

[eInclusion in]

Czech Republic

Česká Republika



ICT & Ageing

Geographic Digital Divide

eAccessibility

eInclusion

Cultural Diversity

Inclusive eGovernment

Digital Literacy & Competences

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Disclaimer:

This document is not intended to be exhaustive. Its purpose is to give an overview of the general eInclusion situation in Czech Republic. Even though every care has been taken to ensure accuracy, the information herein should be treated as indicative and no responsibility for errors can be taken. Neither the European Commission, nor any person acting on its behalf is responsible for the use that could be made of the information provided.

Country Profile

Basic data and indicators

Basic Data

Population (1 000): 10 467.5 inhabitants (2009)

GDP at market prices: 147 879.2 million Euro (2008)

GDP per inhabitant in PPS (Purchasing Power Standards, EU-27 = 100): 80.1 (2008)

GDP growth rate: 2.5 % (2008)

Inflation rate: 0.6 % (2009)

Unemployment rate: 6.7 % (2009)

Government debt/GDP: 35.4 % (2009)

Public balance (government deficit or surplus/GDP): -5.9 % (2008)

Source: [Eurostat](#)

Area: 79 000 km²

Capital city: Prague

Official EU language: Czech

Currency: Czech koruna

Source: [Europa website](#)

Information Society Indicators

Percentage of households with Internet access: 54 % (2009)

Percentage of households with broadband connection: 49 % (2009)

Percentage of individuals regularly using the Internet: 54 % (2009)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for uploading self-created content: 2 % (2008)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for reading online newspapers/magazines: 43 % (2009)

Percentage of Individuals using the Internet for finding information about goods and services: 50 % (2009)

Percentage of Individuals using the Internet for seeking health-related information: 20 % (2009)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for looking for a job or sending a job application: 8 % (2009)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for doing an online course: 1 % (2009)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for seeking information with the purpose of learning: 26 % (2009)

Percentage of: individuals using the Internet for interaction with public authorities: obtaining information 22.8 %, downloading forms 9.1 %, returning filled forms 4.8 % (2009)

Source: [Eurostat](#)

Editorial notice: Statistical indicators referenced in this section reflect those of Eurostat at the time the Edition is being prepared.

eInclusion History

Main developments and key milestones (in reverse chronological order)

For the latest developments, see: [ePractice news for eInclusion](#)

Recent News

January 2010

- ▶ In an [official press release](#), the [Czech Ministry of Industry and Trade](#) (*Ministerstvo průmyslu a obchodu*, MPO) announced the government's **future strategy** for the development of electronic communications in the next decade. The strategy, entitled 'Digital Czech Republic' (*Digitální Česko*), includes topics such as access to broadband Internet throughout the country, digital television broadcasting and spectrum management, while remaining compliant with the European Directives on Telecoms. The strategy recommends that the extent of the digital divide in the country must first be assessed and subsequently tackled via a set of proposals included in the document.
- ▶ On *11 January*, the Ministry of Industry and Trade (*Ministerstvo průmyslu a obchodu*, MPO) was assigned the responsibility for the national policy on broadband Internet access, previously held by the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky*, MVCR).

April 2009

The Action Plan for the '[School of the 21st century](#)' (*Škola pro 21. století*) for the period 2009-2013 was published by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy*, MŠMT). Funded jointly by the state and the European Social Fund, the plan addresses ICT as well as the support and motivation of **staff teaching** in local education. The model proposed by the plan includes developing an educational methodology to support the development of modern technologies and the training of the teaching staff. One of the most important steps proposed by the Action Plan is the national project 'Making Digital Resources' (*Zpřístupnění digitalizovaných zdrojů*), as a contributor to the nationwide implementation of the [Data Mailbox](#) (*eGON - datové schránky*) project affecting all citizens and administrations.

News 2008 and before

2008

- ▶ An amendment to [Act no. 365/2000](#) on Public Administration Information Systems, which came into force on *1 January*, obliges all public institutions to make their websites conformant to accessibility standards.
- ▶ In *January 2008*, [Czech POINT](#), a network of **access points** to eGovernment services, was officially launched. Following on from a previous pilot project, the Czech Point system offers citizens access to all public records via a one-stop portal. More than 1 500 Czech Points became operational at post offices, municipal bureaus and the embassies in Bratislava, Warsaw, Dresden, Berlin, Vienna and Washington DC. At the time, the terminals provided certified documents for frequently sought public records, such as criminal records, and the land and commercial registers. The aim was that access to all data stored in public registers became available in the future.
- ▶ At international level, the Czech Government supported eInclusion efforts such as, for example, computer literacy projects in Africa as a part of cooperation for development actions.

2007

- ▶ The conclusions of the Ministerial Meeting on eInclusion in Lisbon regarding the 'Action Plan on ICT and Ageing' was adopted by the Czech Republic on *28 November*.
- ▶ The [Government Council for the Information Society](#) (*Rada vlády pro informační společnost*) was established by Government Resolution No. 293 on *28 June* as an interdepartmental advisory and coordinating body on matters concerning information technologies.
- ▶ The Ministry of Information Technology (also referred to as 'Ministry of Informatics') officially ceased its operation as a separate government department on *31 May*. Its responsibilities were taken over by the [Ministry of the Interior](#) (*Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky*, MVCR).

