

Risk of Unemployment and Earnings Levels by Socio-Economic Group – Introduction of ESeG Classification

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Abstract

The article focuses on the patterns of the individual position in the labour market according to various socio-economic groups using draft classification of European Socio-economic Groups (ESeG). The position is primarily measured by a specially developed indicator on the Risk of Unemployment based on data of the Labour Force Survey. Secondly, the data of Structure of Earnings Survey is used for calculation of earnings levels. The results have proven that discrepancies among various ESeG groups are considerable and justify the use of the classification for analyses in the field of social position and labour market.

Keywords

Socio-economic groups, classification ESeG, social status, risk of unemployment, earnings, Labour Force Survey, Structure of Earnings Statistics

JEL code

J64, J31, J81, J82

INTRODUCTION

The labour market has become a focal point of economic science lately. Judging only by sums and/or arithmetic means is not a reasonable option in times when we monitor growing variability in almost every field of study. One of the exploitable breakdowns – despairingly almost not employed in the Czech Republic – is a socioeconomic stratification. Authors desired to present it and, for this purpose, they used a most recent – one can say brand new – classification of ESeG.

1 METHODOLOGY OF ESEG

The new prototype on the classification of European Socio-economic Groups has been developed by the ESSnet project under Eurostat supervision in 2011–2014. The ESSnet was composed by the National

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Statistical Institutes of France, the Czech Republic, Italy and Hungary, and collaborated with a number of French research institutes and the Czech Institute of Sociology. Its work was linked to previous social-economic-class or occupational status schemes (Ganzeboom, Treiman, 1996), especially EGP (Erikson, Goldthorpe, Portocarero) and lately ESeC, which was connected to ISCO-88 (Harrison, Rose, 2010; also Krejčí, Leontiyeva, 2012).

The basic idea behind ESeG is to split the population upon relatively coherent social-economic categories – groups with similar characteristics not only in the labour market, but immanently expressing the social status. The fundamental criteria considered have been the autonomy in employment and the human capital. These criteria are also strongly correlated to the attraction of the job (Goldthorpe, Hope, 1974). However, the final prototype has not been created ideologically but it is purely evidence-based using a whole variety of topics under questioning. Therefore, as an analytical tool to measure social status, the ESeG could be used for various social fields: working conditions, health, living conditions, housing conditions, deprivation and poverty, as well as the social mobility and the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities (Šafr, 2012).

Although the socio-economic hierarchy is changeable by definition (Machonin, 2003), basic pecking order is quite steady, therefore the ESeG “ladder” is spread from managers (group 1) to less skilled workers (group 7), another two groups are added for inactive population. The ESeG has also the second level where groups are split into several subgroups predominantly corresponding to professional area (see Tables). Whereas basic group scale should be used by sociologists, the 2nd level is designed for great statistical surveys such as LFS or SES (EUROSTAT ESSnet, 2015).

ESeG Classification (1st level)

1 Managers

2 Professionals

3 Technicians and associate professional employees

4 Small entrepreneurs

5 Clerks and skilled service employees

6 Industrial and agricultural employees

7 Less skilled workers

8 Retired persons

9 Other non-employed persons

By the decision of Directors of Social Statistics WG of Eurostat, the ESeG has been developed solely on the “core social variables” of the official EU statistics, i.e. status in employment, occupation according to 2digit ISCO-08 and auxiliary variables – age and self-declared labour status – for two groups of inactive population.

Some sociological studies already declared that the Czech society has become again a class society (Katrňák, Fučík, 2010). The aim of this article is to cast light on how much this expression is justifiable from the point of view of labour conditions.

The work of Michel Amar, François Gleizes and Monique Meron of INSEE for Eurostat emphasizes the differences along the European continent, as for representation of various economic sectors and distribution of jobs, e.g. the proportion of farmers fluctuates from 1% on Malta and Slovakia to 27% in Romania. Their work also revealed that stability of employment was falling and the risk of unemployment increased when moving from top to bottom of the ESeG hierarchy (Amar, Gleize, Meron, 2014). The authors of the article intend to validate these results (made for the whole European Union) using national LFS data and put further detail on the labour market situation of socio-economic group in the Czech Republic.

