provided by secondary technical and professional schools (‘Shortened Study with a GCE’ and ‘Extension Study’) or by secondary vocational schools (‘Shortened Study with an AC’).

These programmes take one to two years of study (see Table 1). They provide the following sorts of education:

1. Train graduates of secondary schools with a GCE in more specialised areas of qualification, and prepare them for middle- or lower-rank non-manual professions. The typical transition
here is from a gymnasium to a shortened study programme with a GCE, for those gymnasium graduates who do not intend to continue at the higher level of education, and they want to add a narrower specialisation to their general education in order to improve their chances in the labour market.

2. Qualify graduates of secondary schools with a GCE for specialised (mostly manual or semi-manual) professions in different industries. The typical transition here is from a secondary technical or professional school to a ‘shortened study programme with an AC’. For example, this choice is made by those former students of the given kinds of secondary schools who do not intend to continue at the higher level of education, and want to improve their chances in the labour market by being better employable as manually skilled specialists.

3. Broaden the qualification gained at a secondary level school in fields like business, law and administration, foreign languages, informatics, etc. – while also providing their students with a more general education compared to the earlier level, and issuing the General Certificate of Education for their graduates. Therefore the typical transition here is from the three-year secondary vocational schools to ‘extension study programmes’ (which take two years of study). This is typically an option for the more talented and motivated secondary vocational school leavers who want to gain better qualifications (e.g., for non-manual middle- or lower-rank positions) and possibly continue their study at an institution of higher education, either a higher professional school or a university.

1.7 Higher Education

There are two types of educational institutions at the higher education level: universities and higher professional schools. They can only be entered after gaining the General Certificate of Education. The majority of applicants are fresh graduates of secondary schools in regular programmes (not extension study, that is), and therefore their typical age is 19. Higher professional schools provide education in areas like administration and business (most frequent), medical services, social work, informatics, foreign languages, arts and crafts, and tourism. They can only be accredited to issue undergraduate degrees. It is only universities which provide higher education at all three levels – undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate – although of course not every single (concrete) university programme is accredited to all of these. Undergraduate programmes, including those at higher professional schools, are typically designed for three to four years, graduate programmes for two to three years, and post-graduate programmes for three to four years. The actual time of study, however, varies according the students’ performance and individual strategies.

1.8 School Authorities: Founding and Operating Bodies

The most common founders of educational institutions – that is, the authorities/bodies that issue the Founding Document (see note 9) for a particular school, allocate a proportional part of finances to the school, and have the ultimate power to decide upon its existence – in the Czech Republic are:

1. Municipalities: the majority of pre-school educational institutions and basic schools;
2. Regional Governments: the majority of basic-special schools, secondary schools, secondary vocational schools, and higher professional schools; and, to a lesser much lesser extent:
3. Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (MEYS): a few schools in every category except institutions of higher education (universities or higher professional schools);
4. Churches: especially some pre-school institutions and basic schools; and
5. Private corporations and private persons: especially some secondary schools or higher professional schools

In principle, any type of founder can found and operate any type of educational institution, except universities, which are autonomous legal bodies (to be discussed).

Each school (and Founding Document), regardless of the particular founder, has to comply with legal regulations and requirements issued by MEYS (e.g., the FEP BE in the case of basic schools), and with the general frameworks of the Education Act and Higher Education Act.

Universities are founded by an autonomous foundation/accreditation act, yet they all have to comply with the accreditation rules and requirements issued by MEYS. The actual accreditation process is operated through accreditation committees which are composed of delegates of the existing universities and the Ministry representatives. In this way, the university system and individual universities themselves are much more autonomous than all other (lower) levels of education, including the higher professional schools. Universities can be either public (25 universities in total) or private (44 universities in total). Despite the difference in the number of public and private universities, approximately only 10% of university students study at private universities, while the rest (appr. 90%) are enrolled in public university programmes.

Each school (except nursery schools and universities) has to have a School Board which takes part in managing the particular school. School Boards are established by the founders, and they have to be composed of representatives of parents (or students at higher professional schools), teachers, and the founder, which each takes one-third of the seats on the Board. Representatives of parents are usually elected by and from the Association of Parents and Friends of the School, which is a semi-formal body of all parents whose children attend the particular school. Parents may choose to keep a parent whose child has already left the school in the School Board as their representative, if the person agrees and is interested in staying. The school's director cannot be a member of the School Board. The School Board discusses the School Educational Programme (SEP – see section 1.4 for more) and makes suggestions as to its final shape, it authorizes the annual report of the school, and it approves the school regulations (including, e.g., stipend schemes) and the rules for evaluating pupils/students (numerical vs. verbal evaluation). The School Board also takes part in formulating the developmental strategy of the school, discusses the budget proposal and the reports of the Czech School Inspection (see below, sub-section 1.11), and it may also make various sorts of suggestions addressed to the school director, the founder, or MEYS.

Table 4: Types of schools by founder (2005/2006 school-year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>Founder</th>
<th>No. of schools</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-School facilities</strong></td>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>4,631</td>
<td>278,795</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Regional Government</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>2,464</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>188</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>848</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>3,194</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4,815</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Basic Schools</strong></td>
<td>Municipality</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regional Government</td>
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<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>Church</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4,199</td>
<td>876,513</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Type of School | Founder | No. of schools | No. of Students |
--- | --- | --- | --- |
Secondary schools (GCE) | Municipality | 14 | 2,872 |
| Regional Government | 839 | 297,137 |
| Ministry of Education | - | - |
| Church | 34 | 8,607 |
| Private | 254 | 52,064 |
| Total | 1,148 | 368,756 |

Higher professional schools | Municipality | - | - |
| Regional Government | 113 | 17,673 |
| Ministry of Education | - | - |
| Church | 12 | 1,715 |
| Private | 48 | 8,187 |
| Other | 1 | 74 |
| Total | 174 | 27,650 |

1.9 School Funding System

The Czech school funding system has been re-shaped by the decentralization process, which took place between 2001 and 2003, and which involved the legal implementation of regions (with their own regional governments) as relatively autonomous territorial units. The largest part of funding, nevertheless, still comes from the state budget, although the major ‘legal’ founders who operate individual schools are regional governments and municipalities. MEYS distributes the respective part of the state ‘educational’ budget among the regional governments’ budgets – the total number of registered pupils/students in all non-private schools in individual regions is the major distributive criterion. The regional school councils then allocate this money to individual schools founded by the region, municipalities and also churches. In a limited way, they can amend the ministerial criteria of re-distribution, and they can also co-sponsor their schools – as can municipalities and churches. This happens only to a very limited extent: regional governments.

Schools founded by a private body (private schools) fill their budgets with tuitions (fees paid by students/their parents) and to a varying extent by private sponsorship. They are also entitled to state subsidies, although to a lesser extent (approximately 40% less) than non-private schools. The school fee in private schools varies according to the kind of school (it is typically higher, e.g., in schools emphasizing foreign languages in their curricula), level of education (quality of teachers, intensity of education, etc.) and locality (the fees are typically higher in large cities, particularly in Prague).

Non-private schools also may seek funding from private donors or grant projects, national and international. Pupils/students (their parents) typically participate in sponsoring educational institutions either directly by annual contribution (customary, but not obligatory, except tuitions in private schools) or indirectly: paying for exercise books, textbooks, and other learning instruments, catering provided by the school, school trips, etc. Parents also usually pay for extracurricular educational activities of a particular school (additional language or ICT courses, etc.), in which their children take place.

There are special subsidies coming from the state budget – included in the funds distributed among the regions and then among schools – for pupils/students with special educational needs, except those who are socially disadvantaged. Socially disadvantaged families are supported with special benefits provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Since identification of these families is ‘personally sensitive information’, schools can not obtain this information, which is one of the reasons why they do not get special direct funding for socially disadvantaged pupils/students (see above, section 10).

This applies to all educational institutions except universities. The special system of university funding is addressed in this section.
MEYS also has special programmes to support socially disadvantaged pupils/students, e.g., in the form of the provision of boarding for those who attend boarding schools (typically at the secondary level of education). And the school founder, too, may choose to support socially disadvantaged pupils/students, e.g., in the form of stipends or in kind provisions. This support is especially provided by some local founders (municipalities, churches, private bodies), and it is usually based on individual applications of the respective pupils/students or their families.

The state provides health insurance premiums to all students up to the age of 26 years, excluding cases when a non-full-time student earns a salary or is entitled to unemployment or retraining benefits. Therefore most university students benefit from this premium.

Universities, however, are subsidized from a different part of MEYS budget, and by somewhat different rules stated by the Higher Education Act. The funds are distributed directly to individual universities from the state budget. The major criterion is also the number of students, while there is more money following a doctoral student than an undergraduate or graduate student. In addition to this, a relatively large part of state direct subsidies also depends on a particular university's performance in research. Universities also can – to a greater extent than, e.g., higher professional schools or secondary technical and professional schools – seek additional income through pro-profit activities (providing expertise, selling patents, establishing paid-for study programmes for international students, providing extra-curricular training courses, etc.). Study at a public (non-private) university is free of charge in programmes taught in Czech, regardless of the nationality and citizenship of students enrolled in these programmes. The largest part of private universities' income comes from tuitions, yet (similarly as private schools at other levels of education) they also have part of their budgets covered by state subsidies.

1.10 Teachers

The required educational level of teachers is a graduate university degree. Teachers at the primary and the secondary levels of education must hold a pedagogical qualification (not necessarily a degree from a faculty of pedagogy), teachers at the higher levels of education can only have professional qualifications (not a specific pedagogical qualification). In respect to the required qualifications of teachers, universities decide autonomously. Teachers at all levels are employees of the particular school, that is, for example, not of the founder. External school authorities (including the founders) are not legally entitled to interfere in the recruitment of new teachers or in the selection of teaching staff.

1.11 Quality Control

Except for universities, the major external body controlling the level and quality of education is the Czech School Inspection (CSI). It observes whether schools follow the basic tenets of the Framework Educational Programme (see above, section 1.4 and elsewhere). The CSI is established by MEYS, and it schedules regular inspections at individual schools. An inspection can be carried out on the basis of complaints, petitions, etc., or when a school applies for a subvention. The CSI elaborates evaluations of each school, and it summarises its findings in a general annual report. If problems occur, it is the responsibility of the school director to solve them. If this does not happen in a given time, the founder is contacted and asked for an intervention, and then MEYS. Sometimes law suits are the last approach. MEYS also collects statistical data on education (through its Institute for Information in Education), and sponsors research projects on the quality of education (especially, although not exclusively, via its Pedagogical Research Institute). Since 1990, a number of international evaluation projects have also been conducted.11

Internally, it is the director who is responsible for the quality and level of education at a particular school, and controlling these is one of their formal obligations. The major document that

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puts the school under public control is the Annual Report which has to be authorized by the School Board. The latter is the major institution of internal control for each individual school, as it is composed, besides representatives of the teachers, of representatives of parents (students) and the founder. MEYS has incited schools to carry out regular self-evaluations, but these are not obligatory and can take various forms.

