

## European Language Council: TNP 2

### Quality Enhancement in Higher Education Language Studies: National Report of the Czech Republic

#### **1. General Introduction**

##### **1.1 Languages spoken in the Czech Republic**

The population of the Czech Republic (ca. 10.200.000) is largely monolingual, Czech being the official language. Nevertheless there are language minorities, namely Slovak, Polish, German, Romani, and an increasing number of immigrants have come from the countries of the former U.S.S.R. and Asia. Though the Law on Ethnic and National Minorities, which came into force in July 2001, guarantees the right to education in the minority languages from nursery to secondary level, in practice only the children of the Polish population have access to primary and secondary education in their language. Slovak and other immigrant children attend Czech schools (the Slovak school established in Prague survived only a couple of years due to a lack of pupils). Use of the Romani languages in schools has increased since 1997 when Romani teacher assistants were introduced to primary schools to help Roma children escape from a pattern of educational underachievement.

##### **1.2 Modern Languages in pre-primary, primary, and secondary education including identification of authorities responsible for pre-primary, primary, and secondary education**

The Czech system of education is divided into:

Basic Schools (age 6-15).

Secondary Schools – 8-year, 6-year or 4-year Grammar Schools offering general education from the ages of 11/13/15 - 19

4-year Technical and Commercial Schools offering specialized education from the ages of 15 - 19.

Vocational Schools offering training from the ages of 15 – 17,18,19.

Institutions of higher education and universities (age 19+).

Until 1989 the public administration system was highly centralized. National ministries directly administered various institutional activities and functions and a centralized, single political party exercised control at all levels. Following the political changes in 1989, the municipal level administration became self-governing, the former elected bodies at district level were abolished and the various local administrative departments were transferred to the relevant ministry. The school heads, the municipalities (local authorities), the Education Authorities, the Czech Inspectorate and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport play the main role in the administration of the education system. The municipalities (local authorities), district school councils and school councils became self-governing.

At present Czech pupils begin learning a foreign language in their fourth class at the age of 9/10 and it is mostly English that is preferred by both the pupils and their parents for a variety of reasons. It should be pointed out that even though the age when the foreign language is introduced in school has been lowered twice in the last decade (and the government plans speak about a further lowering to the third class), the number of qualified teachers of languages has not increased (in some schools, because of public demand classes are offered even from the first grade). The lack of qualified teachers of languages has been a permanent problem since 1990 when Russian ceased to be the number one language taught. The schools, both basic and secondary, have been in constant need for anyone willing to teach languages (English especially), and so far have had to overlook the question of proper qualifications. The situation is most problematic in the cities where there are better job opportunities for language speakers, and graduates from

language departments at universities are offered much higher salaries in the private sector than they would receive in schools. Statistics from 2001 claim that only 56.7 per cent of basic school teachers of languages are qualified.

At Basic schools pupils have one compulsory language (usually English, German or French); only at schools with extended language learning are two compulsory foreign languages taught from the third class. A similar situation exists in Grammar schools, the 8-year, 6-year and 4-year, and Commercial secondary schools (business academies), only more languages are taught (Russian, Spanish, Italian). Other Secondary schools (technical, vocational) mostly teach only one compulsory foreign language. According to the school policy the pupils should be able to select the foreign language they want to learn, but in practice they have to take what is available. Sometimes better pupils learn English (German in some areas) and the others what is available. Headmasters usually do not dare to offer Russian even if there are qualified staff in the school. Fortunately, in the last few years some grammar schools have started to put Russian in the curriculum again as a second optional/compulsory language.

Apart from compulsory languages schools often offer optional courses of languages: at basic schools from the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> class or in some cases earlier. At secondary schools the situation varies greatly according to the availability of teachers.

There are many good and dedicated teachers, both with proper qualifications and without them, but their number is insufficient and the quality of teaching languages is, on the whole, unsatisfactory. That is why a number of parents, especially in cities, send their children to private language schools in spite of the heavy fees that are required.

