

Czech Republic

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1. The country

The Czech Republic has a population of 10,246,1781 with a population density of 130 inhabitants per km². Dominating nationality is Czech (90.4%) and also Slovak (1.9%), who are the largest ethnic minority. Most common religion would be Roman Catholic (39.2%) and atheist (39.8%). 99.9% of the population are literate, however only 8.9% attains University education. 1,165,581 citizens live in the capital city Prague.

The economy of the Czech Republic had unarguably a big burden to start with: The residues of communist centrally planned economy and heavy industry orientation had to be gotten rid of. While the GDP growth rate was at -2,2% (per year) in 1998 due to an economic recession, it has risen to 3,3% in 2000. During the period from 2000 to 2003 growth was significantly boosted by exports to EU, increased investments from foreign investors, dropped interest rates and increase in domestic purchase power. At the present day the economic priority is to complete the privatisation process.

Since 1998 the governing party in the Czech Republic have been the Social Democrats (ČSSD). The decisive majority has been granted to them by the Opposition treaty (a treaty with the Civic Democratic Party (ODS)), which had lasted from 1998 until 2002. From 2002 on the decisive majority has been maintained in coalition with the Christian Democrats (KDÚ-ČSL).

The alcohol policy decisions are put forward by the Government Board for Coordination of Alcohol Policy. After gaining the approval of the government or the parliament (which may include legislative changes or revisions), the decisions are carried out by a relevant institution.

Box 1.1 Basic facts
Total area:78,866 km ²
Number of inhabitants:10,245,178millions
Population density:130inhabitants/km ²
Capital city (name, population):Prague
Official language(s):Czech
GDP per capita:15,700 USD

Sources: CIA World Factbook, 2004 (<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>)

2. Alcohol consumption

According to the WHO Country Profile 2004, which documents the consumption from 1961 to 2001, the overall average alcohol consumption per capita (15 years of age and older) in the Czech Republic has been steadily rising. While the average consumption per capita per year was 9.70 l of pure alcohol in 1961, in 1999 it was 14.94 l.

Beer is perceived as almost a national symbol in the Czech Republic. Therefore it is not very surprising that the consumption has been steadily growing since 1961. The only exception appears to be a short time period in mid eighties, where the consumption might have been affected by domestic anti-alcohol campaign, which was an attempt to reflect a similar campaign, which, at that time, was taking place in the former SSSR. Beer is understood to be the traditional Czech beverage

(along with some spirits) and is fairly socially accepted. Also, the beer in the Czech Republic is very cheap, 0.5 l of most brands is cheaper than equal amount of any non-alcoholic beverage.

Children are introduced to beer through advertisements (which are almost unrestricted), social environment and their own families. The average consumption per year per capita (15 and more years of age) has risen from 6.36 l of pure alcohol in 1961 to 8.60 l in 1999. Apart from the mentioned time period, average consumption has rising tendency.

Although there are several wine-producing regions within the Czech Republic, some of which have been growing and processing grapes since the 3rd century A.D., most people prefer beer to wine. Therefore the average consumption of wine has only slightly risen from 2.00 l of pure alcohol per capita in 1961 to 2.35 l in 1999.

The average consumption of spirits (in terms of pure alcohol) has also been rising, with a peak of 4.71 l of pure alcohol per capita in 1981. However, in last few years (since 1991) there has been a marginal decrease. Still, the average consumption has increased threefold since 1961 with average 1.35 to 1999 average of 3.96.

Figures on unrecorded alcohol consumption by beverage categories. (Give at least rough estimates on unrecorded alcohol production, smuggling, the importance of drinking by tourists, border trade and alcohol imports by travellers. Example: Smuggling of alcoholic beverages is unimportant in regard to total alcohol consumption):

The unrecorded alcohol consumption is estimated to be 1.0 l of pure alcohol for the years following 1995.

Drinking habits according to latest population survey if available (percentage of abstainers, overall drinking frequencies, weekly rhythm of drinking, drinking frequencies by beverage type, hazardous and harmful alcohol consumption, alcohol dependence, binge drinking, gender differences, differences between age groups):

For various reasons the number of lifetime abstainers in the Czech Republic is very low. According to the World Health Survey 2003, only 11.9 % of the population have been lifetime abstainers.

