

Dear Readers:

*The Statistical Yearbook of the Czech Republic 2016 is getting on your hands. It presents the year 2015, in which the Czech economy managed the best way in the recent eight years. The gross national product increased by 4.5% and the pace of the Czech Republic economy growth was more than double the pace of the European Union. The last year was positive also in many other aspects. The employment rate reached a high level of 70.2%. The unemployment rate was one of the lowest in the European Union. The number of employees as well as average wages were growing.*

*Many statistical data describing the society development in 2015 you will find just in the Statistical Yearbook, which is structured into 29 chapters. It contains 52 new tables. Right in the first chapter Key National Economy Indicators showing long time series since 2000, for instance, there are new indicators in Education as, inter alia, public expenditure on education and its share in state budget. Table on water management works is newly included in chapter The Environment. Three new tables in chapter Agriculture contain data from the Survey on Vineyards 2015. Chapter Information Society is expanded with information which deals with computer and internet skills. New tables in chapter Education brings data structured by public, state, and private schools and give numbers of study applicants, students, and graduates. Chapter Culture and Sport publishes data on art festivals for the first time.*

*Chapters of Health and Social Security were reworked and expanded as well. Being concrete, the former received a broadened table on health establishments. Now it gives newly data, for instance, on convalescent homes and sanatoriums, child homes, emergency medical service, independent surgeries of general practitioners, and pharmacies.*

*In Social Security chapter tables on pension and sickness insurance schemes were completely reworked, added with new indicators and long time series. For instance, table Unemployment benefits, which includes data on the average number of job applicants entitled to unemployment benefits, average monthly amount of unemployment benefit, and total expenditure on benefits, is included for the first time as well.*

*The Statistical Yearbook of the Czech Republic is an amply rich source of reliable and independent pieces of information for all who are willing to get their opinion and have an overview of the developments of economic, environmental, demographic, or social conditions in the society.*

*We, in the Office, made a great effort to prepare this publication. Therefore closing the foreword, allow me, please, to express my thanks to all who contributed to these activities. I believe that the Statistical Yearbook will be not solely a valuable background for your work or studies, yet also an inspiration in every case where numbers and decision making based on them play an important role.*

Iva Ritschelová,

President of the Czech Statistical Office