

**Analytical Report PHARE RAXEN_CC
Minority Education**

**RAXEN_CC National Focal
Czech Republic**

Dženo Association

Report on the Situation of Minority Education
in the Czech Republic

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1. Executive Summary

Despite the fact that the norms delineating the position of national minorities in the Czech Republic are grounded in the *Charter of Basic Rights and Freedoms*, the term national minority has been defined in the Czech Republic only in July 2001 when the Act No. 273/2001 Coll. on the rights of the members of national minorities was passed by the House of Representatives. This act defines national minority as a community of citizens of the Czech Republic living on the territory of the republic who differ from the other citizens mostly in their ethnic origin, language, culture, and traditions, and who form a numerical minority while they demonstrate their will to be considered as a national minority with the aim to express and protect the interests of their historically formed community. A member of national minority is defined by the Act as a citizen of the Czech Republic who declares to be of other ethnic origin than the Czech one and demonstrates his/her wish to be considered as a member of a national minority together with all others who declare to belong to the same ethnic group/national minority.

The Conception of minority education flows from the *Constitution of the Czech Republic*, it respects the *Charter of Basic Human Rights and Freedoms* as well as the legal order of the state. The contemporary legal norms allow for the establishment of schools or classes for children of foreign-language speakers, with their mother tongue as the language of instruction. However, the creation of conditions for the education of pupils from national minorities in their mother tongue within the state educational system is affected by the insufficiencies of existing legislation.

Adequate attention is paid to minority education in the newly drafted School Act – in Article 11 and in the General Provisions (General Provisions, Section 1, Art. 2 “Principles of Education“) that lays down the basic principles of education:

- Equal access to education for every citizen of the Czech Republic
- Mutual respect, opinion tolerance, solidarity, and defence against manifestations of discrimination and intolerance
- Promotion of the development of knowledge on the culture, history, language, traditions, and religion of the nations and national minorities living in the Czech Republic
- Respect for the educational needs of the individuals in the educational process.

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3. National Minorities in the CR¹

3.1. DEFINING THE TERM NATIONAL MINORITY

Despite the fact that the norms delineating the position of national minorities in the CR are grounded in the *Charter of Basic Rights and Freedoms*, the term national minority has been defined in the CR only in July 2001 when the Act No. 273/2001 Coll. on the rights of the members of national minorities was passed by the House of Representatives. This act defines national minority as a community of citizens of the CR living on the territory of the republic who differ from the other citizens mostly in their ethnic origin, language, culture, and traditions, and who form a numerical minority while they demonstrate their will to be considered as a national minority with the aim to express and protect the interests of their historically formed community. A member of national minority is defined by the Act as a citizen of the CR who declares to be of other ethnic origin than the Czech one and demonstrates his/her wish to be considered as a member of a national minority together with all others who declare to belong to the same ethnic group/national minority.

3.2. ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE INHABITANTS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The basic information on the ethnic composition of the Inhabitants of the CR comes from census results. The last population census was taken and closed on 1 March 2001 in accordance with the Act No. 158/1999 Coll. on the census of population, houses and flats in 2001.

The census offered to everybody the possibility to indicate their ethnic origin according to their choice, while the section “ethnic group“ in the census form did not include a list of ethnic groups but a free space where everybody could identify their ethnic group according to their own decision.

Please, find accurate numbers in the appendix, chapter 8.1.

3.3. SLOVAK MINORITY

Slovaks are the largest national minority in the CR. They have been coming to the territory of the contemporary Czech Republic already in the 18th century when some of them settled in the region. Larger numbers of Slovaks came to work and study in the CR after the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918 and later in 1945 as well as 1968 when the state was changed into a federation. The Slovaks have become a national minority in the Czech Republic after the split of Czechoslovakia in 1993.

¹ The following information on the individual minorities flow especially from the Report on the Situation of National Minorities in CR in 2002, published by the Council of the Government for National Minorities.

Today, there is more than 193,000 Slovaks permanently living in the CR. With respect to their linguistic closeness, the members of the Slovak minority do not face any larger problems in the CR. In the regions with higher concentration of the Slovak minority (Karviná), there are primary schools that use Slovak as the language of instruction; schools in other places offer Slovak lessons as a facultative subject, the teaching of which is subsidised by the state. The state also supports Slovak minority newspapers and journals (*Slovenské listy, Dotyky, Korene, Slovenské rozhľady*).

The members of the Slovak minority face especially the problem of assimilation, the progress of which is spontaneous. Nevertheless, the minority members find fault with the lack of official attempts to prevent it.

3.4. ROMANY MINORITY

The Roma are the second largest national minority in the CR. The total number of Roma living in the CR is estimated to be 150-200,000, even though the numbers resulting from the census are far from reaching these estimates. In 2001, less than 12,000 people have declared to belong to the Romany minority in the CR. Detailed information on the Romany minority is to be found in Chapter 4.

3.5. POLISH MINORITY

The Polish minority is the third most numerous minority in the CR. The Poles live traditionally in the north of Moravia, in the regions of Karviná and Frýdek-Místek. Polish minority education is composed of 30 primary schools, two secondary grammar schools, and 16 classes in secondary technical schools. There are also 50 Polish kindergartens. The state subsidises the publication of the Polish language newspaper *Glos ludu* and journals *Zwrot, Nasza gazetka, Prazsky kuryr*. By the means of grants, the state also supports the publication of Polish language books by minority authors. The Polish language is also used in the regional broadcasting of the Czech Radio. The signal of the Polish TV covers the whole territory where the Polish minority lives.

Poles living in the CR complain of discrimination in the application to universities (the entrance exams can be done only in the Czech language) and in the access to some offices; they also find the level of the state financial support for the development of minority culture unsatisfactory. Criticisms are raised also in connection with the Act on the Rights of the Members of National Minorities, which the Poles see as inefficient. According to the 2001 census, the number of Czech citizens belonging to the Polish minority reaches 52,000.

3.6. GERMAN MINORITY

The German minority is the fourth largest one in the CR. Germans have been living in the Czech borderlands and cities since the 13th century, when they had been invited to the thinly populated regions. Only 40,000 members now represent the once large minority. The majority of the German minority members are elderly people, the contemporary

younger German generations are fully assimilated and do not want to reclaim their original minority identity.

