

Dear Readers, Users of Statistical Information:

Good statesman, politician, manager, as well as every responsible citizen are well aware that the ability of critical thinking and making of objective decisions without having quality statistics is a very hard task. More and more people from both the professional and lay public, who use statistics in an effective manner in their job or private life, become aware of the importance of statistics for further progress. What I can see as a positive thing is the circle of users of the Czech Statistical Office outcomes has been expanding at a relatively fast pace, and, vice versa, people who are unaware of statistics or are not willing to notice it have been gradually reduced in number. This is very good for the society because only humans with statistical literacy are by far less prone to deliberate or unintentional misinterpretation of data, and therefore enjoys a higher degree of freedom yet are also more responsible in their decision making at any level, beginning at the household budget to public finances at the end.

Information provided by the Czech Statistical Office to its users is based on national and international methodological foundations (built for a long-term and in a sophisticated way), which are under strict auspices of international institutions as Eurostat, United Nations Statistics Division, and others.

Over the whole year the Czech Statistical Office published 211 News Releases, 400 time series, 444 publications, and 81 analyses and commentaries. The most complete overview of the economic, social, and environmental state of our country is the cardinal and comprehensive statistical publication of the Czech Statistical Service, the Statistical Yearbook of the Czech Republic 2015. It presents a wide spectrum of statistical data in an easy to view and coherently structured form. The publication contains 30 chapters you have already become accustomed to, yet two of them have been renamed to Information Society and to Science, Research and Innovations giving them names that in a better way reflect the described area surveyed and better suit current terminology as well.

The society development in information and communication technologies (ICT) was incorporated, *inert alia*, into the opening chapter Key National Economy Indicators, which new indicators on higher education students of informatics, as well as of other science and technology studies were added into. Data on ICT specialists newly include data on professionals and technicians in the respective area, on individuals using the Internet, and on ICT investments. In chapter Information Society you will also find tables with data on businesses using electronic submissions to public administration and data on the number of mobile phones in households by income group. Concerning telecommunication infrastructure the section with data on individuals using the Internet in mobile phones, communicating on social networks, and shopping via the Internet will be surely interesting to you as well.

The Statistical Yearbook of the Czech Republic 2015 contains 32 new tables. Table with data on the population by age group and, for the first time, by marital status is a novelty in chapter Population. Finalised data on the long-term development of external trade newly include time series with data for the Euro Area 18. Table with expenditure on health care by diagnosis with time series since 2010 is new in chapter Health. Chapter Culture and Sport was modified and now contains, *inter alia*, tables with economic indicators for radio and television broadcast, data for sales of musical records and of feature films shown in cinemas. Sports fans will find data on medals won at world and European championships and cups in elite or adult categories.

Other changes in the publication are in chapter Organizational Structure of the National Economy. There were changes in classification of businesses into institutional sectors and subsectors made to the Statistical Business Register in accord with the newly adopted international classification ESA 2010. Performing these changes was, however, not an easy task but it was one of the conditions for successful implementation of the ESA 2010. The Czech Republic was even the only Member State of the European Union, which managed to adopt the new standard of system of national accounts with no derogation.

Dear readers, I believe that the Statistical Yearbook of the Czech Republic 2015 will serve you as a quality source of data which will assist you in formulating of correct conclusions and subsequently in adopting of proper decisions, the same way as in the previous years. May our statistical information be further a useful assistant in your job or studies. Believe, please, that we at the Czech Statistical Office do our best the Office would stay with you as a trustworthy and reliable partner not merely for collection, processing, and presentation of statistical data.

*Closing the foreword allow me, please, to express my thanks to all members of the Editorial Board of the Statistical Yearbook of the Czech Republic, to employees of the Czech Statistical Office, but also of ministries and other institutions, who contributed to the preparations of and enriched this issue of the Statistical Yearbook of the Czech Republic.*

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*President of the Czech Statistical Office*