2006

- ▶ The [Government Council for Older Persons and Population Ageing](#) (*Rada vlády pro seniory a stárnutí populace*) was established on *22 March*, by Government resolution No. 1482 on the implementation of the '[National Programme of Preparation for Ageing for the period 2003 – 2007](#)' (*Národní program přípravy na stárnutí na období let 2003 až 2007*). The Council is a permanent advisory body to the Government of the Czech Republic on issues related to ageing and older persons.
- ▶ The Czech Ministry of IT (*Ministerstvo informatiky*) released details of a proposed project to **monitor disabled users** on the web, forecast the financial impact of accessibility implementation and suggest accessibility methodology and rules for the websites of public bodies. Interested parties had to submit their proposals by *18 June*.
- ▶ In *January 2006*, the Ministry of IT (*Ministerstvo informatiky*) launched nine free-of-charge **basic computer courses** via its public administration portal. The courses covered the same topics as those of the European Computer Driving Licence, such as basic terminology, file administration and use of the Internet. In addition, they included courses on eSignatures and the use of the government portal. The initiative was aimed at raising computer competences, particularly among the more excluded groups such as elderly workers, where the lack of these skills is the main reason for unemployment. More than 10 000 people registered in the first six months.
- ▶ The Ministerial Declaration on the 'Information Society for all' was adopted by the EU Member States, including the Czech Republic.

2005

- ▶ On *17 August 2005*, the '[National Plan for the Support and Integration of Persons with Disabilities 2006-2009](#)' (*Národní plán podpory a integrace občanů se zdravotním postižením na období 2006 – 2009*) was adopted via Government Resolution 1004. Among others, the plan called for legislative amendments to improve 'accessibility of information', as well the development and operation of a web portal offering access to information and other forms of support for the disabled.
- ▶ The Czech Government approved of a **National Broadband Strategy**, whose main goal was to ensure that approximately 50 % of the population of the Czech Republic will be using broadband by 2010 at the latest.

2004

- ▶ The Public Administration Portal Portal.gov.cz was officially launched after a pilot phase of one year. The main target of the portal was set to be the elimination of information barriers that socially excluded groups (for example the disabled) faced.
- ▶ The Czech Government adopted the 'State Information and Communications Policy' (*Státní informační a komunikační politika*, [e-Czech 2006](#)), a strategic document in the field of the Information Society, covering the period 2004-2006.

- ▶ An experts' committee issued web accessibility [guidelines](#) (*Pravidla tvorby přístupného webu*) for public bodies. The document included 37 points covering all criteria state organisations should meet. Among those were legibility, user-controlled interaction with the website, clarity of presented information and ease of web navigation.

2003

- ▶ The 'National Computer Literacy Programme' (*Národní program počítačové gramotnosti*, NPPG) was launched with a view to teach the basic skills of using and **working with computers** and the Internet to the wider public.
- ▶ The Ministry of IT (or Informatics, *Ministerstvo informatiky*) was established, with the responsibility to coordinate and develop eGovernment, telecommunications, postal services and the promotion of the Information Society in general.

2002

- ▶ The Internet radio broadcasting of the [Ministry of Interior](#) (*Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky*, MVCR) 'Radio Interior' was initiated.
- ▶ The Czech Government approved the '[National Programme of Preparation for Ageing 2003 – 2007](#)' (*Národní program přípravy na stárnutí na období let 2003 až 2007*).

2001

The Czech Republic joined the [eEurope+ Action Plan](#), aiming to foster the development of the Information Society in EU accession countries.

eInclusion Strategy

Main strategic objectives and principles

eInclusion policies

The Czech Republic does not have an integrated eInclusion policy, but many areas are covered by **theme-specific documents** and **policies**. The Czech Republic views eGovernment as a means to bridge the digital divide and promote ICT literacy and competences.

Financing implementation of eInclusion policies and measures largely relies on European funds. The [European Social Fund](#) for the Czech Republic for the period 2007-2013 supports three operational programmes:

- ▶ The [Human Resources and Employment](#) Operational Programme (HREOP), which includes actions on professional education and reintegration of socially excluded citizens.
- ▶ The [Education for Competitiveness](#) Operational Programme (ECOP), which includes the creation of an effective system of lifelong learning.
- ▶ The [Prague Adaptability](#) Operational Programme (PAOP), which includes actions to integrate those who are (or are at risk of) being socially excluded and also to promote the knowledge economy.

Information Society services policy

The present 'Strategy for the development of Information Society services for the period 2008-2012' (*Strategie rozvoje služeb pro informační společnost v České republice na období 2008 — 2012*) was published by the Government Council for the Information Society (*Rada vlády pro informační společnost*) in March 2008. The document sets out a vision of the Czech Republic becoming one of the top five EU countries in terms of eGovernment development. The target is that **citizen satisfaction** ultimately should determine success, with eGovernment becoming a genuine aid to everyday life events. The strategy itself advocates the development of services in an open, democratic society, not the development of the Information Society as such; the latter can only emanate from the free initiative of citizens and entrepreneurs.

