

EDUCATION OF FOREIGNERS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Legislative framework for education of foreigners in the Czech Republic.

The body of laws of the Czech Republic provides all individuals of any citizenship who are subject to the compulsory school attendance with the same rights as the citizens of the Czech Republic are provided with. The basic legal regulations are mainly: *the Bill of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, the Constitution of the Czech Republic and declared international agreements on human rights and fundamental freedoms*. The Convention on the Rights of the Child obliges the Czech Republic to make the basic education compulsory and available free of charge for everybody. The Act no. 326/1999 imposes the obligation to ensure the conditions for education of foreigners upon the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

In the course of compulsory school attendance free education in basic and special schools, including education while executing the institutional or protective re-training is provided to foreigners:

- who were granted the permission for permanent residence in the Czech Republic,
- who reside in the Czech Republic temporarily who either were granted short-term visas up to 90 days, or were granted long-term visas over 90 days, or are without a visa,
- who were granted an asylum in the Czech Republic,
- with a tolerance visa, or with a visa for the purpose of temporary protection.

Foreigners falling within the categories above are provided with free secondary education too.

Foreigners attending specialized schools of higher education are charged the same fees as Czech citizens. Realization of the institutional and protective re-training of foreigners is taxed as in the case of Czech citizens.

Foreigners being educated at schools in the Czech Republic study under the same conditions as Czech citizens. Schools are not obliged to offer extra-lessons of Czech language to a pupil-foreigner.

Statistical data on education of foreigners in the Czech Republic.

In 2003/2004 the number of children-foreigners, pupils-foreigners and students-foreigners attending schools in the Czech Republic was 34 101. 42% (approximately 14 500 individuals) of them went to universities, 37% attended basic schools, 9% kindergartens and 10% some type of secondary school. This distribution varies substantially from the distribution of Czech students and pupils.

The great majority of children-foreigners in kindergartens and basic schools comes from Vietnam (39% of all foreigners in kindergartens, 32 % at basic and secondary schools, i. e. 0,5 %, and 0,4 % of all children in kindergartens and basic schools respectively). 16% of children in kindergartens and 25% of basic school pupils have Ukrainian citizenship (i. e. 0,2 % and 0,3 % of all children and basic school pupils respectively). High percentage is further attained by children and pupils with Slovak citizenship (9 % of children, 12% of pupils, i. e. 0,1% and 0,2 % of all children and pupils respectively) and Russian citizenship (7% of children, 9% of pupils; 0,1% of all children as well as pupils).

Special schools were attended by 275 foreigners in 2003/2004 (they constituted 0,4% of children and pupils of special schools). The majority was again from Vietnam, Ukraine and Slovakia.

In the area of secondary education foreigners can be found mainly in grammar schools (1 492 students in 2003/4) and secondary specialized schools. The majority of foreigners study at secondary schools in Prague (36%). The overall number of foreigners attending grammar schools consists mainly of Vietnamese citizens (24% of foreigners studying at grammar schools), then Russian citizens (16%), Ukraine (15%) and Slovakia (10%). These four citizenships also prevail at other types of secondary schools: secondary technical schools and secondary vocational schools (the highest percentage at this type of school is formed by Ukrainian citizens - 24% of secondary technical school students, 31% of secondary vocational school students). The schools of higher education were attended by 385 foreigners, 33% of which in the evening form of study; nearly 40% of them is studying in Moravian-Silesian Region.

Programmes of the Ministry of Education supporting the integration of foreigners in the Czech Republic.

In accordance with the Conception of Integration of Foreigners in the Czech Republic adopted by the government and based on the Plan of Integration Policy, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports announced the following programmes for 2005:

1. Projects supporting multicultural education of children and youth.

Events of local as well as regional character aiming to support education towards tolerance, against racism and xenophobia, to strengthen the feeling of human solidarity and respect to other nations, to enable learning foreign culture and values in the forms adjusted to the age and specific features of social groups. Social, cultural, sport and other events for children and youth with participation of children-foreigners. Identification and implementation of effective methods, forms and means of educational activity of teachers and instructors in multicultural environment.

2. Projects supporting Czech as a foreign language.

Language education of foreigners - children and adults – as the key competence for their integration. Forms and methods of Czech language teaching (as a foreign language) especially focused on teaching foreigners – children as well as adults. The programme of creating and implementation of modern textbooks, dictionaries and teaching aids with regard to up-to-date needs of effective teaching in Czech language.

3. Studies focused on the issue of educating migrating foreigners.

Organisation of seminars for education of foreigners. Creating materials for teachers, instructors and educators informing about the culture, habits and way of life in the countries their pupils come from. Other forms of education in this field, lectures and seminars on general and specific problems of educating foreigners (adults as well as children).

The financial means earmarked for adopting the particular resolution of the Czech Government are aimed exclusively at supporting the integration of foreigners in the Czech Republic and will be used solely in accordance with the adopted conception.