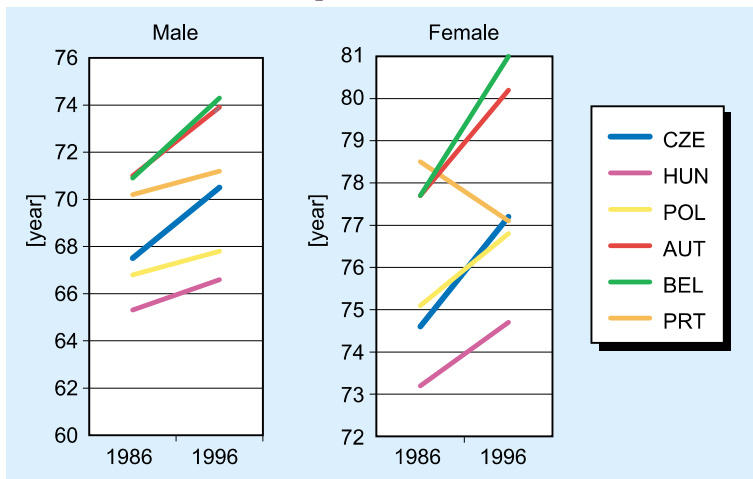


IV. QUALITY OF LIFE

Life expectancy

Box 4.1. Life expectancy at birth, female and male, international comparison, 1986 and 1998



Source: OECD, UNDP

Note: Life expectancy at birth is the average number of years that a person could expect to live if they were to be subject from birth to the mortality rates of a given period. As an indicator of mortality and health conditions of a given population it is considered one of the most important indicators of quality of life

Life expectancy was low in all the former communist countries. Whilst in 1960 Czech life expectancy was among the highest in the world, it fell considerably over the next thirty years.

The situation has gradually been improving in the 1990s although it still lags behind that of EU countries: a life expectancy of 71 years for males and 77 years for females in the Czech Republic means that both men and women can now expect to live about 4 years less than their counterparts in the EU. However, life expectancy improved by 3 years for males and by 2.6 years for females during the 1990s, which represents the second highest increase in all of the seven countries analysed. The main factor driving the improvement in life expectancy was the fall in death rates in older age groups.

Health care

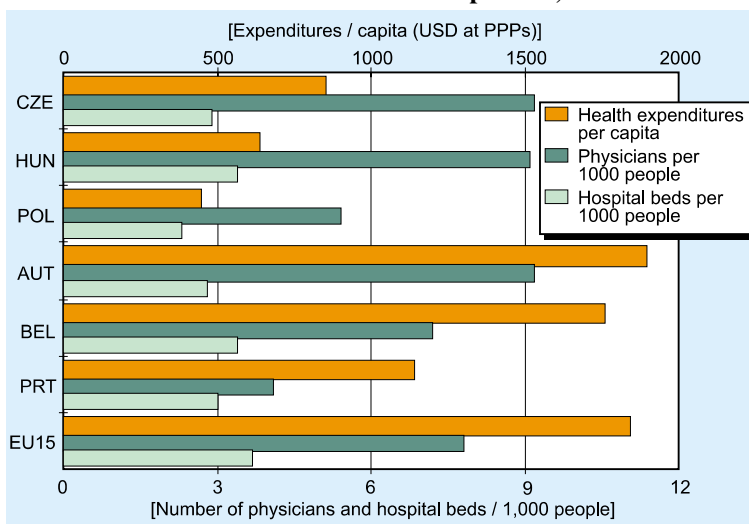
After the fall of Communism, the Czech Republic quickly acquired the features of the developed world in terms of basic health indicators. The main positive features of

healthcare in the Czech Republic are the dense network of facilities and the high standard of staff, technology and treatments. These are most evident in prenatal care, infant and child healthcare, prevention focused on reducing risk behaviour (smoking, drugs, AIDS) and serious and frequent illnesses (cardiovascular, oncological and diabetes), dialysis and organ transplants. The number of abortions fell 2.3 times between 1989 and 1998, from 126 thousand to 55 thousand. However, the total fertility rate (the average number of children born to a woman during her lifetime) fell significantly as well - from 1.89 to 1.15 - and is now one of the lowest in Europe.

The provision of healthcare services in the Czech Republic has recently undergone significant diversification, with healthcare providers owned by the state, municipalities, churches, legal entities and physical persons. As a result of the process of privatisation, the network and structure of healthcare bodies in the Czech Republic have undergone significant changes since 1991. Already in 1993, there were nearly 3,000 private facilities and this number has grown every year, reaching 22,500 in 1997.