The Germans have originally lived concentrated in the Czech borderland; today, they are dispersed on the whole territory of the Czech Republic. The state supports the publication of German minority press, *Landes-Anzeiger*, *Landes Zeitung* and *Prager Volkszeitung* weeklies as well as other non-periodicals in German. The members of the German minority are organised in numerous regional civic associations, some of them with cross-border activities and partnerships. The contemporary minority movement is often fused with other linguistic and cultural activities and happenings organised in the framework of Czech-German cooperation. Large part of the German press and publications, for example the *Prager Zeitung*, reflect the fact that a large number of German nationals live more or less permanently especially in Prague in connection with the economic cooperation and the presence of supranational organisations.

3.7. UKRAINIAN AND RUTHENIAN MINORITY

The Ukrainians and Ruthenians have come into the Czech territory after the establishment of independent Czechoslovakia in 1918. Due to the lack of work opportunities in the Transcarpathian region many inhabitants of the region went to search for work into the Czech territory and especially Moravia that witnessed a rapid development of heavy industry. Large numbers of Ukrainians and Ruthenians were also forced out of their home country by the repressive policies adopted to confront the aristocracy and bourgeoisie in USSR after its creation; some of them have found their new home in the Czech Republic as well.

The number of Ukrainian and Ruthenian emigrants in Czechoslovakia in the period between the two World Wars was so high that the minority managed to establish, with state support, not only a Ukrainian secondary grammar school, but also a university, a teachers' training institute, and a polytechnic institute. The minority has become dramatically smaller in numbers in the course of the Second World War and in the following period in particular. Many members of the minority have escaped to the West from the approaching Soviet Army; many of those who stayed have been dragged back into the Soviet Union. The Czechoslovakian communist regime has ended further development of the minority by banning all ethnic associations and by dissolving all Ukrainian schools.

According to the census conducted in 2001, more than 21,000 Ukrainians and more than 1,000 Ruthenians live in the Czech Republic. Both groups use the same language but at the same time guard their respective cultural differences.

Members of both of the two minorities are organised in several civic association, they develop their language and cultures with the support of the state. The Ukrainian minority publishes a cultural quarterly, *Porohy*.

Ukrainians continue to come to the CR in search for work even today. Some of them have been married and established their families in the republic and have received Czech citizenship. The current period is also marked by a massive influx of Ukrainians (including whole families with children of school-age) to the CR from the

Transcarpathian region. This fact is not adequately reflected in the official policies of the Czech state.

3.8. HUNGARIAN MINORITY

The Hungarians are one of the most recent minorities on the territory of the Czech Republic. The first members of the minority have come from Slovakia and the Transcarpathian region mostly to Prague and other bigger towns after the creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918. The largest number of Hungarians has been however deported into Czechia from Slovakia after 1945; in this period Hungarians from Slovakia were deported to Hungary and Czechia to be “re-educated“. These people were later allowed to return to Slovakia, their houses however long ceased to exist or had new inhabitants, and therefore, many Hungarians stayed in the Czech territory.

Today, about 14,000 members of the Hungarian minority are living in the CR. They have become assimilated to a very large extent; they however keep developing their language and culture. The minority never established its own education network, and will not manage to establish it due to its territorial dispersion. Hungarian civic associations however hold courses on Hungarian language and culture for the children. With the support of the state, the minority publishes a journal, the *Pragai Tükör*.

3.9. RUSSIAN MINORITY

The Russians started to migrate to the territory of today’s Czechoslovakia especially after the year 1918, in connection with the October Revolution. In the 1920’s about 35,000 Russians were living in the then Czechoslovakia. The minority declined in numbers after Second World War. The Nazis blamed the Russians for collaboration with the Soviet Union; the Soviets later tried them for treason and dragged many of them back to the USSR. The prodigy of Russian emigrants suffered through hard times under the communist government in CSSR (1948-1989). All minority activities were banned and it was only the compulsory Russian lessons that have enabled them to retain their own language and culture.

After the year 1993 and the replacement of the Soviet Army from the territory of Czechoslovakia, the Russians come once again to work into the CR. Many managed to receive a long-term residence permit, they establish families and apply for Czech citizenship. According to the 2001 census, there are 12,369 Russians living in the Czech Republic; the minority can be expected to grow in the future years.

3.10. BULGARIAN MINORITY

The first Bulgarians came to the Czech territory in the second half of the 19th century, to help to improve horticulture. A larger group of Bulgarians later came only in 1923 after Bulgaria fell under fascist control. Many of them took part in the resistance movement during the Second World War as well as in the Prague Uprising in 1945. Therefore, their fate after 1945 was not so harsh. Students and workers continued to come to the Czech

Republic, some of them settled there for good. Many have assimilated and that is why nowadays less than 4,400 Bulgarians declare to belong to this minority.

3.11. GREEK MINORITY

The Greeks came to the Czechoslovakia in connection with the civil war that took place in Greece between 1946-49. As a first step, Czechoslovakia accepted 3,500 Greek orphans who grew up in children's homes. Later, 10,000 adults who escaped the winners of the civil war were granted asylum. In the 1960's, a democratic regime was reinstalled in Greece and most of the Greeks in Czechoslovakia returned home. Today, there are 3,200 members of the Greek minority.

3.12. CROATIAN MINORITY

The Croatians started to settle on the territory of today's Czech Republic after 1530 when they fled from the Turkish attacks on their country. They established several villages in the fertile regions in Moravia and settled there for good. In the course of the years, some became assimilated with the Czech majority, some with the German minority. The latter faced deportation in 1945. The rich Croatian villages were however too much of a thorn in some people's side – there were claims that all Croatians should be removed from the republic. Some of the Croatians did not wait to see the result of the discussion and left their villages, the others were resettled from their homes and dispersed to 188 municipalities. Even though they were later allowed to return to their original villages, the wrong was never repaired and continues to influence mutual relationships. 1.585 people declared to belong to the Croatian minority in the CR.

