



**Case Study: Czech Republic  
Chamber of Commerce**

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| <p><b>The case study, the story</b></p>  | <p><b>Evidence, material – Possible content</b><br/>These are <u>pointers</u> as to the content of the case study and the evidence you may want or be able to bring</p>  |
| <p><b><u>The context</u></b></p> <p>In which sector is it taking place?<br/>In which organisation is it taking place?<br/>The background to the case study/ <i>a landscape</i> of the case study</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Web links to institution/ organisation website or</a></li> </ul> <p>A brief institutional profile: a few lines of presentation or explanation of the organisation's function &amp; purpose – number of staff etc...</p> <p>The organisation's/ institution's involvement in, or position towards, RPNF-IFL</p> <p>The process of validation and recognition of non-formal an informal learning is coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. There are five ministries performing the role of authorizing bodies within their remit. They are:<br/>The Ministry of Industry and Trade<br/>Ministry for Regional Development<br/>Ministry of Agriculture<br/>Ministry of the Interior<br/>Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports<br/>All the partial qualifications are included and described in the National Qualification Framework.</p> <p><b><u>Czech Chamber of Commerce and its Activities within the field of recognition of non formal education</u></b></p> <p>One of the authorised organisations which carries out most of the partial qualifications, is the Czech Chamber of Commerce (<a href="http://www.komoracz.eu/">http://www.komoracz.eu/</a>). It is the biggest authorised body from the point of view of the amount of candidates, the number of accredited partial qualifications and the authorised examiners as well.</p> |

The number of authorisations given is at present (May 2010) 34 partial qualifications ([http://www.komora.cz/sluzby-a-produkty/zkousky-dle-zakona-c-179-2006-sb/zkousky-dle-zakona-179-06-sb/chap\\_14414/zakon-c-1792006-sb.aspx](http://www.komora.cz/sluzby-a-produkty/zkousky-dle-zakona-c-179-2006-sb/zkousky-dle-zakona-179-06-sb/chap_14414/zakon-c-1792006-sb.aspx)). They cooperate with 60 authorised persons (representatives of professional/specialized guilds) on validation and recognition of mentioned partial qualifications.

The recognition of the further education started within the Czech Chamber of Commerce in October 2009. Since that time they validated and recognised approximately 950 partial qualifications (till May 2010), 100-200 people per month. Success percentage amounts 95 %.

The Czech Chamber of Commerce is a member of the NSP consortium (National Occupation Framework) consortium, together with the Confederation to Industry of the Czech Republic, the Institute of Industry Federation of the Czech Republic and the company TREXIMA, Ltd. The National Occupation Framework is separate from the National Qualification Framework and its aim is to monitor requirements to performing of particular occupations. The members cooperate on fulfilling the NSP's objectives. They operate in a different perspective from the traditional one on the concept of apprenticeship, its curricula and structure. Particularly the Czech Chamber of Commerce brings into contact the real qualifications and the needs of the labour market.

The Czech Chamber of Commerce aims to ensure accordance with other certification authority activities. For example the Czech Accreditation Institute (<http://www.cia.cz/default.aspx?id=45>) provides certification for welders, quality managers. The professions in the field of insurance are certified by the Ministry of Finance. The Act No. 309 stipulates further requirements for health and safety at work in labour relations and concerning occupational health and safety and is already complemented (in the field of police profession) by the by the necessity to pass recognition process in the case of police officers (as is described in Act. No 179 on Verification and Recognition of Further Education Results).

The system of the verification and recognition of further education results is linked to the Decree of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs on the retraining of job-seekers and Employees. Where there exists a partial qualification described in National Qualification Framework, the examiner at the final retraining exam must be an authorised person for appropriate partial qualification.

The Czech Chamber of Commerce wishes to affect the proportion between secondary vocational and apprentice education. There is already an increase of young people in secondary education (the national aim is 80 %). On the other side there are unfulfilled technical/craft positions within the labour market.

