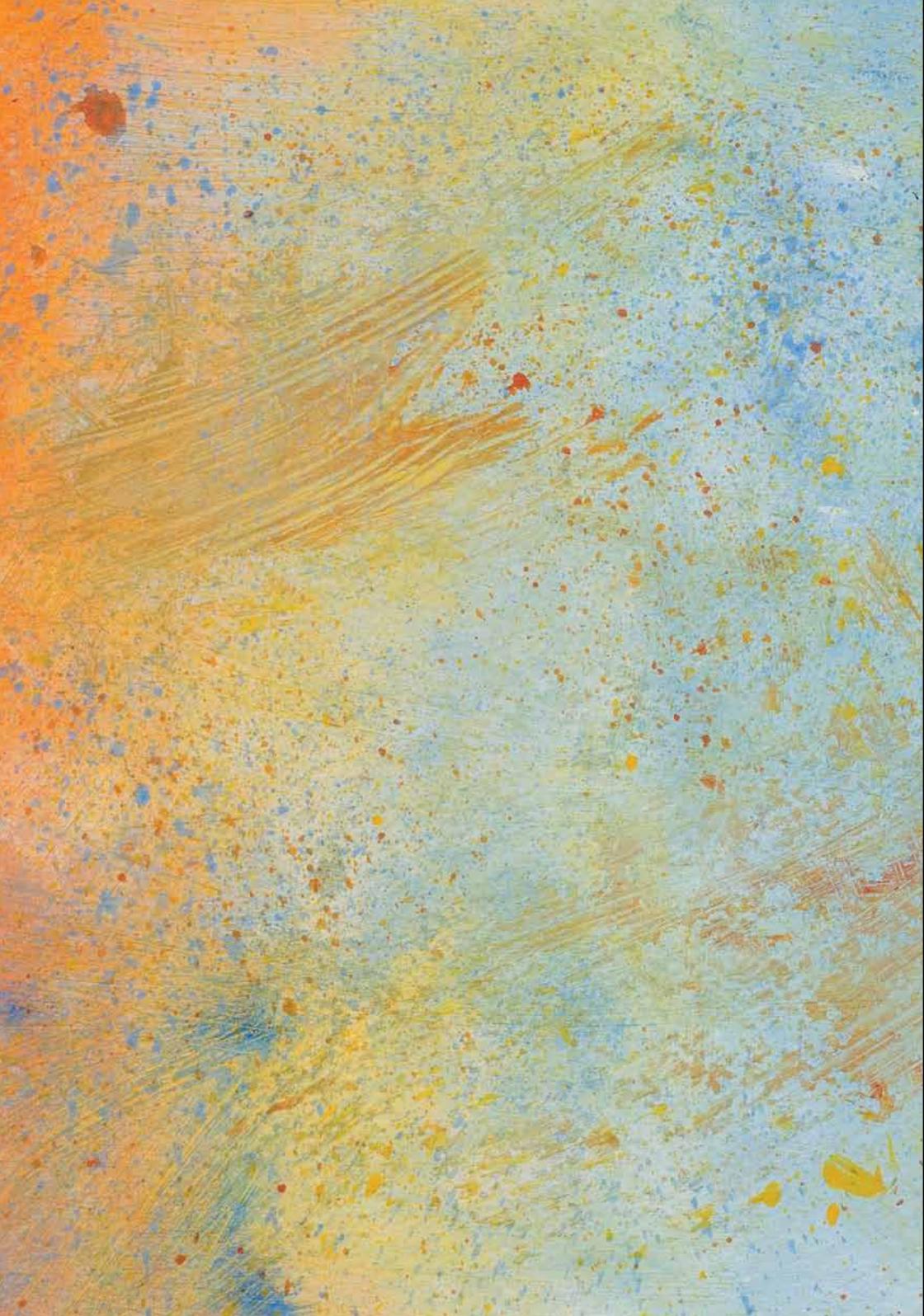




Without rose-tinted glasses

**Our youth seen by researches,
and our world and life in it seen by the youth**



Without rose-tinted glasses

**Our youth seen by researches,
and our world and life in it seen by the youth**

The Centre for International Cooperation in Education (DZS), 2014

Nikdy
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Table of Content

Who will be discussed	4
At the start	8
How surveys see us – Main findings summarised	12
How we see it	14
What is important for us	16
Our health	22
What we enjoy and what we do	26

The world round us	36
What worries us Politics? Not interested... We cannot do too much about it, although...	
We and the school	48
On the labour market	56
When life does not go well	62
Our wishes, or what we recommend	68
References and sources	70



Without rose-tinted glasses
Who will be discussed



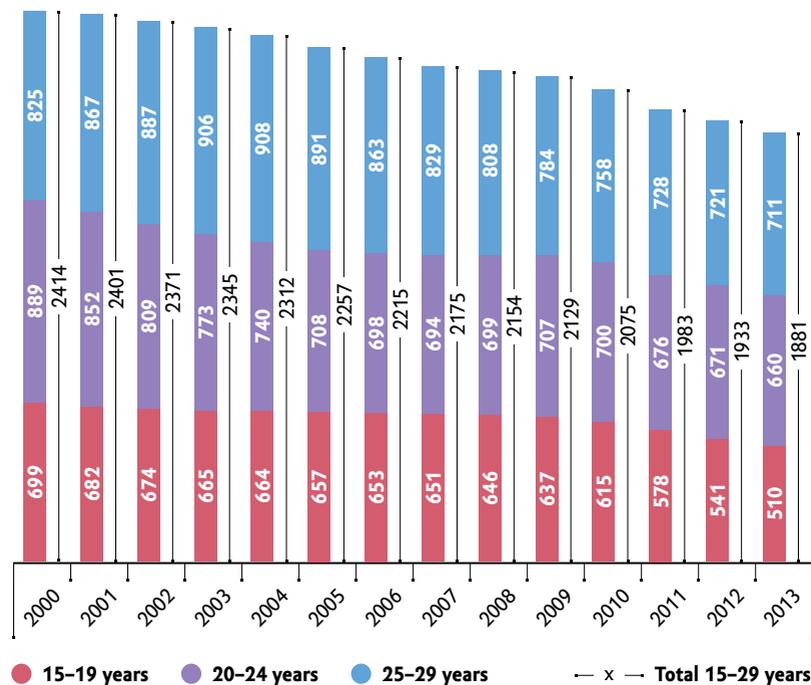
Who will be discussed

The youth in our conditions usually include young people from 14 or 15 years of age, when compulsory school attendance ends, to 30 years of age, when partial processes of social maturity are completed.

(Velký sociologický slovník, 1996).

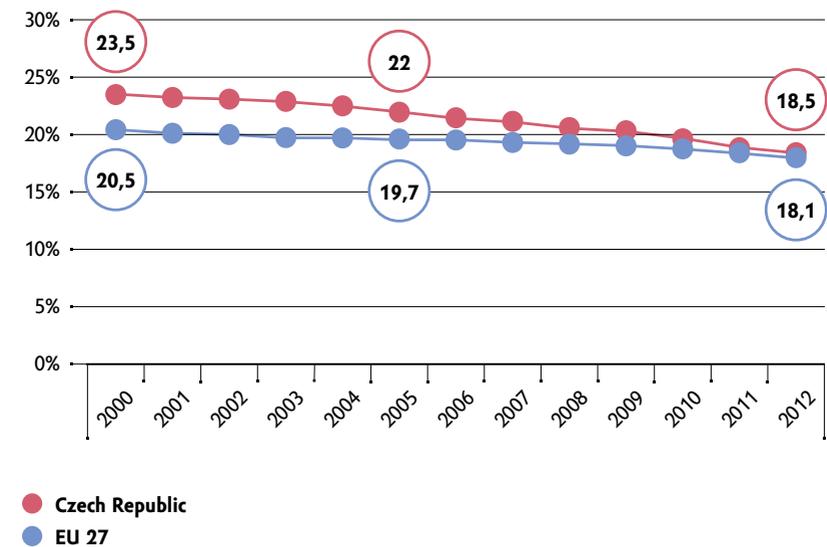
The Czech Republic had 10,516,125 inhabitants as of 1 January 2013; 1,881,844 of that number were aged between 15–29 years, which accounts for almost 18% (4.9% aged 15–19, 6.3% aged 20–24, and 6.8% aged 25–29). The least number of young people aged 15–29 years lived in 2012 in Prague and in the Central Bohemian Region; on the contrary, most young people lived in the Region of Vysočina and Moravian-Silesian Region.

► **Numbers of young people (aged 15–29) living in the Czech Republic; data in thousands**



We can see that the youth group reduced in the past thirteen years by 533,000 members, i.e. by over one fifth, and we have achieved as early as in 2012 the general „European average“, which is characteristic with a deep birth-rate crisis throughout our civilisation sphere.

► **Numbers of young people living in the Czech Republic and in the EU**



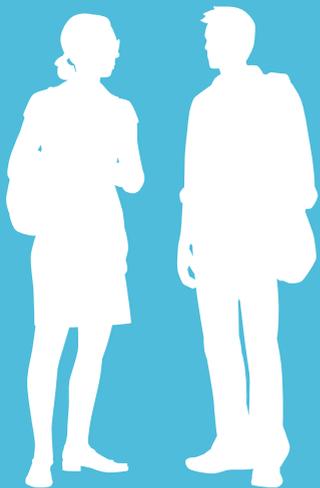
Commencing from 2002 the Czech Republic repeatedly reaches the highest ranks among European states as regards the number of young people with secondary education. Over 90% of population aged 20–24 received secondary education (that means general or vocational upper secondary education). The European average in 2012 was 80%. In this regard, there is no difference between men and women in the Czech Republic. About 54% of them include students of secondary vocational schools, 25% are grammar school students, and 21% graduated from vocational schools.

On the contrary, the ratio of higher education students is the aspect in which the Czech Republic lags behind. Although the numbers of young people with higher education keeps growing, only 25.6% of young people aged 30–34 received higher education in 2012. The European average was almost 36% in 2012.



Without rose-tinted glasses

At the start



At the start

Do we know what a boy aged thirteen or fourteen thinks about the world he lives in? What a girl of the same age, a young lady, in fact, wishes to change in our world? Do we ask them about it? Can we listen to them? Do we reflect on why they are so dissatisfied, critical, disappointed and often so pessimistic or resigned? It doesn't become young people at all and, in fact, it is a failure of all of us. What kind of world we have prepared for them? And what kind of life we have been preparing them for – by how we have been co-creating the world and what model of life we have been presenting them?

This paper is an offer to stop for a while. To listen – both to the facts and to young people. And to think about it. It is also a kind of a mirror for us who do not consider themselves as youth any more. Do we care about the reflection we would see? Do we care what we could still do for those who are at the start of their mature lives? If we do, we can learn a lot. About ourselves and, of course, about those young people. Maybe, we would stop giving up on them and on ourselves, and instead we might contribute more efficiently and make our common world a *home* rather than just a „hostel“ in which we stand in our ways instead of being one family.

Imagine you are the boss of the world. What would you fix up?



Answers of adolescents aged 13 to 15 from Prague and the towns of Chýnov and Prostějov.

