

8 The Education of Foreign Nationals in the Czech Republic

One of the areas that CSI considered when looking at the educational opportunities offered to residents in the Czech Republic during the 2006/2007 school year were the opportunities and conditions of the education provided to foreign nationals.

8.1 Primary Education

The primary schools that the inspectorate monitored in this particular area had a total of 603 foreign students, a number equal to 3.9% of the respective student bodies. The majority of these foreign children were from non-EU countries (521). The number of students coming from other EU countries (82) had dropped compared to the previous school year. Most of the foreign students were from Vietnam, Azerbaijan, the Ukraine and Russia. All of the foreign students were legal residents of the Czech Republic.

When enrolling in an primary school, most foreign children undergo a standard acceptance process. In determining which grade the foreign student should be enrolled in, school administrators base most of their decisions on the entry interview with the student and their parents. 95% of the foreign students had a knowledge of the Czech language, which allowed them to be enrolled without any problems. Only rarely do such foreign students take advantage of the option of them enrolling in a free preparation programme for enrolment in an primary school and the option of receiving lessons in their native language.

Approximately two-thirds of the teachers at the inspected primary schools can communicate in at least one foreign language. 20% of the teachers are enrolled in continuing education programmes to learn a foreign language. The school employees that participated in multicultural educational training programmes were usually school counsellors or officers for the prevention of sociopathological problems. Teachers only rarely participated in these programmes. The material conditions for educating foreign nationals were rated by the inspectorate as 'standard' in 83% of the inspected schools and as 'exemplary' in the remaining percentage of the schools. In all the schools, foreign students were treated in the same manner as non-foreign students. The cooperation between the schools and the parents of foreign students was also positively rated.