

Government Policy on Children and Young People for 2007-2013 Czech Republic

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I. Some Problems Identified in Recent Research Concerned with the Young Generation

Children and young people represent the sector of the population aged up to 26. Sociology normally examines a group from completion of compulsory schooling until reaching social maturity – i.e. individuals from 15 until 30 years of age. This is a large group with a specific position and role in society.

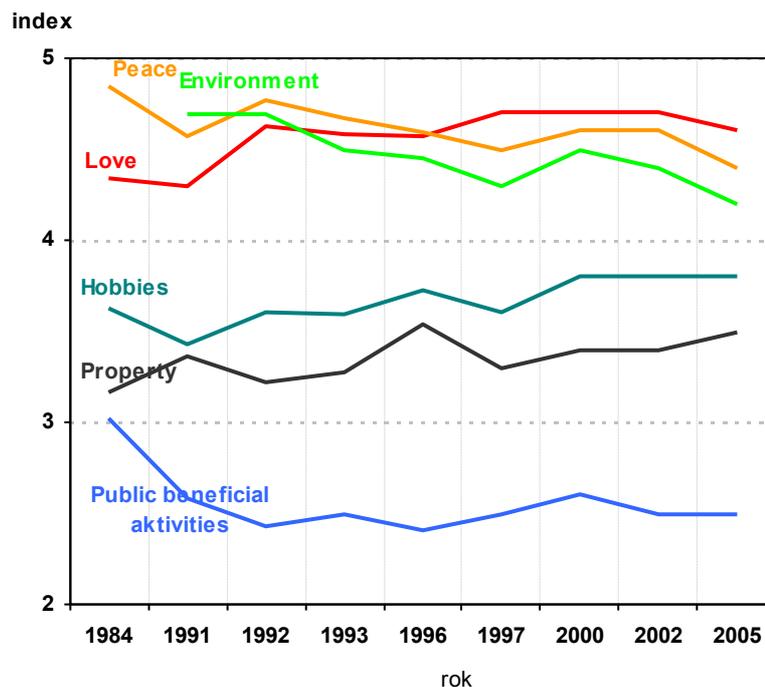
A number of recent research studies worldwide have identified a set of qualities that facilitate success and “happy life” in our civilisation. Five of them turned out to be very convincing (the so-called Big Five): *intelligence, conscientiousness, openness to experience, emotional stability and agreeableness*.

An analytical study combining theory and empirical research entitled *Outline of State Policy on Children and Youth until 2007* by Petr Sak, the study *Participation of Young People in Political and Social Life* by Tomáš Houška, and on-going research of the National Children and Youth Institute based on long time series comparisons, have identified the following trends in value orientations that are in conflict with the aforementioned five key personality traits:

They point to an increasing importance of economic prosperity and a career as a means of acquisition of property. There is growing emphasis on material values and sensual life and experience, including drugs. On the other hand, the quality of life loses out in competition with sensual life and material values. The importance of responsibility for others is decreasing and so is self-improvement and the spiritual dimension of life and ideas.

The importance of property and the pursuit of leisure activities (interests, hobbies) are growing steadily. On the other hand, less and less emphasis is being placed on the concept of “being useful to other people”, on the meaning of peace, the environment and work beneficial for society. The importance of democracy is decreasing as a result of experience with our political system, political culture and the part each citizen plays in the system.

Development of selected values in 1984 - 2005 (15 – 30 age group):



It must be pointed out that, despite the shift in values characteristic of the majority of the young generation, there are groups with different value orientations. The current young generation has relatively clear characteristics. Their preferred focus is on their ego, their own self, but based on sensual perception. Their internal world is deprived (ideas, thoughts, spiritual dimensions) and this deprivation is one of the reasons for growing interest in drugs.

A major trend in the development of young people is a decreasing influence of social/spiritual systems – be they secular or religious. Their importance has been declining steadily since the early 1990s. This trend is consistent with the development of young people’s value orientation, which points to hedonism and pragmatism accompanied by the diminishing importance of global and social values.

The mainstream within the young generation is adapted to society and identifies with it. Mainstream media are an important instrument of social conformity. To an increasing extent the media imprint contents upon the human mind and psyche that in no way or very little reflect the nature of the real world. They are more and more producing a virtual reality. The mainstream of the young generation is to a large extent manipulated by the media and accepts the opinions and positions generated by them.

The traditional electronic media and new technologies – the personal computer, the internet, mobile telephone and multimedia – are phenomena that shape the current young generation in a leading way. At the same time, this young generation is the principal subject of the computerisation of society and its transition to the digital age. The entire life of today’s young people changes and acquires a different form in comparison with previous generations. There is an ongoing digitalisation of the environment and lifestyle of young people. Young people are characterised by technologies as they change from one generation to another. This is why the current young generation is sometimes called the “on-line generation”. This title does not only concern Czech young people. Another feature of young people is expansion of their environment by adding a European and global dimension. The expansion takes place primarily in cyberspace and, consequently, in the natural space and time.

The important role of the media for young people may be evidenced by the fact that they spend one third of their waking time and two thirds of their free time with the media. One of

the consequences is that virtual and media reality squeezes the vital component out of the young person's environment.

The process of digitalisation also occurs in education. E-learning has gained an important position among young people in only a few years. Young people accept e-learning and have included it in their activities. The digitalised form of anything appeals to them more than the traditional form. This is why they read less – and this also applies to the age group that includes higher education students.

