

CZECH POINTS – THE CZECH SHOWCASE?

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Abstract

In the Czech e-government, particularly the project of Czech POINTs represents the most visible central government initiative. The project was tested during the year 2007 and its full practice has launched officially since the beginning of 2008. Because of his relatively fast practice and improvements it can be considered as the Czech e-government showcase initiative. The paper describes the Czech POINTs and evaluates the project in reference to the NISPAcee's eGovernment Learning Platform framework.

1. Introduction and methodology

Czech POINT represents a one-stop-shop project of the Czech central government which is still developing under the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior. The project was tested during the year 2007 and its full practice has launched officially since the beginning of 2008. According to information of the Ministry, Czech POINT terminals form a network of electronic contact points of public administration reducing the administrative burden and providing easier communication with the government, because citizens and businesses do not have to visit several public authorities to obtain certain kind of services as they had to before. Ministerial information often highlights the following leading motto of the project: "to make the data – not the citizen – run around". For the first time in the Czech e-government history the project of Czech POINTs has *enabled much more public authorities to access mutually independent information systems from one place*. That is why the project can be considered as the Czech showcase. One must be aware of the fact that it is still developing however.

The presented paper describes the project of Czech POINTs and tries to evaluate the project in reference to the framework of the NISPAcee's eGovernment Learning Platform¹ using particularly the published information. The structure of the paper is following:

- The project and its aims and functionalities are briefly described in the first part of the paper. This part focuses mainly on the current functionalities and stakeholders, but considers also future development of the project as planned by the Ministry of Interior. In the case of individual functionalities discussed issues as well as their reflection in life events provided by the Czech Portal of Public Administration (www.portal.gov.cz) are considered in this part of the paper too. Also the project's standing in national e-government awards is introduced.
- The second part of the paper deals with the history of Czech POINTs during Czech e-government policy. It also introduces the management of the project and points out existing evaluation practices.
- The final part contains conclusive remarks which concern also discussion on innovativeness of the project, on lessons learned and possible transferability.

2. Description of the project, its components and main stakeholders

2.1 Czech POINTs and their current functionalities

Czech Ministry of Interior expects that Czech POINT system will provide access to all data stored in public registers and will be accessible via the internet, so that citizens will be able to locate the

¹ See NISPAcee, Working Group on e-Government, Topic 2009 : Launching an e-Government Learning Platform, online.

documents they need without leaving the comfort of their homes which would be a radical change of the current situation. *The aim of the project is to create guaranteed service that can be used particularly by citizens and businesses in order to communicate with the state via single contact place where it will be possible to*

- obtain and authenticate data from public and non-public information systems,
- authenticate documents,
- converse paper documents into authorized electronic form and vice versa,
- obtain information about the progress of administrative proceedings and to initiate administrative proceedings.

The aims speak about interactions with the state, but the project attempts to improve not only interactions in the field of state administration, but also in self-government and especially in municipal self-government. In many administrative activities, Czech municipalities represent front-line institutions of self-government as well as state administration. The same joined model is characteristic for Czech regional administration. In the Czech administrative system more than 6200 municipalities represent a basic level which may be problematic for e-government rationality, because majority of them (almost 60 %) has less than 500 inhabitants, and almost 80 % of them have less than 1000 inhabitants. Methodology of Czech Statistical Office's surveys on e-government practices is still insufficient in describing e-readiness of small municipalities, results are still not covering those with less than 500 inhabitants. In the area of self-government, municipalities and regions are not in subordination relationships as it is the case of hierarchical state administration. State administration is not the right, but the duty according to Czech legislation. This causes tensions in various areas, including ICTs management and coordination of public administration information systems.

Although a number of services providing by Czech POINT has been growing and ministerial plans presume that Czech POINT terminals (thereinafter "Czech POINTs") will allow its users to proceed with any communication with any public authority at any place in the future, Czech POINTs currently represent *a network of physical terminals that provide Czech POINT reception services mostly during their office hours. They mostly do not deliver services to users on 24/7 basis via the internet, but they transfer most of the requirements on its providers.* For the providers it is necessary to ensure adequate equipment and other tangibles as well as abilities and skills of their employees (for example in the sense of Parasuraman and Zeithaml's quality dimensions which consider physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials as the most relevant tangibles)². The current form of Czech POINT services delivery does not require any computer literacy of customers. Thanks to the project citizens can visit one of more than 3 500 institutions in order to receive certain service regardless of their permanent residence. This may save their time and money. As Kusak notices, CzechPOINTs are also adapted for needs of disabled as well as elderly people.³

In the present time Czech POINTs can deliver following services (development of the network of Czech POINTs and their services is introduced in more depth below):⁴

- 1) *Extract from the Cadastre of Real Estate.* The Cadastre is a complex of data on real estate including their register and description, their geometric and location definition as well as information about property and other rights. It is administered by a central authority– Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre⁵ and its 14 cadastral offices in regions and 114 subordinated offices organized mostly on district basis. Users of its service "Look at the Cadastre of Real Estate" may obtain selected information about plots of ground and buildings for free (including the information about property rights).⁶ Other service of the Cadastre – "distant access

² See Zeithaml, V. A., Parasuraman, A. Service Quality. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Marketing Science Institute 2004,

³ Kusak, M. CzechPOINT - eGovernment one-stop-shop for all, online.

⁴ Information published on the czechpoint.cz website specifies particularly the service "extract from the Criminal Register".

⁵ Its website is situated here: www.cuzk.cz.

⁶ The service is available at <http://nahlizeniidokn.cuzk.cz>.

to data of the Cadastre⁷ – is paid, it is for free for public authorities according to Czech law, they only have to apply for a client account. In the case of client accounts established for purposes of extracts delivery by Czech POINTs (such account is different to the client account for the distant access) a fee of 50 CZK is required by the Cadastre in order to obtain an output (in the case of a single type of the output and regardless of number of its pages). Czech POINTs' users are charged 100 CZK for the first page of the extract, other pages may cost them up to 50 CZK. These administrative fees are considered as incomes of Czech POINT providers by law similarly to most of other extracts delivered through Czech POINTs. Public authorities may reduce fees for extracts delivered by Czech POINTs by 90 % at maximum. If public authorities decide to reduce the fees, the Ministry of Interior recommends issuing of internal regulation and applying the same approach for similar cases not to discriminate the applicants.

At Czech POINTs, a customer may apply for the extract from the Cadastre anonymously, but he/she is required to know identification data about the real estate (cadastral territory and a number of a list of ownership, or the plot number or description number etc.). Because of problems with extracts' download (caused for example by an early disconnection due to large amount of transferred data when Czech POINT central mediated communication of Czech POINT terminals with databases, but could not process all applications for extracts), which occurred in the past, it is currently possible for Czech POINTs' employees to use the function "repeated download of the print-out". Modifications of the service has brought a possibility to use the preview function before printing out an extract, in the past clients were informed only about number of pages of an extract, not about its content.

Before the Czech POINTs started the Cadastre had been signing extracts with electronic mark (as presupposed by Czech act on electronic signature) so that they had been equal to their paper form and could have been used as such by various clients. According to the president of the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre, Czech POINTs have brought rapid increase of demand for cadastre services that had been used mainly by banks, notaries, lawyers and profit estate agencies before. He also pointed out that Czech POINTs issued only the mentioned extracts and did not provide their customers with authorised extracts of cadastral maps as other services of the Cadastre allow for some years through the web interface of the Cadastre.⁸ Some civil servants of municipalities still prefer to use the mentioned service "distant access to data of the Cadastre" to Czech POINT system when they are required to issue extracts (if they have a possibility), because they know it better, it is usually more stable, it allows to issue authorized extract from cadastral maps or obtain necessary cadastral identification data if an applicants for extracts do not know them. According to some civil servants, the web interface of the Cadastre is also more user-friendly for its users providing them with more options of issuing partial extracts from the Cadastre than the Czech POINT system.

The *life event* "Extract from the Cadastre of Real Estate" is available on the *Czech Portal of Public Administration*. In order to solve the event users of the portal are advised to visit the cadastre office personally or to send paper application for the extract. If they require cadastral maps they have to visit cadastral office responsible according to the location of the real estate. Legislation prescribes 30 days deadline for processing paper form applications. In case of personal visit of a customer, applications are processed while one waits. Users of the portal are also informed about the possibility to visit Czech POINTs. Within the life event description there is no clear information telling users that it is not possible to arrange authorised extracts of cadastral maps through Czech POINTs however. Users are also informed that they may utilize some of the cadastral services for free through the web pages of the Cadastre.