3.13. ROMANIAN MINORITY

The first immigrants from Romania (the then Wallachia) started to settle on the Czech territory during 15th to 17th century. They were invited to come there to introduce sheep raising and a special method of mountainous agriculture. These first immigrants have become completely assimilated, only several local names rest from their presence. After the end of the Second World War, several dozens of Romanian soldiers who entered Czechoslovakia with the Red Army settled there. Later, in the 1950's, 10,000 Romanian agriculture workers came to Czechia, some of them have established families and settled there for good. Romanians continue to come to the CR still today driven by the economic crisis, many of them seek asylum in the CR. The Romanian minority now reaches only about 1000 members; it will however certainly continue to grow.

3.14. THE JEWS

Jewish settlements on the territory of today's Czech Republic have been recorded since the 9th and 10th century. Until the Second World War, the Jews formed an integral part of the society in the Czech countryside as well as in the bigger towns and Prague in

particular. It was a generally accepted fact that the culture of the Czech territory is shaped by three nations: Czech, German, and Jewish one. The catastrophe that has become the fate of the Jews in Czechia during the Second World War is a generally known fact. Only several thousands from the original several hundred thousand Czech Jews have returned from the concentration camps.

The Czech Jews later faced another tragedy – the deterioration of formerly good relationships between communist Czechoslovakia and the newly established state of Israel. The life of the Jewish community was affected by the communist regime in the same way as the life all other national minorities in that time.

After 1990 a part of the original possessions was returned to the Jewish religious community, items from the collection of the Jewish Museum and real estates of religious character in particular. As far as the ethnic emancipation is concerned, it comes as a paradox that the Jews themselves resigned from their status of a national minority and declared to be a religious community rather than an ethnic group. The Jewish entity is thus nowadays represented by the Jewish Religious Community, that defines Jews as people practicing Judaism, even though this stance departs quite radically from the Czech reality.

Already after the end of the First World War, the Jews have started to abandon their religious community and enter in great numbers especially the Czechoslovak Hussite Church. In the course of the time, still larger part of the Jews living in the atheist Czech territory – the Jewish intellectuals in towns in particular – continued to abandon the faith of their ancestors without ceasing to be Jews in the ethnic, cultural and historical sense. This fact has been nowadays repeatedly deliberately refused by the chief rabbinate in Prague, represented by the chief rabbi Karel Sidon, the numbers of which continue to be enlarged by young orthodox rabbi from Brooklyn. Such a self-destructive approach to the question of national minority status was criticised especially by the Jewish community of Brno, however, due to the privileged position of the central Jewish religious community in Prague, attempts to change the situation remained fruitless.

It should be noted that the Jewish national minority has won great respect in the early 1890's among the representatives of other national minorities who regarded the Jewish minority as their strong partner and natural leader. The decision not to take part in the process of constituting the forms of life and development of all national minorities in the CR was not only quite destructive for the Jewish community itself but it also offered the state the opportunity to marginalise the emancipatory efforts of the other national minorities in the CR.

3.15. VIETNAMESE MINORITY

Vietnamese citizens have started to come to Czechoslovakia as bigger organised groups in the 1950's, after the establishment of diplomatic relations between Czechoslovakia and the Vietnamese Democratic Republic. This was a period of wartime economic crisis in Vietnam, the republic therefore used the opportunity to have its citizens educated abroad. Since the 1990's, the Vietnamese continue to come to work in the CR; in their majority, they enter the business, regardless of their education. In 2001, more than 17,000 people declared to belong to the Vietnamese minority.

4. Minority Education in CR

4.1. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Conception of minority education in the CR flows from the *Constitution of the CR*, it respects the *Charter of Basic Human Rights and Freedoms* as well as the legal order of the state. The contemporary legal norms allow for the establishment of schools or classes for children of foreign-language speakers, with their mother tongue as the language of instruction. However, the creation of conditions for the education of pupils from national minorities in their mother tongue within the state educational system is affected by the insufficiencies of existing legislation.

New specific problems of minority education appear, as the legal norms are applied in practice. To solve these, the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports has established a *Counselling Committee to the Minister of Education for the Questions of Minority Education*, the members of which include, since 2001, representatives of the Polish, German, Romany, Slovak, Hungarian, and Ukrainian minorities in the CR, and the representatives of the Jewish religious community.

A new legislative norm in the educational sphere is now being drafted as the Bill on Pre-school, Primary, Secondary, Higher Professional, and Other Forms of Education and on the Changes of Some Acts from 2002 (Act on the Initial Education). The bill is supposed to come to force on 1 September 1 2004.

Adequate attention is paid to minority education in the newly drafted School Act – in Article 11 and in the General Provisions (General Provisions, Section 1, Art. 2 “Principles of Education“) that lays down the basic principles of education:

- Equal access to education for every citizen of the CR
- Mutual respect, opinion tolerance, solidarity, and defence against manifestations of discrimination and intolerance
- Promotion of the development of knowledge on the culture, history, language, traditions, and religion of the nations and national minorities living in the CR
- Respect for the educational needs of the individuals in the educational process

One of the priorities in the sphere of education is to create adequate conditions for education of the members of national minorities according to the needs of the individual regions, to guarantee the publication of textbooks in minority languages, and to secure the further educational programs for teachers. This part of the program also includes the support for the establishment of preparatory classes for children from socio-culturally handicapped background, the key long-term priority in this regard is the delineation of the content of the education in such classes and the definition of conditions under which such education will take place. Connected with this problem is the support for the creation of the post of teacher’s assistant in schools and educational institutes according to the particular needs.

In the framework of the educational system in the CR, only larger minorities manage to exercise the right of minority members to be educated in their mother tongue, since only

these minorities can meet in the place of their settlement the condition of a minimum number of pupils in a class. The right to education in mother tongue is therefore exercised to the adequate extent only by the Polish minority. The dispersed settlement and small numbers (in the case of the Bulgarian, Croatian, Greek, Ruthenian, Russian, and Ukrainian minority but also in the case of relatively larger minorities such as the German, Hungarian, Romany, and Slovak ones) therefore represent a serious problem in the field of minority education. It is only the education of the members of the German, Polish, and Romany minority that is supported as an integral part of the state educational system in the CR, while the education of the rest of the minorities is conducted in the form of supplementary educational programmes by means of grant programmes for out-of-school activities. The following detailed description of minority education is limited only to four national minorities (German, Polish, Romany, and Slovak) and the Prague Jewish community.

