



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
1 June 2021

Original: English
English, French and Spanish only

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Seventieth session

27 September–15 October 2021

Item 7 (a) of the provisional agenda

**Consideration of reports: reports submitted by States parties
in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant**

Replies of Czechia to the list of issues in relation to its third periodic report^{*}, ^{}**

[Date received: 16 February 2021]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

** The annexes to the present document may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



I. General information

Reply to paragraph 1 of the list of issues E/C.12/CZE/Q/3

1. The Czech Republic described the position of the Covenant in domestic law and the national protection of economic, social and cultural rights in par. 3 and 4 of its periodic report. The rights contained in the Covenant are directly applied by courts and administrative authorities according to Art. 10 of the Constitution. The differences in the content of the Charter and the Covenant or other human rights treaties do not affect the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights in the Czech Republic.
2. The Czech Republic described the use of the Covenant by the courts in par. 5 and 6 of its periodic report. Until now, the Supreme Court referred to the Covenant in 55 cases, the Constitutional Court in 60 cases.
3. The Constitution states the main principles on functioning of the judiciary. Judges and courts shall be independent in the performance of their duties and their impartiality must not be compromised. In their decision-making, judges are bound by law and international treaties. The Act on Courts and Judges further implements the provisions of the Constitution. In 2019, the Government submitted an amendment to the Act on Courts and Judges to strengthen independence and impartiality of judiciary. The proposal aims to introduce a uniform and transparent selection system of judges and court officials. Their nomination should be based on an open selection procedure open to judge trainees as well as non-judicial applicants. Selection procedures for presidents of courts should be newly regulated by law. In addition, an amendment to the Act on the Proceedings in Cases of Judges, Public Prosecutors and Certificated Bailiffs shall strengthen the disciplinary proceedings of judges, prosecutors and bailiffs by introducing two levels of jurisdiction. The Parliament is currently discussing both proposals. The impartiality in court proceedings has been reinforced by a new system of random assignment and redistribution of court cases in 2020, which dis-abeles any prediction of the division of cases.

Reply to paragraph 2 of the list of issues

4. The Ministry of Environment introduced the investment programme „Boiler Subsidies” which aims to reduce air pollution from local heating plants by replacing at least 85,000 old non-ecological boilers. In 3 calls, a total of 9 billion CZK will be distributed from EU funds to households. Almost 58,000 projects have already been supported. Vulnerable and low-income households in low-income regions are provided with interest-free loans to pre-finance a replacement of non-compliant boilers in family houses.
5. Currently, the biggest challenge related to climate change is drought. In 2019, 2 billion crowns were distributed among 4606 projects aimed at improving the supply of drinking water, its quality and saving. As a result, the supply of drinking water to 200,000 people in 120 municipalities has improved and 81,000 people in 80 municipalities have gained new access to drinking water. A number of projects supporting the restoration of natural landscape functions shall help to increase its water retention abilities. Subsidies provided for revitalization of green spaces, infiltration of rainwater in the built-up landscape and construction of green roofs supports the adaptation of residences to climate change, including reducing the impact on vulnerable groups. An Early Warning System for rapid temperature changes or extreme temperatures aims at helping vulnerable groups (e.g. children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities).
6. According to the 2019 Evaluation of the National Action Plan on Adaptation to Climate Change, 70% of all 350 tasks are being fulfilled. An update to the Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change in the Czech Republic is being prepared. The greenhouse gas emissions decreased between 1990 and 2018 by 35.6%. According to the emission projections in the National Energy and Climate Plan, the emission target set by the Czech Republic under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change shall be met by 2030. The pledge of the Czech Republic to the Green Climate Fund is ca 5,3 mil USD. Foreign development cooperation includes projects aimed at adapting to climate change and reducing greenhouse

gas emissions in developing countries., improving access to water and clean energy, reducing disaster risk, saving energy and adaptation of the agricultural sector.

II. Issues relating to the general provisions of the Covenant (arts. 1–5)

Reply to paragraph 3 (a) of the list of issues

7. The data on the levels of inequality and the proportion of persons below the poverty line are provided in Annex I.

Reply to paragraph 3 (b) of the list of issues

8. The data on proportion of public revenue generated through taxes are provided in Annex I.

Reply to paragraph 3 (c) of the list of issues

9. The data on the rates of corporate tax, personal income tax, value added tax, the excise duty and on the percentage of total revenue generated from personal income taxes collected from the richest decile of the population are provided in Annex I.

Reply to paragraph 3 (d) of the list of issues

10. The data on the percentage of public expenditure from gross domestic product and the proportion of the public budget allocated to social spending within total public expenditure are provided in Annex I.

Reply to paragraph 3 (e) of the list of issues

11. The data on inflation-adjusted absolute levels of social spending are provided in Annex I.

Reply to paragraph 4 of the list of issues

12. The Czech Republic summarised its position in par. 21–25 of its periodic report. The discrimination in economic, social and cultural rights is prohibited by the direct application of the Covenant itself, the constitutional prohibition of discrimination in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms which contains all the grounds included in the Covenant (including colour and descent) and the prohibition in the Antidiscrimination Act, the Labour Code, the Employment Act and other legislation. If not mentioned separately, the grounds of colour and descent may be included under racial discrimination according to its definition in CERD. The Antidiscrimination Act as the general antidiscrimination regulation defines direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation or instruction and initiation to discrimination.

13. The updated data on cases of discrimination detected by labour inspectorates are provided in Annex 1.

14. The courts dealt with four cases of discrimination in education. Three cases concerned the provision of allowance for a teaching assistant, one case the right of a child with disabilities to be educated according to their health condition. The cases are still pending.

15. All discrimination victims can claim compensation in courts and fill complaints within administrative bodies as stated in par. 24 of the periodic report. In cases including the discrimination areas and grounds covered by the Antidiscrimination Act, the victims proceed

according to that Act, in other cases according to the Civil Code. Both ways are in their form equal and can provide protection against discrimination including compensation.

16. The Ombudspersons plays the main role in increasing public awareness of victims of discrimination and the defence of their rights. The Ombudsperson publishes information on remedies for victims of discrimination, instructions for filling out complaints or court actions to claim compensation or possibilities of legal aid on their website.¹ Public inspection authorities dealing with discrimination such as the Labour Inspection publish information on discrimination and remedies on their websites.

Reply to paragraph 5 of the list of issues

17. According to the Civil Procedure Code, the rules on the shift of burden of proof apply in all cases concerning racial or ethnic discrimination and in all cases concerning discrimination in employment and occupation. In other cases, the shift of the burden of proof unfortunately does not apply. The Czech Republic plans to amend the rules of the burden of proof during the recodification of civil procedure legislation in the coming years.