- 2) *Extract from the Companies Register* ("Obchodní rejstřík" in Czech). The Companies Register is a public register containing data on enterprises (basic identification data, object of activity authorized by trades license, statutory bodies, structure of property and others). The registration is compulsory for business organizations and cooperatives and some foreign businesses (as

⁷ Distant access to the Cadastre data are specified by § 22 of the act 344/1992 (after amendments) and by § 10 of regulation 162/2001. The distant access service is enhanced by paid web services of distant access ("WSDP") that enables the link up of users to the interface.

⁸ Veřejná správa online, Czech POINT pohledem partnerů, vol 4, 2008, online.

prescribed by the commercial code). The register is administered by the Ministry of Justice particularly through the network of registration courts (the register is operated by 7 regional courts⁹ for businesses which have their residence within the district of the court). Services of the register are partly available online to public¹⁰, but in this case they are only of informative not of an official nature, for the vast majority of legal operation authorized extract is required.

Again anonymous application is allowed in the case of this extract if delivered by Czech POINTs. A person may apply for the complete extract (in order to obtain all information about a business recorded in the register during the existence of the businesses) or for the extract of actual information.

There is no life event like “Extract from the Companies Register” available on the national public administration portal.

- 3) *Extract from the Trades Register* (“Živnostenský rejstřík” or “RŽP” in Czech). The Trades register is partly a public directory of all enterprises that run their businesses on the basis of trade license. It is administered by the Ministry of Industry and Trade. It is defined by § 60 of act 455/1991 on business enterprises. It serves as an instrument for those who want to verify its partners. According to the server business.center.cz it is more useful than the Companies register which may contain obsolete data. Certain information of the register is available online to public¹¹, in this case they are only of informative nature. Through Czech POINTs anonymous application for this extract is allowed, but the extract can cover only the public part of the register. Extracts from the non-public part are issued by Trades Licensing Offices (which represents a specific field of activity of 205 municipal offices of municipalities with extended competence and regional offices) and only if an applicant proves the legal interest.¹²

There is no life event like “Extract from the Trades Register” available on the national public administration portal.

- 4) *Receipt of submission made according to § 72 of the Trades Licensing Act*. Amendments of legislation have brought an opportunity to submit all submissions (the announcement of trades, announcement of data registered in the Trades Register) or their changes, and the application for a license addressed to municipal trade licensing offices through Czech POINTs. *Czech POINTs have gained the status of submitting terminal*. The submission may be realized on the basis of agreement between the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Industry and Trade in one of the following *two ways* which may reduce applicants’ efforts only partly:

a) by filling-in an electronic form available on the portal of the Economic Chamber. The filled-in form has to be send through thy system of the Register of Trades by a client. After submission the client receives a ticket with a number. With this ticket it is necessary for him/her to visit a Czech POINT. The Czech POINT’s employee finds the data on the submission in the system and sends them electronically to Trades Licensing Office selected by the client, or to a territorially responsible one. At the same time the employee prints out the form and he/she shell send it to the Trade Licensing Office in the paper form without delay according to the act. The change in the register is active from the time of the electronic submission of the filled-in form made by the Czech POINT.

b) by filling-in a paper form. Clients may bring the filled-in form (it is possible to download it from the web pages of the Economic Chamber). An employee of a Czech POINT terminal takes over the form and sends it to relevant Trades Licensing Office. The change in the register is active within 5 days in this case. Customers are charged not only for submission to the Czech POINT, they also have to pay a fee according to the type of submission that must be send to the selected Trades Licensing Office. For some customers it may be cheaper to visit the relevant Trades Licensing Office (which is now possible regardless of their permanent residence) where they are not charged for submission through the Czech POINT, in the same cases some services can be provided for free. In some municipalities Czech POINT employees are also employees of

⁹ See Ministerstvo spravedlnosti ČR, Rejstříkové soudy, online.

¹⁰ On www.justice.cz/or or on the portal portal.justice.cz.

¹¹ Here: <http://www.rzp.cz>.

¹² Among the nonpublic part for example the following types of information are recorded (type of the trades license, the time of its validity, overview of imposed fines, identification data of statutory bodies etc.)

the Trades Licensing Office in the same time and it is upon their decision if they choose to provide services through Czech POINTs or directly through the system of Trades Register. Various types of submissions to the Trades Register are described by life events on the national public administration portal which also refer to Czech POINTs.

- 5) *Extract from the Crime Register.* The Crime register is administered by the Ministry of Justice. The register contains mainly records on persons who were sentenced by courts in criminal procedures. According to the Czech law only a subject of data may apply for this extract (personally or on the basis of power of attorney), i.e. the register is not public. The application must have a written form, but applicants shall receive a pre-filled form of application before obtaining the extract. Applicants must prove their identity showing their valid IDs (personal ID or passport) and they must also have an officially assigned birth number. This means that also foreigners who have a permanent domicile in the Czech Republic may use the service. Applications shall be archived for 6 years. Civil servants shall control personal IDs in the database of invalid personal IDs and if an ID is valid, a form of application for the extract is filled in and printed out by Czech POINT's employee and the applicant only signs the printed application. Czech POINT's employee sends the signed application to the Crime Register which may react in two ways. The Crime Register may send back
- a) the extract that is printed and supplemented by a clause of verification and signed by the applicant afterwards; or
 - b) a reply that "the application could not be processed electronically". In this case the application must be handled manually in the workplace of the Crime Register. Applicants must apply for the extract in the paper form. The form of the application may be printed out at the Czech POINT. After the applicant's identity and the data stated in his/her application are verified by the Czech POINT employee, the application is sent to the Criminal Register by this employee. According to the information on the Czechpoint.cz, this application is processed manually within 30 minutes time (if it is submitted between 7.30am and 3pm from Monday to Thursday or between 7.30am and 2pm on Fridays according to the information on the register's website) and sent back to the Czech POINT electronically. The applicant may pick the extract at whatever Czech POINT where he/she is required to show a number of the application submission and his/her ID, or the extract may be sent to his/her home if the applicant applies so.

The refusing reply occurred also because of the faulty communication between databases according to the Czech media. In March 2008, server zpravy.idnes.cz informed about malfunctions of Czech POINTs in the case of applications of Czech citizens who were born abroad or who came to light in another place than in a hospital. When the system detected that the place of birth was not from the Czech Republic, it refused to process the application electronically, albeit the applicants had their birth number assigned and their permanent residence was in the Czech Republic.¹³

Also in the case of this Czech POINT service, users of Czech Public Administration portal may use the relevant *life event*. Users are advised to visit municipal offices (including those with the registry office) and territorial branches of the Crime Register where they will be required to prove their identity when they apply for the extract. After verification of their identity their written paper application is sent to the Crime Register in Prague to be handled (if they do not visit the central register themselves). If citizens apply for the extract through municipal offices, law prescribes a 30 days deadline for handling the application. Since 22 February 2008 individuals can send their applications electronically using the qualified e-signature (the extract is issued when the customer proves the payment of the fee). The life event also informs its users about the possibility to use Czech POINTs and refers to their website to get more detailed information.

Users of Czech POINTs are not provided for the use of the service which allows citizens to check their records in the registry (the service "look-in the transcript from the Crime Register"). Citizens may do so only if they personally visit the workplace of the Crime Register in Prague or if they apply for the transcript electronically with the qualified e-signature. Only in this way they can also obtain information to whom and when extracts / transcripts related to them were issued.

¹³ Czechpoint selhává kvůli vadné komunikaci mezi databázemi, [Zpravy.idnes.cz](http://zpravy.idnes.cz), 16 March 2008, online.

