

**Interreg
Danube Region**



Co-funded by
the European Union



COOPOWER

Country report The Czech Republic

by IREAS, Institute for Structural Policy

Table of contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	2
1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. PROBLEM	4
3. ANALYSIS.....	5
3.1. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS	5
3.1.1. Population and age structure.....	5
3.1.2. Marriage and fertility.....	6
3.1.3. Life expectancy and infant mortality.....	6
3.2. GENERAL ECONOMIC ACCOUNTS	7
3.2.1. National economic accounts	7
3.2.2. Business statistics	7
3.3. LABOUR MARKET SITUATION	8
3.3.1. Employment	8
3.3.2. Trainees.....	8
3.3.3. Unemployment	8
3.4. EDUCATION SYSTEM	10
3.4.1. Participation in education and training	10
3.4.2. Out-of-school rate and early leavers from education and training	10
3.4.3. Access to information and obstacles to participation in education and training	10
3.4.4. Education and training outcomes	11
3.4.5. Adult learning.....	12
3.5. HEALTH, POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION.....	13
3.5.1. Health issues	13
3.5.2. Disability - Access to education and training	13
3.5.3. Disability - Access to the labour market	13
3.5.4. Risk of poverty.....	14
3.5.5. Housing cost overburden rate	14
3.5.6. Material and social deprivation.....	14
3.6. DIGITAL ECONOMY AND SOCIETY	16
3.6.1. Personal and household access.....	16
3.6.2. Information society.....	16
3.6.3. Digital economy	16
3.6.4. Personal digital skills	17
4. SOLUTIONS.....	18
4.1 STRATEGIC GOALS	18
4.2. PROPOSED INTERVENTION (WHERE IT'S APPLICABLE)	19
5. CONCLUSIONS	20
6. REFERENCES	21

List of abbreviations

DRP	Danube Region Programme
Jems	Joint electronic monitoring system
LP	Lead partner
MA/JS	Managing authority and Joint secretariat
PP	Project partner
PR	Partner report
PPR	Project Progress Report

1. Introduction

This document aims to validate and refine the needs and challenges identified during the proposal stage, taking into account the local and national context regarding the labour market integration of vulnerable young people. Additionally, the country reports will establish common ground among partners to facilitate subsequent project activities and enhance partners' localised knowledge and understanding of the challenges and opportunities within employment services through intersectoral cooperation.

The primary research method employed is desk research, supplemented by additional interviews for validation.

This activity is essential for understanding local needs, informing evidence-based policymaking, and guiding strategic decision-making processes. Therefore, it serves as a cornerstone for the cooperative implementation of the project, contributing to O1.1 overall. The results will directly inform and be incorporated into the local strategies (O3.3) and the transnational strategy (O3.4)

2. Problem

Despite overall economic stability, low unemployment, and relatively favourable social indicators compared to the EU average, the Czech Republic faces several structural and demographic challenges that disproportionately affect vulnerable groups—especially young people.

Demographic ageing and shrinking youth cohort. The Czech population is ageing rapidly, with a declining share of people aged 15–29 and a rising age dependency ratio. Population growth is driven primarily by migration rather than natural increase, as deaths consistently exceed births. This trend increases long-term pressure on the labour market and social systems and heightens the importance of successful labour market integration of young people.

Education – labour market mismatch. Although participation in education is high and early school leaving remains low, a significant share of graduates—particularly from vocational tracks—work in jobs below their qualification level. This mismatch indicates insufficient alignment between educational curricula and labour market needs, especially in rapidly changing and digitalised sectors. As a result, young people risk underemployment and reduced career prospects despite formal qualifications.

Unequal labour market outcomes for vulnerable groups. Certain groups of young people face persistent disadvantages. Young women often have lower labour market participation due to family and care responsibilities, youth with disabilities or activity limitations experience markedly higher NEET rates, lower educational attainment, and significantly lower employment rates, and young people with low educational attainment are overwhelmingly represented among the unemployed, highlighting the strong link between education and labour market exclusion.

Low participation in lifelong learning and reskilling. Adult participation in education and training remains below the EU average, particularly among people with lower education levels, the unemployed, and those living in rural areas. Barriers include lack of time, high costs, limited information, and low perceived relevance of training. This limits labour market adaptability and exacerbates skill mismatches over the life course.