Reply to paragraph 6 of the list of issues

18. The Roma Integration Strategy until 2020 requires the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to monitor the situation of Roma children, pupils and students. The Czech School Inspectorate monitors the activities of schools and school counselling facilities in inclusive education and cooperates with the Office of the Government, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the Ombudsperson, non-governmental organisations and other experts in assessing the situation of Roma children, pupils and students.

19. In the 2017/2018 school year, 2 complaints concerning discrimination against Roma pupils were submitted to the Czech School Inspectorate, both were assessed as justified. According to data from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the number of complaints about unequal treatment of Roma children, pupils and students has been declining.

20. In 2019, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports allocated the amount exceeding CZK 12 billion to the subsidy program Support for the Integration of the Roma Minority. It focused on help and support of Roma pupils in pre-school and primary education and their successful transition to secondary school as well as leisure activities for Roma children and pupils. 29 non-profit organisations and 1 school were supported.

21. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports analyses the impacts of the introduction of the compulsory final year of pre-school education. The analysis assesses the barriers of education of children from disadvantaged backgrounds and focuses on the reasons for postponing compulsory school attendance, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports will respond detected problems.

22. The early school leaving of Roma students remains a persistent problem. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports focuses on reducing barriers in access to higher education, by e.g. social scholarships linked to the minimum wage rate. Further support is provided through calls in the Operational Program Research, Development and Education which focuses on increasing the participation of students with special needs, from socio-economically disadvantaged groups and ethnic minorities in higher education, and reducing students' failure.

23. The Final Reports of the projects supported by the grant program Support for Field Work showed that in 2019 field workers carried out approximately 1,471 interventions concerning discrimination. Social workers dealt with 66 cases of alleged discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity by the labour offices and 38 cases of alleged discrimination by employers. Social workers provided Roma clients with information on possibilities of defence of their rights in discrimination cases (the Ombudsperson, inspection authorities,

¹ See <https://www.ochrance.cz/en/discrimination/assistance-to-victims-of-discrimination/>.

courts). Clients, however, usually did not seek any solution of their problem. In 2019, the State Labour Inspection received two complaints on possible discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin. Some labour offices of the Czech Republic try to prevent cases of discrimination, for example, by allowing job interviews to be held on their premises.

24. Roma face insufficient supply of housing, high deposits and exaggerated rental prices or reluctance of landlords to rent an apartment to Roma people. Social workers from the municipal projects financed by the Office of the Government met a total of 338 cases of alleged discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity by real estate agents or landlords of flats and hostels towards a Roma person. In 2019, municipalities with a higher number of Roma implemented social housing programs introducing the Housing First approach, or a three-tier model of permeable housing. More information in social housing is available in par. 137 sq. of the periodic report.

25. Reports on the Roma minority show that, in general, Roma have a more reluctant attitude towards health protection than the majority population. Their relation with the health care system is also difficult due to lack of mutual trust and prejudice. Social workers from the municipal projects financed by the Office of the Government carried out ca 5,000 health interventions like providing information and support to patients in registering with doctors or in dealing with risky behaviours (especially gambling or substance abuse). They also encountered 125 cases of alleged discrimination by representatives of medical facilities against Roma people. However, in 2019 the Ministry of Health did not register any official complaint on discrimination against the Roma minority.

26. In 2018, a Coordination Working Group of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic was established, focusing on social and health services and providing care, support and assistance for people in need, including the Roma minority. The aim is to improve the quality and effective functioning of services on the socio-health border and to ensure their availability.

27. In 2018, the Public Health Institute launched a five year project “Effective Health Promotion of Persons at Risk of Poverty and Social Exclusion” aimed at increasing health literacy, improving health awareness and lifestyle of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion. In 2018/2019, 14 Regional Health Support Centres were established as expert bases for the implementation of the new 66 intervention support programs implemented in 11 thematic areas (personal hygiene, healthy living, addiction prevention, nutrition, etc.). The centres have coordinators and so-called health promotion mediators, mostly of Roma origin. At the end of 2019 there were 50 employees, in 2020 the number shall increase. The centres cooperate with the key partners in their region (hygiene stations, non-governmental organizations, the Union of Towns and Municipalities, the Agency for Social Inclusion, etc.). In 2019, regional health education activities focused on HIV/AIDS prevention, addiction prevention, daily hygiene, etc.

28. The project “Activation and Empowerment of Roma Actors through the National Roma Platform” aimed at organizing meetings in regions with Roma stakeholders to discuss the implementation of the Roma integration strategy, provide input for the new Roma Integration Strategy after 2021 as well as counselling for Roma community building, cooperation with majority communities, grants for Roma communities and other relevant issues. The meetings also formulated recommendations for Roma integration in the area of employment, education, health care or housing.

Reply to paragraph 7 of the list of issues

29. Laws regulating the residence of foreigners in the Czech Republic are based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination. In practice, public institutions and non-governmental organisations provide assistance and protection to foreigners and help to prevent discrimination against migrants and migrant workers.

30. The public integration policy focuses mainly on the support of access to employment, housing and public social support. The State operates the integration policy aimed at foreigners staying in the Czech Republic and the State Integration Program designed for the

integration of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection. Integration aims at the peaceful mutual coexistence between foreigners and Czech citizens and their self-sufficient life in Czech society. Regional Centres for Support of Integration of Foreigners Integration provide foreigners with information, assistance or courses of Czech language. Special adaptation courses shall familiarize foreigners with the Czech legal, political and social system, their rights and obligations as well as basic values of Czech Republic and the EU. Municipalities organize local integration projects funded by the state. The integration of foreign nationals and refugees into Czech society is further addressed in other strategic documents, especially the Social Inclusion Strategy 2021–2030 and the related Action Plan, which will contain specific measures in areas like social services, health care or housing.

31. In the labor market, participants in the State Integration Program have the same rights as Czech citizens, i.e. they can work without any work permit and register at the Labor Office. The State Integration Program participants can also participate in retraining and other educational courses. Foreigners derive their rights from their residence permit. Permanent or long term residence includes the same work entitlements as Czech citizenship. Other residence permits (e.g. visas) may also include working permits.

32. Entitlement to social security benefits is based on insurance derived from employment in the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic also has bilateral social security agreements with some countries to facilitate mutual recognition and cooperation. Non-insurance social benefits are equally open to most persons with legal residence in the Czech Republic. A one-off extraordinary immediate assistance is provided also to persons staying illegally in the Czech Republic in case of risk of serious health damage. The Czech Republic provided information on access to health care for foreign nationals in para. 104 of its periodic report. The new legal regulation on health insurance of foreign nationals has not been adopted yet.