- Jirka:** *“Ban all wars and make the countries help each other, all should help each other.”*
- Joia:** *“I would make somehow the states financially equal. And then, I would surely change the boys to be simply normal.”*
- Šimon:** *“I would probably destroy all those Nazi parties and the dictatorship in China. And I would make some laws for the poor in Africa.”*

- Max:** *“I would do something with cars, because it’s terrible how cars cause damage to the nature. And I would do something with the sick in Africa. Simply, that all states be well-off.”*
- Tomáš:** *“That every country has some money, so that they would be kind of equal.”*
- Anička:** *“I would probably change international relations, ecology and the environment and water for Africa. And that Tibet be independent, too.”*
- Bára:** *“I would totally ban wars, on the contrary, I would fight poverty. And we should also do something with the environment. I would like to find home for every abandoned dog. I know it’s nice to speak about it, but it is so unrealistic, so much...”*
- Žužu:** *“I would do something for the environment and also for poor states. And above all, I would fire our politicians, because they don’t care about us at all, just sitting on their asses, maybe drinking and smoking.”*
- Lukáš:** *“I would surely come up with a new kind of raw materials, so that states would not attack each other for mineral resources, and that cars don’t run on petrol. And I’d join Žužu, that politicians be fired, because they only promise and promise and they don’t keep their promises. They keep decreasing salaries, but not their own. They have big money and they don’t care, just that they are not affected themselves.”*
- Davy:** *“There should be so many cars, because the smell is terrible.”*
- Kuba:** *“I’d modernise everything.”*
- Láďa:** *“Expand as much as possible the sports facilities, because we don’t have a place to play at.”*
- Lucka:** *“I’d try, for example, to reduce unemployment.”*
- Věrka:** *“I’d change – there should not be differences among people. For example, they have nothing in Africa.”*
- Katka:** *“I agree, people should be equal and people in Africa and Australia should have meal to eat and water to drink.”*
- Luboš:** *“There should not be so much violence, and I’d surely modernise somehow the world.”*
- Petra:** *“That when I go shopping, I wouldn’t have to pay for it. And everything should be up to date. But mainly, everybody should love each other, they shouldn’t quarrel.”*

How surveys see us – Main findings summarised



Interest in politics

- ▶ Young people in the Czech Republic feature in general **very low and still decreasing interest in politics**. 94% of young people aged 15–30 are not interested at all or almost at all in politics. The average interest in politics in the EU is 25%. The most frequently mentioned reasons for the lack of interest in politics in the Czech Republic include: disinterest in general, disgust due to the current situation in society, and zero possibility to influence social affairs.
- ▶ Young people in the Czech Republic feature in general very low and still decreasing interest in politics. 94% of young people aged 15–30 are not interested at all or almost at all in politics. The average interest in politics in the EU is 25%. The most frequently mentioned reasons for the lack of interest in politics in the Czech Republic include: disinterest in general, disgust due to the current situation in society, and zero possibility to influence social affairs.

Health

- ▶ Almost two thirds of young people (aged 15–24) assessed their health as very good, less than one third as good, and only 3% as satisfactory. The young people in the Czech Republic do not perceive almost any problems in the access to health care and availability of medical examinations.
- ▶ **Overweight and obesity of children and young people becomes an ever growing issue**. One fifth of boys and one tenth of girls in the population aged 11–15 suffer from overweight; the percentage in the

male population aged 15–24 is as high as 32.9%, and 5% of them are obese.

- ▶ The Czech Republic ranks among the countries **with the highest ratio of juvenile smokers, alcohol and marijuana users**. 17.5% of girls and 22.6% of boys aged 15–24 smoke daily; almost 30% (the highest percentage in the EU) smoked marijuana in the past year. 21% of the young people aged 16 were drunk at least once in the past 30 days. Simultaneously, the Czech Republic ranks in the long term among the countries in Europe with **the highest ratio of students having experience with the use of illegal drugs**. One half of the 16-year-olds do **not admit the risks** associated with daily tobacco smoking and/or regular alcohol drinking.

Participation in cultural events

- ▶ Compared to the general Czech population, the young people aged 15–30 rank among **above-average visitors of cultural events**. 87% of them visited a cinema or a concert, 77% sights, museums or galleries and 56% a theatre or dance performance or an opera during the past year. 29% are actively involved in non-professional cultural activities.

Internet

- ▶ 77% of the 16–24-year-olds used the **Internet** daily in 2012; **the number of every-day users keeps increasing sharply**. According to an international comparative research, the **Czech children** aged 9–16 ranks among the **above-average Internet** users, both in terms of frequency and in terms of knowledge. That means they are more at risk but, simultaneously, they can use better the possibilities of the Internet.

Youth unemployment

- ▶ Compared to the other European countries, the **youth unemployment rate** (young people aged 15–24) is relatively low, although it keeps increasing from 2008. Unemployment increased by 0.5% between April 2012 and 2013 up to 20%. The European average in this age category is 23.5%.
- ▶ Youth unemployment (young people aged 15–24) is almost three times as high as the unemployment rate in the general population of the 15–64-year-olds. **School-leavers with lower levels of education rank among the most endangered groups on the labour market**.

Risk of poverty or social exclusion

- ▶ The Czech Republic belongs to the European countries with a **low risk of poverty or social exclusion**, also in the population of the 18–24-year-olds. Less than one fifth of young people in this age category was at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2012, while the EU average in the same year was 29.8%.

Specific group of so-called “NEET” young people

- ▶ The **percentage of the NEETs*** (i.e. Not in Education, Employment, or Training) is relatively **low** in the Czech Republic. It was less than 9% in 2012.

Crimes

- ▶ Over two fifths of detected offenders were aged 15–30 years according to the data from 2010. The **numbers of crimes** committed by identified offenders aged under 18 **keeps decreasing**.

* Not in Education, Employment, or Training

How we see it

Young people identified the following shortages and conflicts in Czech society under the project *Have Your Say*, which has been implemented in the Czech Republic since 2011 under the auspices of the Czech Council of Children and Youth:

Behaviour of authorities

- ▶ Dissatisfaction with behaviour of „authorities“ – frequent patronising, inability to listen to and take seriously opinions and needs of the others. The public debate frequently lacks willingness to look for a common solution, consensus and understanding. Some persons excessively pursue their personal interests regardless of the community's interests. Arrogant behaviour of authorities is frequently disregarded and they are not held liable for their behaviour and acts.

Opinions of the young on the public

- ▶ Unwillingness to solve immediately minor issues and respond positively to criticism and dissatisfaction of individuals, either at school, in a municipality or in another social environment. Dissatisfaction expressed by young people is frequently disregarded by relevant players in society, either by businessmen, politicians, or by teachers, directors and others.

Initiative of the young in the field of education

- ▶ Young people are not sufficiently motivated to influence the quality, form and contents of education (they are not consulted as regards merging of schools, cancelling subjects such as teaching of certain foreign languages, attempts at project activities, etc.). Individuals are often „punished“ for own initiative using underhand means, they are ridiculed, disregarded, excluded from a community, etc.

Respect and disrespect

- ▶ Lack of respect for others on the part of certain individuals, persons and minorities. Values, such as respect, willingness to good co-existence, willingness to help, respect for others, are disappearing from the usual space and they are maintained only in smaller groups, they are not a standard „in the street“.

Prejudices

- ▶ Stereotypisation of negative phenomena, prejudices and depreciation of individuals based on general assumptions and stereotypes, not based on the individuals (e.g. released prisoners, children from disadvantaged environments, such as orphanages, all politicians being corrupt, ...).
- ▶ The system cannot work with disadvantaged individuals in such a way that they themselves do not often cause reasons for such negative stereotypisation.

Politician as a model

- ▶ Politicians do not perform their roles of good examples and managers of the state. On the contrary, some of them invoke indignation and disillusion, aggravating the atmosphere in society. The Czech Republic's political system is not able to cope with those phenomena, which is perceived in a negative way.

Communication culture

- ▶ Inadequate culture of communication in the public space, in the media and on social networks, which frequently results in an even deeper moral decline.

Vulgarity

- ▶ Nowadays, vulgarity is quite common in majority society, even in the media and in the public space. Numerous „authorities“

trying to attract a wider audience or media use „bon mots“, which directly or indirectly promote and support vulgarity in society. Vulgarity becomes a standard, not an exception. That is why most individuals ignore and overlook it.

Ethical codes of manufacturers and vendors

- ▶ Insufficient control of manufacturers and vendors' ethical codes. Many services are rendered and business negotiations held with the objective of profits only, regardless of any ethical rules (e.g. promotion events, doorstep selling).

Youth unemployment

- ▶ Youth unemployment keeps increasing. Although the Czech Republic is below the European average, there are foundations of the future deepening of problems in Czech society, not only of the economic ones, but also of moral and social problems.

Access to drugs and alcohol

- ▶ Young people can easily access drugs and alcohol – the government should enforce the applicable legislation regulating the use by and sale of alcohol to minors. Where this is not the case, the use of alcohol and its subsequent negative effects become a standard, and a young person can hardly avoid it by himself or herself because of the environment and links in the community of young people.

Legislation

- ▶ Weak legislative environment and law enforcement – the legal order in the Czech Republic is very much lacking in transparency, it includes numerous exceptions, attenuating circumstances, etc., which helps evading the system and the justice.





What is important for us

Based on a long-term monitoring* of values, which are important for our secondary school students, the *Concept of the State Support for the Children and Youth for the Years 2007 to 2013* includes the following, quite critical characteristic:

We can see growing importance of economic prosperity, a career as a means of gaining property, material values and sensual life and its experiences, including drugs. On the other hand, importance of the quality of life decreases in competition

* 1984 – 2005

with the sensual life and material values. Importance of responsibility for others decreases in competition with responsibility for oneself; and, simultaneously, importance of improving oneself and of the transcendent dimension of life and ideas decreases, too. Importance of property and leisure time spent in line with one's interests and hobbies keeps increasing. On the contrary, importance of „being useful for other people“ in particular, as well as importance of the peace, environment and socially useful activities decrease. Importance of democracy also decreases as a result of experience with our political system, political culture and position of the citizen in the system.

Numerous other researches had studied in these past five years what was important for our youth. Valuable are the results of surveys, which are conducted in three-year intervals by the agency People in Need among secondary-school students (including vocational-school students) under the project **One World in Schools**. Especially interesting answers from the most recent one are those to the question: *What is the most important for me to feel happy in my life?*

► **What is the most important for me to feel happy in my life?**
(the figures show the percentage of students who gave respective answers):

	2012	Difference from 2009
Family / supporting family	37	4 ▲
Friends	20	-3 ▼
Health / good health	15	-1
Good / satisfactory / well-paid work	15	4 ▲
Money / good living standard / finance	14	0
Complete my studies / pass leaving examinations	12	5 ▲
Studies / education	9	-6 ▼
Partner / friend	7	-6 ▼
Relations / interpersonal relations	7	-1
Love	6	-3 ▼
Peace / well-being	6	-1
Success / success in life / satisfaction	4	-1

Considering that respondents in this survey could themselves enter up to two values, which are the most important for them to feel happy in their lives, we can see our youth does not considerably differ from the adult Czech people who gave in these past twenty-five years very similar answers when asked what was the most important for their lives. They would state almost always the following values in the first five places: **Live in a happy family; Live a healthy life; Take care of one's health; Live in a healthy environment; Help my family, friends; Have friends with whom I get along.**

Therefore, the aforementioned characteristic of our youth, which describes them as oriented mainly towards material values, stressing the importance of money and pleasures and, on the other hand, having a weakened sense for relations and responsibility, seemingly does our youth an injustice. That is why the answer to the next question is also important: *What would considerably improve my feeling of happiness in my life?*

► **What would considerably improve my feeling of happiness in my life?**
(the figures show the percentage of students who gave respective answers):

	2012	Difference from 2009
Money / more money / better financial situation	21	2
Complete my studies / leaving examinations / pass leaving examinations	13	3 ▲
Improvement of political / social situation	7	7 ▲
Family / establish family / atmosphere in family	5	0
Good / better work	4	-3 ▼
Better interpersonal relations	4	-2
To be admitted to university	4	1
Improvement of economic situation / end of the crisis	3	3 ▲
Certain success	3	3 ▲
Health of family / friends / related people	3	0
Get rid of gypsies (negative statements on Roma people)	3	3 ▲
Love	3	1

Here, we can clearly see that our youth does not push too far as regards „idealism“. The family is important, probably the most important, but it should be „padded“ with money. Indeed, general satisfaction of our secondary school students decreased further between the years 2009 and 2012 – the original value of 17% of those who were really happy dropped to 13%, while 10% of those who were really unhappy increased up to 16% (that means out of twenty young people there are three who are really unhappy). The increase of dissatisfaction is evident in particular among vocational-school students, almost fifty percent, and the current situation is that every fourth vocational-school student is unhappy.

What is
important for
you in your life?



Answers of adolescents aged 13 to 15 from Prague and the towns of Chýnov and Prostějov.

- Šárka:** "Health and money, too, because you can buy health for money."
Honza: "Well, health, then, I'd say happiness and family."
Eliška: "I'd say health and family."
Radim: "Good luck, because if you are lucky, you have everything, problems avoid you."
Jirka: "Health is the most important, then happiness and money in the last place. Money is not everything."
Lucka: "I'd say happiness, because if I am happy, it outweighs the health, the family."
Michala: "People around me are important, and that is related also to health."
Kryštof: "Health, family, money... simply, the basic things."
Dan: "Family, friends, money. Probably, the family in the first place, then money and friends."
Kačka: "The most important for me is health of my family, of my friends, so that all of them are well."
Luboš: "Family, health, not so much money; the choice of a partner, too."
Markéta: "Family, health, money."
Martina: "For me, probably the family is in the first place."
Ruda: "Family and health."
Kuba: "Family, health, friendship."
Lukáš: "Well, health in the first place."



