



Audit Report

25/02

Funds earmarked for projects supporting evaluation and management of the regional education system

The audit was included in the audit plan of the Supreme Audit Office (hereinafter also the "SAO") for the year 2025 under No 25/02. The audit was headed and the Audit Report was prepared by SAO Member Michal Šmucr.

The aim of the audit was to examine whether the funds earmarked for projects supporting the evaluation and management of the regional education system had been spent effectively, economically and in accordance with the law.

The audited period was 2019-2024; both the previous and subsequent periods were also considered for contextual reasons.

The audit was conducted with the audited entities between January and September 2025.

Audited entities:

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (also referred to below as "MoEYS" or "the Ministry")

Czech School Inspectorate, Prague (hereinafter also "CSI");

National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic (a facility for further education of pedagogical staff), Prague (hereinafter also referred to as "NPI").

The Board of the SAO at its 19th meeting held on 8 December 2025,

approved by Resolution No 7/XIX/2025

the ***Audit Report*** as follows:

Financial support for evaluation and management of the regional education system in the Czech Republic

KEY FACTS

11,691

Number of schools in the regional education system of the Czech Republic*

CZK 226.7 million

Financial support provided in the field of evaluation of the education system in the period 2017-2022

CZK 506.8 million

Financial support provided in the field of evaluation of the education system in the period 2016-2023

FINDINGS

CZK 506.8 million

Ineffectively spent funds in the field of management of the educational system

CZK 1.3 million

Funds spent in an uneconomical manner on the *Education Information System*

- The projects did not lead to an increase in the quality of education and improved student performance.
- In the acquisition of the *Education Information System*, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports spent funds in an uneconomical manner and acted contrary to the law.
- The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, contrary to the law, did not evaluate long-term educational plans.

* Indication of the number of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools according to MoEYS data as at 30 September 2024.

I. Summary and Evaluation

The SAO conducted an audit of state and European Union (hereinafter also the “EU”) funds earmarked for projects supporting the evaluation and management of the regional education system. The aim of the audit was to examine whether the funds earmarked for projects supporting the evaluation and management of the regional education system had been spent effectively, economically and in accordance with the law. To support the evaluation and management of the education system, the MoEYS allocated CZK 3,519.5 million at the system level in the audited period 2019-2024, specifically from the state budget and the European Structural and Investment Funds (hereinafter also “ESIF”).

The SAO found that projects in the area of the education system management, on which CZK 506.8 million was spent, did not meet the objectives aimed at increasing the quality of education, improving student performance in key competencies, or developing the strategic management system. The MoEYS has been repeatedly providing funds for methodological support projects, which, however, show a low rate of use by the target groups. The expected benefits of this financial support in relation to the quality of education in the regional education system did not materialise. In light of these circumstances, the SAO assessed the expenditure of the funds as ineffective.

The SAO also found violations of the law in the delivery of *the Education Information System*. The SAO assessed as uneconomical a portion of the funds amounting to CZK 1.3 million for the acquisition of this information system, which the MoEYS had spent by the date of the audit conclusion. Furthermore, contrary to the law, the MoEYS did not evaluate the goals and measures of long-term educational plans.

The SAO assessed the funds spent on the project to evaluate the education system in the amount of CZK 226.7 million as effective. In examining the topic of integrating Ukrainian pupils into Czech schools, the SAO did not find any violations of the law for the audited entities.

The overall evaluation is based on the following main audit findings:

1. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports did not meet the objectives of the call for system projects

The area of education system management was supported by the call for individual system projects under the Operational Programme *Research, Development and Education* (hereinafter also “OP RDE”), the aim of which was, among other things, to improve the quality of education, strategic management and student performance in key competencies¹. However, the SAO found that the implemented system projects in the area of management (*Support for Regional Action Planning and Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions*) did not lead to the expected improvement in education quality and the performance of Czech students in key competencies. The results of international surveys (e.g., PISA²) and CSI reports show stagnation or decline in performance in mathematics, reading comprehension and literacy in natural sciences.

As part of the support for strategic management, action plans were developed (regional action plans, local action plans, school action plans), but their benefits to schools were inconclusive

¹ Key competencies of students represent a set of vital skills and knowledge that a pupil is meant to acquire during schooling in order to be successful in everyday life, further education and work.

² Programme for International Student Assessment.

– a significant part of the target group perceived them as formal documents without real impact.

Due to the limited impact of the projects mentioned and the failure to meet the specific objectives of the call, the SAO assessed that the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports spent funds for their implementation ineffectively.

2. The MoEYS provided financial support for two projects with limited impact on the regional education system.

The SAO audited three system projects supported by the call from the OP RDE.

Project Support for Regional Action Planning

The project was meant to provide methodological support to administrative regions in action planning, but due to delays and low use by the target group, it did not meet one of its sub-objectives. The outputs were retroactively adjusted so that the project formally met the requirements, even though the actual effect was minimal. The SAO assessed the funds in the amount of CZK 250.2 million spent on the project as ineffective as they did not bring the expected benefits.

Project Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions

Due to lack of time coordination with follow-up projects and low level of participation of schools, two sub-objectives were not met. The financial support provided had limited reach and the systemic effects were minimal. The SAO assessed the funds in the amount of CZK 208.6 million spent on the project as ineffective as they did not bring the expected benefits.

Project Comprehensive Evaluation System

The project focused on assessing the quality of schools and fulfilled all set objectives and outputs. The results were used by both the CSI and MoEYS and contributed to systemic changes in the field of evaluation. The CSI ensured the sustainability of the project's outputs. The SAO assessed the funds in the amount of CZK 226.7 million spent on the project as effective as they brought concrete and usable outputs for the entire education system.

3. The MoEYS has been repeatedly providing funds for methodological support projects, which, however, show a low rate of use by the target groups.

The SAO audited two follow-up projects focused on methodological support to schools in strategic management, supported by one call from the OP RDE and one call from the Operational Programme *Jan Amos Komenský* (hereinafter also "OP JAK").

Project Methodological Support for Action Planning

The project was meant as follow-up to the preceding *Support for Regional Action Planning and Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions* projects and to align action planning with educational policy goals. Although the project formally met its outputs, there was a lack of independent evaluation and the main output – the Strategic Planning Guide – had a very low usage rate. The SAO assessed the funds in the amount of CZK 48 million spent on the project as ineffective as the project did not contribute to improvement in education quality and its effects were limited.

Intermediate Support Link project

The project is intended to create a system of methodological support for school managements and founding authorities. Its implementation was not completed as at the end date of the audit. The SAO identified risks associated with possible overlap with NPI activities, uneven

provision of methodological support to schools, and uncertain sustainability of support after the end of the project. As at the date of the SAO audit conclusion, over CZK 89 million had been spent on the project.

4. The MoEYS did not proceed when implementing the public contract for the *Education Information System* in accordance with the law

The MoEYS during the implementation of the public contract for the *Education Information System* in the total value of CZK 27.4 million breached the Public Procurement Act.³ This is because the Ministry concluded an amendment to the supply contract, which allowed for substantial changes to the public contract, including a change in the method of payment of contractual penalty.

Based on the amendment to the contract, the MoEYS paid the supplier by the time of the end date of the audit CZK 1.3 million for a detailed implementation proposal – additional functionalities of the *Education Information System*, without adopting this implementation proposal. The SAO assessed the expenditure of these funds as uneconomical.

5. The MoEYS provided schools with financial support to integrate Ukrainian students

In order to define the conditions of education for persons under temporary protection, including the possibility of postponing school attendance and simplified school admission, Act No 67/2022 Coll.⁴, was adopted, the draft of which was prepared by the MoEYS.

To support the integration of Ukrainian students in 2022 and 2023, the Ministry provided a total of over CZK 460 million within several subsidy calls. The SAO did not detect any violations of the law by the MoEYS in the process of providing the subsidies.

6. The MoEYS did not evaluate long-term educational plans according to Decree No 15/2005 Coll.

Under Act No 561/2004 Coll.⁵ and Decree No 15/2005 Coll.⁶, the MoEYS was obliged to develop long-term educational plans, in which to evaluate compliance with previous goals and measures. In the audited period, the *Long-Term Plan for Education and Development of the Education System in the Czech Republic for the Period 2019-2023* (hereinafter also “LTP CR 2019-2023”) was prepared, which contained 44 objectives and 159 measures. However, the document did not contain a mandatory evaluation of the status achieved in follow-up to the previous *Long-term Plan for Education and Development of the Education System in the Czech Republic for the Period 2015-2020* (hereinafter also “LTP CR 2015-2020”) in terms of the set goals and measures, whereby the MoEYS breached Decree No 15/2005 Coll.

