

## QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: WITHOUT INFORMATION, THERE IS NO (EFFECTIVE) MANAGEMENT



In the Country-specific Recommendations from June 2012, the Council called on the Czech government to make better use of human capital and create innovation-based growth. The Czech Republic was invited to establish a transparent and clearly defined system of quality assessment in higher education and research institutions and also to ensure sustainable funding interlinked with results of quality assessment. In the Czech Republic, tertiary education encounters decline in quality and increase in the number of master's graduates in the recent years. These reasons stand behind the recast of the Czech Higher Education Act. "The way towards improving the quality of higher education leads primarily through better information about quality of courses, transparency of the evaluation process and improved management of universities and quality of academia staff", agreed speakers at the CEBRE debate organized in Prague on 18th December 2012. Information on quality of universities and various programmes should be available

online on a single webpage, which would help students to better orientate in the maze of studying programmes. Christele Duvieusart, European Commission's expert responsible for analysis of national education systems both in the Czech and Slovak Republic, noted that the changes in quality of tertiary education under preparation in the Czech Republic seem to go in the right direction and are in line with the Council recommendations from June 2012. Karolína Gondková, Director of Department of Higher Education of Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, added that the changing rules should set the ground for creation of profiles of individual universities by increasing their autonomy and accountability, setting up transparent funding rules and reducing administrative burden. Miloš Rathouský from the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic, who stressed that universities need to focus more on the practical side of studying programmes and employability of student on the labour market, concluded the debate.

## EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP: MORE THAN JUST THE RIGHT TO TRAVEL



This year, the European Union celebrates 20th anniversary of the creation of European citizenship. This is one of the main reasons why the year 2013 was selected as a European Year of Citizens. The goal of the European Year of Citizens is to raise awareness among general public about its rights and also to increase participation in the next European Parliament's elections taking place in mid-2014. Free movement is one of the four main freedoms of EU citizens though the level of migration of workers in Europe is very low. Insufficient awareness of workers' rights, complicated recognition of professional qualifications, limited access to job vacancies in public sector, discrimination of cross boarder workers and, of course, the language barrier can be the reasons for low mobility. EURES and SOLVIT are two tools that can help to change this situation. EURES offers easy access to information about jobs in different

member states and currently over 1 million job vacancies are available in this network. SOLVIT offers free out-of-court settlement of disputes related to the EU internal market. SOLVIT deals with approximately 1,300 cases annually and its success rate is about 90%. Besides the right of free movement, European citizens also have the right to vote and to be elected as well as the right to receive consular assistance from another Member state embassy in the place of their stay, where their home state is not represented. A new instrument to enforce the rights of EU citizens is the European Citizens' Initiative, which allows 1 million EU citizens from at least 7 member states to suggest to the Commission new legislative proposal focused on a specific area. These are conclusions of CEBRE debate that took place on 8th January 2013 in the European House in Prague.

CEBRE was founded in 2002 by the three most important Czech business organizations - Czech Chamber of Commerce, Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic, Confederation of Employers' and Entrepreneurs' Associations of the Czech Republic with kind support of the Ministry of Industry and Trade via its Trade promotion agency CzechTrade.

[www.komora.cz](http://www.komora.cz)[www.spcr.cz](http://www.spcr.cz)[www.kzps.cz](http://www.kzps.cz)[www.czechtrade.cz](http://www.czechtrade.cz)

## News FLASH

### >CZECH INDUSTRY DRIVEN BY EXPORTS

At the end of 2012, Czech industry experienced a decline and the situation is not about to change during the first months of 2013. On the other hand, foreign trade balance reached a surplus of 35.5 billion CZK. An increase in new contracts is expected to last this year, especially in the sector of chemicals production, engineering and energy production.

### >EMISSION PERMITS TO MODERNIZE CZECH ENERGY SECTOR

The Commission allowed the Czech Republic to use money from CO2 emission permits to renovate Czech energy infrastructure. Almost 1.878 million EUR will support projects focused on building biogas plants, waste management facilities, and overall sector modernization.

### >EASIER WAY TO RUSSIA

Access of Czech companies to Russian, Belarus and Kazakhstan market should be eased by a qualified assistance to obtain required documents for export of goods and services provided within a project launched by the Czech Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Commerce and industry of the Russian Federation.

