European, global and intercultural dimension in curriculum development

After the formation of Czechoslovakia in 1918, the area of knowledge of the world and Europe, and of the international understanding had been incorporated in the common part of the curriculum. However, over time it was affected by political and ideological circumstances. The current concept of the European dimension was incorporated into teaching at all education levels after the revolution 1989, although its formal inclusion in official documents occurred later.

The strategic documents Czech Education and Europe, i.e. the Green Paper (1999) and the National Programme for the Development of Education, the White Paper (2001) provided a major impetus for introducing the European dimension in education. In these documents, the following objectives concerning the content of education were formulated:

- the need to be able to communicate in two languages;
- education towards tolerance, understanding and respect for other nations, races and cultures;
- the introduction of new topics: European integration and multicultural education;
- the goals of and reasons for European integration.

These objectives were fully incorporated into the curricular reform that is laid down in the Education Act, which came into force in 2005. The reform resulted in new documents for education for pupils and students aged 3 to 19 years, i.e. the Framework Educational Programmes. These set out a binding framework for education and define the standard educational content for a given education stage. (For more information, see System of curricular documents [1] in Chapter 2.)

Concerning the promotion of the language education outside the curriculum framework, a significant initiative is the European Language Label award [2]. It aims to promote new initiatives in the area of teaching and learning foreign languages, and to increase awareness of them among the professional community and the general public. The award is given to projects carried out by various institutions that are involved in both formal and non-formal education of all age groups. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports [3] annually allocates some financial amounts for awarded projects.
Pre-primary education

The binding document for pre-primary education is the Framework Educational Programme for Pre-primary Education (FEP PpE) prepared by the former Research Institute of Education and approved by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports with effect from 1 March 2005 (see Steering documents and types of activities in Chapter 4). One of the framework objectives of the FEP PpE is “to learn the essential values on which our society is based”.

The educational content of the FEP PpE is organised in five educational areas; the following items relate to the international dimension:

- within the area 5.4 Child and Society – sub-objective: creating an awareness of the existence of other cultures and nationalities;
- within the area 5.5 Child and the World – sub-objectives: getting to know other cultures, developing a sense of unity with living and inanimate nature, people, society, and the planet Earth.

Teaching of foreign languages – see Primary and lower secondary education.

Legislation and Bibliography:

Framework Educational Programme for Pre-primary Education [8]

Primary and lower secondary education

The binding document for primary and lower secondary education is the Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education (FEP BE) was approved in 2004 by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. In 2013, its content was reviewed (see Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education in Chapter 5).

The European, global and intercultural dimension themes run through the entire basic education. In the FEB BE they are included:
1. as a cross-curricular theme
2. in different educational areas.

1. Cross-curricular themes

The Framework Educational Programme makes suggestion how to implement the cross-curricular themes in individual educational areas during basic education, defines the theme’s required contribution to the development of the pupil’s personality (knowledge, skills and abilities, as well as attitudes and values) and stipulates individual thematic areas.

a) Cross-curricular theme Education towards thinking in European and global contexts

A substantial part of this cross-curricular theme consists of educating future European citizens, developing awareness of the European identity while at the same time respecting the national identity, and supporting traditional European values as:

- humanism
- free will
- morality
- law enforcement and personal responsibility together with rational reasoning
- critical thinking and creativity.

The thematic areas of the cross-curricular theme Education towards thinking in European and global contexts:

- We are interested in Europe and the world – family stories, experiences from Europe and the world; places, events and artefacts in close vicinity that are related to Europe; our neighbours in Europe; how children live in other countries; folk literature, customs and traditions of European nations.
- We are discovering Europe and the world - our country and Europe; European countries; Europe and the world; international meetings; national and European symbols; the Europe Day; life of Europeans and the lifestyle of European families; young Europeans’ lifestyles and education.
- We are Europeans - roots and origin of the European civilization; key milestones of European history; European integration; institutions of the European Union and their functioning; four freedoms and their impact on the life of an individual; what connects and what divides Europe; international organisations and their contribution to solving problems of children and youth.

b) Cross-curricular theme Multicultural education

This cross-curricular theme, which includes intercultural dimension, familiarises pupils with the diversity of various cultures and their traditions and values. It develops a sense for justice, solidarity and tolerance, and guides pupils towards understanding and respecting the constantly increasing level of sociocultural diversity.