During the 1980s, healthcare expenditures rose slowly, but in the 1990s they increased by 4.7 times. The current level of healthcare expenditure, at around 7.9 percent of GDP, is fully comparable with many developed countries.

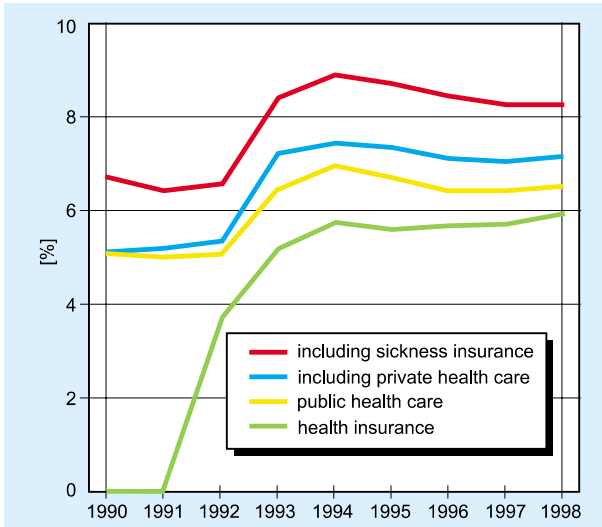
Box 4.2. Healthcare expenditures per capita, number of physicians and hospital beds, international comparison, 1998



Source: World Bank

Note: Europe (EMU) refers to 11 participating member countries of the European Monetary Union

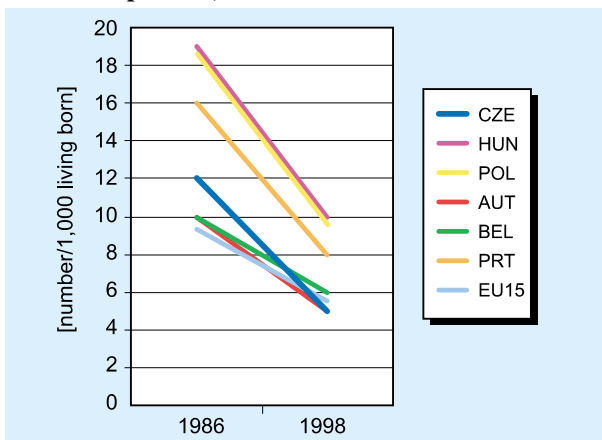
Box 4.3. Healthcare expenditures in the Czech Republic as a share of GDP, 1990-98



Source: Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs

Government policy on health is formulated in the National Programme to Support Health. The political consensus to tackle problems of health and the environment was expressed in the Czech National Environment and Health Action Plan (NEHAP) dating from 1998. The National Institute of Public Health launched in 1991 a system to monitor the health impact of environmental influences, with the aim of collecting reliable data on living conditions and the environment. The system has been implemented in thirty locations across the country and all data collected has been quality assured by independent laboratories.

Box 4.4. Infant mortality rate, international comparison, 1986 - 1998



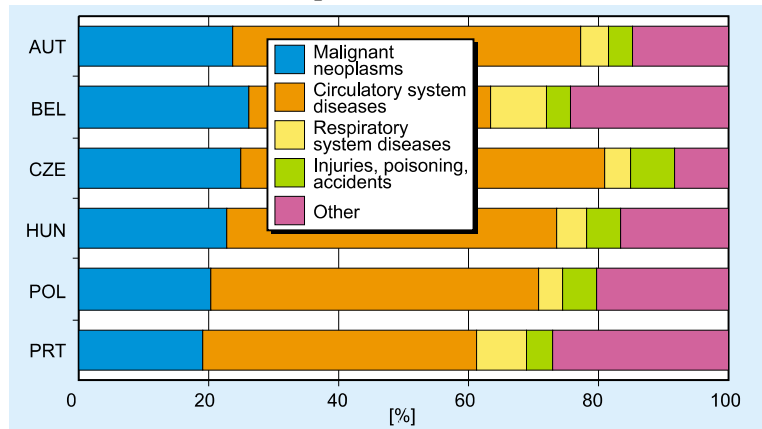
Source: National Institute for Public Health

Note: Children deceased under 1 year age

Infant mortality in the Czech Republic has fell by 50 percent since 1990, reaching the existing level in the most developed EU countries. This trend was mirrored by a similarly positive trend in neonatal and maternal mortality.

Total standardized mortality rate (according to the European standard) showed a decrease in the EU in both males and females during the past ten years. In the Czech Republic, a significant decrease in total standardized mortality was found as well; however it was higher then in the EU (approximately by 30 percent). This improvement was the result of the elimination of negative lifestyle factors, improved medical care and better quality of the environment. The most significant component in the decrease in total mortality was attributable to cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. Mortality as a result of malignant tumours, however, has stagnated and remains high.