Act No. 199/2002 Coll. on institutional or protective education and preventive-educational care in educational facilities entered into force on 1 July 2002. This act is closely linked with the Family Act, the Criminal Code, the Act on the Social and Legal Protection of Children, the Rules of Civil Procedure and other legal regulations of the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, Justice, Health and the Interior. Its application impacts upon discriminated children living in disadvantaged social conditions.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has posted on its web site the document "Strategy for the Improvement of Education of Romany Children (version 2001)". The document includes the conceptual intents in the field of education of Romany children in the different educational programs included in all levels of education. It has to be mentioned that the ministry did not implement a certain number of commitments obliged by the government to be achieved by the end of 2001 (for example the commitments flowing from Resolution no. 279/1999) at all, and some commitments were not achieved in due time.

4.2. STATISTICAL OVERVIEW OF EDUCATION ACCORDING TO NATIONAL MINORITY

A statistical overview of children, pupils, and students in the CR (including both Czech nationals as well as foreigners) according to their ethnic origin is published annually in the *Statistical Yearbook*. The data is based on information from the Ministry of Education, census results as well as redundant databases in the sphere of education in general. Please, see accurate data for the school year 2000/2001 in the appendix, chapter 8.2.

4.3. EDUCATION – GERMAN MINORITY

The request of the German minority for education in mother tongue has been formulated most distinctively in the recommendations of the *Draft Program of Sudeto-German Education* carried out by the Sudeto-German Cultural Council in the town of Liberec in 1992 and later repeated by the representatives of the *Assembly of Germans in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia*. The members of the German minority acknowledge that with respect to the dispersed settlement of their minority, the idea of German minority schools

does not represent a realistic concept. A part of the German minority views as the most pressing goal the promotion of German as a mother tongue for children from German and mixed families and the establishment of bilingual primary schools with German as the target language. Although the Ministry of Education and the representatives of the German minority continue to oppose each other in this matter, the state administrative is ready to meet, in the framework of the present legal norms, its obligations towards the German minority by supporting the programme of German language classes for the children of German minority members that exceeds primary school educational plan.

In 1996, the Ministry of Education has included into the schooling network two schools: the *Private Primary School of Czech-German Understanding* and *The First Thomas Mann Secondary Grammar School in Prague*.

The Primary School of Czech-German Understanding (Bedřichovská 1, Praha 8) was established by the Assembly of Germans in 1991 as a private primary bilingual school with both Czech and German as a teaching language with the aim to teach German already from the first grade and to contribute to the Czech-German relations by fostering among pupils Czech-German understanding. The name of the school had to be changed so as to be in accordance with the amendment of the act on teaching language during the compulsory school attendance. The school has adopted the "Primary School" educational plan and uses the curriculum for German courses since the first grade accredited by the Ministry of Education in the EXTRA 1995 programme. Germany supports the school by assigning to it the so-called programme teacher and native speaker for the German language course and by allocating to it financial support for teaching material. Today, only five grades are running in the school. The opening of the sixth grade is dependent each year on the number of pupils in the class (minimum of 13). The pupils are, in their majority Czech nationals, five children have German state citizenship, and a large number of the pupils have Russian and Ukrainian citizenship. The school is considered the best option among those parents who want their children to learn both solid German and Czech. The school has developed a partnership with the primary school *Im sonnigen Winkel* in Stuttgart. The tuition for 2000/1 was 13.700 Kč. The school is funded to 100 per cent by the state.

The foundation of the *Thomas Mann Secondary Grammar School* (Střížkovská 27/32, Praha 8) by the Union of Germans – Prague and Central Bohemia in 1995 was incited by the parents from *The Primary School of Czech-German Understanding*. The school has eight grades and offers complete general secondary education with extended German classes and with German as the language of instruction in individual specialised subjects (mathematics, geography, biology, German history, and German literature). The Ministry of Education accredited the educational plan and the curricula developed by the school itself. The school prepares its pupils for the German language test *Deutsches Sprachdiplom II der KMK*, the passing of which guarantees the extent of knowledge of the German language adequate for German Universities. German is taught in the first four grades on three skill levels. The German republic supports the school by assigning to it the so-called program teacher, native speaker for the German language course, and by allocating to it financial support for teaching material. In 2004, the school has 114 students and runs seven grades; the final grade will be opened next year. The higher grades have a very small number of students, 25-30 students are accepted to the first grade. The students have different nationalities; many of them are children from mixed Czech-German marriages. The school is considered a particularly good option among

parents who return with their kids from a long-term stay in German linguistic areas and search for a continuing bilingual education. The school has several school-partners in Germany. The tuition for 2001/2 was 13,700 Kč. The school is funded by the Ministry of Education to 90 per cent.

The existence of both of the two schools was seriously threatened in 2001, when *The Primary School of Czech-German Understanding* was given notice to quit the rented premises by the state primary school Žernosecká in Prague 8 (Žernosecká str.). The situation was solved thanks to the understanding approach of the local municipal authorities that rented to the German school an old school building at Střížkov. The reconstruction of the building was financed by the *Thomas Mann Secondary Grammar School* that offered its former premises in Bedřichovská str. where the German primary school moved to open for the school year 2001/2002. Financial sources for the reconstruction that reached 11,000,000 Kč were raised among the Hermann-Niermann-Stiftung Foundation, Düsseldorf, and Czech German Fond for Future.

In 1997 the *Bernard Bolzano Primary School* was opened in the town of Tábor. The school is integrated into the school network of the Ministry of Education; it is funded to 60 per cent from the state budget. Czech and German donors support it. Currently, there are 136 pupils in seven grades. The instruction follows the “General School” educational programme with extended language classes. The Czech School Inspection has awarded the teachers from the school in February 2001.

4.4. EDUCATION – POLISH MINORITY

The Polish minority has created a network of schools with Polish as the language of instruction in the regions Karviná and Frýdek-Místek. The network includes kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, and schools with Polish as the language of instruction at secondary technical school. Since 1994 Polish minority education has been granted financial relief.