33. Illegal migrants are placed in detention facilities for foreign nationals. Facilities for detention of migrants include the asylum facilities under the Asylum Act and detention facilities for foreign nationals under the Act on the Residence of Foreign Nationals. These facilities shall ensure to their residents equal access to all rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. They are operated by the Refugee Facilities Administration of the Ministry of the Interior (RFA).

34. Applicants for international protection are provided in asylum facilities with health care to the same extent and under the same conditions as Czech citizens, i.e. free health services under public health insurance. Health care for adults and children is provided by the Medical Facility of the Ministry of the Interior, or by external specialists if necessary. The Asylum Act explicitly requires equal access to education which is also provided in the facility or nearby schools including school supplies. Education is supported by extracurricular activities in children's centers.

35. Children and their parents illegally staying in the Czech Republic are placed at the facility in Bela-Jezova adapted for the stay of children and continuously renovated. The facility has a room for mothers with children, classrooms and medical station with medical staff including pediatricians. There are two classes for children for compulsory schooling. There is also a special children's center where leisure education and free-time education are provided including activities outside the facility, together with a playground and a gym. The data on number of unaccompanied and accompanied children in detention facilities for foreigners are provided in Annex 1.

Reply to paragraph 8 of the list of issues

36. A recent amendment to the Act on residence of foreigners will introduce a statelessness determination procedure for the legalization of the stay of stateless persons in the country and their rights and obligations. The procedure shall be similar to the asylum procedure. The applicant can be provided with free interpretation if necessary. There are no possibilities of appeal but judicial review is possible. The stateless person can obtain a visa to legalize their stay in the country, but can qualify for any other residence permit. They can also work freely in the country after 6 months of residence, is included in public health

insurance and also has the right to attend school education. The statistics on the number of stateless persons are provided in Annex 1.

Reply to paragraph 9 of the list of issues

37. Actually, the legal gender recognition in Czech Republic is subject of the medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria and chirurgical interventions disabling reproduction. Subsequently, the person's gender marker in civil registry is changed and the person receives a new name and identity documents. The proposal on same-sex marriage is still being debated in the Chamber of Deputies and has not been adopted yet. Sexual orientation and gender identity are among prosecuted grounds of hatred and subject to measures in the annual government anti-extremism and hatred strategies. The topic is also included in education on all schools at elementary and secondary level. School prevention programs include also the prevention of homophobia based on guidance for teachers and school personnel by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

Reply to paragraph 10 of the list of issues

38. The Government adopted the Action Plan on the Balanced Representation of Women and Men in Decision-making Positions for 2016–2018, (the “Balanced Representation Action Plan 2016–2018”) to promote women's representation in managerial and decision-making positions and the “+1” Strategy. Central public administration bodies shall adopt measures to gradually achieve the 40% representation of both sexes in decision-making positions and have to report annually on the implementation of their steps. In their reports, ministries indicate using gender-sensitive language and emphasizing gender equality and diversity in the job advertisement, appointing gender-balances selection committees, and facilitating flexible working arrangements to improve work-life balance. Gender audits were also undertaken in central bodies of state administration. While the 40% representation of both women and men was not yet achieved, the adopted measures facilitate a gradual increase of women in decision-making positions. As of 31 December 2019, women accounted for 32% of deputy ministers, 27% of department ministers and 43% of unit heads.

III. Issues relating to the specific provisions of the Covenant (arts. 6–15)

Reply to paragraph 11 of the list of issues

39. The active employment policy measures support, in particular, jobseekers that need special support due to their health, age or childcare or other reasons limiting their participation in the labour market (e.g. a social exclusion due to long-term unemployment). Since 2019, employers have been financially motivated to offer socially purposeful jobs to disadvantaged job seekers by increasing public contribution to their remuneration, which increases accordingly to the jobseeker's disadvantages.

40. In 2019, the total unemployment rate decreased. The number of long-term (more than 24 months) unemployed jobseekers declined rapidly. Jobseekers in charge of children under 15 years of age showed a slower decline. On the contrary, young people's share in the total number of job seekers increased. The updated statistical data on the employment rate in 2018–2019, the economic activity of individuals aged 15+ in 2019, the number of job seekers in 2019, the use of active policy instruments in 2019 are provided in Annex 1.

Reply to paragraph 12 of the list of issues

41. There are no estimates of the number of people employed in the informal economy in the Czech Republic. The Act on Employment defines illegal work and offenses related to its performance or facilitation. Labour inspection authorities detect and combat illegal

employment. The Czech Republic provided in its periodic report the statistics on the number of inspections carried out by the labour inspections, the number of infringements detected, the number and amount of fines imposed, Further information is provided in Annex 1.

42. The Interministerial Body for Combating Illegal Employment of Foreigners coordinates activities of competent public authorities in the fight against illegal employment of foreigners from third countries. The Czech Republic is also a member on The European Platform tackling undeclared work.

Reply to paragraph 13 of the list of issues

43. The adjustment of the minimum wage is the exclusive competence of the government. Before increasing the minimum wage, the government conducts a social dialogue with employers' and trade unions in the Council of the Economic and Social Agreement of the Czech Republic. Each increase of the minimum wage shall be proportionate to the increase of the cost of living so employees can cover basic living needs from their own earnings.

44. It should also increase the motivation to work instead of being unemployed and drawing social benefits.

45. From 2013 to 2019, the average gross salary increased by 24,9%. Over the same period, the minimum wage increased by 49,1% in real terms. The relation of the minimum wage to the average wage reached 39,1 %. The most recent increase of the minimum wage is dated back to January 1 2021. Since then, the minimum wage is CZK 15,200/month or CZK 90.50/hour.

46. The compliance with labour law regulations concerning remuneration and its monitoring is one of the priorities of labour inspections. In 2019, they detected 102 infringements of the minimum wage regulations, most often by the small employers in the wholesale and retail section. They imposed 181 fines for a failure to provide the employee with at least the minimum wage.

Reply to paragraph 14 of the list of issues

47. Within „22% TO EQUALITY” project, two analytic reports on the differences in remuneration of men and women were elaborated. The main finding is that the unjustified difference in the remuneration of women and men for the same work in the same workplace is at 11%. In 2019, a public opinion survey on experience and opinions on equal remuneration of women and men was launched. Currently, a methodology focusing on equal pay for equal work is being developed and tested in cooperation with the State Labour Inspection Office. 30 inspectors of the State Labour Inspection Office and the Regional Labour Inspectorates, and 20 methodologists and 20 managers of the Labour Office were trained on equal opportunities for women and men and the legislation on equal pay and non-discrimination. 12 inspections on equal pay for women and men were conducted, but no infringements were detected.