Regarding access of services by citizens, the new strategy emphasises the availability of the '**Data Box**' (a personal register of a person's electronic communications with the authorities) and of a developed network of public administration contact points (Czech POINT network), where certified extracts from selected registers can be obtained. Both projects are currently operational and under expansion.

The previous strategy on ICT, the State Information and Communications Policy (*Státní informační a komunikační politika, e-Czech 2006*), identified areas such as information literacy, eLearning, bridging the digital divide and inclusive eGovernment as being of the highest priority.

Broadband Policy

The government's future strategy for the development of **electronic communications** in the next decade appeared in January 2010 ([official press release](#)), under the title 'Digital Czech Republic' (*Digitální Česko*). The responsibility for its implementation belongs to the Ministry of Industry and Trade (*Ministerstvo průmyslu a obchodu, MPO*). The strategy document includes topics such as access to broadband Internet throughout the country, digital television broadcasting, spectrum management and compliance with the European Directives on Telecoms. Among the recommendations is a set of proposals for first assessing and subsequently tackling the country's digital divide.

The previous strategy on broadband communications was part of the eCzech 2006 document and included requirements for countrywide broadband access for all groups of the population as well as

measures to support rural and remote areas. Activities and relevant ICT projects were co-financed as part of the Joint Regional Operational Programme.

A specific document entitled the '[National Broadband Access Policy](#)' (*Národní politika pro vysokorychlostní přístup*) was adopted in January 2005, based on the OECD Council recommendations on promoting **broadband development**. The main goal was that around 50 % of the population should have access to broadband by 2010.

Social inclusion

The [National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008-2010](#) (*Národní zpráva o strategiích sociální ochrany a sociálního začleňování na léta 2008–2010*), issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (*Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí*, MPSV) calls for the integration of **socially excluded individuals** and individuals at risk of social exclusion through social assistance and services, and the removal of barriers to the entrance and retention of these individuals in the labour market. Skills in modern information technologies are seen as an essential means to achieve this.

A national plan for actions concerning the disabled was first drafted after the establishment of the [Government Board for People with Disabilities](#) (*Vládní výbor pro zdravotně postižené občany*), a coordinating and advisory body. This plan has received regular updates, of which the '[National Plan for the Support and Integration of Persons with Disabilities 2006-2009](#)' (*Národní plán podpory a integrace občanů se zdravotním postižením na období 2006 – 2009*) is the latest. The plan is the principal document of the Board and forms the basis for legislative, methodological and organisational activities related to the needs of the disabled. Measures of relevance to eInclusion are contained in section 5 on 'accessibility of information', which calls for legislative amendments to enable TV broadcasting to be equipped with open or closed subtitles, especially by taking advantage of digital transmission technologies. Another measure aims at developing and operating a web portal offering access to information on existing services and other forms of support for the disabled.

Information Technology Education

A special government programme called 'The State Information Policy in Education (*Státní informační politika ve vzdělávání*, SIPVZ)' aimed to provide support for the development of **ICT in education**. The programme set out objectives relating to the information literacy of teachers, students, citizens, civil servants and employees in the healthcare sector and in libraries. Over the period of its implementation in 2001-2006, an extensive network of ICT training facilities and a number of information centres were set up for teachers and schools respectively; numerous projects were successfully implemented in schools and school facilities in the Czech Republic. Even though the horizon of the SIPVZ was originally up to 2010, its objectives were declared as having been fulfilled at the end of 2006. No substitute programme has been announced since.

The Government Resolution No. 535 of 23 May 2007 approved the 'Long-Term Plan for Education and the Development of the Education System' (*Dlouhodobý záměr vzdělávání a rozvoje vzdělávací soustavy ČR*). Regarding ICT, the plan aimed to enhance basic skills of pupils and teachers in information literacy. At the beginning of 2008, the Framework Curriculum for ICT put the focus on the acquisition of basic literacy in information technologies at schools.

Finally, the '[Education for Competitiveness](#)' Operational Programme for the period 2007-2013 (*Operační program Vzdělávání pro konkurenceschopnost*, OPVK) under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy*, MŠMT) and the support of the European Social Fund focuses on the development of human resources through education at all levels including lifelong learning, research and development.

Strategies for the aged

The '[National Programme of Preparation for Ageing 2008-2012](#)' (*Národní program přípravy na stárnutí na období let 2008 až 2012 - Kvalita života ve stáří*), of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

(*Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí, MPSV*), which builds on the previous programme (2003-2007), targets quality of life in the old age. Its basic principle is that seniors should be provided with opportunities to promote self-fulfilment, learning, education and an active life. The programme makes no specific mention of eInclusion or the digital divide, but supports the development of information and communication technologies, as a means to assist those who are in need due to ageing. It also calls for equal access to those technologies and for opportunities to educate those in need, regarding their use.

eInclusion Legal Framework

Main legal texts impacting on the development of eInclusion

Constitutional provisions

The provisions of Article 29 of the Constitution of the Czech Republic entitle women, adolescents, and disabled persons to increased protection of their health at work and to special working conditions. In addition, adolescents and the disabled are entitled to special protection in labour relations and to assistance in vocational training.

eGovernment legislation

[Act on Electronic Actions and Authorised Document Conversion](#) (*Zákon o elektronických úkonech a autorizované konverzi dokumentů*)

This Act, also referred to as the 'Czech eGovernment Act', was adopted on 17 July 2008. It accords electronic and hardcopy documents the same legal status, enables the authorised conversion of hardcopy documents and sets out provisions for the use of certified eSignatures. The Act introduced the concept of the so-called '**Data Box**' - a personal register of all electronic communications with the public authorities. All legal entities in the Czech Republic were obliged to set up and activate their respective Data Boxes by 1 November 2009. Each Data Box is password protected and accessible only via a certified eSignature. From 1 January 2010, the Data Boxes' information system is set to become available to other types of communication, such as citizen-to-citizen, citizen-to-business and business-to-business.