The major controlling instances at the university level are:

1. Accreditation Committees (each university programme gets accreditation for only a limited number of years and has to be regularly re-accredited);
2. external evaluation schemes and projects, both national and international; and
3. self-evaluations.

2. Education of Foreigners and Minority Ethnic Youth

2.1 Immigrant and Ethnic Minority Students at Schools: Basic Data

We only have reliable data as to the numbers of legal immigrants with the status of permanent residence, long-term residence, and asylum seekers. Most foreigners in the Czech educational system study at a university type of institution. Out of these, the vast majority are Slovaks, for which there is a number of reasons:

1. Studying at Czech universities has been a traditional pattern in Slovakia for centuries, which has also continued after the split of Czechoslovakia in 1992;
2. This has been made easier by the closeness of the two national languages, there is almost no language barrier between Czechs and Slovaks, although a natural understanding of the other nation gets a little more difficult for younger people growing up in already separated countries; and
3. The number of Slovaks at Czech universities has risen after tuition was introduced in Slovak universities.

As far as the basic level of education is concerned, besides Slovak pupils, there are two principal immigrant groups attending Czech basic schools in outstanding numbers: the Vietnamese and the Ukrainians. Both (or all three) are also predominant among children of foreign origin in nursery schools and among foreign students at secondary schools. This reflects the fact that these three nationalities represent traditional immigrant groups to the Czech Republic: Slovaks for long decades or even centuries, Vietnamese since the 1970s, when they were coming as temporary guest workers, but many of them have stayed and a new wave of Vietnamese immigration started after 1990, and the Ukrainians have joined these two groups in the 1990s due to predominantly economic immigration.

Despite this sequence, the data (see Table 5, this section) show that while the proportion of the Ukrainians is growing with higher levels of education (up to the secondary level), the proportion of the Vietnamese decreases as the level of education rises. This can be explained by the fact that while the Vietnamese come to the country mostly as singles, and it is often only here that they first have children, the Ukrainians come to the country at an older age as guest workers, and after some time they bring their families from their first home. This, combined with the fact that both Ukrainian and also Vietnamese immigration is a relatively recent phenomenon can also partly explain the sudden drop in numbers when it comes to university education. But here one other factor, at least, can be at work: especially for the Ukrainian youth who had grown up in Ukraine until they reached the teens,
language barrier may play a role in the more demanding and more competitive university admission procedures. These all constitute good reasons for us to focus on our project, besides the Roma minority, also on the educational trajectories and experiences of young Vietnamese and/or Ukrainians in the Czech Republic.

As for the overall proportion of immigrant children among all school attendees in the Czech educational system, the numbers are still relatively low, compared to the more traditional immigrant countries of Western Europe. This may well change in the years to come as the Czech Republic has recently become a favourite immigration destination. In 2007, more than 100,000 immigrants came to a country with population slightly above ten million. This made the Czech Republic the third country in the European Union, after Spain and Italy, by the number of incoming immigrants per capita in the given year.

Table 5: Immigrant children in various types of schools (2005/06)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Nursery schools</th>
<th>Basic schools</th>
<th>Secondary schools</th>
<th>University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Number) % of Total</td>
<td>Pupils</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Foreigners</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CZSO, 2008c.

Table 6: Basic Education: Pupils, Foreigners according to Type of Residence (2005/06)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citizenship</th>
<th>Pupils in Total</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Foreigners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Permanent Residence</td>
<td>Long-term Residence</td>
<td>Asylum Seekers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>864,009</td>
<td>98.6</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreigners – total</td>
<td>12,504</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>8,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>3,452</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2,837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainians</td>
<td>2,748</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1,782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others</td>
<td>6,304</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>3,876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>876,513</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>8,495</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: database of ÚIV (Institute for Information on Education)

2.2 Problematical Statistics on the Roma population

Concerning the Roma minority, it is rather difficult to speak in exact numbers. All official statistics concerning the education of ethnic-national minorities are based on the nationality stated in the national census, which takes place once in ten years (starting in 1991). For children under 18 years old, the nationality is stated by their parents or a designated statutory representative. According to this data, there were only 11,746 persons who identified themselves as of Roma nationality in 2001. It is
quite peculiar, at the same time, that even these persons are regularly not included in statistics by their declared nationality. The census does not use the term ethnicity, and whoever intends to be considered and officially registered as Roma (Moravian, Silesian, Jew, etc.) has to put this self-identification under the heading of nationality – and there are basically no restrictions as to what one can put here. One problem is that the term nationality may for many respondents be psychologically pressing, it may be perceived as more consequential (however vaguely in terms of concrete consequences), and it also may easily be perceived as exclusive (‘either Czech or Roma’). Another problem, and more important in our context, is getting at least some precise data on the educational experience, performance, and trajectories of Roma children and youth. Even those who have declared themselves as of Roma nationality in the census, are regularly excluded from other official statistics, since their administrators are inclined, by inertia and custom, to conceive of Roma origin as ethnicity – and this kind of statistical data is prohibited by the law. To contribute to the confusion, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs issued a press release in 2004 which said that the “nationality of each Czech citizen is a matter of their free will, and Roma community won’t be a subject of any official research initiated by the state authority.”

Therefore, to know an exact percentage of Roma citizens (pupils, etc.) is clearly impossible, and we can only rely on estimations of demographists, ethnographers, and also teachers and representatives of school authorities. The latter two categories, and especially the last one, however, are as a rule reluctant to make their estimations public, except in private conversations.

We have some exact statistical data on the Roma community in the Czech Republic from the past. Before 1989, municipalities (then called National Councils) did not record all Roma citizens of their district, but only those who asked for social aid. Although the ethics of this activity were highly disputable, it at least helps us to know in 1989 (the last evidence provided) there were officially recorded 145,738 citizens of Roma origin in the Czech part of Czechoslovakia.

Today demographists estimate the Roma population on the Czech territory to range between 250,000-300,000. (Frištenská, Višek, 2002) Apart form this, estimations tend to vary between 140,000-400,000, that is, approximately 1.4-4% of the Czech population in total. Some demographists and Roma-theoreticians consider numbers above 250,000 as not realistic. The state administration usually, but rather unofficially, works with a figure of about 200,000 citizens of Roma origin. (MIGHEALTHNET, 2008; Office of the Government, 2007) According to the Roma Education Fund, the Roma population in the Czech Republic varies between 160,000 and 300,000. Using outcomes from a recent quantitative survey (GAC, 2006) the Foundation argues that for a more or less exact estimation, the official number of 11,718 from the last census in 2001 should be multiplied 15-20 times (Roma Education Fund, 2007).

As far as the Roma school attendees are concerned, we have some data at disposal from the government (MEYS) programme called ‘Support for Roma Students at Secondary Schools 2008’ (to be discussed). The materials of MEYS speak here about 219 schools which were granted the support, with 865 pupils of Roma origin. There are another 65 pupils on the list of unsuccessful applicants (mainly due to administrative reasons) (MEYS, 2008e). This of course cannot be taken as a number coming close to the total number of Roma students at secondary schools. Many Roma families and students did not apply to this scheme for support, for reasons that will be introduced.

Other estimates of the Roma school attendees are derived from general estimations of the Roma population in the Czech Republic. The demographist Hule (2007), for example, estimates that in 2005 basic schools were attended by 55,000 Roma pupils – based on the premise that there were 250,000 people of Roma origin in the Czech population. This estimation uses another premise stating that 22% of the Roma population is equal to an age cohort of 6–15, which should be children undergoing the basic level of education. In the same year Special Schools (abolished by the 2005 amendment of the Education Act) were attended by 24,164 children and experience says, according to Hule, that most

12 Declaring more than one nationality in the census is in principle possible. But often the census commissars like to have things clear for statistical purposes, and they persuade the respondents to choose just one option. We may assume that this kind of pressure may even more easily work among the Roma community than among most other parts of population, at least among those of them who have adopted the culture of a rather submissive relationship to authorities.
of them were of Roma origin. If 90% of pupils educated by the former Special Schools were of Roma origin – and we use this number simply with reference to the estimated ratio of Roma pupils at the two Basic-Practical Schools in Brno we spoke about in section 1.4, although other estimates also range between 70-80% of Roma children educated at Special Schools before 2005, see below – then we could derive that about 40% of Roma children were educated in special schools in 2005. According to official sources, in 1999, approximately 75% percent of Roma children in the Czech Republic had been educated in Special Schools.\footnote{Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, CERD/C/372/Add.1, 14 April, 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. Ne as (1999) reports that the ratio of Roma children in Special Schools before 2000 was 80%.

This information was based on a research conducted by the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), and another round of the ERRC research, conducted in 2002, reported that this pattern had not changed in the meantime. If this was the case, and if Hřle is right, too, then around the year 2000 the total Roma population in the Czech Republic would be only around 115,000 people. The problematic character of statistical data on Roma perhaps cannot be demonstrated more clearly.

The Open Society Institute (OSI) estimates that 7.3% of Roma youth are enrolled in secondary education (with the GCE), while only 1.2% of the Roma youth in a particular cohort are estimated to complete secondary school successfully and gain the GCE, and about 0.3% of a particular age cohort of Roma youth, according to this estimate, graduate at a university-type of school (OSI, 2006). Combining Hřle’s pattern of estimation, the OSI estimate would mean, in absolute numbers, that on average some 440 Roma students entered Czech secondary schools each year around 2005, and about 70 of them could be expected to finish it and gain the GCE. Compared to the aggregate data for the whole population of secondary school students, this would mean that the percentage of Roma students newly enrolled in secondary schools (with the GCE) would be about 0.5 percent of all enrolled (89,086 in 2005). This can be juxtaposed to another estimate drawing from Hřle’s account: 55,000 estimated Roma pupils at basic schools in 2005 equals to cca 6.3% of the total of 876,513 pupils in basic schools that year. If the estimate of 250,000 Roma in the Czech Republic is at least fairly correct (but it can be 140,000 or 400,000 according to other experts), then the statistical chance of a Roma pupil to continue their education at a secondary school with the GCE would be about 13 times lower than the average chance of their non-Roma classmates. Still, if a Roma pupil is lucky enough to cross this threshold, they again only have one-fifth of the chance of their non-Roma classmates that they will really gain the GCE at the end of their studies. While the average drop-out rate at secondary schools with the GCE ranges between 10-20% – about 5% for gymnasia and about 25% for secondary technical and professional schools – the drop-out rate of Roma students at these schools, according to the OSI estimate (and with the provisional assumptions that these numbers are somewhat constant over a few years) would be about 85%.