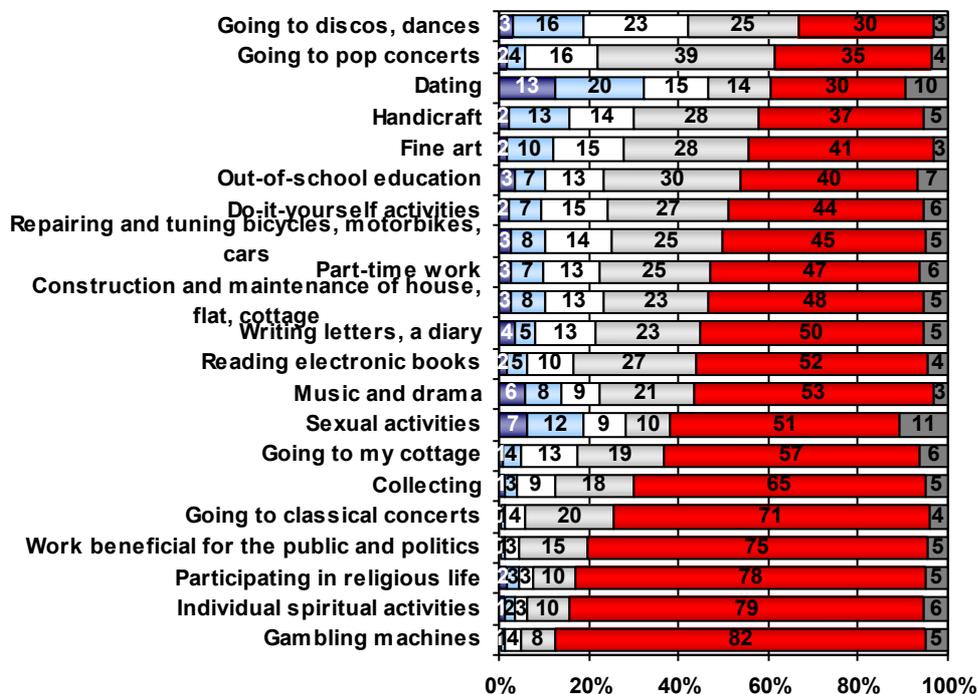
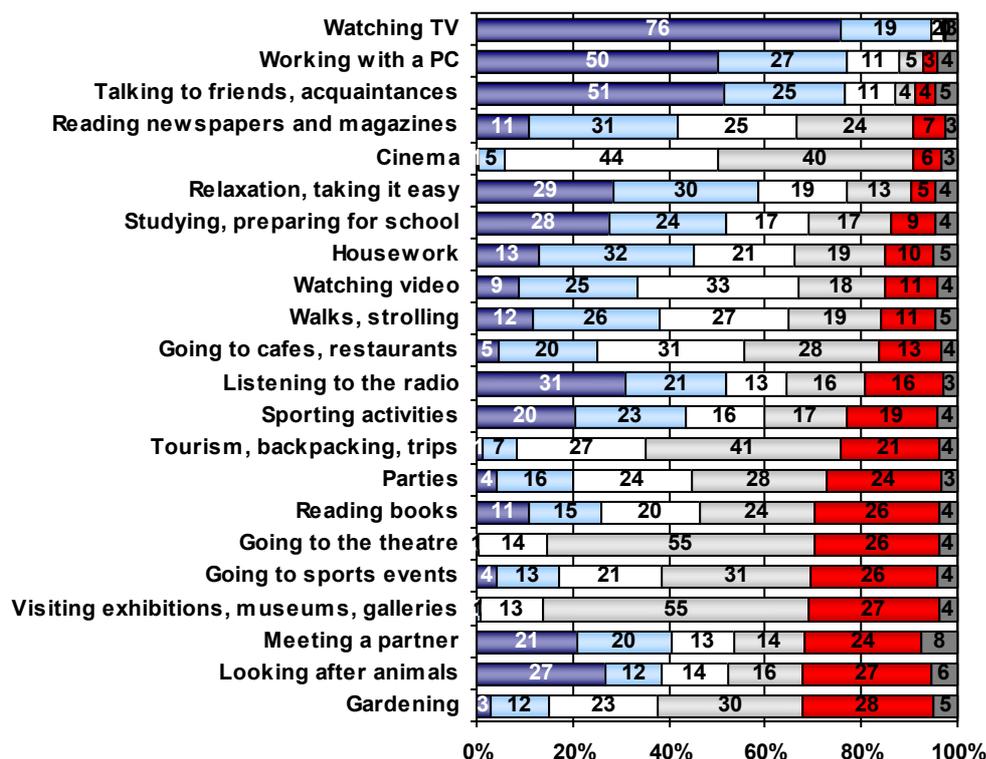
The hedonistic and pragmatic orientation of the young generation, coupled with the absence of social vision, contribute to the increased consumption of alcohol, nicotine and drugs. Tolerance towards drugs is growing and smoking marijuana is perceived as a standard element of lifestyle in some social classes.

Young People and Leisure

Leisure represents a major sociological, economic and pedagogical category. The way they spend their leisure time is particularly important for young people.

The following figures illustrate the frequency of various activities carried out by young people aged 14-19.

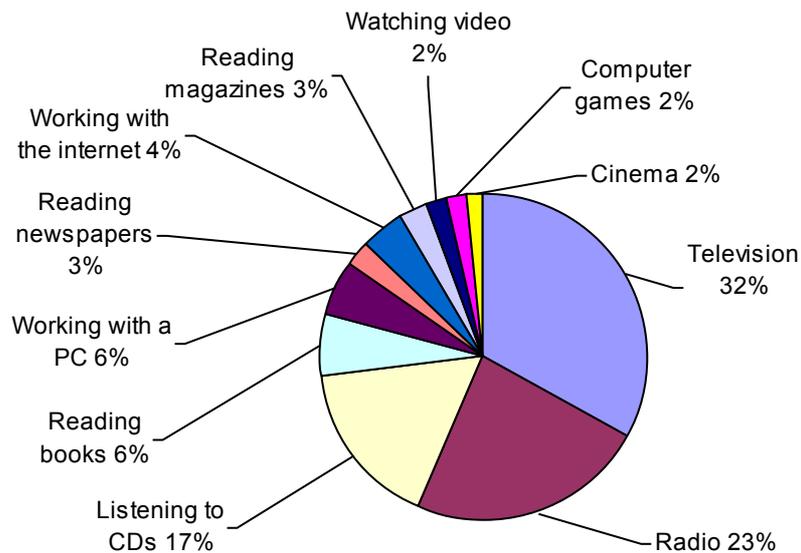
■ pravidelně □ často □ občas □ výjimečně ■ nikdy ■ nevím/neodpověděl(a)



Although trips to the countryside and tourism are particularly beneficial for children's and young people's mental and social development, their importance in terms of socialisation and the prevention of socially undesirable behaviour, including drug addiction, is not fully recognised.

Watching TV predominates among young people's leisure activities. 76% of young people watch TV every day. People spent an increasing amount of time with the media, and increasingly use them to fulfil their needs. There is a growing range of activities that have some connection with the media or virtual reality.

Watching TV and PC-related activities are the most frequent leisure activities of today's young people. As early as 2000, Czech young people spent around one third of their waking time with the media, and some two thirds of the time at their disposal (excluding the time spent at work and at school). These proportions are likely to grow. Graph 1 below shows the proportion of time spent using various media (2000, 15-30 age group).



Since 2000 there has been a steep growth in the amount of time spent with a PC, and an even faster increase in the time spent in "cyberspace". A new dimension of human existence – virtual reality - has been developing.

The use of new technologies by young people in their free time is accompanied by a decrease in reading printed books. The new technologies create a particular form of multimedia messaging where images play a major role. Text appears to be outdated in the upcoming digital age. From 1992 until 2000 the number books read dropped. The group of avid readers who read 4 and more books every month has virtually disappeared. In 1992 the proportion of these readers ranged between 17% and 8% in the relevant age groups. In 2000 it was 0 to 1%. The largest decline in reading occurred in the 19-23 age group, where more than one third study at higher education institutions and reading is part of their "job description".