- 6) *Application for an extract or a transcript from the Crime Register* (“*Czech POINT for public authorities*” / “*internal use of extracts from the Crime Register*” / “*internal Czech POINT*”). According to amendments of the act on the Crime Register (made by act 124/2008) since July 2008 some public authorities (central authorities, regions and municipalities with extended competences¹⁴) may apply for an extract or a transcript from the Crime Register in the electronic way that allows the distant access. This is the only *government-2-government service* delivered by Czech POINTs thanks to the agreement between the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice. The amendments changed more than 60 acts which prescribed the duty of individuals to submit extracts from the Crime Register to individual public authorities for purposes of administrative procedures. Concerned public authority may apply for the extract itself now. Employees of Czech POINTs have special status in this case - employees whose application is processed and recorded by the Ministry of Interior are inserted into the Czech POINT system by administrators of their public authority and can access only electronic forms in order to obtain extracts or transcripts from the Crime Register. They can use the Czech POINT system only for this purpose and since the beginning of this functionality they have been required to log in using a couple of commercial and qualified certificate. They are not allowed to provide citizens with authorized outputs from the Crime Register in the same time. Extracts obtained internally are for free and contain also a description of purpose of their issuing.
- 7) *Extract from the records of points for driving offences*. This extract is provided by Czech POINTs on the basis of act 480/2008 from the Central Register of Drivers. This register is administered by the Ministry of Transport and contains also records of points drivers “get” when they commit a driving offence. It is highlighted that this extract *is only informative* and does not substitute an extract from a driver’s card that is issued for purposes of interactions with public authorities. Because the Central Register of Drivers is not (similarly to the Crime Register) public according to law, only a subject of data may apply for this extract (personally or on the basis of power of attorney). Requirements of identity verification are similar to those of the extract from the Crime Register.
- Applicants for this extract have to pay 100 CZK for every page if they apply for it at Czech POINTs. They may obtain the same extract only for 15 CZK if they apply for them at transport departments of municipal offices (responsible according to a domicile of an applicant however).¹⁵ There is a *life event* “Driver’s Registration Card, Points Given” available on the national public administration portal. Users of the portal are advised to submit a paper application through relevant municipality office of a municipality with extended competence (in this case law prescribes 30 days deadline for handling the submitted application) or through Czech POINTs.
- 8) *Issue of the authorized output from the List of Qualified Suppliers*. The List is administered by the Ministry of Regional Development as a part of the public procurement information system. This ministry initiated the functionality and it was the first initiative from other ministry than the Ministry of Interior according to some. The List is public and anybody can apply for the extract. The ministry registers applicants which comply the criteria prescribed by the act on public procurement (act 137/2006 and its §§ 53 – 54). This service is focused on businesses and suppliers who want to take part in public tenders. The extract proves their basic and professional qualification. An institution placing a tender shall accept extracts not older than 3 years. According to representatives of the Ministry of Interior this extract shall substitute several extracts (e.g. those from the Companies Register, the Crime Register).¹⁶ On request of businesses applying for being recorded in the List of Qualified Suppliers, the Ministry of Regional

¹⁴ Municipalities with extended competences execute the largest amount of state administration in Czech municipal administration system. These municipalities represent the youngest category of municipalities that has been created in relation to the abolishment of district authorities and the transfer of their competencies to municipal level) since January 2003. Czech administrative system was introduced for example in Špaček, D., Špalek, J. Communication and Electronic Public Administration: Some Issues in the Context of the Czech System of Public Administration. In Nemeč, J. (Ed.). Lessons and Recommendations for Improvement: Central and Eastern European Public Administration and Public Policy, Bratislava: NISPAcee 2007, pp. 217 – 238.

¹⁵ Klimšová, N. Služeb Czech Pointu využívá více klientů. Czech POINT, online.

¹⁶ See Konopa, P., Renčín, T. Czech POINT se rozšíří o nové funkcionality. In Veřejná správa online, online.

Development may obtain the relevant extract from the Crime Register itself.

There is no such life event described on the national public administration portal.

- 9) *Submission into the Register of Car Wrecks* – Since the beginning of 2009 new online system for car wrecks has been launched according to requirements of the act 352/2008. This functionality was prepared by the Ministry of Interior in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment. Keepers of scrap-yards have to register at a special system and they may also do so through Czech POINTs. During January 2009 this service was provided only by Czech POINTs of municipalities. In the case of this service, there is no such life event described on the national public administration portal.
- 10) Since April 16, 2009, also *extract from the Registry of Insolvent Subjects* (isir.justice.cz) may be obtained through Czech POINTs. This register is administered by the Ministry of Justice and it is another example of Czech public registers. It aims to enhance the publicity of insolvency procedures and their proceedings. Currently the register is running simultaneously with the register of breakdowns, it follows up with this register, but does not replace it, it contains information on administration procedures made after January 1, 2008, older information are available to public in the electronic form through the register of breakdowns¹⁷.
- 11) *Czech POINT E-SHOP – extracts by post*. Extracts from the Trades Register, the Companies register and the Cadastre of Real Estate may also be ordered via a web-form situated on the Czech POINT website from citizens' own computers.¹⁸ This service is running by the Czech Post which shall deliver the ordered extracts within 3 days time. Citizens may currently order extracts from the registers when their prize do not exceed 2000 CZK. Users of national public administration portal are informed about the possibility to use this service within descriptions of relevant life events.

Czech POINT is based on the system of web services enabled by communication of the Czech POINT Central Office with other information systems. There are *more communication centres (central offices) of Czech POINTs* today depending on the delivering service. The term “centre” refers to administrators of relevant registers which are interconnected with the Czech POINT Central Office. The Central Office provides for unified interface for communication with registers which is secured by HTTPS protocol. Current plans of the Ministry of Interior speak about Central Place of Services that will be a cornerstone of public administration communication infrastructure providing exchange of data and services between various public administration information systems as well as external information systems (including the European communication infrastructure).

Providers of Czech POINTs only have to download simple 602XML Filler application to run the Czech POINT system. This application is free of charge. Functionalities and their updates are organized centrally and utilize advantages of web services which allows also further automation of data processing for example by electronic file service systems of public authorities. According to Czech POINT providers their operation is easy and training can take just few hours. Some representatives of municipalities which participate in the Czech POINT network pointed out that the used 602XML Filler *could discriminate providers as well as customers*. According to them the solution is not ideal because it is supported only by MS Windows operational systems and does not enable multi-platform aspects which may limit also the future projects that shall enable citizens to use Czech POINT services from their homes (see below). Therefore representatives of municipalities would prefer secured SSL access as it is the case of client account of the Cadastre of Real Estates.¹⁹

During discussions about security issues (which is introduced below) the Ministry of Interior highlighted that no data remained in the Czech POINT system and that it was not possible to browse through individual databases. Czech POINTs provide its users for obtaining a concrete extract after they insert certain data. Czech POINT providers shall also keep on files of issued extracts. They shall also issue a receipt confirming that a customer has paid for issued extract. This is still a matter of

¹⁷ The register of breakdowns is available here: http://www.justice.cz/cgi-bin/sqw1250.cgi/upkuk/s_i8.sqw?F=U.

¹⁸ The Czech POINT e-shop is situated here: <http://www.czechpoint.cz/web/eshop>.

¹⁹ eGovernment.cz. Czech POINT: a nemusíte lítat po všech čertech, April 2008, online, p. 25.

complaints from the side of Czech POINT providers, especially in the case of services which do not require verification of customer identity. The identification is required in the Czech POINT system before the receipt is printed out, the identity of customer is also among requirements of records in the file service systems of public authorities regardless its form (current legislation presumes electronic or paper form of file service systems). It can be solved by separation of payment when paid at a cash desk of a public authority which would reduce convenience of Czech POINTs however. Employees of Czech POINT of smaller municipalities sometimes use a portable cash desk and numbered blank forms which are handed over to central cash desk after certain time.

Future Czech eGovernment practice (including the project Czech POINT) also depends on the effectiveness of *legislation on basic registers*. The Bill has been already approved by both Chambers of the Parliament, in the case of Senate it was done so on 26 February 2009. It is planned that the act will come into force in July 2010. The Bill specifies 4 basic registers (Register of Inhabitants, Register of Legal Entities, Register of Territorial Identification, Addresses and Real Estates, and Register of Rights and Duties) that shall replace many heterogeneous and often duplicate records of various authorities. Data from registers will be considered as authentic and civil servants will not be required to authenticate their accuracy. The act will require interconnection between registers through a special information system organized by a special institution - Basic Registers Administration - incorporated within the organizational structure of the Ministry of Interior.

2.2 Providers of Czech POINTs

Czech POINT services may be provided by following types of *providers* according to the amended act 365/2000 on public administration information systems:

- a) registry offices,
- b) regional offices,
- c) municipal offices,
- d) offices of city districts / parts in territorially subdivided statutory cities and the capital city of Prague,
- e) offices of Czech embassies,
- f) holders of post license,
- g) the Economic Chamber of the Czech Republic,
- h) notaries.

Subject from groups a), b), c) and d) must be enumerated by a regulation. Regional and municipal offices and offices of municipal parts or municipal districts of subdivided statutory cities represent fundamental executive bodies of Czech regions and municipalities. They carry out tasks from the both fields of responsibilities (state administration and self-government). Functions of registry office form just one field of responsibility of their municipal offices. Above stated Czech POINT services are considered as their state administration activities by the law. Municipalities with registry offices (potentially about 1 300 municipalities) and branches of Czech Post (potentially about 2000) are considered to be cornerstones of the Czech POINT system.

