



Country Brief: Czech Republic

8 / 2005

The context for supply and demand of public online services in the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is a sovereign, unitary and democratic state. Legislative power lies with the Parliament, which has two chambers, the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The Czech Republic has 14 municipal regions and a total population of 10.2 million, which makes it the second largest of the countries that joined the European Union on May 1st, 2004. The country had joined NATO already five years earlier (March 1999).

Until 1993, the country was part of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. In a process called "velvet divorce", the Czech Republic separated from Slovakia which became an independent country itself, counting about half as many inhabitants as the Czech Republic. The latter has a higher GDP per head than its new Eastern neighbour because most of the CSR's industrial base has traditionally been located in the Czech part. While growth has recently been slower than in Slovakia, the country is still considered as one of the most stable and prosperous of the post-Communist states of Central and Eastern Europe. Growth in 2000-04 was supported by exports to the EU, primarily to Germany, and a strong recovery of foreign and domestic investment. In addition, domestic demand is playing an ever more important role in underpinning growth.

Key figures about the Czech Republic¹

	CR	Ø EU15	Ø EU25
Old age dependency ratio	19.7	25.5	24.5
Population density	129.7	119.8	116.3
GDP per head	71.0	108.6	100.0
Growth 5 year average	3.14%	1.85%	1.92%
Unemployment rate	8.3%	8.1%	9.0%
Inequality index	25	30	29

The accession to the EU has emphasised the need for further structural reform. Intensified restructuring among large enterprises, consolidation in the financial sector, and the inflow of money from the EU's Structural Funds all have a big impact on the national economy as well as public finances. Difficult pension and healthcare reforms and the privatisation of state-owned Cesky Telecom are expected to be pushed through in 2005.

There are no large minorities in the Czech Republic, but national policies towards the Roma (who number up to about 300,000 and who suffer disproportionately high

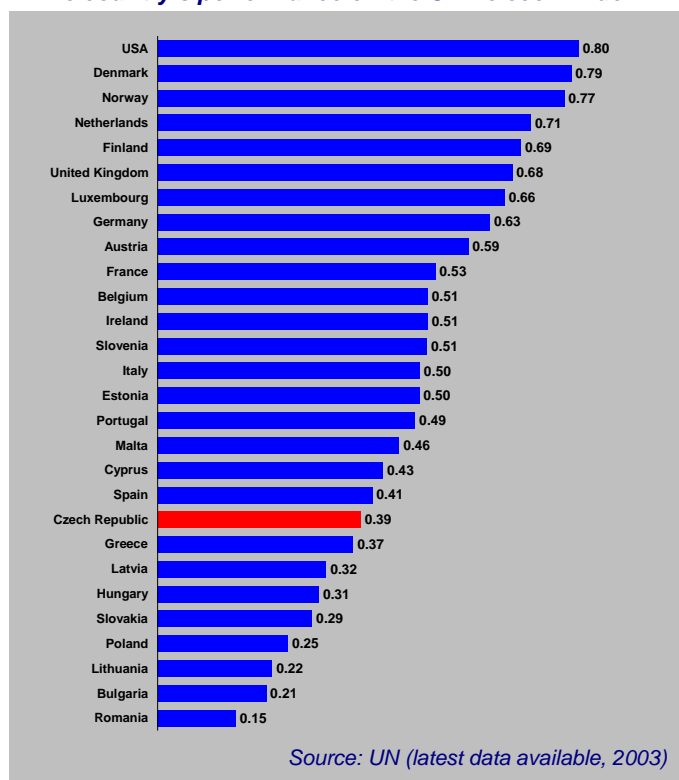
levels of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment) has been an area of controversy.

Information Society indicators²

	CR	Ø EU15	Ø EU25
Internet penetration	19%	45%	42%
Broadband penetration	0.7%	7.6%	6.5%
Price for Internet use basket	106.31	49.57	48.35
ICT expenditure	4.8%	3.2%	2.6%
Digital Divide Index	49.0	53.0	50.1

In recent years, the Czech Republic has made good progress in diminishing the backlog to the EU15 average as measured by Information Society indicators. This is partly due to high ICT expenditure. Nevertheless, the most recent data indicate that Internet penetration through broadband is poorly developed yet, and that connection prices are very high in comparison to the EU15 as well as the NMS10 averages.

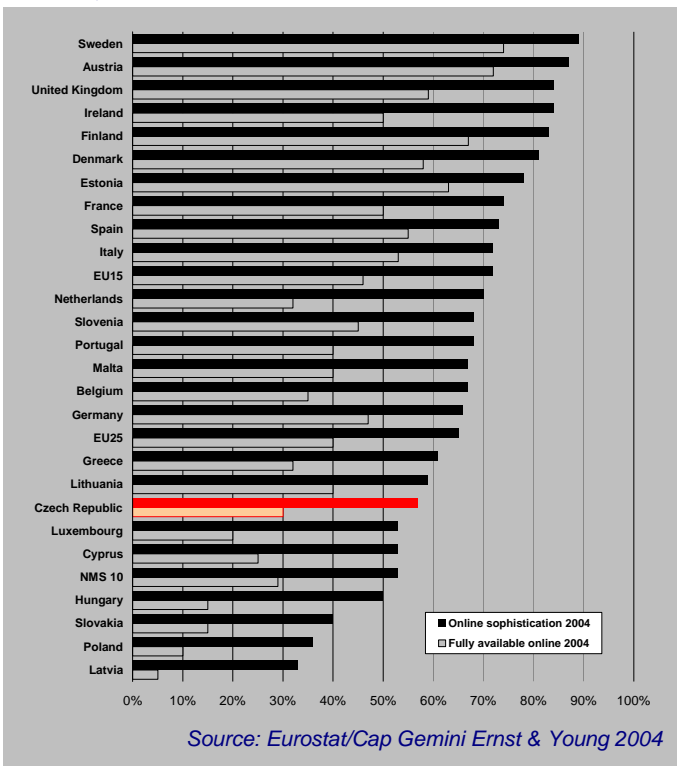
The country's performance on the UN Telecom Index³



eGovernment in the Czech Republic⁴

As reflected in the latest data from the eEurope benchmarking exercise carried out by CapGemini, the Czech Republic's performance is modest when it comes to the number and sophistication of public services available to citizens on the Internet. The country is roughly on par with the New Member States average. While it scores better than Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, there is still a long way to go in order to reach the level of eGovernment supply that has been achieved in the leading EU countries.