2 DATA SOURCES

The analysis stems from two essential statistical sources on the labour market situation, both produced by the official Czech Statistical System:

- Labour Force Survey
- Structure of Earnings Survey

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a continuous household survey conducted by the Czech Statistical Office since 1993 (CZSO website). Data on economic activity of individual persons in the household sampled are collected in the electronic questionnaire. The results are published monthly (basic rates) and *en masse* quarterly, with key indicators of employment rate, unemployment rate and working time. LFS covers whole population living in individual households; it also enables to calculate indicators on household composition and educational structures of population. The LFS is produced in almost all European countries, ensuring comparable results which are presented by Eurostat.

The national Structure of Earnings Statistics (SES) is a perpetual enterprise survey conducted by the TREXIMA Ltd. on behalf of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs since 1994 (ISPV website). Data on personal information together with earnings of individual employees plus information on the enterprise as a whole are collected electronically. The survey is sample one for stratum of business enterprises with numbers of employees 10–250 (small and middle-sized) and exhaustive for big enterprises with numbers of employees higher than 250; non-business organizations are surveyed exhaustively by the Ministry of Finance and the resulting data are merged to SES. Data on extra-small businesses are modelled using administrative data and 4-yearly special surveys.

The national SES results are published quarterly on enterprise level and yearly/half-yearly on the level of individual employee (breakdowns by sex, education, age, etc.), with key indicators of average earnings, of earnings medians and quantiles (5%, 10%, 25%), of numbers of employees and of average time paid. In contrast with LFS, the SES covers only paid employees; self-employed persons without wages cannot be covered.

The SES is also conducted Europe-wide; but only with four-yearly periodicity; thus, last available comparable EU results being for reference year 2010 (EUROSTAT, 2015).

For the sole purposes of this article, special calculations have been made on both sources.

3 METHODOLOGY OF THE RISK OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS

The Czech Labour Force Survey enables comparing numbers of employed people with the unemployed within the same ESeG category because of the question on previous job. As we deem the bias caused by a time shift insignificant, we would use simple ratio of people in unemployment to total labour force as a measure of risk of unemployment (RU). It means that we compare – for individual ESeG (sub)group – numbers of people who lost and still have not found new job relatively to the size of the group. The inverse probability (addition to 1) would be a number of people with the job to whole labour force within the ESeG group. For this article, years 2011–2014 have been used for calculations, both as quarters and whole year results.

The Structure of Earnings Statistics provides data on individual employee, therefore distributions of earnings are available, expressed both as frequencies and/or as quantiles. For our purposes, the medians and some percentiles were used, beside average figures. Moreover, the parts of wages are surveyed as well, enabling to compare influence of basic wage, bonuses, overtime pay etc. for various groups of employees.

Along with earnings levels, we should take into account the size of the groups, i.e. number of employees, as well as the average time paid (hours per month). As the share of women differs in various ESeG groups, we should consider this fact during data analysing.

For this article, special calculations have been used on years 2011, 2012 and 2013.

4 SITUATION ON THE CZECH LABOUR MARKET

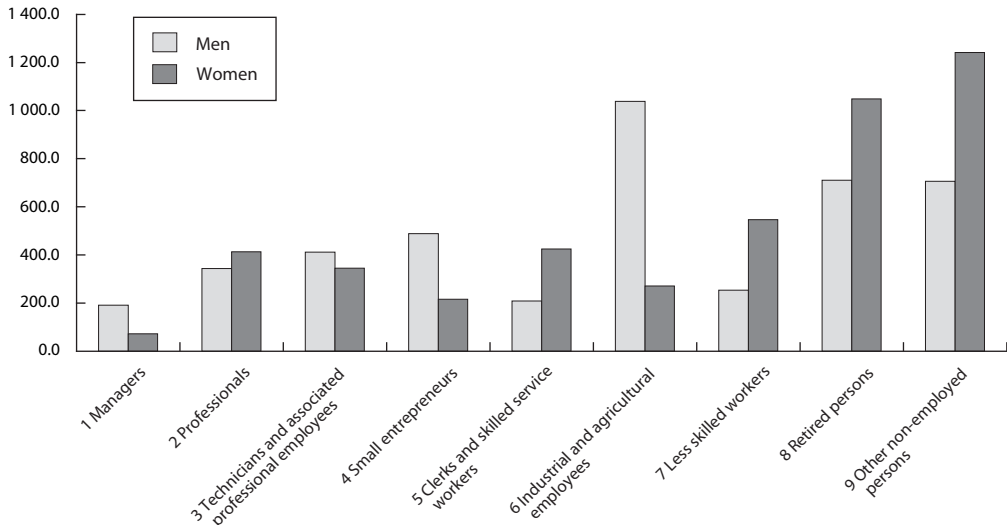
4.1 Risk of Unemployment and other labour conditions