Public administration information systems legislation

[Act on Public Administration Information Systems](#) (*Zákon o informačních systémech veřejné správy*)

All public administration websites must have fulfilled criteria of eAccessibility focused on people with disabilities by 1st January 2008 under the Act on Public Administration Information Systems ([Act No. 365/2000 Coll.](#)) as amended by Act No. 81/2006 Coll. The criteria must ensure accessible (barrier-free) web in line with the rules of the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI). The Act stipulates that public authorities should provide online information in a form that allows people with disabilities to access it.

Government resolution No. 64, 7 February 2008, which provides harmonisation with the European Directives resulted in the publication, by the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky, MVCR*), of 33 recommendations for **eAccessibility**, realising three methodologies, namely WCAG 2.0, Section 508 and Blind Friendly Web.

The Public Procurement Act No. 137, 14 March 2006, includes a provision for technical specifications regarding accessibility in public contracts. Section 45(3) states that, where justified by the subject matter of the contract, public authorities shall take into account accessibility criteria for people with disabilities.

eCommunications Legislation

[Act on Electronic Communications](#) (*Zákon o elektronických komunikacích*)

[Act No. 127 on Electronic Communications](#) (Act No. 127/2005 Coll.) implements the EU Universal Service Directive in Czech law. Section 43 sets out that the universal service provider shall provide equitable access to publicly available telephone services for people with disabilities. This includes emergency call

numbers, directories, directory enquiry services and barrier-free access to suitably equipped public payphones. Guaranteed privileges for the disabled are laid out in supplementary Acts (such as Act No. 161/2005 Coll. and Act No. 336/2006 Coll.). These further specify the equipment and service features needed to suit particular types of impairment.

Under the rules of the Czech Telecommunications Office, socially disadvantaged people and people with disabilities qualify for price discounts on either fixed or mobile services.

Broadcasting

Under the Act on Radio and Television Broadcasting (Act 231/2001 Coll., as amended), national broadcasters are obliged to provide open or closed subtitles for at least 15 % (commercial broadcasters) or 70 % (public broadcaster) of broadcast programmes. The Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting is entitled to impose financial penalties for no compliance. The targets are monitored by the TV licences awarding body. Digital broadcasting is so far governed by the same legislation as analogue, with no additional provision for eAccessibility. Public subsidies for purchasing the necessary additional equipment (e.g. set-top boxes), however, are available for certain disadvantaged social groups.

Social Security Legislation

[Act on Social Security](#)

Directive 2000/78/EC, of 27 November 2000, which established a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, has been fully adopted into Czech Law (65/1965 Digest and adjustments No. 155/2000 Digest and 46/2004 Digest).

According to regulation **No. 182/1991**, of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (*Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí*, MPSV), which implements the **Act on Social Security**, those severely disabled are entitled to one-off allowances for the acquisition of special aids intended to remedy, reduce or overcome the consequences of their disability. This includes computers or special devices.

eInclusion Actors

Main roles and responsibilities

National eInclusion

Policy/Strategy

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (*Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí, MPSV*)

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (*Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí, MPSV*) was established in 1990 and is responsible for social policy. This includes people with disabilities, social services, social benefits, family policy, social security, employment matters, occupational safety and health and other social and labour related affairs.

The Ministry is also responsible for social inclusion policy and strategy, for example the issuance of the '[National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008-2010](#)' (*Národní zpráva o strategiích sociální ochrany a sociálního začleňování na léta 2008–2010*).

Ministry of the Interior (*Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky, MVCR*)

Following the reorganisation of government in 2007, the ministry became responsible for drawing the strategies on eGovernment and the Information Society, as well as coordinating implementation of relevant projects, some of which were previously assigned to the (now obsolete) Ministry of Information Technology (*Ministerstvo informatiky*).

Ministry of Industry and Trade (*Ministerstvo průmyslu a obchodu, MPO*)

Following a government decision on 11 January 2010, the Ministry of Industry and Trade (*Ministerstvo průmyslu a obchodu, MPO*) replaced the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky, MVCR*) as the body responsible for drawing the national policy on broadband Internet access. The ministry is also charged with the coordination of developments in telecommunications.

Coordination

Ministry of the Interior (*Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky, MVCR*)

The Ministry of the Interior coordinates the development and implementation of information systems for the public administration (such as the government portal), Information Society programmes (such as the 'National Computer Literacy Programme' (*Národní program počítačové gramotnosti, NPPG*)), postal services and others.