In the academic year 2001/2002, there existed 38 kindergartens with Polish as the language of instruction attended by 701 children, the primary schools with Polish as the language of instruction in the regions of Karviná and Frýdek-Místek had 2326 pupils. The number of secondary school classes with Polish as the language of instruction in the region of Český Těšín and Karviná reached 23 with the total of 686 pupils.

Please, see appendix, chapter 8.3 for a statistical overview of Polish minority education in the Czech Republic.

In 1995 the Educational Center for Polish Minority Education started its existence in Český Těšín. The centre is active in the field of teacher training programmes and the distribution of methodological and teaching materials and instruments. A special post of an inspector for schools with Polish as the language of instruction was created. Since 1994 the Ministry of Education has been supporting the publication of two journals, *Ogniwo* and *Jutrzenka*, that the representatives of the Polish minority views the key initial teaching material for schools with Polish as the language of instruction.

In addition to the financial support to cover direct expenses that is received from the Ministry of Education by all Czech language schools as well, the schools with Polish as the language of instruction were granted the following financial support:

- Primary schools the amount of 7,590,000 Kč,
- Secondary schools the amount of 2,527,000 Kč.

The Ministry of Education financed the Polish Educational Center in Český Těšín by the amount of 4,000,000 Kč. Financial support from the Ministry of Education for the Society of Polish Teachers reached 65,000 Kč in 2001. Official reasons for such financial privileges in favour of Polish minority education include: low number of pupils in the classes, higher percentage of Polish language classes, and higher expenses for textbooks and other teaching materials.

4.5. EDUCATION – SLOVAK MINORITY

In the academic year 2000/2001 the only primary school in the CR with Slovak as the language of instruction in the town of Karviná has been closed because of insufficient number of pupils and the lack of interest of the parents (members of the Slovak minority) to send their children to this particular school. It is interesting that the most dramatic decline in the number of pupils in this school happened in 1989. The lack of interest in sending children into a Slovak school prevented also the implementation of the project *Slovak M.R. Štefánik Secondary Grammar School* in Prague 4. The Ministry of Education has formally established the school but it could not be opened due to the insufficient number of applicants.

It is important that on the basis of special relations between the Czech and Slovak Republics, more than 5000 students from Slovakia have been studying during the academic year 2001/2 at Universities in the Czech Republic (students of the first year represented one half of the total number). Slovak language, literature, history is studied at the Philosophical Faculty of the Prague Charles University (since 1994 the department of Slavic studies includes Slovak Studies Cabinet).

4.6. EDUCATION – JEWISH COMMUNITY IN PRAGUE: LAUDER SCHOOLS

The Ministry of Education supports the existence of a kindergarten with an alternative programme directed at the Jewish culture. The school had 25 pupils in 2001/2002. In 1998 the Ministry has included into its school network the *Lauder Primary School „Dur Arje“*. It is a private primary school with Hebrew language classes, focusing on the Jewish history and culture. More than 100 pupils attend the higher grades at this school. In 1999 the Jewish Secondary Grammar School was also included into the official school network. App. 80 pupils attend the school.

The Ministry of Education funded the schools to 100 per cent - the total of 4,607,000 Kč.

5. Romany Education in the CR

5.1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The contemporary situation in the education of Roma in the CR is a result of centuries' long exclusion from the society and decades of biased legislative directed first at the assimilation of the Romany population. When the assimilation intent failed, the Roma started to be excluded from the wider society and to be placed into special needs schools, which created a situation of inequality.

The first attempts at the education of the Roma have happened during the reign of Mary Therese: in 1761, an order was issued in the Habsburg Empire that allowed forced settlement of the Roma. In 1785 first groups of Roma started to settle on the territory of South Moravia, in the villages of Džbel, Jamné, Okrouhlá, Bohusoudov a Oslavany. The system of compulsory school attendance was introduced in the Habsburg Empire in 1777, however it did not include the Roma until the 20th century.

The Czechoslovak Republic was established in 1918, and even though its democratic institutions received broad acknowledgement, it was a disappointment for the Roma. In 1927, the Act on Travelling Gypsies was passed (and amended in 1928). The act has restricted the Roma in several ways: the Roma were ordered to keep a special "Gypsy card" and a "travelling card", their freedom of movement and association was restricted. The act also allowed the removal of children from their families in the case of "insufficient care". The state did care for the Romany children but they were hindered in expressing their identity.

During the Second World War, the Romany population on the territory of the Czech Republic was exterminated. The majority of the contemporary Romany population of the CR is formed by the so-called Slovak Roma, i.e. Roma who have moved into the republic after 1945 from Slovakia and their prodigy. The migration of the Slovak Roma into the republic was sometimes voluntary, more frequently, however, the Roma were forcefully removed from their traditional settlements in Slovakia.

In the Czech territory, the Roma were exposed to a different social background and assimilatory pressure. Their large families were urbanised in the industrial towns of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia, which resulted in the disruption of traditional relationships and values. Despite their centuries long presence on the territory of the CR, the Roma are still considered an alien and unwelcome element.

Soon after 1945 the practice to place Romany children into special schools of the mentally retarded was started. In 1958 the Act on Permanent Settlement of Travelling Individuals was passed. The act obliged the local authorities to support the change of such people into "regularly working citizens" and it allowed unconditional sentences to prison for those who continued in their nomadic lifestyle despite the offered "support". Even though the majority of the Roma in Czechoslovakia did not lead a nomadic life style, the act was frequently used as an excuse for removing the Roma from one place to another regardless of the fact if they were travellers or not.

In 1965 the Czechoslovak government passed a Resolution on Measures Solving the Questions of the Gypsy Inhabitants that was supposed to prevent “unwelcome concentrations of gypsies“. The real intent of the Resolution was the disruption of Romany settlements in Slovakia and the removal of their inhabitants to the Czech territory.

Political interventions into the life of the Roma had serious influence and were not compensated by due state support. The need to educate new Romany immigrants does not appear at all in the act from 1958 and the act from 1965 mentions only three times the necessity to take the Romany children into “a greater consideration“. The lack of respect for Romany identity was evident. The laws that did concern, directly or indirectly, the Roma were based on the assumption that the Roma are only maladapted Czechoslovakians.

