

Dear Users of the Statistical Yearbook,

You have in your hands the fourteenth volume of the statistical yearbook – *Statistical Yearbook of the Czech Republic 2006*. In this context I would like to inform you that the Czech Statistical Office (CZSO) has been applying the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) for three years. They include higher quality of statistical products and services, especially with regard to interrelationships, comparability and reliability of statistical information. For example, each branch and cross-sectional statistics go, roughly once in five years, through the methodological audit whose objectivity is guaranteed by the fact that distinguished outside experts from universities, research establishments, statistical service of government departments, etc., are among the auditors. The elimination of inaccuracies found by the methodological audit was apparent, for example, in the correction of industrial production index calculation. Gradual improvement of the quality of statistical data that are initiated by Eurostat is undoubtedly further impetus for improvements. Quality Reports have been prepared on some areas of statistics. They inform about how individual statistical offices meet the general requirements of statistical quality, namely relevance, accuracy, timeliness, punctuality, availability, comprehensibility, coherence, comparability and completeness. The introduction of Quality Reports and comparing ourselves with the rest of the world will also exert pressure on improving the quality of all CZSO's outputs, the *Statistical Yearbook* being no exception.

This edition of the *Statistical Yearbook* has undergone as usual several changes, about which I would like to inform you. It was made "slimmer" by leaving out certain tables broken down by region that are contained in the regional yearbooks. On the other hand, the methodological introductions to chapters include more references to web pages presenting more detailed information related to the subject. Chapter 2. Area and Climate is completed with interesting meteorological data. In Chapter 5. National Accounts I would like to draw your attention to the long-term time series of non-financial assets data. Starting from 2006, Chapter 9. Income, Expenditure and Consumption of the Population will be extended by new tables of results of the sample survey Living Conditions, which takes place annually in the framework of the EU-SILC (European Union – Statistics on Income and Living Conditions) and is obligatory for all EU member states. This survey is aimed at collecting comparable data on the social situation of people in European countries. As I mentioned above, the CZSO changed the methodology for calculation of the industrial production index (IPI). The alternative methodology for IPI calculation has been applied due to extensive changes in the structure of industrial products and industrial services within manufacturing, which did not allow the full use of industrial production indices for individual products and their aggregates. The change applies to the tables concerned in Chapter 16A. Industry and to the IPI time series since 2000 in Chapter 1. Key National Economy Indicators. Significant changes have also been made in Chapter 21. Education, in connection with School Act No. 561/2004 Sb. As expected, the results of Torino 2006 Winter Olympic Games provided by the Czech Olympic Committee were added to Chapter 22. Culture and Sport. A sizeable reduction (11 tables) was made in Chapter 25. Justice, Crime, Accidents. Chapter 28. Elections contains the results of last election to the Chamber of Deputies held in June 2006. Minor changes can be found in several other chapters.

A number of specialists from the Czech Statistical Office, cooperating ministries and other institutions participated in the content and technical preparation of the Yearbook. My thanks go to all of these and to the publisher NAKLADATELSTVÍ SCIENTIA responsible for printing and distributing the *Statistical Yearbook* at home and abroad.

Any interesting ideas you may have for improving the Yearbook will be gratefully received. The addresses are given on the introductory page. I hope you will find in the Yearbook the data you need. Besides, this source of information can serve the user as an instrument for widening the horizon of their knowledge.

Jan Fischer

President

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