Without rose-tinted glasses
Our health



Our health

Compared to the older age categories, young people feel much less problems in the area of their health. As we already know, almost two thirds of young people (65.3%) aged 16–24 assessed in 2010 their health as very good, less than one third (30.4%) as good, and only 3.3% as satisfactory. Nevertheless, almost a half of girls aged 15 and a little bit smaller group of boys of the same age suffer from headaches at least once a week, and over two thirds of girls and almost the same number of boys complain of neck pain and back and shoulder pain.

Overweight and obesity

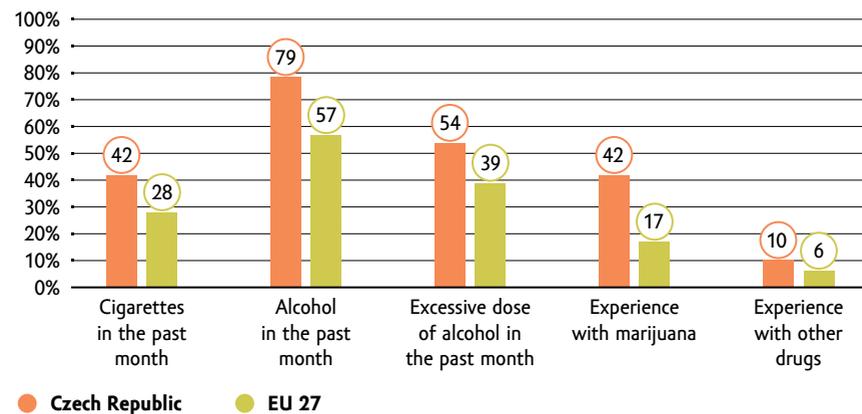
The ever increasing percentage of children and young people who suffer from overweight and obesity is the major issue, which affects health in the long term. And yet overweight and obesity in childhood have serious health effects in the physical area (the skeletal, muscular, cardiovascular systems), as well as in the psychical and social areas. We also know from the summary that one fifth of boys and one tenth of girls aged 11–15 suffer from overweight (as regards overweight and obesity, boys significantly exceed girls in all age groups); in the age group of 15–24 years, as many as 32.9% of men are overweight and 5% are obese.

Addictive substances

Risky behaviour (such as the use of alcohol, tobacco or other addictive substances, improper nutrition, or lack of physical activity, etc.), especially in this age, is also a serious issue, which can later have long-lasting and life-long effects. In particular, the number of smoking girls aged round 16 years increased recently (almost 45% of them smoke regularly, beating boys of the same age). Both their peers and the situation at home are crucial factors affecting youth smoking; where parents (mainly mother) smoke, probability that their children also become regular smokers is over 70%.

Researches show that risky behaviour is very often a combination of more phenomena at once; if, for example, a young person smokes in his/her teens, he/she will also be more inclined to drink alcohol. Alcohol drinking and regular tobacco and marijuana smoking by teenagers is still a long-term, serious problem in which Czech youth sadly holds primacy in Europe.

► The use of addictive substances by young people in the Czech Republic and in the EU



*I don't mind smoking,
I smoke myself, but I don't like
my dad reproaching me, that
I am going to to spoil all my life.
But he didn't quit smoking.*

Michala, 14 years



As regards marijuana legalisation

the project participants did not achieve a clear consensus. That is why this discussion cannot be considered as finished. An agreement can only be found in the basic points:

- Marijuana should not be available to children aged under 18 years.
- The use of marijuana should be prohibited when driving car and/or doing other technical activities.
- Growing marijuana for one's own needs should not at least be criminalised.

Have Your Say, 2011



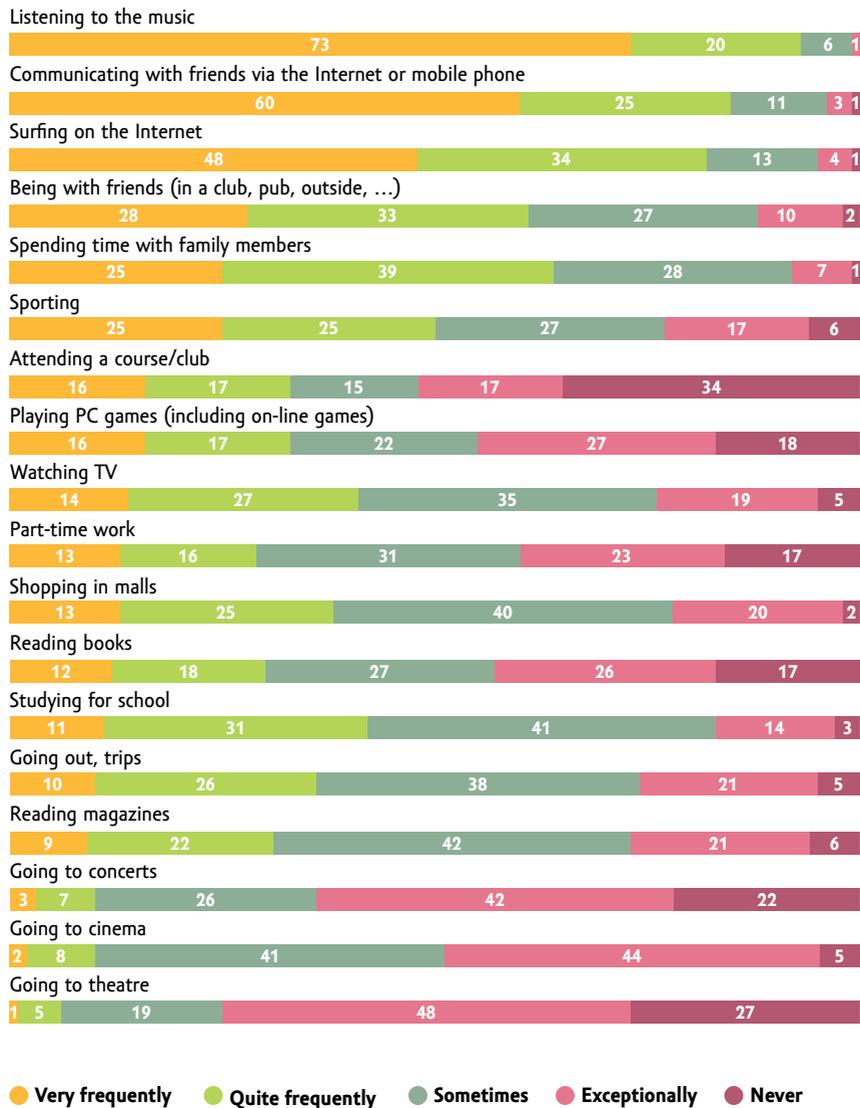
Without rose-tinted glasses
What we enjoy and what we do



What we enjoy and what we do

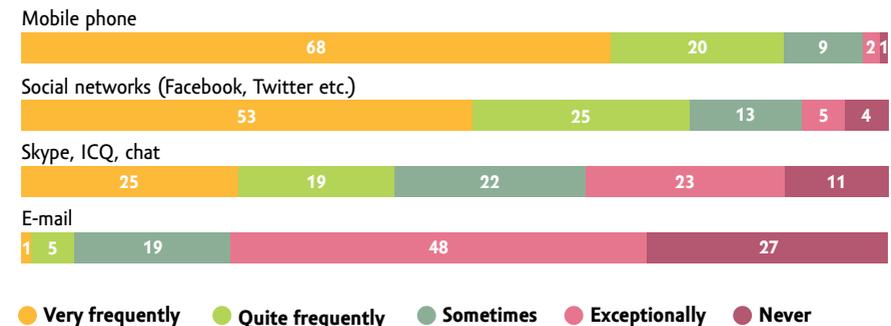
The students' life style has not change too much in the past years. Young people spend their leisure time mostly by listening to the music and communicating with their friends, using modern technologies rather than at personal meetings. The Internet as a leisure-time activity is preferred to watching TV and other sources of entertainment. Very few students visit on a regular basis cinema, concert or theatre, or go for a trip to the nature. All those is shown by this chart from the survey ***One World in Schools***:

► **How young people spend their free time (2012, in %)**



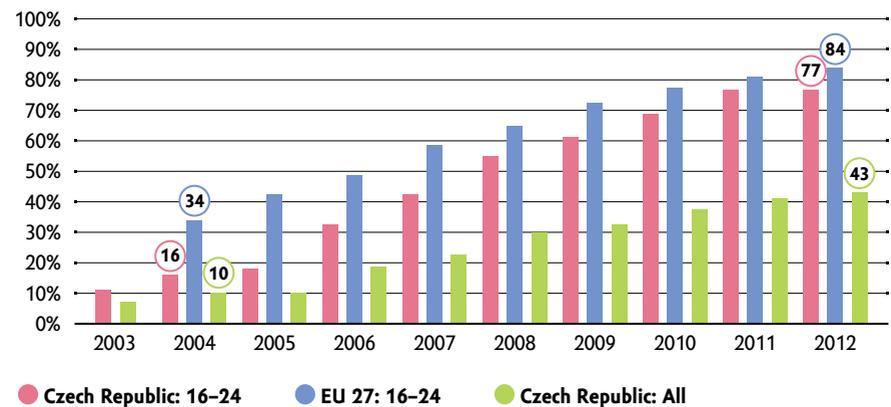
The main communication means for the contemporary youth is the mobile phone in the first place, followed by the Internet on which mainly social networks and on-line communication applications are used. On the contrary, e-mail is used scarcely by students.

► **The most frequent means of communication of young people (in %)**



That means a considerable development of the use of the Internet can be seen in the recent years, in particular among the young people. While 16% of young people aged 16–24 (i.e. less than a half of the European average) used the Internet on a daily basis in 2004, the value was 77% in 2012 and we keep pace with other European countries:

► **Daily use of the Internet in the Czech Republic and in the EU**



What is indispensable for you: the mobile phone, the Internet, or TV?

Answers of adolescents aged 13 to 15 from Prague and the towns of Chýnov and Prostějov.



- Max:** "The mobile phone. I can call friends, we are chatting, for example, for four hours. I could do without the Internet, but it would hurt."
- Tomáš:** "Mainly the mobile phone and also the Internet."
- Anička:** "Surely the mobile phone, I could do without TV."
- Bára:** "I could do without TV, but I couldn't without the mobile phone. I carry it with me all the time. I also need a PC."
- Jirka:** "The mobile phone, PC and Internet."
- Michala:** "Surely the Internet so that I can communicate with friends on Facebook. And the mobile phone."

What do you look mostly for on the Internet? What do you use it for?



- Jirka:** "For communication. I watch films, news, weather forecast."
- Joia:** "I also look there for news about weather, timetables. Naturally, I have Facebook on the Internet and I use it to watch films in English."
- Šimon:** "I mainly use Facebook on the Internet. And also maps of Prague to travel to matches."
- Max:** "I look for where and when we play. I also have Facebook and I use Skype a lot."
- Tomáš:** "I use the Internet for Facebook, Skype and mostly also things to school."
- Anička:** "I use it to communicate and I look for something to school."
- Bára:** "Facebook and Skype are important for me. I also look there for things to school. And films, photos."

Czech children aged 9 to 16 are even above-average users of the Internet compared to other children in Europe, both in terms of frequency (75% of children stated they used the Internet every day or almost every day) and in terms of knowledge. On the one hand they are more at risk, but, simultaneously, they can better use the possibilities offered by the Internet (for example, for school work). Czech children are in the fifth place in digital

literacy and they rank among those who have the highest rate of profiles on social networks (72%). Children and teenagers are more at risk of watching porno on the Internet (the 4th place) and they also make friends on the Internet twice as often compared to the average. The warning findings also include the fact that 42% of Czech children had a contact with a person they met on the Internet and 13% of children met such person face to face.