In the case of territorial self-governments Czech POINTs are partly integrated with the Czech portal ePUSA (electronic portal of territorial self-governments) which have been developing since 2000 and serves as a national database of municipalities and other public authorities.²⁰ Information recorded in the ePUSA system may be automatically replicated in the identity description of Czech POINTs.

2.2 Czech POINTs' functionalities – history and future

During the history of Czech e-government some projects similar to Czech POINTs emerged. Project EVA (an acronym of Electronically Amiable Administration) is one of examples, it was presented

²⁰ Its website is situated here: www.epusa.cz.

already in 2002.²¹ Published information speaks mainly about its pilot testing during February 2002²², although it seems that the project is still running.²³ During the pilot self-service kiosks were situated in 10 municipalities in order to test it and evaluate their benefits. The kiosks allowed registered citizens²⁴ to use its service regardless office hours of public authorities. The services was of a life-event nature – the kiosks informed citizens about steps that had to be made during selected administrative procedures (particularly social benefits, announcement of trades, waste disposal, buildings and land estates, complaints and applications for information) together with contact information on a responsible civil servant. The kiosks contained also information from official notice boards of municipalities and also a personal mailbox informing citizens about the state of their submission or giving them instructions from civil servants. Right from the kiosk a citizen could call an employee of service centre to get necessary help.

In 2003 the Economic Chamber presented a project that aimed at creation contact places for businesses in newly established 205 municipalities with extended competences („municipalities III“/„microregions“/„small districts“) and their interconnection with existing system of supports provided by governmental and other agencies.²⁵ The project attempted to address information disproportion about business environment in some regions and to improve relationships between businesses and public administration.

Czech POINTs were tested from April to December 2007 and their full practice has been launched since January 2008. Management of the project is introduced below. *Development and future of Czech POINT' functionalities may be summarized as follows:*

- Till 2008 Czech POINT services were limited to issuing extracts from the Real Estate Cadastre, the Companies Register and the Trades Register.
- Since the beginning of 2008, changes in legislation provided for issuing first extracts from non-public register - the Crime Register, and since February 2008 it is possible for Czech POINT customers to apply for the extract using the power of attorney. In the case of Czech POINTs operating by Czech Post and territorial branches of the Economic Chamber this service has been available since July 2008.
- In March 2008, the service Czech POINT E-SHOP was launched.
- Notaries have started to participate on the project mainly since May 2008. The Ministry of Interior and the Chamber of Notaries signed a memorandum on their cooperation which declares that all notaries will participate on the Czech POINT project.
- It was already mentioned above that since July 2008 some public authorities have been authorized to use Czech POINTs to obtain an extract or a transcript from the Crime Register for specified internal administrative purposes. Since the same time Czech POINTs' customers have been provided for placing submissions to Trade Register and Czech POINTs of branches of Czech Post and the Economic Chamber have been allowed to deliver most of the Czech POINT services (including extracts from non-public registers – i.e. the Crime Register in that time).
- Since January 2009, the Ministry of Interior in cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development has launched the service of issuing of the authorized output from the List of Qualified Suppliers. Since the same time also extracts from the records of points for driving offences might have been issued (relevant amendments of the act 361/2000 on road traffic came into effect), and submissions into the Register of Car Wrecks have been possible through Czech POINTs.
- The manual but electronically improved handling of extracts from the Crime Register (4b above) was launched on February 26, 2009.

²¹ See e.g. Tlustý, J. Elektronická vřídňá administrativa - EVA. In Sborník ISSS 2002, s. 232 - 234.

²² See. Co to je projekt eVA?, Veřejná správa online, vol 1, 2002, online.

²³ See <http://www.naseeva.cz>.

²⁴ Citizens could register at the kiosk or at municipal offices.

²⁵ See e.g. Vřch, P. Informatizace krajů, úloha Krajských hospodářských komor a zapojení HK ČR do informačních systémů veřejné správy (ISVS), In Sborník ISSS 2003, s. 271 - 274.

- Since April 16, 2009, also extract from the Registry of Insolvent Subjects may be obtained through Czech POINTs.
- The Ministry of Interior planned that till the end of 2008 Czech POINTs' customers would be provided also for submission to registry offices, submission of a change of address notification and obtaining extract from records about inhabitants. These services has not been established yet.
- The ministerial plans said that customers would be able to obtain the following extracts:
 - extracts from „Info Court“ Information Systems in April 2009 informing them about progress of their court procedures;
 - extract confirming that they do not owe payments to health insurance (in May 2009) and to social insurance (in June 2009). These services has not been established yet.
- Since July 2009 the *act on electronic transactions and authorised conversion of documents* (the so called “e-government act” in the Czech Republic, act 300/2008) will come into force. This act specifies *data boxes* that will be required for communication between businesses (if they are corporate bodies) and public authorities. For other subjects (including citizens) the establishment of their data boxes will be voluntary. The data boxes established by the Ministry of Interior will serve as electronic depositories which shall enable sending and receipt of official documents in their electronic form (the called data messages). This shall replace the traditional paper form of interaction. Czech POINTs are supposed to mediate the access to data boxes. Their employees will print out documents from the data box or converse documents brought by a customer into electronic form (including its electronic signing) and send it to relevant public authority.
- On 25 February 2009, the minister of interior and general director of the Czech TV signed a memorandum of cooperation in the field of t-government which shall bring Czech POINT services on the screen of citizens' TV in the future. According to available information first pilot projects shall be launched at the end of 2009.
- Current strategies speak also about “CzechPOINT@home“, i.e. Czech POINT that may be used via the internet from home on self-service principle. According to available information this future form of Czech POINTs utilizes experiences of another awarded and/or in media promoted Czech projects like Virtuos²⁶, eSMO²⁷, eObec²⁸, InterSpis²⁹ etc.³⁰ It is presupposed that the project would provide integration of information systems and services delivered externally with portal system CzechPOINT@home for public authorities. It means that the amount of future Czech POINT services will comprise services enabled by central portal solutions (e.g. a municipality can make electronic forms from central file depository available on its own web pages), current plans add that such services will be supplemented by electronic booking system for appointments with civil servants, electronic registry (“e-podatelna” in Czech) and electronic official notice board in order to meet local needs.³¹ It is also presupposed that CzechPOINT@home services will be available for those (corporate bodies or individuals) who have their data boxes activated.³²

2.4 Czech POINTs and national e-government awards

The project has been awarded twice in the national e-government awards. It won the first place in *The BEST 2007 competition organized by the magazine Egovernment* (www.egovernment.cz) in

²⁶ “Citizen-Self-government Virtually” – a project initiated by the Regional office of the Plzeňský Region (The web pages of the project are currently available here: www.evirtuos.cz).

²⁷ „Electronic Statutory City of Ostrava“ (www.esmo.cz).

²⁸ Project of the town Uherský Brod (its homepage is situated here: <http://eObec.ub.cz>).

²⁹ InterSpis is a electronic registry office service provided by the City Office of Prague (see <https://www.praha.eu/jnp/cz/obecne/interspis/index.html>).

³⁰ See e.g. Koudele, V. *Cena Ministerstva vnitra za inovaci ve veřejné správě: Ročník 2008 – Závěrečná zpráva z řešení (Virtuos), online, or Strategy of eGovernment Implementation in a Territory* (p. 13; the strategy is introduced below).

³¹ See Beneš, J. *Projekty samospráv: Technologické centrum - studie typového projektu* (pracovní dokument MVČR, verze 0.80), Ministerstvo vnitra, 11. 1. 2009, online.

³² See Koudele, V. *Kudy přijde e-government do malých a středních obcí*. In *eGovernment*, No. 3, 2008, pp. 14 – 15, online <<http://www.egovernment.cz/archiv/PDF%203-08/4a.pdf>>.

cooperation with KPMG (www.kpmg.cz). This competition tries to promote the most interesting projects of Czech e-government which have been realized and represents good practice examples increasing administrative efficiency and comfort for its users. The “best of” list is a result of initiation and voting of readers of the magazine and particularly of a final decision of selected experts (mainly from Czech public authorities) who gave points according to the competition criteria. The expert jury was inspired by criteria of the European eGovernment Awards (2007).³³

In 2007 the project was also awarded as *the best IT project of 2007* by the Czech Association of Managers of Information Technology Departments (CACIO; www.cacio.cz). Also this competition aims at further promotion of the best practice. The competitive projects are selected from applicants by “Expert evaluating commission” (appointed mainly from profit corporations) which considers particularly the content of applications.³⁴ From these nominated projects up to 3 winners of “IT project of the year” are selected considering especially personal presentations of applicants.