Supply of eGovernment Services in the CR⁵



In general, using a progression model which starts with simple information services, via interactive communication services to true transaction services, most observers agree that eGovernment in the Czech Republic has established the first (information) level now and is currently moving towards the second (interactive) phase. Fully implemented local, regional and national level online services include:

Information eServices for citizens: Access to ordinances, job vacancies, announcements, registers, etc. Portals were created in co-operation with the Czech programme "eTEN" and under support of other non-profit organisations. Assigned also to disabled, handicapped, seniors, gypsies, refugees. Information on issues related to everyday life functions is provided by both state and non-state institutions and covers housing, transportation, culture, weather, warning systems, etc.

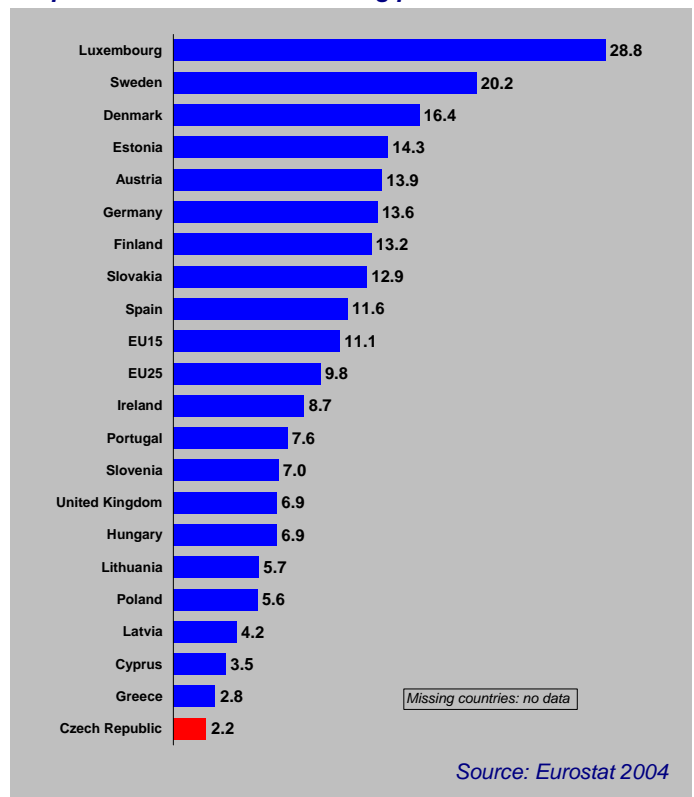
The Ministry of Informatics has recently set up an Internet Portal of Public Administration – a gateway to the public agencies in the Czech Republic. Through this, Czech inhabitants can – free of charge – put enquiries to the public administration, find information on taxes and other issues, and download forms. About 1.2 millions enquiries are being counted per year.

Communication eServices for citizens are only partly implemented. Examples include the "podatelny.cz" (online registry enquiry) initiative which is considered as the first step towards realisation of one-way eGovernment in the country.

Meanwhile, **transaction eServices for citizens** are mostly still at project stage, mainly due to the lack of an effective digital signature infrastructure in the country. Some services that do rely on a digital signature have been put online.

The country's mediocre performance in making public government services available online is also reflected in the scoring of the United Nations eGovernment Readiness Index, in which the country ranks behind Poland, Lithuania and accession country Bulgaria. According to Eurostat data, uptake rates of eGovernment services are among the lowest in Europe.

Uptake of eGovernment among private households⁶



The Czech Government is undertaking considerable efforts to make progress in the Information Society area. This is happening in the context of the ongoing territorial public administration reform and modernisation of public administration, which are under the authority of the Ministry of Interior (MV). Main policy objectives and activities to be taken are laid out in "State Information and Communications Policy: e-Czech 2006", "State Information Policy" and "National Telecommunications Policy". They built on earlier policy frameworks such as the "Action Plan to Implement the State Information Policy by 2003" and the "National eEurope+ Action Plan", which was initiated for by the European Commission.

Current key priorities in eGovernment policy include (a) to carry out a national programme of digital literacy in order to prevent the development of a digital divide; (b) the creation of a robust legal framework for online applications

such as eCommerce; (c) support of new services and concepts in the areas eGovernment, eProcurement, and eHealth.

Related key targets include (a) to provide access to authorised copies of entries in registers and records of public administration – insofar as these citizens need them for getting what they want/need from authorities – via all public administration contact points and all branches of the Czech Post, by end 2005; (b) to minimise as much as possible the obligation of citizens to submit to public administration bodies information (usually in document form) if public bodies can obtain these from each other electronically, by end 2005; and (c) to make available via the Public Administration Portal the following online services: portal-type services assisting the public with their life events; possibility to file personal income tax returns; application for personal identification documents (identity cards, travel documents, etc); single point to announce the change of address online; applications for social benefits; and a number of services related to public health care.

User orientation in eGovernment

User orientation has become a key objective in the plans for modernisation of public service provision in the country. The Public Administration Portal plays an important role in this regard as it is to be developed into the single interface between the entire system of eGovernment services and their users (citizens).

