

C Endorsement of Foreign Language and ICT Teaching

C.1 Enhancement of Teaching Foreign Languages

In the school years from 2005/2006 to 2007/2008 the Czech School Inspectorate gathered and evaluated a range of data concerning the development of language education in schools. The observations by CSI concentrated on creating conditions for the further development and possibilities of pupils to apply their language knowledge as well as on the methods of work leading to further improvement and modernisation in the instruction of foreign languages in compliance with the goals of curricula reform implemented during 2005 and 2008. One of the priorities of curricular reform in the Czech education system is to improve, modernise and extend the teaching of foreign languages, which is to be achieved by means of enhancing the professional qualifications of teachers at all levels of education and by updating teaching methods so that these better develop all aspects of language education.

The National Plan for Teaching Foreign Languages 2005-2008 increased the number of hours for foreign language instruction and introduced the framework system of training courses for the further education of language teachers with the aim of increasing the level of language education of pedagogical staff. Improvement of the qualifications of foreign language teachers is supported by the programmes known as '*The Gate to Languages*' (*Brána jazyků*)⁵ or *MEJA*⁶, and by making available extended distance studies for those who have successfully completed the *MEJA* and *JAME*⁷ programmes organised in cooperation with pedagogical faculties. Foreign language teachers at the lower level of basic schools and kindergarten teachers participated in the republic-wide programme '*Languages through Games*' (*Jazyky hrou*), which, apart from the basis for a relevant foreign language, also provided a basis of guidelines for teaching. In 2005 an extensive programme, co-financed from the European Social Fund, entitled *TEACHERS (UČITELÉ)*⁸, was launched. This programme was a follow up to experiences gained within the *JAME* project and summer language training courses, which were thus supplemented with other supportive activities and focused on new target groups.

In the course of the school years from 2005 to 2007 schools drew up their self-evaluation as well as their own strategies for teaching foreign languages and on the basis of such documents and the Framework Education Programme, they developed, as of 1 September 2007, their school education programme. The aim of SEPs was to encourage schools to apply new active forms of teaching, to develop cross-curricular relationships and instruction of integrated content. In doing so schools decided to make use of team work of teachers and different forms of extra-curricular activities. When teaching foreign languages schools should apply an individual approach and also enable pupils and students to develop language knowledge within out-of-school activities. The aim is to make education more effective in compliance with the Long-term Policy Objectives of Education and the

⁵ The Gate to Languages programme: development of specific competences of teachers and other professionals working within the education system with a view to improving education in BSs, SSs and tertiary professional schools; it was launched in October 2005, in Prague in March 2006 under the name JARO (Spring)

⁶ MEJA programme: a development programme aimed at the methodological and language preparation of teachers teaching at the primary level of BSs without professional qualifications for teaching foreign languages and language preparation for kindergarten teachers, teachers at primary level of BSs and teachers of basic artistic schools; the programme covered the period from 2006 to 2008

⁷ JAME programme: a nation-wide project designed for qualified teachers who are not language teachers; it was implemented in October 2004

⁸ TEACHERS programme: focused on the development of specific competences of teachers and other professionals in the education system with a view to improving education in BSs, SSs and tertiary professional schools and to enhancing the adaptability of such staff in the labour market