### **1.3 The Higher Education system**

There are 52 higher education (HE) institutions in the Czech Republic: 23 public institutions, 4 state HE institutions (military institutions and the Police Academy) and about 25 private institutions. The Police Academy and all private HE institutions are non-university type institutions. Several new HE institutions have been established in regional centres, in the majority of cases on the basis of previously existing independent institutions, mainly faculties of education. Although the total number of HE institutions remained the same until 1999 when new private institutions came into existence, there were fundamental changes in the number of faculties and in course structures. Whereas in 1989 there were 69 faculties in the Czech Republic, in 1999 the number of faculties and similar units had risen to 120. The total number of students at HE institutions in the 1990's constantly rose but in spite of this thousands of applicants for admission to HE institutions are rejected every year.

The new Higher Education Act of 1998 lays down the present-day conditions and relations between autonomous HE institutions and the state. The changes embodied in the Act mostly involve greater diversity of programmes and institutions.

According to this new HE Act, HE institutions can be either university or non-university types, or either public, state or private. The type of institution is declared in its statute, and must comply with the judgement of the Accreditation Commission. According to the HE Act "The Accreditation Commission monitors the quality of higher education and performs comprehensive evaluation of educational, scholarly, research, developmental, artistic or other creative activity of higher education institutions."

Traditional university-type institutions may offer all types of study programmes (bachelor, master and doctoral level) while non-university institutions are characterized by the running of mainly bachelor study programmes. Most university-type institutions are divided into faculties. Only a HE institution can be a legal entity.

At present there are only 25 small private non-university type HE institutions offering only bachelor programmes in fields such as bank management, hotel management, systems engineering, informatics and creative writing in which the students pay tuition fees. As a rule, the study of languages, especially English, occupies an important position in the study programmes of the private institutions. The private sector

comprises only about 2000 to 3000 students, but the number is expected to rise despite the fact that it is very often the students who are not admitted to public or state HE universities, who seek admittance to the private institutions.

#### **1.4 Introduction of a two-cycle structure**

An entirely new phenomenon of the nineties was the introduction of bachelor programmes. This type of study was established by the HE Act of 1990 and the number of students involved in bachelor programmes has constantly risen. However, in many ways the bachelor programmes are considered inferior by the general public and their graduates can find better positions in the private sector than in the too rigid state institutions that have not prepared a "slot" in their ranks for this type of education. An example of this can be found in the bachelor programme for language teachers funded by the European Union for several years in the 1990's. In this 3-year programme pre-service teachers received teacher training in one subject (English, German or French).

However, our school system requires the degree of "magister" from teachers and so the bachelors are considered under qualified. Paradoxically, the magister teacher's degree is a joint degree, pre-service teacher trainees study two major subjects and so they have even fewer contact hours of teaching per subject than the bachelors had. Moreover, every bachelor had to defend a diploma thesis on some aspect of the methodology, literature or linguistics of the language studied while the two-major magister students can choose which of their majors they will write the thesis on and so not all of their theses deal with languages. In the end a new, short-lived follow-up course for the language bachelors had to be established so the bachelors could gain the necessary qualification required in schools. In the meantime, however, a number of them left the state school system as they were offered better conditions elsewhere.

In response to the Bologna declaration the Ministry of Education has declared that bachelors studies should be supported and the "White Book" recommends that the number of students at HE institutions should be increased in the bachelors programmes. (The "White Book" being an official document formulating the goals of the Czech education system to develop its compatibility with the social demands and requirements of the European Union). This process will take some time to affect specialised language programmes. On some non-specialised bachelors programmes there is a language component as part of the final state exam.

#### **1.5 Accreditation of new programmes and of new HE institutions**

Accreditation of new and existing programmes and of both new and existing HE institutions is the responsibility of the Accreditation Commission which is directly answerable to the Ministry of Education and whose members are appointed by the Ministry.

