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## THE TRANSFORMATION OF GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION IN CZECHIA

D. Řezníčková: *The transformation of geography education in Czechia*. – Geografie–Sborník ČGS, 114, 4, pp. 316–331 (2009). – The presented contribution summarizes the development of geographical education in primary and secondary schools, in Czechia, over the period of the past 20 years (especially after 2001), during which time extensive reforms to the Czech education system have been underway. The aim of this contribution is to shed light on a wider context, mainly on the impact of curricular reforms, reform of the upper-secondary graduation examination (Maturita) as well as on the scope of research in Czech geographical education. The final part of the contribution summarizes and evaluates the main factors influencing the current and future state of geography education with a SWOT analysis.

**KEY WORDS:** Geography – geography education in Czechia – Czech curriculum research – curricular reform – reform of the graduation examination – social prestige of the discipline of geography – practical impact of geography education.

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### 1. Ongoing reforms of the Czech school system: a distinct impulse for changes in geographical education

It has been 20 years since the “Velvet Revolution”, which set off far-reaching changes in all spheres of life for Czech society, with the education system being no exception. The objective of this article is to summarize developments in geographical education during this period, especially the period after 2001, when ongoing, general reforms of the Czech education system began. The article refers to a wider context and points out the main factors influencing the current and future state of teaching geography at primary and secondary schools in Czechia.

The development of geographical education in primary and secondary schools, over the past 20 years, has been influenced by a wider context, among other things by the gradual, and initially unsystematic, transition of the education system, as a whole. During the 1990s, developments consisted primarily of the annulment of past circumstances and their rectification (the de-politicisation of content, abolishment of content-unifying primary schools, increased opportunities for diversification and differentiation of education, e.g. through the approval of three alternative educational programmes for primary schools, the establishment of six- or eight-year general secondary schools (gymnázium), as well as the establishment of private and alternative schools). The Autonomy of schools, along with pedagogues' advocacy of their personal conception of geography education, has gradually increased through many activities, due

in part to a loosening of the binding character of pedagogical documents and textbooks, which were no longer defined in principle (not always in practice) by an official content norm. The availability of various textbooks and other educational aids, varied, both in terms of workmanship and quality, increased rapidly. Because national evaluation standards were not set, new attributes of the educational environment enabled, at least partially, an increase in the plurality of methods and outcomes in geographical education, which was then projected in the ambivalence of the graduation examinations in geography. In short, the education system in Czechia, along with its functional parts, i.e. geographical education, went through two phases – deconstruction and partial stabilisation, when major and minor content and legislative changes came into being, which were not part of the overall, long-term conception.

The need to confront this “creative liberal chaos” (Hynek 2000) with a national strategy of education, which would present a consensus among those interested in seeking answers to fundamental questions regarding modern society’s needs and requirements for general education, has gradually strengthened. Nationwide discussion on the issue was summarised, at the turn of the millennium, in the National Programme for the Development of Education in Czechia, the so-called White Paper (2001). The need for a new curriculum model for general secondary schools, which would not be based primarily on the acquisition of the greatest possible amount of facts, but rather on the acquisition of key skills, attitudes and values, as well as on the strengthening of integration and inter-subject relations, is emphasized in this contribution.

This strategy was meant to create an impetus for the systemic renovation of the education system in light of its long-term development. A comprehensive overhaul of the educational aims and content, called the Curricular reform (in which previous binding documents are gradually replaced with bi-level state and school sets of documents), has been prepared and successively implemented, within the context of the White Paper. State level curricular documents, called the Framework Education Programme (hereinafter FEP), have prescribed the framework for various, individual phases of education and are binding for the creation of School Education Programmes (hereinafter SEP), arising at the individual school level.

The concept of the Framework Education Programme, which stands on three pillars – key competencies, educational areas and cross-curricular subjects (see Table 2), influences the conception of various school subjects. Generally, each subject should contribute to the acquisition of key competencies of a common interdisciplinary character. However, the branch of study (subject) competencies, which should be specified as the central goals of the geography teaching process, are not stated explicitly. These goals have only been defined at the general level for individual educational domains (areas), which associate school subjects of similar content into wider units. The geography teaching process comes under two educational domains – Man and Society (i.e. the platform for social-science subjects) and Man and Nature (i.e. the platform for science subjects). The non-existence of a Society and Nature domain has formally diminished the position of geography as a subject which integrates social and scientific cognition.