First of all, we have to take into consideration, that population/ labour force/ employment is not evenly distributed along ESeG groups. Using LFS data for whole year 2014, the managers represented 3% of the whole adult population in which the employers (self-employed managers) showed only 0.8% and the employees 2.2%.

Simply, the two largest groups of population are those of inactive people: proportions of 21.8% showed the Other non-employed persons (covering also Unemployed not elsewhere classified) and 19.7% the Retired persons, who are internally classified into ESeG subgroups by their latest employment. The biggest group as for the employed persons were the Industrial and agricultural employees with 14.7%, followed by the Less skilled workers with 9.0%. The “bronze medal” was split between Professionals and Technicians – both showing 8.5% of the whole population aged 15+ years, in 2014.

Also two sexes were not evenly distributed, which is manifested in the Figure 1, and requires no commentary.

Figure 1 Numbers of persons aged 15+ by ESeG



Source: LFS 2014, special calculation

The joblessness is a phenomenon widespread in all economic active ESeG groups but the probability is considerable uneven. The highest risk of unemployment has definitely been among the Less skilled workers especially the Blue collar employees and food assistants in elementary occupations (ESeG 7.2.) and also Cleaners and helpers and services employees in elementary occupations (ESeG 7.3.). In danger are both men and women: using 2014 data, the RU for men in ESeG 7.2. was 17.9%, for women 16.9%. In previous years, the situation was not better, on the contrary; the year 2012 was the worst: ESeG 7.2. men had RU 24.0% and women 17.3%; ESeG 7.3. had for men 20.9% and for women 13.6%. In 2011, more than one third of male cleaners and helpers and services employees in elementary occupations was jobless.

Typically, in manual professions, men are in greater risk of unemployment than women, but there are exceptions: ESeG 6.2. Food processing, wood working, garment employees, where women showed almost twice higher RU in all years. Also in elite classes, especially high managers, as well as for petite-

bourgeoisies, women are under much higher pressure than men, but for the former we had only small numbers as women hit the “glass ceiling” there.

On the other hand, time dimension is almost negligible for the two elite groups of managers and professionals, where RUs fluctuate about 1.5%. All in all, the smallest ever had been the risk of unemployment among big entrepreneurs, which is obvious, and among health professionals – less than 1 percent, which illustrates that these people can be as fearless as they can easily negotiate for earnings rising.

Also other groups of professionals are so demanded in the labour market, that their unemployment rates can be called natural; it means that they do not linger in the jobless state but only flow from one job to another. The actual unemployment rate is rather a fluctuation rate then.

The real unemployment is an existential threat for some sub-groups of middle class and predominantly for working class. For illustration, getting jobless is twenty-one-times more probable in subgroup 7.2. than among the Health professionals. Note please that for ESeG 3, the Health associate professionals had very small RU in all years as well.

Other criteria of labour market position could be the work in unusual hours. Working on shifts, on Saturdays and Sundays as well as on evenings and nights, destroys social and family life and in consequence leads to shorter life span.

It is no wonder that working in unusual hours is more typical for less qualified occupations, especially in factories where a permanent operation can be predicted (see Table 3). Health professions, where shift work in hospitals refers also to the professionals (belonging to the high class) made an exception.

For men, shift work is often among health associate professionals, personal care employees, also armed forces occupations and protective service employees or stationary plant and machine operators and assemblers. Women work in shift most likely as stationary plant and machine operators and assemblers, as armed forces occupations and protective service employees and as customer service clerks. Self-employed apparently cannot work in shift.