3. Czech POINTs – policy, management and evaluation

3.1 Czech POINTs during the history of Czech e-government policy and its current funding

3.1.1 Policies of previous governments

The project of Czech POINTs was launched on the basis of central government strategy. Although the project has started officially since the beginning of 2008, its ideas are not new in the Czech information and e-government policy context. They have been incorporated in every information policy program since the approval of *the first information policy - State Information Policy of 1999: the way to information society*. Here the concept of e-government was specified particularly in the third priority area “Development of information systems of public administration” which was further elaborated by the later document *Conception on building of information systems of public administration* approved in 1999. Both the documents worked with the requirement to establish integrated network of “contact points of public administration” that would enable integrated delivery of informational and transactional services when they specified an aim to reduce administrative burdens on citizens and businesses. The information policy set a 2000 deadline for a creation of these contact points and defined them as “universal and serving points where citizens can arrange more administrative requirements and where they can obtain information and possibly also forms”. The same deadline was set also for necessary legal equalization of paper and electronic form of documents and also for legalization of electronic communication with public administration. Both the documents agreed that the *challenges were mostly of legislative rather than technical nature* and required more strict coordination of information systems and also an analysis of the current state of education of civil servants and improvements of public administration educational system in the future. Both also required establishment of the communication infrastructure of public administration information systems that would address the situation when many public authorities had information systems that were not mutually compatible and interoperable and that would support establishment of secured and shared nation-wide network.

³³ The following criteria were used: 1) Evidence of impact, 2) Evidence of, or potential for, sharing good practice, 3) Understanding of multi-channel aspects, 4) Innovation and management efficiency, 5) Overall impression and communications capacity (eGovernment.cz. The Best 2007, p. 7, online <<http://www.egovernment.cz/best/PDF%2007/cela%2007.pdf>>)

³⁴ The competition worked with the following criteria: 1) High efficiency, especially low costs or high benefits, 2) originality of solution, especially innovative system (technologic) solution, 3) successful handling of problems that occurred during the realization phase, 4) extraordinarily beneficial social impact or the possibility of re-use, 5) other criterion selected by applicant (CACIO, online, <http://www.cacio.cz/2007/>).

According to the Conception on building of information systems of public administration from 1999 the contact points represented *an alternative which might bring public administration closer to citizens*. In the final state, the contact points should have represented a workplace with qualified service, adequate technical equipment which communicates via secured and shared interface with all basic registers (at that time governmental plans spoke about register of inhabitants, register of business, register of real estates and register of territorial identification). The conception required the registers to be shared and automated and also interconnected with other information systems. Interactions which did not require personal contact with civil servants should have been delivered through information terminals or kiosks serving as the contact points. *Functionalities of the planned contact points were supposed to include:*

- a) an information centre (information about public administration, provision of forms, guides and advices how to arrange activities and life-events services),
- b) registering and updating point (e-registry office, including inputs and outputs of basic registers),
- c) an integrated authority (inter-sectoral delivery of administrative services enabling a receipt of applications and handling of activities of more administrative resorts). The conception underlined that the creation of this functionality had to be perceived as continual, modular and open process which require inter-sectoral cooperation and interconnection with centre through the non-public communication network of public administration. According to the conception, information services had to be ensured together with at least partly functional services of registering and updating already in the period 2000 – 2001. During this period pilot testing of integrated services had to be carried out at least in two administrative resorts. Due to their higher level of readiness the conception recommended that the contact points should have started in the area of social allowances and registry offices. Till September 2000 an initial feasibility study which would consider also relationships with basic registers should have been elaborated. The conception noticed that *in that time registers could not be perceived as functionally cooperating system* and that their functionalities were delivered by individual systems of a partial nature which did not communicate sufficiently with each other and which collected data about citizens and businesses repeatedly without any control of correctness of the collected data. Such negative situation was supported by *fragmented legislation* which did not regulate the area systematically. Therefore the conception also proposed the content of future act on basic registers.

Because of the mismatch between plans and practices in reality – particularly it was the case of systemic sharing of data recorded among various public administration information systems - the establishment of contact points could be still found among goals expressed in the next information policies. The *Action plan on information policy realization till 2002* (approved in May 2000) stipulated that by the end of 2002 at least 10 % of interactions with public administration would be realized electronically and that functions of public administration would be “rationalized and available through contact points of public administration” which would have sufficient ICTs and functional connection with public administration registers. The next *Action plan on information policy realization till 2003* (approved in March 2002) extended the deadline for the establishment of the contact points till the end of 2005.

The information policy *e-Czech 2006*, which was approved in March 2004, required a further creation of contact points that would be provided by municipalities, regions, public libraries and other institutions like branches of Czech Post also on life-event basis. Again, the key tasks of this policy comprised the draft legislation governing the rules for sharing and interchange of data between public administration bodies, the status and interoperability of basic registers, reduction of administrative burden, making certain online services for citizens and businesses available also online via the Portal of Public Administration which was launched officially in 2005. The information policy required that till 2005 citizens would be allowed to obtain authenticated extracts or transcripts from registers and records they needed to arrange administrative requirements through the public administration contact points and branches of Czech Post.

3.1.2 Current Governmental Policy

Political changes of 2006 influenced the planned directions. Particularly *the resolution of new government no. 1085 from September 2006* is very important for today's Czech e-government practices. This resolution stipulated "a set of measurements for accelerating e-government". It speaks particularly about

- a) necessary changes in the structure of ministries (particularly with regard to the Ministry of Informatics which existed that time but which was directed not by an individual minister as before, but by the minister of interior – "minister of interior and informatics");
- b) proposals of necessary legislation (on Czech POINTs, legislation approving rules that would enable public to submit comments electronically, legislation on possible use of electronic documents in place where only paper form could be used at the moment - i.e. the Czech e-Government Bill, and proposal on legislation on central registries) with deadlines set till the end of September and October 2006.

In November and December 2006 very important change was brought by new *Conception of development of public administration communication infrastructure*. Government approved the conception on communication infrastructure (by its decisions 1270 and 1453) and contrary to its previous forms (from 2001 and 2006) the new conception required all public authorities to connect to the communication infrastructure. The 2006's e-government acceleration requirements were further incorporated into a broad strategy called "*Efficient Public Administration And Friendly Public Services – Strategy on Realization of Smart Administration in the Period 2007 – 2015*" ("Smart Administration strategy") which was approved by government in July 2007. Some claims that the strategy is just a special-purpose text elaborated with regard to requirements of European structural funds rather than the real strategy in its nature.³⁶ E-government aims are fragmented among various directions of the strategy that clearly show perceived instrumental character of ICTs. The document explicitly underlines possible reaching of efficiency gains, bringing public services closer to citizens in more simple but secure way, and enhancing quality of public administration. Particularly following similarities to former plans are echoing within the stipulated duties:

- a) to ensure adequate utilization of ICTs, create central public administration registers for the purposes of secure sharing of data and authenticated access of citizens;
- b) to support e-government while emphasizing secure and simple access to public services through the internet at the same time, to prepare a legislation on electronization of administrative activities, equality of paper and electronic form of documents, to secure communication between administrative institutions and public and that would also optimize internal administrative processes through the use of ICTs;
- c) to establish a network of contact points of public administration Czech POINTs – universal and assisted places of services for citizens and businesses where it will be possible for a person to
 - arrange all submissions towards public authorities and
 - receive all authenticated data which central registers and records contain
 - obtain information about the progress of administrative proceedings by the person or related to the person.

The strategy also requires monitoring of "indicators of outputs" (number of established contact points, number of services delivered through contact points) and an "indicator of impact" (percentage of population using the contact points), but did not express any quantitative targets.

The Smart Administration strategy also enumerates following problems of ICT use in Czech state administration:

- inefficient use of ICT,
- absence of unified communication infrastructure,
- absence of interconnection between individual registers,
- insufficient ICT equipment,
- low computer literacy of employees,
- absence of electronic communication in state administration supported by a duty to communicate in

³⁶ eStat, Smart Administration – reforma nebo jen pozlátko pro evropské úředníky?, online.

the paper form.

The strategy criticizes low pace of modernization in self-government, lack of complex view of representatives of self-governments and it also points out insufficient compatibility of software between territorial public authorities. The statements are only qualitative, they are not supported by solid quantitative data.