The partial qualifications carried out by the Czech Chamber of Commerce (authorised to recognise the qualification) is at the ISCED level 2 and 3C currently, but there are preparations for partial qualifications at the ISCED level 4 and 5 (skills relating to ECDL 5,6)

#### Information policy on the recognition of further education within the Czech Chamber of Commerce

The offer to validate and recognise the further education is published on the web presentation of the Czech Chamber of Commerce, at regional centres of the Chamber of Commerce; the professional associations and guilds cooperate on the recognition process. These information sources are used more by the employers than employees. The system of recognition is just beginning (at the Chamber of Commerce it began in October 2009), but it is clear that there is a need for higher publicity and promotion. For example part of the advertising system for the recognition process should be done in cooperation with the Labour offices, but they can only offer the retraining courses and the recognition of professional skills and knowledge.

*Note from the author Helena Vojtaskova: It would be helpful if the Labour offices were able to offer other possibilities of vocational education (in this case recognition of the non-formal education). The involvement of the labour offices to the promotion process for the offer of recognition of non formal education could help to address the needs of people who have a problem to assert themselves on the labour market. They would appreciate this possibility, and knowing about the opportunities would be very useful. It is a possibility to the future.*

#### The recognition process

The list of partial qualifications recognised by the Czech Chamber of Commerce is available at the web address: [http://www.komora.cz/sluzby-a-produkty/zkousky-dle-zakona-c-179-2006-sb/zkousky-dle-zakona-179-06-sb/chap\\_14414/zakon-c-1792006-sb.aspx](http://www.komora.cz/sluzby-a-produkty/zkousky-dle-zakona-c-179-2006-sb/zkousky-dle-zakona-179-06-sb/chap_14414/zakon-c-1792006-sb.aspx), as well as the application form.

The application form includes:

- Code and name of the verified partial qualification
- Date of the exam (within 21 days or earlier)

- Personal and contact information
- Date and signature

Application to the validation and recognition is conditioned by the payment of the fee. The price of the payment for the exam depends on the type of qualification, it covers all the costs related to the exercise/exam performance (including the costs of working tools/materials, and rent of the rooms), but not the examiners' salary (covered by the Czech Chamber of Commerce).

If the candidate cancels the exam two days before, he can get back the total fee.

The Chamber of commerce ensures organisation, schedule, and certificates of the recognition and authorised examiners. The examination report is drawn up for each validation and recognition and archived.

In most cases the preparation to the verification exam is kept entirely at the candidates' initiative. As there is no established position/role of advisers or tutors, the employers offer the training. This solution can help in the beginning, but cannot become a rule. Thy system at the moment does not have the financial sources to pay for advisers or tutors. In this case the Czech Chamber of Commerce does not seem to consider an advisory service necessary.

According to the employers opinion the candidates would be willing to invest in the consultations (for example 2 days training in groups, and several hours of individual consultations) about 1000-1500 CZK (48-58 €) (1 hour of advisory services costs 300 CZK or 12 €). Advisory/consultancy services can be organised by the guilds or by the Chamber of Commerce. Anyway the organisation of such supporting services must be centralised. It can be expected that it would attract more interested candidates. Currently they are afraid of investing the money for an examination with uncertain result. Moreover the verified qualifications are mostly for craftsmen; the people are not used to search for the necessary information and study on their own. When potential candidates obtain the invitation to the consultancy days in their field of **work**, an increase of interest in the recognition can be expected.

### **Example I**

#### Recognition of partial qualification guardian/policeman

The partial qualification for state or municipal police, (working as a 'guards' on the street) forms the majority of recognised qualifications within the scope of the Czech Chamber of Commerce. (about 900 in the period from October 2009 to May 2010). This amount corresponds to the fact that this recognition is a legal requirement for the exercise of the profession of policeman/guardian. On the basis of the internal regulation of the Ministry of Interior it is obligatory to have the recognition certificate of partial qualification of policemen/women.

The fee for recognition of partial qualification guardian/policeman is 1200 CZK.