All these calculations work, again, to the extent only to which the basic estimate of 250,000 Roma in the Czech Republic as well as all other estimations are right. And therefore we do not put these numbers into a table, that is, outside the context of the commentary. We can assume, for example, that most of the Roma pupils who continue their education at a secondary school with the GCE go to a secondary technical or professional school, where the drop-out rate is generally higher than in Gymnasia. On the other hand, this kind of hypothesizing might also suggest that it may then also be the assumed high drop-out rate of the Roma students which contributes to the relatively high drop-out rate at secondary technical and professional schools in general.

2.3 Legal and Institutional Frameworks for the Education of Ethnic-National Minorities and Immigrants

In this section, we will proceed along two lines. First, we will sketch out the general legal and institutional conditions of education that apply to both immigrants and ethnic-national minorities. Second, we will follow some differences between these two categories, that is those with the immigrant
status (regardless of their ethnic-national background) on the one hand, and ethnic-national minorities (regardless of their citizenship status).\textsuperscript{14} Since we are pursuing substantial issues, however, we will not separate these two lines of account in separate sections of the text, but we will refer to the coincidences and differences at any point when it is relevant.

The basic legal/constitutional framework is especially anchored in two documents that form a part of the Czech legal system:

1. **The Charter of Rights and Freedoms\textsuperscript{15}** which declares that everyone has the right to education;
2. **The Convention on Children's Rights\textsuperscript{16}** which says that the state recognises the rights of children to an education, and it is responsible for providing free of charge basic compulsory education for all children within its territory, regardless of their citizenship status. This convention takes precedence over other legal norms, according to Article 10 of the Constitution.\textsuperscript{17}

A specific problem has been school attendance of children illegally staying in the country with their parents. Until 1 January 2008, it was legally impossible for the children of illegal immigrants to attend basic school, as one of the necessary requirement for being accepted by a catchment or other school was to provide a valid document for the place of residence. The Amendment of the Education Act\textsuperscript{18} has cancelled this obligation as of 1 January 2008, and since that it has also been made possible for children of parents illegally staying in the Czech Republic to be educated free of charge by Czech basic schools, and they have been subsumed under the scheme of compulsory school attendance.

For foreigners from third countries (here, that is, other than those from the EU countries) there are special conditions regarding preparatory programmes at the level of pre-school education. This especially concerns Czech language lessons, in the case of foreigners with a mother tongue other than Czech. Until the amendment of the Education Act in 2005, these programmes were available free of charge without further conditions only to EU citizens, to residents with permanent or long-term residence status (that is, those who can prove that they have lived in the country for more than five years), and to official asylum seekers. The fact is that EU citizens do not usually take advantage of these programmes. According to the 2007 Annual Report of the Czech School Inspection, only three children of the EU non-Czech residents took part in them. For the remaining categories of immigrants without permanent or long-term residence status, and other than asylum seekers, some special integration programmes have been initiated by some individual schools (especially basic schools) or by some NGOs, typically sponsored by grants.

More importantly, as of 2005 these other legal categories of immigrants – children of applicants for international protection, children of recognised refugees, and children of persons with subsidiary protection – have all been, according to the amended Education Act, automatically considered as 'children with special educational needs.' And it is this status which qualifies them to the free of charge participation in preparatory lessons at the pre-school education level. The schools providing these preparatory classes

\textsuperscript{14} This part of the text is based on a study prepared within the project 'Work in Czech', part of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL in the Czech Republic with contributions from Mrs. Hana Tóthová (The Supreme Administrative Court of the Czech Republic) and Mrs. Hana Vojáková (Society of Citizens Assisting Migrants).

\textsuperscript{15} Constitutional Act N. 23/1991 Coll., article 33, paragraph 1 and 2.

\textsuperscript{16} Convention on Children Rights, 104/1991 Coll., applied in accordance with article 4, paragraph 4, Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

\textsuperscript{17} Constitutional Act N.1/1993 Coll., Constitution of the Czech Republic.

\textsuperscript{18} Act N. 561/2004 Coll.
(not all of them do it) are entitled to a special subsidy when educating this category of immigrants. And the same applies to the regular basic education level. Here, identification of 'pupils with special educational needs', in the category of 'socially disadvantaged', seems to be no problem, unlike the case of children from Czech families of Czech citizenship with low social-cultural status (see section 1.4).

For Czech citizens with a minority ethnic-national background the formal conditions are slightly different in this respect. According to the Education Act, education for members of ethnic-national minorities may be provided in their respective languages under certain conditions. This other-than-Czech-language-education legal norm applies to nursery schools, basic schools, and secondary schools, and its implementation is guaranteed by municipalities, regions, and MEYS. Two conditions (or rather a double-condition) have to be especially met:

1. the particular ethno-national community has to represent at least 10% of all permanent residents of the given municipal district (not necessarily a catchment area, which is usually smaller, particularly in bigger cities); and
2. There has to be a Council for National Minorities established in the given municipal district. However, the positive 'catch-22' is that this Council by law has to be established in exactly the localities in which an ethnic-national minority represents more than 10% of permanent residents.

In those schools where education in the language of a respective ethnic-national minority is implemented bilingual certificates are issued – in the Czech language and the language of the national minority. There is not much space in the Czech Republic, however, for ethnic-national minorities to take advantage of this legal opportunity. The most obvious reason for this is that ethnic-national communities are not very numerous as of yet, and they tend to be dispersed in larger territories, and thus they seldom represent more than 10% of the local population. The specific case in this regard is the relatively large Roma minority in the Czech Republic. For reasons stated above in the previous paragraph (widespread disinclination to declare themselves as of Roma nationality in the national census), it is difficult even for this minority to document that its members represent more than 10% of the local population even in localities which are predominantly populated by those who are perceived and perceive themselves as Roma. Besides this, other obstacles to establishing Roma schools consist especially in the lack of qualified Roma speaking staff and in the inability to mobilize support for such a school in most Roma populated localities.

The most notable exception is the Polish minority which is not only concentrated in some areas, especially the border land with Poland around Ostrava, but they are also relatively well organized as a

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20 This means that if neither a municipality nor a region has the resources (finances, teaching staff, text books, etc.) to establish a school where pupils are taught in their ethnic-national language, it is MEYS who has the ultimate responsibility to act as the founder of such school in a particular locality.

21 As stated in Act N. 128/2000 Coll., Communities Act, section 117, para. 3: The local council establishes a committee for ethnic minorities if there are at least 10% citizens living in its territory declaring their nationality as other than Czech. The number of citizens is based on regular censuses with 10 years periodicity. This legal norm has caused slight tensions in some smaller Moravian towns in which more than 10% of inhabitants had stated Moravian as their nationality in the census form of 1991. In order to abide with the new law, some towns and villages attempted to establish such Councils, despite the deep disinterest and sometimes irritation of the local population, including those who had declared themselves Moravians in 1991. Since at least one-half of the Council members have to be composed of representatives of the given minority, the Moravians found themselves under pressure to delegate their representatives to a body, which was largely seen as an unnecessary problem (there is no official Moravian language, for example, just some local dialects) by the municipalities and the local populations, including by a majority of the Moravian minority. The problem was solved by the national census of 2001 in which a much lower number of people living in Moravia declared Moravian as their nationality.

22 Yet, bilingual schools also exist elsewhere, e.g., in the Karlovy Vary Region with a strong German minority – but to a much smaller extent.
community and through a representative institutional structure (associations, Polish periodicals, etc.). Therefore, there are several schools educating pupils and students in the Polish language, mainly in the Moravian-Silesian Region. In the school-year 2007/08, 2,814 Polish children and youth attended 21 nursery schools, 23 primary schools, and one grammar school in this region, all conducting their classes in Polish. Besides this, there were also five mixed nursery and primary schools in the same region with both Czech and Polish children, which conducted education in both languages in the same school year but different classes.

The education of ethnic minorities is further regulated by the Rights of Members of National Minorities Act. Its wording is rather general and it regulates the position of national minorities in the Czech Republic. It states once again that national minorities have the right to an education and schooling in their own language, under certain circumstances (above, previous paragraph). It states that members of national minorities may, under special conditions, found private schools with education in their minority language. To this point, however, the official statistics do not show the existence of any such school.

Under discussion there is another document targeting the issues of equal opportunities and discrimination in the Czech Republic: the so called Anti-discrimination Act. While still not enforced, it summarises various equal-treatment norms in the Czech legal system. It explicitly identifies and prohibits various forms of discrimination, and it also defines equal treatment in the access to education. In accordance with the European Council directives, it defines direct discrimination as an action based on race, ethnic origin, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, religion, belief or world-view. Therefore this document is highly relevant for our project, and that is why we mention it here, although it still has not been passed by the legislative bodies. We will return to the public and political discussion about and around this document – a discussion which, due to its political sensitivity in the current governmental constellation, partly reveals why this Act has not yet been implemented – in the fourth part of this report.

Besides the Polish nursery, basic, and secondary schools in the Moravian-Silesian region, special classes at regular schools can be and have been opened in which education is conducted in a minority language, again, at the pre-school, basic, and secondary education levels. Although this is not strictly required by law, the rule is that special classes of this kind can be established if there are more than a certain number of minority children or youth attending the particular school, and they or their parents express an interest in such class. The numbers are at least eight children for a nursery school, at least 10 pupils for a basic school, and at least 12 students for a secondary school. This opportunity is rarely taken advantage of by the schools, however, for various reasons: complicated bureaucracy, difficult quality control, shortage of qualified teaching staff, and a low level of interest on the part of parents are some of them. In some schools in Prague, nevertheless, a few classes where education is conducted, e.g., in Chinese, have recently been opened. Another possibility of a bi-lingual education within one and the same school, regulated by the same norms of the Education Act, is the possibility of conducting specific subjects (e.g., history or literature) or their parts in both the Czech and a minority language for the respective minority pupils or students. Neither this opportunity is widely used, even by schools with minority pupils or students.