#### **1.6 Quality assessment/evaluation**

##### **1.6.1 Bodies responsible**

Externally, the assessment of departments is carried out by the Accreditation Commission (see 1.5.) at regular intervals. Internal assessments are also carried out within each institution on an individual basis.

##### **1.6.2 Teaching vs research**

One of the criteria investigated by the Accreditation Commission (AC), the highest assessing body, is the qualification of the staff of individual departments. If the qualifications are considered insufficient, the department may lose the accreditation of some of its programmes, or even completely. The accredited subjects should be guaranteed by member(s) of staff with the degree of professor, "docent" (associate professor), Ph.D. or even the formerly used "CSc". If the department lacks teachers with such qualifications it may lose accreditation.

As the process of acquiring higher degrees in foreign (especially "western" languages) was in the past halted by the communist authorities, the few surviving language departments lacked staff with higher degrees when the regime changed and of course the new departments could hardly find people with the "proper" qualifications or people who would try to attain them as, due to the closure of western language departments in faculties of education under communism, there were no graduates. Unfortunately, this gap has not been bridged, partly due to the growing demand for language teaching, a vastly increased number of students and also because of financial reasons. Consequently, at present some departments, particularly newly established departments of faculties of education, feel threatened by the accreditation process run by the AC, whose members (nominated by the Ministry of Education) come mostly from faculties of arts, where original language departments survived and are very traditional in their academic views on university education.

In the Czech Republic, for instance, it is not possible to do a philological doctoral study in the methodology of language teaching as there is no professor of this field in the CR, and the process of acquiring the degree of "docent" (associate professor) is so complicated and demanding that in the last eight years there has been only one such degree conferred in the field of English/American literature at Charles University's Faculty of Arts, with another candidate, having successfully passed through all the necessary procedures, currently awaiting the final decision of the academic council.

### **1.6.3 Categories guiding assessment of teaching**

The Accreditation Commission assesses courses on a written basis only. It considers written course outlines, descriptions of course aims, and the publications and qualifications of staff. No actual observation of teaching practices takes place. Student assessments of courses take place on an individual departmental/faculty basis.

### **1.6.4 Benchmark statements**

The Accreditation Commission (AC) gives recommendations to each department on an individual basis and supplies deadlines for implementation of the suggested improvements.

### **1.6.5 Ranking of departments or programmes**

Unofficially the oldest and most established universities are the most sought after. The number of applicants for study at these institutions is substantially higher than at others. There is no official ranking as such.

## **1.7 Funding of universities and criteria upon which the funding is based**

Public and state education is free of charge, but there has been a lively debate about the potential introduction, level and system of tuition fees. Universities are self-governing institutions receiving funding from the Ministry of Education. Individual HE institutions allocate the money they receive from the Ministry annually to their various faculties, who then decide how to use the funds (building improvements, salaries etc.). There are also fairly large discrepancies between the financing of the various state HE institutions:

- 1) technical faculties receive more funds – but the languages there definitely play a minor role;
- 2) new regional institutions receive additional financial aid from the local administrations that feel the necessity to support their development unlike the traditional institutions in the cities where the local governments take them for granted.

The funding problem has been the subject of discussions of the deans' and rectors' bodies in recent years. Consequently there is not much unity within the representative bodies of HE institutions in dealing with the state, as some representatives may believe their situation is not so desperate as it could be. Perhaps one of the measures could lie in appointing some arbiter who would be able to work out a system of financing through which each institution would get a more just share. The strained financial situation of the public HE institutions led to the charging of students (in fact fining them) should they prolong their studies. The

expected duration of studies at most faculties is from four to five years and students who study longer than seven years now have to pay for each semester extending this time; the fee is not high – about one quarter of a month's average salary in the Czech Republic – and the money goes to the stipend fund, stipends being provided to students in financial difficulties, handicapped students, or sometimes as a reward for outstanding achievement.

Despite the promises of each government in the last decade, the financing of the HE institutions is inadequate and has not risen proportionally with the rising number of students. The teaching load at universities has increased but not the salaries. In November 2001 the Rector's conference resolved to take more drastic measures and the universities went on a one-day strike to draw the attention of both the government and the public to this burning issue.