In late 1970's the movement Charter 77 mentions in its commentaries “*the majority of the people do not know anything about the problems of the most discriminated minority*“. The part of the document that is concerned with education claims “*the inability of the Romany pupils to embrace the curricula of Czech and Slovak schools is solved by their removal into special schools for pupils with lower IQ.*“ According to the document, the lack of success of Romany children in the Czech schools was a direct consequence of the failure of the system to establish educational institutions that would respect the cultural identity of the children: “*Everything that they meet in the school, from the illustrations in their textbooks to the definitely delineated curricula, palms off on them the idea that they represent a lower alien race without a language, history, and face.*“

Statistic material from 1970 shows that the proportion of Roma in the group of people with a completed secondary education between 25-29 years of age was well below one per cent. There exists a comprehensive statistical document on the number of Roma who have passed through the education in special schools for the mentally retarded pupils in the period 1970-1990. This period was marked by a huge increase in the number of Roma in the special schools.² Human Rights Watch described in 1992 the education of Roma in Czechoslovakia under communism (1948-1989) in the following manner: “*The level of education of Roma [was] still markedly below that of the majority population due to discriminatory educational policies practiced during the communist regime.*“³

Even though the Roma took part in the process of political and social development under the democratic government after 1989, the governments however failed, as far as the sphere of education is concerned, to guarantee for the Roma equal opportunities. In 1996, Human Rights Watch, Romany activists, social workers, and officers from the Ministry of Education had to announce that “the situation with [remedial] special schools had not improved much in recent years.”⁴

² For detailed information on the problem of the placement of Romany children to special schools see Section 4.2 of the report.

³ Helsinki Watch, 1992, *Struggling for Ethnic Identity: Czechoslovakia's Endangered Gypsies*, Human Rights Watch, 1991, p.37.

⁴ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, *Roma in the Czech Republic: Foreigners in Their Own Country*, Vol. 8, 11 (D), 1996, p. 15.

5.2. ROMA IN SPECIAL REMEDIAL SCHOOLS IN THE CR

Information on the placement of Roma into special schools is very difficult to gather. The last complete information on this matter was included in a report from January 1991 prepared by Jitka Gjuričová and other members of the work group with the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Prague. Contrary to the information from the census that concerned also the level of completed education among adult population of the CR, this report concerns pupils in the compulsory primary school attendance in the academic year 1989-90 and it is the last available record including information on their ethnic origin. According to the report, from the total number of 1,289,766 pupils in the first to ninth grade of primary schools, the Roma made up 2.2 per cent (28,872 pupils), while in the special schools Romany children represented 46.4 per cent and non-Romany 3.2 per cent. The probability that “intellectual insufficiencies” would be indicated with a Romany child were therefore 15 times higher than with a non-Romany one. The report was written 13 years ago but none of the professionals working in this particular field suppose that the numbers of Romany children in special schools declined since 1990.

There is another more recent source of information on Roma in Czech schools: the Statistical Yearbook on the Czech educational system published by the Institute for Information on Education. According to this source, out of the total of 1,149,609 pupils attending the primary schools, 48,473 pupils attended special schools, which represents only 4.2 per cent of all children in the age of compulsory school attendance. The yearbook also includes information on the ethnic origin of the pupils based on the declaration made in the time of enrolment. According to this data, 1,529 Romany pupils attended primary school. Experts claim that this number, based on a voluntary declaration at the enrolment, is 20 to 30 times lower than the actual number of Roma in primary schools. The situation as it is described in the Yearbook is nevertheless alarming as 956 of the recorded 1529 Romany children, i.e. 62.5 per cent, were pupils of special primary schools. Compared with the percentage among the total population (4.2 per cent), the percentage of Romany children in special schools is thus 15 times higher than the national average.

This conclusion is supported by empirical experience proving that more than one half of the pupils in many special schools is formed by the Roma.

For example in the town of Ostrava in 1998, there were 81 state primary schools: 70 common primary schools, eight special schools, one school for children with learning disabilities, one school for children with a hearing defect, and one school for physically handicapped children. In January 1999, the Ibsen Special School in Moravská Ostrava had 136 children, out of which only eight were non-Romany. Similarly, 156 pupils, including 121 Roma, attended the Karas Special School in Mariánské Hory in March 1999. Out of the total of 190 pupils in the Special School Na Vizině in Slezská Ostrava, there were 110 Roma. The Halas/Erben Special School in Vítkovice had 95 per cent of Romany pupils – in January 1999 there were 169 pupils, 161 of which were Roma. The Čkalovova Special School in Poruba had 49 Romany pupils out of the total of 191. 762 pupils out of the total number of 1360 pupils in special schools in Ostrava are of Romany origin – the Roma represent 56 per cent of pupils in special schools in Ostrava. Romany children in Ostrava attended the special school 27 times more often than their non-Romany peers.

The situation in Brno, the second largest town in the CR, is much similar. In Brno, there are five special schools, four of which stand in the eastern and central parts of the town, in localities with a dense Romany population. the Special School in Vídeňská street: 40-50 per cent of its pupils are Roma; the Cpt.Jaroš Special School: 60-70 per cent of its pupils are Roma; the Special School in Štolcova street: 30 per cent of the pupils are Roma; the Special School in Sekaninova: 70 per cent of its pupils are Roma. It is estimated that approximately 25 per cent of the Romany children in Brno attend special primary schools, whilst the Roma represent only four per cent of the total population of children in school age.

The extent to which the Romany education takes place in special schools is reflected also in financial reports. The Interdepartmental Commission for the Affairs of Romany Community has awarded 13 grants in 1997 and seven grants in 1998 to *primary* schools (out of the total of 42 grants). The grants were aimed at the support of educational programmes for Romany children. The supported schools included three common primary schools, three special schools and one special kindergarten.

Even the most conservative estimates, based on the available statistics, point to the seriousness of the problem: undoubtedly, Romany children are sent to special primary schools 15 times more often than non-Romany children. This disproportion is quite unusual even if we compare it to results from abroad declared as unacceptable. The Council for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has condemned "racial segregation" in Czech schools.