Young People and Education

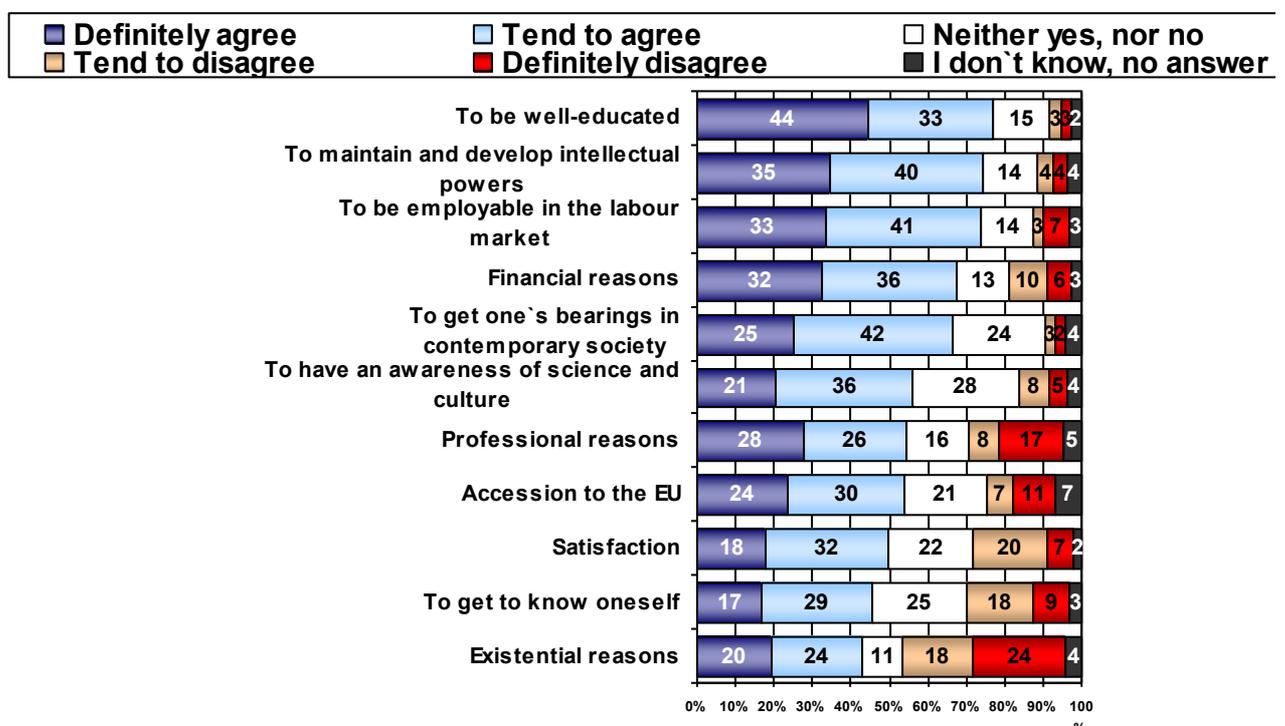
The proportion of the population undergoing some form of education is constantly increasing, and education covers an increasingly large portion of life. There is a specific social group of young people whose main mission is education and professional training. At the same time, the complexity of the education system is growing and its infrastructure is improving. At present around one third of the relevant age cohort achieves higher education in the Czech Republic. The educational process, including doctoral studies, extends to the age of 30.

The importance of educational attainment and education for society is growing. The level of educational attainment of the population will determine the future of countries as they compete with each other. Modernisation of the education system is assuming a key role. This concerns both modification of primary education with a view to creating a system open to

new knowledge, and provision of opportunities for individuals to acquire new knowledge as part of lifelong learning. This will not be focused merely on expanding the body of knowledge in individual disciplines, but also on a synthesis of the new knowledge allowing for a deeper, comprehensive insight into the principal categories of life, society and existence.

Modernisation of the education system thus becomes necessary in order to include lifelong learning, which covers the range from primary to higher education, and also includes education outside the traditional formal system. In the process of modernisation and further development of the education system, it is impossible to disregard the penetration of new information and communication technologies into education.

There are, no doubt, a number of reasons why to pursue education. Research methods must therefore fit this reality. Answers were sought to the following question: “Do any of the following reasons have an impact on the fact that you participate in education outside the formal initial education system?”

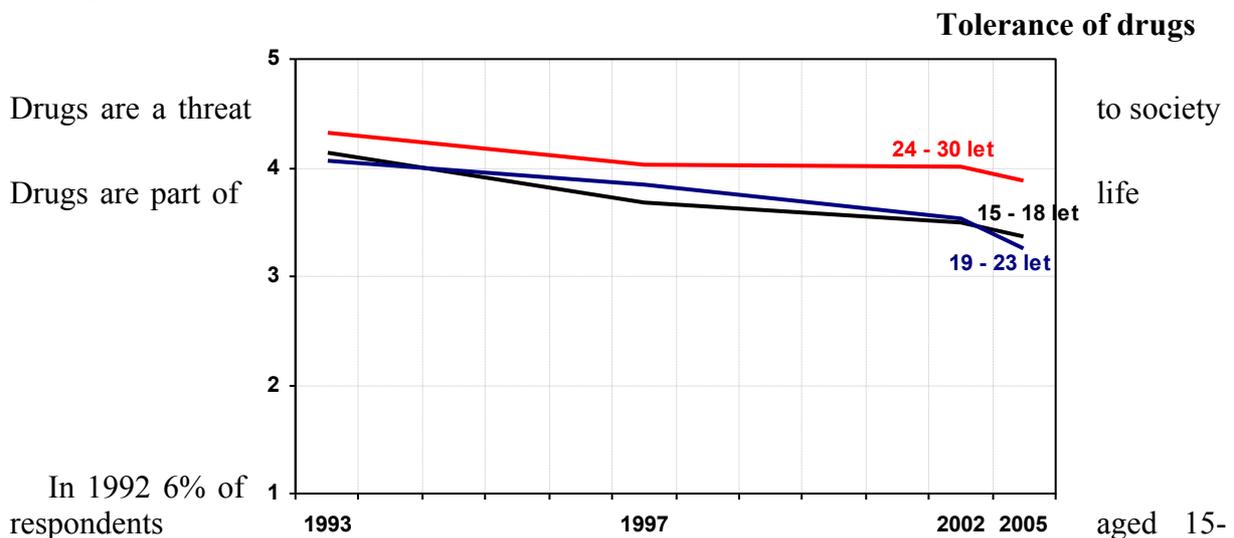


It has been proven that the modern individual pursues education for various reasons and to satisfy various needs and interests. There are several types of motivation: existential, social and individual/psychological. The need to be educated is at the top of the motivational scale. It is followed by the need to develop and maintain intellectual skills through education. “Becoming employable in the labour market” ranks as low as third. The motivation where the educational process is valued for its own sake (“education makes me happy”) was expressed by 50% of young people.

Young People and Socially Negative Phenomena: Nicotinism, Alcoholism, Drugs, Crime

The many socio-pathological disorders that are elaborated in detail below are not the only threats young people face. The key is education for healthy lifestyles where an individual's health is seen as a balanced state of physical, mental and social comfort. It is formed and influenced by many aspects, such as the style of life, health prevention behaviour, the quality of interpersonal relations and of the environment, safety, etc. As health is the prerequisite for an active and happy life and for optimal work performance, both the theoretical and practical pursuit and protection of health has become a priority.

Between 1993 and 2005 more tolerant attitudes towards drugs in the relevant groups of young people increased and so did opposition to a repressive approach. Tolerance of drugs decreases in favour of a repressive approach along with increasing age. This link applies from as early as 15 years of age. It may be stated that the new generations are increasingly liberal as regards drugs, and the children's population already has imbibed a higher level of tolerance of drugs.



In terms of age the 19-25 age group has the greatest experience with drugs. The 26-30 cohort encountered the drugs boom probably too late and therefore its experience is less than that of the 19-to-25-year-olds. The youngest group of those aged 15 to 30 may still be expected to gain a drugs experience. The reason for this is that 15% of the 15-30 group who experienced drugs gained this experience after 18.