### **1.8 Admission of students**

There is as yet no objectively assessed school leaving exam, all such being administered by the staff of individual schools. CERMAT is the organisation sponsored by the Ministry of Education to work on producing an objective exam and this is in the process of being piloted. In the meantime students apply directly to the institutions of their choice, (as many of them as they choose) and sit the entrance exams set by those institutions. For example, an English department might offer 70 places and have 1400 applicants for these places.

### **1.9 Student fees and student support**

Students are not charged fees for their studies if they do not exceed the recommended length of study - see 1.7. above. There is no expectation that fees will be introduced in the near future.

### **1.10 Departments/units in HE institutions in charge of the programmes and portions of programmes constituting the area of languages**

To discuss the teaching of modern languages at universities and other institutions of higher learning, we can divide the students into two basic categories:

- A. Non-language students studying economics, sciences, the humanities, arts and technology
  - B. Language specialists - students studying philology, teacher training, translatology
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- A. Non-language students are usually expected to pass an exam in one or two languages (in the case of two languages, the first language is tested on a higher, the other on quite a low level). The requirements are usually set in such a way that every student can pass with some effort. The exception is the study of economics, where one or two languages are thoroughly studied and tested. The languages are usually taught from the perspective of ESP and they comprise mostly English, German, French, Russian, and Spanish. (Even though the courses are divided according to the level of students, the levels are not standardised so what is, for example, defined as intermediate need not necessarily be so.)
  - B. Students who study a language/languages as their main subject/s do so at
    - a) Faculties of Arts (philology, teacher training, translatology);
    - b) Faculties of Education (teacher training).

The modern languages studied range from English, German, French, which are offered at most faculties of arts, to Spanish and Portuguese and "minor" languages (Mongolian, Norwegian, Tamil etc.) which can be studied only at some of these institutions (mainly Charles University) and whose courses for a limited number of students (Spanish and Portuguese excluded) do not open every year. Translatology is taught at the Translatology institute of Charles University's Faculty of Arts and in translatology sections of some language departments of other faculties of arts.

Faculties of education offer courses for pre-service teachers of English, German, and French and in some cases Russian and Spanish. Some of them also have extramural courses for re-training teachers and

methodology or refresher courses for in-service teachers. All the faculties of education are accredited for the preparation of teachers for basic schools (primary and lower secondary), while some of them also received accreditation for the preparation of teachers for higher secondary schools for some or all languages taught, for instance Charles University's Faculty of Education and Masaryk University's Faculty of Education.

The demand of the last few years has led to the establishment of courses such as English in Commerce, English and the Tourist Industry, etc. at various types of HE institutions, including some faculties of education.

Czech for Foreigners is offered by faculties of arts, language centres at universities and private schools. Language centres at universities are special departments that offer various types of tailored courses contracted by various institutions or offered to the general public. They are self-funding.

## **2. Description and analysis of quality measures relating to defining and designing courses and programmes in the area of languages**

### **2.1 Have learning outcomes been defined for programmes or portions of programmes in the area of languages**

As part of the accreditation process all departments had to submit complex and thorough documentation to the Accreditation Commission specifying the learning outcomes of each individual course. The accreditation also required the classification of the study programmes of the branches of study together with the characterisation of individual subjects and definition of graduate profiles. The AC can thus compare the programmes and courses of similar departments, which can certainly throw some light on the quality of some aspects of the work of different departments.

### **2.2 Statements on the learning outcomes of the various programmes and portions of programmes**

As part of the accreditation process all departments have to prepare so-called professional profiles of the graduates of their study programmes. According to the "White Book" (see 1.4) the basic goal of the education system is "to prepare students in such a way that they can succeed in the employment market". The long-term aim is to have a system that balances university education and the needs and demands of the market.

