

Dear Readers,

You have the *Statistical Yearbook of the Czech Republic 2018* on your hands. The Yearbook brings summary information from many branches and areas of life of our country and us, the country inhabitants, in the last year. Since the formation of the independent Czech Republic it is already 26th volume of this remarkable edition which still enjoys significant interest of not merely professional public. Its existence, popularity, and, first of all, the contents thereof are not just confirming importance of statistics as a scientific discipline yet also provide evidence of meaningfulness and inevitability of an independent and trustworthy official statistics describing in an easily comprehensible manner segments of our society over the whole range thereof.

How was the last year in the Czech Republic? The economy development in 2017 was characteristic for strong growth. The total increment to the gross domestic product reached 4.3% last year and economy was driven by increasing both domestic and foreign demand. Households benefited from strong growth in wages and increased their consumption costs as well as investments. Businesses used advantage of favourable development for investments into the production equipment innovation as well as an expansion of production capacities. In the first half of the year, especially, economic growth was supported also by growing positive balance of external trade.

The significant increase in demand brought great requirements for the production capabilities of Czech producers. Data of the Czech Statistical Office reveal the non-financial businesses responded by higher investments. Yet over a short term, producers solved the conditions especially by increased demand for labour force. In the course of the several-year period of boom, however, available domestic resources of qualified labour force had been depleted. Thus the year 2017 was specific also for a record-breaking low unemployment rate and an unprecedentedly high level of the participation rate of the population. The population migration statistics at the same time revealed that favourable economic development attracted many foreign working persons as well. All aforementioned pieces of information you can find in a greater detail inside the Yearbook.

In 2017 there were elections into the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic held. Elections results, processing of which is provided by the Czech Statistical Office as determined by law, you can also find in the Yearbook.

As every year the Yearbook brings several novelties, namely in the form of newly included tables in some of chapters. Chapter dedicated to the population, for instance, gives newly engaged persons broken down by the status of the bride and bridegroom in the recent two years. Table on domestic migration broken down by migration type gives, for the first time ever, data by migrant age in the continuous time series starting in 1980. Chapter Education was added with five new tables. One of them, for instance, gives numbers of academics at public universities who contribute to lecturing as professors, associate professors, assistant professors and other lecturers by sex and by status in employment. The Yearbook users will, however, learn information from the survey on fruit orchards and growers, detailed data on active sportspersons, or on the share of renewable energy in international comparison.

It can be clearly seen, the current Yearbook has brought numerous useful and valuable pieces of information the same way as in the previous years. This summary work, however, could not be created without quality and careful work of employees of the Czech Statistical Office, without coordinated activities of collaborating institutions, and, of course, without participation of all respondents, which provided their data. Therefore it is clear to express thanks to all the engaged which contributed to making of this crucial title of the official statistics. These are also the persons and other entities, which the Czech Statistical Office owes for wide confidence of the public as a representative of impartial and independent statistics.

I wish you find the *Statistical Yearbook* a useful aide and advisor.

Marek Rojíček

President of the Czech Statistical Office