Regarding the Roma minority, the situation is somewhat different at the pre-school level of education. As teachers, community workers, representatives NGOs, and some politicians acknowledged that a large majority of those who are perceived as Roma (by themselves and by others) are excluded from the ethnic-national minority programmes at the basic level of education, by declaring themselves

23 Act N. 273/2001 Coll. on rights of members of national minorities.
24 Chamber of Deputies Press 253/0.
25 Since the Education Act says that education in a language other than Czech has to be approved by MEYS, this norm bears the character of an exception that can be granted to a particular school if certain conditions are met. That is, this norm does not constitute a special right or legal claim.
as other than Roma in the national census, the focus shifted more to the pre-school level of education through preparatory classes. These activities especially rose in the second half of the 1990s, not without relation to the international attention that the Czech Roma and their problematic position within Czech society drew by starting to emigrate in large numbers to Canada and the UK. These programmes do not require formal declaration of Romany ethnic origin of parents in order to involve their children. Although they are not exclusively designed for just Roma children, but for socially disadvantaged children in general, the Czech Roma community has clearly been their primary target. These pre-school preparatory programmes have mostly been conducted by basic schools, and they have often been integrated with the pre-school preparatory classes designed specifically for children with special educational needs. The difference is that now the identification of Roma families (with children of a pre-school age) has not been identified via official data, but via experience and common sense. The recurrent problem, however, has been the recruitment of Roma children to these programmes, that is, attracting their parents to the programmes and keeping them motivated in participating over time. This is all the more troubling to the involved teachers, community workers and others, since recently MEYS has expressed satisfaction with the effect these classes have on the education of those Roma children who participate in them. About 80% of Roma children from preparatory classes are later integrated into regular basic schools. (Youth Information Centre, 2008)

2.4 Educational Strategies

In this section, we will focus on some legal regulations, official norms and documents, and special grants explicitly designed to support the integration of minorities (and especially the Roma minority) into the majority society and related to educational activities.

On the basis of the Government decree N. 98/2002 Coll., MEYS has, in the past several years, been launching the Programme for the Support of Integration of Roma Community (MEYS, 2008a). This Programme focuses on funding the pre-school preparation of Roma children, including an increase in their participation in pre-school education. The general aim is to support activities that enhance the readiness of Roma children for a successful start of school attendance. Therefore it is also intended to improve co-operation of the bearers of these activities with Roma families that have small children, and increase the awareness of the area of pre-school education among Roma communities. This part (i.e. pre-school preparation) is supposed to create conditions for a smoother implementation of the Conception of Early Care for Children from Socio-Culturally Disadvantaging Environment. This strategic document identifies the socio-culturally disadvantaging environment as a social and cultural context which makes it difficult for children to participate in mainstream education. At the practical level, it is represented by a set of programmes for children from three years of age to the beginning of their compulsory school attendance. It focuses on pre-school education and preparatory classes, on the involvement of counselling organizations, and on their work with Roma families with low social and cultural status, with the goal to improve the competence of parents to nourish children’s learning potential in their natural environment.

In 2005, shortly before the Special Schools were abolished, MEYS stated that during 10 years (from 1994–2004) the number of pupils attending Special Schools lowered from 3,21% to 2.65 % of the age cohort of pupils at basic schools (MEYS, 2005a). Some commentators see the problematic point of this conception as that although it seeks to involve nursery schools, this may not have a large effect on the Roma children. While attendance of nursery schools is paid from the age of three of the child, until they are five, the last year is free of charge by law. The idea behind this is to make it possible for low income families to place their children in these facilities, where they could be made better prepared to attend compulsory school. The problem is that only a small fraction of Roma children attends nursery

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26 This norm delineates conditions and methods of grants provided by the state which sponsor certain activities of members of ethnic minorities, and which are oriented to supporting the social integration of Roma.

27 MEYS. 2005.
schools, regardless of age. Occasional pre-school preparatory classes at basic schools or elsewhere, if attended by the Roma children at all, cannot substitute for the experience of a structured daily life, communication and shared experiences with classmates, learning by playing in a collective, the acquisition of basic social and hygienic competences, etc. Thus, the positive effect seems to be subverted since the proper pre-school education – seen in the nursery schools, by these commentators – is the essential condition for a successful transition to basic school and for a successful social integration in general. Some of them suggest that one year of pre-school education be made compulsory for children five years old. And there are also appeals to a more extensive co-operation with external subjects, such as the social and health care sectors, public administration, and commercial and non-governmental organizations (ERRC and HRL 2007; HRL 2007)

This integration programme also involves schooling at the basic and secondary levels of education. And it is here that the function of a teaching assistant, and their individual care of children starting and undergoing basic education, is seen as crucial since it is intended to provide continual support for adjustments to the education process, respecting at the same time possible special needs of Roma children. Complementary to the assistance for the children themselves are the proposed (and sometimes offered) counselling activities intended to assist Roma parents not only in motivating their children, but also, e.g., in looking for jobs. Methodical support for the teachers (e.g. special training programmes), elaboration of didactical texts and expert studies, and supporting specific leisure activities for Roma children and youth are the other areas of the programme. However, while basic school directors responding to a questionnaire, distributed by the Institute for Information on Education (IIE) in 2007, appraised the idea of individual work with Roma children via the institution of teaching assistants (although only 27% of the addressed schools held that position), they were rather skeptical to the idea of a multicultural team of teachers or working with members of particular Roma communities. (IIE, 2008a, IIE, 2008b)

Since 2001, MEYS has launched the above mentioned special programme called Support for Roma Students at Secondary Schools. This programme is offered to those secondary schools (with the GCE) which accommodate and educate Roma students, and it is aimed to compensate part of the expenses related to a student’s school attendance: tuition (if required by the school), school meals, boarding, travel expenses, and aids required for education (textbooks, etc.). The maximum grant is 7,000 CZK (cca 300 EUR), and it is awarded for each half-school-year (semester). It is the school who applies for the support, on the basis of the student’s (or their parents’) oral statement that he or she is of Roma origin. This is another scheme which does not refer to the declaration of Roma nationality in the census. The application has to be accompanied by a recommendation from a Roma community worker or the local social care authority, confirming that the respective student (family) deserves such help. With such recommendation, financial support is awarded automatically, and there is no competition involved. The only further precondition is ‘good behaviour’ of the student, which is confirmed by the school’s application itself, and the student or parents (in case the student is less than 18 years old) have to agree with the application. If cases are declined, it is mostly due to formal reasons. It is the school which gets the money, and it reimburses the student upon providing receipts which document actual expenses. The school also keeps the books for each such student and gives reports to MEYS. Although the scheme leaves the whole administrative burden on school, about half (again a rough estimate) of the Roma students and their families do not ask for this help. This should not come as a big surprise, since it is particularly the better-to-do Roma families who have their children at secondary schools. This scheme has been widely appreciated by schools and Roma activists, but some Roma organizations have also raised concerns about its exclusionary nature – pointing out that all socially needy students should be entitled to such assistance, since the current arrangement may be arousing sentiments against Roma in general.

A tendency towards or calls for a more integrationist approach have also recently emerged in relation to the concept of secondary professional schools for Roma students. Since the end of the 1990s, several of such secondary schools have been open in different parts of the country. Probably
the most famous is the ‘Romani Secondary School of Social Work’, which was established in Kolin (Central Bohemia, nearby Prague) in 1998. It was established as a private school run by the Rajko Djuric Foundation (a foundation specifically supporting Roma), and the major sources of revenue have arrived from the Soros Foundation (especially in the first years of the school’s existence), the Czech state, the Czech private (corporate) sector, and local governments (municipalities) of towns from where students have been coming to the school. This school, as well as other Roma secondary schools, have put particular accent – besides the minimal volume of subjects required for accreditation – on teaching Roma history, Roma language, and Roma studies in general. The hope has been that the graduates will work in and with Roma communities after leaving school. To this date, however, we lack sufficient information as to what extent this hope has been fulfilled. Around this project, other similar schools have recently (around 2005) been founded by the Roma entrepreneur Emil Šuka, which has created a network of Secondary Professional Schools for Roma students. This network also includes the first Roma Secondary School in Kolin, and encompasses seven such schools in total, dispersed all over the country (Brno, Hradec Králové, Jihlava, Karviná, Kolin, Prague, Rumburk). Their primary orientation is towards social work, law, public administration, and management, or combinations of these. As stated above, these schools are open to all, not only to Roma students, although the latter still represent a clear majority.

3. Other Dimensions of Differentiation in the Educational System

3.1 Structures and Mechanisms Perpetuating Inequality: General Overview

As we have indicated in section 1.4 on basic education, the implementation of the Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education (FEP BE) and the School Educational Programmes (SEPs) has provided a new basis for factual divisions among basic schools along two lines:

1. specification (individualization) according to the concrete curriculum; and
2. the intensity (actual level, demands) of education provided.

It is the latter dividing line that is especially important for us to look at (besides, these two axes often coincide: specialised schools are as a rule more demanding in general, since they also have to keep at least the minimally required workload in other subjects). In larger cities – including Ostrava, our target city – this arrangement (FEP BE and SEPs) has contributed to (or sometimes rather legitimized and strengthened, given the short time, since 2005, it has been active) the polarization within the system of basic education.

Unlike the previous rather unifying arrangement, it made it more possible for schools to profile themselves according to the level of demands, which has led to the formation of clearly elite basic schools at one pole, and basic schools with low demands at the other. Both kinds of schools operate within the same system of basic education, and from the formal-legal point of view there is no difference between them. Both kinds of schools (their directors and sometimes governing bodies) look for ways to spread their character among the public: websites, media coverage, organization of events (cultural, sport, etc.), expert institutions (Special Pedagogical Centres, pedagogical-psychological counsellors, community workers), etc. For the elite schools, typically with extended curricula in some subjects or for some classes of pupils, this serves to attracting more gifted pupils from outside the catchment area (often children of the more ambitious cultural-social strata). The less demanding schools, on the other hand, attract children with learning difficulties, whose parents do not want them to be unbearably
overloaded by schoolwork and/or stigmatized by low grades. Recommendations of the expert bodies, given to parents, work especially in this latter case. (The more gifted or "non-problematic" children and their parents do not usually get in contact with these experts anyway.)

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2000, 2003, and 2006 carried out an international inspection and reported that the Czech Republic belongs among the countries where there is a strong dependence of students' results on the socio-economic and cultural status of their families. Sixty-two percent of the differences between students are ascribed to the differences between schools, which is mostly accounted for by the fact that they are attended by students from similar socio-economic backgrounds. Therefore, the selection of a school is very important for students' future educational trajectories. (Koucký, Paleková, Tomášek, 2004, Paleková, 2007). Although the catchment school system of enrollment (section 1.4) is followed by a larger part of basic school attendees, polarization is under way as well through parents' choice to place their children in a school other than their catchment one. Among those who make this choice, two social groups are predominant: families with high social-cultural status on the one hand, and families with low social-cultural status on the other. The former look more than others for more demanding schools with extended curricula, while the latter (and Roma families among them in particular) more frequently choose to place their children in a school with limited curricula (Basic-Practical School), for which, however, an expert recommendation is needed. This largely affects the pupils' further educational trajectories, and in the final effect it contributes to the reproduction of social inequalities along social-economic and social-cultural lines.