Working on unusual hours cannot be omitted for lower managerial self-employed (hotels, restaurants, trade, culture), even higher managerial self-employed, but most probable has been among armed forces occupations and protective service employees; also one third of stationary plant and machine operators and assemblers worked at evenings and/or nights. Because of dependence on the nature, agricultural employees are likely to work on weekends.

The probability of weekend work for armed forces and protective service workers is twelve times higher than for teaching professionals (which principally do not work on weekends at all).

4.2 Earnings levels of employees

The earnings level of managers in 2013, measured by arithmetic means, was more than twice (2.2times) higher than overall average. Their distribution was extremely spread (the coefficient of variation was 103% and decile ratio 5.5) and curved, the 5th percentile was higher only by 36% than percentile of all employees; on the other side, managerial 95th percentile was 2.8times higher, and this salary of CZK 149 091 was also 6.6times higher than overall median earnings. Generally, the medians show that managerial earnings are 1.8times higher than middle earnings in the Czech Republic.

Higher managerial employees earned much more money than the smaller subgroup of their lower colleagues – 90% of managers in hotels, restaurant, trade and culture had earnings from CZK 11 306 to CZK 81 368; it is about one half of the value of higher managers in every quantile.

The professionals' earnings were more flat than managerial ones. Nine in ten of these highly skilled employees earned between CZK 18 451 and CZK 78 921. Thus, the decile ratio was 2.9 and duodecile ratio was 4.27 – compared to 10.65 of managers; the coefficient of variation was 64%. According to the median values, earnings of professionals were by one third higher than overall value.

Table 1 Earnings levels by ESeG

	Average earnings	Earnings in main quantiles		
		5 th percentile	Median	95 th percentile
Total	26 444	10 326	22 557	53 528
1 Managers	57 315	14 003	41 368	149 091
2 Professionals	37 628	18 451	30 200	78 921
3 Technicians and associated professional employees	29 130	13 451	26 299	52 025
5 Clerks and skilled service workers	21 578	9 788	20 119	37 910
6 Industrial and agricultural employees	21 782	10 980	20 888	35 555
7 Less skilled workers	15 931	8 960	14 338	27 608

Source: SES 2013, special calculation

In more detailed look, second group of professionals was divided into two: scientific occupations (plus business and administration) on the one richer hand, and teaching and similar occupations on the other poorer hand. The first part consists of science, engineering, ICT, health, business and administration professions where average earnings are more than CZK 40 thousand; the richest was the subgroup of business and administration professionals (CZK 42 790), but comparing the 5th percentiles, the richer were science, engineering and ICT professionals with CZK 19 131.

Peculiarly, the highest 5th percentile of all ESeG subgroups had teaching professionals (20 634 CZK); however, starting from medians up, they were the most poorly paid subgroup of professionals. As for 95th percentile, the teachers were by 44% lower than the value of professionals' total. It demonstrates the extreme evenness of their salaries, decile ratio being 1.6.

As regards the health professionals, there is anomaly concerning overtimes which extends their working hours (it is consistent with the findings on the LFS data): the overall average was 174.4 h/month whereas theirs was 187.5 h/month. Overtime pay is regularly paid by 25% higher than normal hours, so overtime hours increase earnings significantly. The extreme values refer predominantly to men.

Following two elite groups downwards we can find technicians and associated professionals, their average earnings were higher than the overall average by 10%. The inner structure by branches is very similar to professionals; we found the highest salaries at science, engineering and ICT whereas the poorest were at legal, social and cultural activities. Also, the size of differences is quite the same. Apparently, there is general society values order in work here, where teaching and social work is at the very bottom.

The fourth ESeG group consists of clerks and skilled service workers; these are typical middle-class jobs. Also here the personal care employees had by far the poorest pay, with median of CZK 16 671, while clerk occupations showed more than CZK 21 thousand. On the other hand, their wages were remarkably even, with decile ratio 1.7, comparable only with subgroups of teachers as for the flatness of distribution. (Usual decile ratio of subgroup was about 2.5.)