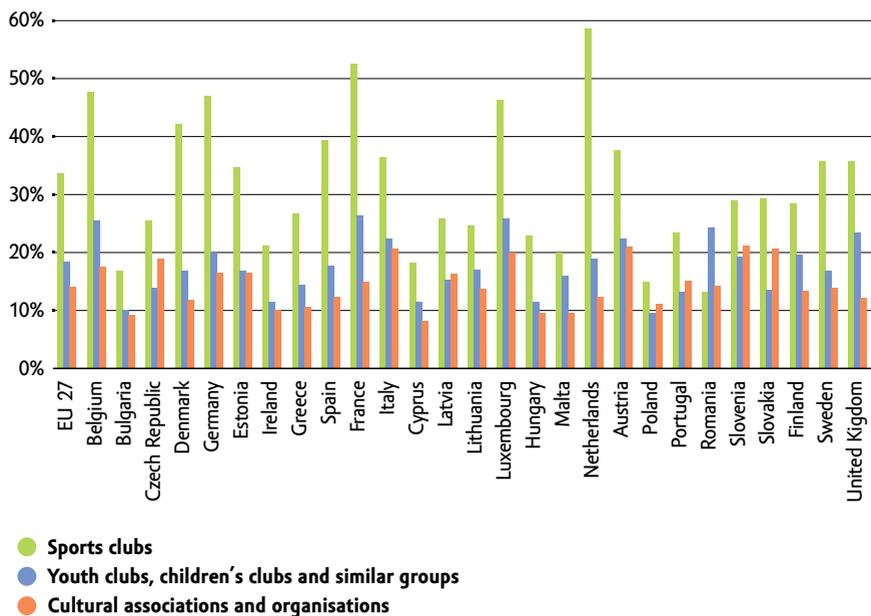
Television

Although TV loses its originally steadfast first place, it still plays an important role in the life of Czech youth. Over one third of teenagers and young people spend at least two and a half hours daily watching TV. Its role, however, is changing: its position of a medium, which integrates the family and offers shared experiences, is weaker and TV becomes a tool of individual choice and consumption. The trend to perceive TV as a means of individual choice and consumption increases with age.

Membership in clubs

As regards membership in sports, youth or cultural organisations, Czech youth belongs to the European average. Similarly to almost all countries, organisations with sport orientation are visited most frequently (including after school clubs, clubs in institutions for children and youth, and leisure-time centres). The chart below shows the situation in European comparison. The first column shows the ratio of young people aged 15 to 30 who go in for organised sports activities, the middle one indicates representation of members of children's and youth clubs, troops or similar groupings, and the right-hand column shows representation of those who are members of various cultural associations or clubs.

► Youth membership in sports, youth and cultural organisations



Do you attend after-school clubs or troops?

- Tomáš:** "I attend a ping-pong club."
- Max:** "I play football and tennis. And golf, too."
- Šimon:** "I play basketball on competitions and football – only matches."
- Joia:** "I play piano and cello, I sing in a choir and solo, I attend English courses, and I play golf and tennis for recreation."
- Žužu:** "I attend competitions in athletics and I play volleyball and attend a Sokol troop."
- Bára:** "I dance Latin dances – something in between competition and recreation dancing."
- Lucka:** "I do trampoline jumping twice a week. And I attend a fitness centre."

Friends

Of course, friends play a crucial role in the life of teenagers and young people. They not only spend with them a considerable part of their free time, but and mainly their inner world belongs to them. Practically on a daily basis they co-determine their experiences and evaluation of what they go through. They are usually the most important „reference group“ to which young people compare, according to which they arrange their standards, and from which they derive their self-assessment and their wishes to the future.

In general, how children and teenagers spend their free time depends considerably on the initiatives, information and possibilities of their parents, which are associated in particular with the level of education and with the socio-economic status of the family.

What do you do
when you come
home from school?



- Bára:** "After school I go out with my friends, have a cigarette, then we are chatting, then I go home and do my homework. And every Thursday I have a practice."
- Joia:** "After school I always have a club, a dancing club or piano lessons or something like that."
- Adam:** "I go to my room for an hour or so so that the others think I am studying. I play with my mobile phone, then I go out, PC, TV."
- Jirka:** "I go to my PC, studying, doing homework. Then I go to have practice, then I eat, and PC again."
- Michala:** "I am sitting at my PC, from time to time I go to the kitchen to eat something. Then, my mum drives me out to study and I must study. On Fridays I visit my grandmother."
- Kryštof:** "After school I usually go out with my friends. And then I have German and maths tutorials."
- Anička:** "I also usually go out with my friends, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays I have my practices."
- David:** "Well, after school I drop my school-bag at home and go directly out with my friends."
- Lukáš:** "I turn on my PC, then I make an arrangement with my friends and go out for about 45 minutes. Then I have a football practice. And then PC, TV."

The respondents complained of lack of time for themselves and their hobbies and for communication with their environment, to follow community events in a wider and deeper context.
From the survey *One World in Schools*





The world round us

How do young people see the „world“ round them? Does it worry them? Would they wish to change it somehow – and do they think they have a chance to make it? What do they themselves do for that? And what do they think about „administration of public affairs“ – about politics? Numerous pieces of information on the topic have been collected during the past years – amongst other, also because (not only in our country) we can see more and more the widening gap between youth and the public sphere, as well as growing dissatisfaction of young people with how „the world“ they enter as citizens and workers does (not) function.



Because of the scope of this publication, only three areas out of the large quantity of collected information will be discussed; the areas mapping well the position of young people in the public space and their attitudes and opinions relating its quality and possibilities it offers them:

- 1) What worries them on the local, national and global levels.
- 2) How politicians help them to find orientation and solution.
- 3) What they themselves try to do to improve their environment.

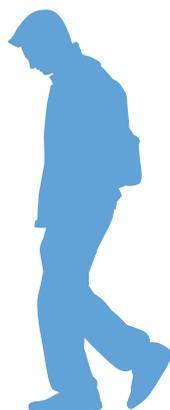
What worries us

At first, let's consider the local and Czech problems (the survey *One World in Schools*):

► „I consider the following to be the most serious problems in the municipality where I live“ (in %)

	2012		Difference from 2009	
	The most serious problem	Main problems	The most serious problem	Main problems
Co-existence with Roma minority	24	47	5 ▲	2
Lack of cultural event	8	36	-3 ▼	-11 ▼
Drugs	13	34	-1	-2
Unemployment	11	33	4 ▲	2
Traffic situation	8	29	-3 ▼	-9 ▼
Poor interpersonal relations	5	28	-1	-6 ▼
Foreigners and immigrants	4	28	0	0
Criminality	6	26	0	0
Poor environment	6	25	-2	-5 ▼
Homelessness	2	25	-1	-4 ▼
Local political representation	3	19	0	2
Racism and xenophobia	3	14	-1	-3 ▼
Corruption	3	14	1	4 ▲
Other	2	8	1	0

- The most serious problem
- Main problems



► „I consider the following to be the most serious problems in the Czech Republic“ (in %)

	2012		Difference from 2009	
	The most serious problem	Main problems	The most serious problem	Main problems
Co-existence with Roma minority	19	55	9 ▲	15 ▲
Political representation	15	55	-1	6 ▲
Unemployment	10	50	1	6 ▲
Corruption	14	47	4 ▲	10 ▲
Economic situation	9	35	4 ▲	12 ▲
Drugs	5	31	-4 ▼	-7 ▼
Criminality	6	31	-2	-1
Foreigners and immigrants	4	28	1	4 ▲
Racism and xenophobia	3	22	0	0
Poor interpersonal relations	3	22	-1	-3 ▼
Poor work of the police	2	18	-2	-6 ▼
Long court actions	1	16	-1	-13 ▼
Poor enforcement of law	2	15	-1	-4 ▼
Poor quality of schools and education	2	14	0	2
Poor environment	0	13	-1	-5 ▼
Poor quality of health care	2	12	-2	-7 ▼
Life oriented on consumption	1	9	-1	-1
Prostitution	0	4	-1	-5 ▼
Other	1	3	1	1

- The most serious problem
- Main problems

We can see that bad co-existence with the Roma minority is perceived as the biggest issues in both cases. As many as 55% of young people aged 15 to 19 think so on the national level. Simultaneously (in agreement with the adult population) almost all young people (90%) believe that Roma people have caused this situation, mainly because they do not want to work (58%), they show racist attitudes towards the „white“ majority (40%) and they are uneducated and they even do not want to educate themselves (37%). Unemployment, drugs and, on the national level, the total failure of political representations (this will be discussed later in more detail) are further serious issues.

The situation on the global level is as follows:

► „I consider the following to be the most serious problems in the world“ (in %)

	2012		Difference from 2009	
	The most serious problem	Main problems	The most serious problem	Main problems
Wars and conflicts	21	60	-1	-9 ▼
Diseases (AIDS and other)	16	56	-4 ▼	-12 ▼
Terrorism	9	47	-3 ▼	-13 ▼
Poverty in developing countries	10	46	3 ▲	-1
Drugs	4	33	2	2
Global warming	8	28	-9 ▼	-22 ▼
Poor environment	3	24	1	3 ▲
Overpopulation	5	23	3 ▲	6 ▲
Insufficient protection of human rights	3	23	1	3 ▲
Poor interpersonal relations	4	22	3 ▲	6 ▲
Racism and xenophobia	3	21	2	3 ▲
Illiteracy	2	18	1	4 ▲
Immigration	4	18	1	9 ▲
Undemocratic regimes	2	14	1	1
Religion	2	14	0	0
Life oriented on consumption	2	10	1	1
Globalisation	0	7	0	0
Other	2	3	1	0

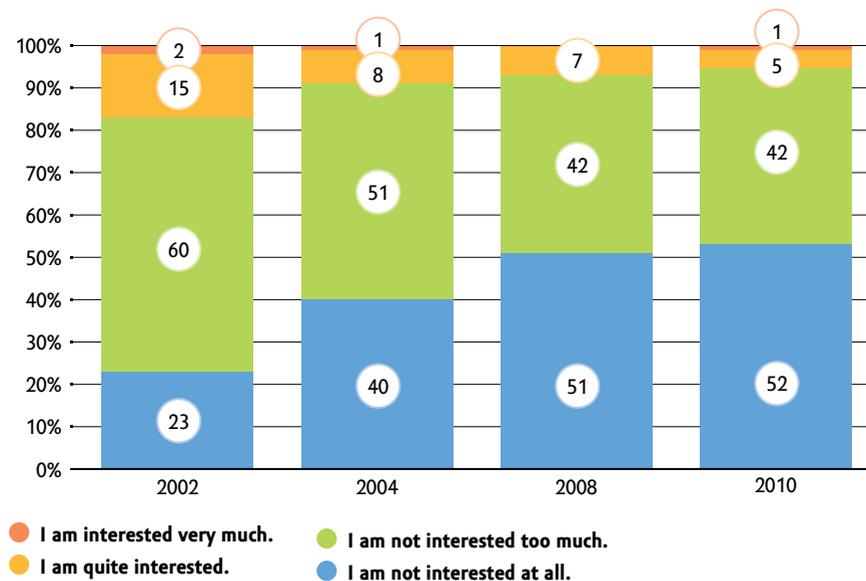
● The most serious problem ● Main problems

The identified findings are not surprising. Fears of violence (war, terrorism) and diseases are permanently the main threats perceived by people both in the Czech Republic and in the world. Closely following those threats are the circumstances, which are often their causes: poverty, drugs, poor interpersonal relations, disrespect for human rights, damaging the environment.

Politics? Not interested...

The Czech Republic features in general a very low (and even decreasing in the past decade) interest in politics. According to the European Social Survey, 94% of young people aged 15–29 (see the chart below) is not at all or almost not at all interested in politics, which is the lowest ratio of all European countries where the survey was conducted. In average 20% of young Europeans are interested in political events. The respondent's interest in politics tends to increase with his or her age, and the differences between the youngest respondents and those who are almost 30 are evident.

► Young people interested in the politics (age 15–29 years)



The most frequently mentioned reasons why young people do not follow political events in the Czech Republic include: disinterest in politics in general (65%), disgust due to the current situation in society (38%), and zero possibility to influence social affairs (22%). 72% of young Czechs aged 18 to 30 stated they had turned out to vote in at least one election in the past three years; the figure is slightly below the European average. Indeed, the youth electoral preferences are more radical rather than those of the general population; besides, it turned out that preferences were quite different between vocational-school students who preferred the *Workers' Party of Social Justice*, the *Pirate Party* and the *Communist Party*, and secondary-school students who clearly preferred *TOP 09* and *ANO*.

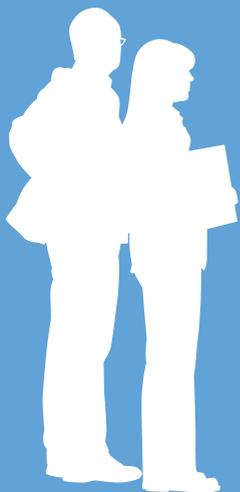
How do young people see an ideal politician?