Persistent digital gap. While overall internet access is high, disparities persist based on income, education, and place of residence. Youth from disadvantaged or rural backgrounds are more likely to face limited connectivity and weaker digital skills. This digital divide restricts access to education, employment opportunities, and public services in an increasingly digital economy.

Overall, the key challenge for the Czech Republic is not widespread unemployment or economic instability, but rather structural inequalities hidden beneath strong national averages. These include demographic pressures, skills mismatches, unequal access to digital and educational opportunities, and persistent disadvantages for vulnerable youth groups. Addressing these issues requires coordinated, intersectoral policies focused on education, labour market integration, digital inclusion, and targeted social support.

3. Analysis

3.1. Population and demographic statistics

3.1.1. Population and age structure

TABLE 1
Main demographic data

	Country level
Total population	10 905 028
Proportion of 15-29-year-olds in the total population	15.2 %
Proportion of females in total population	50.9 %
Median age of population	44
Median age of population – females	45.3

Source: Eurostat. 2024 data or the latest available.

The national data show that the population of the Czech Republic has experienced a slight increase in recent years, although this growth is primarily driven by net migration, not by natural change. The natural population change remains negative, meaning that the number of deaths consistently exceeds the number of births.

The population structure of the Czech Republic is marked by gradual ageing, with the median age steadily increasing over recent years. The share of young people (aged 15–29) in the total population is declining, while the proportion of those aged 65 and over is growing, which contributes to a rising age dependency ratio reaching approximately 57.5% in 2026, with the old-age dependency ratio specifically climbing to 32.1% (ČSÚ, 2023). In summary, the Czech Republic is experiencing a shift in population structure toward older age groups, later family formation, and changing family patterns. These developments mirror broader demographic changes occurring across many European countries.

3.1.2. Marriage and fertility

TABLE 2
Main socio-demographic data

	Country level
Mean age at first marriage – females	30.4
Mean age at first marriage – males	33
Mean age of women at childbirth	3.4
Proportion of live births outside marriage	47.1
Proportion of live births from 15 to 29 years in the total live births	33.3

Source: Eurostat. 2023 data.

The data indicate a clear trend towards later family formation. Both marriage and childbirth are increasingly postponed to the early thirties, for both women and men. At the same time, the proportion of children born outside marriage is high, accounting for almost half of all live births. Together, these indicators point to changing family patterns and a diversification of pathways into parenthood.

3.1.3. Life expectancy and infant mortality

TABLE 3
Main life expectancy data

	Country level
Life expectancy at less than 1 year – total	79.9
Life expectancy at less than 1 year – males	76.9
Life expectancy at less than 1 year – females	8.9
Infant mortality rate	2.2

Source: Eurostat. 2023 data.

Life expectancy in the Czech Republic has generally followed an upward trend, although it showed fluctuations in recent years due to health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Women live significantly longer than men, and the gender gap in life expectancy remains notable. Infant mortality in the Czech Republic is relatively low compared to the EU average and has declined over the past decades. Overall, the Czech Republic shows improving long-term trends in life expectancy and infant survival, with levels comparable to those observed in many EU Member States.

3.2. General economic accounts

3.2.1. National economic accounts

TABLE 4
Main national economic accounts data

	Country level
Gross domestic product (GDP) at current market prices (Euro per capita)	29 440
Euro per inhabitant in percentage of the EU27 (from 2020) average	91.8%
Current prices, purchasing power standard (PPS, EU27 from 2020) per capita	36 435,9

Source: Eurostat. 2024 data or the latest available.

At the national level, the Czech Republic shows moderate economic stability, with GDP growth recovering in recent years following pandemic-related declines. Compensation of employees varies across regions, reflecting differences in economic performance, mainly in disadvantaged regions like Karlovy Vary or Ústí nad Labem, which consistently report the lowest wages and highest unemployment. This contrasts sharply with the economic dominance and higher compensation levels found in Prague. Overall, the Czech economy has returned to growth.