Box 4.5. Mortality by cause, international comparison, mid-1990s



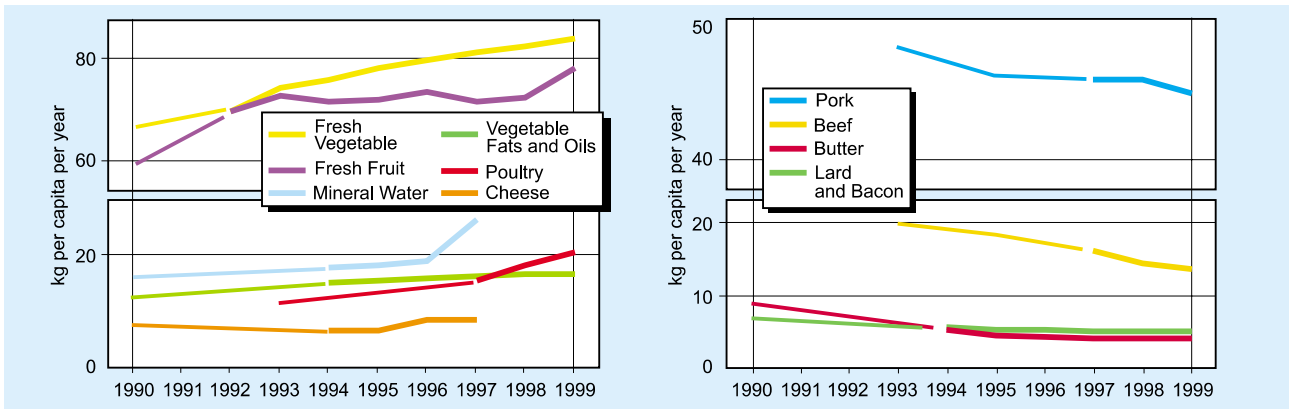
Source: Czech Statistical Office

Note: Data for the Czech Republic refer to 1997

Food consumption

There has been a marked reduction in the long-term tendency for excessive consumption of certain foodstuffs in the Czech Republic. Analysis shows that rises in the prices of food and the fall in real purchasing power of incomes were accompanied by an improvement in the structure of nutrition positively influencing public health. Between 1989 and 1999 consumption of beef, animal fats, and dairy products fell substantially; consumption of sugar, potatoes, cereals, fish, eggs and pork fell slightly; whilst consumption of poultry, pulses, vegetable fats, vegetables and fruit rose.

Box 4.6. Consumption of main foodstuff types in the Czech Republic, 1990-99



Source: Czech Statistical Office; Research Institute of Agricultural Economics

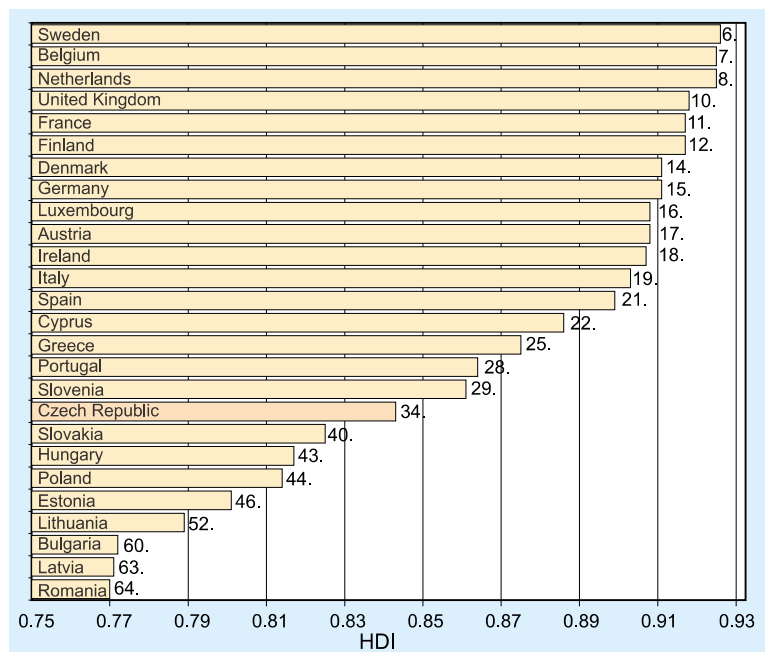
It is clear from a purely nutritional point of view that remarkable and positive changes have occurred. According to Human Development Report by UNDP the daily per capita intake of calories in the Czech Republic decreased by about 5 percent during the 1990s, though it still remains high at 3,177 cal, compared to the world average of 2,336 cal and to the East European average of 2,800 cal. It is however lower than the average of 3,377 cal in industrialised countries. Almost all the changes in nutrition have positive health impacts, with the exception of a decrease of about 13 percent in the intake of calcium. Current calcium intake is 9 percent lower than the recommended limit as a result of decreased consumption of dairy products.