Government Council for the Information Society (*Rada vlády pro informační společnost*)

The Government Council for the Information Society (*Rada vlády pro informační společnost*) was formed in May 2007 as an interdepartmental advisory body with the mission to achieve greater coherence and coordination of departmental and national projects in Information technologies. The Council leads the Government Steering Committee, headed by the Prime Minister, and, following Government Resolution No 373 of 24 May 2010, has 29 members. These were appointed on the basis of representing the central and local government involvement in the development of information society and eGovernment.

Ministry of Industry and Trade (*Ministerstvo průmyslu a obchodu, MPO*)

The Ministry of Industry and Trade (*Ministerstvo průmyslu a obchodu, MPO*) has a general coordination responsibility for the general area of telecommunications.

Implementation

Ministry of the Interior (*Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky, MVCR*)

The Ministry of the Interior (*Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky, MVCR*) is responsible for implementing national eGovernment infrastructure projects, which also affect efforts on eInclusion.

Other Central Government Ministries and Agencies

Various ministries and government agencies may occasionally become responsible for implementing their respective departmental projects, which affect eInclusion. For example, the [Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports](#) (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy, MŠMT*) is responsible for educational programmes which target eInclusion via learning programmes on ICT.

Support

Minister for Human Rights

The Minister for Human Rights belongs to the Office of the Government. His mission is to oversee and promote human rights, including those of socially disadvantaged groups. In this regard, he has a supporting role regarding eInclusion.

eInclusion Who's Who

Main eInclusion decision-makers and executives

Minister responsible for eInclusion

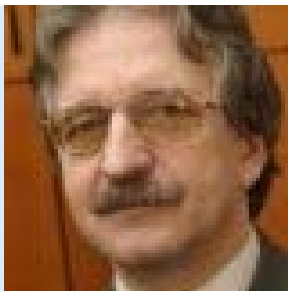


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eInclusion Areas

Riga Declaration Priorities

ICT & Ageing

Status in ICT & Ageing

It is evident from statistics that the aged do not, in general, use ICT in their daily activities. According to the latest survey (2007) by the Czech Statistical Office (*Český statistický úřad*), on ICT Use in Czech Households and by Czech Individuals, only less than 5 % of the age group over 65 are PC users. Similar performance has been observed for Internet use. A similar picture emerges from the European Commission's report on 'Europe's Digital Competitiveness' for 2010, where the index on regular Internet use for those between 65 and 74 is 0.20, as opposed to an EU-27 average of 0.33.

Actions to support ICT & Ageing

ICT courses for seniors are offered by Czech universities as part of life-long learning initiatives and participation in European funded projects, such as the European Computer Network – IT utilisation by seniors (EuCoNet) for the years 2002-2005. Other activities supporting the aged have taken part under the 'University of 3rd Age' programme, for example the project 'Seniors On Line' on the ICT Education of seniors, run by the Czech Technical University in Prague (2004-2005).

The '[University of the 3rd Age](#)' (Univerzita třetího věku, U3A) is a special form of the lifelong learning programme which comprises courses for pension-aged seniors on science, ICT, history, politics, culture and others. Most Czech universities are participants.

The '[National Programme of Preparation for Ageing 2008-2012](#)' (*Národní program přípravy na stárnutí na období let 2008 až 2012 - Kvalita života ve stáří*), of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (*Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí, MPSV*), which builds on the previous programme (2003-2007), targets the quality of life of the elderly. The programme supports the development of information and communication technologies, as a means to assist those who are in need due to ageing. It also calls for equal access to those technologies and for opportunities to educate those in need, regarding their use.

The [Government Council for Older Persons and Population Ageing](#) (*Rada vlády pro seniory a stárnutí populace*) is a permanent advisory body to the government on issues related to ageing and older persons. The Council's mission is to promote conditions for healthy and active ageing, dignity in old age, and active participation of older persons in economic and social development in the context of demographic ageing. It aims to ensure equal rights for older persons in all areas of life, to protect their human rights and support development of intergenerational relationships in family and society. The Council is chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs (*Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí, MPSV*).

Geographic Digital Divide

Status of Common Access to Electronic Content and Services

As remarked in the European Commission's 'Europe's Digital Competitiveness' reports (2009, 2010), the Czech Republic is characterised by good competition levels and average speeds, but has a medium socio-economic context and take-up of services. According to the same reports:

- ▶ The country has a broadband penetration rate at 19.1 % (January 2010) of the population (as opposed to an EU-27 average of 24.8 %) and a broadband performance index of around 0.55 (the

index takes into account coverage in rural areas, the socioeconomic context, speeds, price, competition and take up of services, and ranges from 0.17 to 0.75 throughout Europe).

- ▶ Coverage of rural areas by DSL is at 85 %, as opposed to a national coverage of 92 %, in December 2009.
- ▶ The rate of growth in regular Internet use between 2008 and 2009 has been approx. 54 %.
- ▶ The Czech Republic belongs to the countries which, thanks to the lack of legacy infrastructure, were able to leapfrog older technologies in favour of enhanced ones. Only 39 % of broadband lines are based on DSL, with fixed wireless access and cable modem predominating. Alternative operators only rent 5 % of all fixed broadband lines from the incumbent operator.