In December *Integrated Operational Programme* (“IOP”) was prepared by the Ministry of Regional Development in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Healthcare, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The programme was approved by the European Commission on 20 December 2007.³⁷ The IOP is funded from the European Regional Development Fund and comes under thematic Operational Programmes. Among others the Czech IOP aims to reduce the country’s administrative burden by 25%, and support the creation of four national registers. A key goal is to increase the proportion of people who use the internet to communicate with government and local authorities from 3% to 35% by the end of 2015. The IOP is an instrument that is used for funding e-government projects in accordance with the Smart Administration strategy within the period, including the Czech POINTs. The primary goal of its priorities 1a (Modernising public administration – Convergence Objective), 1b (Modernising public administration – Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective) and 2 (ICTs for territorial public administration) is to create a more efficient public administration system (including the development of a national integrated rescue system). This includes modernizing public services at local and national level through greater use of ICTs. These activities will also contribute to the general development of the information society in the Czech Republic according to the IOP. The Ministry of Interior is a responsible intermediary body in case of the mentioned priorities.

Breakdown of finances of the IOP’s e-government components is summarized in the following Table 1.

Table 1 - Breakdown of finances by three priority e-government axis of the Czech Integrated Operational Programme (in EUR)

Priority Axis	EU Contribution	National Public Contribution	Total Public Contribution
<i>1a: Modernising public administration – Convergence Objective</i> (including 1.1a: Development of information society in public administration)	310 602 133	54 812 141	365 414 274
<i>1b: Modernising public administration – Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective</i> (including 1.1b: Development of information society in public administration)	23 892 472	4 216 319	28 108 791
<i>2: ICTs for territorial public administration</i> (including 2.1: Introduction of ICTs in territorial public administration)	170 831 173	30 146 678	200 977 851

Source: Czech Republic - Operational Programme 'Integrated Operational Programme'.

For priorities 1a and 1b, € 334.5 mil., i.e. 21.1 % of IOP budget, have been allocated from European funds to cover e.g. the establishment of data networks for public administration services, introduction of electronic public administration services in the sphere of justice (e-justice), tax administration or customs administration, culture (e-culture), education (e-learning), health care (e-health), transport (e-

³⁷ See Ministerstvo vnitra, Strukturální fondy: Integrovaný operační program, online, or Czech Republic - Operational Programme 'Integrated Operational Programme', online.

transport), employment, social care, property management and archiving, digitalisation of selected data sources, application of broadband wireless access technologies, etc.

For the priority 2, € 170.8 mil., i.e. 10.8 % of IOP budget, have been allocated from the funds to cover e.g. the acquisition of a technological solution enabling increased utilisation of e-Government in the context of territorial public administration, the digitalisation of selected data sources with access provided to all eligible entities, the establishment of public administration contact points (Czech POINTs) and the linking up of regional and local offices to Czech Points, the inclusion of territorial administration authorities in a system for sharing data, the establishment of high-speed interoperable data infrastructures with high throughput (broadband) and broadband wireless access technologies, etc.³⁸

The Smart Administration strategy also presumed that a project schedule would be elaborated within 3 months after the approval of the strategy and that annual reports on practice would be presented to government. The complete schedule of “smartening of administration” is still not available in the form of public information yet, but in April 2008 complementary *Strategy for development of services for information society* was approved. It does not use the term Czech POINT, but it requires that in 2009 extended network of universal public administration contact points will exist where it will be possible to obtain authenticated transcripts from selected public records (without any further quantitative specification of targets).

The *Strategy of eGovernment Implementation in a Territory* is the second document specifying the Smart Administration strategy. The strategy speaks about 5 periods of announcements of projects that will be funded from the European funds from 85 % - from the IOP 171 million EUR for self-governmental units in total, and from the Operational Program – Human Resources and Employment 97 million EUR for self-governmental units in total. Some claim that the European funding is the most important advantage that can be grabbed by current government in order to negotiate in a way which would be more favourable to results and which may also reduce still criticized departmentalism of Czech central administration (i.e. insufficient cooperation between ministries and other central authorities).³⁹

The first announcement “Czech POINT for municipalities” took place in December 2008. According to its text, supporting initiatives shall include also establishment of provisional internet connectivity (to the communication infrastructure of public administration) through ADSL and provision of scanners necessary for conversion of documents. The strategy aims at establishment of *eGON centers* in regions that would facilitate ICTs development according to local and regional needs. Working documents of the Ministry of Interior highlight the future needs of strategic planning (eGovernment strategy of a region) and coordination activities of regions. The regional and municipal eGON centers shall include:

a) technological centers allowing establishment, operation and maintenance of infrastructure necessary for processing key data of basic registers and other applications (e.g. file service systems, CzechPOINT@home). According to the Ministry of Interior the project will link the technological centres to the project of Czech POINT for municipalities which will facilitate certain standardization of their ICTs use even in the case of small municipalities. Current working documents also speak about a very important role of municipalities with extended competences which shall become providers of technological centres for other municipalities. According to still deliberated plans they shall primarily run electronic file service systems and other services like CzechPOINT@home⁴⁰ for

³⁸ See Centre for Regional Development of the Czech Republic, IOP Priority Axes, online, <<http://www.crr.cz/index.php?did=841>>.

³⁹ For example Koudele, V. Kudy přijde e-government do malých a středních obcí. In eGovernment, No. 3, 2008, p. 14.

⁴⁰ Plans speak about “typified projects”. Regional technological centers and technological centres of municipalities with extended competences shall ensure required functions of the following a) typified projects of self-governments: electronic file service system, digital map of public administration (cadastral map, territorial planning and analytical documents), data depository and managerial information systems for regional statistics, saving and digitalization of data, CzechPOINT@home, management of crisis; b) already defined projects of self-government (ePUSA as a database of contacts on self-governments, KEVIS as a central depository of basic

municipalities from their administrative districts. The planned criteria speak about effectiveness if - since the time of launching the project - such services are delivered for more than 50 % municipalities from an administrative district of a municipality with extended competence in two years.⁴¹

b) administration and promotion of e-government, and

c) e-government education including the support of implementation of central eLearning system

3.2 Management of Czech POINT providers' network

3.2.1 Pilot testing and its evaluation

Pilot testing of Czech POINTs was carried out from April to December 2007. According to the Ministry of Interior, the main aim of the pilot phase was to test the technical and security features of the system as well as to verify the feasibility in individual municipalities that would allow further diffusion of the project. For the purposes of pilot testing municipalities were selected already in 2006. In December 2006 in his article Ryšavý warned of an opinion of the president of the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic that Czech POINTs activities may be undervalued in the system of state administration funding. The president also claimed that the Ministry attempted to diffuse Czech POINTs in all municipalities with the registry office, but it was not clear if it had sufficient information about their readiness. The article also pointed out an opinion of the political opposition that still in that time not so much was known about the technical solution of the project and it was not clear if Czech POINT services would be provided via the Czech Portal of Public Administration.⁴²

The first Czech POINT was launched on 28 March 2007 at the office of city district Prague 13. Finally 37 municipalities participated in the pilot phase. Gained experiences were reflected in training of employees of other participants. From April 18 to May 4, 2007, the main part of the pilot testing was realized. In June a survey was carried out and from July to September 2007 also employees of the Czech Post and the Economic Chamber were trained, 74 branches of Czech Post (mainly in towns with former district authorities) and 10 branches of the Economic Chamber participated on the pilot testing. Till September 2007, the Czech POINT central was upgraded.

The Ministry of Interior planned that municipalities would be equipped with complete hardware terminals of Czech POINTs or with software clients which would be implemented within their existing hardware equipment. In order to realize it, 81 million CZK were set apart to equip 1 448 public authorities and the centre (including the connectivity). During the spring 2007, *Commission for informatics of the Union of Towns and Municipalities* criticized that former plans presupposed 250 million CZK a year in order to equip 1 200 public authorities. The Commission also criticized that the financial plan of the ministry did not take into account costs on employees and highlighted that knowledge of employees (especially of small municipalities) as well as the awareness of citizens represent the crucial determinant of future Czech POINTs' practice. It was also against the first legislative proposals that wanted to amend the act on public administration information systems, enumerated the list of Czech POINT providers and spoke about duties of certain municipalities to provide Czech POINT services. The Commission required voluntariness which became a leading principle of Czech POINTs establishment. Also the comment that municipalities with registry offices might not be prepared for delivering Czech POINT services was repeated once again. According to the Commission only the Cadastre of Real Estate was the one functional and well prepared for anticipated services in that time. The Commission raised a question why also financial authorities (223 financial

structured data, and HelpDesk for communication within a region or administrative district of a municipality with extended competences)

⁴¹ See Beneš, J. Opus citatum, p. 10.