Even in the subsequent *Long-Term Plan for Education and Development of the Education System in the Czech Republic 2023-2027* (hereinafter also “LTP CR 2023-2027”), the MoEYS did not evaluate specific goals and measures from the preceding period. This approach as well was contrary to Decree No 15/2005 Coll. The repeated lack of evaluation, and thus failure to comply with the requirements of the decree, reduces the informative value of long-term plans and limits their usability for strategic management of the education system.

³ Act No 134/2016 Coll., on public procurement.

⁴ Act No 67/2022 Coll. on measures in the field of education in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of Ukraine caused by the invasion of troops of the Russian Federation.

⁵ Act No 561/2004 Coll., on pre-school, primary, secondary, higher vocational and other education (Education Act).

⁶ Decree No 15/2005 Coll. on the requirements for long-term plans and annual reports.

II. Information on the Audited Area

According to data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Czech education system is highly decentralised, similar to, for example, the Netherlands, United Kingdom or Latvia. For public schools, responsibility is split between different levels of public administration. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports sets the legal framework for the schooling system, while municipalities ensure the provision of pre-school and primary education and regional authorities organise education in secondary schools and higher vocational schools. The operation and equipment of schools is paid for by their founding authorities, i.e., municipalities or their associations and regional authorities. The state budget, through the MoEYS, covers the salaries and social security contributions of teaching staff, expenditure for teaching aids, teacher training and extracurricular activities. In the Czech Republic in the school year 2024/2025, there were 5,410 active kindergartens, 4,293 primary schools, 1,313 secondary schools,⁷ 155 higher vocational schools and 520 primary art schools, totalling 11,691 entities operating in the regional education system.

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is an organisational unit of the state and the central state administration authority for pre-schools, schools, primary schools, secondary schools and universities, for science policy, research and development including international cooperation in this field, and for scientific degrees, for state care for children, youth and physical education. The MoEYS was the managing authority for the OP RDE in the programming period of 2014-2020 and for the OP JAK in the programming period of 2021-2027.

Czech School Inspectorate

The Czech School Inspectorate is an organisational unit of the state and an administrative authority of the Czech Republic with nationwide jurisdiction. The CSI is the national authority for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of initial education, including kindergartens, primary schools, primary art schools, secondary schools, conservatories and all school facilities (such as school counselling facilities, leisure centres, school cafeterias, etc.). In organisational terms, the Czech School Inspectorate is structured into headquarters based in Prague, and 14 regional inspectorates.

National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic

The National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic is a state contributory organisation directly managed by the MoEYS. The NPI was established on 1 January 2020, merging the National Institute for Education and the National Institute for Further Education. The main tasks of the NPI include:

- Systematic methodological and educational support for school and school facility managers in matters of strategic planning and development at the local, regional and administrative region levels;
- Supporting school networking and cooperation with other entities in the field of continuing education of teaching staff, creating tools to improve the quality of teaching;
- Coordination and methodological and information support for founding authorities of schools and school facilities, their managers and teaching staff at the local and regional levels through 14 regional offices (support centres) part of the NPI;

⁷ MoEYS data as at 30 September 2024.

- Implementation of projects financed from the European Structural and Investment Funds.

Long-term plans for education and development of the education system and strategic documents of the MoEYS

Long-term plans for education and development of the education system in the Czech Republic are prepared by the MoEYS on the basis of the provisions of Section 9 paragraph 1 of Act No 561/2004 Coll. Long-term plans are compiled for the entire regional education system, define the framework of long-term planning for administrative regions, and align activities of the national government and regional authorities in particular in the area of setting the parameters for the education system and the aims of the educational policy of the Czech Republic. Each administrative region also prepares its long-term plan for education and development of the education system in accordance with the provisions of Section 9 paragraph 2 of Act No 561/2004 Coll.

Long-Term Plan for Education and Development of the Education System in the Czech Republic for the period 2019-2023

The *Long-Term Plan for Education and Development of the Education System in the Czech Republic for the Period 2019-2023* was valid and effective during the audited period. The LTP CR 2019-2023 contained 12 areas for the development of the regional education system. Part F dealt with the topic of evaluation of students, schools and the schooling system, in which the MoEYS set four priority objectives and 12 associated measures. Part L addressed the topic of management of the schooling system, in which the MoEYS set eight priority objectives and 22 associated measures.

Action planning within the framework of the OP RDE

Action planning in the OP RDE was intended to serve as a specific tool within the management of the schooling system. Regional action plans and local action plans were to be devised in the bottom-up direction from the needs of schools, priorities of educational policy and the needs of each local area, which were to be reflected, *inter alia*, in long-term plans for education and development of the regional education system. School action plans or education development activity plans were to be prepared in all schools (kindergartens, primary, secondary and higher vocational schools).

Local action plans were to be focused on pre-school and primary education and were to be developed and implemented where partnerships between schools and their founding authorities, other educational institutions, organisations active in education and parents had already been established. In contrast, regional action plans were to be targeted at vocational education, including cooperation between schools and employers, and to be prepared in partnerships between the administrative regions, schools, employers and other key actors in education in the given local area.

Local action plans and education development activity plans were to primarily monitor the needs of schools in areas such as inclusion, material and technical equipment, polytechnic education, entrepreneurship and career guidance, etc. This information was to be shared as a basis for the processing and addressing of the given topics within the framework of the regional action plans. This was meant to produce a comprehensive solution within the framework of regional and local activity plans and education development activity plans to enable collaborative projects across schools and other educational institutions.

Based on the compiled action plans, individual developers were then entitled to draw funds from individual calls of the OP RDE or the *Integrated Regional Operational Programme*,

whether for developing and overhauling infrastructure and material equipment of schools or for selected activities within templates (e.g., training teachers or providing a school psychologist, etc.). Through regional and local activity plans, the strategic management of schools was to be improved, thereby giving more effective support to teachers, improving the quality of teaching and ultimately developing key competencies of students.

System projects supported by the MoEYS

1) *Comprehensive Evaluation System*

The project was launched on 1 February 2017 and ended on 30 November 2022. The promoter was the Czech School Inspectorate. CZK 248.7 million was allocated to the CSI project from the state budget and ESIF, with the CSI using CZK 226.7 million, of which 81% was personnel expenditure. The aim of the *Comprehensive Evaluation System* project was to interconnect the processes of external and internal (self-) evaluation in schools at all levels of the education system based on the developed methods, procedures and tools. The *Comprehensive Evaluation System* project consisted of eight interconnected key activities. There were in excess of 200 of the project outputs. These included, for example, methodologies, expert publications, sets of evaluation tools, descriptions of examples of inspiring practice, national reports, thematic reports, professional seminars, conferences and panel discussions, etc.

2) *Support for Regional Action Planning*

The project started on 1 March 2016 and ended on 31 December 2021, with the NPI as the project promoter. The NPI subsidy for the project amounted to CZK 275.9 million from the state budget and ESIF. Thereof the NPI spent CZK 250.2 million, of which 96% was personnel expenditure. The general aim of the project was to support education in the secondary education and higher vocational education systems in accordance with the educational strategy of the MoEYS and using action planning. The NPI set to achieve this goal by supporting the preparation and implementation of regional action plans in the field of education and also by targeted support to schools in the preparation of education development activity plans or school action plans, their evaluation and ensuring the quality of the implemented activities. The project outputs primarily included a methodological support system during regional action planning, school action plans and activity plans, methodological seminars and webinars, an umbrella network of methodologists called *Edusít* (in Czech this is a portmanteau word for educational network), a questionnaire survey of needs, and reports on the status of inclusive education in secondary schools.

3) *Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions*

The project was launched on 1 March 2016 and its implementation ended on 30 November 2021 with the NPI as the project promoter. In total, CZK 239.2 million was allocated to the project from the state budget and ESIF, with the funds used totalling CZK 208.6 million, of which 70% was personnel expenditure. The main objective of the project was to improve strategic management and planning in schools and regions through the development of pedagogical leadership in schools, methodological guidance of beneficiaries of individual projects towards the creation of local action plans, and their mutual cooperation. The project's main output was the establishment of support centres in each administrative region and a system of intensive support for directors.