On 7 April 1999, the Czech government has passed a resolution No. 279, under the title "Resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic on the Conception of Governmental Policies towards the Members of Romany Community Supporting Their Integration into the Society", in which it has embraced the extent of the problem of Roma in the special schools system. The resolution clearly mentions that the situation is marked by some "apartheid tendencies" when saying: "*The fact that around three quarters of Romany children attend special schools for children with a minor mental defect and more than 50 per cent [estimates claim 75 per cent] of all pupils in the special schools are formed by the Roma, has become the subject of a growing criticism from abroad, where these schools, viewed as forcefully segregative, represent a premonition of apartheid tendencies.*"

The disproportionate placement into the schools for the mentally handicapped negatively influences the contemporary as well as future chances of at least 25,000 Romany children attending the primary school in the same way as it has destroyed the life of the older generation. The disproportionate placement of Romany children into the schools for the mentally handicapped also violates the unconditional ban on racial segregation in Article 3 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination that obliges the states "*to condemn racial segregation and apartheid and to press for the prevention, prohibition and elimination of all practices of this kind on their territories.*" The contemporary racial segregation in the Czech school system has the features of "humiliating treatment" and violates Article 3 of the European Human Rights Convention. The stipulations of the Czech Civic Act on the right to personal dignity included in the Article 11 of the Civil Code are violated by the unjustified placement of Romany children into special needs schools.

The discriminatory nature of the position of the Roma in the Czech educational system violates also the Article 5 of the international Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination that obliges the states to press for the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination and to guarantee the right to education without distinction of race, colour, and national or ethnic origin, as well as the Article 3 of the Czech Charter of Basic Rights and Freedoms, and inter alia the Czech Constitution. Racial segregation and discrimination also violates Articles 10 and 24 of the Charter of Basic Human Rights and Freedoms.

5.3. POSITIVE NEWS ON ROMANY EDUCATION

The education of children from Romany communities flows from the identification of the language handicap these children face when entering primary school. This handicap is one of the most serious obstacles in their future education. These include, except for the language barrier, different dynamics of the personality development, hierarchy of values, and socio-cultural feeling of the Romany families. All these factors are reflected in their general approach to education. It is also indisputable that the state administrative is not sufficiently flexible in its reactions to the particular needs in this sphere.

Since 1993, the Ministry of Education has been implementing various measures to promote education of Romany children; these include first and foremost the establishment of the so-called preparatory classes for Romany children before their entrance to primary school and the support for alternative educational programs. In the academic year 2000/2001 110 preparatory classes were opened (for 1364 pupils). By the beginning of the academic year 2001/2002, 214 pedagogical assistants were employed in the preparatory classes; in 2001, financial support for the assistants reached app. 18 mil. Kč. On the one hand this measure has positively influenced the increase in the numbers of such classes with primary schools and kindergartens, and on the other hand, it incited a decrease in their numbers in special schools (by 25 per cent).⁵

In the sphere of education of Romany children, the Ministry of Education works in accordance with the measures that flow from the Resolution of the Government from July 14, 2000, No. 599 “Conception of the Governmental Policies towards Members of Romany Community Supporting Their Integration into the Society”, following Resolution no. 686 from October 1997 “To the Report on the Situation of the Romany Community in the CR and the Contemporary Situation inside the Community”, and the Resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic, No. 994/2000 from 11 October 2000 “On Measures Leading to the Organisation of a Public and Parliamentary discussion on the Improvement of Relations between the Majority Society and the Romany Minority”, and Resolution No. 87 from 23 January 2002, “Information on the Implementation of the Governmental Resolutions, Concerning the Integration of the Romany Communities and Active Approach of the Central Administrative to implement the Measures Accorded by These Resolutions on 31 December 2001“.

The Evangelic Academy - Higher professional Social School in Prague has been running, since 1998, a pilot project of secondary correspondence course for Romany advisors and assistants working in the state administrative. The Ministry of Education has accredited

⁵ Confidential information.

the course under the title Experimental Study in the Field of Social Work in the minority background. The school has been awarded financial support in accordance with the norms in church education (100 per cent of state support).

The Romany Secondary Social School in Kolín represents a similar project. The aim of this private boarding school is to offer to the students a complete secondary professional education: the curricula concentrate on the Romany specificities and socio-cultural background. The school prepares its students for the job of social workers in Romany communities. Financial support directed to the institution through the Central Bohemian local authorities reaches 90 per cent of the norm per student (23,534 CZK per student/year), catering receives 80 per cent support (5,158 CZK).

The Institute guarantees further education on national minorities of the employees of educational-psychological advisor centres, of education advisors, and teachers for Educational and Psychological Advisory in Prague as well as by the regional educational centres.

In 2001 a Primary Art School for Romany pupils (40 pupils and five teachers including one Romany teacher and one Romany assistant) was established under the auspices of the Czechoslovak Hussite Church as an experiment.

The Philosophical Faculty at the Charles University in Prague runs a MA programme Romany Studies. Other faculties include in their offer courses on various aspects of Romany studies (Pedagogical Faculty at the University of Jan Evangelista Purkyně in Ústí nad Labem, Pedagogical Faculty at the Palackého University in Olomouc, Faculty of Social Sciences at the Charles University in Prague).

Local community centres represent an important player in the field of education of the young Romany generation. Romany and pro-Romany civic associations usually run the centres. The priorities of more than a hundred of these centers include after-school activities for youth and children and standard club activities.

Since January 2001, the People in Need Foundation has been implementing the PHARE project “Improvement of the Relations Between the Czech and Romany Communities”, concentrated at multicultural education. The NGO sector implements another three projects on human rights and multicultural education (Association for the Education to Citizenship, Teresa- Association for Ecologic Education, Educational and Cultural Centre of the Jewish Museum). A ministerial institution, the Research Institute for Education is responsible for the conceptual development of multicultural education for primary and secondary schools.

6. Conclusions

National education in the CR can be evaluated in general as quite unbalanced, with regards to the conceptual whole as well as to the differences among the individual minorities. The authors of the present report agree that the majority educational system lacks distinctive awareness – and education to such an awareness – of the existence of minority education as a part of the implementation of the Constitution of Czech Republic. This absence minimises the contribution the minority education could make for the multicultural education of the majority society. Given the trends that predominate at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and given the state budget, the authors are obliged to regret that a change towards a positive development cannot be expected to happen soon.

