EURYDICE

EACEA
Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency

Vocational Guidance Education in Full-Time Compulsory Education in Europe

European Commission

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE EDUCATION IN FULL-TIME COMPULSORY EDUCATION

CZECH REPUBLIC

School year 2007/08

Education is compulsory for pupils between the ages of 6 and 15. It is offered in basic schools *(základni škola)* and is organised as a single structure. Pupils remain in the same education system and do not change schools. Some pupils with academic talents may access (via an entrance exam) *gymnázium* (lower secondary level) at the age of 11. The end of compulsory education is a key moment in terms of guidance. Pupils have the possibility to go on to general or vocational upper secondary education. Access depends on meeting entrance requirements, which are usually the results obtained in the entrance exam.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND NATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The 2004 Education Act stipulates guidance services at schools which are specified in the regulation. In the field of vocational guidance, the guidance services at school are focused on guidance assistance integrating education, information and support regarding a suitable choice of educational and later professional career. The 2004 Employment Act defines the state employment policy, including career counselling in labour offices.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs share the responsibility for the implementation of vocational guidance education and vocational guidance services. Their objective is to provide solutions to facilitate educational and vocational guidance for young people and adults.

Guidance services at schools (under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports) are aimed more specifically at solving the problems faced by young people, in particular those related to choices and changes in educational pathways.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has established specialised institutions. The Educational and Psychological Counselling Institute (IPPP) coordinates guidance services in schools and controls their quality and effectiveness. It also offers in-service training of educational staff in the field of guidance and conceptional, methodological, information and counselling activities.

The National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education (NUOV) is responsible for research, the development of methodologies and information on vocational guidance. It also offers in-service training of educational staff in the field of guidance through e-learning courses. One unit of the Institute is the Career Guidance Centre.

The National Institute for Further Education (NIDV) offers in-service training aimed at increasing the quality of guidance and career counselling of educational staff.

The Institute for Information on Education gathers statistics and, among others, informs on educational opportunities and available places at upper secondary schools.

The National Children and Youth Institute, and namely its department Information Youth Centre, gather all necessary information, information products, consultancy and services for children and youth, and also develop information and counselling activity in the broadest scope possible.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs established Labour Offices (77) which are centred on the transition between school and the world of work, providing support to young people in their search for employment, and are aimed at increasing the level of employability. This Ministry founded the National Training Fund with the objectives to develop human resources and support lifelong learning, employment and social development.

Many other guidance services exist (bodies under the responsibility of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, private organisations and employer associations).

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM

In 2002, the educational area 'learning about career choices' was included in the Standard of Basic Education for *základní školy*. It is aimed at developing the knowledge and personal capacities of pupils in terms of their understanding of working life, which are necessary in order to begin and make progress in their academic and professional lives. Schools may integrate this topic into other subjects (such as citizenship education) or provide it as a separate subject (this is the case in 25 % of compulsory schools). The optimal number of hours is 60 lessons lasting 45 minutes each, in the last two or three years of basic education.

In 2004, a curricular reform began. The Framework Educational Programme of Basic Education has been implemented gradually since 2007/08 (starting in the first years of primary and lower secondary level of *základní škola* and relevant year of *gymnázium*).

One of the general aims of basic education is to help pupils to discover and develop their own abilities and skills in the context of actual opportunities and to use their abilities and skills in combination with their acquired knowledge when making decisions regarding their personal and professional aims.

Among the working competences acquired by the end of basic education, pupils use their knowledge in the various educational areas to the benefit of their own development and preparation for the future; make well-founded decisions regarding their future studies and/or profession; have a notion of the basic activities needed to set up and implement a business plan; and understand what it means to be an entrepreneur, the goals an entrepreneur pursues and the risks they face.

These competences can be acquired in the educational area 'People and the World of Work'. This educational area covers a broad spectrum of working activities and technologies, guides pupils towards gaining basic practical skills in various areas of human activities and contributes to shaping pupils' attitudes towards their lives and professional careers. The thematic area entitled 'The World of Work' is mandatory for the last two or three years of

basic education. The Framework Educational Programme is implemented at school level by a school educational programme prepared by an individual school.

Traineeships within the framework of the curriculum

Traineeships within the framework of the curriculum of compulsory education are not provided. There are several ways to prepare young people with special educational needs depending on their level of disability.

OTHER TYPES OF ACTIVITY/GUIDANCE SERVICES

Contacts with the professional world

The Framework Educational Programme of Basic Education sets only the competences and content of basic education. Methods and forms are not prescribed and depend on the school head and teachers. They can be specified in the School Educational Programme.

Guidance services at school

Schools are obliged by law to ensure provision of guidance services. They usually create a post of educational counsellor *(výchovný poradce)* who works in close collaboration with class teachers or other educational staff at school. Apart from the educational counsellor, a school psychologist or special pedagogue works at some schools.

The role of educational counsellors is to guide pupils in their choice of educational and professional pathway, to identify pupils with specific educational needs and to provide the necessary care and follow-up for their integration into school. They provide methodological support to teachers in the area of career guidance and care for pupils with special educational needs.