As a school subject, geography has been incorporated into the bloc of science-domain subjects. The Man and Society domain was only given a short shrift by means of a short comment. As a means of maintaining the integrity of the subject, geography is currently incorporated into the Man and Nature domain (including its social-science aspects). This formal act has its consequences.

Tab. 1 – The three conceptual pillars of FEP

| Key Competencies   | Educational Areas  | Inter-disciplinary Topics   |
|--|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learning competency</li> <li>2. Problem-solving competency</li> <li>3. Communication competency</li> <li>4. Social and personal competency</li> <li>5. Civic competency</li> <li>6. Professional competency</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Language and Language Communication</li> <li>2. Mathematics and Its Application</li> <li>3. Man and Society</li> <li>4. Man and Nature</li> <li>5. Man and the World of Work</li> <li>6. Arts and Culture</li> <li>7. Man and Health</li> <li>8. Information Science and Information and Communication technologies</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Moral, Character and Social Education</li> <li>2. Education towards Thinking in European and Global Contexts</li> <li>3. Multicultural Education</li> <li>4. Environmental Education</li> <li>5. Media Education</li> <li>6. Democratic Citizen Education (only for primary education)</li> </ol> |

Source: Framework Education Programme for Secondary General Education (Grammar Schools), [www.vuppraha.cz](http://www.vuppraha.cz), 10. 9. 2007

Geography shares its obligatory teaching lessons with numerous science subjects. In comparison with 1989, the number of obligatory teaching lessons has decreased in many primary and general secondary schools. The extent of this decrease is not known, due to the lack of a curricular reform that would monitor research at the national level. The fact that geography was de facto given the label of a scientific subject is also reflected in the reformed secondary school graduation exam (Maturita, see below) and influences comprehension of the subject by the general public. To illustrate the position of geography, the role of the media should be mentioned. This is evident in the way that debates on social science subjects often deal only with such subjects as History and Civics.

The concept of traditional school subjects can also be influenced by the selection of teaching methods for cross-curricular FEP subjects. These topics enable the integration of multi-subject approaches and, at the same time, aid in the development of beneficial aspects of students' personalities. The schools themselves are responsible for selecting methods for implementing various subjects. The terms agreed upon for interdisciplinary topics (see Table 1) indicate geography's potential to participate in the teaching process of most of the stated topics. However, as there is not a clear specification of geography's platform, there is a danger that other subjects will "steal" traditionally geographical approaches and topics.

The FEP for primary and secondary schools are available in English at [www.vuppraha.cz](http://www.vuppraha.cz). (For details, see Řezníčková, 2006b.)

The function and social prestige of geography has also been impacted by the Reform of the secondary graduation examination, which was launched in connection with the curricular reform, in 2000. The proposed new model of this exam should have been initiated in 2004. Consequently, catalogues of requirements for graduation examinations for individual subjects, geography not excluded (Bičík et al. 2001), were published. Unfortunately, insufficient coordination in the implementation of the above-mentioned reforms has led to a situation, in which requirements for student performance in the written part of the graduation examination were defined previous to the determination of overall target requirements for the FEP. The "start" of the "New Maturita"

(secondary graduation examination) has been postponed to 2010 for this and other reasons.

Along with the gradual changes in the Maturita exam model, changes in the position of geography in the system of obligatory and non-obligatory Maturita exam subjects in its general (written) section were also implemented. The first model of the Maturita exam excluded geography altogether. Geography was subsequently included in a new interdisciplinary subject called Science-technical foundations (it was not implemented in the subject Social-science foundations). In the most recent concept of the Maturita exam (see [www.ceremat.cz](http://www.ceremat.cz)), geography is a stand-alone subject in a block of ten non-obligatory subjects, from which students choose one. Students can also sit geography in the profile section of the Maturita exam. Comments concerning the current model of the Maturita exam are summarized by Řezníčková (2007).

At the end of 2007, an empirical survey, aimed at detecting any disproportions in the conditions and the level of the Maturita exam in geography at Czech general secondary schools (for more details see Řezníčková 2003b). From all the secondary schools in Czechia, which were addressed in the survey, about a third responded (i.e. 152 schools). Half of the respondents stated that, during the 1990s, the portion of Maturita graduates in geography was about 20–30 %. It may be presumed that, at present, the proportion of Maturita graduates in geography at grammar schools remains quite high. However, for many of the graduates, the Maturita exam in geography seems to be an obvious escape from more difficult or undesired Maturita subjects. Only a very low proportion of students are highly motivated to pass the geography Maturita exam with merit. Such students primarily see the exam as an opportunity to prepare for university entrance exams to geography-related branches of study. The New Maturita exam will probably bring a decrease in students willing to sit the Maturita exam in geography. One of the obvious reasons for this is a wider range of available Maturita subjects – the main rival subjects to geography include information technologies (IT), civics and social science foundations. The latter subject, even though it is an integrated subject, does not include geography.

