

## Foreword

**T**his report for the Czech Republic forms part of the OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools (also referred to as the School Resources Review, see Annex A for further details). The purpose of the review is to explore how school resources can be governed, distributed, utilised and managed to improve the quality, equity and efficiency of school education. School resources are understood in a broad way, including financial resources (e.g. expenditures on education, school budget), physical resources (e.g. school infrastructure, computers), human resources (e.g. teachers, school leaders) and other resources (e.g. learning time).

The Czech Republic was one of the countries which opted to participate in the country review strand and host a visit by an external review team. Members of the OECD review team were Claire Shewbridge (OECD Secretariat), co-ordinator of the review; Jan Herczyński (consultant on funding mechanisms), Thomas Radinger (OECD Secretariat) and Julie Sonnemann (consultant on teaching workforce development). The biographies of the members of the review team are provided in Annex B. This publication is the report from the review team. It provides, from an international perspective, an independent analysis of major issues facing the use of school resources in the Czech Republic, current policy initiatives, and possible future approaches. The report serves three purposes: i) to provide insights and advice to Czech education authorities; ii) to help other countries understand the Czech approach to the use of school resources; and iii) to provide input for the final comparative report of the OECD School Resources Review.

The scope for the analysis in this report includes early childhood education and school education. At the request of Czech authorities, the focus areas of the Review of School Resources in the Czech Republic are: i) the organisation of the school network; ii) the funding of school education; and iii) the teaching profession and school leadership (including improving their attractiveness). The analysis presented in the report refers to the situation faced by the education system in May 2015, when the review team visited the Czech Republic.

The Czech Republic's involvement in the OECD review was co-ordinated by Michael Vlach, Strategies and Interdepartmental Affairs Unit, Department of Strategy and European Affairs, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic. An important part of the Czech Republic's involvement was the preparation of a comprehensive and informative Country Background Report (CBR) on school resource use authored by Petr Mazouch and Kristýna Vltavská, Researchers at the University of Economics. The OECD review team is very grateful to the main authors of the CBR and to all those who assisted them in providing a useful basis for questioning during the review. The CBR is an important output from the OECD Project in its own right as well as an important source for the review team. Unless indicated otherwise, the data for this report are taken from the Czech Country Background Report. The CBR follows guidelines prepared by the OECD secretariat and provides extensive information, analysis and discussion in regard to the national context, the organisation of the education system, the use of school resources and the views of key stakeholders. In this sense, the CBR and this report complement each other and, for a more comprehensive view of the effectiveness of school resource use in the Czech Republic, should be read in conjunction.

The OECD and the European Commission (EC) have established a partnership for the Project, whereby participation costs of countries which are part of the European Union's Erasmus+ programme are partly covered. The review of the Czech Republic was organised with the support of the EC in the context of this partnership.\* The EC was part of the planning process of the review of the Czech Republic (providing comments on the Czech Republic's CBR, participating in the preparatory visit and providing feedback on the planning of the review visit) and offered comments on drafts of this report. This contribution was co-ordinated by Christèle Duvieusart, Country Desk Officer for the Czech Republic as regards education and training, working within the "Country Analysis" Unit of the Directorate for "Modernisation of Education I: Europe 2020, country analysis, Erasmus+ co-ordination", which is part of the Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) of the European Commission. The review team is grateful to Christèle Duvieusart for her contribution to the planning of the review and also for the helpful comments she provided on drafts of this report.

The review visit to the Czech Republic took place in May 2015. The itinerary is provided in Annex C. The visit was designed by the OECD (with input from the EC) in collaboration with the Czech authorities. It also involved a preparatory visit by the OECD secretariat in November 2014, with the participation of Christèle Duvieusart, from the EC. The review team held discussions with a wide range of groups at all levels of government (central, regional and municipal).

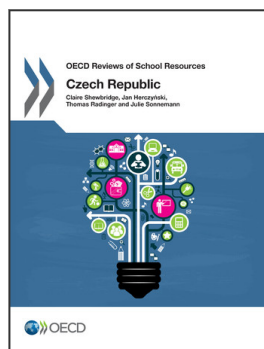
The OECD review team wishes to record its gratitude to the many people who gave time from their busy schedules to inform the review team of their views, experiences and knowledge. The meetings were open and provided a wealth of insights. Special words of appreciation are due to the National Co-ordinator, Michael Vlach, for his organisation of the review visit and the Czech Republic's participation in the broader OECD review. The review team wishes to thank him for his efficient and friendly practical support. The courtesy and hospitality extended to us throughout our stay in the Slovak Republic made our task as a review team as pleasant and enjoyable as it was stimulating and challenging.

The OECD review team is also grateful to colleagues at the OECD. Eléonore Morena provided key administrative, editorial and layout support. Paulo Santiago and Yuri Belfali provided guidance and support.

This report is organised in five chapters. Chapter 1 provides the national context, with information on the Czech school system, main trends and concerns as well as recent developments. Chapter 2 analyses the governance of schooling and the organisation of the school network. Chapter 3 reviews approaches to school funding. Chapter 4 looks at the management of the teaching workforce while Chapter 5 examines school leadership policies. Each chapter presents strengths, challenges and policy recommendations.

The policy recommendations attempt to build on and strengthen reforms that are already underway in the Czech Republic, and the strong commitment to further improvement that was evident among those the OECD review team met. The suggestions should take into account the difficulties that face any visiting group, no matter how well briefed, in grasping the complexity of the Czech Republic and fully understanding all the issues. Of course, this report is the responsibility of the OECD review team. While the team benefited from the Czech CBR and other documents, as well as the many discussions with a wide range of Czech personnel, any errors or misinterpretations in this report are its responsibility.

\* This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union.



From:

## OECD Reviews of School Resources: Czech Republic 2016

Access the complete publication at:

<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264262379-en>

### Please cite this chapter as:

Shewbridge, Claire, *et al.* (2016), "Foreword", in *OECD Reviews of School Resources: Czech Republic 2016*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264262379-1-en>

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