

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

Office of the Agent of the Czech Government
before the European Court of Human Rights

Execution of Judgment of the European Court of Human Rights

no. 57325/00 – *D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic*

Interim Report on the Execution of the Judgment

submitted to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 17 January 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

This Interim Report on the Execution of the Judgment in *D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic* is submitted in pursuance of point 9 of decision no. CM/Del/Dec(2024)1492/H46-10 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, dated 14 March 2024. Its purpose is to provide information on (i) the progress made by the Czech Republic in implementing the Action Plan for the Execution of the Judgment in *D.H. and Others*, submitted to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 21 December 2023, and (ii) the progress made in analysing the reasons for the low participation of Roma children in preschool education, along with further steps planned to encourage their preschool attendance.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE EXECUTION OF THE JUDGMENT IN *D.H. AND OTHERS* OF DECEMBER 2023

A. ACTION PLAN

At the end of December 2023, the Czech Republic submitted to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe its Action Plan for the Execution of the Judgment in *D.H. and Others*, outlining measures aimed at the desegregation of Roma pupils (available in Czech [here](#)). The Action Plan, drawn up in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS), reflects the country's current approach to securing equal access to education for Roma pupils. It contains a schedule of measures to be implemented in the years ahead.

The measures are grouped thematically into the following three project fiches, which are described in detail in individual annexes to the Action Plan: (1) *Reform of the counselling system*; (2) *Ethnic desegregation*; and (3) *Support for schools*. The measures draw heavily on the Analysis of the causes underlying the higher proportion of Roma pupils receiving education in classes set up under section 16(9) of the Education Act, conducted by PAQ Research and STEM (available [here](#)). The way in which these measures were formulated was discussed by the Expert Forum of the Panel on the Execution of the Judgment in *D.H. and Others*, an advisory body of the Agent of the Czech Government before the European Court of Human Rights. Forum members continue to be consulted during the implementation process. The Action Plan was also presented to journalists and the broader expert audience, including representatives of the Roma community, at a working breakfast hosted by the MEYS in cooperation with the Office of the Agent of the Czech Government in February 2024. The objectives and draft measures for each of the Action Plan's project fiches can be summed up as follows:

I. REFORM OF THE COUNSELLING SYSTEM

Objective: To increase the quality and efficiency of the activities of school counselling facilities with a view to approximating the proportion of Roma pupils diagnosed with mild mental disabilities to the level of the general population.

- **Legislative reinforcement of competences in the management of school counselling facilities** (the ability to select and remove facility directors; the obligation to follow facilities'

methodologies in order to standardise their activities, the obligation to submit data on their activities); and the **introduction of catchment areas for educational psychology counselling centres**;

- The **launch of a project for the management of school counselling facilities** (allocation of management funds for the National Pedagogy Institute – NPI; increase in staffing at the MEYS);
- The **introduction of a viable system for the registration and management of data on the activities of school counselling facilities**.

II. ETHNIC DESEGREGATION

Objective: To reduce the number of Roma children in ethnically segregated schools.

- **An explicit definition of ethnic segregation in schools and consideration of the enshrinement of its prohibition in the Education Act**;
- **Political support for desegregation** – a proclamation of its inadmissibility; PR activities, reinforcement of the Support for the Integration of the Roma Minority subsidy scheme;
- The **promotion of desegregation by the MEYS, the Czech School Inspectorate (CSI) and the NPI** (the pinpointing of areas with segregated schools, communication with their founders urging them to desegregate, accompanied by an offer of support; the formulation of MEYS desegregation methodology for founders; the **establishment of an incentive tool** for the MEYS in initiating communication with founders to promote desegregation – a **subsidy scheme encouraging founders to engage in desegregation activities**; the submission of proposals seeking the abolition of school districts where segregation is detected).

III. SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS

Objective: To reduce the correlation between pupils' performance and the socio-economic status of their families.

- The establishment of **index-based school funding** – modification of the system used to fund regional education so that it takes into account the socio-economic status of families, and the **set-up of methodological, staffing, and financial support for schools** serving a high proportion of socially disadvantaged pupils;
- Legislative treatment of the **transmission of data on pupils between the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) and the MEYS** for purposes of the disadvantage index;
- The **lowering of financial barriers impeding access to education, including free lunches** – the channelling of a portion of social support directly into the coverage of school supplies; the replacement of subsidy schemes with the direct reimbursement of education-related costs to schools (meals, school supplies) for all children whose parents draw or are entitled to a child allowance;
- An extension to defined positions to include the **position of social pedagogue** and the determination of funding for the same.

B. PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan is being implemented. Among the measures being adopted is an amendment to the Education Act, registered under reference number [618/24](#), which was approved by the Government on 2 October 2024 and is currently awaiting debate in the Chamber of Deputies (amendment to the Education Act). In particular, it introduces: (i) a **system for the index-linked**

funding of education ensuring that schools attended by a higher number of socially disadvantaged pupils receive more funding, while capping the maximum benefit per school in order to encourage the equal distribution of socially disadvantaged pupils among all local schools; (ii) the establishment of **catchment areas for educational psychology counselling centres** relative to primary schools; and (iii) the institutionalisation of supporting roles in education (**school psychologist, remedial teacher**).

One of the most important activities emerging in connection with the implementation of the Action Plan is the initiation of cooperation between the MEYS, the NPI, and the research organisation PAQ Research under the **Memorandum of Cooperation for the Elimination of Ethnic Segregation** (more, for example, [here](#)). In October 2024, the Ministry of Regional Development acceded to this Memorandum when the Agency for Social Inclusion (“the Agency”) became involved. The first steps in this inter-institutional cooperation are now under way. The MEYS, the NPI, and PAQ Research are jointly running a pilot programme across six selected sites that includes the provision of consultation, training, methodology, and financial support to schools and their founders. The Agency promotes systematic desegregation in other municipalities. Within the scope of this cooperation, methodology will be devised for school founders containing specific steps to mitigate and forestall the emergence of ethnic segregation.

A detailed description, as provided by the MEYS, of the progress made in the individual project fiches of the Action plan, broken down by planned outputs during 2024, is presented below:

PROJECT FICHE I: REFORM OF THE COUNSELLING SYSTEM

Output 1 – Registration and management of data on the diagnostic and intervention activities of all school counselling facilities

It has been decided to set up systematic and regular data collection on the activities of school counselling facilities, which requires a change in legislation. The draft amendment to the Education Act that is currently under discussion includes the harvesting of data from recommendations, reports, advisory assessments, and statements issued by school counselling facilities. This data is to be collated by the MEYS, which currently does not have access to the information. It will be assessed and measures will be taken where necessary. The adoption of the amendment is now passing through the legislative process. The plan is for it to take effect as of 1 January 2026.

In 2025, amendments to implementing legislation for the amendment to the Education Act will be prepared. Decree no. 364/2005 on the keeping of documentation of schools and school facilities and school registers and on the transmission of data from the documentation of schools and school facilities and school registers will be amended to clarify what data is to be transmitted.

In the future, a register of children, pupils and students and a register of teaching staff is expected to be introduced. A bill introducing these two registers is currently undergoing inter-ministerial comment procedure. Only schools will provide data on children, pupils, and students in the initial stage, followed by school counselling facilities in the second. The register of children, pupils, and students should allow for the easy collection of detailed data on the progress of children and pupils through the education system. The information provided will encompass data on the disadvantages faced by the given child, pupil, or student, as referred to in section 16 of the Education Act, data on aptitude, data on support measures provided to the child, pupil, or student by the school in accordance with section 16 of the Education Act, and data on the findings of examinations referred to in recommendations made by school counselling facilities. Each child, pupil, and student will be assigned a unique, non-descriptive identifier serving to identify them in the register of children, pupils and students in the delivery of education or school services. This law is slated to take effect on 1st September 2026.

In 2025, the MEYS will also conduct an analysis drawing on already available data from the reporting system to determine how often mild mental disability is diagnosed across the various school counselling facilities.

Output 2 – More detailed legislative definition of school counselling facilities’ activities

Amendments to the Education Act and the Teaching Staff Act related to inclusive education and counselling in the education sector are now passing through the legislative process. As a follow-up to their adoption, in 2025 the implementing legislation will be amended, including the issuance of a new decree replacing Decree no. 72/2005 on the provision of counselling services, to update the activities carried out by school counselling facilities. On this basis, methodological documentation will be developed to standardise the activities of these facilities.