48. The implementation of Logib analytic tool for labour law purposes continues. Currently, 15 employers are undergoing the analysis. Public administrations are undergoing testing. Since 2019, the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic gives preference to grant applicants who have implemented the Logib tool.

49. The social partners drew up a position paper “Social dialogue on equal pay for women and men” which contains specific proposal for provisions in collective agreements that should contribute to improve the position of women in the labour market and to their fairer remuneration. The online Wage and Salary Calculator tool contributes to transparency in remuneration and provides information on wage and salary levels in specific sectors, industries, positions and regions. The project team, in close cooperation with Deloitte, created an analysis of the possibilities of legislative benefits for employee organizations applying gender equality standards and equal pay for women and men. The conclusions of the analysis will be taken into account in the Action Plan for Equal Remuneration for Women and Men.

50. The Czech Republic develops activities to overcome gender stereotypes in education since the horizontal gender segregation starts in the education sector. The National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports provides education and career counselling for pupils and students of primary, secondary and special secondary schools, their parents and for adults interested in further education. Career counselling prescribed by the Education Act ensures equal access to education for everybody. The low involvement of women and girls in STEM subjects has been noted by some universities, which focus on motivating women and girls to select non-stereotypical study careers. For example, in 2017, the Brno University of Technology launched the ‘I Belong Here’ campaign encouraging women to apply for technical and science studies.

51. The vertical gender segregation has been tackled by the adoption and implementation of strategic commitments, including the “+1” Strategy, and the Balanced Representation Action Plan 2016–2018. Individual tasks concerning women’s representation in decision-making were also assigned to ministries via the Action Plans on Gender Equality.

52. The Czech Republic described measures addressing the sharing of parental responsibilities and childcare options and the difficulties of women re-entering the labor market after the maternity leave in par. 54–57 of its periodic report.

53. In 2014, a children’s group was introduced as new type of childcare aiming to expand the range and capacity of pre-school childcare services. It is a service on a non-profit basis for children from one year until the start of compulsory education. Providers are non-profit organizations, municipalities, regions, universities, churches or employers. As of June 2020, there were 1,082 registered children’s groups with a total capacity of 14,331 places. An amendment to Children’s Group Act has been approved by the Government to ensure their systemic financing from the public budget and increasing the quality of care. Another type of childcare service are micro-crèches, a small group of maximum four children with the age from 6 months to 4 years. A legislative regulation of micro-crèches is proposed as a part of the above amendment of the Children’s Group Act. As of June 2020, 98 micro-crèches are in operation.

54. The parental allowance is currently the most important non-insurance social benefit intended for parents of young children. The parent’s income is neither decisive nor monitored for the purposes of this benefit. Its concept is flexible and supports reconciliation of work and family life. For example, it is possible to work and receive parental allowance at the same time. Parents of a child under two years of age can use the services of a childcare facility for 92 hours in a month (until 2020 only 46 hours in a month), and parents can take turns in care every three months. In January 2020, the possibility of drawing parental allowance was adjusted and the parental allowance increased from CZK 220,000 to CZK 300,000, in the case of multiple births from CZK 330,000 to CZK 450,000. The allowance can be received up to 4 years of age of the child.

Reply to paragraph 15 of the list of issues

55. Some ministries conducted anonymous surveys on the prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace in 2015–2017. While the results were not fully representative, they indicated that various forms of sexual harassment occur also in the public sector. Women were the victims in 90% of the reported cases. The most common offences were sexual comments and jokes, the ‘eyeing’ of the victim, and inappropriate physical contact.

56. The Office of the Government and the Office of the Public Defender of Rights published a handbook for public authorities on dealing with sexual harassment in the workplace, which was distributed to all central authorities. Its aim is to disseminate information on preventing sexual harassment in the workplace and sensitively and effectively addressing its occurrence. A seminar on the prevention of sexual harassment in the public sector was organized for state secretaries of all ministries in 2019. Additional seminars for human resources personnel of various public offices were organized in 2020. The handbook has been also disseminated among private sector.

Reply to paragraph 16 (a) of the list of issues

57. The Czech Republic currently legally regulates only strikes in a dispute over the collective agreement as described in par. 69–70 of its periodic report. The need of a legal regulation of the right to strike in other situations was repeatedly discussed with the social partners, most recently in May 2019, when the representatives of workers and employers agreed that such law is currently not necessary.

Reply to paragraph 16 (b) of the list of issues

58. The current quorum requiring the consent of two-thirds of voting employees on the strike was set up in agreement with the representatives of social partners. It is sufficiently representative to allow employees declaring a strike and protect the employers against possible abuse of that right. The Czech Republic has not received any complaints from other stakeholders that these settings would cause problems in practice. Neither it has received any suggestions that the quorum is too high, and is therefore an obstacle to a possible strike in disputes regarding the conclusion of collective agreements.

Reply to paragraph 17 of the list of issues

59. The austerity program in 2011–2012 strongly affected only two non-insurance state social support benefits. The social supplement was abolished due to its insufficient use and inability to address social situations. The birth grant has become limited to low-income households. The expenditure on child benefits showed only a slight decline, while the number of their recipients declined faster due to the increase of their income. The expenditure on parental allowance and housing allowance increased, while the number of their recipients stagnated.

60. Health-related benefits (care allowance, disability benefits) showed a steady increase in both expenditure and recipients. Up to 2015, there was an increase in assistance in material need benefits intended for disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups. Since then, they gradually decreased due to the favorable economic growth.

61. In April 2020, the amounts of the subsistence and existence minimum were increased for the first time since 2012. Their values determine the entitlement to non-insurance benefits and their amount. The increase of 13,2% reflects the increase in the relevant consumer price index excluding housing, water, energy and fuels.

Reply to paragraph 18 of the list of issues

62. Uninsured persons, persons insured for an insufficient period of time, as well as other persons in specified situations are entitled to non-insurance social benefits if meeting the legal conditions. The system of state social support is intended for families with dependent children increasing their income and allowing to cover the costs of upbringing and childcare. The system includes child allowance, birth grant and housing allowance, which are subject to the income test, and the parental allowance, which is universal not depending on the income. Since 2018, the income limit for the child allowance and the birth grant is below the 2.7x of the subsistence level of the family.