7. Sources

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8. Appendix

8.1. THE INHABITANTS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC ACCORDING TO NATIONAL MINORITIES⁶

Ethnic group		Inhabitants totally		Men		Women	
			%		%		%
Inhabitants totally		10 230 060	100,0	4 982 071	100,0	5 247 989	100,0
Included National Minority	Czech	9 249 777	90,4	4 475 817	89,8	4 773 960	91,0
	Moravian	380 474	3,7	203 624	4,1	176 850	3,4
	Silesian	10 878	0,1	6 578	0,1	4 300	0,1
	Slovak	193 190	1,9	94 744	1,9	98 446	1,9
	Polish	51 968	0,5	21 571	0,4	30 397	0,6
	German	39 106	0,4	18391	0,4	20 715	0,4
	Roma	11 746	0,1	6 149	0,1	5 597	0,1
	Hungarian	14 672	0,1	7 711	0,2	6 961	0,1
	Ukrainian	22 112	0,2	9 943	0,2	12 169	0,2
	Russian	12 369	0,1	4 634	0,1	7 735	0,1
	Ruthenian	1 106	0,0	529	0,0	577	0,0
	Bulgarian	4 363	0,0	2 711	0,1	1 652	0,0
	Romanian	1 238	0,0	667	0,0	571	0,0
	Greek	3 219	0,0	1 671	0,0	1 548	0,0
	Vietnamese	17 462	0,2	10 775	0,2	6 687	0,1
	Albanian	690	0,0	500	0,0	190	0,0
	Croatian	1 585	0,0	886	0,0	699	0,0
	Serbian	1 801	0,0	1 138	0,0	663	0,0
	Other	39 477	0,4	23 588	0,5	15 889	0,3
Not recognised, not declared	172 827	1,7	90 444	1,7	82 383	1,6	

⁶ Sčítání lidu, domů a bytů 2001. Základní informace z definitivních výsledků. Vydal Český statistický úřad, Praha, červenec 2002, s. 26 (The Census 2001. Basic information About Definite Results. Published by Czech Statistic Office, Prague, July 2002, p. 26).

8.2. OVERVIEW OF EDUCATION ACCORDING TO NATIONAL MINORITY

Type of school	Total	Ethnic groups in %					
		Czech	Slovak	Ukrainian	Polish	German	Roma
Kindergartens	100	99,1	0,13	0,19	0,26	0,05	0,27
Primary schools	100	99,06	0,46	0,18	0,2	0,05	0,05
Grammar schools*	100	98,96	0,52	0,09	0,330,97	0,01	>0,01
Technical schools	100	99,07	0,48	0,01	0,29	0,05	0,01
Apprentice Training Centres**	100	99,21	0,48	0,07	0,15	0,06	0,03
Secondary Technical Schools**	100	98,87	0,8	0,1	>0,01	>0,01	-
Special Schools	100	97,2	1,51	0,06	0,08	0,04	1,11
Universities***	100	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

*Including declared Moravian and Silesian ethnic group

** Normal study

*** Normal study - only pupils of Czech state citizenship

Type of school	Total	Ethnic groups					
		Czech	Slovak	Ukrainian	Polish	German	Roma
Kindergartens	269 832	267 378	350	525	703	125	751
Primary schools	1 045 573	1 035 721	4 779	1 902	2 050	650	471
Grammar schools*	124 785	123 488	652	112	410	117	6
Technical schools	177 802	176 143	856	175	515	96	17
Apprentice Training Centres**	154 726	153 505	759	107	234	89	32
Secondary Technical Schools**	21 354	21 112	173	12	49	8	-
Special Schools	67 085	65 206	1 016	38	59	21	745
Universities***	166 439	-	-	-	-	-	-

*Including declared Moravian and Silesian ethnic group

** Normal study

*** Normal study - only pupils of Czech state citizenship

8.3. STATISTICAL OVERVIEW OF POLISH MINORITY EDUCATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

8.3.1. Kindergartens with Polish as a teaching language – 2001/2002⁷

District	Locality	Number of schools	Pupils
Frydek-Místek	Bukovec; Bystřice; Dolní Lomná; Hnojník; Hrádek; Jablunkov - Písečná street 42; Jablunkov - Školní street 800; Karpentná; Milíkov; Mosty u Jablunkova; Návsí; Nebory; Nýdek; Oldřichovce; Písek; Ropice; Třinec - Dolní Lištiná 172, Kanada, Konská 119, SNP 477, Štefánikova 772; Vendryně; Vendryně - Zálší 615	24	426
Karviná	Albrechtice; Český Těšín - Svibice, Akátová 17, Hrabinská 51; Dolní Lutyně; Havířov - Bludovice, Podlesí; Horní Suchá; Karviná - Fryštát, Nové Město; Orlová - Lutyně; Stonava - Holkovice; Těrlicko	14	275

⁷ Report on the Situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001, Prague, Published by Council of National Minorities of the Government of the Czech Republic, June 2002, p. 33 – 34.

8.3.2. Pupils of primary schools with Polish as teaching language - 2001/2⁸

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	Total
Total of Primary Schools (Frydek - Místek District)	114	153	147	153	166	152	173	179	184	1421
Total of Primary Schools (Karviná District)	83	79	95	86	93	119	105	116	129	905
Primary Schools Total	197	232	242	239	259	271	278	295	313	2326

8.3.3. Pupils of secondary schools with Polish as teaching language 2001/2⁹

Secondary school	6 -I.G III grade	I	II	III	IV	Total
Český Těšín Grammar School	23	122	124	105	93	467
Český Těšín Grammar School Its classes in Karviná		94	97	86	66	343
Secondary Technical School Karviná (classes)		28	27	19	27	101
Secondary Technical School Karviná (classes)		13	14	17	19	63
Commercial Academy Český Těšín (classes)		25	30	17	30	102
Secondary Health Care School Karviná (classes)		13	14	13	14	54
Total	23	295	306	257	249	1130

⁸ Data source: Report on the Situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001, Prague. Published by Council of National Minorities of the Government of the Czech Republic, June 2002.

⁹ Data source: Report on the Situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001, Prague. Published by Council of National Minorities of the Government of the Czech Republic, June 2002.