Multicultural Education permeates all educational areas. It is particularly close to the educational areas of:

- Language and language communication
- People and society
- Information and communication technologies
- Arts and culture
- People and health
- People and nature (primarily the educational field Geography)

The thematic areas of the cross-curricular theme Multicultural education are:

- Cultural differences
- Human relations
- Ethnic origin
- Multiculturalism
- Principles of social reconciliation and solidarity

For more, see the FEP BE [10].

2. Educational areas

From the nine educational areas of the FEP BE, teaching about Europe is included in the following ones:

ISCED 1 (first stage of basic school (základní škola))

- educational area People and their World (thematic circle People around us).

The FEP BE aims, among other things to guide pupils towards:

- recognising and understanding differences between people
- understanding different cultures,
- understanding the significance and the nature of help and solidarity
- acting on the basis of jointly created and accepted or commonly applied rules of coexistence,
- fulfilling duties and common tasks.

Within the subject matter, the area also focuses on Europe and the world - continents, European countries, the EU, and travelling.

ISCED 2 (second stage of basic school)

- educational area People and Society, especially the educational fields Education for Citizenship, thematic circle International relations, a global world).

The expected outcomes of the educational area are, among others:

- describing the impact of the Czech Republic’s accession to the EU on the everyday lives of citizens, providing examples of the rights of Czech nationals within the EU and possible ways of exercising these rights
- naming several important international organisations and communities with which the Czech Republic has a relationship, assessing their importance in the international context and describing the advantages of cooperation among countries, including ensuring state defence and participation in foreign missions
- providing the examples of manifestations of globalisation, comparing their
positive and negative features
- mentioning some contemporary global problems, expressing one’s own opinions on them and describing their main causes and possible consequences for humankind
- explaining the links between global and local problems, providing examples of possible manifestations of global problems and their solution at the local level – in the municipality, region.

- educational area People and Nature (educational field Geography: thematic circles The social and economic environment and The Czech Republic)

Among the expected outcomes there are:
- comparing countries in the world and their interest associations based on their similarities and differences
- giving examples of the Czech Republic’s participation and involvement in world, international and supernational institutions, organisations and associations of states.

Teaching of foreign languages


Legislation and Bibliography:

Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education [16]

Upper secondary education

Upon successful completion of an upper secondary education it is possible to achieve a level of:
- upper secondary education with a Maturita examination (general education at gymnázia and vocational education at secondary technical schools)
- upper secondary education with a VET certificate (vocational education)
- (upper) secondary education (vocational education).
General education

The general upper secondary education is provided in the educational fields of gymnázia. Graduates attain the upper secondary education with a Maturita examination.

In terms of content and structure, the Framework Educational Programme for Secondary General Education (gymnázium) is linked to the Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education (for more information see General education in Chapter 6).

Thus, the European, global and intercultural dimension theme is there also included as a part of:

1. the cross-curricular themes
2. several educational areas.


a) Cross curricular theme Education towards thinking in European and global contexts which:

- builds on the existing educational and life experience of pupils
- enriches, deepens, and systematises knowledge of European and global processes
- reinforces the value of upper secondary general education
- provides a critical view of the globalisation and developmental processes as currently perceived in the modern world.

The cross-curricular theme includes the following thematic circles:

- Globalisation and development processes
- Global problems, their causes and consequences
- Humanitarian aid and international developmental assistance
- We live in Europe
- Education in Europe and the world

It is recommended to integrate this cross-curricular theme especially into the educational area:

- People and society (the educational field Basics of Civics and
Social Sciences, thematic area: International Relations, the Global World; and the educational field History

- Language and Language Communication
- People and Nature (educational field Geography, thematic areas: Natural Environment, Social Environment, Environment, Regions).