### **2.3. See 2.2.**

### **2.4. Learning outcomes reflecting specific professional profiles see 2.2**

### **2.5. Learning outcomes relating to personal development and citizenship**

The stress in the "White Book" on the general concept of lifelong learning should be a stimulus to a more open system and more open structure of education. Because of the introduction of a credit system of studies students will have an increasing choice in selecting and shaping their own studies and therefore their sense of responsibility will be enhanced.

### **2.6. Statements regarding outcomes of learning related to accepted levels of proficiency**

Though education faculties have been involved in drawing up and piloting the European Language Portfolio at primary and secondary levels such common standards have not yet been applied at the HE level.

### **2.7. Admission requirements for the various programmes in question**

See above – 1.8 for general admission conditions. Specialised language programmes demand that students pass both written and oral examinations. Apart from their performance in these exams, students are also awarded points for the outcome of their school leaving exam, acknowledged certificates such as the Cambridge exams and TOEFL and, in the case of language education programmes, previous teaching experience. Some other non-language programmes e.g. at the faculty of economics, also include a language test in their entrance exams.

## **2.8. New course content based on newly defined learning outcomes**

Because of the changes in learning culture a number of courses have become a part of the syllabus in language departments, such as: Cultural Studies, Discourse Analysis, CALL, Gender Issues in Literature.

## **2.9. New forms of assessment based on newly defined learning outcomes and content**

Though more written tests have been introduced as a direct influence of western teachers, assessment remains traditional and has not changed significantly.

# **3. Description and analysis of quality measures related to the process of teaching and learning**

## **3.1 New methods facilitating quality language learning**

- using information technology
- introduction of the ECTS system
- organisation of study opportunity in foreign institutions
- self-access study centres
- greater emphasis on students' own research

## **3.2. Learning environments facilitating quality language learning**

Wherever possible departments have worked with foreign cultural organisations to increase opportunities for their learners. The British Council, for example, financed a number of resource centres in faculties of education and these centres provide an invaluable supportive study environment for students with an emphasis on self-access. Students have also been involved in organising and participating in conferences, not only in language departments but, because of their language competence, also in other departments.

## **3.3. Delivery programmes in other languages i) modern language programmes ii) non-language programmes**

In most modern language teaching instruction is given in the language taught. In non-specialist studies at beginners' level instruction also includes teaching in the students' mother tongue. Non-language programmes have started to appear in the last few years in connection with the Socrates and Erasmus programmes. Occasionally visiting academics from abroad offer lectures and instruction.

## **3.4. Quality of students' mobility: i) linguistic and inter-cultural support ii) validation and certification of linguistic skills and competences acquired during study-related mobility iii) further development of linguistic skills and competences acquired during study-related mobility.**

Within the Socrates/Erasmus programmes and other individually negotiated exchange programmes, student mobility has grown over the past six years. All specialist language departments have links with foreign institutions. Non-specialist language departments do not usually offer language focussed stays for their students, however, students studying a particular subject abroad can obviously benefit from being in a

different language environment. Students selected for study stays abroad have to prove their academic and language competence before undergoing the study abroad. Partner institutions abroad are aware of the cultural and linguistic challenges involved in foreign students studying at their institutions and therefore offer assistance e.g. Joensuu university in Finland offers pre-study courses in Finnish to foreign students who will study with them. The Learning Agreement students must sign with their host institutions before embarking on their studies can be considered to be a helpful tool for increasing students' awareness of their study responsibilities.

ii) specialist language departments wherever possible validate courses completed abroad by acknowledging marks or evaluation given and according them the equivalent value in the regular credit and exam system (this process will be easier once the ECTS system is fully operational).

iii) students studying abroad frequently use the opportunity to research the topic of their final diploma thesis. Students also report on their experiences and pass on advice to subsequent applicants.

### **3.5. Organisational structures facilitating quality language learning (language centres)**

The foreign institutions representing the most frequently learned languages (English, French, German) all have language and cultural resources which can be used both by students and teachers and the general public. Universities have language centres catering for various language needs, including offering courses for the public.