# Youth Unemployment: Will youth guarantees help to find jobs for young people?



Youth unemployment is rising every month in Europe. While the EU average at the end of the last year was approximately 24 per cent, in some countries, like Spain, the youth unemployment stepped over 50 per cent. All in all, there are almost 6 million people under the age of 25 without a job. As a reaction to that, the European Commission proposed a new set of measures called "Youth Employment Package" based on four key initiatives, one of them being Youth guarantee schemes. This proposal basically guarantees to every person under the age of 25 that within four months after being unemployed or after leaving formal

education, he or she will be offered a job, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship. The Commission proposes that such guarantee schemes could be co-financed by the European Social Fund. In mid-January, the European Parliament said quite a strong yes to the scheme, when 546 MEPs voted in favour of the proposal. While most of the MEPs support the idea of having an EU-wide system of apprenticeship provision, especially Socialists and Democrats, those not in favour criticize it as a populist proposal that will further increase the already high pressure on national budgets. In addition, opponents are convinced that

actions to tackle youth unemployment should be taken at national level with the involvement of national governments and should be tailored to specific conditions of labour markets in each country. In general, European business associations welcome the proposal on youth guarantees. European businesses already play an important role when it comes to provision of apprenticeships and traineeships. However, if the EU wants to evolve this idea into a viable and long-term efficient system, it needs to cooperate more with businesses, especially on the national level, and a coordinating role of governments is also required. Nevertheless, business associations also stress that financial commitments required by member states might be a bottleneck. The Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic also stresses the need of bigger flexibility of the guarantee schemes. In its position, it indicates that incentives to tackle youth unemployment should be in line with economic situation of individual member states. It also highlights that certain motivational incentives to hire an apprentice or a trainee should be introduced, which would lead to increased cooperation of businesses and young people. Now, it is on EU employment ministers to decide.

## EESC CORNER: HOW TO SUPPORT TALENTS IN EUROPE?

**Europe has a crucial mission: to prevent the brain drain whereby more able people leave for other parts of the world in which to use their talents.**

*The Employers' group of the European economic and social committee has stepped up its activity in recent years to support closer and better ties between education systems and the needs of the world of work in order to increase workers' employability and adaptability, provide employers with better access to skilled workers and facilitate the transition from school to working life. In this context the last plenary session in January 2013 adopted an own-initiative opinion "Unleashing the potential of children and young people with high intellectual abilities". The current education policies of the EU Member States focus strongly on catering for diversity among students, pledging to provide each student with the educational care they need to realise their full potential. As part of the efforts aimed at all students requiring specific educational support, it is necessary to increase the resources currently devoted to those with high intellectual abilities. Improving the care provided for highly able students involves various separate aspects: initial detection; psychological, educational and social assessment to confirm or refute the presence of high abilities; and educational care in its true sense, which can be provided through both formal and non-formal education.*

*Europe has a crucial mission: to prevent the brain drain whereby more able people leave for other parts of the world in which to use their talents. The*

*opinion is delivering the following recommendations:*

- *nurture the development and potential of children and young people with high abilities throughout the various stages and forms of their education;*
- *foster education and lifelong learning;*
- *give greater consideration to each Member State's existing models for and experience in working with highly gifted children*
- *detect, in the workplace, those workers (particularly young workers) who are able and willing to develop their intellectual capabilities and contribute to innovation, and give them the opportunity to further their education*
- *support the initial and ongoing training of teaching staff regarding the typical characteristics of highly able students*
- *support schemes and procedures for student exchanges and visits abroad*
- *harness opportunities for exchanging information and good practices on detecting and caring for gifted students*



Vladimíra Drbalová  
Vice-Chair of the Section  
for Employment,  
Social Affairs and Citizenship  
European Economic  
and Social Committee



### MILAN CABRNOCH

Member of the European Parliament's Committee on Employment and Social Affairs:

"I fully realize the importance of working experiences for young people, but I am against using a youth guarantee programme, which will only generate artificial jobs. In addition, it will create another burden on national budgets."

### CEBRE CALENDAR:

- CEBRE consultations with Czech companies – 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> February 2013 (Prague)
- CEBRE debate on "Commercial Procurement in the field of R&D" – 12<sup>th</sup> February 2013 (Prague)
- CEBRE debate on "Plans for transport infrastructure investment 2014-2020" – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013 (Prague)
- CEBRE debate on "REACH revision" – 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 (Prague)

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IN BRUSSELS!



CEBRE – Czech Business Representation, protects the interests of the Czech business community in relation to EU institutions, informs Czech businesses about EU legislation affecting them, trains Czech entrepreneurs in Brussels and represents Czech business associations at European business federations. Contact: Czech House, 60 Rue du Trône, 1050 Brussels, Tel: +32 2 502 0766/+32 2 502 8091, e-mail: brussels@cebre.cz, www.cebre.cz