

Annex 6

Memorandum on Support for the Development of Reading Literacy

In Prague on 26th May 2011 the Czech School Inspectorate organised the “National Meeting on Results of Inspections relating to Reading Literacy”, which was attended by representatives of the MEYS, the National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education, the National Institute for Information on Education, the Institute of Pedagogical and Psychological Consultancy, delegates of occupational associations, members of the civic association Critical Thinking, and representatives of kindergartens, basic and secondary schools from all regions of the Czech Republic, and inspectors of the CSI.

Representatives of CSI management provided participants of this working meeting with detailed information about the results of inspections carried out in the area of support for the development of reading literacy in pre-school and basic education. The follow up discussion in particular stressed the need for the rapid and coordinated approach of all stakeholders.

Participants generally agreed on the necessity to stipulate the definition of reading literacy in pedagogical documents and improvement of reading literacy should become the aim of our education policy. In this context it is important to identify all current legislative obstacles and to remove them in legislative provisions on an ongoing basis. The changes which are to be made in the education system and the necessity of their implementation, as has been confirmed by the results of international comparisons, must have political support, including support at the regional level.

Further progress in this area is hardly thinkable without a definition of the central target and specification of a national strategy of support for the development of reading literacy in the Czech Republic. After such long-term policy objectives are laid down and individual goals are specified it will be possible for schools to derive their own strategies from them. The Czech School Inspectorate will strive, along with other institutions, colleges as well as with occupational organisations, to develop such a strategy as soon as possible. The strategy should be developed in the context of lifelong learning, including standards to motivate and develop children at an early age.

Without specifying common objectives it will be neither possible to develop and provide effective professional support to teachers nor to determine and detect the quality of reading literacy. The absence of a comprehensive and long-term strategy will lead not only to a waste of financial resources but also to a loss of trust and effort of teachers and other school employees responsible for this area.

As regards framework education programmes it is necessary urgently to develop standards for assessing the level of reading literacy and to support the creation of tools which will assist teachers to assess the given level on an ongoing basis and the progress of children and pupils made in reading literacy. It is desirable to create standards of pupils' performance and monitoring tools in cooperation with the whole professional community at a pace corresponding to the capabilities of the community to understand such tools and use them for the benefit of pupils.