It is stated in the Framework Educational Programme for Secondary General Education (gymnázia) that the whole framework educational programme provides an opportunity to implement this cross-curricular theme.

b) Cross-curricular theme Multicultural Education which focuses mainly on:

- knowledge and understanding of cultural differences between people of different origins,
- interpersonal relations,
- intercultural communication and adaptation to life in a multicultural society.

Special emphasis is placed on the situation in Europe.

Thematic circles are:

- Basic issues of socio-cultural differences
- Psychosocial aspects of interculturalism
- Relationship to the multilingual situation and cooperation between people from diverse cultural environments.

b) Cross-curricular theme Multicultural Education which focuses mainly on:

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Thematic circles are:

- Basic issues of socio-cultural differences
- Psychosocial aspects of interculturalism
- Relationship to the multilingual situation and cooperation between people from diverse cultural environments.

From the perspective of the European and global dimension, the thematic circle The environment of my region and the Czech Republic is important within this cross-curricular theme. It addresses, among others, which legal provisions are the most important within the environmental area and how they are influenced by the European Union.

2. Educational areas of the Framework Educational Programme for Secondary General
Education (gymnázia)

European dimension and global issues are a part of the subject matter and expected outcomes of the:

a) educational area People and society

Within this educational area, the European and global dimension is a part of two educational fields:

- of the educational field Basics of Civics and Social Sciences, thematic circle International relations, the global world

**Expected outcomes** of this thematic circle are:

- explaining the reasons for European integration and assessing its significance for the development of Europe identifying the roles of the EU authorities and providing examples of their activities
- assessing the impact of the integration of countries into the EU on the everyday life of its citizens, giving examples of how physical and legal entities may exercise their rights within the EU
- providing the examples of activities of some important international organisations and explaining how these activities influence the operation of the global community, evaluating the significance of the Czech Republic’s participation
- giving the examples of institutions to which one can turn to if problems arise during the stay abroad
- assessing the manifestations of globalisation, providing examples of current global problems, analysing their causes and indicating their possible consequences

- of the educational field History

Within the expected outcomes of the thematic circle Modern period II - contemporary history there is a theme:

- describing the mechanisms and means for the progressive unification of Europe on the basis of democratic principles, explaining human rights in the context of European cultural traditions; knowledge of the basic institutions of unifying Europe, the scope of their activities and functioning

b) educational area People and nature

Within this educational area, the European and global dimension is a part of the Educational field Geography

- the thematic circle Social environment

A part of the subject matter of this thematic circle is:
• socio-economic sphere – socio-geographic systems, geographic aspects of wealth and poverty, globalisation

Within the expected outcomes of this thematic circle there is also:

• analysing the main racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural, and political specifics in terms of ways of life and standard of living in the various cultural regions of the world

• thematic circle Regions

A part of the subject matter of this thematic circle is:

• macro-regions of the world – centres, peripheries, model region – model problems with an emphasis on Europe and the European Union

Within the expected outcomes of this thematic circle there is also:

• locating macro-regions of the world on the maps, defining their borders, evaluating their natural, cultural, political, and economic properties and comparing these macro-regions

Vocational education

Vocational education can be divided into three educational pathways:

1. upper secondary education with Maturita examination
2. upper secondary education with VET certificate
3. upper secondary education

Framework educational programmes have also been prepared for individual fields of education of all the above-mentioned pathways of secondary vocational education (for more information see the chapter 6 Upper Secondary and Post-Secondary Non-Tertiary Education [17]). There are more than 200 of these framework educational programmes. The requirements for the content and the results of education are there divided into two parts: the general part, which is largely similar for each of the three above-mentioned educational pathways, and the vocational part, which is prepared separately for each educational field.