- ▶ *He/she is patient, honest and eloquent and he/she can communicate with different people; he/she is educated, smart and representative. He/she respects traditions, but he/she can adapt himself/herself and his/her work to the needs of the modern time. He/she is popular, realistic. He/she wants to improve the situation. He/she is persuasive. He/she turns up at meetings. He/she has no dubious record, supports participation of youth, he/she is a team-player, sociable, he/she can listen to others. He/she is not afraid to assert himself/herself and his/her opinions. He/she is incorruptible, works hard and persistently, he/she does not have racist opinions, is brief, matter-of-fact, modest, empathic, honest and responsible, initiative, lives a healthy life style.*

What do young people miss in this area?

- ▶ *Young people know that active and responsible citizens can become competent politicians.*
- ▶ *Citizens should be able to remove upon an initiative the politicians who are not considered competent any more by citizens. The initiative could be in the form of a petition. Every politician should be given an opportunity to defend in the public space that he/she behaved in a competent way or his/her behaviour was in favour of society as a whole. Politics are a difficult „craft“ and, unfortunately, it brings about many unpopular steps that have to be taken in certain situations by a proper and competent politician. If a politician loses the public trust due to such steps, he/she should be given an opportunity to defend his/her honour and explain that such steps were necessary. If he/she does not manage, he/she should then be removed from his/her post, or he/she should be held liable for his/her improper acting.*

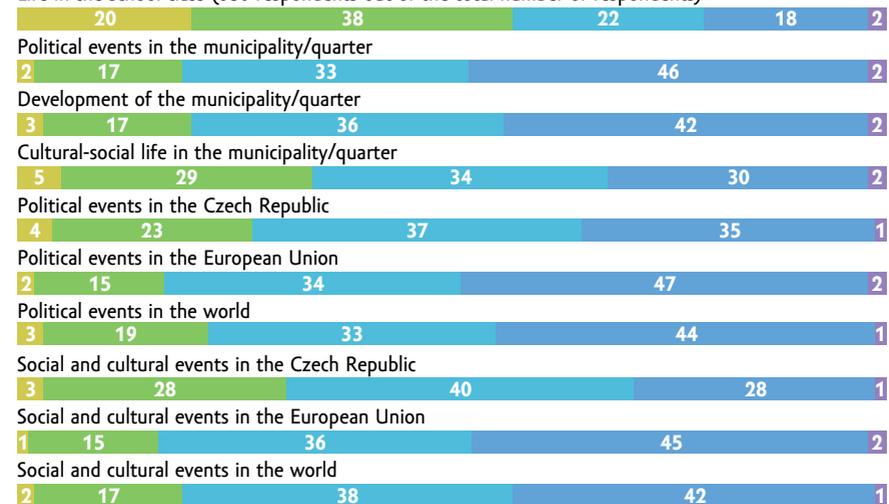
From the project **Have Your Say**



It is useful to put the young people's (dis)interest in political affairs into a broader context of their interest/disinterest in what is going on round them. The chart below illustrates it to some extent. It shows, amongst other, that young people can be interested in many things – in case they believe it relates them and they believe they can influence it somehow.

▶ Young people interested / not interested in the politics in a given context (in %) (total number of respondents 1,061)

Life in the school class (680 respondents out of the total number of respondents)

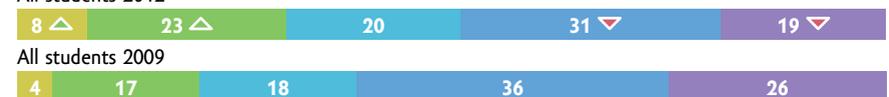


- I am interested in details.
- I am interested a little to have general information.
- I am interested marginally.
- I am not interested at all or almost at all.
- I do not know. / Answer refused.

The aforementioned findings are supported by our secondary school students' opinions on the question whether or not the life in socialist Czechoslovakia had been better compared to the present life. Answers are shown in the chart below; it is important to notice the change in the past three years:

▶ Opinions of the young on the life in socialist Czechoslovakia (in %)

All students 2012

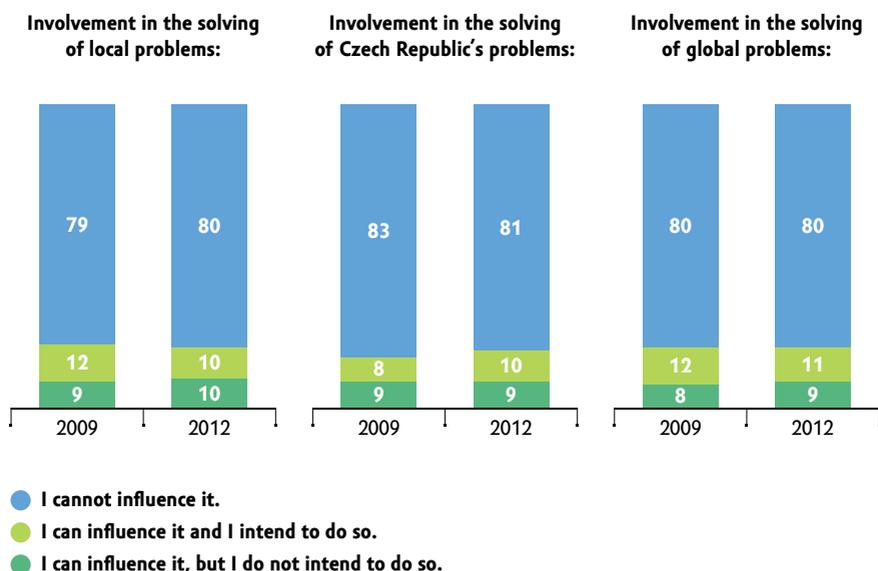


- Much better
- Rather better
- Similar
- Rather worse
- Much worse

We cannot do too much about it, although...

The young people's critical opinion on the public sphere should be supplemented with the findings showing whether or not and to what extent they are aware that they are not just observers, but they are also actors. Their answers to the question whether they can actively contribute to find a solution of what worries them – on the local, national and global levels – are illustrated in the charts below:

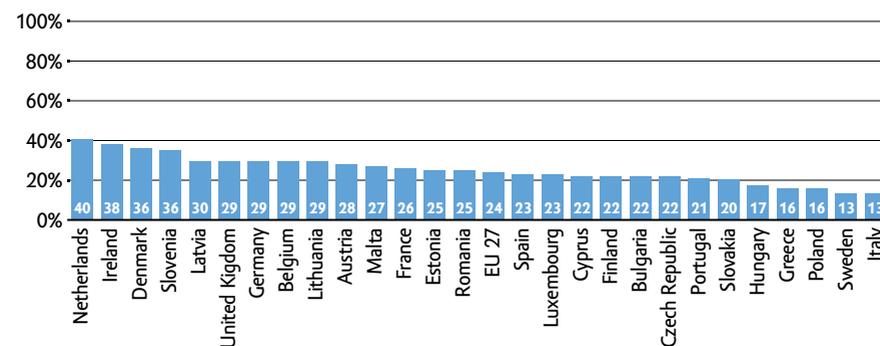
► Involvement of the young in problem-solving (in %)



Now we know that a vast majority of Czechs aged 15 to 19 believe that they *cannot* do anything about the problems – from those on the local level to the global problems. And of the small part (about 20%) who thinks they *could* do something, as many as a half is not willing to.

This sad picture is corrected a little by the fact that a non-negligible part of our youth still tries to do something for their environment and, sometimes, for the world. And they do it on a voluntary basis – without being paid for it. The chart below shows how we stand in the European comparison:

► Involvement of the young volunteers in problem-solving in EU countries



Compared to the Netherlands with 40% of regular volunteers from among young people, we lag behind quite significantly, but we do not differ too much from the European standard. Other researches indicate that compared to the other age categories (in particular seniors), young people aged 15–24 incline to less intensive activities (9 hours per month in average), and compared to the others, there is a higher probability of one organisation only, for a short time and on a less regular basis. Their activities focus most frequently on hobbies in the area of sports (18% of volunteers in sports are represented by youth), in the area of youth activities (38%) and also – in particular in rural areas – as volunteer firemen (17%). There is also a higher ratio of young people who help organisations or individuals not directly, but indirectly or in a „remote“ way, for example, in the form of administration of websites, translation or technical consultation and advising.

Global issues

Compared to the other European countries, the ratio of Czech youth participation in projects with global themes is relatively low. 1.5% of young people state they were involved in the past year in activities of non-profit organisations focusing on the global climate change or global warming, and 3.5% of young people participate in activities of organisations promoting human rights. Approximately 2% of the 15–30-year-olds participated in the past 12 months in the activities or projects to support cooperation of young people from different continents.

Based on group discussions we sorted students into three types by the criteria of their involvement and activities – **very active** (max. 5%), **active** (40%) and **passive** (55%).

- ▶ The level of differentiation in their attitudes and civic involvement correlated to some extent with the **school type** and **gender** („active grammar school female students vs. passive vocational school male students“).
- ▶ In general, we noticed in the examined groups a **lack of stimuli and models** that would intensively and consistently lead and educate the survey participants to be involved in the solving of social issues. **Parents** and **teachers** and, in general, **media** turned out to be a weak link.
- ▶ **Lack of time** and excessive stimuli are also barriers in accepting the social involvement-related themes. In particular the „passive“ ones choose the least-resistance way, i.e. what is „the most comfortably digestible“ for them, what is close to them and what satisfies their need of fellowship.
- ▶ Besides, teenagers also **fight** with the stereotype of the label of children without any attitude and ability to act, which is often attached to them by teachers in communication and which is used to „silence“ them symbolically.
- ▶ **Media** can also be a **demotivating factor** to some extent – in particular, negative media images of thematised events.

A **lack of authorities** was also evident in a local context.

- ▶ The respondents mentioned only in a negligible ratio persons from their places of residence who “do something for the community”, i.e. who is socially involved. A “strong drive” is missing.
- ▶ Mostly, negative criticism of local politicians appeared, sometimes in connection with corruption (however, it was a generally shared image – the respondents themselves did not have any experience of their own).

Summary:

The role of the closest “influencers” is important. Young people need locally close models to involve them and work with them – to override other offered stimuli. Unfortunately, the teenagers’ social environment lacks enough strong opinion-leaders for the young people to be sufficiently motivated towards active citizenship.

From an analysis of the qualitative survey **One World in Schools**

Why „having your say“?



We could be finding new and new answers to the question „why having your say“; let us try to mention at least the most frequent ones:

- ▶ *Because I have the right to say my opinion. If I disagree with anything and if I can influence it, I should not be indifferent;*
- ▶ *I can learn more about the issue, to expand my horizon and knowledge;*
- ▶ *At the same time I unconsciously strengthen my positive attitude to life and reinforce my abilities and skills I can use in the future, such as active communication, endurance, attention, ability to search information, work with information, critical thinking, ability to discuss correctly and dispassionately, tolerance to different opinions of others, and I also boost up my self-confidence;*
- ▶ *Because I meet many interesting people, peers, older and younger ones, and I can learn from them many things or I can give them something, I can also find new friends among them;*
- ▶ *I can support what I believe is right;*
- ▶ *I can have many interesting experiences I would hardly have otherwise, I can see places I would not go to normally;*
- ▶ *Correct and real participation helps me assume responsibility, exactly in line with my own development and maturing;*
- ▶ *By turning up to vote I support representatives elected based on their programme, which they should later implement and take care of the functioning of the state „on my behalf“, if I am not interested myself, I do not have time myself or I do not have other options to be involved myself in public affairs.*

From the conclusions of the project **Have Your Say**



Without rose-tinted glasses
We and the school

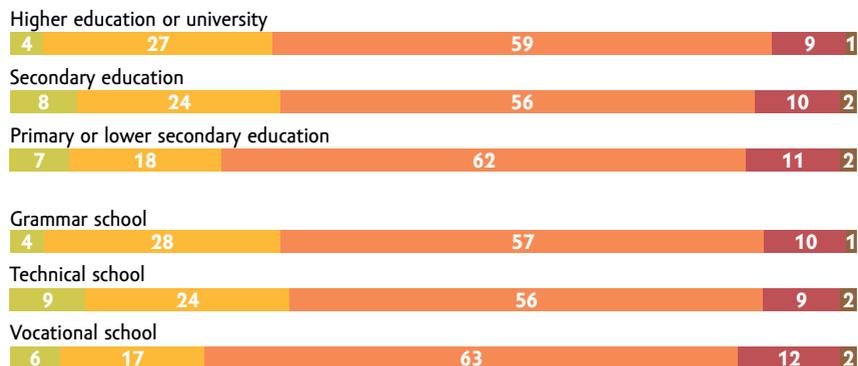


We and the school

The relation of our youth to school is mostly no surprise and no concern. On the other hand, however, the fact that at least 10% of students (of vocational schools) are scared by school is surely a cause for concern.