Human development

The human development index (HDI) is an important aggregate indicator pioneered by the UNDP in 1990 and is now a respected gauge of the overall level of human and social development of a country. It demonstrates that the link between economic prosperity and human development is neither automatic nor obvious. It is highly correlated to GDP, which is the reason why the Czech Republic lags behind most EU countries with a score of 0.843 for 1998. Other components of the HDI are however at a similar level and the

gap with less developed EU countries is smaller than for GDP per capita because of the well-educated Czech population. Ranked 34th out of the 174 countries for which the index exists, the Czech Republic belongs to the UNDP's grouping of countries with 'high human development'.

Box 4.7. Human development index for the EU Member States and Accession countries (with world ranking), 1998



Source: UNDP

Note: The Human Development Index is based on three distinct components - indicators of longevity (life expectancy at birth), education (adult literacy rate and combined enrolment ratio) and adjusted per capita income. Its value ranges from 0 to 1. In the above chart, EU Member States and the Accession Countries are shown with their global ranking

Women's status

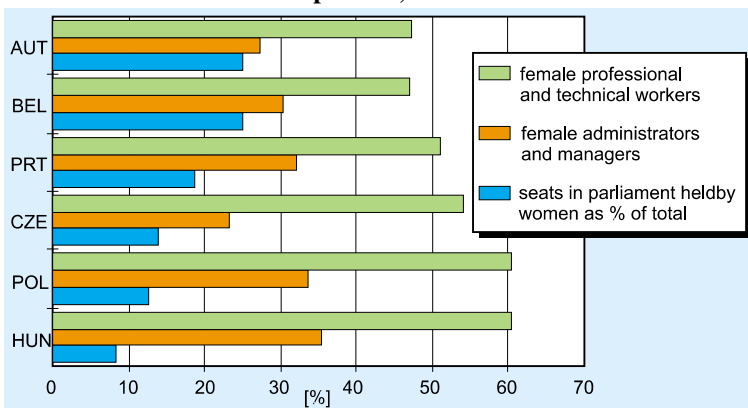
Box 4.8. Gender-related Development Index (comparison with HDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure, international comparison, 1998

	World ranking			
	GDI	HDI	GEM value	GEM rank
Czech Republic	33	34	0.537	26
Hungary	38	43	0.487	42
Poland	40	44	0.512	36
Portugal	27	28	0.618	18
Austria	16	16	0.710	12
Belgium	7	7	0.725	10

Source: UNDP

The transformation process in the Czech Republic has not brought any dramatic changes in the status of women, partly perhaps because there was already a relatively high degree of social emancipation before the transition period. Gender-related Development Index, GDI - captures achievement in the same dimensions as the HDI but adjusts the results for gender inequality by focusing on women's capabilities³. For every country the GDI value is lower than the HDI value. Thus, when adjusted for gender, HDI values decline, indicating the presence of some gender inequality in every society. With gender equality in human development, the HDI and GDI values would be the same. The GDI ranks the Czech Republic as 33rd from the 143 countries for which the index exists.