4) *Methodological Support for Action Planning*

The project was launched on 1 December 2021 and its implementation ended on 30 November 2023 with the NPI as the project promoter. In total, an amount of nearly CZK 50

million was allocated to the project from the state budget and ESIF, with the funds used totalling CZK 48 million, of which 71% was personnel expenditure. The *Methodological Support for Action Planning* project followed up on the activities and outputs of the *Support for Regional Action Planning and Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions* projects. Its aim was to maintain methodological support for all actors in action planning (methodological support, coordination and consultancy) and at the same time to align action planning processes at all levels of the education system (i.e., national, regional, local and school tiers) to produce a unified action planning model. The main output of this project was the *Strategic and Action Planning Guide*.

5) Intermediate Support Link

The project was launched in July 2023 and its expected implementation end date is set at 30 June 2029. The promoter for this project is the MoEYS. The MoEYS allocated CZK 882.2 million for the project from the state budget and ESIF, of which 77% is planned for personnel expenditure. As at the date of the audit conclusion, the MoEYS had spent over CZK 89 million. The aim of the project is to build a system of communication and methodological support for kindergarten and primary school managements and their founding authorities, with an emphasis on efficient organisational management, people management, and orientation in school legislation. The project focused on providing both general and individualised methodological assistance directly where schools and founding authorities needed it most through regional coordinators and regional methodologists. According to the MoEYS, the project implementation should help reduce inequalities in access to quality education.

III. Scope of the Audit

The audit focused on funds earmarked for projects supporting the evaluation and management of the regional education system. The aim of the audit was to examine whether the funds earmarked for projects supporting the evaluation and management of the regional education system had been spent effectively, economically and in accordance with the law. The audited period was from 2019 to 2024, and the preceding and subsequent periods where materially relevant.

The audit was carried out at the MoEYS as the supervising authority for the area of education and the managing authority of the OP RDE. The audit was also performed at the CSI and NPI as the promoters of system projects in the areas of evaluation and management of the education system.

The audit focused on the use of funds from the state budget and the EU targeted at system projects in the areas of evaluation and management of the education system. The implementation of these projects referred to the objectives and measures in the Long-term Plan for Education and Development of the Education System in the Czech Republic for the Period 2019-2023. Consequently, the audit at the MoEYS verified progress in compliance with the objectives and implementation of the measures of the LTP CR 2019-2023 in part *F Evaluation of Students, Schools and the Schooling System and in part L Management of the Schooling System*. Furthermore, the SAO examined within the framework of the OP RDE the set parameters of calls supporting the areas of evaluation and management of the education system. At the level of the MoEYS as the managing authority of the OP RDE, three system projects and one follow-up project were audited. Specifically for these, their benefits and

effects on the regional education system were evaluated. Furthermore, one follow-up project supported from the OP JAK was also audited at the MoEYS. The *Education Information System* development project was also selected for auditing at the MoEYS, of which the SAO audited its first stage.

For CSI and NPI, the level of fulfilment of the project objectives, the implementation of key activities and the use of their outputs in the regional education system was verified. In the area of management of the education system at the MoEYS, the SAO also focused on the topic of integrating Ukrainian children into Czech schools. Calls issued by the MoEYS supporting these activities were examined (see Annex 1 to this Audit Report).

The audited amount of funds at the systemic level at the MoEYS totalled CZK 3,519.5 million, which represents funds allocated to selected projects, the *Education Information System*, and calls issued by the MoEYS in 2022 and 2023 focused on the integration of Ukrainian students. The audited volume of funds spent on selected projects amounted to CZK 733.5 million, of which CZK 226.7 million was at the Czech School Inspectorate and CZK 506.8 million at the National Pedagogical Institute. The audited volume of funds spent by the MoEYS on the integration of Ukrainian students amounted to CZK 463.6 million.

The assessment of effectiveness primarily included evaluating whether the funds spent by the MoEYS on projects to support the evaluation and management of the regional education system were used in a way that optimally contributes to achieving the goals in this area, with a clear effect on the education system.

The assessment of economy primarily consisted in evaluating whether the MoEYS had used the funds slated for the development of the *Education Information System* with the lowest possible expenditure of these funds, while maintaining the appropriate quality of the tasks performed.

Note: The legal regulations referred to in this Audit Report apply in their wording effective in the audited period.

IV. Detailed Findings of the Audit

1. The MoEYS did not meet the objectives of the call for system projects

The area of education system management was supported through the OP RDE primarily from call no 02_15_001 – *For individual system projects of the Operational Programme Research, Development and Education*. The SAO therefore focused in its audit on selected projects supported under this call.

For selected projects, the MoEYS set within the framework of call no 02_15_001 three specific objectives that were to be achieved by the implementation of these projects:

- Specific objective 2: *Improving the quality of education and student performance in key competencies;*
- Specific objective 3: *Development of a system of strategic management and quality assessment in education;*
- Specific objective 5: *Boosting the quality of education and vocational training, including reinforcing their relevance for the labour market.*

The quality of education in the Czech Republic is monitored and evaluated by the Czech School Inspectorate in accordance with Act No 561/2004 Coll. Every year, CSI publishes an annual

report for the preceding school year, in which, based on a survey of schools covering the whole annual period, it comprehensively evaluates the state of the education system, the quality and effectiveness of education, and presents the results of education of children, pupils and students in the Czech Republic. The SAO focused on trends in available indicators of education quality in the Czech Republic after the implementation of selected system projects (2021) in order to verify the fulfilment of the specific objectives of the call.

In its annual report, *Quality of Education in the Czech Republic in the School Year 2022/2023*, the CSI stated that the average level of reading comprehension of Czech pupils and students has not improved significantly over the past 20 years and is rather stagnant. Similarly, there is a lack of progress in literacy in natural sciences. According to a survey by the CSI, 51% of secondary school students showed a minimal or insufficient level of literacy in natural sciences.⁸

Furthermore, according to international PISA⁹ surveys and the national CSI report, there was a decline in proficiency in mathematics between the 2018/19 school year and the 2023/24 school year, which was the most pronounced since 2003, across all types of schools monitored.¹⁰ In reading comprehension and literacy in natural sciences, the results were relatively stable according to the last two PISA surveys. In proficiency in natural sciences, Czech students maintained almost the same result as in 2018, but scored lower by 15 points against 2003.

Table 1: Results of Czech students in international PISA surveys

Area	PISA 2003	PISA 2018	PISA 2022
Mathematics	516 points	499 points	487 points
Reading	489 points	490 points	489 points
Natural sciences	513 points	497 points	498 points

Source: prepared by the SAO based on data from annual reports of the CSI for 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 and from the PISA 2022 national report.

By implementation of selected *Support for Regional Action Planning and Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions* projects, the results of students in key competencies were to improve, among other things. According to the above data, however, the results of these system projects did not contribute to improving the quality of education and student performance.

To verify the development of the system of strategic management and quality assessment in education, the SAO also used data from the MoEYS and the CSI. Action planning was meant to improve the level of strategic management in schools, thereby improving the quality of teaching and ultimately developing key competences in students. The MoEYS thus set in the OP RDE the obligation to develop action plans, including for drawing on EU funds. Regional action plans were developed at the regional level, local action plans at the local level, and school action plans at the level of individual schools.

⁸ Similar results were found among secondary school students also in the areas of modern history (46%) and financial literacy (46%).

⁹ PISA does not measure the percentage of success in the test, but the level of students' proficiency in a given area. The result is expressed on a point scale with an average of 500 points and a standard deviation of 100 points (600 points = above-average skills, 400 points = below-average skills).

¹⁰ Primary schools, secondary vocational schools with a high school diploma, secondary vocational schools without a high school diploma, multi-year grammar schools and four-year grammar schools.

The SAO ascertained that each administrative region prepared within the framework of the OP RDE three regional action plans in the period 2016-2021, totalling 42 documents. However, the MoEYS abandoned their further creation after 2021 and incorporated them into long-term education plans (see point 2 below). Also in the period 2016-2021, 222 local action plans were compiled. Financial support for the creation of local action plans continues to be provided under OP JAK. In the first wave in the period 2016-2018, 701 school action plans or activity plans were prepared, in the second wave in the period 2018-2021, 918 SAPs/APs were developed (i.e., 63% of all secondary schools, higher vocational schools and conservatories). Although the MoEYS imposed an obligation on all schools to prepare school action plans, it had no data about how many schools had actually fulfilled this obligation, nor whether this had contributed to strategic management in schools.

According to data from the MoEYS, the methodological support was deemed unnecessary by the action plan developers (a third of regional action plan managers) and half of the school action plan developers did not see any benefit in creating action planning. In fact, more than half of the plan developers did not perceive action planning as a tool for improving the quality of school work. This means that the action plans were rather formal documents without any concrete benefit for the schools and education.