The global issues and the intercultural dimension:

a) are a part of the objectives of upper secondary vocational education as such, in particular, for example, the objective Learning together, within which education should aim at:

• building respect for living and non-living nature, for protecting and improving the natural and other environment, and for understanding the global problems of the world
• deepening the personal, national, and civic identity of pupils, their readiness to protect this identity, but also to respect the identity of other people
- to free pupils from prejudice, xenophobia, intolerance, racism, aggressive nationalism, ethnic, religious, and other intolerance in relation to other people.

**b)** pervade into the **key competences** set for the upper secondary vocational education, especially in the area called ‘**Civic competences and cultural awareness**’. Graduates should:

- through education, come to the recognition of the values and attitudes essential for living in a democratic society
- maintain these values and attitudes
- act in accordance with sustainable development and
- promote the values of national, European and world culture.

**c)** are a part of the **cross-curricular themes** in all framework education programmes for upper secondary vocational education:

- **Citizens in the democratic society** – pupils should be encouraged to be willing to engage in matters of public interest for the benefit of people in other countries and on other continents
- **People and the environment** – the main goal of which is to lead pupils to understand the links between different environmental phenomena and human activities, between local, regional, and global environmental problems.

**d)** are included in the framework education programmes for upper secondary vocational education as a **subject matter**.

E.g. in the educational area **Social sciences** (which is part of the curriculum of upper secondary education with *Maturita* examination and upper secondary education with VET certificate), or in the **Basics of Civics** (secondary education without VET certificate), where part of the curriculum are multicultural coexistence, races, nations, nationalities, the majority and minority in society and globalisation, or in the educational area **Biological and ecological education** (which is part of the curriculum of most fields of upper secondary vocational education) involving global problems on Earth in the subject matter.

### 1. Upper secondary education with *Maturita* examination

In the fields of upper secondary education with *Maturita* examination, the topics relating specifically to the European dimension are similar for all programmes of the fields of this education and are included in the following educational areas:

- **Social sciences**

In the **expected outcomes** it is set that pupils should be able to:

- describe developments in advanced democracies and developments in European integration
- clarify the position of the Czech Republic in Europe and in the
• characterise the EU's current objectives and assess its policy.

**Aesthetic education**

Education in this area should aim to ensure that pupils promote and have a positive attitude towards the values of local, national, European and world culture.

**Economic education**

The *expected outcomes* indicate that pupils:

- understand the importance of European integration
- assess the economic impact of EU membership.

2. Secondary education with VET certificate

In case of the fields of upper secondary education with VET certificate, the topics relating to the European dimension are represented in the following educational areas:

**Social sciences**

*Expected outcomes* include:

- explaining which supranational groupings the Czech Republic belongs to and what obligations it entails
- describing why the EU exists and what the obligations and benefits of EU membership accrue to our citizens.

**Aesthetic education**

Education in this area aims, among other things, to ensure that pupils promote the values of local, national, European and world culture and have a positive relationship with them.

3. Secondary education

For secondary education, the topics relating to the European dimension are listed in the educational area:

**Social sciences**

In the *expected outcomes* it is set that pupils should be able to:

- describe why the EU exists and what the obligations and benefits of EU membership accrue to our citizens.
Teaching of foreign languages


Legislation and Bibliography:

Framework Educational Programme for Pre-primary Education[8]
Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education[10]
Framework Educational Programme for Secondary General Education[21]
Framework Educational Programme for Bilingual Secondary General School[22]
Framework Educational Programmes for Vocational Upper Secondary Education[23]

Partnerships and networks

Many schools establish cooperation and partnerships with foreign educational institutions within the European Erasmus+ programme (partnership programmes[24]). Within Erasmus+, the e-twinning activity, which focuses on online cooperation between schools, is carried out.

Virtual networks

Via the Centre for International Cooperation in Education[25], the Czech Republic – together with 30 other countries – is a member of the European Schoolnet (EUN)[26], a European association promoting the use of ICT in education, innovative teaching of mathematics, science and technical subjects, and supporting cooperation between schools in this area. The activities, projects, competitions and campaigns are mainly initiated by the European Commission. Among other things, the EUN provides the Czech Republic with an opportunity to share good practices in the introduction of ICT, and the teaching of mathematics, science and technical fields. The projects support e.g. the introduction of ICT into instruction at basic schools (základní školy) and upper secondary schools (střední školy).