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It is sometimes argued that the older generation destroy their lives by tobacco and alcohol, while the young generation "have their marihuana which is basically less risky". However, this has not been proved. The young generation consumes alcohol the most, tobacco a little less and drugs the least. There are only 5% of respondents in the 15-30 age group who have not tasted alcohol, and 17% of those who have not touched a cigarette. 78% occasionally or regularly consume alcohol and 33% are regular smokers. At the same time, there is a steep increase in the proportion of smokers and alcohol consumers (and the frequency of consumption) within the group of drug users.

It turns out that the younger the person is when exposed to a drug, the more negative and strong the effect on his/her personality. 13 is roughly the age when the child goes through a crisis in relation to family and seeks his/her role among peers while assuming a new perception of society. This is a critical background for contact with drugs.

A large part of children and young people adapt to society in contact with media manipulation and become consumers dependent on designer goods. Drugs are also part of this “designer lifestyle”. Being “in” means at least smoking marihuana. Another section of this population retreats to drugs trying to escape an aggressive market society.

The role of the media in socialisation and in the level of social maturity among children and young people

Leisure education works, to an extent, with the media as a component of children’s lifestyle. However, the scope of the media impact and the resulting creation of media and virtual reality (“cyberspace”) places additional demands upon pedagogy. Traditional phenomena of the natural world assume their digital or media form in the digital and media age. In the same way as education is assuming media and electronic forms, we speak about digital or computer crime. We can observe phenomena on the borderline between pedagogy and digital crime that could be described by the term “media crime”.

In the future media crime may be constituted by what commercial TV introduced to Czech media culture in the 1990s under the slogans “catching up with the world”, “return to Europe”, “freedom of expression” and “liberalisation”. Advocates of the non-regulated impact of the media used arguments such as: no-one is forced to watch, regulation is a remnant of totalitarian society, interventions in broadcasting constitute a violation of market principles, interventions in profit-making resulting from ownership smack of socialism, TV broadcasting does not educate, only entertains, etc. Owners and supporters of commercial broadcasting repeatedly question the influence of TV violence on growing aggressiveness in society, mainly in the young generation, in spite of the conclusions of a number of sociological and psychological studies.

Attitudes of young people to politics and public life

Research shows clear trends that young people assume increasingly negative views of politics and civic involvement. Particularly alarming is the trend calling for “a stronger hand” at the expense of democratic principles and growing intolerance of immigrants.

Current society should aim to educate children and young people so that they can become individuals marked, above all, by conscientiousness, integrity, self-control, mental stability and perseverance, curiosity, motivation and the desire to learn, tolerance, decency and a capacity to develop friendly relationships and help others. Young people should get to know their own selves as living creatures. They should learn to understand the value of health, the meaning of health prevention and the depth of problems related to illness or other impairments in order to understand principal values in life and gradually adopt the relevant attitudes. This policy should help them on their way.

II. The Basis for Government Policy on Children and Young People for 2007-2013

The basic principles and foundations of state policy include the responsibility of the state for establishing conditions for the development of the young generation¹ and for other tasks within its purview and the scope of international agreements of which it is a signatory, the responsibility of the family and, proportionately to his or her age level, the individual's responsibility for his or her own self.

The state affects children and young people at the level of support and protection. The drawing up of objectives of state policy is based on the assumption that the state's impact on young people must be differentiated and designed to foster individual needs at two levels.

Support consists both of state measures to address problems faced by the young generation and preventing these problems from getting worse, and various innovative programmes, etc.. Support also includes the operations of the state (its bodies) that establish conditions, as part of state policy, facilitating the participation of young people in social and political life and motivating various classes and groups of young people to pursue activities in the spirit of the state's 'children and youth policy'. Non-governmental non-profit organisations (NGOs), whose activities to this end are also supported by the state, play an important part in providing this support.

Protection consists of the state's pursuit of diminishing the impact of negative phenomena and their effects on children and young people. Protection always comes in when an individual is not able, on his/her own, to cope with negative effects of the environment and some social phenomena. Here the state either uses its instruments or pursues co-operation with other public administration bodies, municipalities, NGOs and other institutions and organisations working for the benefit of children and young people. International co-operation is a major factor in this area, pursued by both state bodies and NGOs focusing on work with children and young people (EU Youth programmes, etc.).

The instruments of the state for supporting and protecting children and young people include, above all, legal regulations. They also include economic instruments, application of research, an effective information system and a comprehensive human resources policy (selection and training).

¹ In line with UNESCO policies 'young generation' in this material covers children and young people up to 26 (in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child children are individuals up to 18, young people are those aged 18-26).

III. The Main Objectives of Government Policy on Children and Young People for 2007-2013

The main objective of the new government policy is to establish appropriate conditions particularly for:

- Fulfilment of the family function
- Personal development of young people and their position in society
- Education for active citizenship including participation
- Support for healthy lifestyles
- Protection against negative phenomena and their effects

Background resources:

- Convention of the Rights of the Child
- Legal regulations of the CR concerned with children and youth
- White Paper of the European Commission on a New Impetus for European Youth
- European Youth Pact
- Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life
- European Youth Information Charter (ERYICA, 1993)
- Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the European youth field
- Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council on the common objectives for participation by, and information for, young people, with a view to promoting their active European citizenship
- Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council on the common objectives for voluntary activities of young people
- Resolution of the EU Council on the common objectives for a greater understanding and knowledge of youth
- Recommendations of the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) of the Council of Europe
- Government policy statement
- National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development
- Long-Term Programme for Improving the Health Condition of the Population in the CR – Health for All in the 21st Century
- Strategy of Lifelong Learning in the CR
- Human Resources Development Strategy for the Czech Republic
- Long-Term Plan for Education and Development of the Education System in the CR
- Preparation for the Czech Republic's EU presidency in 2009

- Implementation of bilateral agreements
- Research on children and youth
- Strategic documents on children and young people developed by various ministries

Definitions:

- ***Voluntary work*** is a freely chosen activity for the benefit of others without entitlement to reward. Volunteers provide part of their time, energy and capacities to carry out an activity that is defined both in terms of time and content. What they get is not financial remuneration but often an invaluable good feeling from helping others, as well as experience, knowledge and skills.
- ***Formal education*** is education where the pupil or student normally attends school (or a school facility) and which always leads to acquisition of a particular level of education (documented by a certificate, diploma, etc.). Formal education also includes distance education.
- ***Non-formal education*** takes place outside the formal education system and does not lead to acquisition of a particular level education as in school. It includes organised educational activities outside the official schools system which intentionally offer development of life experience, skills and attitudes based on a coherent set of values. These activities are normally voluntary. They are organised by associations of children and young people, other NGOs, and by school facilities for leisure education – particularly centres for leisure, training agencies, cultural establishments, etc.
- ***Informal learning*** is a process of acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes based on day-to-day experience, from the media, the external environment and contacts. Unlike formal and non-formal education it is not organised, systematic and co-ordinated by any institution.

IV. Thematic Areas Covered by Government Policy on Children and Young People for 2007-2013

1. Information about and for young people

The objective of government policy in this area is to:

establish, expand and improve the conditions and prerequisites for the acquisition, transfer and dissemination of a broad range of information that caters to the needs and interests of the young generation; support better technical and economic accessibility of electronic media, their appropriate and safe use, and, particularly, support high standards of the content disseminated by them, and, finally, provide legislative and social conditions for effective use of public media in attending to the needs of children and young people.