The proposed changes include:

- a definition of the types of school counselling facilities and their activities at the level of a legislative act;
- a specification of the provision of counselling services in schools;
- the parameterised funding of remedial teachers and psychologists from the state budget in mainstream primary schools where the average number of pupils is 180 or more (for three consecutive years);
- the establishment of catchment areas for educational psychology counselling centres in order to provide methodological guidance to nursery, primary, and secondary schools related to positions in the school counselling centre;
- the obligation for regions to foster conditions conducive to the provision of counselling services by school counselling facilities;
- modifications to the provision of support measures;
- the introduction of a new procedure for professional qualification as a remedial teacher;
- changes in the funding of school counselling facilities – a combination of various factors in the funding of school counselling facilities, including the complexity of the counselling services provided;
- the gathering of data from school counselling facilities;
- the selection of procedures, tools, and methods by the school counselling facilities in line with best practices;
- changes in the process for the selection of directors of school counselling facilities.

In connection with the establishment of catchment areas for educational psychology counselling centres, a multi-year call in for the pilot testing of the establishment and financing of the methodological guidance of school counselling centres by educational psychology counselling centres will be published in spring 2025 under the EU-funded Johannes Amos Comenius Operational Programme (JAC OP). This methodological guidance is intended to ensure greater coherence in the counselling system, improve the quality of cooperation between schools and educational psychology counselling centres, and provide guidance to the expert staff of school counselling centres. Within the framework of targeted support for school counselling facilities, there are JAC OP calls that will be used to pilot-test models for the institutionalisation of remedial teachers and psychologists in nursery, primary, and secondary schools.

Output 3 – Organisation of the management of school counselling facilities' activities by MEYS

Other changes currently in the legislative process concern the way in which the management of school counselling facilities is organised. These include the obligation of a founder to hold a competitive selection process for the position of school counselling facility director every six years, and the strengthening of the CSI's powers to initiate a selection of a new director if irregularities are found in a school's or school counselling facility's activities, at any time during the term of office of the current director. The MEYS submitted a project to the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic aimed at forming a unified system for assessing special educational needs and defining types and levels of support measures. As a follow-up, pedagogical research will be carried out to determine specific procedures in the diagnosis of, and establishment of support measures for, all disadvantages, including those related to social and health. This research will be due for completion in 2028.

During 2024, a working group headed by the National Pedagogy Institute (NPI) produced an update of a methodological recommendation on the diagnosis of mild intellectual development disorders (formerly mild mental disabilities). One of the working group's briefs was to update the methodological recommendation to take social disadvantage into account when diagnosing mild intellectual development disorder. The purpose of the diagnosis under this update is to recommend support in education and in the educative context of the family setting that will work best for the pupil's education. School counselling facilities' counsellors will draw up their own reasoned conclusions as to the optimal recommendation for a pupil's education. In the diagnosis of socially disadvantaged children, pupils, and students, the NPI is also developing new diagnostic tools for subsequent dissemination.

The working group's outputs will be implemented through training programmes for the staff of school counselling facilities (educational psychology counselling centres and special education centres), where counselling experts will be apprised of recommendations and procedures for diagnosing the level of intellectual abilities, as well as how to take into account, in the diagnostic process, the possible influence of socio-cultural disadvantages faced by children and pupils. Implementation will start in 2025.

Besides methodological information, the working group's outputs also include recommendations to the MEYS for systemic adjustments in this area. The MEYS will continue to address these recommendations and, where appropriate, their implementation.

Output 4 – Supplementing missing capacities at municipalities with extended powers

The draft amendment to the Education Act envisages a change – effective as of 1 January 2026 – in the funding of school counselling facilities through the introduction of national funding rates concerning the annual amount of spending allocated by the state budget. The MEYS decided to take this step largely on the basis of a comparison of regional funding rates for payroll and other non-capital spending set by individual regional authorities for regional and municipal education in 2024.¹ Sizeable inconsistencies were found in the way regional funding rates were set for school counselling facilities. Different regional authorities use different ways of setting regional funding rates. This results in differences between regions in the financial resources provided to school counselling facilities, and gives rise to issues such as a significant disproportion in the number of clients per member of educational staff, which may affect the quality of the counselling services provided. National funding rates will make it possible to combine multiple factors in the funding of school counselling facilities,

¹ For more information, see <https://msmt.gov.cz/vzdelavani/skolstvi-v-cr/ekonomika-skolstvi/porovnani-krajskych-normativu-mzdovych-prostredku-a-12>.

including the complexity of the counselling services provided and activities for which no client is recorded – an aspect that is central to the current funding system.