The situation is illustrated in the chart below:

► **Relation to school by the achieved level of education and type of school (in %)**



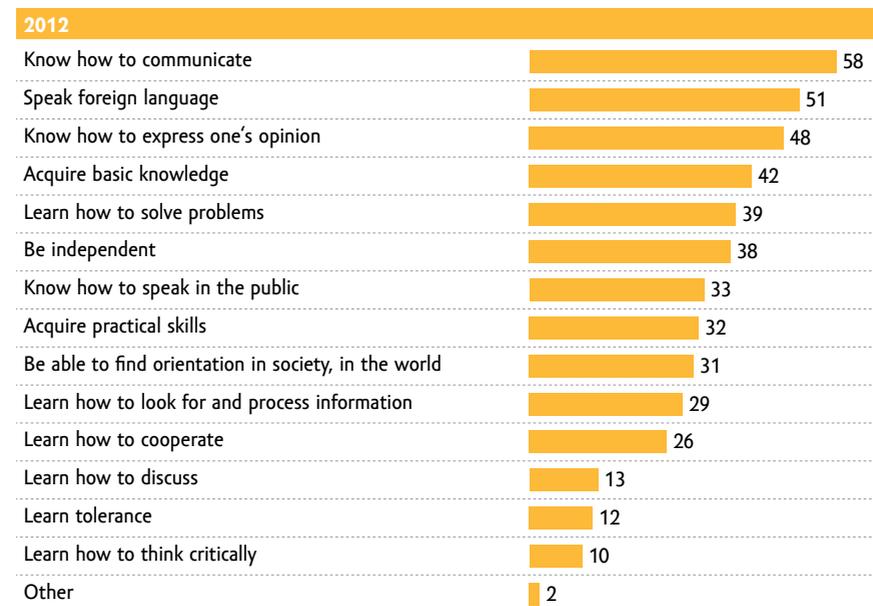
- I enjoy very much going to school, I look forward to school almost every morning.
- I quite enjoy going to school, I mostly look forward to school in the morning.
- I neither do, nor do not enjoy going to school, I rarely look forward to school in the morning, but I do not fear school.
- I do not like going to school, I often fear school in the morning.
- I hate going to school, I almost always fear school in the morning.

In 2012 secondary-school students scored their schools higher rather than in 2009. The average rating improved from 2.47 up to 2.1 and the number of awarded „ones“ increased from 12% up to 19%. It is symptomatic that the number of awarded „ones“ in vocational schools remained unchanged (12%), it increased at technical schools by 11% (18% vs. 9%) and at grammar schools (28% vs. 17%).



And what do they expect to receive mainly at school? That is illustrated in the chart below:

► **What did the school teach me? (in %)**



College students and their success rates

As regards graduates, we already know that the number of those aged 30–34 is exactly the same as the EU average twelve years ago – that means less by almost one third compared to the current number (25% in the Czech Republic, 36% EU average). The total number of newly enrolled college students stagnates in recent years, although it is a common opinion that their numbers keep increasing (and too much). Because of the weaker population years and lower numbers of secondary school leavers in the next years, the numbers of new college students can be expected to stagnate or even decrease.

In the Czech Republic 67% of men and as many as 83% of women who started their college studies successfully complete their studies. This indicator is above-average compared to the other European states.

Motivation to study

The three main reasons motivating young people to higher education to similar extent (about 25%) includes: the wish to study further, the wish to receive academic degree, and the wish to achieve a desired job. Achieving social prestige and expectations of the environment are the most significant factors influencing students of law. A very minimum of students say they study to help other people.

The following survey indicates that the numbers of students across study branches are not distributed evenly; in particular students of social studies, business and law prevail significantly. Their numbers more than doubled from 2001:

► Representation of study branches

Type of studies	Education	Humanities, arts	Social sciences, trade, law	Natural sciences, mathematics, informatics
Year 2001	28 439	19 683	53 211	21 127
Year 2010	44 652	38 823	137 440	49 688
Type of studies	Technical sciences, manufacture, engineering	Agriculture, veterinary medicine	Health care, social care	Services
Year 2001	50 516	8 408	18 232	7 616
Year 2010	59 449	16 341	35 950	20 671

Secondary-school students' interest in college studies and individual branches develop with their age and year of studies; it differs by the type of secondary school and by students' abilities to study. Most secondary-school students at the beginning of their fourth grade prefer technical branches; however, most applications are later sent to the colleges with economic orientation. Students wishing to study mathematical-physical branches feature the best abilities to study, while those applying for pedagogical branches feature the lowest abilities to study. Students usually choose a particular school with regard to their career; the quality of instruction is of the same importance for students interested in social sciences. Students applying for pedagogical branches relatively frequently look for as cheap as possible studies and as easy as possible way to graduate.

Lack of authorities at schools

Formation of the relation to school is in general affected by a lack of authorities. Teachers are a very important, though weaker link. In the discussions teachers were quite frequently depicted as those who personalise a rigid school system attributing to students a role of a passive audience. A lack of respected authorities among teachers stress the exceptional qualities of several high-quality teachers. They were praised in the discussions for their active approach to instruction, for their ability to discuss with students, to listen to them and to their opinions – simply, for their friendly treatment of students as equal communication partners, as adults.

From an analysis of the survey *One World in Schools*

Sexual education at schools

The young people involved in the project *Have Your Say* expressed their strong support to the so-called sexual education at schools. The first thing to be changed, however, is the title of the theme (e.g. sexual education and relations), because it does not at all cover all the issues to be taught in their opinion. Instruction should focus more on relations, education/instruction towards partnership, the role and functions of family, the formation of personal values, etc. Special attention should be paid to appropriateness and personal development and well-being of the individual.



What do you
enjoy most
at school?



- Jirka:** *"Mostly, the breaks and the lunch when I am hungry."*
- Joia:** *"Also the breaks, certain lessons with certain teachers, nothing else probably."*
- Šimon:** *"I enjoy most that I have friends there and gym classes."*
- Max:** *"I like the breaks with my friends and certain classes when someone is provoking and we begin laughing."*
- Katka:** *"The breaks and classes with good teachers."*
- Davy:** *"The breaks and friends."*

And what you
do not enjoy?



- Anička:** *"The gym teacher."*
- Tomáš:** *"Teaching in general."*
- Šimon:** *"I would eliminate chemistry and physics."*
- Joia and Bára:** *"Our teacher teaches poorly. She lowers our self-esteem. Sometimes, she is even a racist."*
- Davy:** *"I don't like the Czech language and I'd also shorten classes."*
- Katka:** *"I would replace certain teachers. They are terrible."*
- Michala:** *"The gym classes. It is not physical training, it's a torture."*



On the labour market

The international study *First Steps into the Labour Market* conducted by Deloitte in 2013, which maps the situation and attitudes of students before they enter the labour market, indicates that almost a half of Czech college students have some experience with work in the branch they study. Simultaneously, 61% of respondents believe that Czech higher-education institutions do not prepare their graduates for the process of looking for job, and one third of respondents even think that the university will not prepare them for their professional life. The most important

values of work for them include „pleasant people“ (96%) and „good salary“ (93%), as well as the opportunity to achieve something and the opportunity to use their skills. That their work help somebody is important only for 45% of college students. 72% of respondents stated they were willing to move within the Czech Republic to find better employment.

Entrepreneurship

As regards the willingness to start one's own business, the recent comparative surveys show that Czech young people are on the bottom places. Only 35% of respondents stated they would like to start their own business (the EU27 average is 43%). The reasons why young people do not want to start their own business include in particular: a lack of money (63%), a lack of courage to start business (40%), an absence of a business plan (40%), fears from competition and concerns about responsibility and stress. On the other hand, the certainty of work and stable income, the opportunity to concentrate on one's own work and not solving organisation or administration issues, as well as the opportunity to gain work experience and establish good contacts are the reasons why most young people prefer employment.

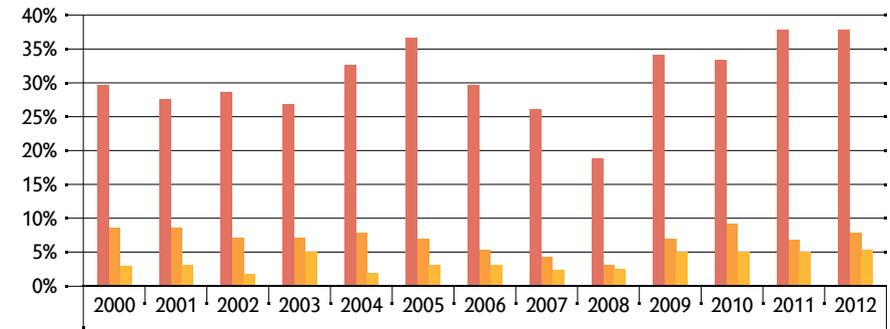
Unemployment

The Czech Republic still belongs to the European countries with the lowest (though growing) unemployment rate, including youth unemployment. As indicated by the Eurostat report from April 2012, total unemployment in the European Union was 10.9% and unemployment of the 15–24-year-olds was 22.6%. In one year it increased up to 11% and 23.5% in the case of youth unemployment. The situation in the Czech Republic was slightly better. Total unemployment in April 2012 was 7.1% and unemployment of the 15–24-year-olds was 19.6%. In one year it increased up to 7.2% and 20% in the case of youth unemployment. That means youth unemployment is almost three times as high as the unemployment rate in the general population of the 15–64-year-olds.

The level of education naturally plays an important role in unemployment. That is well documented by the following chart, which shows the ratio (in %) of the unemployed in the age group of the 24–29-year-olds.



▶ Youth unemployment by achieved level of education



- primary or lower-secondary education (without leaving examinations)
- higher secondary education (with leaving examinations, including further studies after completion of vocational school)
- university or higher technical education

It is not surprising that graduates with higher levels of education feature a lower unemployment rate. It is also evident, however, that in spite of the current economic problems there are opportunities to find jobs in particular in industrial manufacture, which is indicated by low values of unemployment in the machinery and certain electrotechnical branches. After many years the decrease in the ratio of students admitted to vocational branches was stopped.

Negative effects of unemployment

Long-term youth unemployment is a serious problem. The data from the Czech Republic fluctuated from 2000; the highest value 38.3% was achieved in 2005, long-term unemployment increased again in 2012 to exceed slightly the European average. Its negative effects can also include life and social dependence on the family, non-development of acquired skills and abilities, reduced contacts and social isolation, non-formation of necessary work habits and tendency to risky behaviour. Many young people can get into the situation that they lose motivation to look for job and they put up with their role of the unemployed.

What to do to improve the young people's chances on the labour market...

- ▶ Young people's access to the labour market requires certain practical skills, which are demanded by employers – therefore, it is necessary to support the opportunities for young people to acquire such practical skills and experience, either within their school education or leisure-time activities. That is why practical gaining of skills should be supported, in particular through cooperation with government institutions, including school facilities, non-government non-profit organisations working with children and youth and the private sector.
- ▶ Young people consider insufficient the approach of government institutions mediating young people's entry to the labour market (in particular employment agencies) – in addition to proper information on opportunities and the offer, they miss a motivation factor and assistance. The employment agencies' procedures in relation to young people are very demotivating. Only a few employment agencies offer special programmes for young people. Employment agency advisers do not offer adequate services to the young people as a specific group of population – in particular to those looking for their initial employment. The category „Graduate“ is very limited and it does not solve in a complex way the needs of all young people.
- ▶ Employment agencies should offer consultancy as a standard service to the young people looking for job. Such service should help young people find orientation in the offer and motivate them to join the labour process in various forms, including entrepreneurship.
- ▶ The young generation worries a lot about summer-time jobs and internships and about opportunities to earn some money during their studies, in particular during tertiary education. Young people confirm the researches and information from the EU that working students are often used to do more complicated, risky and inadequately remunerated jobs.
- ▶ There are concerns also about web portals offering various part-time jobs. One can often find there offers the contents of which do not correspond to the real activity or remuneration. Operators of such services should check the advertised offers and filter out misleading and deceptive offers.
- ▶ People of any age should be given an opportunity to complete their education and, for example, sit for leaving examinations, etc., in case they did not manage to do so during their youth, so that they have a chance to find a better job throughout their lives.