It has then been argued that the selectivity of the Czech education system is supported by an early differentiation between prime school students (multi-year gymnasia, basic schools with extended curricula) and regular basic school students. The argument says that the drain of promising students into prime schools – which comes in three ways for a particular age cohort: at the age of eight (basic schools with extended curricula), 11 (basic schools with extended curricula and eight-year gymnasia) or 13 (six-year gymnasia) – contributes to the decrease of educational quality at other basic schools. This negative trend is not compensated by any higher added value in students' education. That is, those who stay at regular basic schools advance comparatively much less than the supposedly more talented kids leaving regular basic schools for the prime schools. Surveys conducted by Greger (2004) and Matříř (2006) show that selective prime schools are mostly attended by pupils who come from families with higher socio-economic status and higher cultural capital, and they tend to have higher aspirations in regard to further education. Only seven percent of students attending multi-year gymnasia come from the two lowest quintiles of socio-economic status scale, while pupils coming from the two highest quintiles represent 79% of the multi-year gymnasia students. This is also reflected in students' judgment of what their school has to offer to them. While the vast majorities of secondary vocational school students (77.8%) and secondary technical or professional school students (84.9%) state that their school provides them with a good chance to find a job, the same opinion is shared only by a little more than half of the multi-year gymnasia students (Greger, 2004). The explanation at hand is that these students are well aware that gymnasia' primary role is to prepare them for further education.

There is also a cumulative effect of the social-cultural background and the attendance of gymnasia in general (the influence of same-age group, i.e., peer effects). According to PISA (2006) this trend shows a steady pace in the Czech Republic and the differences between pupils/students of different types of schools are on the increase rather than decrease. Matříř (2006) claims that although the direct

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29 These recommendations are issued either by Special Pedagogical Centers or by a psychological-pedagogical counselor (see section 1.4).

30 The share of basic school pupils who attend schools and classes with extended curricula (see section 1.4) is 9.7%. Parents show considerable interest in this type of schools (on average twice higher than the schools' capacity), since they hope their children will have better further educational chances here than if they attend a regular basic school. If children from other than the catchment area apply to this school, it is again the school director who decides on the applications. In some cases – if, for example, there only are few classes with extended curricula at the school, or for applicants from other catchment areas – an entrance examination takes place, either when pupils are 8 or 11 years old (Greger, 2004, 2006)
family influence on a child’s aspirations has decreased in light of a general increase of education’s prestige (the child’s own aspirations and motivations are now crucial), the indirect influence of family and socio-economic background on children’s performance in schools persists. The share of students in programmes concluded with the General Certificate of Education (GCE) has increased; however, one-third of students still enter secondary education schools and programmes after which, even when successfully completed, they cannot continue directly at the tertiary level.

3.2 Main Dimensions of Social Inequality in Education and the Role of Ethnicity

Ethnically framed inequalities and differences at Czech schools may be viewed in two basic dimensions: social and cultural.

Although we do not have exact data on this, it is clear that poverty, unemployment, and low standards of housing are considerably more frequent among Roma than among the Czech families on average. It is especially within Roma communities, often concentrated in particular urban areas (GAC 2006), that we would find a higher percentage of indebted families with three or more children and both parents unemployed, dependent on social welfare. It may be assumed – and consultations with teachers, Roma activists, psychologists, ethnographers, and sociologists confirm this assumption – that it is largely the social environment which considerably affects Roma pupils’ performance, especially at basic schools. Under these conditions, children from Roma families lack, to a greater extent than others, not only the sufficient private space for school preparations, but also the attention of parents (especially in families with more children) and opportunities to be equipped with supportive learning aids, such as the Internet, for example.

There also is a more ‘technical’ aspect to this, consisting in the fact that many Roma children grow up in a bi-lingual environment (not only within families which sometimes switch within their conversations from Romany to Czech and back,31 but also in a larger environment, in encounters with other Roma or non-Roma people), which makes their transition into a single-language (Czech) environment at schools particularly difficult and disadvantageous compared to non-Roma pupils. Also, as preparatory pre-school classes are conducted mostly (if not exclusively) in Czech by Czech speaking teachers, this causes disappointments on all involved sides (pupils, teachers, parents), and it may be one of the reasons for the relatively high drop-out rate among Roma children in these classes. And the problem continues at basic schools. The problem is heightened by the fact that only a few Roma children attend nursery schools, which may well be related to the social disadvantage, as the first two years of nursery schools have to be partly paid by the parents – and the possibility of the last free of charge pre-school year at nursery schools is seldom taken advantage of in general, not only by the Roma.

This problem is not new, and it has been widely known and regularly pointed to by experts, journalists, activists, and teachers in the past several years. In the second half of 1990, Vladimír Smékal (2000), the renowned Brno psychologist, conducted in-depth research among Roma children, which showed that pre-school children from Roma and other minority environments have in fact the same mental dispositions as their Czech-only speaking age-mates. He and his colleagues see the two major obstacles for Roma children to be ‘linguistic competences’ and ‘motivation’ – which, as we have suggested above, may not be independent of each other. The pre-school tests (used, e.g., by the Special Pedagogical Centres), according to this research, assess the disadvantaged Roma (and other minority) children to the extent to which they (the tests) are based exactly on the language competences and skills. Smékal’s general thesis is that the major problem for these children, in their transition to the educational system, is not only in their poorer handling of the official (Czech) language, but also in the fact that they ‘have not learnt to learn’. These are two examples or dimensions of the barriers that many Romany children

have to overcome upon their enrolment in schools, which makes their starting position on average more disadvantageous than that of the other children.

By this position, Smékal and his colleagues point to another problem to be mentioned here in regard to the major dimensions of inequalities and differences in the educational process. It is the family environment where the cultural aspect intervenes in reproducing inequalities and differences within the education system. It is the experience of many teachers, supported by more in-depth research in Roma communities (e.g., Polédová-Zobařová, 2006), that too many Roma children do not enjoy a supportive environment within their families (and also wider communities) that would motivate them towards higher achievements and ambitions in school. It is an open question as to what extent the reported (but often only supposed) sceptical attitude towards education among many Roma parents is derived from some traditional distrust to the social and personal value of education present in Roma culture, or to which extent it is more a rationality or reflection of the Roma’s life chances within the majoritarian (Czech) society (‘whatever you do, it won’t help you anyways’). And such question may never be satisfactorily answered in terms of a clear either/or. Rather, a rationalized tradition is one possible explanation at hand. The fact remains that head teachers miss Roma parents at the regular parent–teacher meetings more than other parents. Often the Roma parents show up only when an exemplary meeting is held at the school concerning bad behaviour or other transgressions (e.g., long-time or frequent absences of the child), by which a milieu of mutual distrust may well be created. We turn to this problem in the following paragraph.

The teachers, special pedagogues, and school directors we have consulted also largely share the view that Roma pupils on average have more problems with respecting the school code and rules. Again, it is an open question whether this view/experience is related to an ethnically framed (biased) pre-judgment (seeing the same kinds of transgressions among Roma pupils as ‘typical’, and thus not accidental, and therefore more dangerous and pathological than among other pupils – because if the transgressions are ‘typical’, they cannot be easily dealt with), or whether and to which extent such a view/experience is free from such pre-judgment. Though this is not an easy one, we should address it in our research, since it often seems the case that it is on the basis of ‘bad behaviour’ that schools (teachers, special pedagogues, and directors) try to persuade Roma parents to have their children checked by an expert, and then possibly moved to another (usually Basic-Practical) school as a child with a developmental (learning and/or) behavioural disorder. A general but in fact well documented hypothesis that may be drawn from such pattern is one of a double resignation: resignation of the parents who may easily come to the view that their child will be better off in a Basic-Practical School, and a resignation on the part of the school regarding the possibility to work harder and therefore more efficiently with many of the Roma children. A pattern of mutual distrust may easily be established and reproduced in such a constellation.

The spatial and social seclusion, a way of life corresponding in many respects to living conditions, and the crime rate ascribed to Roma all contribute to a distance and distrust that a majority of non-Roma population holds towards this minority in general – a distrust regularly confirmed by surveys on attitudes to minorities. This distance and distrust, then, is reflected within the educational system, e.g., to the extent to which non-Roma parents are reluctant to place their children in schools with a large number of Roma pupils, for example in ethnically mixed catchment areas or the pre-dominantly Roma populated Basic-Practical Schools. Not only is this distrust and distance reflected, but sometimes the relationships within schools – between teachers, pupils, and their parents – alone may take a part in creating such sentiments. Generally, poor grading of Roma children, their relatively frequent failures to advance to a higher class-year, parents being invited too often to the school (by the head teacher, the special pedagogical counsellor, the school psychologist, or the director) to solve children’s poor performance or behavioural transgressions against school regulations, etc. – all this may, and often does, arouse distrust of the Roma parents in a particular school and those who represent it. It is also this experience that may (and most likely does) lead some of them to place their children into the Basic-Practical Schools. And the distance and distrust towards Roma in general on the part of teachers
and non-Roma children and their parents also may get strengthened vis-à-vis the experience in school: teachers may thus perceive the Roma pupils’ and parents’ sensitivity to ethnic-based injustice and their voiced objections as framed as a strategic pressure from their side, or non-Roma pupils and their parents may see some cases of benevolence towards Roma pupils as an unfair preferential treatment.

The above account corresponds to the findings of a 2004 research study on the integration of foreign children and youth in the Czech Republic,\textsuperscript{32} which identified four important issues in the education of children from ethnic minorities: language handicap, communication with pupils’ parents, discontinuous attendance (of the pupils in schools), and the lack of information and methodological support for teachers.

According to another research study (Kocourek-Pechová, 2007), Vietnamese children start basic education with the most serious language problems, but their family support and motivation helps them overcome this barrier relatively quickly. On the other hand, the research says, pupils from Ukraine, another possible target group for us, largely share the initial and perpetuating language problem with the Roma pupils, along with other (sometimes concomitant) problems like poor communication with parents and discontinuous school attendance, although to a somewhat lesser extent.