Objectives of ministries:

MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR (MOINT) AND MINISTRY OF INFORMATICS (MOINF):

- to provide support for safe use of the Internet (particularly by children), for combating forbidden, non-requested and harmful content and for raising general awareness of this issue among parents, teachers and children as end users; to continue implementation of the Community programme Safer Internet plus.

MINISTRY FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (MRD):

- to prepare extension of the Rural Renewal Programme by activities focused on work with children and young people in the area of increasing ICT literacy, particularly in rural areas and in peripheral territories.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AND SPORTS (MOEYS):

- to develop, in synergy with NGOs, schools and school facilities, an information system for young people and, in this way, to improve the access of young people to information.
- to initiate the establishment of networks of organisations dealing with the provision of information to young people in various sectors.
- to develop regularly updated databases of innovative approaches and good practices in providing information to young people.
- to support access of young people to information services (improving co-ordination of information services, web-based and other innovative approaches to provision of information to young people – e.g. mobile information units for young people, etc.).
- to provide information of high quality (the education and training of persons responsible for youth information, adapting information and guidance services to the needs of young people, improving evaluation of the quality of information, accessibility and comprehensibility of information, etc.)
- to support the participation of young people in information-related activities.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (MOA):

- The Ministry will contribute by providing financial resources in line with the means available to it, specialist consultations, issuing of various publications and promotional materials, and producing various video programmes to be

shown at events concerned with “environmental education of children and young people in forestry and gamekeeping (forestry education, fisheries and beekeeping).” Where do the inverted commas end?

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT (MOE):

- to support the use of information technologies to promote direct contact of children and young people with the natural environment.

2. Youth and Europe

The objective of government policy in this area is to:

establish conditions facilitating access of young people to information about youth issues in Europe and their active involvement in international activities; to establish strategic conditions for introduction of measures on youth adopted in the EU, and to take an active part in promoting the European concept of freedom, stability and prosperity for European youth.

Objectives of ministries:

MOEYS:

- to establish conditions for implementation of tasks resulting from resolutions of European bodies.
- to establish conditions for implementation of the European Youth Pact.
- to ensure implementation of tasks in the area of children and youth that relate to the Czech Republic’s presidency of the Council of the EU in 2009.
- to set up a National Centre for Non-Formal Education and open it as part of the Czech EU presidency in spring 2009.

3. Youth, leisure and lifestyle

The objective of government policy in this area is to:

establish good social, legislative and financial conditions for young people to spend their free time in a sensible way that supports a healthy lifestyle; to support the development of school facilities that will offer a wide range of leisure activities including education; to support the work of NGOs both run by and concerned with children and young people; to motivate these organizations, by means of grant-funded programmes, to ensure availability of leisure activities of high quality.

Objectives of ministries:

MOEYS:

- to provide methodological support to NGOs concerned with children and young people.
- to ensure implementation of programmes of state support for NGOs concerned with children and young people and other specialised grant-funded programmes; to support repairs and refurbishing of buildings NGOs have taken over from the administration of the Children and Youth Fund that is being wound up.
- to provide methodological support for the development, implementation and innovation of school education programmes in school leisure facilities.

- to establish conditions for the development of school leisure facilities with a view to increasing their total number and capacity for potential participants, and to provide finance for their operations.
- to support open sporting events including one-off campaigns focused on a healthy and active lifestyle.
- to support the work of NGOs and school leisure facilities that will be focused on hiking, sporting and environmental activities.
- to ensure, via the MoEYS's National Children and Youth Institute, a permanent monitoring of the operations of school leisure facilities, to map their needs and provide them with methodological support.
- to create conditions, in co-operation with regions, for strengthening co-operation between school facilities and NGOs.
- to co-operate closely with mass media in promoting various activities in which children and young people are involved, and in drawing popular attention to successful children and young people.

MINISTRY OF CULTURE (MOC):

- to design and test pilot programmes for a comprehensive use of children's and young people's leisure time in the area of culture.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (MOD):

- to establish conditions for improving the quality of life on the part of students of secondary military schools and young soldiers up to 26, particularly as regards opportunities in the use of leisure time.

MOE:

- to ensure provision of a range of accessible leisure activities aiming to promote environmental thinking and a healthy lifestyle; to support the work of NVOs; to support environmental awareness-raising nationwide events, such as the Earth Day, the European Car Free Day, the Day of Trees, etc.

4. Youth and education

The objective of government policy in this area is to:

Promote education and educational activities with a view to nurturing the overall development of young people, their personality, talents and interests in line with the needs of society. A combination of formal, non-formal and informal education should be pursued in this process.

Objectives of ministries:

MOEYS:

- to finalise curricular reform that introduces framework and school education programmes, and to support their implementation in pre-school and primary education.
- to complete preparation of framework education programmes for grammar schools (*gymnázia*).
- to finalise the development of framework education programmes for various fields of secondary technical and vocational education; to update the system of educational fields in line with framework education programmes and to finalise the reform of educational fields.

- to create a single, coherent system for the monitoring and evaluation of schools and school facilities, including self-evaluation.
- to ensure equal educational opportunities for all and to provide an opportunity for the development of talented and gifted pupils and students.
- to establish conditions for improving the quality of education of children and pupils with special educational needs.
- to establish suitable conditions for education, encouraging children and young people to pursue healthy lifestyles and to assume responsibility for their health (e.g. prevention of accidents, obesity, etc.).
- to train teachers and educators to be able to implement school education programmes, and to provide them with systematic support including continuing training.
- to develop a stimulating system of continuing training of teachers and educators.
- to support the involvement of pupils and students facing physical and social disadvantages in the educational process at all types of school.
- to stress environmental education and sustainable development, as well as the knowledge of special pedagogy both in the undergraduate and postgraduate training of teachers.
- to co-operate with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) in adapting the training of young people in line with labour market requirements.
- to pay constant attention to the development of pre-school education and the education of pupils in basic art schools, children and pupils with special educational needs and talented and gifted pupils.
- to enhance the standards of guidance provided to higher education students and standards concerned with psychological, educational-psychological and career aspects, and with leisure and personal development activities.
- to expand the undergraduate training of teachers and educators to cover specific areas such as multi-cultural education, special pedagogy, sign language, prevention of socio-pathological disorders, health education, etc.
- to continue supporting the training of volunteers in school leisure facilities.
- to continue supporting the training of volunteers working with children and young people.
- to organise and support activities aimed at encouraging children and young people to study science and technology disciplines in line with the EU position on this matter.
- to ensure recognition of the value and benefits of non-formal education and education as a leisure activity.
- to provide for a functional system for recognition of education, training and professional qualifications acquired abroad.
- to implement new curricular documents in schools; to continue pilot testing of the teaching of Roma language and literature as an optional subject in schools and to evaluate its efficiency.
- to support a harmonious development of all components of the child's personality, including the capacity to respond actively to the environment.

- to support effective implementation of curricular reform focusing, among other things, on a consistent development of cross-curricular themes in school education programmes at schools and school facilities.

MoD:

- to ensure that military schools prepare versatile graduates with general education covering languages, humanities, science and technology as well as psychological and legal aspects.
- to establish conditions for MoD staff to acquire required levels of language competence as part of EU and NATO membership with a primary focus on military school pupils and students.
- to reinforce, by means of human rights education, in young soldiers the values of respect for and tolerance of individuals of various nationalities and beliefs in locations where military troops are deployed, particularly as part of international operations.
- to implement the Comprehensive Training Programme for Military Professionals at the University of Defence and in training facilities.