An output from the project *Have Your Say*

What would you like to achieve in your life?

Lukáš: *“Own a company and create software.”*

Žužu: *“I'd like to be a pilot of aeroplane or a doctor.”*

Bára: *“I'd like to be admitted to grammar school, that's my dream, then to university, become a veterinary doctor or an actress.”*

Anička: *“I'd like to go to conservatory, or become a doctor.”*

Tomáš: *“I'd like to be a lawyer.”*

Šimon: *“I'd like to have such work, which earns me enough money, simply, I'd like to be well off.”*

Joia: *“I have a plan to go to a good grammar school, go to America to my relatives in the second grade and study in the USA, then return back and study at the Academy of Arts, an acting course.”*

Davy: *“I'd like to earn a lot of money. And one day go to Florida to have a rest.”*

Katka: *“I'd like to be a tennis-player, a really good one.”*





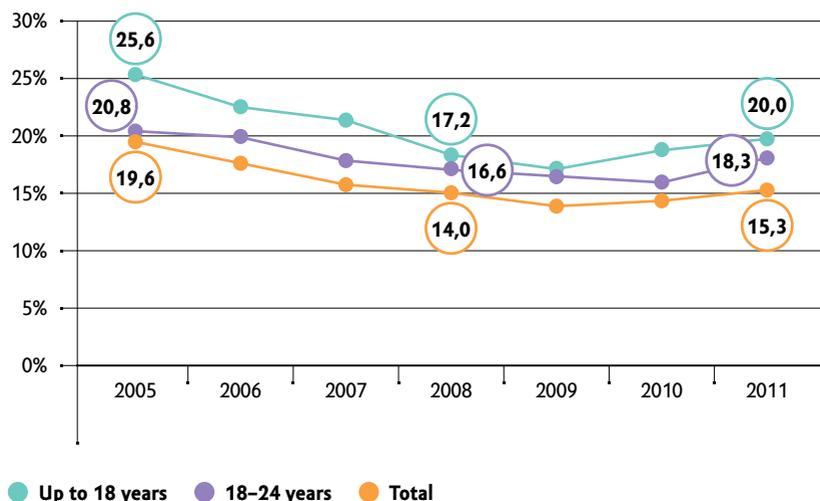
Without rose-tinted glasses
When life does not go well



When life does not go well

Compared to the other European countries, the risk of poverty or social exclusion is very low in the Czech Republic, even in the population of young people (aged 18–24). The poverty-risk rate in this category was 18.9% in 2012 (the EU27 average among the 18–24-year-olds was 31.5%), while the overall risk rate in the population is 15.4% (the EU27 average was 24.8%). Commencing from 2009, values of the risk rate increase in the Czech Republic.

▶ **Young people at risk of poverty, serious material shortages and ratio of households with very low labour intensity**



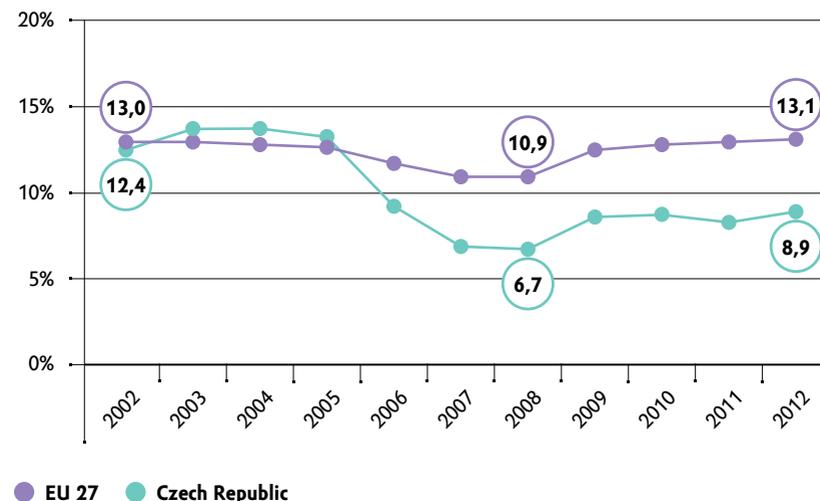
This characteristic is based on three partial indicators: the rate of poverty risk, serious material shortages, and the rate of households with very low intensity of labour. The data for the Czech Republic’s population are below the European average in all three indicators. The value of poverty risk was 12.7% in 2011 in the population of the 18–24-year-olds, serious material shortages were found in 6.1%, and 6.6% lived in that year in the households with very low intensity of labour.

Specific group of the so-called “NEET” young people

The word NEET* is used to refer to the persons (aged 15 to 24) who are not involved in education, employment or training regardless of the level of their education; that is why they are more at risk on the labour market and more at risk of social exclusion. The risk factors increasing the probability that a young person gets into that category include: disability, immigration origin, a low level of education, abode in distant areas, low income of the household, parents’ experience with unemployment, a low level of parents’ education, their divorce and life in incomplete family.

* Not in Education, Employment, or Training

▶ **Specific group of the so-called „NEET” young people**



The chart shows that the number of young people who fall under the NEET group is relatively low in the Czech Republic compared to other European countries. The figure in 2012 was less than 9%, whereas the European average achieved 13.1%; nevertheless, it should be taken into account that the figure means over one hundred thousand young people in our country.

Roma minority

The Roma minority members form a group, which is at exceptional risk of social exclusion and life failure in general. According to the *Report on the State of Roma Minority in the Czech Republic in 2012*, the situation of Roma youth aged 15 to 26 is alarming. 61% of them are unemployed and, in addition to that, 77% of them never had any work experience. The very low age when Roma children and youth have a contact with an addictive substance, which is 9 to 13 years, is also a serious issue. *An analysis of attitudes and educational needs of Roma children and youth* indicated, amongst other, that problems of Roma integration are rooted also in education. Roma children have a very low chance to remain in the classes of primary schools to which they come; out of ten Roma children entering first classes of primary schools, only three boys and a half of girls remain in their original classes. As already mentioned, our young generation also considers the situation of Roma people to be the most serious social issue – and they clearly blame Roma people themselves.

Criminality

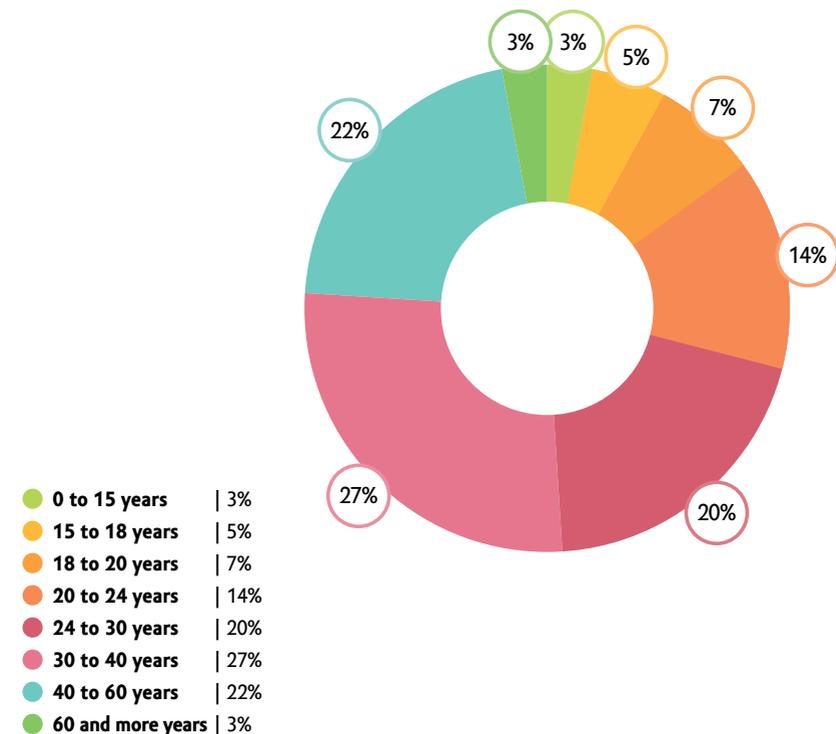
Finally, we should also mention a very sad area – criminality. According to the data from 2010, children aged under 15 committed 1,584 and juvenile persons 5,339 crimes. People below 30 years of age commit in our country 48% of crimes (see the chart). What is positive is that youth criminality keeps decreasing during the past years and the trend is of a long-term character. The ratio of prosecuted and investigated persons also decreases in the case of children and juveniles.

Child and juvenile offenders usually commit property crimes, in particular theft and burglary, robbery and battery, and other offences (such as car accidents, obstruction of justice, graffiti spraying, illegal manufacture and possession of narcotic and psychotropic substances, etc.). The highest ratios of juvenile offenders in the total numbers of investigated and prosecuted persons were recorded in the Moravian-Silesian Region (5.4%) and in the Region of Vysočina (4.9%); on the contrary, the lowest ratio was recorded in Prague (1.5%).

According to the survey *Youth about Criminality and Every-day Ethics*, criminality is mostly caused due to the abuse of psychotropic substances, in particular hard drugs and alcohol, as well as due to bad friends (delinquents live in a social environment inspiring to crimes where such behaviour is supported and appreciated), desire to make one's mark among one's peers and a lack of positive stimuli how to spend free time. The respondents also state that youth criminality is caused to a considerable extent by improper upbringing in the family and, in general, by poor examples given by adults.

The participants of the project *Have Your Say* consider the issue of bullying and cyberbullying to be a topical theme, which was faced by a large part of young people. It should be paid special attention and considered as breach of the child's rights. In particular, it is necessary

► Crime ratios in certain age group



to stress prevention and, simultaneously, work on follow-up solutions, which are friendly to children and young people in case bullying and cyberbullying already occurred. It is a society-wide problem with a serious impact on the victim's psychic and healthy development.

Our wishes, or what we recommend



Behaviour of authorities

- ▶ Control the behaviour of the authorities in the public space in terms of observing ethical rules. We demand that ethic codes be included in employment contracts for politicians, civil servants, school managers, teachers and entrepreneurs, and that their breach be penalised. Individuals should be made to be personally liable for their behaviour.

The principle of self-control of various groups can be a start; but it should be supported with legislative measures defining different punishments, primarily alternative ones, as well as, for example, firing of office-holders who breach ethic codes.

Professional behaviour of politicians and public officials

- ▶ The state should clearly strengthen and be a model for a correct dialogue and public participation in the problem-solving. Citizens and young people cannot always be expected to speak and behave professionally in emotional situations, but professional behaviour should be a standard for public administration employees and politicians.

Education

- ▶ Schools should encourage the culture of participative dialogue and offer young people opportunities to solve shortages in their environment.

Public respect

- ▶ Both the government and elites should promote mutual respect and be good examples for citizens. Public media should

not pursue so much sensations, they should respond to relevant and positive news. The media and the state should try more to cultivate public discussions and contributions.

Work with minorities

- ▶ The work with minorities should be based on the values of esteem, respect, equal treatment of all citizens. Discrimination should be duly punished.

Responsibility of politicians and public officials

- ▶ The state should clearly define responsibilities of politicians and office-holders for their acts and decisions.

Human rights

- ▶ The need of plurality society, respect and human rights should be reminded repeatedly and wrongdoers or individuals and groups, which can breach them, should be worked with accordingly.

Vulgarity in the public

- ▶ Politicians, office-holders and celebrities should avoid vulgarity and they should not use vulgar words in contact with the public. The public and citizens should not use vulgarity as a means to achieve their own interests, in particular in relation to public authorities, but also among themselves.

Consumer protection

- ▶ The Czech Republic should strive for a clear and better protection of consumers, both in the Czech Republic and in the European Union, because

quality standards already fall to a considerable extent under the European single market. Where standards on the European level are inadequate, the Czech standards should be stricter and compliance should be checked.

Consumer protection audit

- ▶ The Czech Republic should presently conduct an independent audit of consumer protection and prepare proper amendments to the consumer protection policy.

Legislation in the field of addictive substances

- ▶ The state should consistently enforce the applicable legislation as regards the abuse of alcohol and drugs and the selling of alcohol and tobacco products to juvenile persons. The state should tighten up punishment for non-compliance with the applicable legislation, in particular as regards the selling of addictive substances, alcohol and tobacco to juvenile persons.