Box 4.9. Gender Empowerment Measure, international comparison, 1998



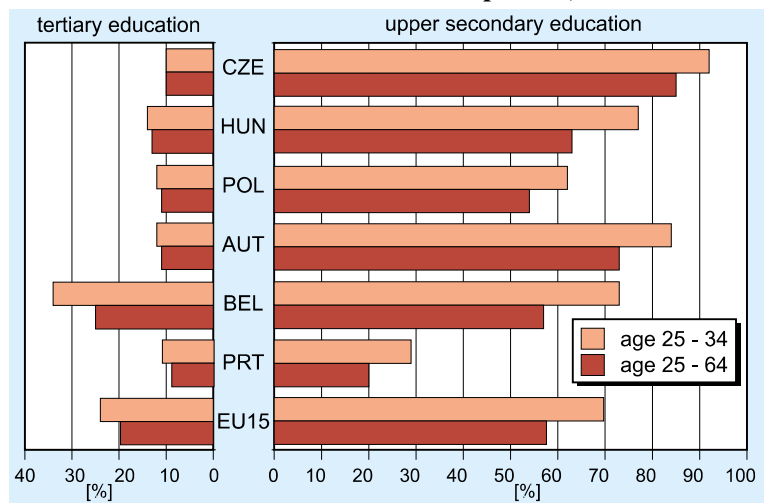
Source: UNDP

Note: Illustration of the GEM methodology is in Human Development Report 2000

Another index measuring gender inequality is gender empowerment measure (GEM). It captures inequality in key areas of economic and political participation and decision-making (women's and men's shares in administrative and managerial positions, professional and technical jobs, parliamentary seats, and income). It thus focuses on women's opportunities rather than their capabilities. The GEM ranks the Czech Republic as 26th from the 70 countries for which the index exists.

Education

Box 4.10. Population with at least upper secondary and tertiary education by age group, international comparison, 1998



Source: OECD

Note: Secondary education in the Czech Republic has undergone major changes since 1989/90. The above data are therefore not fully comparable. According to the Education Statistics Yearbook 1989-1999, the figure corresponding to "upper secondary education" in the Czech Republic would be about 66-68 percent

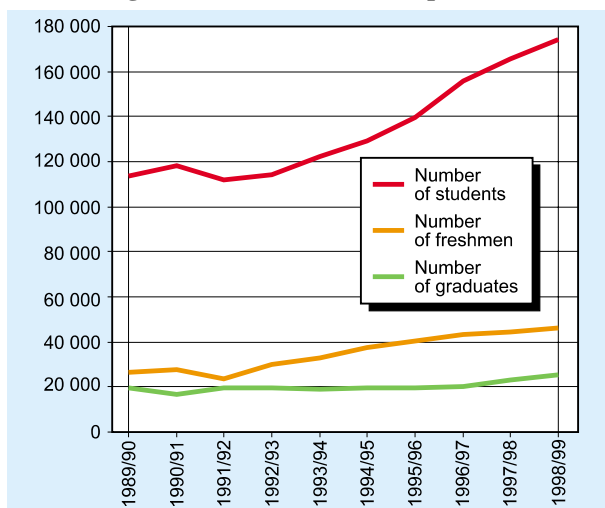
All Czech governments of the 1990s have stressed the importance of education for the economic prosperity of the country and declared their support for it. Primary and secondary education in the Czech Republic has a long tradition of good quality and in some respects is better than in many western countries, as demonstrated by the results of various international competitions between students.

Tertiary education has been facing more fundamental problems - Czech uni-

³ GDI uses the same variables as the HDI. A weighting formula is used for the gender-sensitive adjustment of life expectancy, educational attainment and income. A detailed explanation of the GDI methodology is in Human Development Report 1995

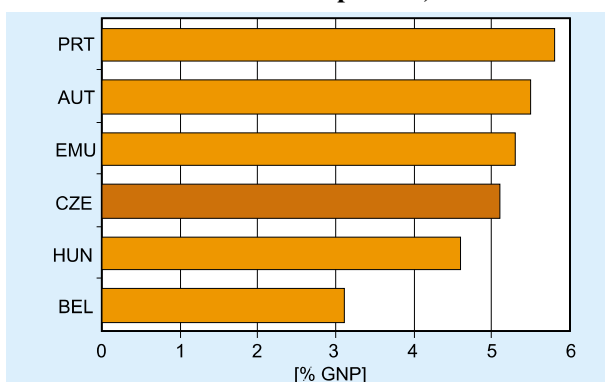
versities have for some time been able to place only about 50 percent of students wishing to enrol in a course of academic study. The opening of new universities and faculties (there was 23 public and 11 private universities in 1999) however has meant that the number of people studying at tertiary level has risen. During the school year 1998/99 over 182 thousand students were enrolled at Czech universities. The overall length of time spent in school ('school expectancy') has increased by more than one year in the last decade and now stands at 15.1 years. Despite this progress, the Czech Republic lags behind the EU average by about two years. Since the structurally changing labour market places new demands on number of workers with higher education and qualification great attention has recently been paid to analyses of institutional and qualitative changes to the education system and to finding ways to link education policy to employment policy.