Given the limited real effect of the projects on the Czech education system and the failure to meet the specific objectives of the call, the SAO concluded that the funds in the amount of CZK 506.8 million spent on their implementation were used ineffectively.

2. The MoEYS provided financial support for two projects with limited impact on the regional education system.

The SAO focused on system projects in the area of evaluation and management of the regional education system, which referred to the *Long-Term Plan for Education and Development of the Education System 2019-2023*. Of the total costs of system projects, 81% was spent on personnel expenditure at the CSI and the NPI spent an average of 83% on personnel expenditure for two projects. For the *Support for Regional Action Planning and Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions* projects, one of the sub-objectives was not met.

2.1 *Support for Regional Action Planning* project

The implementation of the *Support for Regional Action Planning* project, which aimed to provide methodological support to administrative regions and schools in the creation of action planning documents, began with a delay. Some administrative regions thus began creating their regional action plans on their own without the methodological support from the NPI. Consequently over the period 2016-2018¹¹, the *Support for Regional Action Planning* project did not provide methodological support to the extent to which the NPI committed itself in the support application and the project charter. The NPI thus failed to meet one of the four sub-objectives.

Although the project formally met all set outputs, some of them – such as the number of seminars, webinars, or meetings to exchange experience – were significantly downward adjusted six months before its end. However, NPI was already aware of their non-fulfilment earlier during the project implementation. The NPI met outputs in the form of seminars, webinars and annual meetings on average at only 11.6% of the originally set values. The SAO

¹¹ The first two years of the project implementation.

therefore assesses the adjustment of the number of outputs as an ad hoc device so that the project formally meets its outputs.

The SAO further assessed that the expected benefits of the project did not materialise. This assessment was based on an external evaluation of the project and assessments by managers of regional action plans and developers of school action plans who were primarily targeted by the project. The target group was not fully satisfied with the support provided – a third of the total of 14 regional action plan managers considered it unnecessary. Almost half of the developers of school action plans/education development activity plans¹² did not see the benefit of action planning efforts and more than half did not perceive it as a tool for improving the quality of school work.

After the project ended, the MoEYS abandoned the creation of regional action plans by amending Decree No 15/2005 Coll. and replaced regional action plans with the development of long-term educational plans at the level of individual administrative regions, which the regions have been obliged to create since 2005. The amended decree introduced, among other things, the obligation to include an analysis of school needs at the national or regional levels as a basis for long-term plans and also public consultations on long-term plans.

Given that the *Support for Regional Action Planning* project did not support the preparation and implementation of regional action plans to the expected extent, the SAO assessed that the funds provided by the MoEYS for the implementation of this project were spent ineffectively.

2.2 Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions project

The implementation of the *Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions* project, which aimed, among other things, to improve strategic management and planning in schools, began with a delay. The *Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions* project also lacked temporal alignment with local action plan projects, for which the *Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions* project was meant to provide methodological support. Some local action plan projects (55 instances) had already been under implementation since January and February 2016, i.e., a month before the start of the *Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions* project implementation. Implementation of a further 152 local action plan projects began within three months of the launch of the *Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions* project. In the initial phase, the *Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions* project, or rather the NPI, did not provide methodological support in the creation of local action plans¹³ to the extent to which it committed itself in the support application and the project charter. Consequently, the NPI failed to fully meet one of the four sub-objectives. Furthermore, the NPI did not meet another sub-objective, namely the communication of the outputs of OP RDE projects and the principles of the KLIMA action¹⁴.

Although the *Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions* project formally met all of its set outputs, one of them – local conferences – was downward adjusted two

¹² There were approximately 918 developers of school action plans/education development activity plans in the second wave of regional action plans (secondary schools, secondary vocational schools and higher vocational schools).

¹³ This was in the period approximately between 2018 and 2018.

¹⁴ The KLIMA action within the framework of the OP RDE was a systemic initiative to support the quality of primary and pre-school education. It focused on the key areas of learning culture, pedagogical leadership, inclusion, methodological support for teachers (mentoring), and activation forms of teaching.

months before its completion. The NPI was meant to support 65 local conferences, but this number was reduced to 41. According to the NPI, the reason was the target group's lack of interest in meetings and in holding joint online conferences. The MoEYS approved this change.

As part of the project, on which the MoEYS spent CZK 208.6 million, support centres were established in each administrative region, providing schools with methodological and individual assistance. However, within the entire regional education system, the centres provided on average only 1.65 individual consultations per school over a period of 69 months. The support centres were not integrated into the regular activities of the NPI, which the recipient committed to in the project charter. Furthermore, under the *Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions* project, a system of intensive support was launched in the area of strategic management and planning with an emphasis on pedagogical school leadership, which was piloted at 92 schools in three waves during the project implementation. Overall, only 0.79% of schools within the regional education system (kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools and primary art schools) participated. Although the project was supported under the call for system projects, the aim of which was, among other things, to achieve an effect for the entire regional education system, the intensive support system did not have such an effect.

From the above facts, the SAO assessed that the funds provided by the MoEYS for the implementation of the *Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions* project were spent ineffectively.

2.3 Comprehensive Evaluation System project

The *Comprehensive Evaluation System* project achieved all the expected aims and outputs. After the project ended, the project outputs were used primarily by the CSI in its inspection activities, within the entire regional education system. The CSI thus ensured the sustainability of the project's outputs beyond the scope of the call. The CSI interlinked internal and external evaluation systems and created and published criteria for a quality school. The MoEYS used some of the project's outputs for example in the preparation of legislation or the reform of teacher training in the Czech Republic. Thus, the *Comprehensive Evaluation System* project can be assessed as effective in terms of achieving the set objectives and outputs and also in terms of the funds spent.

3. The MoEYS has been repeatedly providing funds for methodological support projects, which, however, show a low rate of use by the target groups.

The MoEYS did not ensure sustainability of the *Support for Regional Action Planning and Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions* system projects in call no 02_15_005. For the *Comprehensive Evaluation System*, the CSI ensured the sustainability of the project's outputs. The MoEYS, within the framework of the OP RDE, thus announced another call no 02_20_082 – *Action planning in regions*, which was meant to ensure the continuation of action planning activities. The aim of the call was to support joint planning and sharing of activities in regions in order to improve the quality of education in schools. Within this call, the SAO focused on a project supported under activity C – *Methodological Support for Action Planning*, the promoter of which was the NPI.

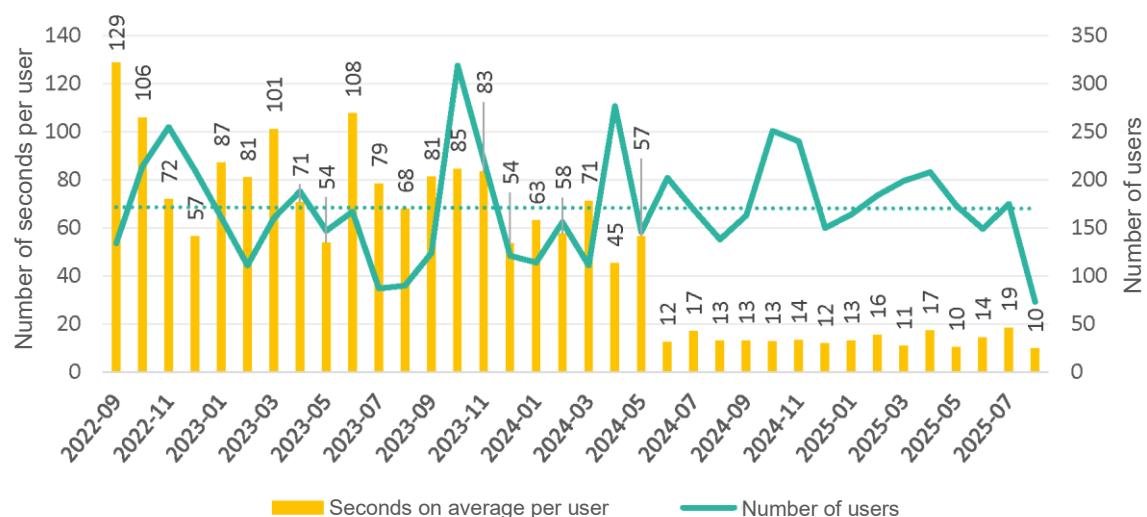
3.1 Methodological Support for Action Planning project

The MoEYS had envisaged the implementation of the *Methodological Support for Action Planning* project since at least 30 September 2020, i.e., 14 months before the planned end

date of the *Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions* project and 15 months before the planned end date of the *Support for Regional Action Planning* project. The *Methodological Support for Action Planning* project followed up on the implementation of the two projects. In its support application for the *Methodological Support for Action Planning project*, the NPI stated that by then, the needs of schools had been addressed through action planning without systematic alignment with the strategic goals and priorities of the MoEYS, and that action planning had to some extent been taking place at various levels in parallel as opposed to in a uniform and coordinated manner. This despite the fact that the consistency of action planning with the strategic documents of the MoEYS in the area of educational policy and overall coordination of individual levels of action planning should have been the result of the implementation of the *Support for Regional Action Planning and Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions* projects already. Nevertheless, 14 and 15 months respectively before the end of these projects, the MoEYS issued a call for a follow-up project, which the NPI subsequently implemented and which mainly addressed these shortcomings. The SAO found that the project formally met its objectives and outputs. However, the NPI did not ensure that an external (independent) evaluation of the project be prepared, contrary to the application. Hence as a result, this project did not undergo an independent evaluation of its set objectives, outputs and benefits. This issue was not addressed by any request for change or comments on part of the MoEYS.