There have been more lifetime abstainers among women (18%) than among men (4.3%). According to the GENACIS study, the average daily alcohol consumption of people older than 18 years of age is 16.6g. Again, the numbers differ for each gender. While the average for women is 7.2g, the men average is almost four times higher – 26.4g. The consumption average is not constant but varies according to age with its peak between the 35th and 44th year of age. The men average for this peak is 35.2g while women average is 8.9g. It is also interesting that the differences in averages between the age groups are much larger for men than for women (in fact, there the daily alcohol consumption average is almost constant).

An indirect relation has been proven between the average amount of alcohol consumed and the highest education attained. The daily consumed alcohol average for men with only the basic education is 29.5g while the average of those with the university education is 19.5g. The relation is much weaker for women, where the difference in the averages is only 3g. Mentioned study also revealed that 23% of men and 10% of women are subject to hazardous and harmful alcohol consumption.

29% of men and 10% of women have been binge drinking at least once a month and 12% of men and 2% of women have been binge drinking at least once in a week. So far, the presented numbers related either to a population as a whole or to adults. Although serving an alcoholic beverage to a person under 18 years of age is prohibited in the Czech Republic, the law enforcement in this field is not satisfactory and young people are able to acquire alcohol. In 2002 36.9% of 15 years old boys and 23.1% of girls reported drinking beer at least once a week. More than one fifth of 13 years old boys reported similar behaviour.

3. Alcohol production and trade

The proportion of domestic alcohol production on alcohol consumption, according to beverage categories (Even rough estimates will be sufficient. Example: There is no viticulture.): In the year 2003, 18 216 000 hl of beer, 73 978 000 l of wine and 57 636 000 l of spirits were produced.

The proportion of exports on domestic alcohol production (Even rough estimates will be sufficient.): 14% of beer produced in the country in 2003 was exported.

Short description of the prevailing situation with the alcohol industry including information on the concentration of alcohol industry and the main industries, on its importance as an employer, and on its contribution to the GDP:

4. Administrative structure of alcohol policy

The alcohol policy decisions are put forward by the Governmental Board for Coordination of Alcohol Policy. After gaining the approval of the government or the parliament (which may include legislative changes or revisions), the decisions are carried out by a relevant institution. The responsibility for the prevention is divided. Generally the responsibility for primary prevention lies with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport while the Ministry of Healthcare is responsible for secondary and tertiary prevention related issues. The responsibility for enforcement of alcohol-related legislative lies with the Ministry of Interior. Industrial and agriculture-related alcohol issues are within the competency of Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Industry and Trade. Both Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Transport are responsible for the prevention and issues related with drinking and driving.

A new conception of the drug policy has been prepared by the Governmental Board for Coordination of Alcohol Policy for years 2005-2009. It implements alcohol abuse prevention to all drug abuse prevention related activities. This conception was eventually accepted by the government on 22nd December 2004.

The Czech government has also signed the Health for all in 21st Century document in 2002, adopting the same 21 targets that were specified by the original WHO document. Four of those targets are alcohol related. However, only a little attention has been paid towards successive realization of the tasks derived from these targets.

5. Licensing policy

Box 5.1 State control on production and foreign trade of alcohol						
State monopoly						
	Beer		Wine		Spirits	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Production	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Import	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Export	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
License is required						
	Beer		Wine		Spirits	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Production	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Import	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Export	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

Box 5.2 State control on wholesale and retail sale of alcohol						
State monopoly						
	Beer		Wine		Spirits	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Wholesale	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Off-premise retail sale	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
On-premise retail sale	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
License is required						
	Beer		Wine		Spirits	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Wholesale	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Off-premise retail sale	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
On-premise retail sale	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