Another asynchrony has occurred in the legislative sphere. After only four years of existence, the Curricular Reform, with its prepared content and organisational changes to the education system, was modified with the introduction of a new act on pre-school, secondary, higher professional and other education (from 24 September 2004). This act gives significantly more leeway to regions, schools and individual teachers in many aspects. For example, it enables the adaptation of the general education concept to the local conditions and the specific objectives of individual schools. The schools determine such adaptations themselves in school educational programmes, within the framework of the rules prescribed, by the state, in the FEP. Decentralisation of the educational sphere, in connection with the transfer of responsibility for a particular selection of goals, content and methods for implementing educational processes to the individual schools, enables an increase the plurality of methods and results of the educational process, both as a whole and for all of its parts, geographical education being no exception. Various methods for outlining geography in the Framework Education Programme are discussed by Marada (2006).

The formal changes, described above, to the education system in Czechia are briefly summarised in Table 2. The most recent phase of the reform of the education system, the so-called Systemic Reconstruction, is divided into

Tab. 2 – Individual transformation phases of general education in Czechia

| Phase   | TRANSFORMATION after 1989<br>(in primary schools and grammar schools)  |  |
|---|--|--|
|   | General education  | Geographical education   |
| Deconstruction  | YES  | YES  |
| Partial stabilization   | YES  | YES  |
| Systemic reconstruction (preparation, decision, implementation) | YES  | PARTIALLY<br>Systemic reconstruction is briefly stated in the White Paper and curricular documents; however, the system lacks a conception of geographical education at the national level.  |
| Result  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The Education/School Act (24. 9. 2004)</li> <li>– The White Paper (The National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic. Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, Prague, 2001, page 69.</li> <li>– Framework Education Programme (FEP) – for Secondary General Education (Grammar Schools). The Research Institute of Education, Prague, 2007.</li> <li>– FEP for Primary Education. The Research Institute of Education, Prague, 2005.</li> <li>– SEP</li> <li>– The model of secondary school-graduation examination (Maturita) modified several times</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Various concepts and roles of geography in SEPs at individual schools</li> <li>– The marginal role of geography in the reformed concept of the Maturita exam.</li> </ul> <p>(see details below)</p> |

three stages: preparation, decision, and implementation. At present, the school system, as a whole, is at the beginning of the implementation phase. Individual schools have undergone the process of preparing their School Education Programmes (SEP), i.e. according to the conditions, discussed above, they prepared their teaching process concepts and started to implement said concepts (Primary schools began doing this during the 2007–2008 school year, and grammar schools during 2009–2010).

The above outline of the reforms at conceptual and project levels; however, does not demonstrate their effectiveness in educational practice. A quick inquiry focused on the implementation of School Educational Programmes, which was recently carried out, as well as the results of surveys conducted by Matějů and Straková (2005), for instance, and Simonová and Straková (2005), point out a number of pitfalls. The fact that the educational system in general is characterised by an unusual resistance to change has been confirmed. It is no wonder, therefore, that a significant number of teachers (including geography teachers) have not identified themselves with the goals of the reform. 65 % of more than 2,000 directors of primary schools surveyed consider the

implementation of the School Education Programmes a large, but useless, change. In addition, broad support for the reform, both from politicians as well as the general public, is missing.

During the eight years of the White Paper's existence, there have been six different ministers at the Ministry of Education, who were led by five different prime-ministers with minimal or no support from the political parties. For this reason, no steps could be taken other than those, which were apprehended as controversial.

Our professional experience in the field of geography education corresponds with the results of a research project, which was assigned by the Ministry of Education and which was aimed at evaluating the extent of the White Paper's accomplishments, in the areas of pre-school, primary and secondary education. The authors of this research project (Straková et al. 2009) have stated that the national educational strategy introduced in the White Paper, even though it contains highly relevant and consistently valid educational goals, does not fulfil its anticipated role as an "umbrella" document. Explanation for this failure should be sought in the managerial nature of Czech policy in the educational realm, especially in the lack of interconnections among state institutions, while significant documents were being formulated. Other reasons behind the White Paper's failure include the great diversity and the disputable level of professional thinking, the complete lack of connectivity between the government and scientific research and the low level of awareness concerning reform goals and research outcomes, both among professionals and the general public.