The MEYS has alerted the regions, who are founders of most school counselling facilities, of the high numbers of clients per member of educational staff in its comments on the long-term plans for education.

In 2025, the MEYS will continue to work on increasing the capacity of psychologists and remedial teachers. Pilot testing will also be conducted on the configuration and funding of the methodological support provided by educational psychology counselling centres in relation to schools. In this context, staffing at the educational psychology counselling centres will be increased.

PROJECT FICHE II: ETHNIC DESEGREGATION

Output 1 – Definition and identification of ethnic segregation in schools

(A) Publication of definitions of segregated and segregating schools, with consideration for the local context

There was a shift in the MEYS's approach in this area during 2024. The adoption of an unambiguous public definition of ethnic segregation in schools is no longer seen as the only way to satisfy the need to legitimise the imperative of addressing segregation in the education system and to select sites for the launch of a case management pilot project (see below). The first need is served by the Action Plan for the Execution of the Judgment in *D.H. and Others* from December 2023, including its annexes in Czech, which is publicly available on the MEYS website, and by the Memorandum of Cooperation for the Elimination of Ethnic Segregation in Schools, also available on the MEYS website. Both these documents describe the measures to be taken to end ethnic segregation in education. The need to select sites for the case management pilot project was covered by internal quantification and expert assessment methodology (see section B below).

Nevertheless, in 2024 contact was established with academic staff of the Department of Social Geography and Regional Development at the Faculty of Science of Charles University, with whom collaboration will continue to be pursued in 2025 in order to develop a professionally accepted definition of ethnic segregation in schools and to conduct further research into its causes and consequences.

In addition to the activities planned for 2024, the MEYS has focused on targeted media coverage of the need to address the ethnic segregation of Roma children and pupils in the school system. The MEYS newsletter for experts and journalists is one of the tools used to communicate this issue to the public. There were several media reports on the issue during 2024.

The explicit enshrinement of the impermissibility of ethnic segregation in the Education Act remains an open option. A decision on whether this would be advisable will be made after the case management pilot project has been assessed and foreign practices have been explored. The general prohibition of discrimination is already enshrined in the Education Act.

(B) Methodology for the initial identification of areas with segregated schools

In order to select several sites for the case management pilot project on desegregation (more on this below), an analysis of available data on informed estimates of the number of Roma pupils in primary schools was conducted. The analysis only considered the schools of founders who have more than one school. This decision was made in light of the plan to use the analysis as a basis for a pilot project on case management for founders whose education systems have an over-representation of

Roma pupils in only some of their schools. For this criterion to be met, founders needed to have more than one school.

The first step in the analysis was to rank all primary schools that meet these conditions in terms of the ratio of Roma pupils in a given school to the average proportion of Roma pupils in all other schools of the same founder. The second criterion, stemming from the needs of the case management pilot project, was a slight preference for larger founders in an effort to maximise the project's impact given its limited financial resources and capacity.

The second step ranked the founders according to how their schools had scored in the first step of the analysis. At the top of the chart were those founders where only a few of their schools had a high concentration of Roma pupils enrolled.

This operationalisation of segregation in schools was chosen instead of simply focusing on schools where more than a third of the pupils are Roma in order to place greater emphasis on the local context in which the schools are situated. By simply selecting schools where more than a third of the pupils are Roma, attention would be trained almost exclusively on municipalities in structurally disadvantaged areas with a high Roma population.

For the six sites selected for the pilot project, initial background materials were created based on available data describing the state of the local education system. These documents contained information on all primary schools in the area covered by the founder in terms of: the size of the schools, the number of pupils in special classes established under section 16(9) of the Education Act, the drop-out rate in lower secondary education, the rate at which pupils repeat a year, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, the proportion of foreign pupils, the number of educational staff at the school, including support positions, the findings of the CSI during its inspections, and the concentration of Roma pupils in only certain primary schools in the area.

For 2025, an automated system generating data-driven reports on the education systems of individual founders should be established as part of the case management pilot project. The specific form and functions of the system are currently under development.

In addition, further refinement of the methodological guidelines for collecting informed estimates of the number of Roma children and pupils in schools is planned as a follow-up to the activities carried out in 2024. The initiative is headed by the Government Commissioner for Roma Minority Affairs and, besides the MEYS, involves the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Regional Development, and the Office of the Ombudsman. Consultations with representatives of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights are also planned.