In general, the Czech fixed broadband market continues to experience significant growth on the back of continued DSL uptake in the wake of falling prices. Fixed wireless broadband is the second most popular form of fixed broadband access, with usage among the highest in the EU. The nascent Fibre-to-the-Home (FttH) sector is also experiencing rapid growth.

Actions to support Common Access to Electronic Content and Services

The Czech government has taken the view that direct support for new network infrastructures should only be provided in areas where standard market mechanisms cannot do so. This has somehow limited the expansion of networks, mainly for local distribution, in less densely populated and/or developed regions. The government's future strategy for the development of electronic communications in the next decade, which appeared in January 2010 entitled 'Digital Czech Republic' (*Digitální Česko*), includes provisions to extend access to broadband Internet throughout the country and to tackle the digital divide.

One of the government's priorities is to enable and **simplify citizens' communication** with the authorities. A network of the so-called 'Czech Points', i.e. places where citizen can obtain filed (stored) data in central records and registers is in operation and expands steadily.

The project 'Public Internet access points' was launched to collect data on such points and to present them to public via websites such as www.verejnyinternet.cz, or the public administration portal (Portal.gov.cz). The database shows that these points are available in most municipalities. Many of them also provide basic courses on the Internet.

Community **Wi-Fi spots** are abundant in the country, representing a large contribution to broadband penetration. More than 5 400 municipalities out of a total of 6 248 offer Wi-Fi connectivity, some of them free of charge.

eAccessibility

Status of eAccessibility

The Czech Republic has a direct legislation and associated regulations that cover accessibility of telecommunications, websites and broadcasting. The national plan of support and integration of people with disabilities for 2006-2009 also contains some eAccessibility objectives. According to the results of the '[Measuring progress of eAccessibility in Europe](#)' (MeAC) project, the country, in 2007, was classified as being at a level which was slightly above the European average in terms of eAccessibility.

According to the Czech Statistical office, only 9 % of public offices have made their web sites accessible to blind and visually impaired citizens.

Actions towards eAccessibility

All public administration websites must have fulfilled criteria of eAccessibility focused on people with disabilities by 1st January 2008 under the Act on Public Administration Information Systems

([Act No. 365/2000 Coll.](#)) as amended by Act No. 81/2006 Coll. The criteria must ensure accessible (barrier-free) web in line with the rules of the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI). The Act stipulated that public authorities should provide online information in a form that allows people with disabilities to gain access to it.

Government resolution No. 64, 7 February 2008, which provided harmonisation with the European Directives resulted in the publication, by the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky, MVCR*), of 33 recommendations for **eAccessibility**, realising three methodologies, namely WCAG 2.0, Section 508 and Blind Friendly Web.

A national plan for actions concerning the disabled was first drafted after the establishment of the '[Government Board for People with Disabilities](#)' (*Vládní výbor pro zdravotně postižené občany*), a coordinating and advisory body. This plan has received regular updates, of which the '[National Plan for the Support and Integration of Persons with Disabilities 2006-2009](#)' (*Národní plán podpory a integrace občanů se zdravotním postižením na období 2006 – 2009*) is the latest. The plan is the principal document of the Board and is the basis for legislative, methodological and organisational activities related to the needs of those disabled. Measures of relevance are included in section 5 on 'accessibility of information', which calls for legislative amendments to enable TV broadcasting to be equipped with open or closed subtitles, especially by taking advantage of digital transmission technologies. Another measure aims at developing and operating a web portal offering access to information on existing services and other forms of support for the disabled.

[Czech Blind United](#) (*Sjednocená organizace nevidomých a slabozrakých ČR, SONS*) is a civil association, which provides many highly professional services in various blindness-related fields and established regional centres of social services for blind and visually impaired citizens. The centres provide consulting services on assistive aids, assistive technologies and PC courses. The 'Blind Friendly Web' project, organised by the association, was the first project in the country to deal with accessibility. Since 2000, it has offered testing methods, courses and consultancy geared towards webmasters who want to create accessible web pages, including material on principles of web accessibility for users with severe vision impairments. Czech Blind United (and some private companies) also offer audits focused on eAccessibility.

The local and regional information society conference, which is a major annual national event, includes a 'Golden Crest' competition for websites and one of the awards refers to eAccessibility.

The website <http://pristupnost.nawebu.cz> provides **voluntary eAccessibility guidelines**. The website provides information about the subject, gives basic orientation in related terminology, provides a web blog and discussion area, presents various eAccessibility instruments and gives links to other information resources.

Digital Literacy and Competences

Status on Digital Literacy and Competences

Digital literacy and competences in the Czech Republic rate low on certain social groups such as the aged and those in geographically remote areas. The European Commission's 'Europe's Digital Competitiveness' reports for 2009 and 2010, evaluate the country as follows:

- ▶ The index on 'Digital Literacy by Risk Groups and Country' is at 0.66 for the 'Riga Total-at-Risk Groups' for the year 2009, as opposed to a corresponding European (EU-27) average of 0.71.
- ▶ The index of 'Digital Literacy Disparities in At-Risk Groups by Country' is at 0.61 for the year 2007, as opposed to an EU-27 average of 0.68.
- ▶ A small drop in digital skills has been observed between 2007 and 2009, represented by negative growth rates of between 1-3 %. Even though this may be only due to sampling errors, the figures will need to be closely monitored in the future to ensure that a negative trend does not emerge.