The Czech Government has realised that back-office modernisation and electronic interconnection of public agencies are prerequisites for offering better services to citizens. This process is fully underway, to be followed by a second stage that will focus, among others, on the development of a web interface whose design is guided by the principle of life events. User orientation is the main objective of this activity.

Another priority of the Government has been to create alternative gateways to the Internet in the form of Public Internet Access Points (PIAPs). At the moment, the largest network of publicly accessible institutions offering Internet access is made up of public libraries. The Government assumes that that network is going to see further dynamic development in the coming years, as a provision in the Libraries Act requires that all libraries providing public library and information services should be able to provide services over the Internet before the end of 2006. During 2004, about 1700 libraries were connected to the Internet. As a consequence, about 76% of the population now live in the vicinity of a library offering public Internet access. With their focus and atmosphere, the Government hopes that libraries may conveniently become both possible public administration contact points and information centres.

To simplify contact of citizens with public administration, the existing network of public “contact points” is to be further extended. Their role is to be a one-stop shop providing citizens with information on public administration and allowing them to do carry out transactions with the public sector related to the so-called life events.

A recent initiative that aims to support the uptake of eGovernment is to use the network of the (public) Czech Post as additional public administration contact points. Thanks to the investment in ICT made by Czech Post in the past 10 years, post offices are well connected to computer

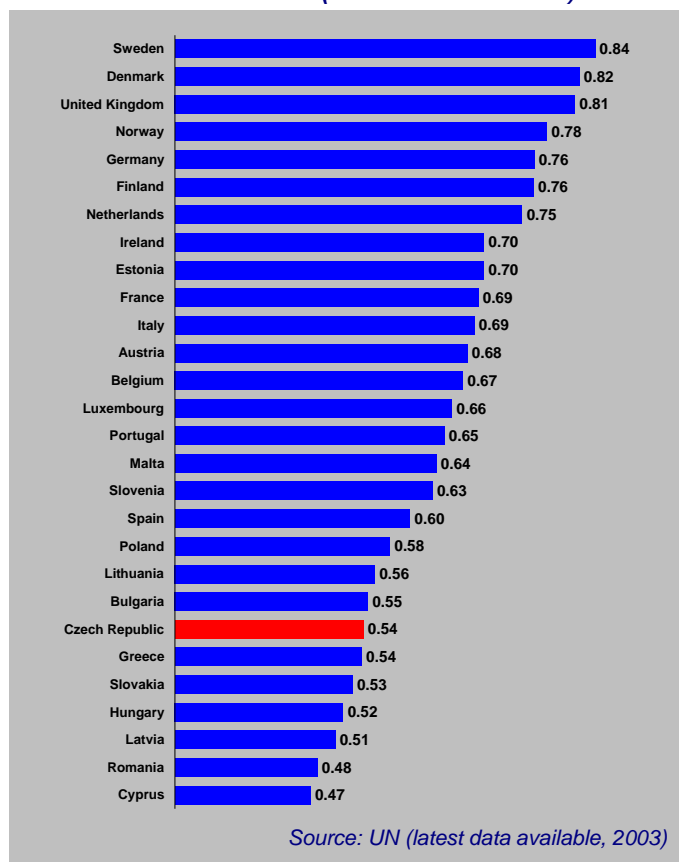
networks already and first electronic services are being offered already. The fact that the Czech Post has a lot of experience in providing public administration services (such as disbursement of pensions and social benefits) to citizens, and their proximity to the places of residence of citizens, explains why they are considered to be ideally suited for this function.

Still, although there are clear signs that eGovernment development increasingly takes account of user orientation, a number of main barriers remain which will slow down uptake of eGovernment in the near future.

An important factors is liberalisation of the telecommunications market which is still incomplete, resulting in charges for Internet access which are much above EU average. Equipment costs also tend to be higher than in neighbouring countries, especially if compared to effective household incomes.

In general, implementation of the ambitious policy measures related to the Information Society has been slow, while many experts believe that funds available for projects have been spent inefficiently and that there is insufficient coordination of projects. Moreover, making public agencies across the country and at the different levels of administration cooperate and work together has proven harder than initially expected.

eGovernment Readiness (United Nations Index)⁷



Demand for online public services is being held back by a low computer literacy in the population, and lack of motivation to use modern technology. The latter has been exacerbated because a number of ICT-related breaches against security and privacy have become public, and are frightening off some potential users.

A study jointly conducted by BusinessInfo, TNS Factum and CzechTrade, among 650 Czech citizens found that 51% of eGovernment users consider the system they used “good” and an addition 9% “very good”. This is in line with the results from other similar surveys that usually found that eGovernment users tend to be satisfied with the value they got from using the service online. However, the survey also identified a number of wide-spread problems such as lack of information which public services can be used online (60% of users), high overall costs for using the Internet (46%), and complicated manipulation and navigation of the systems (39%).

In the future, eGovernment development might have to take better account of the fact that today, the penetration of mobile phones in the Czech Republic is more than double the number of lines in the public fixed telephone network: It amounts to almost 90%. This means that, while the “vision of further development of the telecommunications sector” from 1994 placed the main emphasis on extension of the fixed telecommunications network, the number of main telephone lines in the public fixed telephone network stopped growing in 2000 and has been constantly decreasing ever since. This might have an effect on the type of Internet access people prefer, and the question whether future online services will still require a personal computer and keyboard as access devices.

eHealth in the Czech Republic

The number of **websites with health related information** in Czech language is increasing rapidly. It includes sites which were set up by public agencies and organisations such as the Ministry of Public Health, the National institute of public health, health insurance companies, hospitals, professional associations and related educational institutions. Consistent with the central government's National Information Policy, the website of the Ministry of Public Health has comprehensive information and links to organisations and institutions in the health area. Local and regional governments provide a less comprehensive service which usually consists of lists of medical centres and other related players alone.