3.2.2. Business statistics

TABLE 5
Main business statistics

	Country level
Number of enterprises	1 292 436
Business churn – birth and death rate – percentage	16%

Source: Eurostat. 2022 data

Business statistics in the Czech Republic show a dominance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), particularly in sectors such as trade, manufacturing, and professional services. Most enterprises are micro-enterprises (with fewer than 10 employees), which reflects the general business structure observed across Central Europe. Business demography statistics show relatively stable rates of new business formation, with employer business demography capturing the dynamics of enterprise creation and closure. High-growth enterprises form a small but significant segment of the economy, mainly in technology, manufacturing, and export-oriented services.

3.3. Labour market situation

3.3.1. Employment

TABLE 6

Main employment data

	Country level
Employed persons (total, 15 – 24 years old)	≈ 269 000
Employed persons (females, 15 – 24 years old)	≈ 118 000
Employed persons (total, 15 – 74 years old)	≈ 5 010 000
Employed persons (females, 15 – 74 years old)	≈ 2 267 000

Source: Eurostat. 2024 data.

The employment rate in the Czech Republic has remained relatively high in recent years, reaching approximately 77% among young people aged 20–29 (ČSÚ, 2024a). Employment rates differ by gender, with young women showing lower participation compared to young men. Part-time employment is more common among young women, while young men are more often in full-time work. Temporary employment, including fixed-term contracts and seasonal jobs, also represents a notable share of youth employment. Self-employment is less frequent among young people compared to older age groups. The Czech Republic has a statutory minimum wage, which is updated on a regular basis and provides a baseline level of income protection in the labour market.

3.3.2. Trainees

In the Czech Republic, apprenticeships and traineeships are an established part of vocational education and training, with participation concentrated in sectors such as manufacturing, construction, and services, reflecting the structure of the national economy. Compensation levels for apprentices and trainees are significantly lower than for regular employees, consistent with their training status. Overall, statistical indicators confirm the presence of apprenticeships and traineeships as a component of the Czech labour market, with sectoral differences in participation and remuneration.

3.3.3. Unemployment

TABLE 7

Main unemployment data

	Country level
Unemployed persons (total, 15 – 74 years old, less than primary, primary and lower secondary education)	≈ 33 000
Unemployed persons (females, 15 - 74 years old, less than primary, primary and lower secondary education)	≈ 17 000
Unemployed persons (total, 15 – 74 years old, all ISCED 2011 level)	≈ 33 000
Unemployed persons (females, 15 – 74 years old, all ISCED 2011 level)	≈ 17 000

Source: Eurostat. 2024 data or the latest available.

The data on unemployment in the Czech Republic shows that, in 2024, there were approximately 33,000 unemployed persons aged 15–74 with lower levels of education (less than primary, primary, and lower secondary), of whom about 17,000 were women. Interestingly, the figures for total unemployment across all education levels are identical, reflecting that the vast majority of unemployed persons in this age group have lower educational attainment. This pattern highlights the strong link between lower education levels and higher risk of unemployment. Gender differences are also evident, with women representing roughly half of the unemployed population in this category, indicating a slightly lower participation in the labour market compared to men.

At the national level, the youth unemployment rate in the Czech Republic has remained consistently below the EU average over the past decade, though it has shown temporary fluctuations. Young people aged 15–29 face higher unemployment rates, reaching approximately 7.2%, compared to just 2.1% for those aged 30–64 (ČSÚ, 2025). Long-term unemployment among young people exists but remains at relatively low levels compared to the overall unemployed population. Inactivity among young people is most often explained by participation in education or training, while a significant share of young women reports family responsibilities as their main reason for being outside the labour force. Overall, the Czech Republic is a country with relatively low youth unemployment.

3.4. Education system

3.4.1. Participation in education and training

TABLE 8
Main enrolment data

	Country level
Pupils enrolled in upper secondary education, total	429 958
Pupils enrolled in upper secondary education by programme orientation	115 587

Source: Eurostat. 2024 data or the latest available.

In the Czech Republic, a dominant share of students at the upper-secondary level are enrolled in vocational programmes, representing one of the highest proportions in the EU. While boys are more frequently represented in vocational tracks, young women are more likely to pursue tertiary education, where they now significantly outpace men in completion rates. Although vocational education is prevalent, the system remains permeable, because graduates can enter university after they complete the state graduation exam. Furthermore, the share of young people aged 20–24 in tertiary education is steadily rising, while the proportion of early school leavers remains consistently below 7 %. Reflecting these positive trends, the NEET rate for youth aged 15–29 remains relatively low compared to the EU average. However, adult participation in lifelong learning continues to be limited, particularly among individuals with lower education backgrounds.