63. Benefits in the assistance in material need system are intended for persons and families whose income and social and economic conditions do not allow them to provide for the basic life necessities at a socially acceptable level. They are entitled to the living allowance, housing supplement or extraordinary immediate assistance. Their purpose is to prevent the social exclusion of people in a difficult social situation due to a lack of income, which they cannot increase through their own efforts. The assistance in material need shall not be provided to a person who is not aiming to increase their income or otherwise to improve their economic and social situation. Exceptions include the elderly, persons with disabilities, children or caregivers.

64. Support through non-insurance social benefits also applies to people with disabilities and people dependent on care. These benefits are the mobility allowance, the special aid grant, certificate for persons with disabilities as well as consequent social benefits. These persons can also claim the care allowance belonging to those who need the assistance of another person in coping with the basic necessities of life due to a long-term unfavourable state of health. The amount of the benefit is determined by the degree of dependence.

65. All data on beneficiaries are included in the annex to the periodic report (mainly parts 8 and 9) and their specific updates in Annex I.

Reply to paragraph 19 of the list of issues

66. The Czech Republic supports steps leading to a reduction in the number of children in institutional care. A new amendment to the Act on the Social and Legal Protection of Children has currently been prepared supporting foster care, facilities for children requiring immediate assistance and follow-up care with greater financial remuneration. Projects responding to the current situation in the system of care for vulnerable children and families also contribute to its transformation. This system faces fragmentation in direction and responsibilities and inconsistent approaches and procedures when dealing with the life situations of vulnerable children and families.

67. In 2015, the project aiming for a comprehensive systemic change in providing care for families and children at risk of social exclusion, for socially excluded families and children, or those under social and legal protection of children was completed. The systemic change consisted in optimization of the management and financing of the care system for vulnerable children at the national level as well as the regional and municipal level and the standardization of the system and unification of approaches and procedures for working with the vulnerable children. The project included a comprehensive analysis of the care system for vulnerable children, a proposal for a management and financing system and binding procedures for the work of social and legal protection bodies for children and providers of assistance and support services.

68. In 2018, a project focusing on systemic development and support for social and legal protection of children was completed. The project aimed to support and improve the work of all subjects involved in social and legal protection of children at the local level by increasing their capacities, ensuring quality statistical data, setting up lifelong learning of their employees and support and development of alternative family care with emphasis on foster care. The project was intended to further reduce a number of children living outside their families and to ensure the best standard of care for children in the alternative care.

69. A current project supporting the systemic changes in care for vulnerable children, young people and families began in 2018 and will run until 2022. As a part of the project, the social and legal protection of children in institutional care will be revised and processes fulfilling the needs of children will be described. The project aims at increasing the quality and sustainability of the system of services for vulnerable children by supporting the regions in fulfilling the right of children to family life.

70. The system of institutional education is being transformed to streamline activities and create a modern and affordable system with emphasis on quality and professional care for children and their families with regard to the best interests of the child. The transformation of institutional education is based mainly on the need to influence vulnerable children before the start of risky behaviour in order to avoid their institutional education or to maximally reduce its duration. The statistics on the number of institutionalized children are provided in Annex 1.

Reply to paragraph 20 of the list of issues

71. In May 2015, the updated version of the National Action Plan 2013–2017 Promoting Positive Ageing was introduced. The aim of the updated version was to effectively address the issue of the aging population, to discuss the ways of implementing the proposed measures

within the responsible ministries and to update the measures of the plan. In 2015–2017, the government discussed annual evaluation reports on the implementation of the national action plan. The National Action Plan 2013–2017 will be followed by the Strategic Framework for Preparing for an Ageing Society 2020–2025 which is now awaiting government approval. Its preparation was widely discussed with the public in five roundtables and conferences, the Government Council for Older Persons and Population Ageing, ministries and other stakeholders. The Strategic Framework 2020–2025 includes the Ten Principles of Preparing Society for Ageing which summarizes the areas to be addressed in the context of an ageing society in the Czech Republic. After its approval by the Government, an action plan for the Strategic Framework will be prepared within one year. It will further elaborate the individual measures of the Ten Principles by specifying the measures with indicators, financial requirements, responsible ministries and deadlines.

Reply to paragraph 21 of the list of issues

72. The objectives of the Social Housing Concept 2015–2025 were based primarily on the elaboration and adoption of the Act on Social Housing. However, the proposal of this Act was not adopted, and thus the fulfillment of the objectives of the Concept has become considerably limited. The most successful outcome is “The Social Housing Project - methodological and information supports in the area of social agendas”. The project activities include: planning, elaboration or updating of local social housing concepts; pilot verification of local concepts of social housing; education; evaluation of the projects and information campaigns. A number of methodologies were elaborated and published in the project. In 2019, the Methodology of Social Work in Social Housing was published and distributed to all regions and municipalities. The methodology describes social work tools with people in housing need such as finding housing for homeless people or people at risk of losing housing, support for persons entering social housing, support during social housing and support in maintaining subsequent housing. Municipalities implementing the project managed to expand social work tools and support for persons in social housing and persons in housing need. It currently cooperates with 16 municipalities.

73. Crisis housing is a tool of comprehensive support provided in local social housing systems. The possibilities of crisis housing in the current legislative setting are investigated and various approaches to crisis housing are tested. Municipalities use the accommodation capacities of selected social services facilities (asylum houses, halfway houses, sheltered housing), or flats from the housing stock. At the end of 2018, a project team dedicated to intensive methodological and information support for projects focused on the Housing First approach was created. The project cooperates with 15 municipalities and organizations, which engaged in social work in local Housing First social housing systems.

Reply to paragraph 21 (a) of the list of issues

74. Housing and housing construction is currently supported by a number of subsidies and financial instruments. It supports the construction of Nursing Flats and Community Homes for Older People comprehensively aimed at the acquisition of flats with limited rent, and flats intended for housing of older people and people with disabilities. A tenant may not exceed the maximum income limit. The statistical data on beneficiaries are provided in Annex 1.

75. The Nursing Flats subsidy is intended for the acquisition of flats for persons over 65 years of age or for persons with disabilities. The Community Homes for Elderly People subsidy is intended for the acquisition of flats for persons over 60 years of age. In 2019, the national budget stipulated a total of CZK 260 million for nursing housing and housing in community homes for elderly people. In 2020, financing of 32 projects is planned and the total amount of subsidies provided will be CZK 244.8 million.

76. Dwelling Houses without Barriers subsidy is intended for owners of apartment buildings with four or more floors that do not have barrier-free access. They can receive a subsidy of up to CZK 1 million to make apartments accessible to people with reduced mobility. The subsidy is limited to a maximum of 50% of the eligible costs. In 2019, the

national budget stipulated a total of CZK 195 million intended for Dwelling Houses without Barriers. In 2020, financing of 157 projects is planned and the total amount of the subsidy provided will be CZK 214.4 million.