One of the main outputs of the project was the *Strategic and Action Planning Guide* (a unified action planning model), which was created in a text version and as an online tool. The most watched video in the guide had 537 views. Under the *Methodological Support for Action Planning project*, the NPI declared 1,177 organisations that were affected by a systemic intervention. A comparison of this data shows that even the most watched video was viewed by only a small portion of the organisations involved. Potential users of the guide include, among others, all administrative regions, local action plan groups and schools. According to data from the Czech Statistical Office, the number of kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools in the Czech Republic fluctuates around 11 thousand every year. Thus, compared to the total of all potential users of the guide, the viewing rates of the videos were very low.

Chart 1: Usage statistics for the *Strategic and Action Planning Guide*



Source: prepared by SAO using data from NPI.

The most used levels of the guide were the introductory level of the *Strategic and Action Planning Guide* and the level targeted at schools. Chart 1 shows that the rate of use of the guide, as the main output of the *Methodological Support for Action Planning* project, was very low compared to the total of all potential users of the guide (approximately 11 thousand users). The average time spent in the main levels of this guide since their launch most typically ranged between one and two minutes (per user), and after the end of the *Methodological Support for Action Planning* project, the time even dropped below one minute.

As for the traffic statistics of the guide as a whole, the average number of unique accesses after the end of the project – i.e., as of 1 December 2023 – increased slightly, however the average monthly time spent in the application by one user dropped to less than one third compared to during the project period.

From the end of the project, the NPI ensures communication of this main output of the *Methodological Support for Action Planning* project also through paid courses.

The SAO assessed that the rate of use of the guide and the viewing rates of the videos were low. The project did not contribute to improving the quality of education in schools. The SAO therefore considers the funds spent on the implementation of this project to have been used ineffectively.

3.2 *Intermediate Support Link* project

Under the OP JAK, the MoEYS announced call no 02_22_005, in which the *Intermediate Support Link* project has been in implementation since July 2023. This project, the promoter of which is the MoEYS, aims to build a system of communication and methodological support for kindergarten and primary school managements and their founding authorities. The rationale for the project and its benefits is based according to the MoEYS on findings from the pilot phase of verification of the *Intermediate Support Link* in the districts of Semily and Svitavy.

The implementation of the *Intermediate Support Link* project was not completed by the time of the audit end date. The SAO however sees a risk of ineffective use of funds for this project, especially concerning the following activities:

- The existence of two parallel methodological support systems (support provided by the NPI and through the *Intermediate Support Link*) can cause redundancies, confusion and inefficient use of resources. Methodological support is notably one of the main activities of the NPI according to its founding charter.¹⁵
- Failures to use methodological support by all administrative regions and schools could exacerbate inequalities in education. Since the launch of the project, almost a third of schools in five administrative regions still had not been visited by a methodologist by the end of June 2025.
- Sustainability of regional support will not be ensured after the end of the project as with the *Strategic Management and Planning at Schools and in Regions* project.

¹⁵ NPI Founding Charter, Article II, point 2(d) implementation of systematic methodological and educational support for school and school facility managers in the area of strategic planning and development at the administrative region, regional and local levels; (f) coordination and methodological and information support for school and school facility founding authorities, school and school facility managements and teaching staff in the area of competence of the institute at the regional and local levels, including through the regional offices of the institute.

The SAO assessed these facts as a risk from the point of view of effective use of funds under this project.

4. The MoEYS did not proceed when implementing the public contract for the *Education Information System* in accordance with the law

The SAO audited the public contract for the supply and operational support for the *Education Information System*. The development of the system was one of the measures under the LTP CR 2019-2023 in the area of education system management. The *Education Information System* development project was divided by the MoEYS into three stages. The first stage was to build a functional core of the system and new digitalisation of agendas related to school registers – the register of schools and school facilities, the register of school legal entities and the register of universities.

The MoEYS concluded a supply contract with the supplier on 15 December 2021 for a total value of CZK 27.4 million, and published it through the register of contracts on 3 January 2022. In the contract, the supplier undertook to deliver the finished work within 19 months from the effective date of the contract. However, this did not happen by 3 August 2023.

On 4 April 2024, the MoEYS concluded an amendment to the supply contract and a settlement agreement with the same supplier. The subject of the amendment to the supply contract was the expansion of the original scope of performance by the module for the digitalisation of processes of the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education and some additional functionalities, while increasing the total price of the work by CZK 5.2 million. By concluding this amendment to the supply contract, the MoEYS thus breached the prohibition on making a substantial change to public contract commitment that would allow the participation of other suppliers or could influence supplier selection in the original tender procedure, if the specifications of the original tender procedure corresponded to this change. The MoEYS thus breached the Public Procurement Act.¹⁶

The subject of the settlement agreement was the settlement of the parties regarding the delay, some disputed functionalities and the quantification of the amount of the contractual penalty according to the supply contract commensurate to the extent of the delay, which amounted to CZK 6 million payable by the supplier. Instead of proceeding according to the supply contract, however, the MoEYS and the supplier agreed on payment in the form of non-monetary performance, or compensation, in the value of CZK 6.2 million. The SAO also found the change in the method of payment of the contractual penalty as opposed to deferring to the provisions of the supply contract to be in conflict with the Public Procurement Act.¹⁷ The conclusion of the amendment resulted in a change to the contractual terms and conditions that could have allowed participation of other suppliers if the specifications of the original tender procedure had corresponded to this change.

Based on the amendment to the supply contract, the MoEYS paid the supplier CZK 1.3 million exclusive of VAT on 30 April 2024 in follow-up to acceptance of the invoicing milestone for a detailed implementation proposal for the additional functionalities of the *Education Information System*. There was no further performance by the supplier under the amendment to the supply contract. By the end date of the audit, the MoEYS had not used the detailed implementation proposal in any way. The SAO therefore assessed the expenditure of these funds as at the end date of the audit as uneconomical. According to the SAO, these facts

¹⁶ Section 1 paragraph 222 in conjunction with Section 3 paragraph 134/2016(a) of Act No 134/2016 Coll.

¹⁷ Section 1 paragraph 222 in conjunction with Section 3 paragraph 134/2016(a) of Act No 134/2016 Coll.

indicate a breach of the budgetary discipline.¹⁸

In February and March 2025, communication took place between the MoEYS and the supplier regarding delays in performance under the supply contract, the amendment and the settlement agreement. In July 2025, the MoEYS accepted 29 of the 59 requirements listed in the *Education Information System* tender specifications, another 24 requirements were examined by the MoEYS and released for acceptance, four requirements were not met and two requirements were half met. The supplier did not implement, in particular, the digitalisation of the register of higher education institutions and active study programmes, electronic submission, and support for the use of full electronic submission.

On 31 July 2025, the MoEYS concluded an agreement with the supplier on terminating the liabilities under the supply contract. In the termination agreement, the MoEYS and the supplier quantified the total amount of the contractual penalty for delay on the supplier's part as at 25 February 2025 at CZK 7.7 million. In this instance as well, the MoEYS again agreed with the supplier on payment in the form of non-monetary performance.

In total, the MoEYS paid for the *Education Information System* under the audited public contract almost CZK 13.5 million. These funds bought the Ministry an information platform that contained, among other things, data on schools, school facilities and fields of education. This data was shared with the public, schools, and founding authorities. However, contrary to the original plan, the register of higher education institutions was not digitalised and complete electronic submission was not ensured within the supplied information system. The delivered part of the work as mentioned above, which was to be delivered under the supply contract by 3 August 2023, was at the time of the SAO audit end date in the acceptance process.