3.4.2. Out-of-school rate and early leavers from education and training

The Czech Republic has a relatively low rate of early leavers from education and training, consistently below the EU target of 9 %. Gender differences are evident, with boys more likely to leave education earlier than girls. By labour status, most early leavers are either unemployed or inactive, while a notable share is already employed. By degree of urbanisation, young people in rural areas show a higher likelihood of leaving education early compared to those in urban areas.

3.4.3. Access to information and obstacles to participation in education and training

In the Czech Republic, the interest in searching for information about learning opportunities varies by age, education level, and type of learning. Younger people are more likely to search for formal education opportunities, while adults more frequently look for non-formal or informal learning. Gender differences are small, though women are slightly more likely than men to search for non-formal and adult learning opportunities. Individuals with higher educational attainment are more

likely to seek information about further learning opportunities than those with lower levels of education. Regarding sources of information, the most commonly used channels are internet search engines and institutional websites, followed by personal networks such as family and friends, while public employment services and printed materials are used less often.

People in the Czech Republic face various barriers to participating in education and training, with differences by age, gender, and educational attainment. According to official statistical surveys of ČSÚ (2024b), among those willing to engage in further learning, the most cited reasons for non-participation include lack of time due to work or family responsibilities, high costs of education or training, and lack of information about available opportunities or suitable programmes. Individuals with lower levels of education are more likely to report lack of motivation, perceived irrelevance of training, health-related issues, or low confidence in their learning abilities as barriers. Among those not interested in participating in any form of education or training, the most frequent reasons are satisfaction with their current level of knowledge, doubts about the benefits of further education, and the perception that it is too late to return to study, particularly among older age groups. Educational background strongly influences attitudes toward lifelong learning, with higher educational attainment associated with greater openness to participation and fewer perceived obstacles.

3.4.4. Education and training outcomes

In the Czech Republic, the transition from education to employment is relatively efficient compared to the EU average, though some groups of young people continue to face challenges. Most young adults have completed at least upper-secondary education, and the share of tertiary graduates has been growing, especially among women. Despite this, a proportion of young people remain outside employment, education, or training. These situations are more frequent among women, those with lower educational attainment, residents of less urbanised regions, and young people with long-term activity limitations. Most youth aged 15–24 are still engaged in education or training, but participation declines significantly after the age of 20, marking a critical point in the transition to the labour market. Among those who are no longer in education, employment outcomes are closely linked to qualification level and the time elapsed since completing studies, with vocational and tertiary graduates generally finding employment more quickly.

Young people in the Czech Republic tend to move from education to employment relatively quickly compared to the EU average. Recent school-leavers most often find jobs in the service sector, while a significant share also starts employment in industry and manufacturing. Most graduates begin their careers as employees, with only a small proportion entering self-employment or managerial positions. Data also show that the educational background of parents continues to influence the employment outcomes of young people, with higher parental education associated with stronger labour market positions. Another challenge is job mismatch: a considerable share of recent graduates work in positions below their qualification level, particularly among those with vocational education.

3.4.5. Adult learning

In the Czech Republic, adult participation in education and training remains below the EU average, though gradual improvements have been observed in recent years. Participation varies significantly across population groups. Younger adults are more likely to take part in learning than older age groups, and individuals with tertiary education are much more active in both formal and non-formal training compared to those with lower levels of education. Women tend to participate slightly more often than men, although the difference is small. Employment status also plays a key role: employed people are more likely to engage in training, particularly in non-formal programmes, while participation rates are lower among the unemployed and the inactive. Regional and geographical disparities are evident, with residents of urban areas showing higher participation than those in rural or peripheral regions.

3.5. Health, poverty and social exclusion

3.5.1. Health issues

Generally, the self-perceived health varies by age, sex, and socioeconomic status. Younger people generally report better health, while older adults and those with lower labour market participation tend to assess their health less positively. Educational attainment is also linked to health outcomes, with individuals holding higher qualifications more likely to report good health across age groups. Data on functional limitations show that these increase with age and are more common among people with lower levels of education. Differences also appear by degree of urbanisation, with urban residents reporting slightly fewer limitations than those living in rural areas. Absence from work due to health problems is reported more often by older individuals and those with lower education levels. Higher absence rates are also recorded among people with activity limitations, particularly in older age groups.