*Note from the author Helena Vojtaskova : people who already work as municipal police have to obtain the necessary qualification within a given period. Their employer prepares them for the exam.*

*The recognition certificate is a document confirming that the person successfully passed the exam within the verification/recognition of the particular partial qualification.*

***Partial qualification** is only a part of the complete qualification. It includes several work activities which together gives opportunity to apply for a job. It is impossible to recognize the complete qualification in the Czech Republic. Each complete qualification consists of several partial qualifications. If a person wants to get a certificate of the complete qualification, s/he can pass the recognition of all relevant partial qualifications, but afterwards s/he have to pass the final exam at a vocational or technical school or higher education institution.*

In the case of this partial qualification the employer helps the candidates with preparation to the exam and ensures appropriate training. The employer is the one who applies for the recognition on behalf of the employee, and also takes on the role of adviser.

The exam has only one theoretical part, which takes approximately two hours. The exam uses several test versions. The sets of question are chosen so that the test includes all issues and covered all the themes covering this qualification. There is a difference in comparison with the examination process carried out in apprenticeship schools (students answer only randomly chosen questions).

The candidates obtain the recognition certificate at the end of the exam.

There are no special benefits provided, the candidate can exercise the occupation.

*Note from the author Helena Vojtaskova The internal regulation of the Ministry of Interior determines the conditions of competence for the profession of municipal police. The people who perform the profession have a duty to pass the exam (described in the internal regulation of Mol). Those who sign a working agreement (with the Police) at the beginning work on other positions, and at the same time they prepare for the exam.*

*Before the start of the recognition of informal education, these courses were organised by the Police of the CR or by various institutions. The Czech Chamber of Commerce is not the only one institution authorised to recognize the partial qualification. The authorising body for this particular partial qualification is the Ministry of Interior.*

The examination report includes personal information, time and place of the exam, the result in the partial issues, eventually the reasons for failure to give recognition, if the applicant does not fulfil all the necessary knowledge and skills required; then s/he cannot obtain the certificate.

Receiving this partial qualification is not conditioned by having certificates on previous education.

### **Example II**

#### Recognition of partial qualification in upholstery of backboards and seaters

It was the first recognition of the partial qualification in upholstery of backboards and 'seats'. The initiative came from the employer – the owner of a cabinet making company. His decision followed on from his own interest on the building of the recognition process for further education; he personally will undertake a position of inspector for qualifications within the field of cabinet making.

His two employees were offered to take the validation process and obtain the recognition certificate of the new qualification. Two women, originally dressmakers, embraced this offer. Their main reason was the opportunity to enrich their future personal potential on the labour market.

The advantage for the candidates was also the fact that they did not have to pay for the examination. The size of the payment is derived from the costs of working materials and

rent of the rooms (in this case the payment amounts to 3000 CZK). As their employer provided the craft room, the exam took place at the candidates' workplace, they were exempt of payment.

The employer took the role of adviser. He gave help to the candidates for the theoretical preparation, explained the main themes, provided them with the necessary information, and clarified all the difficult issues.

The exam was taken on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at the Mayer company in Nový Jičín.

The length of time for the examination is approximately 7-10 hours.

Apart from the authorised examiner there were several independent observers. The exam is divided into two parts, theory and practice.

The theoretical examination is not based on a random choice of questions; it covers all the scope of this qualification (all content points are mentioned during the exam). The exam is really detailed. This part of the examination takes 2 hours.

The practical part is not time limited. The aim is to carry out the task, the real time of the practical validation takes 5-8 hours. The task was to make a seat and back cushion of an office chair, using upholstery textile fabric and upholstery of an office armchair using natural leather)

They approved the knowledge of upholstery materials (including leathers), cutting design construction, using the specialised industrial sewing machines, lay on adhesive in the spray room, material sticking, using pins, etc.

At the end both candidates obtained the certificate recognizing partial qualification upholstery of backboards and seats valid within all the European Union.

The reports on the verification and recognition exam are collected and archived by the Czech Chamber of Commerce (as authorised organisation).

Possible candidates can get the information of the offer to verify and recognize the further non formal education at the professional guilds. They will present the results of this first recognition to the professional public. The managers of cabinet making companies order the Joinery magazine, where will be published an article on this recognition process.

