

Czech

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BUSINESSES AND SCHOOLS MUST ANTICIPATE LABOUR MARKET NEEDS TOGETHER



Czech employers suffer from lack of skilled workers. On the other hand, young graduates do not find jobs that match their qualifications and have to accept jobs that do not meet their expectations and unfold their talent. The New Skills Agenda for Europe adopted by the European Commission in June, aims to equip citizens from early youth with a wide range of skills. Better anticipation of labour market requirements and cooperation between schools and employers could help recent graduates gain a position on the labour market corresponding to their qualifications, agreed the speakers of the debate that took place on the 8th September in the European House in Prague. Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports welcomes the agenda, especially its focus on the entire range of skills and specific course of action. According to Petr Černíkovský from the Ministry, the title "Skills Guarantee" is not well chosen, because without sufficient

motivation of individuals the acquisition of skills cannot be guaranteed. Additionally, he does not agree with heading towards the EQF level 4, which is not feasible in the Czech conditions due to the large proportion of people with vocational education without secondary school certificate. That viewpoint is shared by the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic, which also points out that the primary part of the agenda is to link digital skills with the development of STEM education. According to the Confederation it is necessary to promote digital skills at all stages of education and training. "E-apprenticeship will play an important role and should be the focal point of the Coalition for Digital Skills and Jobs", stressed Vladimíra Drbalová from the Confederation. Another key measure to ensure the right skills are acquired is the involvement of companies in vocational education, both in the creation of educational programs as well as in their implementation.

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.



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MEPs CORNER

"The Commission has incorporated many of the recommendations I presented in the report on the establishment of a competitive EU labour market for the 21st century into the New Skills Agenda. I am therefore pleased that the cooperation between the European institutions functions correctly and that we're working together towards the same objective, namely of a competitive Europe."

Martina Dlabajová (ANO 2011/ALDE),
Member of Committee on Employment and Social Affairs



THE CZECH REPUBLIC MUST BE READY TO BLOCK CERTAIN TOPICS IN THE EU

The principle of the same pay for the same work in the same place contradicts the rules of market economy and distorts the European consistency. The Czech government must use all the possible means in order not to make this proposal come true. The Government has to set its priorities for negotiations in the EU and must be ready to support some topics as well as strongly refuse others. These are the conclusions of a meeting of representatives of the Czech Chamber of Commerce, Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic and Confederation of Employers' and Entrepreneurs' Associations with Czech Members of the European Parliament that took place on the 20th of September in Prague. Czech hauliers have been facing many obstacles from the western member states in recent

years. Representatives of Czech businesses agree that these obstacles clearly oppose the principles of the internal market. "We consider the transport sector very specific and that's why the sector should be completely excluded from the scope of the Posting of Workers Directive", said Vladimír Dlouhý, President of the Czech Chamber of Commerce. Energy issues were also discussed. "We call on the European Parliament to well consider its extreme challenges leading towards energy efficiency increase. The proposal of 40% reduction of energy consumption by 2030 isn't technologically possible in a variety of industrial sectors and would mean unacceptable burden for the economy", said President of the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic Jaroslav Hanák.

News FLASH

> CZECH AND POLISH COOPERATION ON ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

The Czech Republic and Poland have agreed to continue their cooperation on the gas pipeline project Stork II. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2020 and will contribute to enhancing energy security and to the development of the gas market in Central and Eastern Europe.

> CZECH AND SLOVAK PARTNERSHIP ON EU MATTERS

Governments of the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic signed a memorandum on mutual cooperation at the end of September. Among other topics, both governments agreed to coordinate their positions on EU matters and enforce them in the EU.

> COMPETITIVENESS AND INNOVATION PROGRAMME A HUGE SUCCESS

The Czech Operational Programme Enterprise Competitiveness and Innovation (OP PIK), the first Operational Programme approved for the period 2014-2020 is hugely popular. Since late April, 4,300 applications worth 36.5 billion CZK (approximately 1.3 billion EUR) have been received.

