

Basic methodological approaches

On 1 January 2000, a territorial structure of the Czech Republic, dividing the country into **14 Regions** ("higher territorial administrative units"), became effective based on Constitutional Act No. 347/97 Coll. In this context and for statistical and analytical needs, as well as for the needs of the European Commission, eight statistical territorial units (**Areas**) were defined within the Czech Republic in compliance with the Resolution of Cabinet of the CR No. 707/1998. This territorial structure of the Czech Republic complies with the system of NUTS (La Nomenclature des Unités Territoriales Statistiques) used in the EU member countries. The above mentioned fact was a stimulus for preparing the publication of historical data in the new administrative arrangement in order to describe a longer period of development in the particular region. Therefore it contains views on the labour market at all basic levels, i.e. NUTS1 - the Czech Republic, but especially NUTS2 - statistical areas and NUTS3 - regions. Data for those NUTS2 which are the same as NUTS3 are stated only once.

The LFSS is conducted among respondents living in dwellings chosen at random. All characteristics of every respondent are related to his/her position in the reference week. This allows to track all the population groups and judge their position on the labour market in terms of age, gender, education, branch of industry, status in employment, mobility of labour force, social status and the like. Compared with current accounting and other register sources, LFSS allows to make an expert guess of not only the level and character of **employment** and **total unemployment** from various aspects, but also the scope and character of **economic inactivity** of the population.

The LFSS concentrates on households living in dwellings chosen at random. It addresses all persons living usually in the dwellings, disregarding the type of their stay there (permanent, temporary or non-registered). The exception are temporary members of the armed forces who were surveyed till the year 2004, for practical reasons, at their residences before they left for the army. In persons under 15, only basic data are asked for: relationship to the head of household, age, sex, nationality and ethnicity. Persons 15+ are supposed to answer additional questions concerning their status in the labour market (which does not apply to temporary members of the armed forces). The survey does not cover persons living in collective accommodation establishments for a long period of time, which is why data on certain population groups (foreign nationals living and working in the CR in particular) are rather scarce. According to Eurostat, such data can be retrieved from administrative sources or acquired via a separate survey taken outside the LFSS.

The panel of chosen dwellings is varied during the survey. Each quarter sees 20% of newly chosen dwellings incorporated into the panel and these are then discarded out of the panel after five quarters. The sample size in the initial three years of the survey was almost 23 thousand dwellings. After reinforcing a sample in the largest districts the sample size amounted to 26 thousand chosen dwelling units on the territory of the Czech Republic - about 0.7% of all dwellings permanently occupied. Nowadays the sample size reaches over 25 thousand dwellings on average (0.6 % of all dwellings) while almost **59 thousand respondents of all age groups** are measured in these dwellings every quarter, of which almost **51 thousand respondents are aged 15 or more**.

The LFSS is conducted as a continuous survey with results regularly assessed and released every quarter. The results are published 3 months after the end of each quarter. In a context of harmonisation of national questionnaire and list of questions obligatory for the Member States, the content of this publication is gradually modified.

The whole databases were corrected in the framework of the **preparation of historical data** so that differences arising from the development of the survey proper could be removed and the databases could be compared with one another. The characteristics which could not be completely methodically unified in time are described in chapter ***Development of methodology of the indicators and characteristics of their changes***.

These **corrections** were focussed on the following in particular:

- removal of differences in reference periods: all data for 1993 to 1997, when the survey was taken in seasonal quarters, were converted to calendar quarters;
- inclusion of information, according to administrative sources, on temporary members of the armed forces in the initial two years of the survey and dividing women on maternity leave and additional child-care leave (not measured in the two initial years);
- methodological unification of indicators to the methodology in force since 1998 resp. 2002;
- re-weighting of 1993-1996 data retrospectively to final demography,
- 2001 data are already re-weighted to population based on the final results of Census 2001. The final population according to Census 2001 was about 40 thousand lower than previous data from the results of Census 1991 and the population estimates between 1991 and 2001. The difference in the final population - as a consequence of Census 2001 - partly influences the comparison of absolute values in the publication between 2000 and 2001.

The above-mentioned facts suggest that it is not possible to use time series data and regular quarterly data from the LFSS at the same time. Should a need to have another view of the history of the labour market in the Czech Republic arise, the Czech Statistical Office should be contacted.