77. In the 2014–2020 programming period, investments in social housing are co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the Integrated Regional Operational Program (IROP). The total amount for social housing in the IROP is approximately CZK 4 billion and a total of 5,000 social flats should be prepared by the end of 2023.

78. The Construction of Rental Housing Program is a loan instrument intended for the construction of rental housing for people with disabilities, people affected by natural disasters, for the elderly 65+, people under the age of 30 or for people with limited income. The maturity of the loan is 30 years and the amount of support is provided up to 90% of eligible expenses. The interest rate is based on the EU base rate. The beneficiaries of the support are housing providers, i.e. municipalities, legal or natural persons. More detailed records on tenants are not kept at the central level.

Reply to paragraph 21 (b) of the list of issues

79. The draft law on social housing was prepared and submitted to the Parliament; however, in the end it was not approved. In 2018, the Ministry of Regional Development decided not to continue preparing a new draft law. Instead in June 2019, the ministry introduced the “Construction” programme combining a subsidy with a financial instrument. The programme supports the acquisition of social housing for market-failing households and affordable housing for ordinary households.

80. The State Housing Development Fund provides a subsidy for the support of social housing, which can reach up to 100% of eligible expenditures. More than CZK 33,000 can be provided per 1 m² of floor area. In the case of modernization, the limit is set at 50% of the construction limit. In the case of available flats, a preferential loan of up to 30 years is provided with a fixed interest rate and no maximum amount set. The rent in social flats is limited and the tenants have to participate in social work to improve their situation. The rent in available flats is determined as the usual rent in a local area. The minimum and maximum floor area of the apartment is set to 120 m². Social housing units can be integrated in social houses (4–12 flats) or mixed houses (with a maximum share of 20% of social flats). Affordable housing units can be created without any restrictions and their creation is supported by a loan with low interest rates. Currently, the Housing Concept of the Czech Republic 2021+ and also the Act on the Affordable Housing are being prepared.

Reply to paragraph 21 (c) of the list of issues

81. Non-insurance social benefits housing allowance and housing supplement are intended to support low-income and vulnerable groups. These benefits increase annually by government regulations accordingly to the increase in the normative housing costs. The system has been described in more detail in par. 138 as well as 121 of the periodic report.

82. Social work is delegated by the state to municipalities. According to the recommendation of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the aim of social work is to support the reintegration of the client into the life of the municipality. The main priority of municipalities is to address the unfavorable social situation of people at risk of social exclusion. Since 2015, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs provides them with a contribution for social work. In 2019, the allocation of funds was dramatically reduced to a historic minimum of CZK 200 million. An additional subsidy of CZK 400 million was distributed; however, the demand of municipalities and regions was much higher and was satisfied only by 58%. For 2020, CZK 400 million is again allocated in the state budget.

Reply to paragraph 21 (d) of the list of issues

83. The Czech Republic described the system of protection of housing against unlawful evictions in the par. 143–145 of its periodic report. Tenants can ask the court for review and if the termination is illegal the lease continues and the tenant shall be compensated for any costs incurred. If the housing is terminated due to the wrecking state of the building, the owner or tenant can claim compensation for the damages caused, though no housing alternatives.

Reply to paragraph 21 (e) of the list of issues

84. The number of beneficiaries of housing allowance and supplements are included in the annex to the periodic report (parts 9.2) and 9.3) and its updates in Annex I.

Reply to paragraph 22 of the list of issues

85. The 2014–2020 Social Inclusion Strategy is expected to be evaluated in 2021. The Commission for Social Inclusion composed of representatives of public administration, regions and municipalities, academia, non-governmental organizations and trade unions, annually evaluates the Strategy. The evaluation reports show that most of the measures are being implemented. The main reason for non-implementation of certain measures is their connection to non-adopted legislation as the bill on social workers and the bill on social housing which have been postponed or revised.

86. One of the government's tools to support social inclusion is the Agency for Social Inclusion, which assists municipalities to solve problems of socially excluded areas. In 2019 the Agency transferred from the Office of the Government to the Ministry of Regional Development without any change in mandate and competencies. The agency connects local authorities, non-governmental organizations and local population, cooperates with ministries, transfers information from municipalities to the state administration and participates in the formation and coordination of state social inclusion policy. In 2020, the Agency cooperated with 169 municipalities.

87. In June 2017, the amendment to the Act on Assistance in Material Need and the Act on State Social Support introduced so-called Housing Benefit-free Zones. This regulation allows municipal authorities to issue a general measure declaring an area with an increased incidence of socially undesirable phenomena. In consequence persons taking up residence in this area do not become entitled to the housing supplement. The issued general measures, their effectiveness and cases in which they disqualified a person for a housing benefit, are monitored by the Directorate General of the Labour Office of the Czech Republic. In December 2017, a group of senators filed a complaint with the Constitutional Court against this provisions, but the Constitutional Court has not yet ruled on the matter.

Reply to paragraph 23 of the list of issues

88. The Czech Republic described the measures taken to guarantee that health-care services are accessible and affordable for all individuals and groups in para. 149–152 of its third periodic report. In the Czech Republic, persons with permanent residence or persons employed by a Czech subject are insured, regardless of their citizenship.

Reply to paragraph 23 (a) of the list of issues

89. In 2014, the government approved the implementation of the Health 2020 Programme which serves to fulfil the National Strategy Health 2020 for the Protection and Promotion of Health and the Prevention of Diseases. The strategy was followed by 13 action plans with specific priorities, which further developed the sub-areas of health policy. In September 2017, the Minister of Health launched the review of those action plans and their priorities. The

review revealed significant disparities in the fulfilment of the objectives of individual action plans. The revitalization of the Health 2020 Programme started in January 2018. A newly formed Steering Committee for the Coordination of the Health 2020 Programme began working with guarantors and managers of the action plans and drafted proposals for their revitalization based on reports on their implementation. They emphasize the prevention of risky behaviour, personal involvement in health protection, management of infectious diseases and vaccination strategy, support and protection of mental health, improvement of access to health care and long-term care and other topics to strengthen primary and secondary prevention and quality and effectiveness of health care. All lessons have also been reflected in the new Strategy Health 2030 approved in 2019.

Reply to paragraph 23 (b) of the list of issues

90. The project responds to findings from Czech and international studies (e.g. FRA 2011, Equi-Health - IOM 2014) and is focused on reducing health inequalities in the Czech Republic and increasing the health literacy of disadvantaged groups. The main aim of the project is to increase health literacy and the competencies of patients in decision-making. This will help to reduce inequalities in access to health services and the incidence of risky behaviour causing health problems. The long-term planned benefit of the project is prolonging healthy life of vulnerable populations, supporting social inclusion and the networking of key partners in equal access to health care.