### **3.6 Languages of communication in modern language departments**

It is usual for the language of instruction to be the target language, particularly encouraged by the presence of native speaker members of staff.

### **3.7 New methods facilitating quality learning in language teacher**

In the period since the political changes brought by the year 1989 the language programmes and language courses at HE institutions have gone through a transformation which has had (unlike the changes at primary and secondary schools) a self-regulating character. Its extent and the timing of its introduction therefore vary from institution to institution and from department to department. The departments, both the surviving and the newly established ones, introduced new programmes and courses and innovated existing programmes and courses inspired by a) a determination to improve the content of the study; b) demands from the students; c) demands from the public; d) ideas of foreign lecturers. The institutions were assisted in this process by various institutions and institutions from abroad (similar departments at universities abroad, organisations such as the British Council, Goethe Institute, and the Council of Europe, etc.).

The structure of courses in the same study programmes of various HE institutions differs not only among different languages but even within one language taught.

A great number of new methods have been initiated to enhance quality language teacher education, many inspired and supported by foreign institutions:

- All the departments teaching the major languages have networks and regularly meet and exchange expertise. There has been a tremendous increase in the number of conferences held in departments, both concerning methodology and other disciplines of language and cultural studies.
- the British Council supported mentoring programmes in all the major teacher training departments, which provided training, support for the publication of a guide on mentoring etc. and also team teaching of the courses;
- Education faculties provide inset courses and retraining courses.
- HE teachers also actively participate in the associations for teachers of languages.
- Cultural studies have also become a greater focus for language studies.
- Some methodological innovations include self-access, tasks, encouraging problem solving, presentations, peer teaching

### **3.8 New methods facilitating quality learning in the training of translators and interpreters**



There are three departments in the country that train translators and interpreters though some language departments also provide courses in translation. In translation departments more focus has started to be given to "market" oriented areas such as economics and law.

### **3.9 Preparation for lifelong learning**

In accordance with the Bologna conference, lifelong learning is an approach that is enjoying growing support. This is clear from the aims specified by the Ministry of Education in the "White Book" (see 1.4) with regard to lifelong learning:

- to enable access to tertiary education to 50% of population group, to increase the proportion of bachelor's study and safeguard the permeability of all kinds of tertiary education with special support to distance education, non-university higher education institutions and higher professional schools,
- to create the legislative framework for the development of adult education, to increase the system of financial and non-financial incentives for its development and in addition to further professional and re-qualification education to provide education of so called "second chance" at secondary, higher professional schools and higher education system and to build a system of civic and non-formal education for adults.

HE institutions participate in this approach by offering programmes and courses to the public. There are also a great number of refreshment and other courses run in teacher education institutions for existing teachers.

### **3.10 Identification, validation, recognition and certification of skills, competences and knowledge acquired outside a given institution**

Extra points can be given for specific language certificates (Cambridge exams, TOEFL, accredited state exams) possessed by candidates at university entrance exams. This is an area where individual institutions have a lot of discretion in accepting the validity of competences acquired elsewhere.

### **3.11 To what extent has a new learning culture been introduced into programmes and provision in the area of languages**

Language departments strive to keep up with developments in language studies both in the country and abroad, and specialised language studies programmes have in particular successfully prepared students whose skills, knowledge and study results are comparable with any institutions of a similar kind in Europe, as has been proved during the students' SOCRATES/ERASMUS exchange study stays.

State HE language departments have taken up the position of leading centres collaborating with primary and secondary schools and other institutions, are involved in research in both academic disciplines and methodology (e.g. aimed at young learners, the Common European Framework of Reference, the European Language Portfolio, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), lifelong learning, mentoring, CALL, learner autonomy, intercultural and multicultural learning, ESP issues, etc.). They have put much networking effort into forming links with language departments both at home and abroad.

To a great extent new technologies, along with the growth of access to various resources and an increase in learners experience of study abroad and of foreign languages in general has led to changes in learning culture. For example, use of self-access resource centres, individual tasks, the internet etc. has led to learners taking more responsibility for their own learning.