Analysis of the measures proposed in the various strategic lines of the White Paper has shown that many strategies have not been reached at all and that many of those, which have been attained, were achieved in isolation. Many measures have been implemented to a broad extent, only formally, without the financial and methodological support necessary to increase chances for success. Reform intentions were merely proclaimed, while fundamental conditions for their realization were left undetermined. The participation of teachers (key participants) was neglected. Teachers (including geography teachers) remain unconvinced concerning the necessity of the reforms and lack the knowledge and skills necessary to implement the reforms. Significant pitfalls, threatening the overall implementation of these reforms, also include un-emphasised and insufficient co-ordination within the many steps necessary for successful reform implementation, especially in the system of student, teacher and school achievement evaluation. In accordance with the opinions of Matějů, Straková et. al. (2005) we presume that if timely financial and material support is not provided, the reform will only be carried out formally.

## **2. The current state of geographical education**

Changes in geographical education in primary and secondary schools are, more or less, a reaction to curricular reform in a situation, when a framing national concept of geographical general education, reflecting appeals from society and changes in the paradigm of the scientific discipline of geography (for details see e.g. Hampl 1998; Bičík, Hampl 2000) and representing the results of the discussions of a broader group of interested geographers, at the same time, has not been created. Consequentially, we do not consider current changes in geographical education to be fully systemic.

More significant changes to the educational subject concept, prepared in compliance with a more accurate definition of geography as a scientific discipline and representing the result of professional consensus of the geographical community, were implemented in Czechia, most recently a quarter of a century ago. This “inner” reform, stressing general social and physical geographical themes, as well as theoretical approaches and modelling, was supported with the publishing of new geography textbooks; however, effective teacher education was missing from school practices. At the beginning of the 1990s, when state requirements loosened, a return to a traditional content conception, with a dominance of regional geography, focusing on the uniqueness of various parts of the world occurred. In practice, however, most teachers did not accept the enforced reform of the “academic geographers”.

The “mapping” of the current state of general geographical education in Czechia and its evaluation, primarily at the implementation level, is not based on the results of broadly reliable inquiries. Research activities were generally focused on individual levels or partial aspects of the intended, implemented and acquired geographical curriculum or on the state of human capital, in general (Jančák, Havlíček, Chromý, Marada 2008). The following text presents a selection of primary activities, dating back to 1997 (an overview of the activities up until 1990 is presented by Wahla, 1997).

Ongoing changes to the outer conditions, under which the geography teaching process is managed, including the changing paradigms of the scientific discipline, have stirred up a number of conceptual studies. Primary educational goals, the concept and content of school geography were discussed, for instance, by Hofmann (2000), Kühnlová (1997), Řezníčková (2006a) and Vávra (2008). Reflections concerning international trends in geographical education were addressed by Hynek (2002), Kuldová (2008), etc. Studies focusing on specifications of the fundamentals of geographical curriculum, which are of a theoretical-methodological character, are presented by Řezníčková (2002); the categorization of geographical skills by Řezníčková (2003c); the issues of geographical thinking by Řezníčková (2003b); the concept of the regional geography teaching process by Hynek (2000b); Novotná, Peckert (2000); Peštová (1999), etc. Numerous studies discuss the concept of specific themes such as landscape (e.g. Balej 2003, Kučera 2009, Řezníčková et al. 2008), location quality (Řezníčková, Matějček 2008; Vávra 2004), biodiversity (Matějček 2008), local area (Kühnlová 2005), fieldwork (Hofmann 2003) and sustainable development (Hynek, Hynek 2005) etc. Each *Geografické rozhledy* (Geographical Horizons) magazine issue (currently the 18<sup>th</sup> volume) encompasses additional, and herein-unmentioned, contributions of a methodological character.

Individual agents or teaching models and means, influencing the quality of the teaching process, have also taken centre stage in other research. These include methods for teaching elementary geography to primary school pupils (Matušková 1998), professional attitudes and value attitudes of geography teachers and their regional differences (Chromý, Řezníčková 2004), the quality of geography textbooks (Knecht 2006, 2007, 2008; Weinhöfer, Novák 2008; Wahla et al. 2000), methods for teaching geography to lower-secondary school pupils (Hübelová, Janík, Najvar 2008), the role of the media in the geography teaching process (Hübelová, Najvarová, Chárová 2008), the relationship between geography and IT (Foltýnová, Svatoňová 2007; Herber 2005; Wahla, Kovář 2002), the function of maps in forming geographical competencies (Novák, Machalová 2001), non full-time forms of geographical stud-

ies (Kühnlová 2003), the Maturita model (Řezníčková 2003a), entrance exams to geography study programmes at universities (Řezníčková 1999), conditions of university preparations of future geography teachers (Hynek 1997, 2000a; Vávra 2005), etc.