91. Within the project, 14 regional conferences and 1 national conference on health promotion of vulnerable groups of the population took place in 2019. 14 health promotion centres were established in each region as an expert basis for the implementation of the project. A total of 68 intervention incentive programs have been developed to support decision-making in favour of healthy life and are being implemented. The Community Field Workers, who themselves often come from socially excluded populations were professionally trained within the project and can play a key role as a mediator between the target group and the health care system.

Reply to paragraph 23 (c) of the list of issues

92. The information on the access of migrants in irregular situations to health-care services without discrimination based on their migratory status are provided in para. 149–152. The Act on the Residence of Foreigners partially regulates the access to health care for illegally residing migrants detained in facilities. This health care paid for by the state includes urgent care in life-threatening situations, pain relief or other serious health threats as well as pregnancy and childbirth.

Reply to paragraph 23 (d) of the list of issues

93. The 2019–2027 National Strategy for the Prevention and Reduction of Damage by Addictive Behaviour (“2019–2027 Addictive Behaviour Strategy”) includes measures to prevent and reduce damage resulting from the use of addictive substances, pathological gambling and the overuse of modern technologies in Czech society. The strategy builds on previous strategies reflecting their final implementation evaluation as well as the current state of scientific knowledge in the field of addictive behaviour. The objectives of the strategy are to prevent and reduce health, social, economic and non-material damages resulting from substance use, gambling and other addictive behaviours and from their distribution and marketing. A more detailed definition of objectives, activities and tools is elaborated in action plans for three-year periods.

Reply to paragraph 24 of the list of issues

94. The Czech Republic provided the information on Deinstitutionalisation of Mental Health Services in para. 169–170 of its third periodic report. Deinstitutionalization of Health

Services is part of the implementation of the Psychiatric Care Reform Strategy under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health. The 2020–2030 National Action Plan for Mental Health was prepared and approved by the Czech government to ensure the continuation of the process and the implementation of full deinstitutionalization of all target groups.

95. According to the last survey of hospitalizations in 2018, 250 patients with mental retardation were hospitalized for a long term (i.e. over half a year) in psychiatric hospitals. Psychiatric hospitals scale all their patients to assess their need for intensive care in their psychiatric hospital's transformation plans. Psychiatric hospitals also look for communal follow-up services for patients whose medical conditions allow for outpatient health care. In 2019, 319 hospitalized patients were released from psychiatric hospitals into their own social environment.

96. The process of deinstitutionalization of people with mental disabilities is largely dependent on the development of social community residential and outpatient services. Medical outpatient care is provided by psychiatric ambulances and general practitioners. Multidisciplinary health-social community teams regularly work with hospitalized patients and try to accompany them in the process of deinstitutionalization. Long-term hospitalized patients in psychiatric hospitals are regularly monitored, including the severity of their health symptoms. Based on this monitoring, the necessary care for the patient in their own social environment is defined and the information is transmitted by regional coordinators to steering groups in all regions of the Czech Republic in order to develop the necessary services.

97. Since August 2019, 21 Mental Health Centres (i.e. multidisciplinary health and social teams for the people with serious mental disability) have been operating. In June 2020 the Ministry of Health selected another 8 Mental Health Centres for further financing and development. The last Mental Health Centres will be selected by the end of 2020. The costs of operating multidisciplinary teams of Mental Health Centres will be covered by EU funds for a period of 18 months. In the meantime, sustainable financing from public health insurance and regional budgets will be set up. Part of the cost is already covered by national resources. The legal regulation of Mental Health Centres is currently being finalized. In addition to the Mental Health Centres, a multidisciplinary method of care is being piloted for specific target groups like children, patients with addiction, patients with dementia, patients in protective treatment.

98. The Psychiatric Care Reform Strategy is implemented through projects supported by the European Structural and Investment Funds. In 2017, the implementation of reform projects to support the transformation and deinstitutionalisation of health services in psychiatric care financed from the Employment Operational Programme was launched. Recipients of the subsidy are the Ministry of Health, the National Institute of Mental Health and the Institute of Health Information and Statistics. The funds are distributed to cover salaries and operating costs or through public procurement. The projects implemented by the Ministry of Health currently employ 381 experts working at the Ministry or in all regions and psychiatric institutions in the Czech Republic. A list of projects and recipients of the subsidy through the Employment Operational Programme is provided in Annex 1.

99. The process of transformation and deinstitutionalization of social services for the elderly and people with disabilities is ongoing. The following projects were carried out within the transformation process: Support for the Transformation of Social services (2009–2013), the Transformation of Social Services (2013–2015), the Life like Any Other (2016–2019). The Life like Any Other project included activities focused on systemic analysis and evaluation, support for systemic changes, methodological support, education and awareness raising. In addition, calls for community projects are issued. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs established the National Centre for the Support of the Transformation of Social Services, which supports the transformation of social services and deinstitutionalization. However, the deinstitutionalization of social services is far from its end. In particular, the insufficient provision of appropriate outreach services for certain groups of vulnerable people (e.g. people with autism) may still be problematic. Data on the availability of community social services and on the number of clients are provided in Annex 1.

Reply to paragraph 25 of the list of issues

100. The Long-term Plan of the Development of the Educational System for 2019–2020 aims to streamline the system of school counselling facilities by introducing unified counselling procedures in identifying special educational needs and the recommendation of support measures.

101. The implementation of the measures in the Action Plan for Inclusive Education for the period 2019–2020 is regularly evaluated. These measures include the improvement and unification of the school counselling, strengthening the skills of pedagogical staff, professional development and methodological support for teachers. In 2019, two calls under the Operational Program Research, Development, and Education with a total allocation of CZK 1.2 billion focused on supporting teachers in programs working with children with behavioural problems and increasing the quality of education of children in socially excluded areas.

102. In 2019, school counselling facilities were equipped with diagnostic tools to unify and improve counselling services. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports funded school counselling facilities with approximately CZK 9.2 million for the purchase of modern standardized diagnostic tools to specify the educational needs and determine adequate support measures. Support funds available for university students with special needs increased by more than CZK 7.5 million annually to CZK 97 million in 2019. The subsidy program “Development and Renewal of the Material and Technical Base of Public Universities”, which ran from 2011 to 2019, provided investments exceeding CZK 13 billion in infrastructure enabling access for people with disabilities to public universities.

