

## National Statements of Commitment of the Czech Republic

### Covid recovery – activities and commitments

The crisis associated with the covid-19 pandemic has strongly affected the whole society, including the education sector and young people. This new and sudden situation required adequate methodological, technical, financial and personnel support, which the Czech Republic has provided in various ways.

During the year 2020, the budget for regional education was strengthened, special funds for schools for the acquisition of ICT equipment for primary and secondary schools amounted to CZK 1.3 billion. 75 000 computers for pupils and teachers were purchased.

**Methodological Recommendation for Distance Learning** and **Methodology Guidance for Schools** with a focus on mental health when social connections are limited were issued. A course called "**Safe in Cyber!**" to explain risk in cyber space was launched.

Children and youth were supported through subsidy programmes to reduce the impact of the covid-19 pandemic. The "**Together after COVID**" call focused on activities of secondary schools providing vocational education, **the Summer Camps call** focused on children with compulsory school attendance. The Camps took place in summer 2021 and were free of charge.

Following the crisis cause by the pandemic, the Government of the Czech Republic prepared the **National Recovery Plan**. The plan is a strong combination of reforms and investments implemented from European Recovery and Resilience Facility Fund and represent the following commitments for the Czech Republic.

Reforms and investment of **€ 393 million** will help **ensure equal access to education** through increasing an access to affordable pre-school care, reinforced support for disadvantaged schools and additional tutoring for children at a risk of failure.

The plan also envisages an **investment in digital equipment of schools** to ensure an access to learning for disadvantaged pupils and students.

**The Johannes Amos Comenius Programme (P JAC)** for the period of 2021-2027, approved on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022 by the European Commission, emphasizes the need to acquire competencies for lifelong learning and is aimed at supporting the development of an open and educated society based on knowledge and skills, equal opportunities and development of the potential of everyone. The programme has two main priorities to which the Czech Republic is committed.

The aim of the first priority of the program, **research and development**, is the development of excellent capacities (in the field of infrastructure and human resources). **Education**, the second priority of P JAC, is considered to be one of the key values for positive social and economic development. The interventions of the programme will modernise the objectives and content of education at all levels of the education system. Further interventions will make the teaching profession more attractive through improving the quality of pre-graduate education and supporting teachers at the beginning of their career, during further education and professional development.

### National consultation process and Strategy 2030+ to transform education

Education in the Czech Republic is currently undergoing the most significant change in recent times. This started with a national consultation process which led to the creation of the Strategy of Education Policy of the Czech Republic up to 2030+.

The Strategy 2030+, adopted in October 2020, focuses on sustainable development competences, on elimination of inequalities, access to quality education, support for teachers, digital literacy and on ensuring stable funding.

The preparation process of this strategic document was based on maximum openness, transparency and on the wide spectrum of innovative ideas. In the first stage, guidelines for the Education Policy were created. Public discussions, conferences and consultations continued on these guidelines and involved the widest possible range of education policy stakeholders.

The aim was to ensure that both the professionals and the public had the opportunity to actively influence these visions themselves. There were over 1 000 direct participants at the round tables and conferences (academics, experts, school principals, teachers, school founders as well as parents and youth) and over 8 700 online views.

The Czech Republic is committed to implement the Strategy 2030+, the implementation process is divided into three periods until 2031 and will lead to the creation and development of an open education system that responds to the changing environment and provides relevant educational content over a lifelong perspective.

The first implementation period (2020–2023) with public participation is currently underway and the main priority is the introduction of a revised curricula which would reflect the needs of the 21st century.

### Financing education (as a common good)

The stable funding is essential for the sustainable functioning of the education system, which is why the Strategy 2030+ includes a number of measures that are intended to both analyse the current state of funding and also bring about the reforms needed for the further development of the education system. The changes may relate to the simplification of the administration associated with financing, financial support for groups of students in need, or, for example, ensuring sufficient funds for the appropriate education of teachers.