So while overall, health information for the needs of the Czech population is available on the Web, this fact alone does not make a comprehensive system of eHealth service, since supply is non-integrated and access to reliable information remains very difficult – often it is necessary to use a multi-purpose search engine such as Google.

Key figures about the Czech Health System⁸

	CR	Ø EU15	Ø EU25
Percentage satisfied with own health	71.3%	82.5%	79.8%
Prevalence of long-term illness	32.0%	13.8%	20.0%
Doctors per 100.000 inhabitants	389	233	251
Health expenditure as percentage of GDP	6.6%	7.4%	7.3%

Even for those of these websites which are targeted at citizens (patients), the nature of information is mainly descriptive. While their scope is often extensive, there is a clear lack of a public health portal, run by a recognised entity such as the Ministry for Health, which is generally accepted by main players in the field and which citizens expect to be trustful.

Demand is still modest, as well – although higher than in most other New Member States (see chart). While uptake of the Internet by private households is progressing fast, overall figures suggest that the Internet is still used mainly by the younger generations. The part of the population which in general exert the strongest demand in health-related information, i.e. the older generations, are not as yet present among Internet users as much as their share of the population would suggest.

In the Czech Republic, many health-related administrative transactions are with insurance companies. These offer e-mail as a communication channel, but enquiries are mostly done via telephone.

With regard to **online retail of pharmacies**, only those drugs which are allowed to be sold without doctor's prescriptions, can be offered in online shops. At the moment, they are a niche phenomenon only.

E-mail is used for **interaction with family doctors**, for example for transmitting test results. There are some (private) doctors who place test results on their websites, from which patients can download them using a dedicated username and password. In general, however, telephone

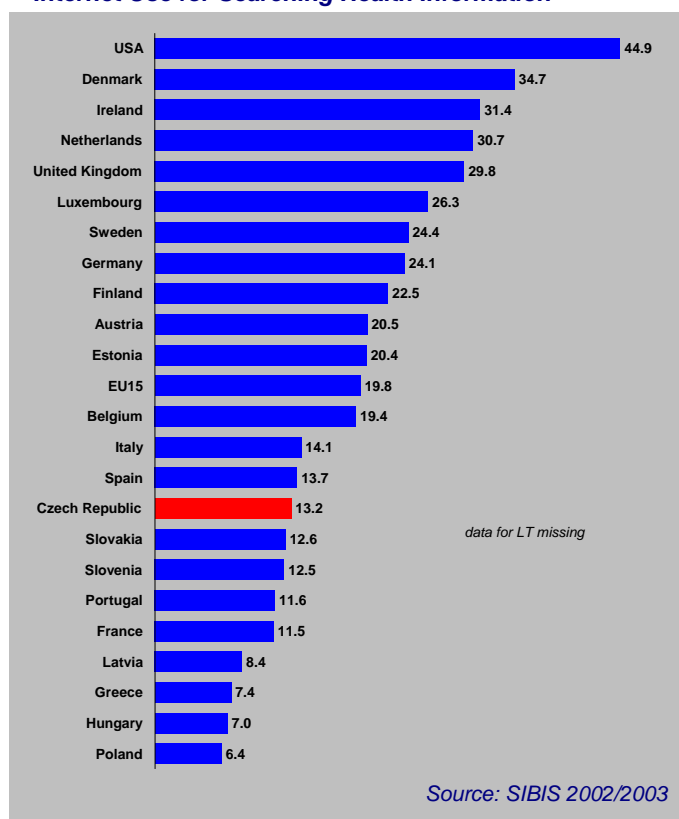
consultation is much more popular. For prescriptions for medication, patients have to see their doctors in person. Transmission via the phone or online is not permitted.

For end-user oriented eHealth applications to take off in the country, it will be necessary to solve two main issues: firstly, general communication between doctors and patients needs to be improved in order to give citizens the freedom to obtain information and to better manage their health themselves; and secondly, a payment system needs to be configured for doctors who spend time on communicating through new channels such as e-mail or the Internet. This concerns the relationship between doctors and the public health insurance companies who are the main pillars of the Czech health care system.

Online consultation is not a regular feature offered by doctors or free-standing providers in the Czech Republic. There are, however, no regulatory constraints on online or telephone-based medical consultation.

A so-called **"Second opinion service"** is available in general from specialised online consulting servers (for an example see www.lekarna.cz). For non-serious health problems, more general advisory websites are sufficient.