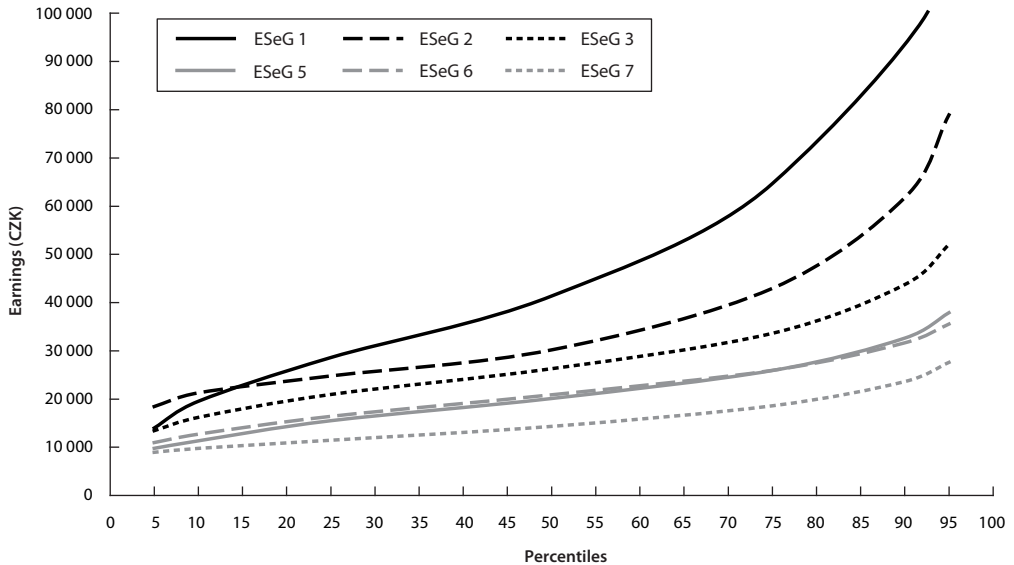
Second outlying subgroup here were the armed forces occupations and protective service employees, where decile ratio was 3.4; median earnings CZK 17 531 and almost one quarter earned less than 11 thousand CZK, but 95th percentile was CZK 36 659.

The working class was split into two ESeG groups and it obviously had strong reasons: while the industrial and agricultural employees had median wages CZK 20 888, the less skilled workers had to be satisfied with CZK 14 338.

It is worth remembering that the last group consists not only of typical blue collar workers, but also of personal services and sales employees. These precarious jobs showed the second poor earnings level (median CZK 14 408); the very worst paid subgroup was cleaners and helpers and services employees

in elementary occupations with CZK 11 893. The wages of this bottom subgroup are one of the flattest with decile ratio 1.8; we can say that these workers are even in poverty, 90% of them earned between CZK 8 553 CZK (the minimum wage in the economy) and CZK 17 975.

Figure 2 Quantiles distribution of earnings by ESeG



Source: SES 2013, special calculation

CONCLUSIONS

The Czech labour market has profiled itself onto discrete strata during recent 25 year, i.e. since the beginning of the transition to capitalist economy. We tried to describe these strata using draft classification of European Socio-economic Groups. Although these groups cannot explain the most of the variance found in the risk of unemployment and earnings level, this tool proved reasonable for description of inconsistencies faced by individual groups of economically active people.

The threat of unemployment is imminent for low qualified workers. One of the six of the cleaners, helpers and services employees in elementary occupations had actually been jobless in 2014. On the other hand, such a situation is quite unimaginable for highly educated people working as professionals or managers.

Sticking to it, low qualified employees had the lowest earnings levels in the economy, which pushes them broadly to the position of low wage earners (also generally called working poor) that has been internationally defined as earnings less than two thirds of national median (EUROSTAT, Statistics Explained). In contrary, the managerial earnings are generally the biggest, but tremendously uneven. A part of managers earn relatively poor salary, comparable to wages of middle workers, illustratively, one of ten earned less than CZK 19 544. On the other side, the richest 10% part of managers earned more than CZK 106 782, i.e. 4.7 times the overall median earnings.