Another area of studies deals with the research of the attained geographical curriculum and its implementation, for instance, a research project concerning 15-year-old students in different European countries (Řezníčková, Marada 2008). An analysis of final-grade grammar school students is presented in the final reports of the project Maturita Step by Step (CERMAT 2003, 2004, 2005). Marada, Řezníčková (2005) and Chromý, Řezníčková (2004) investigate the topic of professional application of university geography-studies graduates.

This list of published studies, focusing on issues of geographical education in Czechia, falls far short of completion. It is difficult to make such a list, because of the interdisciplinary nature of the issues it is concerned with – overlapping disciplines of geography, pedagogy and psychology. Studies that have been carried out as a reaction to contemporary issues regarding the educational transformation process are, therefore, published in various specialised journals and in the anthologies of numerous Czech and foreign conferences. Currently, the direction of research is also determined by the (non-)allocated financial support of grant agencies.

The quality and extent of research is also influenced by institutional and personnel factors. There is no institution in Czechia that would co-ordinate the research activities of various, individual universities so as to enable a long-term comprehensive research project on geographical curriculum to be carried out. The Research Institute of Education (Výzkumný ústav pedagogický), which is responsible for obligatory curricular documents, and the Institute for Information on Education (Ústav pro informace ve vzdělávání, CERMAT), which is responsible for the concept and content of the Maturita exam in various subjects, one of which is geography, are the only two arbitrators on issues such as the systematic and conceptual transformation of general geography education at the national level. Another issue which causes problems is the relatively low level of interest on the part of university geographers in primary and secondary school geography (see also Rawling, Daugherty 1996). In a competitive interdisciplinary environment, there are more and more university geographers, who prefer to conduct financially-supported research on topics not related with education. Until the situation for university pedagogues or at university departments changes, no changes in the proportion of these research activities can be expected.

### **3. SWOT analysis of the state of geographical education in Czechia**

The following text presents an attempt to summarise key factors concerning geographical education with a SWOT analysis. We observe formal education (not after-school education) taking place in primary schools, grammar schools and universities in Czechia and aimed at preparing future teachers of geography. This represents a broad outline, which seeks to highlight the primary elements of a multilevel and multi-factorial, conditioned process of projection, implementation and evaluation of geographical education. A more detailed analysis of the university preparation of geography teachers was carried out by Hynek (1997, 2000).



Tab. 3 – Strong and weak points of geographical education in Czechia

| Strong points  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ The possibility of geography teaching focused on issues of education at nine higher education institutions in Czechia.</li> <li>+ The possibility of post-graduate studies focused on issues in geography education (in recent years at the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University in Brno, within general pedagogy, and at the Faculty of Science at Charles University, within the study programme: General Geographical Issues).</li> <li>+ The possibility to interconnect all geographers – members of the academic community and practicing teachers through the Czech Geographical Society, primarily through its Geographical and Environmental Education Section.</li> <li>+ The possibility to interconnect all geographers – members of academic community through regular working sessions at all the geography departments in Czechia and through numerous professional conferences and seminars.</li> <li>+ Representation of geographers on the Accreditation Board of the Czech Republic.</li> <li>+ Long-standing support of further education for teachers through courses or summer schools organised by various higher education institutions.</li> <li>+ Publishing <i>Geografické rozhledy</i> (Geographical Horizons) magazine (18 volumes), intended primarily for teachers at primary and secondary schools.</li> <li>+ Long-standing existence of the Geographical Olympics.</li> <li>+ Representation of geographers in the Commission of the Ministry of Education, which focuses on education in history and other social science subjects.</li> <li>+ Active cooperation of geographers with reform initiatives.</li> </ul>   |
| Weak points  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lack of a national (framework) conception concerning general geographical education.</li> <li>– There are only two arbitrators on issues regarding the systemic and conceptual change of general geographical education at the national level. One is responsible for the creation of binding curricular documents and works at the Research Pedagogical Institute (Výzkumný ústav pedagogický). The second, dealing with the concept and content of the graduation examination in geography, is at the Institute for Information on Education (Ústav pro informace ve vzdělávání).</li> <li>– Lack of systemic, long-term, comprehensive research on issues concerning geographical education, focused on intended, realised and achieved curriculum at all levels and types of schools and on the application of geography in extra-curricular practice.</li> <li>– The excessively academic nature of university education for future geography teachers only partially reflects the needs and requirements, arising from ongoing school reform.</li> <li>– The disintegration of geography as a scientific discipline, the small number of experts developing a holistic approach to the scientific discipline that is so necessary, inter alia, for general geographical education, a lack of professional research of a general comprehensive nature.</li> <li>– Insufficient awareness among university geographers concerning current education issues and the ongoing school reform. Only a small number of them took part in a nationwide discussion on the conception of general education, including geographical education, in recent years.</li> <li>– Lack of “subject icons” (leading personalities), representing the issue of geographical education; experts oriented in this way, because they have encountered, inter alia, formal problems in receiving the title of a senior lecturer.</li> <li>– “Murmurs” in communication caused, among other things, by non-integrated terminology. A dictionary of geographical terms and didactic terminology that is accepted by all does not exist.</li> <li>– Complete lack of long-term and targeted propaganda of geography and school geography in the media.</li> <li>– Formal membership of most geographers in the Czech Geographical Society (Česká geografická společnost), which is not considered an established platform (they present themselves primarily as representing their faculties or projects).</li> </ul> |