Internet Use for Searching Health Information⁹



User orientation in eHealth services

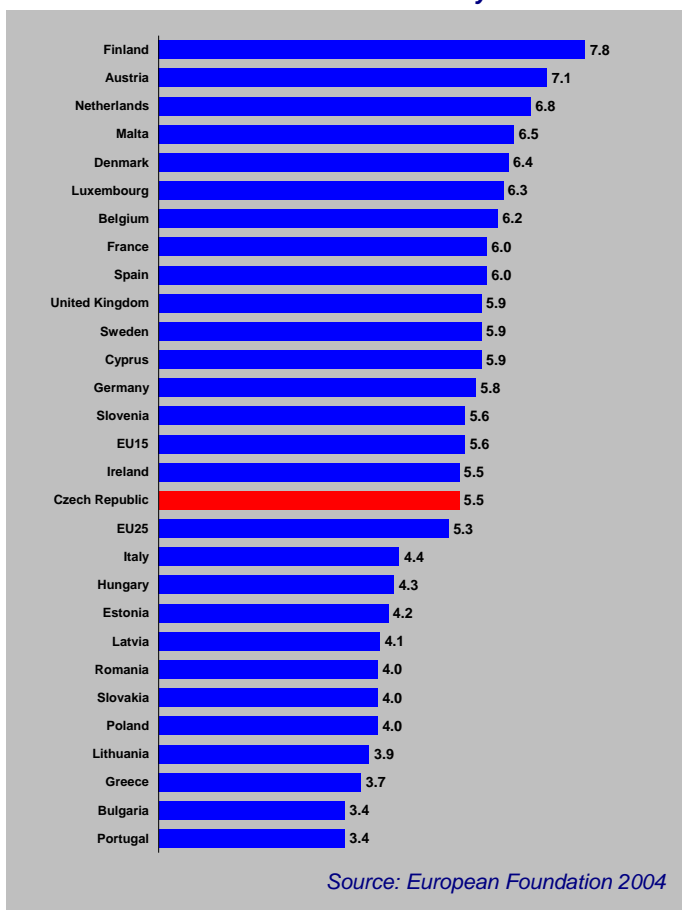
It appears that, compared to other areas of the Information Society that have become key parts of the national IS strategy, the development of eHealth is slower, mainly due to the high resistance against transformation which observers claim to be a traditional feature of the healthcare system in the Czech Republic.

A major barrier on the **demand side** is low Internet uptake, itself correlated with the country's high price level for Internet connections. Moreover, patients (but also

doctors) often do not have the specific skills for feeling comfortable when using the Internet. This means that it appears essential for the time being that health-related services must be offered via the phone as well as online. Overall, satisfaction with the national healthcare system is good when compared to the other New Member States, which means that pressure to change – at least from the demand side – is not as high as it might be in some other countries.

However, there are several facilitators which should boost the development of eHealth services in the country. To start with, the central government puts much emphasis on the area as a priority of their strategy for “e-society development”. The other main force is the private sector, which is starting to realise the business opportunities involved. Moreover, the Internet as well as other ICTs will be taken up by more and more people who will deal with it in their daily work and leisure life, and therefore start to demand more and better eServices from public providers.

Satisfaction with National Healthcare System¹⁰



A national eHealth policy is mentioned in the Ministry of Informatic's “State Information and Communications Policy e-Czech 2006”. The document stresses the Government's view that the use of the latest ICT is an essential condition for the affordability and quality of health care and will actively promote them. At the same time, deployment of ICT is viewed as a way of increasing the efficiency of the care provided and achieving a higher quality of citizens' lives.

To provide public health information and services, for instance related to healthy living, pollution status, options for prevention, availability of care, tele-consultation, etc.,

the Government intends to use the same means that are used to provide other online e-government services, that is above all the Public Administration Portal. Any successful attempt to integrate online access to public services in a single portal (foreseen for end 2005) would certainly provide much added value as much as user orientation is concerned.

The state plans to link up its activities related to patient identification, accessibility of health records, and interconnection and cooperation of health-care providers closely to such activities of the EU in order to achieve maximum compatibility. Key related activities include: (a) to replace the existing health insurance cards by smart cards compatible with EU standards, and in line with EU schedules; and (b) to set up an information network connecting points of care in the Czech Republic to such points in the EU and enabling the sharing of public health data and coordination of activities in the events of life and health emergency (by end 2006).

In the spotlight: Health website ORDINACE

The self-described “virtual health-portal” Ordinance offers a comprehensive service around all questions of health. A selected extract of most common diseases offers insight into the course of ailments and pathology. Moreover, by observing the recommendations of treatment, slight complaints such as headache and skin problems may be treated by users themselves. Besides the description and diagnostic of affliction, a comprehensive encyclopaedia affords information about all thinkable health-related issues such as explanation of medical terms, surgery or biological transactions.



Specific questions are answered by a team of specialized staff. The correspondence is carried out via e-mail which implies that questions of common interest as well as the received answers are archived and may be read by everyone.

Moreover, the website comprises an online pharmacy, a discussion forum as well as up-to-date reports on different topics.

User-friendliness has been taken into account when designing the service. However, ethnic minorities are not yet considered as Czech is the only available language.

www.ordinace.cz

Lifelong Learning and eLearning in the Czech Republic¹¹

The Czech Republic traditionally has high levels of educational attainment, as reflected in key education indicators. In the area of adult continuous education, the country is at a better position than most other New Member States and, indeed, many of the old ones: Participation in company-provided training and the share of employers offering training are above EU15 averages. This can be explained partly by the fact that education is traditionally being regarded as a major value by the Czech population. There is, however, not much of a tradition of lifelong learning on not work-related topics. Overall participation in learning among adults currently stands at 6% - which is considerably below the EU15 average.

Key education indicators about the Czech Republic¹²

	CR	Ø EU15	Ø EU25
Youth education attainment level	90.9%	73.5%	76.4%
Total public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP	4.41%	5.22%	5.22%
Enterprises providing training	61%	54%	53%
Employees' participation in company-provided training	42%	40%	39%
Overall participation in Lifelong Learning	6.3%	10.6%	9.9%

Main providers of adult education and training are (a) public universities, which offer "Další vzdělávání" ("further education") courses to persons in employment, managers and SMEs; and (b) private commercial educational institutions (of Czech or foreign origin) in the area of languages, re-qualification courses for the unemployed, ICT for SMEs and citizens, and leisure time activities.

Persons who want to engage in lifelong learning can find information on course offers etc through the regional job centres, which are responsible for providing personal assistance. For actively encouraging uptake of adult education, the regional job centres advertise their offer through the Internet, newspapers and periodicals. Another player are county councils in districts.

In general, the existing system of education leading to recognised qualifications offers only limited opportunities for adults because such educational programmes usually last several years, which makes them inappropriate for most adult would-be-learners (or their employers). This reduces the uptake of adult education, so that adults make up only a fraction of the total number of learners at schools: approximately 8% in upper secondary schools, 10% in post-secondary technical schools, and 10% in higher education institutions.