MOINT:

- to continue the organisation and implementation of projects for children and young people in schools (including leisure activities) focusing on prevention of socio-pathological and criminal behaviour (the major nationwide projects include “Ajax’s Diary” – instruction about socio-pathological and criminal behaviour in pupils at stage 1 of primary school; “Learning with the Police” – a project (under preparation) designed for all grades of primary school; the screening of films focused on prevention and the use of other teaching aids during discussions and lectures at all school levels and in co-operation with other institutions).
- to include prevention in the practices of various services of the Police of the Czech Republic and, in this way, to reinforce and enhance the contact between police officers and the target group of children and young people; to include prevention in the initial training of police officers; to organise specialised seminars on topical issues related to crime prevention throughout the entire career of police officers.

MoE:

- to support the development of professional and material resources within the nationwide network of centres for environmental education.
- to provide up-to-date information to schools and school facilities about environmental issues; to address schools as a target group in relation to the organisation of environmental festivals and campaigns.

5. Youth, employment and unemployment

The objective of government policy in this area is to:

provide appropriate conditions for the preparation of young people for their future careers; develop specialised programmes to support the employment of young people with a special

emphasis on recent school leavers; pursue, with increased efficiency, the matching of educational fields with the needs of the Czech and European labour markets.

Objectives of ministries:

MoEYS:

- to support the development of co-operation and joint schemes of secondary and tertiary professional schools, universities and industry.
- to adjust educational provision at secondary schools to meet the needs of regions and the labour market where the future graduates will be employed.
- to modify, in co-operation with MoLSA, the training of young people in line with the needs of the labour market.
- to implement, in co-operation with MoLSA, other tasks resulting from the European Youth Pact – particularly harmonisation of professional and family duties, adoption of measures focused on better social and professional integration, and highlighting the area of Youth as part of the Lisbon strategy.
- to evaluate and finalise the system of guidance, diagnostic and information services.
- as regards inclusion of new schools, school facilities and educational fields within the schools registry, to proceed in synergy with regions and in line with approved long-term plans for education and the development of the education system in regions.
- to pursue, in co-operation with the ministries concerned, recognition of non-formal education by society and, particularly, by potential employers and schools.

6. Protection of the rights of children and young people

The objective of government policy in this area is to:

implement in full the Convention on the Rights of the Child and evaluate its implementation on a regular basis; amend continuously legal regulations with a view to reinforcing legal protection of children and young people; encourage the staff at schools and school facilities, individuals in NGOs who run children's groups and other people who work with children to see to and support implementation of the rights of the youngest generation and, at the same time, to educate children and young people to fulfil their duties.

Objectives of ministries:

MoLSA:

- to implement tasks set out in the Policy for the Care of Children at Risk and Children Living Outside their Families.

MoEYS:

- to initiate from 2008, in co-operation with MoInt, a grant scheme for schools, school facilities and NGOs focused on expanding the provision of activities designed for children and young people to protect them against undesirable phenomena – particularly commercial sexual abuse.

- to support leisure and educational activities focused on increasing the level of children's and young people's legal awareness.
- to establish conditions supporting anonymous hotlines designed to help resolve crisis situations of children and young people.

MOINT:

- to take specific measures to reinforce and increase the level of legal awareness on the part of children and young people.

7. Participation of the young generation in social and political life

The objective of government policy in this area is to:

Establish conditions for a wide involvement of the young generation in public and social life; support the formation of children's self-governing bodies; encourage the state administration and self-administrative bodies to extend and intensify two-way communication with children's and young people's organisations; pay more attention, as part of education, to supporting personal development, commitment, independence, speaking up, etc.

Objectives of ministries:

MOEYS:

- to support the participation of young people in civic life (setting up appropriate conditions – e.g. providing financial support or facilities for their activities, supporting equal opportunities for the involvement of all young people, supporting the development of global partnerships of youth organisations and of structured dialogue among young people, supporting the development of local participation schemes).
- to promote wider participation of young people in the system of representational democracy.
- to support various forms of learning through active participation (development of synergy with measures implemented in the education sector, provision of non-formal educational opportunities, use of good practices, etc.).
- to encourage regional and local administrative bodies, youth organisations and young people to pursue joint objectives related to participation and information, and to co-operate closely with regional and local bodies in implementing these objectives to the fullest extent.
- to support methods and forms of participation in leisure educational activities, particularly the involvement of young people in the development of education programmes.
- to support the active participation of pupils in the development of internal school standards.
- to provide methodological support to expand the practice of children's "parliaments" to be present in all regions and to participate in the dissemination of good practices among organisations active in this area.

MRD:

- to continue implementation of the Rural Renewal Programme supporting the involvement of children and young people in the life of local communities.

MOE:

- to support the involvement of children and young people in life and decision-making at the level of local communities (e.g. by means of school-based and out-of-school activities focusing on sustainable development at local level).

8. Youth research

The objective of government policy in this area is to:

set up an effective system for regular and constant research into children and youth issues by means of targeted studies, exploratory work, opinion polls and quick surveys, and by means of their popularisation; to establish preconditions for meeting this objective in the form of creating a co-ordinating network of experts and institutions dealing with youth research as envisaged by the common objectives of the EU for “a greater understanding and knowledge of youth”.

Objectives of ministries:

MOEYS:

- to set up a co-ordination network of experts and institutions dealing with research into youth issues as envisaged by the common objectives of the EU for “a greater understanding and knowledge of youth”, and to run its activities with a view to setting up an effective system of regular and constant research into children and youth issues by means of targeted studies, exploratory work, opinions polls and quick surveys, and by publishing their results and making them known in the public domain.
- to expand the research unit of the National Children and Youth Institute which is concerned with long-term research into children and youth issues.
- to set up an effective system for regular and constant research into children and youth issues by means of targeted studies, exploratory work, opinion polls and quick surveys, etc.
- to carry out across-the-board continuous research and, in this way, create a time chart making it possible to see development trends as a foundation of effective evaluation of the policy over longer time periods.
- to create a database concerning children and youth research by means of maintaining and updating a national children and youth research register and, in this way, improving available information about youth.
- to elaborate topics relevant for youth policy - autonomy, combating discrimination, employment and employability.

ALL MINISTRIES:

- to co-ordinate with other ministries their planned research concerning children and youth; to publish outcomes of research into children and youth issues in the national children and youth research register.

9. Volunteering

The objective of government policy in this area is to:

Support voluntary activities of young people and those who work with them, as they constitute major opportunities for non-formal learning and strengthen solidarity, social coherence and involvement in the life of society; to initiate debate on the legal and social position of volunteers working with children and young people and to encourage recognition of their work and education acquired.

Objectives of ministries:

MOEYS TOGETHER WITH THE GOVERNMENT COUNCIL FOR NGOS:

- to present a requirement to amend law no. 198/2002 on voluntary services and on changes to some laws, as amended, so as to expand the laws to cover traditional voluntary work in NGOs on a membership principle, in schools and school facilities (heads of children's teams, leisure and study groups, summer camps, etc.).