- ▶ Following the above findings, all regions in the country, except Prague, exhibited average internet use and growth, which was slightly below the EU-27 average.
- ▶ The Prague region exhibits a wide distribution of skills: it is among the leaders regarding the higher skill categories, but is also among the laggards due to the low levels found in the low skill categories. This may mean that a hard-core of digitally excluded groups is present.

Actions towards stimulating Digital Literacy and Competences

The latest '[National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008-2010](#)' (*Národní zpráva o strategiích sociální ochrany a sociálního začleňování na léta 2008–2010*), issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (*Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí*, MPSV), includes actions on 'Individualised Further Education', which aim at the development of skills in information technologies, language and other subjects.

Digital literacy services are offered by the [Centrum Internetu](#) organisation, via over 200 educational centres. These provide personal assistance and courses to those who cannot use a computer. They also offer professional inclusion services to target groups with special needs, such the disabled, the elderly, the unemployed youth, and other potentially socially excluded groups. By 2008, 32 000 participants had benefited from this activity.

Many Czech citizens, regardless of their occupation and PC experience, had the opportunity to develop their ICT skills via the 'National Computer Literacy Programme' (*Národní program počítačové gramotnosti*, NPPG), first launched in 2003. Courses were provided by the private sector, but were funded by state grants. The initiative was eInclusion oriented, as the majority of attendees were in the 51-60 age groups. Disable-oriented courses were also offered. By the end of the programme in 2006, more than 100 000 trainees had participated, attending a total of 254 146 courses.

The Action Plan for the '[School of the 21st century](#)' (*Škola pro 21. století*) for the period 2009-2013, funded jointly by the State and the European Social Fund, addresses ICT as well as the support and motivation of staff teaching in local education. One of the most important steps proposed by the Action Plan is the national project 'Making digital resources' (*Zpřístupnění digitalizovaných zdrojů*), as a contributor to the nationwide implementation of the [Data Mailbox](#) (*eGON - datové schránky*) project affecting all citizens and administrations.

eInclusion and Cultural Diversity

Status on eInclusion and Cultural Diversity

Following the Riga Dashboard, the 'Index of Regular Internet Use in At-Risk Groups by Country', compiled by the European Commission's 'Europe's Digital Competitiveness Report' (2010), evaluates the Czech Republic at 0.66 for the 'Riga Total-at-Risk Groups' as opposed to a corresponding European (EU-27) average of 0.68.

A separate **section** on the portal of the public administration ([Portal.gov.cz](#)) is especially oriented towards foreigners staying and working in the country. Similar sections exist in the sites of some ministries, most of them also offering English and other language options.

Actions towards eInclusion and Cultural Diversity

Projects on the support of refugees and foreigners permanently living in the Czech Republic, regarding employment, were carried out as part of the [EQUAL](#) Community Initiative, which ended in 2007.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs portal (*Integrovaný portál Ministerstva práce a sociálních věcí*), accessible at <http://portal.mpsv.cz>, shows statistics on the labour market evolution and offers advertising and CV posting facilities for job seekers, as well as vacancies search and connection to the [EURES](#) portal.

The website '[Home in the Czech Republic](#)' (*Doma v České republice*) is a practical instrument for the integration of foreigners in the Czech Republic. Established in 2003, its purpose is to increase availability of information among foreign nationals, who reside legally in the country. Funding is provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Eight languages are available. The database 'Advice for Living in the Czech Republic' (*Rady pro život v ČR*) contains structured information, advice and procedures concerning foreign nationals in the Czech Republic. The news section provides information on amendments on legal regulations and community life. Links to the [Information Booklet for Foreign Nationals](#), the [Czech for Foreigners](#) website and other sites of interest are also provided.

Inclusive eGovernment

Status on Inclusive eGovernment

According to the latest version of the [benchmarking-based measurement](#) for eGovernment, prepared for the European Commission (2009), the full online availability index for eGovernment services places the country at 60 %, as opposed to an EU-27 average of over 70 %. According to Eurostat, usage of electronic services related to public administration in 2009 was at 36.7 % of the population, comprising 22.8 % for obtaining information, 9.1 % for downloading forms and 4.8 % for returning filled forms. This means that only 4.8 % of the population were involved in a full electronic transaction with the administration.

The most common reasons cited as to why users are not interested in eGovernment services are the lack of personal contact, doubts that a problem can be solved in such a way and the lack of awareness that some issues can indeed be dealt with via the Internet.

Actions towards Inclusive eGovernment

The **gateway** to Czech eGovernment services is [Portal.gov.cz](#) the portal of the public administration, which is the main information source for all services. The portal offers informative as well as transactional facilities. Regarding eInclusion, its main contribution is the elimination of information barriers that socially excluded groups (for example the disabled) face. The Citizen–Health section of the Portal is designed with this group in mind, with advice on legislation and health issues, and practical information on services for the disabled, including e-shops, libraries, magazine articles, job vacancies, events, etc.

The Internet radio broadcasting of the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky*, MVCR), 'Radio Interior', offers, among others, information for the blind. Listeners may contact the newsroom via the telephone.