Tab. 4 – Opportunities and threats of geographical education in Czechia

| Opportunities  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Increasing interest in university education in general.</li> <li>+ Support for the development of human sources through grant projects.</li> <li>+ The increasing need for an inter-disciplinary approach in solving various issues and, consequently, increased possibilities for the practical application of geography.</li> <li>+ The possibility of collaborating at national and international levels.</li> </ul>   |
| Threats  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Limited and non-systematic inflow of funds into science and education.</li> <li>– Complete lack in the representation of geography at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. As a result, the discipline is only developed at universities.</li> <li>– Evaluation of higher education institutions primarily on the basis of their scientific success.</li> <li>– The questioning of the position of didactics of geography as a stand-alone scientific discipline.</li> <li>– Low level of support for research into geographical education from grant agencies.</li> <li>– Decreasing interest in university studies aimed at geographical education in consequence of a decrease in the absolute number of the upper-secondary population.</li> <li>– Non-qualified teachers teaching geography at primary schools (estimated 20 %).</li> <li>– Non-systemic practical education of teachers, excess in the supply of courses at different levels and difficulty in comparison with demand.</li> <li>– Lack of need among practical teachers to join professional organisations (e.g. an association of geography teachers does not exist) and lack of interest in further education, due, among other things, to non-identification with goals of curricular reform.</li> <li>– Lack of interest from the media in geography and geographical education.</li> <li>– Teachers' (including geography teachers) and the general public's refusal to accept the key aims of the curricular reform.</li> </ul> |

The strong and weak points in Table 3 are specified as activities or the results of activities, which the academic community of geographers (joined together in the Czech Geographical Society (Česká geografická společnost), primarily within its Geographical and Environmental Education Section) have under their direct control and which help secure, or in some cases prevent the provision of the present or a higher level of geographical education in Czechia.

Table 4 introduces primary opportunities and threats, which help identify external conditions, meaning things that are beyond the direct control of the academic community of geographers and which support, or rather prevent, the provision of the present or a higher level of geographical education in Czechia.

#### 4. Prospects

It can be presumed that general geographical education in Czechia, under the influence of many mutually conditioned factors, is and will continue to exhibit much greater variety, both in terms of its input and output than it did previously. The FEP's defining requirements for geographical education at a very general level will be one of the factors behind this variety. School Educational Programmes created at the various schools will also influence the larger or smaller scale of functions of school geography.

It can be presumed that the weight/significance of geography as a school subject will be conditioned by the general orientation of the school in question

and by the professional qualities of teachers; however, other external conditions will also come into play. These external conditions will include, among other things, the (non)instructive nature of binding curricular documents, the system selected for evaluating schools and pupils, including the design of the graduation examination, the (non)existence of a national concept for general geographical education, the (non-)systematic approach to further education for practical teachers, etc. (see Table 3 and 4).

Last, but not least, the function and level of primary and secondary school geography will be conditioned by the level of social prestige attained by geography as a scientific discipline (see Holt-Jensen, 2005), for these two “objects” work as “connected vessels”. If geography is a respected scientific discipline in society, its position as a school subject shall be the same and vice versa; if the school subject loses some of its attraction, the social prestige of geography will decrease as well, after a certain time.