\subsection*{3.3 Main Inequalities at School}

In a less general view, segregation of Roma pupils in Czech Schools has at least three more specific causes: housing segregation (forming and living in ghettos in larger towns and cities), as is described in the GAC (2006) report; the inability of Czech schools to provide quality education for all, which results in directing Roma children towards less demanding curriculum groups and the Basic-Practical Schools; and the traditional psychological testing system (tests of learning capacities). This testing system leads to the enrolment of Roma in low-demand curriculum groups (schools) or even in Basic-Special Schools often from the very beginning of the education cycle, and it is not infrequently occurring at the basic level. Children living in socially excluded communities tend to go to the nearest schools, and it is here that often low-demand or Basic-Practical Schools emerge. At the same time, given that Roma parents often lack information about educational choices, they tend to send their children to schools that they know, which may be the nearest or some where siblings or children from other Roma families around already attend. According to the GAC (2006) survey, seven out of ten Roma boys and five out of ten Roma girls do not finish basic education at the ninth class-year level. That is, they leave basic education at a later age, either successfully in the ninth class-year, or unsuccessfully at the age of seventeen with an ‘incomplete basic education’.

The specific inequalities in schools can then be pursued on three mutually related levels:

\begin{itemize}
\item Inequality in placing children in different types of schools with different levels of education provided;
\item Inequality in school performance;
\item Inequality in educational trajectories, i.e., in chances to continue education on a higher level.
\end{itemize}

We have largely dealt with all of these kinds of inequalities in various contexts above. Therefore we will be brief in the following summary.

In 1999, the ERRC undertook extensive research in the Ostrava region\textsuperscript{33} that resulted in a legal case (D.H. vs. Czech Republic). The research showed that Roma children in Ostrava were 27.9 times more

\textsuperscript{32} This research was carried out in 2004. The Czech part of the research was carried out by the Department of Social Geography and Regional Development at Faculty of Science, Charles University, and IOM Prague.

\textsuperscript{33} See A special remedy: Roma and schools for the mentally handicapped in the Czech Republic, (ERRC, 1999), at http://errc.org/publications/reports/.
likely to be placed in remedial schools (then Special Schools) for pupils with learning and behavioural disorders than non-Roma children, and that more than a half the Roma children were placed in these schools. Although Roma represented less than 5% of all basic school-aged students in Ostrava, they constituted around 75% of the remedial Special Schools attendees.

In November 2007, the legal case (D.H. vs. CR) based on the ERRC research was finally closed in Strasbourg at the European Court for Human Rights when the Grand Chamber found the Czech authorities guilty of discrimination against Roma children. The Grand Chamber ruled that the Czech Republic had practised racial discrimination by wrongly channeling Roma children into remedial education facilities and hence violating the European Convention on Human Rights.34

This research and reports that followed pointed to problems that we have already tackled above: one of them is the missing or insufficient pre-school educational experience of Roma children. Roma children seldom attend nursery schools, since this 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 of Early Care has yet to be implemented. In regard to working with parents and local Roma communities, most efforts are made by NGOs and community workers, although some teachers of the pre-school also take part. These efforts, however, frequently suffer from a lack of coordination, and some local projects had to be stopped due to terminated funding.

The notable differences between school performance of Roma pupils and the others are frequently ascribed, although often with little specification, to a lack of preparedness, especially among basic school teachers, for the cultural diversity of the population and therefore also their pupils. One specification in this respect is that the Czech educational system, at both the basic and secondary levels, is rather set to promote factual learning and memorizing, which may be more of a problem for some children with differing cultural backgrounds. This is one identified reason for the relatively bad performance in schools among Roma pupils, which also may easily lead to a de-motivation and disinterest in learning.

This may also be related to the established pattern of classifying (grading) pupils purely on a numerical scale. The argument is that a numerical evaluation system is based on the comparison of the pupils’ final results, and not the learning process itself. Although verbal evaluation (final and during the school-year) has been possible and supported by MEYS for several years, many basic schools avoid this opportunity. While only Basic-Special Schools have to use verbal evaluation due to a legal obligation, it is also Basic-Practical Schools and special classes for pupils with developmental and behavioural learning disorders in regular Basic Schools which use this kind of evaluation for pupils. But this, obviously, is too late, since many of those in these programmes have been transferred here through a process initiated exactly by poor numerical grading. Parents of each child at the basic level of education can request that their child be evaluated verbally, but directors, who decide upon such applications, are not obliged to meet this claim. The verbal evaluation, however, is transformed into the numerical one in the eighth class-year for all children, in order not to hamper further educational chances of those who, in the eyes of teachers, are doing better.

The educational inequalities reproduced at the basic level of education then also largely affect inequalities in the chances for further education, especially in secondary schools with the GCE, in which successful students qualify to apply to a university. We have already pointed to the problem of under-representation of Roma students in these kinds of schools in section 2.2. For many Roma children leaving Basic-Practical School the only viable option seems either not to continue at any school, or to enter one of the Secondary vocational programmes without an Apprenticeship Certificate. Low socio-economic and socio-cultural status of many Roma families has the double negative effect again at this point of transition: many Roma families cannot afford to provide for their children during additional years of

study, when, as a rule, the related expenses grow (and some of them do not know about the supportive government programme mentioned above). Some also probably embrace the pattern of distrust towards the social and personal values of further education. Then community workers sometimes see that some Roma parents prefer that their children start going to the unemployment office as early as possible, instead of motivating them to continue education.

3.4 PISA and Its Influence

Czech Republic uses PISA methodology for research on schooling. One of the long-term research projects is PISA-L, which has conducted an extensive inspection of pupils’ competences in 2003 and is still being carried out. Another project is a ‘regional’ PISA which inspects the results of particular administrative districts (regions) and helps to identify regional differences. Although most of the PISA research results apply to the Czech educational system in general, they also point to the insufficient solution to the problem of the education of Roma, especially in relation to the high selectivity of the system.

It does not seem, however, that PISA reports have so far significantly affected the state’s educational policies. For example, the new Education Act of 2005 establishes a compromise in the relationship between basic schools and the (much criticized by PISA) multi-year gymnasia. On the one hand, the Framework Educational Programme for Basic Schools (FEP BS) encompasses both types of institutions, to the level of the ninth school-year. Simultaneously, it makes possible the gradual increase in the number of classes at basic schools and thus actual classes are made smaller. Nevertheless, the general limitation of the number of students (10% of 11-year-olds) which may continue their study at gymnasia has remained, as well as the selective process of entrance examinations, which the PISA report sees as disfavouring children with lower cultural capital.

A public discussion has been going on, triggered by the PISA finding, of the immense differences between first-year students of Czech secondary schools with the GCE (gymnasia and secondary technical and professional schools), on the one hand, and secondary vocational schools on the other. This discussion has been summarised by the Social Stratification team of the Czech Academy of Science in Prague, which is also the major PISA partner in the country. The first target was the vocational schools, said not to provide a quality education. The basic schools started to be accused of the same, by which the former argument was confirmed, since both in fact suggest that the generally poorly prepared basic school graduates can only be made good students by gymnasia. Defenders of the basic schools (teachers, some journalists, etc.) saw the problem in the assumingly too-open system of the lower secondary education (vocational schools): the argument is that the admission procedures here are often just a formality, which (regardless of the level of truth in this conviction) becomes a commonly shared assumption among basic school pupils as they approach the age of 15, and it de-motivates them and makes any effort on the part of teachers approaching these pupils useless. So the conviction becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, since the vocational schools need new students in order to survive, and therefore they make the admissions easier in the final effect.

Opponents of this viewpoint to the above-mentioned custom among Czech basic schools to use numerical grading (i.e., final grades) as the main motivational instrument (which does not work for those without higher aspirations, and indeed it decreases their aspirations), instead of motivating them to learn what is interesting and possibly useful for them. (However it could be replied to this part of the argument, in relation to what has been said in this report, that it is above all the Basic-Practical Schools who makes most effort to teach students ‘what is interesting and possibly useful for them!’) The core of this argument consists in the assertion that those with aspirations to continue their studies at a higher level of secondary education (especially at gymnasia) enjoy a preferential treatment during the last two years of basic schooling. Before leaving basic school, special attention is paid to the gymnasia-oriented pupils in classes, additional education is organized for them, at the cost of the rest who are treated with neglect and benevolence. The amount of information that has to be delivered to the more ambitious is

35 The Social Stratification team of the Czech Academy of Science in Prague website is: http://www.stratif.cz

36
great, and no time or energy is left for the others. In effect, it is only the motivated gymnasium-oriented pupils who get a proper education, while the others become (even more) disadvantaged. The latter – and a vast majority of Roma pupils belongs among them, if they manage to remain at a regular basic school and make it to the ninth school-year at all – then leave basic school not only without proper education, but also with low motivations and unfavourable perspectives of further education.


4.1 Czech Authorities’ Awareness of Ethnic Minorities in the School System

The issue of national minorities is a regular topic of public (media, political, academic, etc.) debates, although (especially in the media) they often appear on a rather general, catchphrase-like level. Apart from the official academic, political, and most of the media discourse, the attitudes to particular ethno-national groups vary from a relatively positive one (in the cases of Slovaks, Poles, or Greeks) to a rather negative one (in cases of Ukrainians, Romanians, Vietnamese, and especially Roma). In a survey in 2007 conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre of the Academy of Sciences (PORC AS), on a scale from one (the best attitude) to seven (the worst attitude), The Vietnamese gained an average value of 4.19 and the Roma 5.52 – the worst from all of the rated minorities (PORC AS, 2008).

Nevertheless, the surveys also show a tendency of moving from the negative towards the positive pole in the attitudes towards the presence of foreigners in the Czech Republic (PORC AS, 2008b). If the attitudes refer to personal experience with foreigners in general, the distance towards them among Czechs has a tendency to decrease (PORC AS, 2008b; Uherek, 2002).

Lately there have been some official efforts to establish public awareness of minority and immigrant issues, also focusing on schools. One source of inspiration for the legislature are the inducements provided by the Government Council for Human Rights (GCHR, established in 2001) regarding the access of foreigners from third (non-EU) countries to various forms and levels of education, and to basic schooling in particular – which we discussed above, in section 2.3. The new Educational Act of 2005, led in their pursuit by recommendations of the GCHR, has particularly widened the chances of immigrants to enter and be educated in and by the Czech educational system. While previous to the legal amendment foreigners from non-EU countries had to prove the legitimacy of their stay in the Czech Republic, afterwards such provision only applies to those of them who intend to study at schools of a higher level. The same amendment has also made it possible for children from the non-EU third countries, regardless of their formal status, to participate in services offered by schools (e.g. meals) and in pre-school education as well.36

The hope was also that the new Framework Education Programme for Basic Schools (FEP BE) – see section 1.4 for a closer description – would provide a better opportunity for basic schools not only to create their own profiles, but also to allow for more cross-subject and perhaps more multi-cultural curricula at schools with a substantial number of minority pupils. The benefit of such cross-curricular arrangement has been seen as the opportunity to teach pupils to live in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society. (Research Pedagogical Institute, 2007). But these hopes, as some commentators have pointed out, have largely remained on paper. For example, cooperation on the issue between basic schools and universities is virtually non-existent or just to a very minor extent.

