

## THE POSITION OF INDEPENDENT EDUCATION IN THE CZECH EDUCATION SYSTEM

Independent education has been an integral part of the educational system of the Czech Republic for more than twenty years (after the end of communist era). Private education revives, extends, diversifies and complements the educational offer of public schools and school facilities through which the state and territorial self-governmental units primarily fulfil the right of everyone to education.

### Private schools and school facilities are institutions not established by

- state,
- region,
- municipality or
- state recognized church or religious society<sup>1)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup> A group of independent schools traditionally includes a group of church-run schools (catholic, protestant, Jewish) – which representing about 1/8 of all non-public schools – and a group of other non-public (private) schools established by groups of parents, private companies, non-profit organizations, etc. The legal and factual status of all these non-public schools is basically the same except in the area of state budget funding where church-run schools are still funded directly by the Ministry of Education for 100% normative per pupil (due to the not completed separation of the state from the churches).

### Private education is not a homogeneous part of the Czech educational system; it is a very diverse group of educational institutions that differ in:

- **type of activity** (from kindergartens to higher vocational schools and various types of school facilities);
- **composition of education** (from general education to essentially all areas of vocational education);
- **size** (from schools with a few dozen pupils to schools of almost two thousand pupils),
- **mission and motivation** (schools using alternative learning methods, "tailor-made" schools for employees for specific firms, schools set up as citizens' initiatives in places where public school capacity did not respond adequately to demographic growth, schools, who just want to find their own way of education);
- **quality** (among private schools are schools rated by the Czech Education Inspectorate repeatedly best in the whole of the Czech Republic as well as schools bellow average),

### The character of the founder

- **natural person or persons** - in most cases pedagogical staff, parents or former managers of public schools and school facilities motivated to do things otherwise, partly on their own,
- **non-profit organizations and social services organizations,**
- **business corporations (companies).**
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## Share of the number of children, pupils and students in private schools in their total number (school year 2015/2016)

Source: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

Type of private school	%
Kindergarten	3.1%
Primary schools	1.15%
Secondary schools	12.9%
Higher vocational schools	20.7%
Basic Arts Schools	6.3%

**Private schools and school facilities are enrolled in the School Register under the same conditions as public schools.**

**Private schools and educational establishments provide education and school services under essentially identical legal conditions, such as public schools:**

- create School Education Programs respecting the Framework Educational Program set by Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports,
- fulfil the professional qualifications of pedagogical staff,
- conduct administrative proceedings in key matters affecting the rights of education of pupils,
- have the status of a public service providers according to the Education Act,
- keep all the required pedagogical documentation,
- compulsorily participate in all surveys and reporting,
- are subject to control and evaluate activities of Czech Education Inspectorate,
- are subject to control activities of a number of other bodies (eg the Tax Office, the Czech Social Security Administration, the Regional Office, etc.).

**Private schools and school facilities in addition (versus public schools):**

- request for funding from state budget for operating expenses related to education and school services every year, the application is documented by a number of annexes (among other ratings of the Czech Education Inspectorate affecting the amount of funding provided – see below)
- if they are a non-profit-organization and claim a so-called “increased subsidy” (corresponding to a maximum of 70% of the volume of funds going to comparable types of public schools (see OECD report below)), they document the audit of the past year,
- provide investment expenditures (for example in buildings used for education) from their own resources,
- each month reports the number of children, pupils, students, and this number is the basis for adjusting their budget.

## Financing private education from public budgets in the Czech Republic

Private schools and school facilities registered in the School Register are entitled to obtain state budget funds for the education of their children, pupils and students under the conditions laid down by the Education Act and Act No. 306/1999 Coll.

In principle, every private school or school facility enrolled in the School Register is entitled to get the so-called "basic subsidy" of 50% or 60% of the flat rate by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

On the other hand, the admission of the so-called "increased subsidy" is already linked to the fulfilment of the most demanding legal conditions certifying the quality of the provided education and educational services and the non-profitability of the whole legal entity. The increase of the subsidy can be up to 80%, 90% or 100% of the flat rate set by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, depending on the type of school and the school facility.

Private schools and educational establishments are currently the only segment of Czech education system in which the law provides for a direct link between the assessment of the quality of educational services in the area of state funding (this principle does not apply to public education or to church-run education).

State budget funds provided under Act No. 306/1999 Coll. in the form of a fixed percentage of the flat rates set by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, according to the actual number of children, pupils and students in the given school or school, are an absolutely predominant source of funding for the education of children, pupils and students of these schools.

## Other sources of funding (especially "tuition fee" paid by the participants themselves) are just a complement to cover

- the difference between what public budgets pay for a similar educational service provided in municipal and regional schools and what a private school or school facility receives from the state budget, and
- on "above-standard" services provided to participants (lower number of pupils in the classroom, higher number of pedagogical staff, activity of school counselling centre etc.).

## The amount of the tuition fee is currently not limited by legislation.

**OECD's current analysis states that private schools and school facilities in the Czech Republic receive from public budgets only about 70% of the amount of funds going to public schools (by type of school).**

(Source: OECD (2012a), *Public and Private Schools: How Management and Funding Relate to their Socio-Economic Profile*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264175006-en>)

## Association of Private Schools of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia/SSŠČMS

For more than 20 years, there is a voluntary interest organization - Association of Private Schools of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, whose aim is to defend and promote the common interests of its members:

- private schools in the Czech Republic enrolled in the School Register,
- which provide a high quality public service (membership in SSŠČMS is tied to the fulfilment of the qualitative criteria based on the results of the evaluation and control activities of the Czech Education Inspectorate).

Association of Private Schools of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia currently comprises approximately **270 private schools across the Czech Republic (1/3 of all private schools)**, from kindergartens through primary schools, secondary schools, higher vocational schools, and elementary art schools as well.

As mentioned above, the basic purpose and goal is to represent the common interests of private schools, to enable the exchange of information, experience or specialized materials, to provide assistance in solving common problems and problematic situations. Finally, the Association of Private Schools of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia provides to its members legal consultancy as well.

Association provides to its members important information and materials from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, other central administrative authorities and Parliament of the Czech Republic. It prepares methodological materials and statements on the educational legislation and other legislation affecting the activities of private schools.

The association is financed solely from funds provided by members of the Association, although the impacts of its activities (in particular in the field of participation in comment procedures on draft legislative documents and negotiating volume of state budget subsidies for private schools) affect the entire sector of independent education.