(C) List of suspect school founders in areas suspected of segregation in schools

Drawing on the internal analysis of the degree of representation of Roma pupils described above, an expert assessment helped to select six sites for the launch of the case management pilot project. The experts based their selection on the analysis results and took into account the efforts to achieve as much diversity as possible in terms of the representation of different types of segregation in the pilot project. Features characterising the types of segregation include the size of the Roma population in the municipality, the difficulty of finding a solution, and the size of the municipality.

In 2025, four more sites will be selected through a similar process, building on the experience gained from the activities in 2024.

Output 2 – Case management

(A) MEYS methodology for desegregation and the mapping of available staff and financial capacities

In the spring of 2024, the MEYS, the NPI, and PAQ Research signed a Memorandum of Cooperation for the Elimination of Ethnic Segregation in Schools. This cooperation agreement includes the planned transfer of the existing website www.desegregace.cz to the NPI, which is an organisation directly managed by the MEYS. It is expected to take over the site at the end of 2025. The website content is being revised in order to better meet all the needs of MEYS methodology, which primarily serves founders, but also provides other key local stakeholders with a methodological basis for addressing segregationist tendencies in their area.

In the autumn of 2024, the Memorandum was supplemented with an addendum bringing the Department (Agency) for Social Inclusion of the Ministry of Regional Development into the fold. The Agency for Social Inclusion is currently implementing its own project aimed at desegregation in schools from the perspective of socially excluded pupils.

Financial capacities have so far only been roughly mapped to provide the case management pilot project with an internal overview. The building of extra staff capacity is an important part of the pilot project. Its initial stage involved in-depth training of the project's methodologists in order to sharpen the skills needed to carry out project activities. This training remains ongoing as needed and continues to be thoroughly documented so that, on the basis of this training and experience on the ground, a plan can be developed to systemically address the building of staff capacity needed to end segregation in schools.

Talks have also been initiated on cooperation with some pro-Roma non-profit organisations which, under the PRO-ROMA call of the Johannes Amos Comenius Operational Programme, are planning activities to support efforts aimed at ending the segregation of Roma pupils in schools.

The follow-up of other activities to the current case management pilot project, which has secured funding from the National Recovery Plan only until the end of 2025, will also need to be addressed. A related issue is the unresolved financial capacity to directly support the activities of founders seeking to end segregation in their education system.

(B) Establishment of communication with founders, examination of the situation in suspect areas, and determination of the positions of key local stakeholders

At the six sites selected for the case management pilot project, contact was established with the founder, specifically with representatives of the education departments or the political leadership of the municipalities. Each site has been assigned a methodologist responsible for communication and follow-up with the founder. With most founders, by the end of 2024 cooperation had been established with the local education leadership in the municipality; with some founders, discussions on how to proceed remain ongoing.

In 2025, communication will continue in the six selected municipalities, which will be joined by four additional sites. Experience gained from dealing with the founders will be used to develop and refine methodology for the elimination of segregation.

(C) Local desegregation plan and implementation

At the six selected sites, apart from the establishment of communications, the situation and the resulting needs are still being mapped. In the course of 2025, local desegregation plans should be developed and subsequently implemented. Project progress is being closely monitored and follow-up systemic measures will be proposed based on the findings. So far, however, it appears that this activity requires quite a bit more involvement by qualified staff capacities in supporting the founders' efforts to end segregation than expected.

Progress made so far in other activities outlined in the Action Plan is described below. There really is a focus on communicating efforts to end segregation to the public, as described above in the

text. Planned cooperation has been established with the Agency for Social Inclusion and the competent CSI inspectorates are being approached at the specific sites.

In 2025, four more sites will be involved. This means that, at the end of 2025, until when the project's funding is secured, there will be activities aimed at ending the segregation of Roma pupils in schools at a total of 10 sites. In the coming year, attention will be directed more towards the excessive enrolment of Roma pupils in classes established under section 16(9) of the Education Act. So far, the project has focused primarily on segregationist tendencies in primary schools with mainstream classes. For the sake of the project's continuity in the longer term, it will be important to clarify systemic arrangements on how to proceed and secure its funding.

