

# *ANNUAL PROGRAMME REPORT*

## *FM14-21*

Czech Republic

CZ-EDUCATION Education

2020

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2020, the programme CZ-EDUCATION continued with the implementation of the projects selected in the first round of Calls 2018 and with the project selection from the second round of Calls published in Autumn 2019. Publication of the third round of Calls took place in late 2020, as planned. In addition, the guidance and support to the running projects were provided according to the plan. Out of 19 projects approved in the first round of Calls for proposals, eight projects were completed in 2020. Evaluation of the five final project reports is still in the process. 11 projects are still running and the final results will be available in autumn 2021. The second round of Calls for proposals was launched in autumn 2019 and the submission deadlines were in February/March 2020. 38 projects were selected and the project activities started in August 2020. First results of these projects will be available in 2021. The third round of Calls duly announced on 6 November 2020 is currently open for proposals, with the deadlines in February/March 2021.

Recent changes and developments in the national policy context and the national priorities may have a positive impact on the implementation of the program CZ-EDUCATION, especially the adoption of the Strategy for Education Policy in the Czech Republic 2030+.

On the other hand, the realization of the projects has been significantly affected by the restrictions related to the spread of COVID-19. Mobility projects (Outcome 2) and vocational education projects (Outcome 3) are the most affected. The Project Promoters reacted flexibly and quickly. Many project activities were promptly adapted to the on-line form. However, some activities cannot be realized on-line and especially within the mobility projects, interest in on-line mobilities has so far been low. The Project Promoters prefer to prolong the project period, to postpone the mobilities and realize them later, physically.

As a reaction to the COVID-19 restrictions, the Programme Operator and the Project Promoters had to adapt their planned activities to the on-line form. Even though the experience with on-line tools was small, the ultimate feedback was positive. In some cases, the use of on-line tools can be more effective and wider audiences can be reached through it. The Programme Operator and the Project Promoters plan to use a mix of on-line and physical events even in the future when the situation becomes more normal again.

Despite the delay in achieving the project outputs due to COVID-19, some indicators have already been fulfilled. The Programme Operator is considering to evaluate the results after the third selection round and, if relevant, to propose a modification of the Programme Agreement.

The Programme CZ-EDUCATION is open to all levels of education and all projects are bilateral (i.e. partnership with entities from the donor states is mandatory). As demonstrated by the interim and final reports, all the projects contribute to the strengthening of bilateral relations and work towards the achievement of the programme objectives. The EEA Grants and the Programme CZ-EDUCATION were presented at 13 events, such as conferences, education fairs and meetings. The Programme operator organised 16 seminars for potential and actual beneficiaries and for public and published 16 social media posts and 19 articles. Six of those articles were published in a professional journal or on an internet news portal.

The overall risk of the programme has increased from 2.45 to 3 because of the continuing COVID-19 restrictions. Also, a new risk has emerged - the Project Promoters and the partners may not be able to undertake physical mobilities abroad or may not be able to organise project events due to the national protective measures linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.