3.5.2. Disability - Access to education and training

In the Czech Republic, educational attainment among individuals with disabilities or activity limitations is lower than in the general population. The proportion of tertiary graduates is particularly low among those with severe limitations, including in the 15–29 age group. Participation in education and training is also lower among individuals with activity limitations, with differences observable across age groups and sexes. Youth with disabilities show higher rates of being neither in employment, education, or training compared to their peers without limitations. The rate of early school leaving is elevated among young people with activity limitations, indicating greater challenges in completing secondary education and moving into higher levels of study or employment.

3.5.3. Disability - Access to the labour market

In the Czech Republic, individuals with disabilities or activity limitations face clear disadvantages in the labour market. The disability employment gap is particularly wide for people with severe limitations and is more pronounced among women. Employment by occupation shows that people with disabilities are underrepresented in higher-skilled positions and more frequently employed in elementary or manual jobs. Unemployment rates are higher among youth and adults with disabilities, especially those with lower educational attainment. Data also indicate a higher prevalence of discouraged workers among people with disabilities, meaning many are available to

work but are not actively seeking employment. Activity rates are consistently lower for individuals with disabilities, particularly among those with lower education levels.

3.5.4. Risk of poverty

Although the recent financial crisis and consequent high level of inflation has worsened the economic situation of people in the Czech Republic, the overall risk of poverty or social exclusion remain among the lowest in the EU. Nevertheless, Eurostat data show that certain groups remain more vulnerable. Children and single-parent households face higher risks, and children whose parents have low educational attainment are particularly affected. Labour market status has a strong influence: unemployed and economically inactive people are more exposed to poverty or exclusion, while those in full-time employment are less affected. In-work poverty, however, still occurs, especially among people in part-time or low-paid jobs, with young workers and women somewhat more affected. Educational attainment is closely linked to poverty outcomes, with individuals with low education showing significantly higher risks compared to the highly educated. Housing and urbanisation also play a role, as people in rented housing or in densely populated urban areas are more vulnerable. Regional disparities exist, though they are less pronounced than in many other EU countries. Certain regions with lower economic development record slightly higher risks.

3.5.5. Housing cost overburden rate

In the Czech Republic, the overall housing cost overburden rate—the share of the population spending more than 40% of their disposable income on housing—is among the lowest in the EU. Within the population, however, clear disparities exist. Young people under 30 and individuals at risk of poverty are more likely to face high housing cost burdens. The burden rises sharply among households in the lowest income quintile. Tenure status plays a significant role, with people living in rented dwellings, particularly at market prices, showing much higher overburden rates than homeowners. Differences also appear by degree of urbanisation, with residents of densely populated urban areas more exposed to housing cost pressures than those in rural regions. Household type matters as well: single-person households, especially elderly women living alone, and single parents with children show higher overburden risks. Regional disparities are also visible, with Prague and Central Bohemia reporting higher rates compared to other regions.

3.5.6. Material and social deprivation

In the Czech Republic, the overall material and social deprivation rate is among the lowest in the European Union, reflecting relatively stable living conditions. Nevertheless, data show that

disparities exist across age, education, economic activity, and region. Younger people and those in employment generally report lower levels of deprivation, while higher risks are observed among the unemployed and economically inactive. Education is a strong protective factor: individuals with higher educational attainment experience significantly lower deprivation rates than those with only primary education. People living in rural areas tend to higher deprivation than those in densely populated urban centres. Severe material and social deprivation are relatively rare but still present. It affects disadvantaged groups more strongly, particularly those with low education, the unemployed, and certain regions outside the capital. Children are especially vulnerable when their parents have low educational attainment, pointing to risks of intergenerational disadvantage.

3.6. Digital economy and society

3.6.1. Personal and household access

Internet access among households in the Czech Republic has expanded significantly over the past decade, reaching a level close to the EU average. Broadband connections form the backbone of this development, with the vast majority of households now relying on fast and stable access. Despite this overall progress, disparities remain visible. Households with lower income or lower educational attainment are less likely to have broadband connections, reflecting both financial barriers and gaps in digital literacy. Youth from disadvantaged families or from rural regions often face weaker connectivity, which can limit opportunities in education, employment, and access to online services. A segment of young people remains at risk of exclusion, particularly those lacking support in navigating digital technologies.

