

Dear readers,

You are now opening already the 32nd edition of the Statistical Yearbook in the modern history of the Czech Republic. The history of the Yearbook naturally goes much deeper and is related to all previously published yearbooks from the Czechoslovak era. It thus forms a coherent series of publications that bring in one place the most essential information from all important areas of the life of our country and its population. Although nowadays we use a number of modern tools in statistics, e.g. web applications, on-line databases, open data, or geoportals, the importance of the Statistical Yearbook remains – even despite the fact that the number of printed copies is gradually decreasing and users are increasingly using its electronic version.

The current Yearbook primarily describes phenomena that took place in 2023. So what was the year like? At the end of 2023, the population of Czechia was over 10.9 million for the first time since the end of the World War II and the positive net migration (94.7 thousand persons) was, after the one in 2022, the second highest in the post-war history of Czechia. In the migration balance, citizens of Ukraine dominated (75.2 thousand), followed by citizens of Slovakia (5.6 thousand), and, for the first time ever, Filipinos (2.1 thousand) ranked third. The year 2023 was further characterised by a considerable twelve percent decrease in the number of marriages. For the first time since 2005, fewer than 100 thousand children (91.1 thousand) were born alive. The life expectancy at birth was growing for the second year already, thus following a positive trend from before the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Czech economy faced in 2023 a combination of an influence of increasing external demand, domestic investment activity, and government consumption on the one hand and a continuing decline in household consumption and a negative impact of changes in inventories on the other. This mixture entailed fluctuating of the economy in a zone of stagnation; the gross domestic product (GDP) in total decreased by 0.1% last year. Consumer prices increased by 10.7% (in 2022, it was by 15.1%) and their year-on-year growth was gradually slowing down during the year. The total volume of wages and salaries paid increased in nominal terms by 7.8%, while the total employment increased by 0.8%; however, earnings decreased by 1.2% in real terms as the price level continued to grow.

The aforementioned data certainly have their weight, however, they are far from being the only ones that the Czech Statistical Office offers to the public to complete the most comprehensive picture of what is happening in the country. On the pages of the Statistical Yearbook, in addition to a range of other standard published information, you will thus also find newly inserted tables on the digital economy, research and development, education, and social security. Brand new data were brought by the Integrated Farm Survey. A section devoted to crime and justice has also been elaborated newly and with greater detail. Last but not least, the elections to the European Parliament and results of the Olympic Games in Paris should also be noted, while those data already extend to the year 2024.

As it was already mentioned in the introduction, modern official statistics today does not rely solely on yearbooks. It uses a number of progressive tools and tries to follow modern trends both in statistical work itself and in presenting statistical data to users. Since 2024, the Czech Statistical Office has a new website and it is also modernising its database. It offers more and more data in the open data format, too. We can be found on social media; we publish magazines and impact journals. And we're no stranger to the burgeoning possibilities of artificial intelligence, either. Nevertheless, the Statistical Yearbook is still a valid practical tool that concentrates essential and trustworthy information in one place for all those who need it for their work, study, and responsible decision-making. It is therefore appropriate to thank here all those who have contributed and are contributing to production of this remarkable work. That is, the staff of the Czech Statistical Office, partner organisations, and also our respondents without the involvement of whom the compilation of any statistics would be virtually impossible.

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