Within the project *VIP Kariéra* supported by the European Social Fund, school guidance centres *(školní poradenská pracoviště)* were established by the IPPP at 99 schools in 2005. Their aim is to increase the quality of guidance services to teachers and pupils. They are composed of the school psychologist or special pedagogue, educational counsellor, prevention specialist and a team of educational staff at the school.

Schools cooperate with educational psychology consultation centres (*pedagogicko-psychologické poradny* – PPP) and special education centres (*speciálně pedagogická centra* – SPC). A network of educational psychology consultation centres (PPP) in every district is available to schools. Among others, their responsibilities consist in determining pupils' level of knowledge and psychological preparation for school, advising parents or school heads as to pupils' choice of school or class, cooperating during school admissions procedures, counselling pupils who are at risk of becoming early school leavers or those who are particularly gifted, and providing guidance services to pupils in their personal and career perspectives. The counsellors in these centres (psychologists, special pedagogues, social workers) work with pupils and their parents, individually or in groups. They help young people make their future career choices through evaluations of their capacities, personal qualities, interests and other characteristics.

The special education centres (SPC), which are generally located in schools, provide counselling to pupils with different types of disabilities (physical, sensory or mental) and to health disadvantaged pupils.

Guidance services outside school

The labour offices (*úřady práce* – ÚP) under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs offer counselling to all citizens (including young people) who are seeking employment or vocational training, etc. These offices, among others, provide guidance and information services related to vocational training and further education and supplement guidance centres in the education sector. All labour offices have a career counselling centre and provide vocational counselling.

The National Training Fund and its Guidance Service Support Unit oversees guidance services in the sector of this Ministry.

Guidance services are also provided by private employment agencies *(agentury práce)* which must be accredited by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

QUALIFICATIONS OF GUIDANCE STAFF

In the schools

The teachers in charge of subjects which integrate 'learning about career choices' have specialised qualifications in a subject. The initial training of these teachers does not yet include specific preparation. Teachers may nevertheless take various in-service training programmes related to guidance (offered by the IPPP, NUOV, NIDV and other accredited institutions) and benefit from existing methodological documents.

The schools employ qualified teachers as educational counsellors, whose teaching workload is reduced by one to five hours per week (according to the number of pupils at the school) in order for them to devote time to guidance. They have to complete specific complementary training organised by higher education institutions.

School psychologists or special pedagogues who also work at schools and in guidance centres (PPP, SPC) devote part of their time to some form of vocational guidance. They must have a master's degree in psychology and special pedagogy respectively.

In the employment sector

Counsellors in the public employment service must have a higher education degree. They usually have degrees in psychology or education.

COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS, EMPLOYERS, PARENTS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Cooperation in terms of information, counselling and recommendations in compulsory education exists between schools, parents and employers at school level depending on the activities of these partners.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

The *VIP Kariéra* project, with the participation of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, IPPP, NUOV and NIDV and supported by the European Social Fund, enabled the development of a comprehensive basis for guidance and counselling (in-service training and school guidance centres are mentioned above). Within this project, the NUOV created the Information System on School Leavers' Success on the Labour Market (ISA) with the portal www.infoabsolvent.cz. It offers a wide choice of educational and career opportunities, analyses of the labour market and other documentation. This Institute publishes an annual survey on educational opportunities at upper secondary level.

The Institute for Information on Education publishes a list of educational opportunities at upper secondary level (SET) and informs on available places at schools.

The Information Youth Centres (ICMs) gather information on educational pathway possibilities for all ages. These centres are grouped in an association which represents them in the Czech section of the international information portal for young people in Europe (www.infomobil.org).

An information database on employment exists on the website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (www.portal.mpsv.cz), which offers free computer access to those searching for employment.

There are also brochures, company listings, CD-ROMs, video presentations of professions as well as a wide range of information on education (such as, for example, school listings and video presentations of study programmes).

The private sector plays an important role in the production of information, the management of websites, etc.

Internet references

Educational and Psychological Counselling Institute: www.ippp.cz

National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education: www.nuov.cz

National Institute for Further Education: www.nidv.cz

Institute for Information on Education: www.uiv.cz

Information centres for young people: www.icm.cz

National Training Foundation: www.nvf.cz

Information System on School Leavers' Success on the Labour Market (ISA): www.infoabsolvent.cz

Guide to the World of Occupations: http://www.gwo.cz/

Euroguidance: http://www.naep.cz/

Sources

1. Guidance policies in the knowledge society. Trends, challenges and responses across Europe. A Cedefop synthesis report. Ronald G. Sultana. Cedefop Panorama series; 85. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2004. ISBN 92-896-0289-9

2. ETV and Cedefop thematic analysis 'Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment' on www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_ressources/NationalVet/Thematic (Vocational Education and Training in the Czech Republic. Thematic Overview 2007)

3. Eurybase; Eurydice 2007/08.

4. Career Guidance and Public Policy. Bridging the gap. OECD 2004. ISBN 92-64-10564-6