36 See, e.g., the EQUAL project called “Work in Czech” (WIC), which analyzes the education of foreigners and asylum seekers (WIC, 2008).
In connection with the new Education Act the CERD asked MEYS: “To what extent has the Education Act (2005) proved effective in promoting the right to education for children belonging to minorities, Roma children in particular?” MEYS response was, among others, the following formal statement: “systemic change, resulting in a significant shift towards inclusive education, is represented by the curricular reform and the initiation of teaching in accordance with school educational programmes drawn so as to respect the educational needs of the whole range of pupils taught at basic schools (compulsory as of September 2007 in the first and sixth class-years, but already in a pilot operation at most schools.” Critical experts have mostly said that the curricular reform has nothing in common with inclusion, much to the contrary. The CERD responded in their Concluding observations:

“The Committee is deeply concerned by consistent information according to which the Roma suffer from racial segregation [...] in the field of education, a situation that the State does not seem to fully acknowledge. We note with particular concern that a disproportionately large number of Roma children attend ‘special schools’. While taking into account the view of the State that this results from the vulnerable situation of the Roma and the need to adopt special measures to respond to their needs, and having also taken into account the new Education Act, the Committee remains concerned that this situation also seems to result from discriminatory practises and a lack of sensitivity on the part of the authorities to the cultural identity and specific difficulties faced by the Roma. Special measures for the advancement of certain groups are legitimate provided that they do not lead, in purpose or in practise, to the segregation of communities. [...] The State should increase its efforts to assess the situation of the Roma in the field of education. It should develop effective programmes specifically aimed at putting an end to the segregation of Roma in this area, and ensure that Roma children are not deprived of their right to family life and to education of any type or any level. The Committee, in particular, recommends that the State party review the methodological tools used to determine the cases in which children are to be enrolled in special schools so as to avoid indirect discrimination against Roma children on the basis of their cultural identity” (CERD, 2007).

As far as the media are concerned, the issues of minorities, immigrants, and especially the ‘Roma problem’ have regularly and sometimes extensively been reported. Most of the mainstream media attempts a sensitive approach to these issues, seeking to provide a balanced view. In the Ostrava D.H. v C.R. case, they mostly confined their commentaries to descriptive accounts: instead of commenting extensively on the case itself, they took this as an opportunity to point to relevant general problems with the position of the Roma within the Czech educational system:

- segregation of Roma pupils (especially in Basic-Practical and previously Special and Special-Practical Schools) – not so much of pupils from other minority communities;
- unmotivation of Roma pupils and the unmotivating character of their family and community environment;
- troubled ‘school-parent’ relationship;
- too much memorizing and ‘piece evaluation’ in classes;
- insensitivity of teachers (lack of individual approach); and
- elitist character of the education system as a whole.

These issues also represent the main topics for public and policy discourse, and all have been tackled throughout this text in various contexts. The voice of the mainstream media is not unanimous, but on the whole it is rather critical of the state policies in regards to the education of minorities, or to the implementation of these policies in schools.
As surveys and everyday experience regularly point out, this view is not fully shared by the majority of the population, which tends to be much more critical towards the Roma. The verdict in D.H. v. C.R. has been received with much reservation and discontent, not only among the general public, but especially among teachers, and also among a large part of experts in the field of education. Due to the case's publicity, it has been here that probably the most salient "ethnic conflict" in education arises, although it has not been explicitly fostered by the majority of the mainstream media.

Apart from this, we should rather speak of ethnic tensions than open conflicts (if we do not have occasional individual conflicts in mind). These tensions seem to stem from a clash of two deeply anchored feelings and attitudes on the side of the majority and the side of the Roma minority – although they are not shared by all on each side respectively. The widespread majoritarian view is that of an undeserved preferential treatment of Roma as a by and large unmotivated and in fact uneducable minority. On the Roma side, it is the widespread distrust and distance towards the state, the school, and individual teachers, accompanied by feelings of discrimination. Schools and teachers often are the target of both general attitudes, while they are also expected to mediate between them.

4.2 Official Policies and Programmes

Recently, the Minister of Education, Youth, and Sport (Ondřej Liška, Green Party) has repeatedly stated that the presence of children of various nationalities in a class is very desirable, and he makes no secret that the education of minorities and immigrants is one of his priorities:

"Our priority is education accessible to everyone without any difference. All pupils have to be educated according to their possibilities and abilities and have to get a chance to develop their potential" (MEYS, 2008d).

Since this Minister has been in office less than a year, it seems too early to assess to which extent he will be successful in implementing his words. He has established a special team focusing on the education of minorities and immigrants, which is responsible for preparing a general strategy and concrete projects.

The Minister's words were also a reaction to the verdict of the European Court for Human Rights' in the D.H. vs. CR case. But since the verdict is a sensitive issue among politicians as well as the public, the integration policies as a rule are not explicitly related to it.

MEYS annually announces a Programme of MEYS for Support of Education in Languages of National Minorities and Multicultural Education.

This programme aims to support native language instruction for children of members of national minorities, educational activities, activities of schools with significant representation of national minorities, preparation of educational programmes and documents focused on fighting racial and national intolerance, racism, anti-Semitism, integration projects in the area of Roma language education, and research projects on the education of national minorities (MEYS, 2008c). Apart from schools, in 2008, more than a half of successful applicants were NGO's or other organizations promoting a multicultural approach in the elaboration of educational aids. Basic schools are mainly oriented, in their projects, to the implementation of cross-curricular subjects dealing with multicultural education, and to the support of integrating pupils from national minorities. However, it can be derived from the schools' applications that the activities they propose do not really expand the range of opportunities given by the FEP BE (many teachers still have clear reservations about this document).37

Regarding other policies and programmes:

1. For the Government programme Support for Roma Students at Secondary Schools and its assessment, see the last paragraph in section 2.4

37 For the list of successful applications see: http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/vysledky-dotacniho-vyberoveho-rizeni-v-ramci-programmeu-podpora-vzdelavani-v-jazycich-narodnostnych-mensin-a-multikulturni-vychovy-2008
2. For the state policy on education in minority languages and its assessment see section 2.3.
3. For a critical assessment of the multi-cultural aspirations in the last paragraphs of the Framework Educational Programme (FEP) see section 4.1.

To this date, we have no evidence of serious attempts on the part of MEYS to amend the FEP in the direction of strengthening its multi-cultural potential, and levelling its exclusionary potential. According to experts close to MEYS (especially the Pedagogical Research Institute, and representatives of MEYS itself), the FEP already gives a wide range of opportunities for cross-curricular cross- and multi-cultural education, which has so far been used only to a minor extent. And they also probably take into account the distance many teachers hold to this document, which they see as a threat to an efficient education (the acquisition of knowledge by pupils). The exclusionary potential of the FEP, on the other hand, seems to be of no big problem for the liberal-conservative politicians in the Government and legislative bodies (the Civic Democratic Party, leading the current Government coalition and holding most seats in the Parliament, although not a majority).

Regular objections raised by some influential members of the Civic Democratic Party also probably represent the major obstacle in passing the specific Anti-discrimination Act, prepared in a first version as early as 2006. Despite this, the Act has been passed in the House of Representatives, and is being dealt with in the Senate – where, however, the Civic Democratic Party holds majority.

4.3 Role of NGOs and Community Programmes

As more than a half of the successful applicants in MEYS Programme for Support of Education in Languages of National Minorities and Multicultural Education are NGOs (see preceding paragraph), it is evident that a large part of the efforts toward a more inclusive schooling for minorities and immigrants has been undertaken by these sorts of organizations. It is especially NGOs who seek to include wider environments into their efforts and focus, i.e., not only on minority and immigrant children, but also their parents, neighbourhoods, local leaders, and minority associations. They (NGOs) often have the resources for this, which many schools and projects organized by them do not posses: time, enthusiasm, people acquainted with and oriented in the minority environment, contacts with local people, etc.). Sometimes their agenda alone or projects they conduct are more widely defined, and the social-cultural integration in and through education is just part of them, sometimes even not explicit in the initial idea or name of the project.38

The unique contribution of the NGOs is that they are often the major actors in connecting and coordinating otherwise separate activities of different bodies: schools, children, social care institutions, families, immigration offices, police, special pedagogical centres and pedagogical-psychological counsellors, etc. One example of such an NGO – a prototypical GINGO (government initiated NGO), in fact – is, e.g., the network of Centres of Minority Integration. This programme has been initiated by the Czech Government, and it has been conducted under the auspices of the Institute of Pedagogical-Psychological Counsels. From the former, it gets funding (besides the European Structural Funds) and from the latter, it takes expertise. These centres exist in six Czech localities with a concentration of either an immigrant or Roma population. Four of them are located in the Moravian Regions, two in the Bohemian Regions, but none of them in Ostrava, our target city. They ambitiously strive to connect community work, integration of children in schools, integration of their parents in society at large, work and responsibilities of the state authorities (social care and police), integration programmes and policies of schools and the pre-school education, and the expertise in all of these fields. One of their more concrete goals, for example, is to facilitate communication between the school (teachers, directors) and the immigrant parents who may not have a handle on the Czech language and the child may be the only translator available. This is often the case of new Vietnamese immigrants.

38 Among these NGOs with broad agendas, the People in Need Foundation – a well established and one of the best known Czech NGOs in general – should especially be mentioned.
The problem with assessing the work and results of this programme (Centres of Minority Integration) is typical for many NGOs: it has only been in existence less than two years. And it may not be clear whether it will continue its activities after 2008, since it is exclusively dependent on external funding. Even though established NGOs may last, their agenda often shifts over time, sometimes following other problems they encountered through the work on an original programme and which seem more acute now, sometimes following new, media-fostered and therefore politically sensitive problems which have arisen in the meantime, sometimes following better funding opportunities elsewhere (usually connected with the former), etc. Inevitable dependence on external and therefore uncertain sources not only terminates many projects without these having showed real effects (sponsoring institutions are as a rule impatient), it also affects the atmosphere within the NGOs which then affects its work: bureaucratization, too much stress on publicity, but also a regularly high fluctuation of volunteers, which again increases the overall organizational costs (money, time, energy, and expertise) by constantly training the new-comers. Even if an NGO gets professionalised, its continuity often depends on the enthusiasm of the founders, since for other professionals it is an uncertain environment, and many of them do not stay long.