5. The MoEYS provided schools with financial support to integrate Ukrainian students

In 2022, after the outbreak of the armed conflict in Ukraine, the Czech Republic faced an influx of Ukrainian refugees. The task of the MoEYS thus was to integrate Ukrainian students into the Czech education system in accordance with international law and Czech legal regulations, especially the Education Act.

The MoEYS responded to the arrival of Ukrainian students with a draft law that modified educational measures for persons under temporary protection. Act No 67/2022 Coll. made it easier for schools, for example, to increase capacities and adjusted the rules for admitting children to schools. The law has been amended six times, with the first amendment allowing for the postponement of school attendance for up to 90 days, which was meant to ensure the adaptation of Ukrainian children, especially in the language aspect. Further amendments detailed the deadlines and conditions for the education of children under temporary protection.

In 2022, the MoEYS announced four subsidy calls to support the integration of Ukrainian pupils and students into Czech schools. The MoEYS provided under these calls a total of CZK 386.7 million in 2022. In 2023, the MoEYS published two calls and supported applicants with a total amount of CZK 76.9 million. The SAO did not find any deficiencies in the provision of the subsidies. The MoEYS spent funds on the integration of Ukrainian pupils and students into the Czech education system in 2022 and 2023 effectively and in accordance with the law.

The MoEYS monitored issues related to the integration of Ukrainian pupils and students into Czech schools through reports from the CSI. The MoEYS, in cooperation with the CSI and the

¹⁸ Section 3(e) and Section 44 (1)(a) of Act No 218/2000 Coll.

NPI, responded to this situation in the Czech education system by intensifying methodological support to schools, providing funds for the adaptation of Ukrainian pupils and students and cooperating with the Ukrainian side. This situation continued also in the following years of the audited period.

More details on the topic of integrating Ukrainian pupils and students into Czech schools are provided in Annex 1 hereto.

6. The MoEYS did not evaluate long-term educational plans according to Decree No 15/2005 Coll.

The MoEYS was required to prepare long-term plans for education and development of the education system in the Czech Republic by the provisions of Section 9 of the Education Act and Decree No 15/2005 Coll. In the audited period, the MoEYS prepared the LTP CR 2019-2023. The Czech Government approved the LTP CR 2019-2023 by its resolution No 489 of 8 July 2019, *on the Long-Term Plan for Education and Development of the Education System in the Czech Republic for the Period 2019-2023*.

The LTP CR 2019-2023 consisted of three parts: *Societal Development and Education, Regional Education System Development Strategy and Regional Education System Financing*. In the second part of the LTP CR 2019-2023, the MoEYS set 44 objectives and 159 measures for 11 areas of education. For each measure, the MoEYS specified the criteria, compliance deadlines, funding sources and affected entities.

However, the LTP CR 2019-2023 did not contain all the requirements set out in Decree No 15/2005 Coll.; the document lacked an evaluation of the status achieved following the preceding LTP CR 2015-2020 in terms of content and quantitative objectives and priority tasks. The MoEYS thus acted contrary to Decree No 15/2005 Coll.¹⁹ by failing to evaluate the status achieved following the previous LTP CR 2020-2020 in terms of content and quantitative objectives and priority tasks.

Within the framework of the follow-up LTP CR 2023-2027, the MoEYS only evaluated progress in individual areas of the previous LTP CR 2019-2023, generally without evaluating specific objectives and measures. The MoEYS thus acted also in the assessment of LTP CR 2019-2023 contrary to Decree No 15/2005 Coll.²⁰ by failing to evaluate in LTP CR 2027-2019 the status achieved following the previous LTP CR 2019-2023 in terms of set objectives and measures.

¹⁹ Provision of Section 1(2)(a) of Decree No 15/2005 Coll. (wording of the Decree from 1 July 2012 to 14 October 2020).

²⁰ Provision of Section 1(a) of Decree No 15/2005 Coll. (wording of the decree from 1 July 2022 to 31 August 2025).

List of terms and abbreviations

CSI	Czech School Inspectorate
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
EU	European Union
KLIMA action	a systemic initiative under the OP RDE to support the quality of primary and pre-school education, focused on the key areas of learning culture, pedagogical leadership, inclusion, methodological support for teachers (mentoring), and activation forms of teaching (KLIMA is a Czech acronym)
LTP CR 2015-2020	<i>Long-Term Plan for Education and Development of the Education System in the Czech Republic for the Period 2015-2020</i>
LTP CR 2019-2023	<i>Long-Term Plan for Education and Development of the Education System in the Czech Republic for the period 2019-2023</i>
LTP CR 2023-2027	<i>Long-Term Plan for Education and Development of the Education System in the Czech Republic for the Period 2023-2027</i>
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
Mol	Ministry of the Interior
NPI	National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
OP JAK	Operational Programme <i>Jan Amos Comenius</i>
OP RDE	Operational Programme <i>Research, Development and Education</i>
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SAO	Supreme Audit Office

Implementation of the Right to Education for Ukrainian Children in Czech Schools

Data on the number of Ukrainian pupils and students in Czech schools in the period 2022-2025

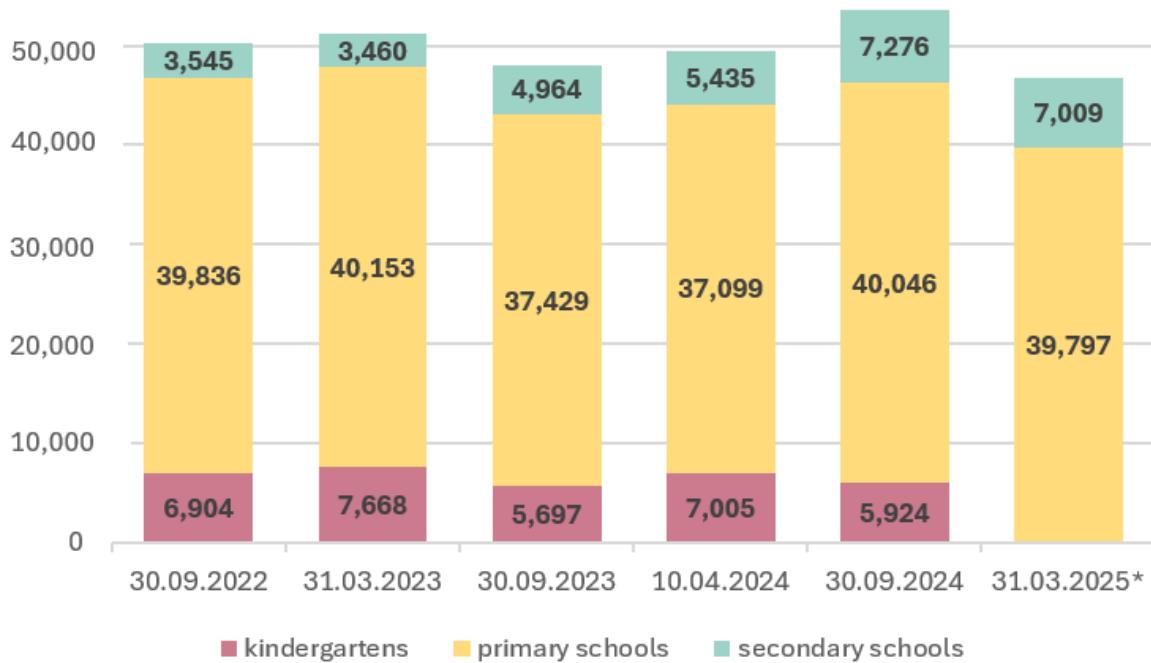
The MoEYS had data on the number of Ukrainian pupils and students in Czech schools. The MoEYS monitored their number twice a year, to 30 September of the commencing school year, because on that day schools filled out the so-called opening reports for regular statistical data collection, and then on 31 March of the current school year. Compulsory school attendance applied to children residing in the territory of the Czech Republic. Additionally, it is necessary to take into account the statutory time limit of 90 days that legal guardians have after arriving in the Czech Republic to ensure the child's school attendance.