The by far largest part of adult education is vocational education. Although some companies and sectors in the Czech Republic have an excellent level of human resource development, the average scope of further vocational education is markedly lower than in leading European Union countries. This gap between the Czech Republic and

the European union recently seems to have widened rather than shrunk.

Other factors which hinder progress in uptake of lifelong learning include: (a) lack of training courses in the vicinity of major parts of the population – courses are offered mainly in the bigger cities, which means the rural population has limited access to them. This situation is made worse by the fact that courses at city locations cannot easily be attended by adult students from villages because public transport systems are not sufficiently developed; (b) lack of course supply related to leisure time activities and civic education; (c) high costs for participation (when compared to common household incomes).

The main aims of policy regarding adult education are outlined in the National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic ("White Paper") from 2001. Solving the following three main problems is seen as a key to adult education development in the country:

1) There is no clear distribution of responsibilities between actors. A legal framework for the development of adult education needs to be drawn up and implemented, in co-operation with state bodies, employers, trade unions, communities, regions and professional bodies. It should also deal with rules for financing the main areas of adult education. Mechanisms for quality assurance, accreditation, certification and other related aspects of adult education also need to be put into place.

2) Financial incentives need to be strengthened for employers (so that their expenditure on training will increase and will be more effective), for employees (so that they will continue to learn to the largest possible extent), for job applicants (so that they will undertake training and retraining), for education providers (so that they will be interested in broadening the education offer and facilitating access to education for various target groups while maintaining quality criteria for individuals so that their interest in education increases, and for specific target groups such as disadvantaged people, minority groups, etc. Non-financial motivation also needs to be strengthened. It can consist of, for example, more transparent and widely accepted systems of accreditation.

3) Lack of systematic instruments for the development of adult education. The infrastructure of adult education needs to be improved, including support systems such as information systems, monitoring, analysis, research, counselling, and international co-operation.

Improving the level of **digital literacy** across all segments of the population has been very high on the political agenda recently. This is reflected in the "State Information and Communications Policy e-Czech 2006" and in "State Information Policy in Education". The massive deployment and use of ICTs both within the education system, in public administration and in the education of all parts of the population is to be supported.

The Government wants to motivate all segments of the population to acquire and maintain higher digital literacy. In order to motivate adults for doing so, economic incentives that would lower the existing barriers and facilitate people's own efforts to acquire or enhance information literacy are being developed. One possible measure would be preferential taxation of computers for home use and home Internet access.

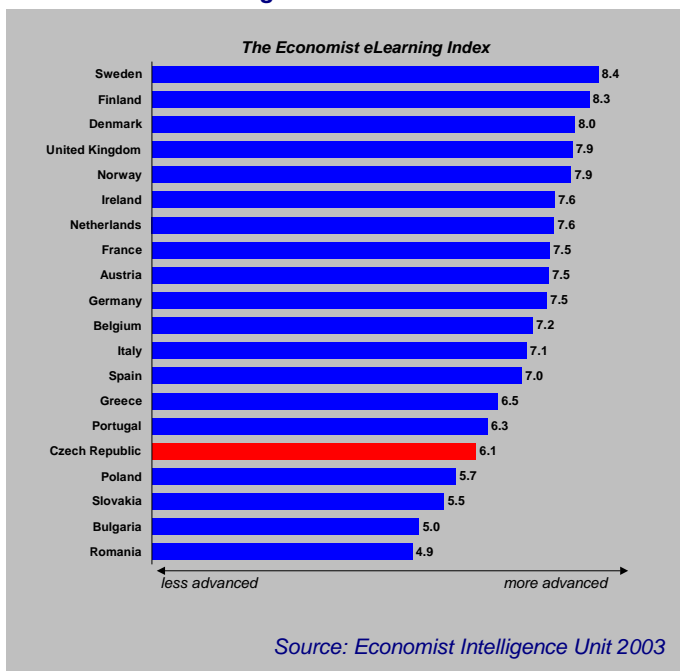
The Government has announced that it will exploit the educational potential of schools to extend digital literacy to the adult part of the population (through courses for the

public). Moreover, libraries should provide equal access to traditional and electronic information resources for education, research, development, and business.

Possibilities are being sought to objectively evaluate skills and knowledge related to computer literacy. The Government considers as a basis the ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) certification system. By 2006, the Government wants to extend basic computer literacy (on the NPCL level) to at least half of the Czech population. A related target is to provide large parts of the public administration staff with computer literacy skills and the relevant certification.

The involvement of the private sector is seen as a key element in order to reach these goals. This requires that such activities are supported on the basis of public-private partnerships. An example is the National Programme for Computer Literacy (NPCL), organised and co-financed by the Ministry of Informatics. The project is designed for complete beginners and the Government regards it as a basis for lifelong learning in relation to computer-literacy.

Economist eLearning Index¹³



eLearning as a solution?

For achieving the ambitious aims of the Czech Government with regard to boosting adult education, eLearning has a lot of potential. This applies in particular, of course, to education in how to use ICT tools themselves. The "State Information and Communications Policy e-Czech 2006" and in "State Information Policy in Education" mention as a key objective the improvement of digital literacy through eLearning technologies and services and generally via improvements in educational software.

Only few institutions offer classical distance education (i.e. strict geographical separation of student and teacher). A typical example is the Open University (an English institution which is well established also in the Czech Republic). In most cases there is provided Kombinované studium (combined study) in which is education process divided into 1) presence study "face to face" and 2) self-study (standard ratio 1:1). The National Centre of Distant

Education coordinates the so-called "national net of distant education", grants accreditation to eLearning courses, and provides access to databases of experts and courses. The National Statistical Office estimated in 2003 that 0.07 % of total population are enrolled in distance education.