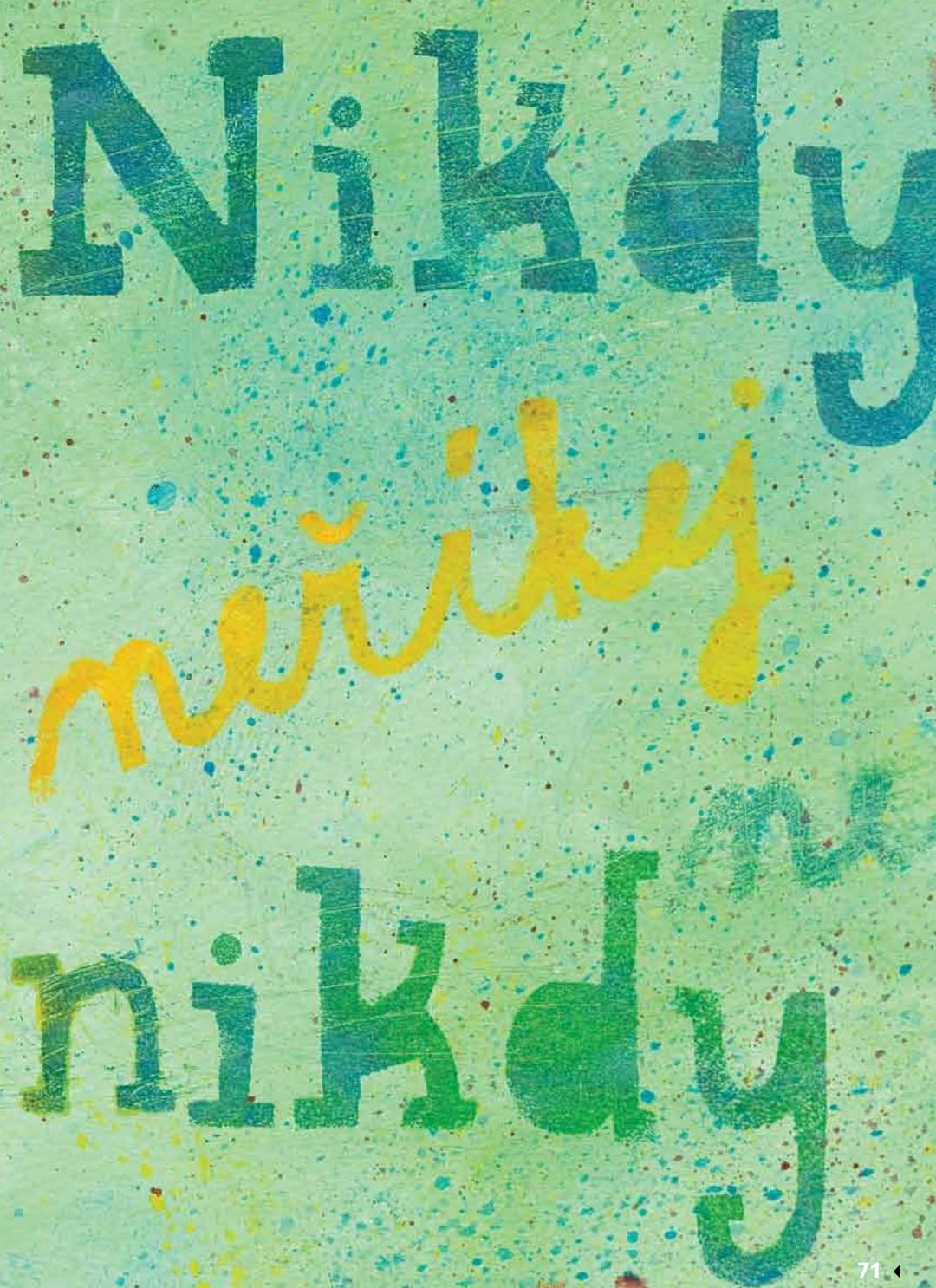
Audit in the field of corruption and abuse of powers

- ▶ The state should order an independent audit of opportunities of corruption and misuse of powers by office-holders, politicians, entrepreneurs, etc., and later an open, transparent and public discussion should be held and result in adequate measures to limit the opportunities of corruption and misuse of powers.

From the project *Have Your Say*

References and sources

- ▶ This publication uses the results summarised in a paper by Mgr. Hana Maříková *Report on Youth 2013 – Basic Information on the Situation of Young People in the Czech Republic*, which also contains references to numerous researches.
- ▶ The other important sources include reports on the research project *One World in Schools* (conducted by People in Need), which are available at the *One World in Schools* website: https://www.jsns.cz/cz/article/57/Pruzkumy_a_setreni.html.
- ▶ The reports on the project *Have Your Say* are posted at <http://www.kecejmedotoho.cz/>
- ▶ Statements of teenagers are quoted from a qualitative survey in relation to the project *Value Orientation of Children Aged 6 to 15* (<http://www.nidm.cz/projekty/realizace-projektu/klice-pro-zivot/vyzkumy/cile-a-vystupy/zaverecna-zprava-z-vyzkumu-hodnotove-orientace-deti-ve-veku-6-15-let>), which was conducted among teenagers aged 13 to 15 in Prague and in the towns of Prostějov and Chýnov u Tábora.



Without Rose-Tinted Glasses
Our youth seen by researches, and our world and life in it seen by the youth

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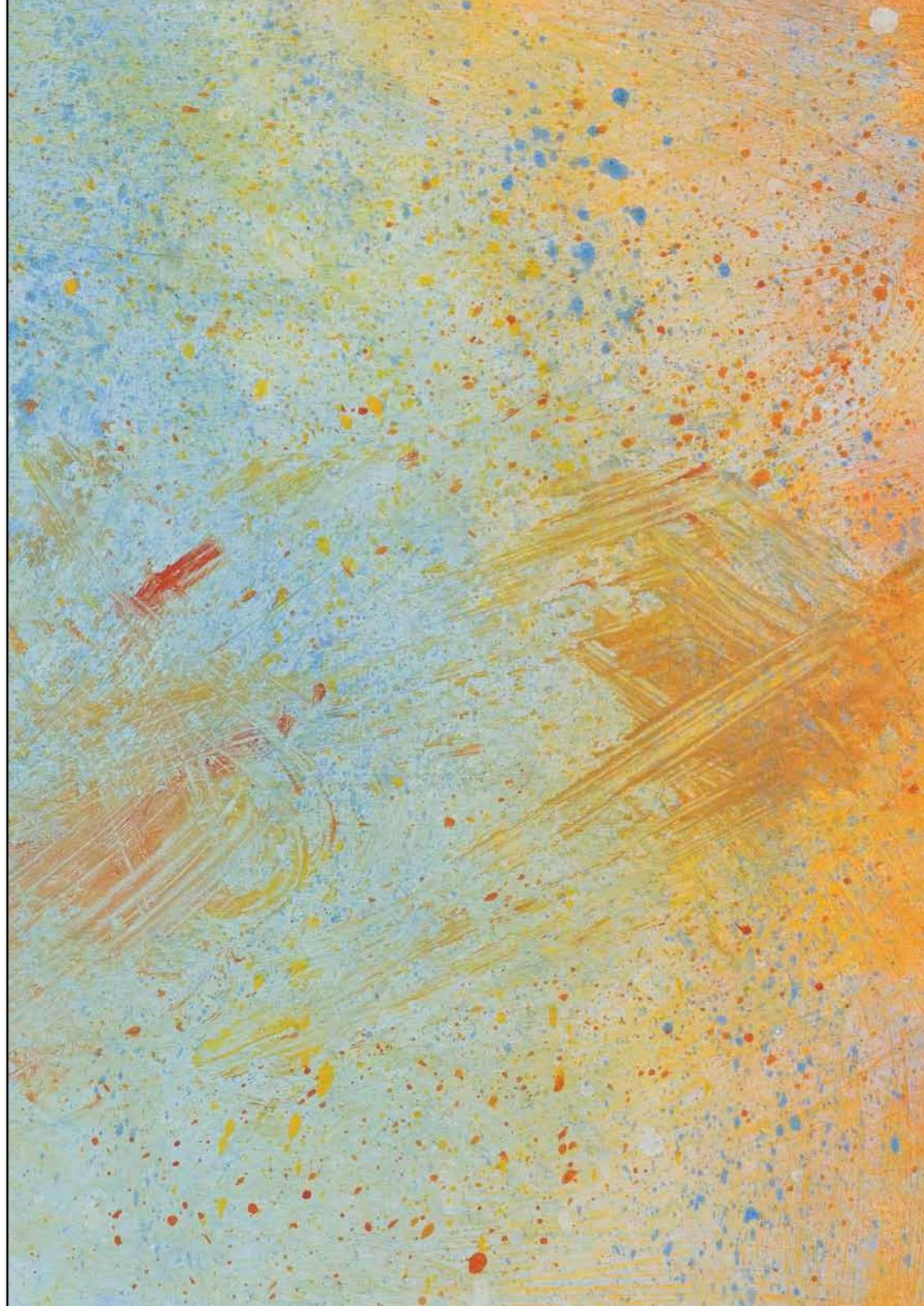
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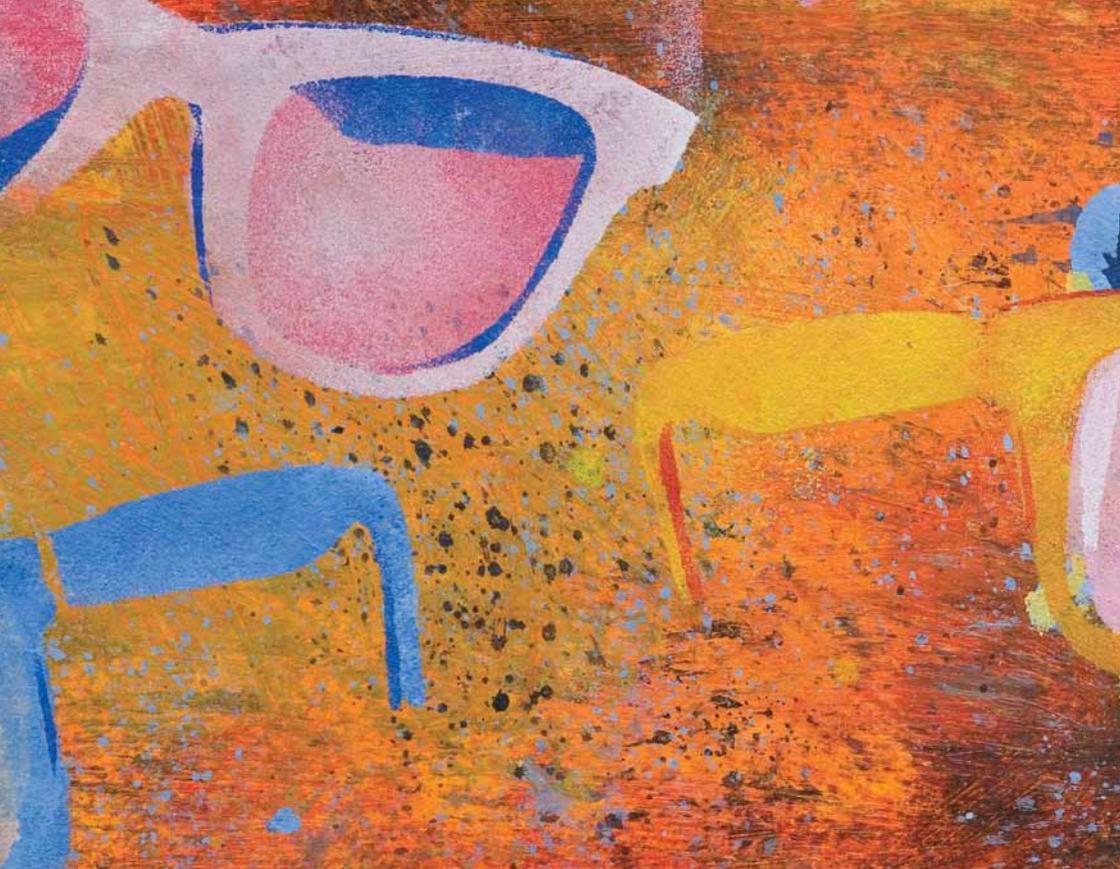
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