In total in Czech kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, there were in education:²¹

- as at 30 September 2022: 50,285 Ukrainian children and pupils (of which 6,904 in kindergartens, 39,836 in primary schools and 3,545 in secondary schools), which thus accounted for 2.7% of the total number of 1,850,696 of all children/pupils;
- as at 31 March 2023: 51,281 Ukrainian children and pupils (of which 7,668 in kindergartens, 40,153 in primary schools and 3,460 in secondary schools), which thus accounted for 2.8% of the total number of 1,850,751 of all children/pupils;
- as at 30 September 2023: 48,090 Ukrainian children and pupils (of which 5,697 in kindergartens, 37,429 in primary schools and 4,964 in secondary schools), which thus accounted for 2.6% of the total number of 1,860,705 of all children/pupils;
- as at 10 April 2024: 49,539 Ukrainian children and pupils (of which 7,005 in kindergartens, 37,099 in primary schools and 5,435 in secondary schools), which thus accounted for 2.6% of the total number of 1,867,182 of all children/pupils;
- as at 30 September 2024: 53,246 Ukrainian children and pupils (of which 5,924 in kindergartens, 40,046 in primary schools and 7,276 in secondary schools), which thus accounted for 2.8% of the total number of 1,877,276 of all children/pupils;
- as at 31 March 2025: 46,806 Ukrainian children and pupils (of which 39,797 in primary schools and 7,009 in secondary schools), which thus accounted for 3.1% of the total number of 1,499,585 of all children/pupils.

²¹ MoEYS data, also available at www.msmt.cz or www.edu.cz.

Chart 1: Number of Ukrainian pupils attending Czech kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools in 2022-2025



***Note:** As at 31 March 2025, data collection was only carried out at primary and secondary schools.

Source: prepared by the SAO on the basis of MoEYS data.

Ukrainians were the largest group of foreigners in the Czech regional education system from 2022, of which approximately 70% were specifically Ukrainian pupils and students.

The MoEYS had data on the number of Ukrainian children enrolled in Czech kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. The MoEYS established cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior (Mol), which had data on the registrations of persons under temporary protection. After comparing data of the Mol with MoEYS data from school registers, it was found in April 2024 that approximately 8,500 Ukrainian children were outside the education system. Of this number, the Mol further determined that:

- 10% of the children were in compulsory schooling or completed it already;
- 17% of the children were not attending school, with almost half of them receiving online education at a Ukrainian school;
- Some children were diagnosed with serious health conditions that prevented them from attending school;
- 27% of the children were found not to be long-term staying at the listed addresses; in these cases, the Mol initiated steps to cancel data on the place of reported residence.

This correlation of data of the MoEYS and the Mol was a one-off action for indicative evaluation of the situation.

Preparatory classes for Ukrainian pupils

In connection with the war in Ukraine and the arrival of refugees in the Czech Republic, Act No 65/2022 Coll. (the so-called Lex Ukraine) was adopted, which enabled Ukrainian refugees to obtain temporary protection and associated access to education. The school admission

process was simplified, Ukrainian children could apply to kindergartens and primary and secondary schools without having to provide all the documents that would otherwise be required (such as certificates of previous education). Schools also had the possibility of accepting Ukrainian children outside of regular enrolment dates, if their capacity allowed.

To facilitate the integration of Ukrainian children into the Czech education system, preparatory classes were established for them²². Preparatory classes were established mainly at primary schools and served to help students master the basics of the Czech language and adapt to the school environment. The teaching focused not only on language learning, but also on basic school skills and orientation in the Czech school system.

Preparatory classes absorbed students who did not speak Czech well enough to meaningfully attend regular classes (i.e., primarily students with a different mother tongue). Admission to a preparatory class was possible based on a recommendation from the school or a school counselling centre. Attendance at the preparatory class lasts a maximum of one school year, after which students move to a regular class corresponding to their age and level of knowledge.

In addition to preparatory classes, the MoEYS financially supported so-called adaptation groups, which Ukrainian children could use for their first 90 days in the Czech Republic.

Support in teaching the Czech language

One form of integrating Ukrainian children into the Czech environment was Czech language courses. These took place, for example, within adaptation groups for children aged three to 18, which were generally focused on reducing the negative impacts associated with the war conflict²³.

Furthermore, the MoEYS announced calls specifically poised to teaching Czech as a second language:

- Call for *Language Courses for Children of Foreigners Migrating from Ukraine 2022*
 - According to MoEYS data, 820 language courses were implemented, attended by 5,144 Ukrainian children.
- Call for *Holiday Language Courses for Children of Foreigners Migrating from Ukraine 2022*
 - 360 courses were implemented, attended by a total of 1,254 Ukrainian children.
- Call for *Summer Language Courses for Children of Foreigners Migrating from Ukraine 2023*
 - 133 courses were implemented, attended by a total of 262 Ukrainian children.

Help for Ukrainian speakers

The Czech School Inspectorate has been monitoring the situation of pupils and students migrating from Ukraine to the Czech Republic since March 2022. In May 2022, it published a thematic report, the *Interim Report on Integration and education of Ukrainian children and pupils*, where it made recommendations for the MoEYS. One of these recommendations was:

- to identify among adult Ukrainian refugees residing in the Czech Republic educational workers and to enable these, under acceptable conditions, to enter the educational system in various positions (teacher, teaching assistant, tutor, leisure time educator, etc.).

²² Organised according to the *Methodological Guidelines for Reports*, Report M 4c on preparatory class at primary school and on the preparatory stage at special primary school.

²³ Call for *Adaptation Groups for Children of Foreigners Migrating from Ukraine 2022*, call for *Adaptation Groups for Children of Foreigners Migrating from Ukraine September-December 2023*, call for *Adaptation Groups for Children of Foreigners Migrating from Ukraine January-June 2023*.

Assistance from people who speak Ukrainian was provided in schools. It has been possible to employ teachers from Ukraine as school teaching assistants since the beginning of the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 school years. According to the provisions of Section 6 of Act No 67/2022 Coll., until 2024, Ukrainian teachers even without knowledge of the Czech language could work in classes where Ukrainian children were included, provided that they had completed pedagogical education. The form of support was adjusted from the 2024/2025 school year. Instead of funding specific positions of teaching assistants, targeted financial support was provided to schools (for assistants and other personnel and non-investment expenditure) that educated children under temporary protection.

The assistance of Ukrainian teachers and assistants was provided not only in teaching, but also in extracurricular activities, tutoring, and community work.

Special assistance for Ukrainian pupils and students

The MoEYS responded to the influx of Ukrainian pupils and students into Czech schools and prepared a draft law on measures in education in connection with the armed conflict in Ukraine caused by the invasion of troops of the Russian Federation, which the government submitted to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic on 9 May 2022. Act No 67/2022 Coll., on certain measures in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of Ukraine caused by the invasion of troops of the Russian Federation, amended the measures in the field of education that applied to foreigners who were granted temporary protection by the Czech Republic under this Act. Act No 67/2022 Coll. addressed areas that were not governed by Act No 561/2004 Coll. For example, the Act made it easier for schools to increase capacity, and also amended some rules for admission to pre-school, primary and secondary education, etc. Under the provisions of Section 3 of Act No 67/2022 Coll., schools could adjust educational content for Ukrainian children according to their individual needs. According to the MoEYS, schools were meant to primarily integrate Ukrainian children into regular classes so that the children/foreigners make up less than half of the class.

Act No 67/2022 Coll. has been amended a total of six times. The first amendment to the Act, No 175/2022 Coll., allowed Ukrainian children to postpone compulsory pre-school and school attendance for up to 90 days after receiving a temporary protection visa. Other amendments mostly concerned changes to deadlines or detailed certain conditions.

Immediately after the outbreak of the conflict, the MoEYS created a special information channel for Ukrainians on the edu.cz portal, and phone lines and the *Telegram* social network were also set up for Ukrainian children and parents in the Ukrainian language. Organisations reporting to MoEYS were also involved. The NPI and CSI published methodological materials both for schools and for Ukrainian children. Some methodological materials and information were published also in Ukrainian.

In September 2022, the MoEYS entered into cooperation with UNICEF, and they jointly provided financial support for 2,600 teachers, school staff and educators. They also supported 600 Ukrainian and Czech teaching assistants by providing training and qualification courses.

The MoEYS has provided the conditions for the integration of Ukrainian pupils into Czech schools so that these pupils can exercise their right to education. This assistance was implemented mainly through OP RDE projects.

Opportunity and support for Ukrainian pupils to be educated in their native language and culture

The MoEYS provided Ukrainian pupils and students with support for access to education in their native tongue and culture.

Since March 2022, school attendance has been resumed in most regions of Ukraine in the form of distance learning, and Ukrainian students thus have had access to educational materials in Ukrainian. However, after arriving in the Czech Republic, Ukrainian children also began to receive full-time education in Czech schools. This combination of face-to-face and online education led to an excessive burden on Ukrainian pupils, as pointed out by the CSI in its thematic report of May 2022. Therefore, in November 2022, negotiations took place between the Ministers of Education of the Czech Republic and Ukraine. The outcome of these negotiations was an agreement on mutual recognition of curriculum, which led to the limitation of online teaching from Ukraine to only some subjects (such as history) and the reduction of the excessive burden on Ukrainian pupils. On the edu.cz portal, the MoEYS, in cooperation with the Embassy of Ukraine in the Czech Republic, published an overview of the Ukrainian and Czech educational systems and information on distance learning for Ukrainian pupils and students.