The following tasks concerning the “marketing of geography” are derived from this analysis of the current situation of geographical education in Czechia. It is desirable to promote increased interest among academics in the issues of geographical education, to support research in this field and, last but not least, to create a framework national conception of general geographical education. Consequently, the preparation of university students with an interest in pedagogy, the outlining and implementation of courses for further education and the publishing of textbooks should all be done in the context of this concept. Recommendations for activities, beyond the scope of the geographical community, can be summarised into one statement: It is desirable to act unanimously and to assert interdisciplinary themes. Furthermore, it is necessary to receive widespread media coverage concerning current events/issues in geography, as often as possible, because non-geographers, with their own ideas acquired in the past, quite often make decisions regarding the role of geography as a school subject at school and national levels. A similar opinion is advocated by the historian Beneš (2007, p. 209), who claims that the position of each subject is created at the national level, by means of a dialogue, and also at times by means of a “struggle” between the government and the scientific sphere. In the end, it is the first partner, or competitor, who has the final say.

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## S h r n u t í

### TRANSFORMACE GEOGRAFICKÉHO VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ V ČESKU

Uplynulo dvacet let od „sametové“ revoluce, která nastartovala hluboké proměny ve všech sférách života obyvatel Česka, školský systém nevyjímaje. Příspěvek shrnuje vývoj školní geografie (tj. výuky geografie na základních a středních školách) v tomto období. Snahou je poukázat na širší souvislosti, proto druhá kapitola obsahuje i základní přehled výzkumných aktivit na poli geografického kurikula. Hlavní faktory podmiňující současný i budoucí stav školní geografie jsou utříděny a zhodnoceny pomocí analýzy SWOT.

Školský systém Česka stejně jako jeho funkční část, tj. školní geografie, prošla v 90. letech minulého století dvěma fázemi – dekonstrukcí a parciální stabilizací, kdy probíhaly větší či menší obsahové, organizační a legislativní změny, které však nebyly součástí promyšlené dlouhodobé koncepce. Důležitým mezníkem tohoto „konceptního zrání“ se stal rok 2001, kdy byla zveřejněna a vládou schválena výchozí koncepce všeobecného vzdělávání jako součást Národního programu rozvoje vzdělávání v České republice (tzv. Bílá kniha).

Tato strategie měla být impulsem pro systémovou rekonstrukci školství se zřetelem k dlouhodobější perspektivě. V kontextu Bílé knihy (2001) se začala připravovat a postupně i realizovat kurikulární reforma, kdy původní závazné dokumenty byly nahrazovány dvou-  
stupňovou soustavou dokumentů – státní a školní. Dokumenty státní úrovně, tzv. Rámcové vzdělávací programy (dále RVP), normativně stanovují rámec pro jednotlivé etapy vzdělávání a jsou závazné pro tvorbu školních vzdělávacích programů (dále ŠVP) vytvořených na úrovni jednotlivých škol. Příspěvek upozorňuje na to, jak koncepce RVP (zvláště formální přiřazení mezi přírodovědné předměty) může ovlivnit funkci a koncepci školní geografie. RVP pro jednotlivé typy škol jsou dostupné (i anglické verze) na [www.vuppraha.cz](http://www.vuppraha.cz). Zásadní připomínky geografů k RVP shrnuje Rezníčková (2006b).

Funkce školní geografie a její společenskou prestiž ovlivnila i reforma maturitních zkoušek, která se začala připravovat souběžně s kurikulární reformou od roku 2000. Zahájení nové maturity bylo několikrát odloženo, naposledy na rok 2010. Jak se postupně měnil model maturitní zkoušky, měnila se i pozice geografie v systému povinných a nepovinných maturitních předmětů ve společné (písemné) části pro všechny maturanty středních škol. Ve stávajícím modelu (viz [www.ceremat.cz](http://www.ceremat.cz)) má poměrně marginální postavení, protože je zařazena spolu s dalšími devíti předměty mezi tzv. volitelné předměty. Student si ve společné (písemné části) vybírá jeden z nich. Podrobné připomínky geografů k modelu maturitní zkoušky uvádí Rezníčková (2007).