MOEYS:

- to encourage the development of voluntary activities of young people with a view to raising awareness of existing opportunities, expanding the scope of these activities and improving their quality.
- to support voluntary activities in order to promote solidarity among young people.
to make it easier for young people to carry out voluntary activities by eliminating existing barriers.
- to recognise voluntary activities and the value of personal capacities acquired through them, to acknowledge the commitment involved as well as the beneficial role voluntary activities play in transition from school to work and in the process of maturing.
- to introduce a ministerial award for volunteers working with children and young people.

MoE:

- to support voluntary activities of children and young people by means of involving them in the development and protection of the environment.

10. International co-operation and mobility in the area of children and youth

The objective of government policy in this area is to:

Support international co-operation and mobility concerned with children and young people and establish conditions for their development; encourage the establishment of conditions for a continuous increase in the participation of young people in international activities, exchanges, study and awareness-raising visits, and acquisition and transfer of new knowledge and contacts; to create conditions for implementation of European and national priorities of the Youth in Action programme.

Objectives of ministries:

MOEYS:

- to carry out tasks as part of the implementation of the EU programme Youth in Action.
- to define obstacles to the mobility of young people and to exchange information with other EU member states.
- to develop and use good practices with a view to making it easier for young people to work, provide voluntary services and take part in vocational training in the EU and outside it.
- to make use of valid bilateral agreements to support and expand youth exchanges, exchange of experience related to youth work, exchange of experts and information on youth.
- to establish conditions for implementation of European and national priorities of the Youth in Action programme.

MOE:

- to support involvement of schools in international programmes concerned with the environment and sustainable development.

11. Youth belonging to national minorities, young migrants, refugees

The objective of government policy in this area is to:

Create conditions for the integration of children and young people from national minorities into mainstream society; to support targeted initial as well as continuing education of this group of the population.

Objectives of ministries:

MOEYS:

- to support and expand the teaching of Czech as a foreign language, including the organisation of basic courses in Czech for foreign nationals who have been granted asylum.
- to provide for systematic undergraduate and postgraduate education of teachers in the area of integrating foreign nationals.
- to establish general conditions for providing effective multi-cultural education to the entire Czech school population.
- to fine-tune economic and organisational conditions for the education of foreign nationals including children
- to monitor continuously the education of foreign nationals in primary and secondary schools, tertiary professional schools, higher education institutions and school facilities including institutional educational and protective care facilities.
- to support, based on educational research into foreign nationals and their communities, the publication of textbooks and organisation of seminars and other educational events.
- to establish conditions for comprehensive methodological support for teachers including enhancement of their professional competencies in language education.

12. Youth and housing

The objective of government policy in this area is to:

adopt such government measures as provide for accessibility of housing for a wider range of young people and young families; to encourage municipalities to pursue their own housing policies.

Objectives of ministries:

MRD:

To continue implementation of the existing instruments of housing policy that are focused on young people, i.e.:

- support for mortgages for young people up to 36 (in line with Government Regulation no. 249/2002)
- provision of low-interest loans to young people up to 36 for new housing construction (in line with Government Regulation no. 97/2002)
- provision of low-interest loans to young people up to 36 for flat acquisition (in line with Government Regulation no. 616/2004)
- provision of low-interest loans to young people up to 36 for flat refurbishment (in line with Government Regulation no. 28/2006)

13. Youth and culture

The objective of government policy in this area is to:

Support all generally recognised cultural activities fostering the education of the young generation; to establish conditions for them to become aware of cultural traditions and, most importantly, to support activities promoting the development of such cultural events and activities as nurture the development of young people's personalities.

Objectives of ministries:

MoEYS:

- to support organisers of nationwide arts competitions and displays in various artistic disciplines, to support the organisation of cultural events for children and young people.

MoC:

- to develop an arts and education policy focusing on providing support for projects using contemporary art as part of the education system – particularly in co-operation with theatres, galleries, libraries, art centres, etc.; to support cultural skills – both practical (e.g. in fine arts, music and drama, and theoretical (understanding forms of artistic expression, cultivating perception of works of art, knowledge of the “languages of art”).
- to provide annual support to organisers of nationwide arts competitions, creative workshops, exhibitions and festivals in various artistic disciplines; to support reading among children and young people; to support the organisation of cultural events for children and young people as part of grant schemes of the Ministry of Culture; to support the creation and presentation of works of art designed for children and young people; to support and develop lifelong learning and the opportunity to learn in any context with an emphasis on non-

formal learning; to support innovative processes in education and learning with the involvement of memory institutions.

- to support, in line with framework education programmes, both approved and under preparation, projects promoting the co-operation of schools and school facilities with libraries, galleries, theatres, museums, etc.

MRD

- to prepare the expansion of the Rural Renewal Programme to cover activities focusing on work with children and young people in the area of cultural awareness and support for training modules focused on local and regional culture and its heritage (with a link to tourism).

14. Youth and the media

The objective of government policy in this area is to:

To support regular information in the media about good examples from the life of children and young people; to create legislative conditions for increasing the volume and particularly the quality of information about young people; to expand the coverage of the youngest generation in the public media.

Objectives of ministries:

- The primary task of them all is to provide regular information via the media about the life of children and young people and to ensure that more positive examples are presented.

MoEYS:

- to discuss co-operation with public TV and radio on presenting information about children and young people, and to develop special programmes for children and young people in a suitable viewing time.
- to recommend that the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament should appoint representatives of children and youth organisations to the Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting.
- to support initiatives leading to effective prevention of children and young people from the negative impacts of the media.

15. Youth and family policy, family support and protection

The objective of government policy in this area is to:

continue adopting legislative, economic and practical measures aimed at strengthening the trust of young people in the institution of marriage; to support young marriages and informed parenthood; to protect young families, etc.

Objectives of ministries:

MoLSA:

- to continue implementation of the National Family Policy by means of updating this document annually.
- to monitor implementation of the Action Plan of Support for Families with Children for 2006 – 2009.

MoEYS:

- to stress family education in both framework and school education programmes.

16. Youth and health

The objective of government policy in this area is to:

continue establishing legislative, economic and practical conditions to protect the health of the young generation in all its forms; to include health education in educational activities; to support health prevention measures; to acquaint children and young people with health risks in ordinary as well as extraordinary situations and guide them to develop skills and ways of acting (decision-making) that maintain and strengthen health, and that allow them to assume appropriate responsibility for their own health and the health of others.

Objectives of ministries:

MINISTRY OF HEALTH (MOH):

- to support prenatal and perinatal care
- to guarantee the availability and quality of healthcare for children and young people
- to support the training of healthcare staff in the area of care for children and young people
- to assert the rights of the child in the legislation under preparation and to see that these rights are respected
- to overhaul institutional care of children up to 3 years of age with a view to satisfying the individual needs of each child.
- to support preventive programmes for children and young people and to support families with disabled children
- to support measures against neglect, maltreatment, commercial and sexual abuse of children and juvenile persons.
- to support prevention of the use of addictive substances.

MOEYS:

- to provide for the inclusion of accident and obesity prevention within education (framework education programmes for all types of education) and to support implementation of this prevention policy in schools and school facilities in line with framework education programmes; to support the initial and continuing training of teachers and educators in accident and obesity prevention.
- to collect, analyse and provide statistical data on accidents of children, pupils and students in schools and school facilities in line with relevant legal regulations.

17. Youth and the environment

The objective of government policy in this area is to:

support all activities leading to a systematic nurturing in young people of a positive attitude to the protection and development of a healthy environment; to support meaningful activities of young people in the area of environmental protection. .

