

Dear Readers,

You have just opened the *Statistical Yearbook of the Czech Republic 2019*. Since the formation of the independent Czech Republic in 1993, it is already the 27th volume of an edition, which brings you summary information about life in the Czech Republic. The same as in previous years, it offers you many pieces of valuable information and it belongs to outstanding summary works of official statistics.

Data contained herein are mapping the year 2018, which can be assessed from the point of view of various statistical domains as a successful year. In the end of the year, the Czech Republic had the population of 10 649 800 inhabitants, which was the highest number since the end of the Second World War. However, it is true that it was foreign migration, which has markedly contributed to the population increase. During 2018, 54 470 marriages were concluded, which is the highest number for the last ten years. The total fertility rate increased to 1.71 child per woman; higher values were achieved for the last time in the beginning of the 1990's. Czechia was well off also from an economic point of view. In 2018, the gross domestic product increased by 2.9%; the economic growth was driven dominantly by the domestic demand, especially consumption, which increased by 3.3%. Concurrently, investment activity of households strengthened, as well as that of non-financial corporations and the general government sector. The labour market corresponded to the peak phase of the business cycle. The general unemployment rate was record breaking and the same was true for the offer of vacant job positions. Strong demand for workers led also to a dynamic wage growth. Inside the publication, you will find more detailed information.

As every year, the *Statistical Yearbook* brings also some novelties and changes. Most of them are in the chapter dedicated to health. For the first time in the *Yearbook*, the table on outpatient care by diagnosis contains data from the National Register of Reimbursed Health Services. Data on visits to outpatient care establishments are shown in the breakdown by selected specialism of the physician. Further three new tables inform about the results of the Sample Survey on Persons with Disabilities. In the chapter on social security, two newly approved benefits were added: a paternity leave for fathers and a long-term carer's allowance. What is worth mentioning, for sure, is a novelty in the chapter on culture. The table on radio broadcasting – structure of music broadcasting shows data for the last two years broken down by Czech and Slovak singers and foreign signers (excluding Slovaks) listed in the order by year of release of pieces played. Naturally, there are also results of elections to local councils and of elections to the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, which were held in 2018. In addition, there are results of elections to the European Parliament in 2019 that are also in international comparisons.

The *Statistical Yearbook* is an extensive work, which would not come into existence without work of employees of the Czech Statistical Office, collaborating institutions and, of course, without involvement of participating respondents. Therefore, all of them should be thanked. It is also thank to their contribution, the Czech Statistical Office, as a representative of impartial and independent statistics, is widely trusted by the public and its data are of good use to a large range of users.

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