DON'T CONDEMN THE BLUE CARD

The Blue Card (The Directive on the Conditions of entry and residence of non-EU nationals for the purposes of highly skilled employment) was adopted in 2009. Since then the directive should have attracted highly qualified workers from around the world, should have challenged the EU labour market bottlenecks and should have supported competitiveness and economic growth. However, the Blue Card has not come up to expectations and has showed many imperfections. The European Commission sees the reason for that in huge variety of similar national schemes for attracting qualified and talented workers from third countries. The June Commission proposal for revision of the directive that should tackle the shortcomings and broaden its scope is based on abolishing these national schemes. That created negative reactions from the majority of member states that would want to keep negotiating forever. Many national parliaments (including the Czech one) have already issued yellow

cards for breaking the subsidiarity principle and won't be held back even by the recent non-success in the case of Posting of Workers directive. At the same time, this wave of concentrated resistance against the Blue Card has put shadow on many improvements that could have turned it, combined with national schemes and various EU schemes for intercompany movement of workers or for seasonal workers, into a legitimate migration tool and cover the changing needs of companies operating in the EU. Employers also strongly disagree with the idea of cancelling the national schemes. Contrary to national governments, however, they think that even if there are issues with the principle of subsidiarity, all the flexible points of the proposal that is discussed in the Council that will broaden the scope of people applying for the Blue Card, increase their mobility among the EU, make the wages criteria more flexible, enable recognition of professional



qualifications as alternative to school qualifications, fasten and make the procedures more effective and enable easier access of companies to highly qualified workers. The business community supports the principle of proportionality and thinks that with certain minor adjustments, the proposal of the Blue Card directive will comply with the principle.

Vladimíra Drbalová,
Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic

EESC CORNER: eGOVERNMENT ACTION PLAN 2016-2020 – ACCELERATING THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF GOVERNMENT



The digital transformation of government is a key element to the success of the Single Market; helping to remove existing digital barriers and preventing further fragmentation arising in the context of the modernisation of public administrations. The previous eGovernment Action Plan 2011-2015 led to the development of technological enablers that are key to facilitate access to and use of public services. Today, eGovernment is more than just taking up technologies. Modern administrations should deliver public services for citizens and businesses, designed by citizens and businesses and on the demand of citizens and businesses.

The new eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020 aims:

- to modernise public administration,
- to achieve the digital internal market, and
- to engage more with citizens and businesses to deliver high quality services.

The Action Plan will support coordination and collaboration at European Union level. Through the joint efforts between Member States and the Commission, the availability and take-up of eGovernment services can be increased, resulting

in faster, cheaper and more user-oriented digital public services.

The EESC supports the proposals aimed at speeding up implementation of efficient, interoperable and universally accessible eGovernment.

eGovernment can only work if other prerequisites, such as the provision of an efficient network and digital services, universal, affordable access and adequate digital training for users of all levels and ages, are met. Whilst it is supposed to become the default means of communication in the medium or long term, traditional means of communicating with public administrations (postal delivery, personal contact, telephone) should be maintained for members of the public who wish to use them. As regards the "once only" principle, according to which individuals and businesses should not have to supply the same information to public administrations more than once, the EESC notes that there are still unresolved legal and organisational problems and calls on the Commission to launch a pilot scheme in this area. It also proposes making provision for the "whole-of-government approach", which involves collaboration between the different public bodies that extends beyond their respective fields of competence with a view to providing the

public with a combined response from a single body. The EESC also regrets that the "no legacy" principle, which involves renewing IT systems and technologies in public administrations so as to keep pace with technological developments, does not feature among the adopted principles. It insists, under the principle of "openness and transparency", on citizens and businesses having an explicit right to delete their personal data (right to be forgotten) and urges the Commission to submit a proposal for a secure European archive and online document exchange system.



Marie Zvolská,
Group I, EESC

CEBRE CALENDAR:

- **5th October:** CEBRE co-organises a workshop on Investment Plan for Europe (Brno)
- **13-14th October:** Czech business mission to Belgium (Brussels, Antwerp)
- **15th November:** Sectoral seminar "Water, Wastewater & Waste Management" (Brussels)

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CZECH & SLOVAK
LEADERS

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