Both the lower Chamber of Deputies and the Upper Chamber of the Czech Parliament provide information on their websites on how each member of the parliament voted on every issue, the draft bills he/she submitted, the transcription of his/her speeches in the plenary and the interrogation sessions.

The Prague Municipality broadcasts the plenary sessions of the municipal assembly on its website, also making archives available.

The Future of eInclusion

Research in Practice & Future Challenges

Research in Practice

The [Seventh Framework Programme](#) (FP7) comprises, under its umbrella, EU research initiatives that play a vital part in attaining the objectives of growth, competitiveness and employment. The broad objectives of FP7 have been grouped into four categories: [Cooperation](#), [Ideas](#), [People](#) and [Capacities](#). eInclusion aspects hold a prominent place in this programme, which has been operational since 2007 and will expire in 2013.

Approximately € 400 million have been allocated to FP7's [Challenge 7: 'ICT for Independent Living, Inclusion and Governance'](#), one of the seven 'Challenges' of the [ICT Work Programme](#) 2009 – 2010 under FP7. The aim of 'Challenge 7' is to create ICT products, through research and development, which will foster independent and active living among Europe's ageing population, improving living standards and mitigating ICT complexity in order to encourage groups with special needs to uptake and use ICT tools and technologies to their benefit.

'Challenge 7' set three objectives:

Objective ICT-2009.7.1: [ICT & Ageing](#)

- ▶ Service robotics for ageing well
- ▶ Open Systems Reference Architectures, Standards and ICT Platforms for Ageing Well
- ▶ RTD roadmaps and stakeholder coordination.

Objective ICT-2009.7.2: [Accessible and Assistive ICT](#)

- ▶ Embedded Accessibility of Future ICT
- ▶ ICT restoring and augmenting human capabilities compensating for people with reduced motor functions or disabilities
- ▶ RTD research agendas & coordination of constituencies.

Objective ICT-2009.7.3: [ICT for Governance and Policy Modelling](#)

- ▶ Governance and Participation Toolbox
- ▶ Policy Modelling, Simulation and Visualisation
- ▶ Roadmapping and Networking for 'participation, governance and policy modelling'.

The Czech Republic is involved in the following FP7 projects:

1. ['Vital Mind'](#) (VM)

Research area: ICT-2007.7.1 ICT and Ageing

Project start date: 1 January 2008

Project end date: 30 June 2010

2. ['Accessibility assessment simulation environment for new applications design and development'](#) (ACCESSIBLE)

Research area: ICT-2007.7.2 Accessible and inclusive ICT

Project start date: 1 September 2008

Project end date: 31 August 2011

3. ['Open accessibility everywhere: groundwork, infrastructure, standards'](#) (AEGIS)

Research area: ICT-2007.7.2 Accessible and inclusive ICT

Project start date: 1 September 2008

Project end date: 29 February 2012

National Projects

In March 2008, the government commenced its reform of the research, development and innovation system. The objective of the complete package of measures is to simplify administration, improve the quality of the system, and increase the benefits of research, development and innovation for the Czech economy. Public financial resources for research and development were to be gradually increased to the target value of 1 % of the GDP by 2010.

The System 'I4Control'

'[I4control](#)' is a system for contactless control of personal computers suitable for motor-disabled people. It enables control of a personal computer by using the eyes or the head to emulate movements of the mouse. Main advantages are low price, simplicity of installation and usage, mobility as well as universality of the system, which can be connected to any computer via a USB interface. The system, which still continues to evolve (for example, left eye control has recently become available), received a medal in the eAccessibility category of the eInclusion Awards presented at the European eInclusion Ministerial Conference and Exhibition in Vienna (30 November to 2 December 2008).

PCs Against Barriers (*Počítače proti bariérám*)

'[PCs Against Barriers](#)' (*Počítače proti bariérám*) is an ongoing activity which in 2010 entered the 14th year of its life. Its main objective remains unchanged: to reintegrate disabled people as fast as possible by education and re-training via ICT. The initiative organises all types of computer courses all over the country, and is sponsored by Microsoft. Since 1996, no fewer than 22 PC centres have been established across the country, where disabled people may enrol, participate in course programmes and learn how to work efficiently with computers. The goal is to further improve the quality of the centres and to increase the variety of the training programmes on offer.

The programme operates under the '[BARRIERS Account](#)' (*Konto BARIÉRY*) project of the Foundation Charter 77 charity (registered as a non-governmental organisation in the Czech Republic).

Future Challenges

Ageing is a priority, as the Czech Republic has one of the most rapidly ageing populations in Europe.

There is a lack of co-ordination among governmental bodies and institutions, which must be addressed. This is also shown by many strategies issued in the past which have not been fully implemented. The effect is amplified by technologies for disadvantaged groups, which are becoming increasingly expensive.

European Commission - eInclusion Practice

eInclusion practice (epractice.eu) is an information and exchange service for European professionals.

The eInclusion factsheets are one of the epractice.eu services. The factsheets present an overview of the eInclusion status and progress in the European countries.

The eInclusion factsheets are produced and updated once a year.

eInclusion practice is an initiative of the Directorate General for the Information Society and Media, European Commission.

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