Box 5.3 Selling or serving of alcohol in retail outlets				
	Off-licence (shops, kiosks, retail stores, supermarkets)		On-premise (bars, cafés, pubs, restaurants)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
All retail outlets are allowed to sell/serve alcoholic beverages	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
A license is required, but all applicants get one	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
A license is required, some applicants do not get one	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Alcohol is only sold/served in specific/regulated	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

premises				
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- Comments on the prevailing situation of the state control and licensing practices on alcohol production and major changes since 1995
 - who is granting the licenses: Local trade office. Ministry of agriculture and Ministry of industry and trade must give a statement to technical assumptions on eligibility of production facilities. Approval for receiving and use of consumable tax immune alcohol and for alcohol improvement form General Directorate of Duties is necessary.
 - are the licenses permanent or temporary: Permanent.
 - do the licenses cost anything: Administrative Fee
 - are there any specific rules or regulations included in the licenses: The license is not related to the produced volume of alcohol, it is related to fulfilment of condition to conducting a licensed trade. This license is dispensed for production and adjustment of alcohol, production of consumable alcohol and liquors. Grower’s alcohol burning is part of free trade, operation of grower’s alcohol burning facility permits Ministry of agriculture.

- Comments on the prevailing situation of the state control and licensing practices on foreign trade of alcohol and major changes since 1995
 - who is granting the licenses: State agriculture and intervention fund.
 - are the licenses permanent or temporary: Temporary.
 - do the licenses cost anything: Administrative fee.
 - are there any specific rules or regulations included in the licenses:

- Comments on the prevailing situation of the state control and licensing practices on alcohol wholesale and major changes since 1995
 - who is granting the licenses: Local trade office.
 - are the licenses permanent or temporary: Permanent.
 - do the licenses cost anything: Administrative fee.
 - are there any specific rules or regulations included in the licenses: .

- Comments on the prevailing situation of the state control and licensing practices on off-premise retail sale of alcohol and major changes since 1995
 - who is granting the licenses: No licence needed.
 - are the licenses permanent or temporary:
 - do the licenses cost anything:
 - are there any specific rules or regulations included in the licenses:

- Comments on the prevailing situation of the state control and licensing practices on on-premise retail sale of alcohol and major changes since 1995
 - who is granting the licenses: Local trade office.
 - are the licenses permanent or temporary: Permanent unless there is a change in entrepreneur’s conditions.
 - do the licenses cost anything: Administrative fee.
 - are there any specific rules or regulations included in the licenses:

- Are off-premise licenses for all or some alcoholic beverages granted only for special alcohol retail stores? Yes No
 - If yes, is this license for selling: distilled spirits, wine, beer.
 - If no, are off-premise licenses for alcoholic beverages granted for: supermarkets, ordinary grocery stores, kiosks, gasoline stations.

- Any comments to clarify the answers for the questions above? Most of the mentioned licences are not specifically alcohol related but allow some general trade (wholesale etc.). No additional alcohol specific licence is usually needed.

6. Restrictions of availability

According to the current law, no kind of alcohol beverage may be sold to any person younger than 18 years of age. However the law enforcement of the age limits is far from strict and if any then there are only minor random and unsystematic actions by state or municipal police.

Box 6.1 Age limits for buying alcoholic beverages		
	Off-premise, take-away (stores, shops, supermarkets)	On-premise, drinking on the spot (cafes, pubs, restaurants)
Beer	18years	18years
Wine	18years	18years
Spirits	18years	18years

Act no. 37/1989 is prohibiting sale in medical facilities, to persons evidently influenced by alcohol or other addictive substance, to drivers, during sport events, during cultural events and dance parties for youth, during public meetings, cultural events and dance parties with exception of beer and wine, in domestic public transport vehicles and areas related to these vehicles as restaurants, buffets, eating wagons and wagon-lits with exception of 10 degree beer (4,2% of alcohol), in canteens and other shops in areas or companies with exception of low degree beer (less than 4,2% of alcohol). According to act no. 353/2003 about consumable taxes it is forbidden to sale alcohol at marketplaces, market halls and outside facilities designated for sale of goods and offering services approved by operation permit.