The situation of the Czech Republic shows a little difference from EU averages. There is a small part of people working in agriculture (the fourth smallest share of farmers), somewhat bigger part of small entrepreneurs than should be adequate for the Central Europe; and, on the other hand, it has a lot of blue collar workers (EUROSTAT Database). It originates from the dissimilar structure of the economy domi-

nated by industry. The Czech Republic has also a small part of part-time workers and disproportionately high gender pay gap (Amar, Gleize, Meron, 2014).

The difference in risk of unemployment between professionals and less skilled workers is considerable in the majority of European countries; the average value is about 10 percentage points (Amar, Gleize, Meron, 2014), which is similar to the Czech Republic. Also commonly used measures for earnings inequality show similar figures for the Czech Republic as for other EU states (EUROSTAT, Statistics Explained). Seeing this, the analysis shows that the recent social structure of Czech Republic did not differ from standard Western Europe societies with free market economy.

Table 2 The risk of unemployment by ESeG sub-group, 2014 LFS

	Probability of unemployment		
	men	women	average
11 Higher managerial self-employed	0.3	1.9	0.4
12 Lower managerial self-employed	0.6	-	0.5
13 Higher managerial employees	2.0	1.5	1.9
14 Lower managerial employees	2.2	5.4	3.7
21 Science, engineering and ICT professionals	1.2	2.7	1.5
22 Health professionals	0.2	1.0	0.8
23 Business and administration professionals	3.0	1.4	2.3
24 Legal, social and cultural professionals	0.6	2.7	1.6
25 Teaching professionals	1.7	1.2	1.3
31 Science, engineering and ICT technicians and associated professionals	1.7	3.8	2.1
32 Health associate professionals	0.8	1.0	1.0
33 Business and administration associate professionals	2.8	4.2	3.6
34 Legal, social and cultural associate professionals	6.6	6.1	6.3
35 Non-commissioned armed forces officers	0.9	10.7	1.6
41 Skilled agricultural self employed workers	1.7	3.2	2.0
42 Technicians, clerical support, services and sales self employed workers	2.2	3.5	2.9
43 Craft and related trades self employed workers	3.8	5.1	3.8
51 General and numerical clerks and other clerical support employees	3.2	4.8	4.4
52 Customer service clerks	5.7	8.3	7.8
53 Personal care employees	5.0	5.7	5.6
54 Armed forces occupations and protective service employees	4.1	6.1	4.5
61 Building and related trade employees	8.2	3.0	8.1
62 Food processing, wood working, garment employees	6.5	10.0	8.3
63 Metal, machinery, handicraft, printing, electrical and electronic trades employees	3.2	3.6	3.3
64 Stationary plant and machine operators and assemblers	5.2	8.8	6.8
65 Drivers	4.2	8.1	4.5
71 Personal services and sales employees	5.7	9.1	8.2
72 Blue collar employees and food assistants in elementary occupations	17.9	16.9	17.5
73 Cleaners and helpers and services employees in elementary occupations	15.9	11.0	11.3
74 Agricultural employees	7.5	10.2	8.7

Source: LFS 2014, special calculation

Table 3 Working in unusual hours by ESeG sub-group, 2012–2014 LFS

	Unusual working hours type		
	Shift work	Evenings and nights	Saturdays and Sundays
11 Higher managerial self-employed	N/A	17.3	32.2
12 Lower managerial self-employed	N/A	27.4	42.4
13 Higher managerial employees	1.6	7.1	10.3
14 Lower managerial employees	5.6	-	18.5
21 Science, engineering and ICT professionals	1.2	8.2	12.2
22 Health professionals	13.2	29.8	33.5
23 Business and administration professionals	0.7	7.7	13.2
24 Legal, social and cultural professionals	1.7	9.3	15.6
25 Teaching professionals	2.5	3.2	3.9
31 Science, engineering and ICT technicians and associated professionals	6.3	11.1	12.4
32 Health associate professionals	12.0	22.0	25.1
33 Business and administration associate professionals	2.1	4.4	6.7
34 Legal, social and cultural associate professionals	5.1	10.5	21.0
35 Non-commissioned armed forces officers	12.4	-	36.2
41 Skilled agricultural self employed workers	N/A	12.8	41.9
42 Technicians, clerical support, services and sales self employed workers	N/A	15.3	32.0
43 Craft and related trades self employed workers	N/A	9.0	28.4
51 General and numerical clerks and other clerical support employees	3.8	5.7	6.2
52 Customer service clerks	11.9	16.2	25.8
53 Personal care employees	15.1	28.5	36.1
54 Armed forces occupations and protective service employees	21.4	44.1	45.6
61 Building and related trade employees	3.0	5.1	12.5
62 Food processing, wood working, garment employees	10.2	17.4	15.4
63 Metal, machinery, handicraft, printing, electrical and electronic trades employees	10.7	17.1	15.5
64 Stationary plant and machine operators and assemblers	20.3	32.9	21.5
65 Drivers	9.9	24.7	27.3
71 Personal services and sales employees	15.2	16.1	39.1
72 Blue collar employees and food assistants in elementary occupations	10.5	15.0	15.8
73 Cleaners and helpers and services employees in elementary occupations	4.4	6.9	13.6
74 Agricultural employees	10.0	14.8	38.2