Formální proměny školského systému Česka shrnuje tabulka 2. Poslední fáze reformy, tzv. systémová rekonstrukce, se zde člení na tři etapy činností: příprava, rozhodnutí, implementace. Nyní se školský systém jako celek nachází na počátku fáze implementace. Jednotlivé školy si připravily školní vzdělávací programy tj. podle v textu popsaných podmínek svoji koncepci výuky a začaly ji realizovat (základní školy od školního roku 2007–2008, gymnázia od 2009–2010).

Uvedený nástin reformem na koncepční a projektové úrovni však nevyhovuje o jejich účinnosti ve školní praxi. V poslední době provedená Rychlá šetření (UIV 2007) na téma zavádění školních vzdělávacích programů nebo výsledky výzkumu Matějů, Straková a kol. (2005) či Simonová, Straková (2005) upozorňují na četná úskalí. Potvrzuje se, že školský systém má v sobě ohromnou setrvačnost a vyznačuje se neobyčejnou rezistencí vůči změně.

Autoři analýzy (Straková a kol. 2009), kterou zadalo MŠMT ČR se záměrem vyhodnotit míry naplnění cílů Bílé knihy v oblasti předškolního, základního a středního vzdělávání, konstatovali, že i když Bílá kniha obsahuje vysoce relevantní a stále aktuální cíle vzdělávání, nastopnila očekávanou úlohu zastřešujícího dokumentu. Důvody je třeba hledat v podobě řízení v oblasti vzdělávání v Česku, zejména v neprovázanosti státních institucí při tvorbě výchozích dokumentů. Dalšími důvody jsou přílišná rozmanitost a úroveň odborného přemýšlení, nepropojenost vzdělávací politiky s výzkumem v oblasti vzdělávání a nízká informovanost v odborných kruzích i v široké veřejnosti o cílech reformy i o zjištěných výsledcích výzkumu.

Analýza realizace opatření navrhovaných v jednotlivých strategických liniích Bílé knihy ukazuje, že řada z nich nebyla uskutečněna vůbec, mnohá z těch, která realizována byla, byla realizována izolovaně nikoli v zamýšlených komplexních celcích a souvislostech. Mnohá opatření byla realizována do značné míry formálně bez odpovídající finanční a metodické podpory, která by zvýšila šanci na jejich úspěšnost v praxi. Reformní záměry byly pouze proklamovány, nebyly zajištěny základní podmínky pro jejich realizaci, bylo zanedbáno zapojení učitelů – klíčových aktérů změn. Učitelé (nejen výuky geografie) nejsou přesvědčeni o její nutnosti a nejsou také vybaveni vědomostmi a dovednostmi nezbytnými k realizaci reformy. Významná rizika ohrožující zdárnou realizaci reformy spočívají rovněž v nepromyšlené a nedostatečné koordinaci s dalšími kroky vzdělávací politiky, především s uceleným systémem evaluace výkonů žáků, učitelů i škol. Ve shodě s názorem Matějů, Straková a kol. (2005) se proto domníváme, že pokud nedojde k urychlené věcné a finanční podpoře kurikulární reformy, proběhnou jen požadované formální nikoli hluboce promyšlené obsahové proměny.

Lze předpokládat, že geografické všeobecné vzdělávání v Česku pod vlivem mnoha vzájemně se podmiňujících faktorů je a bude ve svém průběhu i výsledcích mnohem pestřejší než dříve. Jedním z nástrojů této pestrosti jsou platné Rámcové vzdělávací programy, které definují požadavky na geografické vzdělávání na velmi obecné úrovni. Větší či menší škálu funkcí školní geografie ovlivní i vzdělávací programy vytvořené na jednotlivých školách. Význam výukového předmětu geografie se bude odvíjet od celkového zaměření školy, profesních kvalit učitelů geografie, do hry však vstupují i další vnější podmínky. Nemalý vliv sehraje mj. (ne)návodnost závazných kurikulárních dokumentů, zvolený systém evaluace škol a žáků včetně modelu maturitní zkoušky, (ne)existence národní koncepce geografického všeobec-

ného vzdělávání, (ne)systémový přístup k dalšímu vzdělávání učitelů z praxe a další faktory uvedené v tabulce 1 a 3. V neposlední řadě funkce a úroveň školní geografie se bude odvíjet od dosažené společenské prestiže vědní disciplíny geografie (viz Holt-Jensen 2005), neboť tyto dva „objekty“ fungují jako „spojené nádoby“. Když je geografie ve společnosti uznávaným vědním oborem, je tomu tak i u výukového předmětu. Když školní předmět ztrácí „půdu pod nohama“, s určitým časovým odstupem sníží i společenskou prestiž geografie.

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