Box 6.2 Sales restrictions on off-premise sale of alcohol						
	Beer		Wine		Spirits	
	Yes	No	Ye s	N o	Yes	No
Hours of sale are restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Days of sale are restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Places of sale are restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Density of outlets is restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

No kind of alcoholic beverage must be sold to any person under 18 years of age.

Box 6.3 Sales restrictions on on-premise sale of alcohol						
	Beer		Wine		Spirits	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Hours of sale are restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Days of sale are restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Places of sale are restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Density of outlets is restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

7. Alcohol taxation and prices

Consumable tax for alcohol and alcoholic beverages except beer and wine is 265 CZK/litre of ethanol. Liquors produced by grower's burning 133 CZK/ litre of ethanol. Consumable tax for beer is 24 CZK/hectolitre and degree of original mash (e.g. beer with 10 degrees of original mash will have consumable tax 240 CZK/hl, beer with 12 degrees will have tax 288 CZK/hl, etc.) with reduction for small independent brewery. For fizzy wine it is 23,4 CZK/litre. VAT for all kinds of alcoholic beverages is 19%.

Since 1995 consumable tax for alcohol has increased. Since 1.1.1995 till 1.1.1998 it was 195 CZK/litre of ethanol for alcoholic beverages and 95 CZK/litre of ethanol for alcohol from grower's burning. Since 1.1.1998 till 1.1.2004 consumable tax for alcoholic beverages was 234 CZK/litre of ethanol.

Box 7.3 Price of alcoholic beverages		
Off-license (i.e. when purchased in an average shop, or supermarket, NOT on-premise in a restaurant or bar)	Usual quantity (e.g. 1 litre, 0.5 litres)	Price (local currency)
Average locally produced or most consumed beer	0.5 l	25 czk
Average and most consumed table wine	1 l	52 czk
Average locally produced or most consumed spirits	5 cl	40 czk
If it exists, other special or different local alcoholic beverage, name and % alc. vol.		
Average non-alcoholic soft drink (e.g. coca-cola, lemonade)	0.2, 0,3l	20,25 czk

Source: http://europa.eu.int/comm/taxation_customs/publications/info_doc/taxation/excise_tables_partI.pdf, CEPS

8. Alcohol advertising and sponsorship

Box 8.1 Restrictions on advertising and sponsorship*				
	Complete legal ban	Partial legal restriction	Voluntary agreement	No restrictions
EXAMPLE National TV	<i>S (spirits)</i>		<i>W (wine)</i>	<i>B (beer)</i>
National TV				wbs
Cable TV				wbs
National radio				wbs
Local radio				wbs
Printed newspapers/magazines				wbs
Bill boards		wbs		
Internet				wbs
Points of sale				wbs
Cinema				wbs

* Please provide information on the extent to which alcohol advertising is regulated in different media by filling in B (BEER), W (WINE) and S (SPIRITS) for each type of media below.

13. Summary

Alcohol is widely tolerated in the Czech Republic, not only by its citizens but also by the politicians who might feel that any unpopular measure taken towards the status-quo might threaten their position (preferences). Therefore there has been only a very little or no significant actions taken to effectively reduce the amount of alcohol consumption. It takes large amounts of time and effort to make alcohol related legislative changes. Even the current legislative would have the desired effect had it been strictly enforced. However alcohol laws are only vaguely enforced, especially lacking is the active systematical enforcement of age limits. Though the law does prohibit it, many people younger than 18 years of age are able to buy alcohol average, on-premise and off-premise alike. Also more restrictive approach to alcohol advertising would help to lower the demand. Many of the ads are specifically aimed at young population.

The price of beer in the Czech Republic is especially low and might encourage drinking in youth. Rising the prices by increasing the alcohol related taxes would reduce the accessibility of alcohol and bring more means to the national budget which could for example be redirected to fund secondary and tertiary alcohol prevention.

We have seen that there is an indirect relation between the highest education attained and alcohol consumption. It is also a fact, that not even ten per cent of the population attains university education. Perhaps it would be worth considering for the government to pay more attention to education.

Changes in legislative should be made, introducing new, alcohol specific licences.
It would be good to promote healthier lifestyle and seek for/create positive models to promote health among the Czech population.

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