3.6.2. Information society

Internet use in the Czech Republic is widespread, particularly among younger age groups, and education is one of the common purposes of online activity. The pandemic years accelerated this trend, reinforcing the role of digital tools in learning. Internet purchases are common, especially among younger individuals, and the share of people shopping online has been steadily increasing. At the same time, the adoption of emerging technologies shows a more moderate spread, being more frequent in urban areas and among higher-income households. In the labour market, the use of computers and the internet is most prevalent in sectors such as information technology, finance, and services, while it is less frequent in industry and construction.

3.6.3. Digital economy

The digital economy in the Czech Republic has shown dynamic development in recent years, with e-commerce representing a growing and increasingly significant part of the national economy. Online retail turnover has steadily expanded, driven by strong consumer engagement and the growing importance of digital platforms in everyday life. E-commerce activity is particularly high in wholesale, retail trade, and manufacturing, where larger enterprises lead the market. Consumers increasingly use mobile devices for shopping, reflecting the integration of technology into daily purchasing habits. Small and medium-sized enterprises are progressively expanding their online presence, although resource and capacity limitations can constrain their engagement. Overall, the growth of e-commerce supports innovation in business models, enhances consumer choice, and strengthens connections between companies and customers, contributing to the resilience and competitiveness of the Czech digital market ecosystem.

3.6.4. Personal digital skills

In the Czech Republic the share of people without basic digital skills is relatively low compared to the EU average. Most of the population demonstrates at least basic competences, particularly in areas such as online communication and information search. Advanced digital skills are more common among younger age groups and individuals with higher levels of education, while older people and those with lower qualifications are more likely to face digital exclusion.

4. Solutions

As the Czech Republic is not a pilot country for the educational activities within this project, the proposed solutions focus on a strategic national level. The objective is to leverage the findings from the previous analysis to suggest systemic improvements in the integration of vulnerable young people into the labour market through intersectoral cooperation.

4.1 Strategic goals

Based on the national strategic priorities of the Czech Republic, specifically the Strategy for the Education Policy of the Czech Republic up to 2030+ and the Digital Czech Republic programme, the following goals are proposed to address the challenges identified in the previous analysis:

1. Focus on Competences and Reducing Inequalities (Strategy 2030+): The primary goal is to shift the focus of education towards the development of key competences rather than isolated knowledge. This includes a specific aim to reduce educational inequalities, ensuring that vulnerable youth (especially from low-income families or regions with lower social status) have equal access to quality education and subsequent labour market success.
2. Enhancing Digital Literacy and Skills (Digital Czech Republic): Aligning with the "Digital Education and Skills" pillar, the goal is to improve the digital literacy of the young population. This intervention specifically targets youth at risk of digital exclusion (e.g., those from rural areas or disadvantaged backgrounds), ensuring they possess the digital fluency required by the modern, automated labour market.
3. Support for Lifelong Learning and Reskilling: In line with national goals to foster a knowledge-based economy, the objective is to increase participation in adult learning and vocational training. This is crucial for graduates of vocational tracks who currently face a high "mismatch" between their education and their actual job positions.
4. Improving the Adaptability of Vocational Education: Strengthening the link between vocational schools and employers to ensure that students from vulnerable groups gain practical skills that are directly applicable, thereby reducing the risk of them becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) after graduation.

4.2. Proposed intervention (where it's applicable)

Based on the validated needs of the Czech labour market and inspired by successful intersectoral models, the following interventions are proposed to support vulnerable youth at a national level:

- Integrated Career and Digital Guidance Hubs: Promoting the development of "one-stop-shop" regional centres that provide career counselling alongside digital literacy training, specifically targeting youth from low-income families and rural areas who face higher risks of exclusion.
- Support for Students at Risk of Poverty: Designing "Learning Ambition" schemes in cooperation with regional Educational Assistance Centres to provide targeted financial and psychological support for students eligible for social assistance, ensuring their socio-economic environment does not hinder their educational goals
- Intersectoral Support for Young Women: Developing referral pathways between employment services and family support centres to provide counselling and flexible learning opportunities for young women whose labour market participation is limited by family responsibilities.
- "Digital Access" Outreach Programmes: To bridge the gap in rural connectivity and literacy, mobile digital workshops and equipment-sharing schemes should be supported, particularly for students whose families cannot afford high-speed broadband.
- Enhanced Work-Based Learning (WBL) for Vulnerable Groups: Strengthening the transition from education to employment through subsidized internships and apprenticeships that specifically target youth with activity limitations or those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