(D) Submission of proposals seeking the abolition of school districts where segregation is detected

To date, no proposals have been submitted pursuant to section 42 of Act no. 500/2004, the Code of Administrative Procedure, to the Ministry of the Interior regarding oversight of the issuance and content of generally binding decrees of municipalities under section 123 of Act no. 128/2000 on municipalities which would ultimately lead to a petition to the Constitutional Court for the repeal of the relevant generally binding decree on the school districts of catchment schools. At this point in time, none of the six selected sites appears to be in a situation where it would be productive to take this step, as the threat of segregation there is caused by other factors. Nevertheless, this procedure remains one of the options the MEYS is prepared to pursue in a situation where there is reasonable suspicion of pro-segregation school districts and the absence of an active response from the founder.

PROJECT FICHE III: SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS

Output 1 – Revision of the regional education funding system to reflect the socio-economic status of pupils and schools' needs in working with these pupils

(A) Identifying schools that need extra support as a result of an above-average proportion of socially disadvantaged pupils

During 2024, the school disadvantage index – used for the original selection of schools under the National Recovery Plan-funded Support for Schools project – was reviewed in cooperation with the MEYS, the NPI, the CSI, and the non-profit organisation PAQ Research. The last meeting of 2024, held in December, was proposed further changes. Compared to the original version of the index that was used for the Support for Schools project, the new version uses data collected according to new methodology for identifying socially disadvantaged pupils that was developed under this project. The index has also been calibrated so as not to benefit schools in which socially disadvantaged pupils are concentrated even though they need not be (for example, because there are enough local schools in the area). The index should be set up so that schools are prepared to work with socially disadvantaged pupils in the mainstream, thus avoiding their placement in schools established under section 16(9) of the Education Act, which are able to provide more support than the current way in which mainstream classes operate.

In the context of the Czech Republic, social disadvantage and discrimination against Roma children and pupils in schools are two closely interrelated issues. Therefore, if the quality of education in schools with a higher proportion of socially disadvantaged pupils is improved, this should also have the effect of guaranteeing equal access to education for pupils of Roma origin.

In 2025, there are plans to complete the calculation of the index and incorporate it into legislation on schools, including secondary legislation tied to the amendment to the Education Act.

(B) Establishment of a catalogue of measures to provide comprehensive individualised support to socially disadvantaged pupils

In 2024, under the Promotion of Equal Opportunities project under National Recovery Plan, the NPI continued to provide methodological support to educational staff involved in this project. In the autumn of 2024, the measures used by project schools to support socially disadvantaged pupils also started to be evaluated as part of the project’s annual evaluation report. These measures include breakfast clubs, social pedagogue support, experiential learning, and tutoring. An e-learning course, “How to Work with Social Disadvantage”, was created for existing pedagogical staff including teachers and, in particular, for teacher-training faculties. This course includes an optional module on aspects specific to the culturally sensitive education of Roma pupils.

The development of methodologies for good practice in the use of support instruments is planned for 2025. These instruments will be systemically anchored in index-based funding. Since the implementation of the system differs slightly from the project set-up due to system limits, methodological support needs to be provided to schools on how to use the funds.

(C) Organisation of index-based funding for individual measures to support schools with a higher proportion of socially disadvantaged pupils

In 2024, the legislative process to incorporate an amendment allowing for index-based funding under the Education Act began. This legislative proposal includes differentiating the following funding streams depending on the complexity of the education provided:

- PHmax (funding for teachers’ salaries) – this is included in the amendment but, as part of spending optimisation, no increase is planned in the first three years (this is an expensive, yet relatively low-impact, measure);
- PHPmax (funding for the salaries of school psychologists and remedial teachers) – an increase in the demands placed on these positions;
- Components of the salaries of educational staff above the main pay scale (allowances and bonuses) – it will be possible to award higher remuneration for more demanding work;
- Other non-capital expenditure – these funds could be used to pay for direct support of education of disadvantaged pupils.

In 2025, work will be undertaken to establish secondary legislation related to the amendment of the Education Act so that schools can be funded on an indexed basis from 1 January 2026.

Output 2 – Long-term system of methodological support for schools with an above-average proportion of socially disadvantaged pupils

In 2024, no planning was carried out for the systemic implementation of a system of methodological support. The NPI proposed an extension to the project from the state budget or other sources, but this has yet to be approved.

Another draft amendment to the Education Act, submitted by the MEYS in 2024, would allow the CSI to engage in the methodological guidance of schools.

In 2025, the MEYS should determine whether methodological support will be introduced and, if so, what form it will take.