## **4. Description and analysis of quality measures relating to the training of higher education teachers and trainers working in the area of languages**

### **4.1 Brief description and analysis of the status quo as regards**

### **i) entry qualifications required of university teachers working on the various programmes or portions of programmes**

At present access to employment as a higher education teacher is bound by the HE Act of 1998. Teachers are appointed following a selection procedure and admission to employment is confirmed by a work contract the time limit of which is from 2 to 5 years. No category of HE teacher is accorded a definitive status, or the possibility of acquiring the title emeritus.

The only requirement stipulated by the Act is a completed university education, the degree of Magister (or higher: in the case of teachers from abroad that of M.A. or its equivalent) in the respective field.

### **ii) measures relating to the updating of the qualifications of the teachers in question**

Unfortunately, due to financial conditions, language departments experience great problems in recruiting qualified and dedicated staff willing to sacrifice financial security for a prestigious and challenging position at a HE institution and determined to pursue their professional development.

A recent improvement was that in 2001, on application, faculties received grants from the Ministry of Education for sabbaticals for those teachers in the process of completing higher degrees.

One example of good practice can be found in language departments which encourage outstanding students to become members of staff and take on postgraduate studies after they graduate and are aware of the special need to do all they can to support them.

Some foreign institutions, namely the British Council, also organised further education for the members of the language depts. in the fields of methodology and cultural studies. Their courses successfully enabled 28 teachers to receive an M.A. degree. Unfortunately, the AC does not take this particular degree into consideration and so many of these highly specialised and dedicated teachers are currently hurrying to finish their Ph.D.s (often abroad as the scientific status of methodology is not yet sufficiently acknowledged in the Czech Republic and therefore opportunities for study at this level are limited).

## **4.2 Status, career prospects and conditions of contract of university language teachers**

Despite appallingly low salaries the status of university teachers is still high. Also see 4.1 above.

## **4.3 New qualifications required by university teachers working in the area of languages as a result of the introduction of new learning outcomes, new content, new learning methods and new forms of assessment**

Though any additional qualification is welcomed and encouraged there are no actual requirements officially stated.

## **4.4 Programmes and courses for the training of university teachers in the area of languages**

There are no official courses for the training of university teachers in this respect, however, the teachers are recommended to participate in courses and conferences organised by outside institutions, e.g. the British Council (courses on Literature and Cultural Studies), the Goethe Institute, French Institute or by HE institutions themselves.

## **4.5 Peer observation**

This is carried out by departments at their own discretion and can also take place on externally organised courses, such as the British Council supported mentoring course.

## **4.6 Staff development programmes**

In view of the requirements of the Accreditation Commission departments do have staff development programmes, however, due to financial constraints and current lack of HE teacher trainers they are difficult to support with measures such as training or sabbaticals.

#### **4.7 Human resources management**

Interviews for new staff are carried out by a commission appointed by the university and approved by the Ministry. Heads of individual departments meet regularly with the faculty authorities though "management" of staff is very much governed by financial limitations.

#### **4.8 Measures designed to promote the development of university language teachers (for example, participation in project-type activities)**

University departments participate in a number of projects ranging from EU and Council of Europe projects to projects organised by faculties and foreign institutions (e.g. aimed at young learners, the Common European Framework of Reference, the European Language Portfolio, CLIL, lifelong education, mentoring, teaching heterogeneous classes, CALL, learner autonomy, intercultural and multicultural learning, ESP issues).

#### **4.9 Staff mobility programmes**

At present HE teachers can apply for study stays abroad funded by Lingua A though it is necessary to say that this programme is more sought after by teachers working at a lower level of education. Universities and faculties have also had a programme of so called "bilateral agreements" within which teachers visit partner institutions and gain information concerning their study programmes. This project has been very helpful in improving HE teaching and in establishing links for the exchange of students within the SOCRATES/ERASMUS programme, which has existed for several years now.