5. Conclusions

The analysis of the Czech Republic's socio-economic and demographic landscape reveals a country characterized by overall economic stability and one of the lowest unemployment rates in the European Union. However, beneath these positive national averages lie specific "pockets of vulnerability" that require targeted, intersectoral interventions. The demographic shifts indicate a gradual ageing of the population and a declining share of young people aged 15–29, which increases the long-term strategic importance of ensuring the successful labour market integration of every youth cohort.

A significant finding of this analysis is the persistent mismatch between education and labour market needs. While participation in education is high and early school leaving remains low, a substantial share of vocational graduates works in positions below their qualification level. This highlights a critical need to better align vocational curricula with the evolving requirements of the modern economy and to enhance the adaptability of graduates through specialized bridging programmes.

In the realm of digitalization, which is fundamental to the modern labour market, a digital divide remains evident despite high overall internet penetration. This gap is particularly pronounced among youth from disadvantaged backgrounds or rural areas, who face barriers such as weaker connectivity and a lack of support in navigating digital technologies. Bridging this gap is essential for ensuring equal access to both educational opportunities and higher-skilled employment in an increasingly automated economy.

Furthermore, specific groups of young people continue to face disproportionate challenges. Young women often remain outside the labour force due to family responsibilities, while youth with disabilities or activity limitations face significantly higher NEET rates and lower overall participation. The situation is further complicated by the fact that adult participation in lifelong learning remains below the EU average, particularly among those with lower initial educational attainment, who perceive barriers such as high costs and lack of time more intensely.

In conclusion, although the Czech Republic is not a pilot country for this project's educational activities, the findings underscore that a coherent, multi-institutional approach is necessary. By focusing on the proposed strategic goals, such as reducing educational inequalities, enhancing digital skills, and fostering stronger cooperation between employment services, educational institutions, and employers, the Czech Republic can better support its most vulnerable young citizens in navigating the transition from school to a sustainable professional career.

6. References

CMS. (2025). *Ecommerce in the Czech Republic* [Expert guide]. CMS Legal Services. Retrieved from <https://cms.law/en/int/expert-guides/ecommerce-in-cee/czech-republic>

Český statistický úřad. (2023, November 23). *Population projection of the Czech Republic - 2023–2100*. <https://csu.gov.cz/produkty/projekce-obyvatelstva-ceske-republiky-20232100>

Český statistický úřad. (2024a). *Trh práce v ČR - časové řady (2014–2023)*. <https://csu.gov.cz/produkty/trh-prace-v-cr-casove-rady-20142023>

Český statistický úřad. (2024b). *Vzdělávání dospělých v České republice – výstupy z šetření AES 2022*. <https://csu.gov.cz/produkty/vzdelavani-dospelych-v-ceske-republice-vystupy-z-setreni-aes-2022>

Český statistický úřad (2025). *Zaměstnanost a nezaměstnanost podle výsledků VŠPS – 4. čtvrtletí 2024*. <https://csu.gov.cz/produkty/zamestnanost-a-nezamestnanost-podle-vysledku-vsps-4-ctvrtleti-2024>

Eurostat. (2024). *Labour Force Survey (LFS) data and Digital Economy and Society statistics*. European Commission. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

Government of the Czech Republic (2018). *Digital Czech Republic Programme*. Office of the Government. Available at: <https://www.vlada.cz/en/evropske-zalezitosti/digitalni-cesko/>

MŠMT (2020). *Strategy for the Education Policy of the Czech Republic up to 2030+*. Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Available at: <https://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/skolstvi-v-cr/strategie-2030>

MPO (Czech Republic) & World Bank Group. (2019). *Czech Republic: Assessment of the SME policy mix* (October 2019). Retrieved from <https://mpo.gov.cz/assets/cz/podnikani/dotace-a-podpora-podnikani/oppik-2014-2020/aktualni-informace/2019/11/CR-SME-Assessment- Oct-20 .pdf>