Both the Economist eLearning Index and the take-up rates of eLearning as assessed by SIBIS (see charts) indicate that the Czech Republic still has some way to go in fully exploiting the potential of eLearning, at least when compared to the EU15 countries and also the New Member States from the Baltic region.

The current supply of eLearning courses (and related services) comes mainly from state schools (high and higher education institutions, universities), which provide eLearning courses not only as a part of presence study or distance education for regular students, but also in so called "Dalsi vzdělávání" (Further education) for adults, SMEs, and other similar target groups. According to register data of the Ministry of Education, 12% of enrolled students are making use of eLearning courses for a part of their studies.

The other main supplier are private educational institutions offering own eCourses. Current estimates indicate that about 720 private institutions operate on the educational market using eLearning as distribution channel (partly or totally) with total enrolment of more than 12,000.

There is hardly any information available on the extent to which enterprises use eLearning for staff training. The National Centre of Distant Education points out that eLearning is being used, in particular, by large multinational enterprises (such as Skoda, which is owned by Germany's Volkswagen).

The main organisation that promotes the use of eLearning and gives advice to the public is the National Centre of Distant Education. It organises seminars and workshops, provide accreditations, and organises and awards grant subsidies to learners. The public association for eLearning "Czech E-Learning Network" also provides counselling and advice.

It is safe to say that more support would be needed from the Government and the other actors on the market in order to make eLearning available not only to universities and employees of large corporations, but also to SMEs and the overall population. For SMEs "tailor made" education packages are needed which are not yet available.

User Orientation in LLL and eLearning

Higher education institutions that prepare their strategies of development have a legal duty to plan their aims in accordance with the requirements of all users of the services provided and with the requirements of the state. Evaluation is then based on the fulfilment of those stipulated aims and judged by the extent to which the aims were attained.

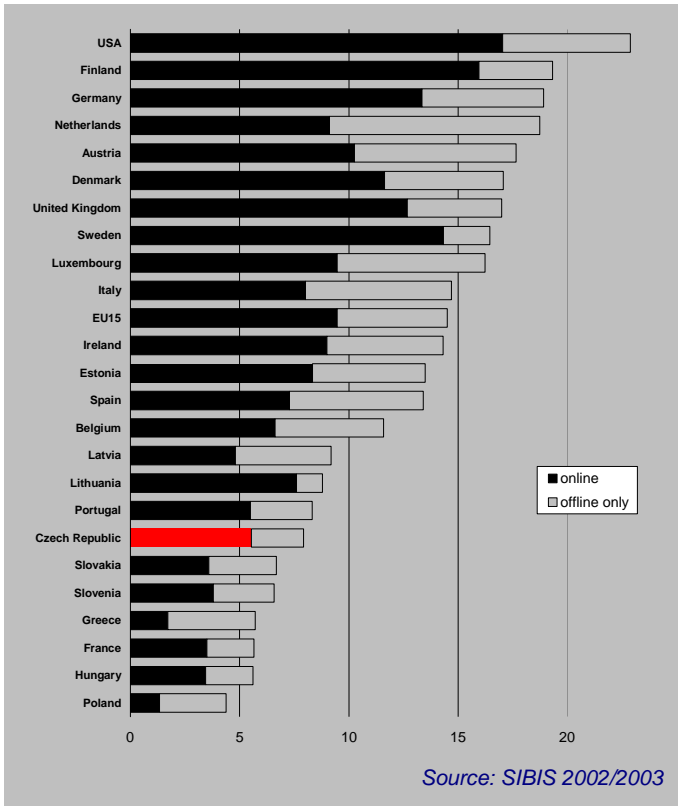
As far as social inclusion is concerned, the current Information Society policy puts particular stress on the needs of the elderly population, women and the disabled.

Special eLearning programmes have been developed for Gypsy children (type: work and play).

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs recently announced that substantial financial support (€ 2 million) will be given to sociological research on the Czech population. This research also concerns adult education,

educational needs of minorities and of seniors, and use of / attitudes towards eLearning. Results will be made available to teachers, decision makers and other providers of distant education.

Uptake of eLearning in Europe¹⁴



eUser – the Project

The eUser study is funded by the European Commission's IST (Information Society Technology) programme. eUser is a major research and support project which has set out to provide solid evidence as to users' real needs regarding eGovernment, eHealth and eLearning offers, as well as providing data about their attitudes and the uptake levels of current public online services. The project supports the IST programme to achieve its key objectives of putting the user and his/her needs at the centre of IST developments. It provides empirical information on key public eServices domains – eGovernment, eHealth, eLearning – identified as priorities by the European Council, and assesses the demand/supply match in these fields.

The eUser Approach

To achieve its objectives, eUser addresses both generic user-related issues and domain-specific topics, and develops a globally accessible repository of evidence-based knowledge, methods and best practice examples. It pursues an extensive programme of active knowledge translation, transfer and dissemination supported by sophisticated online knowledge dissemination tools. The knowledge base will consolidate both existing knowledge and approaches, and novel data generated by the project through representative population surveys (demand side) in old and new Member States, and through comparative analyses of readiness to address user aspects of public eServices in each Member State (supply side).

The project is designed in two phases. *Phase 1* – the preparatory phase – has developed a conceptual framework that systematically identifies and cross-references user issues and service characteristics in relation to online public services. An EU-wide population survey regarding the needs, experiences and requirements of both current and potential users of online public services has been carried out in early 2005. Concerning the supply side, information from national public sector environments has been collected, about the degree to which the European public sector pays sufficient attention to user-orientation of online services. Good practice examples regarding user-appropriate online public service provisions are being identified and described.