Output 3 – Review of the system of financial support available to schools and families for interventions aimed at increasing the academic success of children from socially disadvantaged families

In 2024, the MLSA and the MEYS held several talks on the possibility of sharing, with schools, MLSA data on children whose parents receive or are entitled to a child allowance. No final conclusions have been reached and discussions will continue in 2025.

Existing MEYS subsidy schemes covering school meals for deprived children and pupils have also been announced for 2025. Discussions on a systemic framework for the coverage of school meals will continue in 2025.

3. PREPARATION OF AN ACTION PLAN TO INCREASE THE PARTICIPATION OF ROMA CHILDREN IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

In June 2024, as a follow-up to the decision issued by the Committee of Ministers in March 2024, the Office of the Agent of the Czech Government before the European Court of Human Rights hosted a **roundtable discussion on access to preschool education for Roma and socially disadvantaged children** (the minutes of the discussion are available in Czech [here](#)). The aims of the roundtable discussion were to identify the barriers faced by Roma and socially disadvantaged children and their families in accessing preschool education and to initiate a debate on proposals for measures that would systemically encourage their attendance at nursery schools over multiple years. The data presented by PAQ Research shows that at least two years of nursery school attendance increases, on average, the estimated likelihood of disadvantaged children being enrolled in a mainstream primary school rather than a school or class established under section 16(9) of the Education Act by around 10 percentage points, from 84% to 94%.

The roundtable discussion was attended by representatives of the MEYS, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Regional Development, the NPI, the Office of the Government, the Government Council for Roma Affairs, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Roma community, and other experts, including representatives of PAQ Research, the Platform for Early Care, UNICEF, RomanoNet, Awen Amenca, and People in Need. The headteachers of two nursery schools also came to the discussion to present their good practices in the inclusion of Roma and socially disadvantaged children.

Barriers were identified on the part of parents, nursery schools, and founders. The following were singled out as particular **barriers on the part of parents**: (1) lack of awareness of enrolment dates and procedures; (2) limited possibility of additional enrolment of children in nursery school during the school year – an issue associated with frequent changes of home address; (3) a registered place of permanent residence different from the actual place of residence, and the distance of the latter from the catchment nursery school; (4) unaffordability (the cost of meals, school supplies, activities, and nursery school fees); (5) the obligation to present a medical certificate from a paediatrician and a proof that vaccination requirements have been met; (6) parental distrust of preschool education; and (7) lack of motivation when parents are underemployed.

The following were identified as particular **barriers on the part of nursery schools and founders**: (1) inadequate tools and limited competences of nursery schools, for working with parents of Roma ethnicity or with social disadvantages, including the lack of necessary staff positions; (2) the insufficient capacity of nursery schools in certain areas, leading to the marginalisation of socially disadvantaged children; (3) insufficient readiness among nursery schools to work with children from less stimulating backgrounds – the rejection of children because they are not ready; (4) the absence of resources to identify socio-economically disadvantaged children; and (5) inadequate oversight of the use of individualised education as a substitute for compulsory preschool attendance. A society-wide underestimation of the importance of child development in early childhood and preschool education, as compared to primary education, was also identified as a more general barrier.

Drawing on suggestions and proposals for specific measures from representatives of the above institutions and experts, an **action plan of systemic measures to increase the participation of Roma and socially disadvantaged children aged 3–5 in preschool education is now being prepared**. The Office of the Government Agent is working with relevant ministries on the draft action plan. The deliverables will be discussed further at another roundtable discussion attended by representatives of the expert community. The action plan to increase preschool attendance will then be submitted to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for consideration.

4. CONCLUSION

The Czech Republic continues to attach great importance to ensuring that Roma pupils have equal access to education. To this end, it is committed to proceeding with the gradual adoption of measures under the individual project fiches of the Action Plan for the Execution of the Judgment in *D.H. and Others* from December 2023 in accordance with the foregoing and thus to gradually removing the barriers that Roma pupils face on their way to enjoying a quality education. It is prepared to present a comprehensive report on progress in the adoption of all measures and an outline of the planned course of action for the next period by the end of 2025, in accordance with decision CM/Del/Dec(2024)1492/H46-10 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe of 14 March 2024.

In the coming months, the Office of the Government Agent will continue to collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including the MEYS, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Regional Development, and the Ministry of Health, in preparing an action plan to increase the preschool attendance of Roma children, which it aims to present to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe by the end of June 2025. Collaboration has also been initiated with bodies of the Council of Europe on potential recourse to their expertise on inclusive education.