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# Part-Time Jobs: a rare commodity in the Czech Republic<sup>2</sup>

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## Summary of key facts

- The flexibility and dynamics of the Czech labour market have long been low, and part-time work is one tool that can help to improve the situation. For employers, part-time work can enhance flexibility and reduce costs. On the other side of the labour market, part-time options allow more work involvement by parents, students, seniors, and other disadvantaged groups. Part-time work can also facilitate involvement with one's practice and profession when full-time work is not possible. Part-time jobs help workers to balance work and private life, including caring for family members. However, part-time work also carries risks, if it is forced by a lack of full-time work rather than being the preferred option. This can result in lower earnings, poorer social security, and weakened career prospects.
- Despite the many advantages and benefits of part-time work, the Czech Republic has long been among EU countries where it is limited, which is typical of all countries with a legacy of centrally-controlled economies. While part-time work is more common across occupations and educational groups in Western and Northern Europe.
- In the Czech Republic, part-time jobs are most often occupied by women aged 30-39, who are typically engaged in motherhood duties. Part-time work is also more common among women of pre-retirement age, who may reduce their workload to care for elderly parents or grandchildren.

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- In the wider EU, the incidence of part-time work is more common among women with lower levels of education, but in the Czech Republic it is higher among the university educated. This is probably related to the better bargaining position of university-educated women, their stronger financial motivation to work and, together with their husband's higher income, their better opportunities to provide paid care for their pre-school children if they do not find a place in a public kindergarten.
- Czech women with children under 4 years of age work in the labor market significantly less often than their European counterparts, and when they do work, they more often choose part-time work. As the age of the youngest child in the family rises, mother's employment rates also rise significantly, but mainly as they return to full-time work. Overall, the prevalence of part-time work among women in the Czech Republic is close to the EU average up to the age of 35, and decreases significantly relative to the EU average with increasing age.
- In the Czech Republic, part-time jobs are mainly found in sectors related to administration, where their incidence is close to the EU average. The IT sector is the only area where the incidence of part-time jobs for Czech women exceeds the EU average. The largest differences between the Czech Republic and the EU average are in construction, agriculture, and mining and quarrying sectors, where women are employed relatively rarely, possibly due in part to a dearth of part-time jobs. The relatively lower rates of part-time work in the public administration and health care sectors in the Czech Republic are notable, though it is easier for the state to support part-time work in these sectors.
- In more economically advanced EU countries, women choose part-time work mainly to balance work and family care. In the Czech Republic and other post-communist countries, this is not the primary reason, possibly because part-time work opportunities are rare. Czech men are rarely engaged in part-time work, and when they are, the reason is more likely to be health challenges, and less likely to be difficulty finding full-time work.
- Between 2000 and 2015, the incidence of part-time work in the EU increased slightly on average, but fell almost to 2000 levels in the following five years. In the Czech Republic, as in other post-communist countries, the incidence of part-time work has increased only minimally over the past two decades and continues to lag well behind the EU average. Since 2000, part-time work has increased especially among Czech women who have a young child, women of pre-retirement age, and among women with a university degree or without a high school diploma.
- The distribution of hours worked in the labour market between partners in Czech households with children continues to reflect traditional gender roles. Most mothers with children under 4 stay at home, and most fathers work full-time, and they often work more than 40 hours per week. Once the youngest child reaches school age, mothers generally return to work, but usually full-time rather than part-time.
- The reasons for the long-term low incidence of part-time work in the Czech Republic are probably many, and are likely to include the lack of places in publicly operated accessible pre-school facilities, an insufficient supply of residential and outreach care for the elderly, and an economy that is strongly oriented towards industrial production with shift industries. Further, the relatively smaller service sector, low rates of progression in the system of direct taxes and deductions from wages and salaries (i.e., the relatively high levy burden on low earnings), fixed components of employee costs, and the persistence of social division of roles in families all likely play a part.

- In 2023, a discount on employer-paid insurance premiums was introduced in the Czech Republic for part-time employees over 55 years of age, those caring for children under 10 years of age, full-time students, and for invalid people. However, the impact of this measure has not yet been assessed. Foreign models may provide inspiration for regulatory support for part-time work. For example, more progressive taxation along the lines of that in the Netherlands, German laws that allow for easier transitions between full-time and part-time work, or the French system of support for temporary reductions in working time for family reasons could all be helpful. In the Czech Republic, the public sector, financed from public budgets, offers easier regulatory routes to increased part-time work than does the private sector.