103. The Statistical Yearbook of Education - Performance Indicators shows that the number of pupils with disabilities educated in regular primary schools rose by 8,017 from the 2018/2019 to the 2019/2020 school year. According to the Czech School Inspectorate report – the Quality and Efficiency of Education and the Education System in 2018/2019, equal opportunities for education and development of children were created in 98.2% of inspected kindergartens. 85.8% of the inspected primary schools provided support measures according to the recommendation of the school counselling facility, 82.5% of the inspected primary schools provided effective support to all pupils in need of support measures. From 2015 to 2019, the number of university students with special needs increased by 1,000.

104. According to the Report on the Estimated Number of Roma Pupils in Primary Schools in 2019/2020, the percentage of Roma pupils educated according to the annex to the Framework Educational Program for Pupils with Mild Intellectual Disability (FEP MID) is significantly decreasing. By the end of the school year 2019/2020, education according to FEP MID had been finished and replaced by the Framework Educational Program with Reduced Demands for Learning Outcomes Due to Mental Disabilities allows pupils with mild mental disabilities to use adjusted outcomes only in those areas where necessary according to the recommendations of the school counselling facility. Changes in the education of pupils with mild mental disabilities are implemented in the individual educational plan as a supportive measure. In other areas, the student can be educated according to standard expected outcomes.

105. The amendment to the Decree on the Education of Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Gifted Pupils effective from 1 January 2020 aims to streamline the implementation of inclusive education, but also reducing the administrative burden of pedagogical staff to increase opportunities for pedagogical work. The changes are based on a detailed discussion of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports with the professional public and the non-governmental sector. Conditions of the education of children, pupils and students with special educational needs are regularly evaluated by analyses and statistical data. Since 1 January 2020, the work of teaching assistants is newly financed as a standard job, taking into account the type of school and the disability of children and pupils. A methodological guideline was issued to facilitate its implementation.

Reply to paragraph 26 of the list of issues

106. The Czech Republic provided the information on the equal access to all levels of education by children of foreign nationals in para. 191–193 of its third periodic report.

107. Pupils who have completed their previous school education outside the Czech Republic can be exempted from the Czech language entrance examination for education at secondary or higher vocational schools. Instead, the school verifies the knowledge of the Czech language necessary for education by interview. Applicants who studied for at least 4 years in the last 8 years at a school outside the Czech Republic are entitled to the adjustment of the exam in Czech language and literature in the high-school final exam to maintain equal access to education.

108. The regional authorities and schools provide free preparation for primary education to foreign nationals, including the Czech language. Every year, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports announces subsidy programs “Support for Education of Foreign Nationals in Schools” and “Support for Activities of Integration of Foreign Nationals in the Czech Republic, which cover, e.g. school expenditures for these courses and extracurricular activities. Furthermore, promoting access to education is a key part of the State Integration Program assisting beneficiaries of international protection. The program provides e.g. assistance with requirements for admission into education, tutoring, purchase of study aids and tools and up to 400 lessons of Czech language courses.

109. Support for teachers is provided by Regional Support Centres of the National Pedagogical Institute through methodological materials, multilingual documents, educational programs. Adaptation coordinators provide free assistance to foreign pupils for the first 4 weeks of their education at school, helping them to adapt to the school environment and to understand the principles of the Czech language.

Reply to paragraph 27 of the list of issues

110. The 2015–2020 State Cultural Policy has been implemented by subsequent strategic documents in more detail. The Strategy for Arts Support aims at supporting the creation of works of art and their potential to contribute to social development through an institutional framework, public funds, private sponsoring, strategic planning and social awareness. Grant schemes for literature, arts, performing arts, media or immaterial cultural heritage will be strengthened. The Concepts of the Development of Museums shall enable museums and galleries to develop and present their collections, in line with present and future social demands. The Concept of Library Support promotes the role of libraries as an open educational, cultural and creative community centre. A compact net of more than 6 000 municipal libraries will be supported to provide access to literature, education, culture, but also internet access to world-wide information sources including scientific information. The Concept of Heritage Preservation aims at supporting protection of monuments, their restoration, improving the evidence and presentation of their collections. The Concept of Care for Traditional Popular Culture focuses on its documentation, preservation and presentation to the general public as a valuable part of national cultural heritage to enhance tolerance and gender equality and prevent racism and xenophobia.

111. Czech cultural identity and diversity is supported by events and exhibitions on important topics and anniversaries presenting the Czech culture inland and abroad or scientific research projects. Formal and informal cultural education will also be strengthened. Access to cultural institutions will be supported by free access or reduced entrance fees or online access to public libraries. Participation of marginal and vulnerable groups like the elderly, persons with disabilities or ethnic and national minorities will be supported by free entries, grants, improving barrier-free access to libraries or information technologies, minority libraries or university education for the elderly. Public events and festivals will support the cultural knowledge of the population as well as their identification with the national cultural heritage and its preservation and development.

112. The preservation and development of the culture, traditions and languages of members of national minorities is supported through subsidy programs funded from the public budget.

Support from the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the Office of the Government primarily contributes to the preservation and further development of minority cultures, traditions and languages. One of the priorities will be the support for Romani traditional culture like the Museum of Roma culture in Brno or monuments to Roma Holocaust in Lety u Písku or Hodonín u Kunštátu. An overview of subsidy programs and funds for the activities of national minorities is provided in Annex 1.

113. The Minority Act guarantees members of national minorities the right to education in their mother tongue in schools, pre-schools and school facilities. Members of national minorities may also, under the certain legal conditions, establish private schools with the instruction or courses in the minority language. Minority education financed from public budgets is limited only to Polish national minority in the Moravian-Silesian Region.

114. According to the Minority Act, minorities have the right to disseminate and receive information in their language. The Working Group for National Minority Broadcasting of the Government Council for National Minorities cooperates with Czech Radio and Czech Television in the creation of programs for and about national minorities. National minorities also receive information in their language through their press supported through subsidies funded from the public budget. Members of national minorities participate in public administration. They are represented mainly in working groups addressing the social inclusion and integration of the Roma and ministerial commissions for subsidies.

Reply to paragraph 28 of the list of issues

115. The National Strategy for Open Access to Scientific Information 2017–2020 implements the principle of open access to scientific information in the Czech Republic. It defines Open Access as free and unrestricted online access to scientific information with the possibility of its further re-use. It connects scientific institutions and scientists with cultural institutions as museums, archives and libraries, editors of scientific revues and publications and end-users including the general public. All public research grants shall stipulate free online access to obtained scientific information and publications. Necessary legislative changes have been submitted to the Parliament and information systems are being adapted. The network of public libraries described above plays a crucial role in providing access to scientific information for the general population. The data on expenses in scientific research are shown in Annex 1.