Box 4.11. Number of university students and graduates in the Czech Republic, 1990-98



Source: Institute for Information on Education

Box 4.12. Public expenditures on education, international comparison, 1997

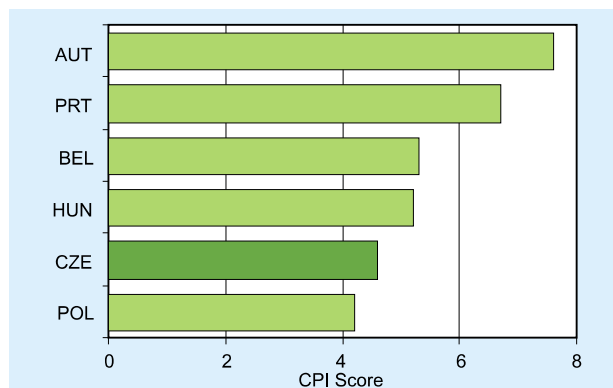


Source: OECD

The relative expenditure on education in the Czech Republic is similar to that in EU countries, which reflects the country's traditionally high level of societal interest in scholarship and education. Further development in this area is held back by financial constraints: after an initial rise, the proportion of GDP accounted for by public expenditure on education fell back to its original level. State schools of all kinds were however complemented by private ones after 1989, which suggests that overall societal expenditure on education, may have risen.

Corruption

Box 4.13. Corruption perception index, international comparison, 1999



Source: Transparency International

Note: The 1999 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (CPI) relates to perceptions of the degree of corruption as seen by business people, risk analysts and the general public. It ranges between 10 (highly clean) and 0 (highly corrupt)

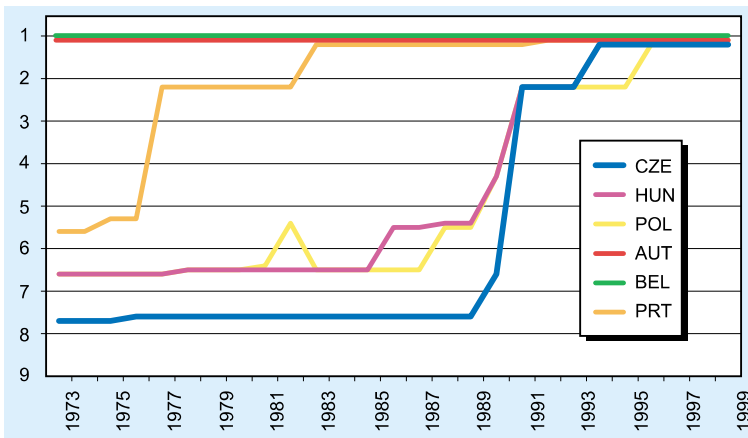
Corruption certainly is a problem in the Czech Republic, but its extent is difficult to express in a quantitative manner. Corruption existed in the former regime but some shifts can be observed as part of the transition process: from small sums paid to low level officials to cut through bureaucratic red tape or get goods shifted, to millions paid to high level officials or politicians to obtain lucrative business contracts. The importance of this problem is obvious not only from public surveys - the public is convinced that the problem exists - but also from the behaviour of foreign investors. Transparency is often absent even when the state procures public projects, goods and services. This form of criminality not only frustrates decent citizens but also obstructs economic development and deters foreign investment. The Czech Republic is trying

hard to fight this social phenomenon with new legislation and with effective enforcement. There may be some small consolation, however, in the fact that the country is not so different from the rest of the developed world.

Freedom and democracy

The June 1998 General Election confirmed that the Czech Republic's political system meets democratic standards. The election reversed the positions of the strongest political parties, and for the first time since 1989 the Government was formed by a left wing-oriented party. The Social Democrats, until then an opposition party, became the ruling party, with the right-wing parties becoming the opposition. The changes in the Government have not led to any fundamental changes in the Czech Republic's policy with regard to the EU. The November election for the Senate and the local elections again confirmed the stability of the Czech Republic's democratic institutions. The 1998 election year, characterised by a number of election campaigns, began in February 1998 when Václav Havel was elected President of the Czech Republic for a second term of office.

Box 4.14. Freedom country scores, international comparison, 1972-1999



Source: Freedom House

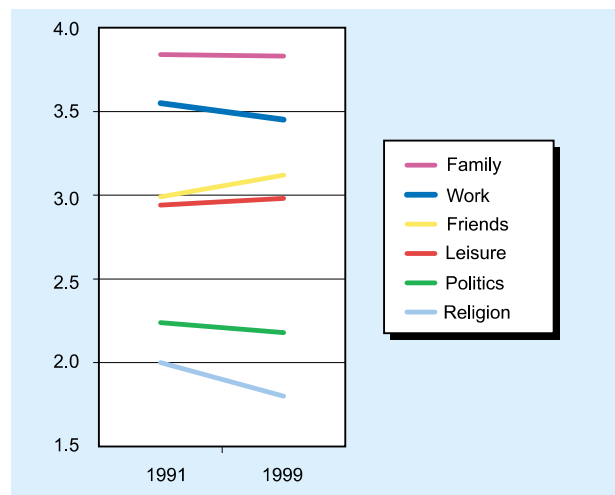
Note: Freedom House annual comparative Survey of Freedom. Country scores began in 1972 by assigning each country the status of 'Free', 'Partly Free' or 'Not Free'. This score is calculated by averaging political rights and civil liberties ratings for each country. Ratings 1-2.5 are considered free, 3-5.5 partly free, and 5.5-7 not free

