

Dear Readers,

The year 2016 was an extraordinary year in many aspects. This has been confirmed not solely by a comprehensive and easy-to-overview, yet also interesting set of data, which has arrived on your hands now. The Statistical Yearbook of the Czech Republic 2017 is already the 25th volume of this edition in the history of the independent Czech Republic. Popularity of this publication in a wide range of users is, *inter alia*, evidence that the official statistics is a very important and trustworthy source of data for majority of all spheres of human activities.

The Czech Republic economy was doing well and this got reflected in numerous statistical indicators. The national economy growth was a relatively strong one compared to those of the Member States of the European Union. One of the economic growth crucial factors, besides final consumption, was also external trade. The external trade balance reached the highest positive value since 1993. Exports were dominated by industrial products. For example, transport equipment accounted for 30% of the total export value of the Czech goods. The production in industry, which formed almost one third of the value added of the Czech economy, was growing at three times faster pace than that in Germany.

Conditions on the labour market were also favourable. The Czech Republic was the first ranked among the Member States of the European Union in total unemployment rate, which at the end of the year dropped to 3.6%. Average wages grew by 3.7%, which was the fastest nominal growth in recent eight years.

These, and not only these pieces of information you will find in 32 chapters of the Statistical Yearbook. Compared to the last volume, two chapters were further subdivided. Trade, hotels, restaurants now form a separate chapter and Tourism is presented in another one. Culture and Sport newly form two separate chapters now. At the publication end, you can find chapter Elections, in which there are results of the October cast of votes in the elections to regional assemblies and to the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic.

You may notice a change to chapter External trade as well. Its new concept builds on the national concept of the external trade statistics measuring trade in goods, in which ownership changes in between residents and non-residents. This concept gives a better picture of external trade than the cross-border concept, which informs exclusively on physical movements of goods across the international boundary of the Czech Republic.

The Statistical Yearbook reveals a couple of new tables, following from new surveys carried out by the Czech Statistical Office. Chapter Agriculture brings four new tables with data from the Farm Structure Survey 2016, for instance. Being concrete, the data are on agricultural holdings sorted by legal form and by utilised agricultural area, on working persons in agriculture by age group, and on organic farming. Chapter Energy newly includes four tables dealing with results of the sample survey on household energy consumption called Energo. New outcomes can be found also in chapter Education as information from the Adult Education Survey and from the sample survey of the Continuing Vocational Training Survey.

The Statistical Yearbook could not be published without collaboration of respondents, which provide the necessary input data, and also without cooperation of numerous ministries and institutions which administrative data are taken over by the State Statistical Service. The careful analytical work of many employees of the Czech Statistical Office, who do their work with maximum efforts and perceive it as their mission, which is inevitable to be performed in an independent and impartial way, is something we cannot afford to miss. My great thanks go to all of the aforementioned. Owing to mutual collaboration of all these parties, the official statistics, which is represented by the Czech Statistical Office, enjoys a highly above-standard trust of the general public. I believe that you will find numerous valuable pieces of information in the Statistical Yearbook and will appreciate its quality.

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President of the Czech Statistical Office