Central European programmes

ACES – Academy of Central European Schools[27] – is a project that aims to create a well-functioning network of cooperating schools. The project was initiated and is financially supported by the Austrian Foundation “Die Erste Österreichische Sparkasse Foundation”. In 2006, it started as a pilot project with the participation of Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and
Slovenia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Montenegro, Bulgaria, Moldova and Kosovo joined the project in 2008. Pupils aged 12 to 17 years participate in bilateral and multilateral projects under the supervision of their teachers. All communication within the project is in English. For more details, see the website of the Academy of Central European Schools, including an overview of projects for the current school year.

**Cross-border/bilateral cooperation**

The Czech Republic has implemented the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities, which was adopted by the Council of Europe in Madrid on 21 May 1980, and bilateral agreements on cross-border cooperation concluded with the governments of neighbouring countries. Within these agreements, 13 eurorregions have already been created (Neisse [28], Elbe/Labe [29], Ore Mountains [30], Egrensis [31], Bavarian forest – Bohemian Forest / Šumava [32], Glacensis [33], Cieszyn Silesia [34], Praděd [35], Beskydy Mountains [36], Silesia [37], White Carpathians [38], Pomoravi – Záhorie – Weinviertel [39], Silva Nortica [40]). There is a number of agreements between the Euronregions in the border areas of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany, Poland and Austria. Similarly, there is a cooperation between various Czech and European cities. An example of cooperation in the field of education is the cooperation between schools and universities in the Czech-Bavarian border areas. The offer of exchange programmes for pupils/students of all types of schools is expanding. School partnerships are also developing in the context of cross-border cooperation.

Another example of cooperation is a two-nation bilingual Czech-German educational cycle at the Friedrich Schiller Gymnasium (general upper secondary school) [41] in Pirna, which was launched in the school year 1998/99 (Communication of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The study programme is intended for pupils in the 7th to 12th year of the school attendance and has two specialisations: Languages (Czech and German) and Mathematics and Science. Education is organised in one class with 15 Czech and 15 German pupils. The study programme is completed with a Maturita examination (maturitní zkouška) that is recognised in all EU countries. The programme is funded by the Czech Republic and Germany. See also the website of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports [42].

The teaching of languages and the European dimension are the focus of the multilingual European Middle School [43] (EMS) in Vienna, which is intended for pupils from Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary (for more information see the EMS website).

The Governments of the Czech Republic and Poland established a Czech-Polish Forum that aims to promote bilateral projects, which can be implemented e.g. in the area of education, research, youth mobility and cross-border cooperation. The projects that were supported in 2016 are showcased on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic [44].

The activities of the Czech-German Youth Exchange Coordination Centres Tandem [45] are an example of bilateral cooperation based on an international agreement between the Czech Republic and Germany. The Coordination Centres have been in existence since 1997 in Plzeň and Regensburg. Their objectives include providing consulting services to governmental and non-governmental organisations that organise Czech-German exchanges of young people, pupils and students, encouraging new forms and areas of cooperation and exchange, supporting exchange projects and assisting the participating institutions (schools, organisations, youth initiatives) in deepening their mutual contacts. For more details on the activities see the Tandem website.
Legislation and Bibliography:

Communication No 309/1998 Coll., Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Source URL:

Links
[3] https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/institutions-7_en#MSMT
[9] https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/teaching-and-learning-single-structure-education-7_en#5_2_1_1_Framework_educational_programme_for_basic_education
[10] https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/legislation-17_en#RVP_ZV
[13] https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/institutions-7_en#Rada_vlady_pro_narodnostni_mensiny
#6_2_1_1_General_education

#6_2_1_1_3_Language_education

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