Teachers also get acquainted with other language departments through the teacher mobility part of SOCRATES/ERASMUS. Teaching at foreign institutions is extremely helpful and challenging.

All these activities depend on the capability of individual departments to form such links, and admittedly there are fewer opportunities for departments teaching non-language students.

#### **4.10 Refreshment courses**

After 1989 the language departments could at last develop freely and they looked for experience abroad. Up until about the mid 1990's language departments participated in various projects funded by SOCRATES, some teachers attended various refresher courses organized by foreign institutions, such as the British Council, Goethe Institute, and French Institute. At present there are hardly any funds for refreshment courses.

#### **4.11 Tailored continuing education**

### **5. Description and analysis of quality measures relating to the organisation of management of the process of teaching and learning**

#### **5.1 Descriptions of programmes, courses, modules and other offerings**

Individual institutions aim to publicise course descriptions and course requirements at the start of each semester, along with listings of study literature which should be available to the students. Many institutions also post such information on websites. For the purposes of accreditation detailed descriptions of each course, its aims and supporting literature were formulated.

#### **5.2 Calculation of student workload (in relation to learning outcomes and levels)**

Course schedules: in specialist studies of the language there is a given number of lessons per week (in the form of lectures, seminars, workshops) in a semester which is usually 15 weeks long. Lectures are usually

optional, the attendance of seminars compulsory. The courses are usually offered in some order, there is not much space for the student to make his/her own schedule and selection of what he/she wants to attend and in which semester. The number of credits and exams students have to pass in each programme per semester is given. As an example, at the Faculty of Education in Prague the students have nine contact hours of the language subjects per week.

In non-specialist studies students can choose from the languages offered and are divided into groups after taking placement tests. They usually study the language, usually for two hours per week, for two to three semesters and have to pass an examination at the end of their study.

### **5.3 Introduction of information management systems**

Such means of monitoring student numbers and achievement exist at faculty level. Individual departments also keep track of students' credits and exam results.

### **5.4 Division of tasks among staff members teaching on a specific programme**

In specialist departments the staff members are divided into sections according to their specialisation: linguistics, literature and cultural studies, practical language, methodology, translatology etc. and sometimes according to the programme in which they teach. Some overlapping is, especially in smaller departments, of course necessary. All senior staff are expected to be responsible for some area of the departmental work in addition to their teaching, for example timetabling, Socrates coordination, preparation of the entrance examinations etc.

In non-specialist departments the division of labour is usually made according to the branches of ESP or according to the level of the students.

### **5.5 Systems for the external and internal evaluation of courses or programmes (including categories underlying the evaluation)**

According to the new Higher Education Act of 1998, HE institutions can be either university or non-university or either public, state or private. The type of institution is declared in its statute and must comply with the judgement of the Accreditation Commission (AC). According to the HE Act, "The Accreditation Commission monitors the quality of higher education and performs comprehensive evaluation of educational, scholarly, research, developmental, artistic or other activity of higher education institutions". The AC meets regularly and grants accreditation for individual study programmes for limited periods of time at the end of which the organizations are again assessed.

Accreditation is awarded for at most double the standard length of a particular study programme and then it is necessary to request its extension or renewal. In the case of grave deficiencies the AC may, through a proposal to the Ministry of Education, take measures leading as far as withdrawal of accreditation even during the period for which the programme had previously been accredited. However, there are no monitoring mechanisms, which means that the process of withdrawing accreditation is instigated only by complaints. While it is known that the AC has not granted accreditation to some language department to the extent applied for, so far there has been only one case of termination of an existing accreditation and this did not concern language studies.

The monitoring of the quality of teaching at different institutions is organised by the institution or the language department on a more or less individual basis. There is no tradition of regular assessment (questionnaires) at the end of each course of study even though some teachers (mostly methodologists) or departments have introduced it on an individual basis. A study programme (optional course) can often be assessed according to the number of applicants (students enrolled).

Monika Vosková  
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