This index clearly illustrates the effect of the fall of Communism in 1989, after which freedom came (almost) immediately. The Czech Republic

has existed as a separate state since 1 January 1993 (before which it was part of the former Czechoslovakia). Now, along with most of the Accession Countries, the Czech Republic is considered free according to the given criteria - a natural outcome of the effects of transition given that historical development in the Czech Republic is firmly rooted in European humanism.

Value orientation

Box 4.15. Value orientation of the Czech population, 1991 and 1999



Source: European Value Study

Note: Data are average of answers to the question 'How important in your life is the following area?', scored as follows: 'very important' = 4, 'rather important' = 3, 'not very important' = 2, and 'not important at all' = 1. Altogether 2,106 adult respondents in 1991 and 1,899 in 1999 gave valid answer to this question

Whilst the primary values of the Czech population have remained the same over the past ten years (first family, then work), there has been a change of importance from 1991 to 1999: work and politics became less important and leisure slightly more so.

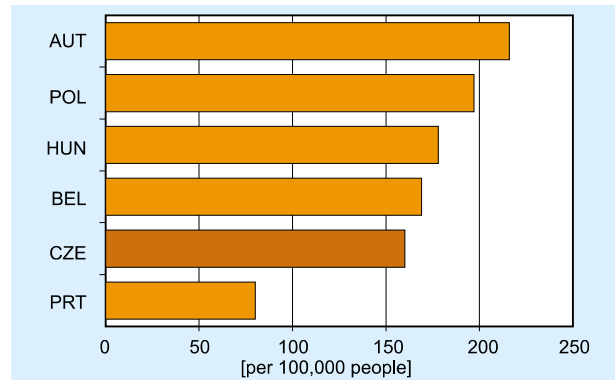
For a large majority of the population, the world of human values in communist Czechoslovakia was split between the public and private spheres. In public, loyalty to the regime was manifested and socialist ideology practised, whilst the opposite values were shared in private life, together with a retreat into family life (often in out-of-town cottages) and with the struggle for extra resources to survive at an above-average standard of living.

In the early 1990s, liberal attitudes were widely shared and most people declared themselves ready to sacrifice their time and comfort for the better economic performance of the country. The painful experience with some phenomena during the transition period (e.g. price shock in the early 1990s, some failed privatisation cases, economic problems in 1996-98) resulted in the lower score given to work and politics with greater emphasis placed on leisure and inter-personal contacts. The importance attached to religion, which was very important to people after 1989, also decreased again.

International comparisons suggest that Czechs place greater hope in security of employment and in the social sphere, and declare themselves to be less flexible in many respects than other comparable peoples. They are traditionally more atheist and anti-authoritarian than other nations, and slightly more in favour of equality and less openness.

International comparison is difficult due to lack of data. The possible comparative indicator is the number of prisoners, which places the Czech Republic to the lower end of the scale.

Box 4.17. Number of prisoners, international comparison, 1994

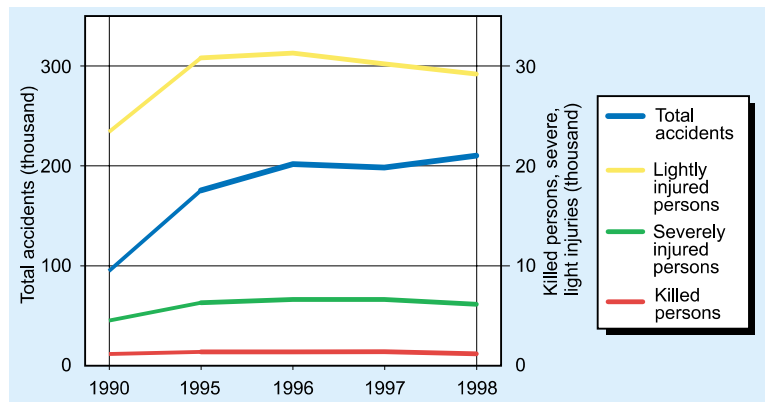


Source: UNDP

Criminality

Throughout the decade criminality has remained a major negative influence on the quality of life in the Czech Republic. The crime rate only has risen slightly overall and more criminal cases have been solved in the '90s. However, the society has faced a greater proportion of children crimes and the most serious crimes of violence (including murders) and economic crimes. A great number of illegal immigration, especially from Central and Eastern Europe, is linked to extensive activities in the shadow economy and in mafia-style activities.