Among the other programmes, projects, and NGOs oriented to the education of minorities, there is, e.g., the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL funded by the European Social Fund; and many other activities are also supported by EU sources and programmes: New School (Nová škola), DROM – Romany Center, IQ Roma Service Civic Group and the Association of Citizens Helping the Migrants are some of them. These organizations offer free of charge special courses (in Czech language, legal and bureaucratic regulations, accommodation in a new environment, etc.) for immigrants or asylum seekers. And they seek to mediate between these groups or individuals and the state or expert authorities, including schools. For minority children whose native language is not, or not only, Czech, NGOs offer supportive programmes as a supplement to the formal school education. These include, e.g., special tutorial lessons teaching children to master information received at school. In these lessons children may work on their homework, discuss their school work with the tutors and prepare for tests and exams. Another form of activity in this area is community education, and many of such programmes (e.g., Saturday Schools) take place in schools, especially in larger cities. NGOs are also active in promoting the secondary schools orientated towards Roma students mentioned at the end of section 2.4.

5. The State of Research on Minority Ethnic Youth in Education

5.1 General Overview

While we can hardly speak about research and a critical public discussion on the issue of minority ethnic youth in education before 1989, after the regime change it has, up to this time, been more a topic of public and political discussion than a subject of extensive academic research. Although the Roma community has especially attracted the attention of many scholars, ethnographers and demographers, the aspect of education has relatively seldom been taken as their primary focus. It has either been absent completely or emerged randomly in various contexts, e.g., Roma families, kinships and neighbourhoods. The same can be said about research focusing on the educational system. In a general view, research that focuses primarily on the issue of minority ethnic youth in education has so far been rather underdeveloped, at least compared to some other areas of exploration in social sciences (like social stratification, re-urbanization, family patterns, gender, civil society, aging, youth, etc.).

We skip most of the ethnographic research in our overview in the following section of this chapter, as it deals with education mostly in a larger context of its primary focus, and also because it will be presented in the EDUMIGROM Background Report on Ethnic Relations: Czech Republic.
5.2 Education of Roma

In spite of this general statement, we are still able to identify particular cases of research activities that can be noted in regard to the issue of minority ethnic youth in education – and we have taken such note of them throughout the above text.

1. Large-scale statistical surveys, the most recent example of which is the GAC survey of 2006. Although this project, sponsored by the Czech Government, aimed especially to identify deprived Roma communities, it has also brought some tentative data on the Roma children in the education system. The authors themselves stress that these data are just too general and rough material, and they call for further investigation in this regard. Still this project went beyond the (mostly international comparative) surveys that collect statistical data for international institutions (EU), governments, and human rights groups and associations. The GAC research especially reached somewhat further in terms of attempts for interpretation and correlation of the data collected, although not too far. The project has especially pointed to the geographical aspect of Roma deprivation, which is relevant to our topic (ghettos – special schools).

2. Demographic research: especially Hřle (2007) has attempted a critical evaluation of the state integration policies in the field of education. Also drawing on statistical data and estimates, he points to the ironic effects of the integrationist ambitions in the educational reforms of the last decade or so, which instead of promoting integration through and in schools, result in the same (if not higher) level of stratification along ethnic lines (concerning the Roma in particular).

3. Psychological research: this is perhaps the most developed field of investigation of minority ethnic youth in education within the Czech academia. Especially the team around Směkal (2003), which has collected data on and investigated in-depth the conditions and trajectories of personal development of (ethnic) minority children. This research especially focused – in a comparative fashion – on mental developments and capacities of minority (Roma) children at the pre-school age, and it has supported the thesis that traditional psychological tests of learning capacities reflect more the cultural background (including language competences) than personal learning dispositions as taken out of the particular cultural and social environment. On the one hand, it can be argued that without cultural and social influences no real (conventionally speaking) learning capacities can be developed. On the other hand, the project has provided an expert basis for the claim that the education system is not without powers to take these cultural and social aspects of personal development into account in shaping its educational strategies, instead of pretending that the dominant culture represents a universal (the only right or true) model of personal development, according to which children can be sorted out on a scale of learning capacities as such. (See also: Poledřová-Zobařová, 2006)

4. Pedagogical research (Úlovcová, Bubíková, Vícníková, Hyha, 2006; Greger 2006): it is also mostly based on statistical data, and critically focuses on failures of the education system to support equal chances for educational careers for pupils and students with different social and cultural backgrounds. This sort of research often refers to the PISA surveys, and close to it are some more recent sociological analyses (also based on collections of statistical data) of the reproduction of inequalities within and by the educational system (Matj, Straková, 2006). The latter authors, however, do not take ethnicity as a factor of the reproduction of inequalities in and through the education system into their account.
5. This relates to perhaps the best publicly known example of ethnographic research done by Plzen anthropologists (Hirt, Jakoubek, 2006) in the latter’s general assumption that the Roma problem is in fact not an ethnic one, but instead a social one.

5.3 Education of Vietnamese

There is very little research done on the Vietnamese community in the Czech Republic in general, let alone the education of Vietnamese children and youth. Their high level of motivation and learning capacities is popular knowledge, which mostly leans on media accounts and reports rather than serious research, although some of this research tends to support this thesis. This is also why we would like to take another in-depth and critical look at this phenomenon.

Kocourek and Pechová (2007) provide perhaps the only consistent account of the experience of and with Vietnamese children at schools. And their account indeed does support the popular thesis reproduced above, although they also point to two gaps that may emerge in the Vietnamese children’s experience. The one is between them and their school-mates, especially during the first years of basic education, where adopted different cultural habits may lead to feelings of exclusion. The other is that between Vietnamese children and their parents, which may arise especially during later years of formal education, insofar as the children have adopted some habits of the majoritarian society in order to get better accommodated in their peer environment.
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Bibliography


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Youth Information Centre, 2008. V CR funguje 164 přípravných tríd pro romské deti, přibývá jich [In the Czech Republic operate 164 preparatory classes for Roma children and they are increasing]. www.icm.cz/v-cr-funguje-164-pripavnych-trid-pro-romske-deti-pribyva-jich

Legislation

Act N. 128/2000 Coll., o obcích. [Communities Act].

Act N. 273/2001 Coll., o právech príslušníku národnostních menšin a o zmene nekterých zákonu. [On rights of members of national minorities and on amendment of some acts].


Act N. 563/2004 Coll., o pedagogických pracovnících a o zmene nekterých zákonu. [On pedagogical workers and on amendment of some other acts].

Chamber of Deputies Press 253/0. [Chamber of Deputies Press].


Council Directive 2000/43/ES, kterou se zavádí zásada rovného zacházení s osobami bez ohledu na jejich rasu nebo etnický puvod. [Implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin].

Council Directive 76/207/EHS o zavedení zásady rovného zacházení pro muže a ženy, pokud jde o prístup k zamestnání, odbornému vzdělávání a postupu v zamestnání a o pracovní podmínky. [On the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions].


Government decree N.98/2002 Coll., kterým se stanoví podmínky a způsob poskytování dotací ze státního rozpočtu na aktivity príslušníka národnostních menšin a na podporu integrace príslušníka romské komunity. [Determining conditions and method of state budget grants awarding on activities of members of ethnic minorities and on support for the integration of members of Roma community].


Regulation of MEYS, N. 73/2005 Coll., o vzdělávání detí, žáků a studentů se speciálními vzdělávacími potřebami a detí, žáků a studentů mimorádně nadaných. [On schooling of children, pupils, and students with special educational needs and children, pupils, and students extraordinary talented].
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<td><strong>Centrum pro výzkum verejného mínění; ; Sociologický ústav AV CR</strong></td>
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<td>CERMAT – Centrum pro zjišťování výsledku vzdělávání</td>
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<td>Česká školní inspekce [Czech School Inspection]:</td>
<td><a href="http://www.csicr.cz">www.csicr.cz</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Rajko Djuric Foundation</td>
<td><a href="http://www.osf.cz/djuric/">www.osf.cz/djuric/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Network on Education in Europe</td>
<td><a href="http://www.eurydice.org">www.eurydice.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Information on Migrant and Minority Health</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mighealth.net">www.mighealth.net</a></td>
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<td>Ivan Gabal Analysis and Consulting</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gac.cz">www.gac.cz</a></td>
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<td>Komunitní vzdělávání</td>
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<td><strong>Liga lidských práv</strong></td>
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<td>Moravskoslezský kraj</td>
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<td><strong>Sociologický ústav AV CR – oddelení Sociologie vzdělání a stratifikace</strong></td>
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<td>Střední odborná škola managementu a práva s.r.o.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sossp.cz">www.sossp.cz</a></td>
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<td>Vláda CR</td>
<td><a href="http://www.vlada.cz">www.vlada.cz</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Výzkumný ústav pedagogický v Praze (VÚP)</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.vuppraha.cz">http://www.vuppraha.cz</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix

Selected English-language Bibliography

Publications and Reports


Conceptual Documents


Internet Portals, Web pages

<p>| Collection of (not only) Czech legislative documents, in English | <a href="http://www.lexadin.nl">www.lexadin.nl</a> |
| Collection of various Czech legislative and conception documents | <a href="http://www.legislationline.org">www.legislationline.org</a> |
| Statistical data on foreigners in the Czech Republic, Czech Statistical Office | <a href="http://www.czso.cz/csu/cizinci.nsf/engkapitola/uvod">www.czso.cz/csu/cizinci.nsf/engkapitola/uvod</a> |</p>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>Apprenticeship Certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>CERD</td>
<td>Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSI</td>
<td>Czech School Inspection</td>
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<td>CZSO</td>
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<td>DiS</td>
<td>Specialist with Diploma</td>
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<td>ECHR</td>
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<td>Human Rights League</td>
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<td>Individual Plan of Education</td>
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<td>International Standard Classification of Education</td>
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<td>MEYS</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports</td>
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<td>OSI</td>
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<td>Public Opinion Research Centre of the Academy of Sciences</td>
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<td>SEPs</td>
<td>School Educational Programs</td>
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<td>SPC</td>
<td>Special Pedagogical Centre</td>
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<td>ÚIV</td>
<td>Institute for Information on Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>VÚP</td>
<td>Výzkumného ústavu pedagogického v Praze</td>
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<tr>
<td>WIC</td>
<td>Work in Czech</td>
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