⁴² Ryšavý, A. Czech Point: Lidovému domu by zřejmě nevadil, ale dál zůstává málo známý. In *Moderní obec*, 6. 12. 2006, online.

authorities exist today as deconcentrates of the Ministry of Finance⁴³), or construction authorities (which form a special field of state administration of more than 600 municipal offices, 13 regional offices and the city office of Prague) and possibly also regional courts were not supposed among Czech POINTs providers.⁴⁴ Financial authorities and construction authorities are those that mostly require citizens to submit extracts from the Cadastre for purposes of their administrative procedures. Regional courts form the network of registration courts, they fill the Companies Register.

The Ministry of Interior published *evaluation report of the pilot* in August 2007.⁴⁵ The report stated that the chosen technical solution was appropriate. The report concluded that the Central place was sufficient in order to communicate with Czech POINTs and central registries effectively and that the pilot allowed more customization and adaptability to needs of participating municipalities. Figures which were included in the report contain particularly numbers of issued authenticated public documents and extracts from public registers however. The report also introduced summarizing charts that show only general satisfaction of municipalities that took part in the pilot. Neither specifications of their “satisfactions with reservations” (17 per cent of municipalities stated such limited satisfaction with technical solution and 44 % expressed such satisfaction level referring to the overall project) nor some cost-effectiveness of the project or opinions of users were included in the published report. The report does not contain evaluation of practice of pilot at Post offices and branches of the Economic Chamber.

In November and December 2007 preparation for the full practice was realized including the training of civil servants.

3.2.2 Full practice of Czech POINTs

The full practice of the project has started since the beginning of 2008. *If municipalities want to apply for the network* they have to fill in and send an application together with the declaration that a municipality has sufficient technical equipment and personnel necessary for the delivery of Czech POINT services. After approval of their application they are included in the government regulation enumerating Czech POINT providers. According to the Czech law all municipalities with registry office may issue authorized extracts in general and it is not necessary for them to apply for the Czech POINT to be listed in the official list of providers. Registration of new municipalities is organized by the Ministry of Interior – few rounds have been realized (the last one has been recently extended together with the period for applications for funding till May 31, 2009). Special help desk was established in April 2008 to help Czech POINT providers as well as applicants. Some municipalities with extended competence plan to make a contract with smaller municipalities from their region to provide methodical, technical and administrative help with their e-government implementation.⁴⁶ For all Czech POINT providers it is necessary to register a client account by the Cadastre Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre to be able to issue extracts from the Cadastre of Real Estate.

No requirements on *qualification* of Czech POINTs’ employees are prescribed by Czech law. Some Czech newspapers gave a notice about deficits in qualification when they tested Czech POINTs of post offices themselves – e.g. still in December 2008 a commentator visited a Czech POINT of a post office and faced employees who had browsed through the manuals before they started to issue the required extract from the Cadastre, finally the employees were not capable to finish the service and after 40 minutes they recommended the commentator to visit responsible public authority.⁴⁷ The Ministry of Interior has been organizing courses (including their online form) for employees who

⁴³ See The list of financial authorities, online, http://www.info.mfcr.cz/ares/ares_fu.html.cz.

⁴⁴ See Komise pro informatiku, *Jaká rizika spatřuje Komise v projektu Czech POINT?*, online.

⁴⁵ Ministerstvo vnitra. *Závěrečná zpráva pilotního provozu projektu Czech POINT*, August 31, 2008, online.

⁴⁶ See *Nová Paka uzavře smlouvu s obcemi, kde bude nově zaveden Czech POINT*, *Czech POINT*, 2 March 2009, online..

⁴⁷ *Czech POINT zatím s problémy*, In *Novojičínsko*, 9. 12. 2008, online.

operate Czech POINT terminals together with the Institute for Local Administration in Prague⁴⁸ and the Počítačová služba Ltd. which won a tender on Czech POINT training. During the first year of Czech POINTs about 6 200 of their employees were trained. The Czech POINT courses are currently organized as one-day 9 hours courses accredited by the Ministry of Interior. They have been offered for free in case of employees of municipal and regional offices. In February 2009 the registration system for online courses was modified. In order to ensure that the courses are attended by the focus groups of employees, their identification is checked in the database of users. If the identification data are correct, an employee receives access data to his / her email.

It is not necessary for municipalities to have a *special job position* exclusively for delivery of Czech POINT services to its customers. Also a number of Czech POINTs established by a single public authority is not restricted by legislation. Delivery of Czech POINT services may be organized according to needs of a public authority. When the Ministry answered the question of a municipality if it was possible to allocate Czech POINT functionalities to individual departments of its municipality office, it pointed out that the idea of Czech POINT is to handle clients' requirements from one place. According to the Ministry it is also allowed to use computers with installed Czech POINT system for processing other administrative activities - "It is apparent that Czech POINT will represent only a supplementary activity of small municipalities which will be handled together with the registry office," stated the Ministry at FAQs on the Czech POINT website. Elsewhere in the FAQs the Ministry also added that realization of administrative activities shall not reduce the functionality of Czech POINT workplace.

Municipalities could apply for *financial support for establishment of the Czech POINT* terminal. They could apply only through a municipality of extended competence they belong to. A subsidy for Czech POINT establishment can cover only establishment of one Czech POINT terminal (i.e. contact point), or upgrade of only one existing terminal. The "upgrade" does not cover buying a new PC, however, according to the ministerial information⁴⁹ as some municipal representatives may still think. The financial supports are realized through the IOP. From 1 December 2008 to 31 May 2009 the second round of call for projects was realized which planned the support of 650 000 000 CZK from the IOP at total. In the case of establishment of Czech POINT the subsidy is currently up to 85 % from 93 927 CZK, in the case of upgrade the support is up to 85 % from 68 540 CZK. If co-financed from the IOP, the Czech POINT must be realized at least 5 years. If an upgrade of Czech POINT is required the Ministry of Interior informs the providers. The ministry committed to inform the providers continuously about changes. The support does not cover also projects like Mobile Czech POINTs.⁵⁰ For the purposes of the financial support also *Handbook for applicants and recipients of financial support from the IOP (eGovernment in municipalities – Czech POINT)*.

The Czech POINT website currently speaks about the following *technical requirements of Czech POINTs*.⁵¹

<p>In order to run a Czech POINT it is necessary to have available computer with the following configuration and access to the internet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- operational system: Windows 2000 and higher;- connectivity to the internet - at least 128/kb/s, https;- processor: Pentium and higher;- memory: minimum memory size depends on the used operational system (64 MB RAM - Windows 2000/XP, 128 MB RAM - Windows 2003)- free disc space: 45 MB required for installation and additional space for saving forms.

⁴⁸ The institute is an educational institution established by the Ministry of Interior, it also methodically manages and coordinates special professional qualification prescribed in state administration and offers special courses to self-governments

⁴⁹ See Zakoupení nového PC v rámci upgrade (25 February 2009), online.

⁵⁰ See Pořízení mobilního CzechPOINTu (11 February 2009), online.

⁵¹ Czech POINT. Přihlášení nové obce do Czech POINTu, online <<http://www.czechpoint.cz/web/?q=node/27>>.

These requirements are not in accordance with minimum technical requirements which were specified in detail⁵² for the second round in the call for projects in order to prepare the equipment for future services, including the creation of data boxes. Due to the planned services of conversion into electronic form the second monitor for clients is required and its minimum parameters defined, also readers of chip cards for operators and 2D code of a client are prescribed to be prepared for future eIDs, the specification requires also Microsoft Windows Vista Business and not other information systems which will be probably criticize by municipalities that use other operating systems.

Since the beginning of March 2009 the *security requirements* for Czech POINT access were changed. When they are logging in the Czech POINT system, civil servants must use a special token and special certificates issued by Czech Post from now on in order to identify themselves. Till that time it was necessary for them to have a special certificate only for the purposes of internal issuing of extracts from the Crime register, in other cases Czech POINT employees used only a log in and a password. This was criticized by some mainly in February 2008⁵³, but the Ministry of Interior claimed that its control did not reveal and security breach. The security of Czech POINTs was consulted also with the Office for Personal Data Protection which supervises the observance of legally mandated responsibilities in the processing of personal data in the Czech Republic. In order to improve the security, the Ministry of Interior also wanted to initiate the eIDs. Their application would enable double control of access to the system according to the Ministry – a civil servant as well as a client would be authenticated before issuing an extract. This project has not been realized so far however.

3.2.3 Evaluation of Czech POINTs

Published information about the practice of Czech POINTs are scarce and if exists it is not of analytical nature. It also shows high degree of supply-centricity which is also visible in results of *survey realized by the magazine eGovernment* and published in April 2008. In this survey 174 municipalities with Czech POINTs participated.⁵⁴ Municipalities were asked the following three questions:

- 1) What is your experience with realization of the Czech POINT project, especially with its implementation in your authority?
- 2) What services should be offered by Czech POINT in the future according to you?
- 3) How do your clients evaluate the service - what is the extent of utilization of Czech POINTs?.