All these results build the basis and provide content for the eUser interactive online knowledge base and support service which is being set up as an online observatory on user issues. This constitutes the basis for active support services on user-centred topics which are being made available inside and outside the IST programme.

eUser Country Briefs

This document has been prepared by empirica based on information provided by a National Correspondent (**Prof. RN Dr. Jaroslav Havlicek, Czech University of Agriculture – Faculty of Economics and Management**) as well as secondary data sources such as Eurostat and other Commission Services.

Altogether 25 eUser Country Briefs are available in a common format, one for each member of the enlarged European Union. You can access and download these documents in PDF format (for free) from our website.

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Notes About the Data Sources Used in This Document

- ¹ Old age dependency ratio = Population aged 65 and over expressed as a percentage of the 2004 working age population (15-64 years); Source: Eurostat 2005. Population density = Inhabitants per km², middle of year; Source: Eurostat 2001. GDP per capita = GDP in 2004 in Purchasing Power Standards in relation to EU25 average; Source: Eurostat 2005. GDP growth average = real GDP Growth Rate, average five years; Source: Eurostat 2000-2004. Unemployment rate = unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force 2004. Source: Eurostat 2005. Inequality index = Gini coefficient; Source: Eurostat 2001. Lower values indicate less inequality.
- ² Households with Internet access = Percentage of households that have Internet access at home 2004; Population base: 16-74; Source: Eurostat 2005. Broadband penetration: Number of broadband in 7/2004 connections related to population; user group not specified; Source: Eurostat 2005. Price for Internet use basket: for 40 hours using discounted PSTN rates; Source: OECD 2004. ICT expenditure: Annual expenditure for ICT hardware, equipment, software and other services in 2004, as percentage of GDP; Source: EITO. Digital Divide Index: The DIDIX is a compound index comprised of four indices, and measures diffusion of computer and Internet access and use amongst the four identified 'at risk' groups along the dimensions gender, age, education and income in relation to the population average. The lower the Index value the more severe is the divide, with parity resulting in a value of 100. Based on SIBIS data from 2002/2003 (www.sibis-eu.org). EU25 average does not include Malta and Cyprus. See Hüsing, T. & Selhofer, H. (2004): DIDIX: A Digital Divide Index for Measuring Inequality in IT Diffusion, In: IT&SOCIETY, 1(7): 21-38.
- ³ The Index comprises indicators on diffusion of PCs, Internet connections, phone lines, mobile subscriptions and TV sets, and share of population online. Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2003): World Public Sector Report 2003. New York.
- ⁴ The following sources were used for preparation of this section: Czech Forum for Information Society; Center for Electronic Commerce; Association for Information Society; Center for Electronic Commerce; Association for Information Society; CommunitiesUnion of The CR; Nemoforum; www.egovernment.cz.
- ⁵ This indicator measures the online availability of 20 basic public services, of which 12 are targeted at citizens. Measurement is based on a sample of URLs agreed with Member States as relevant for each service. Native speakers in each language then carry out a web survey to measure the degree of sophistication of online availability using a 4 stage classification: (1. Basic Information; 2. One-way Interaction; 3. Two-way Interaction; 4. Full electronic case handling). Around 14,000 URLs were tested in 2004. Source: Cap Gemini Ernst & Young 2005.
- ⁶ Percentage of individuals who are using the Internet for downloading official forms, 2004 data. Target population considered is between 16-74 years. Source: Eurostat 2005.
- ⁷ UN eGovernment Readiness Index = combined index of Web Measure Index, Telecommunication Infrastructure Index, Human Capital Index. Web Measure = measures state provided services online, presence of services available, Telecommunication Infrastructure Index = PC and Internet penetration, Human Capital Index = composite of adult literacy rate and gross enrolment ratio. Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2003): World Public Sector Report 2003. New York.
- ⁸ Percentage satisfied with own health = percentage of people being very and fairly satisfied with their own health; 2002 data; Source: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2004. Prevalence of long-term illness = percentage reporting having a long-term illness or disability; Source: Eurobarometer 2002. Doctors per 100,000 inhabitants = total number of practising physicians or doctors per 100,000 inhabitants. Newest data available (EU15 and EU15 averages: 2002); Source: Eurostat 2005. Health expenditure as percentage of GDP; Source: Eurostat 2002.
- ⁹ Share of total population 15+ who have used the Internet to look for health-related information in the 12 months prior to the survey. See www.sibis-eu.org.
- ¹⁰ Satisfaction with National Health System = combined index of satisfaction with health care and with social services. Measured on a scale from 1 (low) to 10 (high); Data source: Eurobarometer 2002; Source: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2004.
- ¹¹ The following sources were used for preparation of this section: Statistical Office CR; National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic.
- ¹² Youth education attainment level: Percentage of the population aged 20 to 24 having completed at least upper secondary education in 2003; Source: Eurostat 2004. Total public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP: Expenditure includes direct expenditure for educational institutions and transfers to private households and firms; data for 2002; Source: Eurostat 2005. Enterprises providing training: as % of all enterprises (>9 employees); Source: CVTS2 2002 (reference period: 1999). Employees' participation in company-provided training courses: in % of total employees (total of enterprises >9 employees); Source: CVTS2 2002 (reference period: 1999). Overall participation in Lifelong Learning: Percentage of adult population aged 25-64 who took part in any training in the four weeks prior to the survey; Source: Eurostat 2005 (based on 2004 National Labour Force Surveys).
- ¹³ The Economist eLearning Index indicates a country's ability to produce, use and expand Internet-based learning. Its elements are four scores for education, industry, government and society).
- ¹⁴ Share of labour force who use eLearning for work-related training (online/only offline). See www.sibis-eu.org.