Objectives of ministries:

MRD:

to prepare expansion of the Rural Renewal Programme to cover activities focused on work with children and young people in the area of environmental education and on promoting young people's relationship to the environment in which they live.

MOEYS:

- to highlight environmental education in the initial and continuing training of teachers.
- to organise and support leisure activities for children and young people increasing their motivation to study science.
- to support the work of NGOs, schools and school leisure facilities in the area of environmental education.

MOE:

- to promote direct contacts of children and young people with the environment.
- to ensure the accessibility of the natural environment to children and young people living in cities.
- to support the creation of a healthy environment.
- to support various school and out-of-school activities organised by NGOs that focus on environmental education; to include children and young people among key target groups as part of various environmental campaigns and festivals.

MOA:

- to develop the environmental education of children and young people in the area of forest management, game-keeping (forestry education).
- to organise activities for children and young people where "forestry education" is presented as a component of environmental education in forest management and game-keeping.
- to develop environmental education for children and young people in fishery and bee-keeping.

18. Youth, socio-pathological disorders, social prevention and integration

The objective of government policy in this area is to:

educate children and young people to live a healthy lifestyle, to acquire positive social behaviour and to develop their personalities; to nurture in the young generation moral values, to help increase social competencies of children and young people and other skills that lead to the rejection of all forms of self-destruction, aggressiveness and violation of laws; to support systematically all activities leading to strengthened preventive measures; to seek and support activities promoting a meaningful involvement of young people in leisure activities and, in this way, diverting their attention from "escapist" forms of behaviour.

Objectives of ministries:

MOEYS:

- to analyse the causes of pupils from different social backgrounds dropping out of school.

- to carry out research into the levels of anti-social behaviour of pupils in the relevant age groups.
- to expand the career guidance services for those not admitted to studies and for failing pupils and students.
- to develop a “safety net” for people at risk of dropping out of education and those who want to return to the education system.
- to train teachers in issues relating to children from families with a low socio-economic status and to prepare them for the necessary individual approaches to and stimulation of children.
- to analyse outputs from the SIM and PROPOS projects and to implement their conclusions in schools and school guidance facilities.
- to charter and analyse needs in the area of primary prevention in all regions and to set clear priorities as a foundation for the further development of preventive activities.
- to develop standards for specific primary prevention.
- to support the work of school methodologists for prevention and create optimal conditions for this work; to support implementation of so-called “minimum prevention programmes” in schools and school facilities.
- to support preventive programmes in schools and school facilities as part of leisure-related educational activities.
- to provide for prevention in institutional and protective care facilities with a special emphasis on the continuous training of staff working in these establishments.
- to improve the conditions for successful integration of physically disabled students in education and to equalise opportunities in access to education for applicants from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

MOINT:

- to develop national reports on spectator violence for 2007 – 2010.
- to see to a consistent observance of directives, regulations and recommendations of the Council of Europe and the Council of the European Union (particularly in relation to providing for security during international matches and prevention of xenophobic behaviour).
- to support preventive activities related to spectator violence and inappropriate behaviour during sport matches, particularly football.
- to continue disseminating information materials for municipalities, clubs and the police about preventive procedures and measures; to ensure learning from foreign experience; to support the implementation of preventive projects in key cities.

MOH:

- to improve prevention of violence to children including child abuse and neglect, trafficking in children and their commercial sexual abuse.
- to improve prevention of risky behaviour in children and juvenile persons, including the use of addictive substances.
- to improve prevention of children and youth crime.

19. Non-formal education in the area of children and youth

The objective of government policy in this area is to:

support lifelong learning as one of the decisive factors in the country's competitiveness; see investment in lifelong learning as the most important investment in development; stress continuously the importance of non-formal and informal learning in various environments; support partnership as part of civil society and division of responsibilities between the state, employers, municipalities, civic associations, etc.

Objectives of ministries:

MOD:

- to promote the development of defence activities in military schools that the army presents to civilian youth.

MOEYS:

- to analyse the current state of non-formal and informal learning in the CR in relation to the decision of the Council of Europe concerned with European youth and recognition of the importance of this learning.
- to initiate unification of terminology in the area of non-formal education.
- to support co-operation of schools, school leisure facilities and NGOs with organisations training individuals who work with children and young people and co-operation with employers.
- to implement European instruments for recognition of non-formal education (Europass, Youth pass) at national level.
- to create conditions for and support leisure projects and programmes focused on a systematic development of key competencies and personal development of children and young people based on a profound needs analysis.
- to promote interest in non-formal education by dissemination of good practices.
- to initiate systemic changes leading to improved methods, forms and content of non-formal education.

V. Implementation of Government Policy on Children and Young People for 2007-2013

- The tasks resulting from this Policy will be the responsibility of the relevant ministry which will also secure financial resources for their implementation.
- The tasks resulting from this Policy will be specified for two-year periods in the form of a Plan of Action that will be prepared by MoEYS together with other ministries for 2008 – 2009, 2010 – 2011 and 2012 - 2013.
The MoEYS will co-ordinate the development of the Plan of Action to benefit children and young people in 2007-2013.
- Ministries will present an overview of their specific tasks and measures for each two-year period at the latest on 31 December of the previous year. At the same time they will present information about task implementation in the previous period.
- The MoEYS will develop and submit to the government an interim report on policy implementation and a draft Plan of Action for the next two-year period. These documents must always be submitted by the end of March of the given year.
- A final report on implementation of the tasks resulting from the Government Policy on Children and Young People for 2007-2013 and a draft of a new policy will be submitted to the government by the minister of education, youth and sports by 31 March 2014.
- It is recommended that regions should use the Policy within their own plans and measures for the benefit of the young generation and that they should co-operate in implementation of particular tasks with the relevant ministries.
- It is also recommended that NGOs should use the Policy within their own plans of activities and that they should co-operate in the implementation of particular tasks with the relevant ministries.

VI. Funding of Implementation of Government Policy on Children and Young People for 2007-2013

- The implementation of tasks resulting from the Policy will be covered by individual ministries from their budgets. The government will not earmark any specific finance for this purpose.
- In their implementation programmes the ministries will identify the amount of resources needed.
- The ministries will also use European structural funds to finance the measures adopted, and they will establish the relevant conditions for the final beneficiaries.
- The government will continue budgeting for grant schemes to support NGOs, leisure activities of children and young people, primary prevention of socio-pathological disorders, support for minorities etc. Within the means available, the government will ensure that these budgetary resources should be increased annually by at least the rate of inflation.

VII. Management and Co-ordination of the Implementation of Government Policy on Children and Young People for 2007-2013

- The main co-ordinator of the implementation of the Government Policy on Children and Young People is the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.
- The MoEYS together with other ministries will set up a standing working group to co-ordinate implementation of the Policy.
- The Youth Chamber (an advisory and initiatory body of the minister of education, youth and sports) will be the co-ordinating and managing authority in relation to non-governmental, non-profit organisations, schools and school facilities.
- The Youth Chamber will regularly discuss state policy issues concerned with the young generation, the implementation of recommendations of the Council of Europe, and the application of legal regulations of the European Community to Czech conditions. The Youth Chamber is responsible for commenting on all legal regulations that concern children and youth. Its members are representatives of NGOs, school leisure facilities, some ministries and regions and experts in children and youth issues.