Box 4.18. Traffic accidents in the Czech Republic, 1990-98



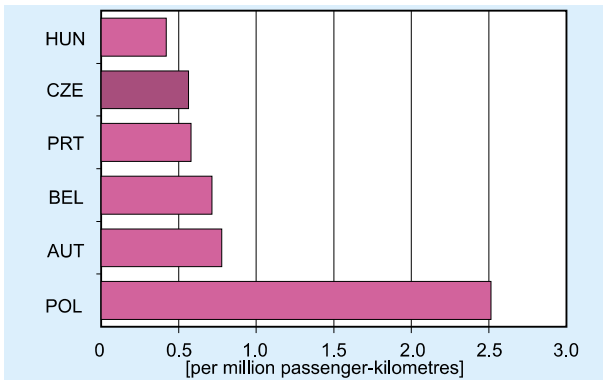
Source: Czech Statistical Office

Box 4.16. Crime in the Czech Republic, 1990-98

	Criminal cases Per thousand people	Cleared up cases %	Criminality of juveniles	Criminality of children	Number of cases			
					Homicides	Drug crimes	Reported rapes	Economical crimes
1990	-	-	-	-	246	-	890	-
1991	-	-	-	-	194	-	767	-
1992	-	-	-	-	258	-	712	-
1993	38.6	31.7	21,074	-	278	-	760	-
1994	36.0	34.8	22,160	8,280	286	-	736	18,431
1995	36.4	40.2	22,310	8,053	277	136	726	18,440
1996	38.2	41.3	22,719	10,322	267	162	678	25,431
1997	39.2	41.9	19,139	12,059	291	334	655	30,156
1998	41.4	43.5	16,730	12,086	313	419	675	36,031

Source: Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs

Box 4.19. Number of people killed and injured in traffic accidents, international comparison, 1998



Source: OECD

The fastest rising negative factor is the traffic accident rate, which is influenced by both technical and human factors. Despite increasing negative trends, the Czech roads are still safer than in most selected countries.

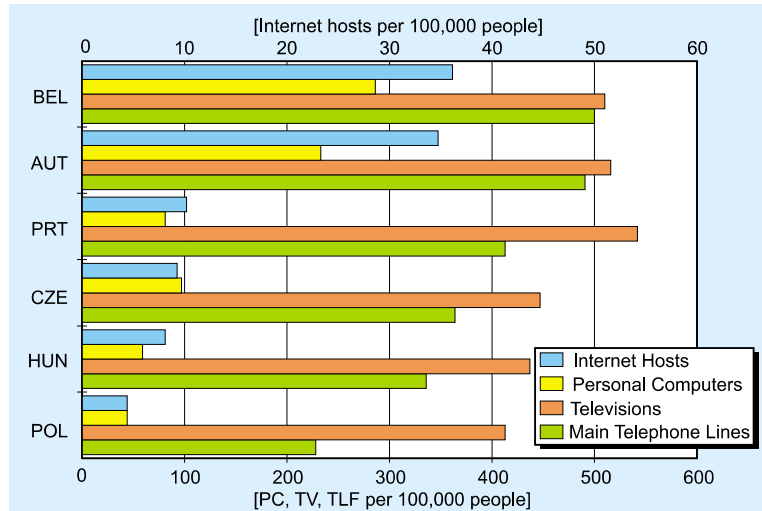
Information society

The importance of information and access to information technologies cannot be doubted: better-informed citizens are better able to participate actively in society. It is clear that the Czech Republic still lags behind the EU in terms of facilities per capita, but the trends are encouraging. The number of fixed telephone lines increased by three times from 1990 to 98 and it is now

comparable with that in EU countries; the number of mobile phone users recently reached 3 million - and since just under 2 million Czechs used mobile phones at the end of 1999, the country's mobile phone penetration rate has almost doubled in one year. The government is supporting today's information revolution: state bodies are putting an increasing number of documents on the world wide web, and secondary schools are also being given financial support to get all of them connected to the internet.

The publishing of magazines and journals in the Czech Republic has undergone a similar explosion: in 1989 there were 772 different titles, whilst in 1998 there were about 5,440 of them - seven times as many.

Box 4.20. Penetration of TVs, computers, telephones, 1998, and Internet hosts, 1999, international comparison, 1998



Source: UNDP