Schools with a modified curriculum or Ukrainian language

After 2022, classes and educational programmes with a Ukrainian curriculum and instruction in Ukrainian were also established in the Czech Republic, serving Ukrainian children and students. These classes are not separate schools in the legal sense, but are part of Czech schools or were created as special projects.

Jaroslav Seifert Primary School and Kindergarten, Prague 3

Offers special classes for Ukrainian children operating from February 2023. The classes are held in both Czech and Ukrainian and are led mainly by Ukrainian teachers. The curriculum is adapted to the needs of Ukrainian pupils.

Branch of Primary School in Kolín

Established in response to the increased number of Ukrainian pupils. This is a separate branch of the primary school in Kolín, where teaching is carried out according to the Ukrainian curriculum and with Ukrainian teachers. Czech language lessons are also included.

Zero grades in secondary schools in Prague

Serving as preparatory courses for Ukrainian students aged 15-19. They include teaching Czech, mathematics and other subjects required for admission to Czech secondary schools.

These classes are funded from the state budget and are exempt from regular school registration as they are not standalone educational facilities.

Project “For Children of Ukraine”

The project supports Ukrainian children in the Czech Republic and aims to provide them with quality education in the Ukrainian language, psychological support, and adaptation to the Czech environment. As part of the project, Ukrainian classes and a children's group were formed, with teaching taking place according to the Ukrainian educational system and in the Ukrainian language.

Monitoring the situation of Ukrainian pupils and identifying problems related to the exercise of their right to education

On behalf of the MoEYS, the CSI monitored the integration of Ukrainian pupils and students according to its founding charter and plan of main tasks.

On 23 May 2022, the CSI published a thematic report on the ongoing integration and education of Ukrainian children and pupils. As part of the report, the CSI provided a total of 10 recommendations for the MoEYS, concerning, for example, school capacities, enrolments, the parameters of financial support, methodological support or leisure activities.

The following year, the CSI published a thematic report focused on the integration and education of children and pupils with insufficient knowledge of the language of instruction (with a specific view to the integration and education of children and pupils from Ukraine). Also in this report, the CSI made seven recommendations for the MoEYS.

The Ministry responded to these CSI recommendations with methodological support provided jointly with the NPI (instructional videos, webinars, educational courses, etc.). Furthermore, the MEYS updated the curriculum for Czech as a second language for primary schools and prepared the curriculum for Czech as a second language for grammar schools and secondary vocational education schools with a high school diploma. The MEYS also supported extracurricular activities, such as suburban camps, short-term sports stays and outdoor teaching. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports also made adjustments to the enrolment of the children in the first grades of primary schools, which from the 2023/2024 school year took place together with Czech children. The MEYS also explored the level of integration, well-being and mental health of Ukrainian children and teachers.

Extracurricular forms of education for Ukrainian children

In the Czech Republic, additional out-of-school forms of education for Ukrainian children were launched after 2022, aimed at supporting their adaptation, development and integration into society. The MoEYS announced calls under which Ukrainian children could participate in various activities.

- Call for *Adaptation Groups for Children of Foreigners Migrating from Ukraine 2022*
 - 14,238 adaptation groups were implemented, which were attended by a total of 40,115 Ukrainian children.
- Call for *Adaptation Groups for Children of Foreigners Migrating from Ukraine September-December 2022*
 - 5,676 adaptation groups were implemented, which were attended by a total of 7,528 Ukrainian children.
- Call for *Adaptation Groups for Children of Foreigners Migrating from Ukraine 2023*
 - 4,966 activities were implemented, attended by a total of 4,401 Ukrainian children.

Cooperation between the Czech Republic, the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science and organisations representing Ukrainians in the field of exercising children's right to education

In connection with the war in Ukraine and the influx of Ukrainian refugees to the Czech Republic, intensive cooperation was established between the Czech Republic, the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science and organisations representing Ukrainians, with the aim of ensuring the right of Ukrainian children to education.

In February 2024, an international conference on inclusive education was held in Prague, jointly organised by the MoEYS and UNICEF²⁴. It was attended by representatives of the ministries of education of the V4²⁵ countries, Ukraine, the UN²⁶ and other European states. The aim was to share best practices in integrating Ukrainian children into the education systems of the host countries.

The Ukrainian Ministry of Education launched *the Learning Without Borders* project, which enabled Ukrainian children to learn online through digital and television platforms. The project was launched in cooperation with Ukrainian media and the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture and Information Policy and was also available to children abroad, including the Czech Republic.

In the Czech Republic in supporting the education of Ukrainian children, organisations have been involved such as People in Need, META²⁷, UNICEF, the Czech Scouting Institute and others. The organisations have been providing methodological materials, psychological assistance, interpreting services, tutoring and leisure activities.

Financing the education of Ukrainian pupils and students in the Czech Republic

The MoEYS supported the integration of Ukrainian children from the state budget and EU resources. In 2022, the MoEYS announced four subsidy calls to support the integration of Ukrainian pupils and students into Czech schools. The MoEYS provided under these calls a total of CZK 386,703,500 million in 2022. In 2023, the MoEYS published two calls and supported applicants with a total amount of CZK 76,882,500 million.

²⁴ United Nations Children's Emergency Fund.

²⁵ The Visegrád Group (also known as the Visegrád Four or V4) is a grouping of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.

²⁶ United Nations.

²⁷ META is a non-governmental, non-profit organization that supports multilingual children and youth in equal access to education. It offers social services, Czech as a second language courses, leisure activities, and methodological support for teachers.

Table 1: Calls issued by the MoEYS for the integration of Ukrainian students in 2022 and 2023

Call	Allocation	Drawn
Adaptation Groups for Children of Foreigners Migrating from Ukraine 2022	CZK 1,250 million / EUR 51.4 million	CZK 245 million / EUR 10 million
Language Courses for Children of Foreigners Migrating from Ukraine 2022	CZK 150 million / EUR 6.2 million	CZK 51.8 million / EUR 2.1 million
Holiday Language Courses for Children of Foreigners Migrating from Ukraine	CZK 100 million / EUR 4.1 million	CZK 4 million / EUR 0.2 million
Adaptation Groups for Children of Foreigners Migrating from Ukraine September-December 2022	CZK 200 million / EUR 8.2 million	CZK 85.8 million / EUR 3.5 million
Total for year 2022	CZK 1,700 million / EUR 69.9 million	CZK 386.7 million / EUR 15.9 million
Adaptation Groups for Children of Foreigners Migrating from Ukraine January-June 2023	CZK 100 million / EUR 4.1 million	CZK 75.4 million / EUR 3.1 million
Summer Language Courses for Children of Foreigners Migrating from Ukraine 2023	CZK 10 million / EUR 0.4 million	CZK 1.4 million / EUR 0.06 million
Total for year 2023	CZK 110 million / EUR 4.5 million	CZK 76.9 million / EUR 3.2 million

Source: prepared by the SAO on the basis of MoEYS data.

In the period 2022-2024, the MoEYS also provided additional funds for Ukrainian teaching assistants, to ensure the operation of the so-called U-line (a telephone line that served to answer inquiries of the public relating to education of Ukrainian children in Czech schools), or for systematic language education poised towards tertiary education for Ukrainians.

Table 2: Other funds provided by the MoEYS in 2022-2024 relating to the integration of Ukrainian pupils and students

	2022	2023	2024
Ukrainian teaching assistants for the regional education system	CZK 103.8 million	CZK 275.2 million	CZK 200.8 million
U-line operation	CZK 0.26 million	CZK 1.09 million	CZK 2.1 million
Call: Language as a gateway (for tertiary education)	-	CZK 3.7 million	CZK 12.8 million

Source: prepared by the SAO based on data from the Closing Accounts of Chapter 333 – MoEYS for 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Ukrainian pupils and students were integrated into Czech schools. Their education thus was financed in the same way as the education of Czech pupils through direct expenditure on education by the regional education system.

Table 3: Regional education system under the administration of territorial self-governing units – direct expenditure on education in 2022-2024

	2022	2023	2024
Direct expenditure on education	CZK 182,735.1 million	CZK 195,550 million	CZK 200,880.9 million

Source: prepared by the SAO based on data from the Closing Accounts of Chapter 333 – MoEYS for 2022, 2023 and 2024.