Source: LFS 2014, special calculation

Table 4 The indicators on earnings by ESeG, year 2013

	Average earnings	Earnings (CZK) in main quantiles				
		P5 5 th percentile	P10 1 st decile	P50 Median	P90 9 th decile	P95 95 th percentile
Total	26 444	10 326	11 972	22 557	41 600	53 528
1 Managers	57 315	14 003	19 544	41 368	106 782	149 091
Higher managerial employees	61 022	16 772	21 848	44 078	112 607	157 114
Lower managerial employees	32 980	11 306	12 443	24 720	59 837	81 368
2 Professionals	37 628	18 451	21 292	30 200	61 773	78 921
Science, engineering and ICT professionals	42 790	19 131	22 391	37 023	68 768	85 186
Health professionals	40 779	17 842	20 588	34 273	70 378	85 192
Business and administration professionals	44 459	17 518	20 997	36 379	74 589	98 495
Legal, social and cultural professionals	31 795	15 384	17 533	27 033	49 966	63 309
Teaching professionals	28 390	20 634	21 758	26 052	34 833	44 543
3 Technicians and associated professional employees	29 130	13 451	16 208	26 299	43 744	52 025
Science, engineering and ICT technicians and associated professionals	31 593	14 550	17 451	28 829	47 047	54 503
Health associate professionals	23 612	12 057	14 039	23 585	32 327	35 281
Business and administration associate professionals	29 384	13 438	16 361	26 338	44 101	53 844
Legal, social and cultural associate professionals	22 143	12 024	14 196	20 750	31 099	35 717
5 Clerks and skilled service workers	21 578	9 788	11 341	20 119	32 641	37 910
General and numerical clerks and other clerical support employees	22 802	10 118	12 557	21 109	34 151	39 232
Customer service clerks	22 118	10 969	13 255	21 282	30 679	36 253
Personal care employees	17 035	11 616	12 676	16 671	21 870	24 372
Armed forces occupations and protective service employees	19 742	9 124	9 672	17 531	32 682	36 659
6 Industrial and agricultural employees	21 782	10 980	12 723	20 888	31 667	35 555
Building and related trade employees	19 531	10 624	11 871	18 838	27 914	30 768
Food processing, wood working, garment employees	17 807	9 752	10 748	16 536	26 154	30 329
Metal, machinery, handcraft, printing, electrical and electronic trades employees	24 051	12 438	14 965	22 913	34 615	38 876
Stationary plant and machine operators and assemblers	21 560	11 813	13 327	20 436	31 279	35 272
Drivers	21 121	10 218	11 887	20 972	30 324	32 968
7 Less skilled workers	15 931	8 960	9 777	14 338	23 631	27 608
Personal services and sales employees	16 262	9 234	10 007	14 408	24 488	29 331
Blue collar employees and food assistants in elementary occupations	16 294	8 650	9 599	15 498	23 738	26 403
Cleaners and helpers and services employees in elementary occupations	12 375	8 553	9 081	11 893	15 960	17 975
Agricultural employees	19 095	12 057	13 360	18 609	25 461	27 340

Source: SES 2013, special calculation

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