The results can be summarized as follows:

- According to the magazine the survey revealed that 14 % of existing Czech POINTs perceived certain problems during implementation period – particularly the tight time schedule when necessary information were receipt in the last moment, funding was allocated in December (2007) and public authorities had to state an account till the end of this month, for some administrators guidelines were not clear and understandable. Extracts are also issued in one copy, when a customer requires more copies employees of Czech POINT terminals must repeat all steps necessary to issue an extract. The perceived issues with multi-platform aspects caused by the used technology and with payments from customers were introduced above. Some municipalities also complained about insufficient information about changes, for example when access to Czech POINT system was changed during the weekend and providers were not informed about new log in information, or when the break down of central component occurred and it was not clear when they started to work again. These factors extended the time of service provision and could impress customers negatively, but emerged especially in the beginning of the project realization according to available information.

⁵² See the MS Excell file available here: <http://www.mvcr.cz/soubor/051208-01-4-technicke-pozadavky-namisto-czech-point-xls.aspx>.

⁵³ See *Czechpoint není bezpečný, upozorňují experti*, Novinky.cz, 4. 2. 2008, online, or the blog of Michal Rada (<http://michalrada.blogy.novinky.cz/0802/czechpoint-opatrna-remiza>).

⁵⁴ *eGovernment, Czech POINT a nemusíte lítat po všech čertech*, April 2008. online.

- Among the future functionalities respondents gave particularly the possibility to see the number of points recorded for driving offences (according to 36 % of respondents) and the enhancement of possible services of the Cadastre of Real Estate (according to 30 % of them), especially authorized copy of cadastral maps which is usually required by clients together with the extract of the list of ownership, the possibility to see the preview of the extract before printing. They also require extracts from nonpublic part of the Trades Register and the possibility to arrange applications for personal documents (IDs, passports)⁵⁵, driving licenses, social benefits etc. Some stated the general requirement that a citizen shall be allowed to access or obtain data (including their transcripts and extracts) which are recorded in public registers and to access or obtain data recorded about him/her in nonpublic registers (including information on progress of administrative/court procedures) as it was declared among aims of the project. Some also emphasized the need to unify fees for extracts or to better focus the training. Some requirements have been realized as it is introduced above.
- According to 92 % of respondents citizens welcome the services. Their opinions are only mediated however.

In April 2009, the Czechpoint.cz informed that similar survey would be realized since the end of March 2009 that would use modified questions. No other information about the methodology and results can be currently found. The magazine eGovernment is currently preparing and eGON 2009 awards and Miss Czech POINT 2009 in order to support and promote the project. The authorities will be awarded in the following categories: the workplace with the highest number of extracts, the most efficient Czech POINT workplace (according to the total number of issued extracts per a PC), the most dynamic Czech POINT workplace (those with the highest increase of extracts during the first several months since their establishment).

Some surveys show that Czech citizens still prefer personal contact with public administration. That is also why conclusions of these surveys still speak about the supplementary role of the internet in citizen-government interactions. This may support the use of Czech POINTs, but no public information about another more systematic evaluation of the project that would include also opinions of citizens-customers of Czech POINTs are available in the present time. In 2008, Kunc, Svoboda (who is a representative of the Ministry of Interior) and Šimoník raised a question to what extent the offered model of communication between public administration and citizens corresponds with citizens' needs. They also commented future prospects of the Czech POINT project. They warned of low awareness about the project among public (only 23 % citizens older than 15 years heard about the project in 2007) and recommended enhanced nation-wide promotion of the project in the future. According to them their research showed that only 5 % of citizens demanded information from the Companies Register.⁵⁶ Currently, Šimoník, Pojer and Svoboda (2009) point out that citizens express their will to communicate with public administration electronically, but they emphasize that it does not mean they will really communicate electronically in practice. According to them only 18 % of citizens had practical experience with electronic communication with public authorities in the end of 2008. Their research focused also on public awareness of current Czech e-government projects and show that more than half of Czech population is aware of existence of Czech POINTs, but only 28 % know where they can visit the closest terminal and 88 % have not used Czech POINT services. Their research also show that Czech POINT has a high potential particularly because citizens perceive it as modern, useful and quick service. They recommend to grab the growing willingness of citizens to communicate with public administration electronically, to enhance the promotion of the project and to attempt to focus individual services more on individual segments of citizens.

⁵⁵ Today it is possible to apply for the identity card and passports through municipality office of a municipality with extended competence responsible according to the the permanent residence or through any municipality office of a municipality with enlarge competence or any registry office. Identity card which is made out can be picked up by any of these offices as specified in the application. In the case of driving license it is possible to apply only through municipality office of a municipality with extended competence responsible according to the permanent residence.

⁵⁶ Kunc, K., Svoboda, J., Šimoník, P. Přípravenost občanů na elektronickou komunikaci s úřady postupně roste. In ISSS 2008, pp. 179 – 184.

Statistics available on the website czechpoint.cz shows only growing number and structure of Czech POINT providers and number and structure of services used by customers. *Czechpoint.cz* currently offers following statistical information:

Chart 1 - Number of active Czech POINTs (by April 30, 2009)

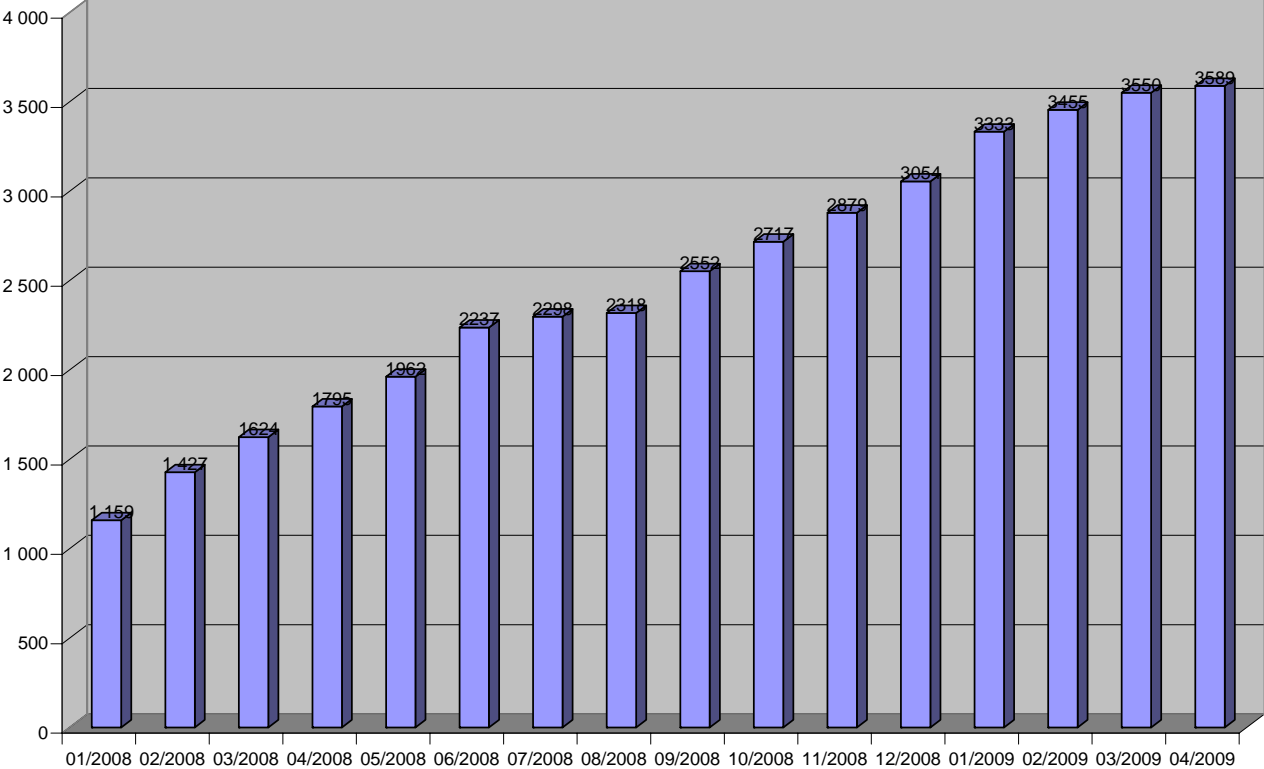


Chart 2 - Structure of Czech POINT providers (by April 30, 2009)

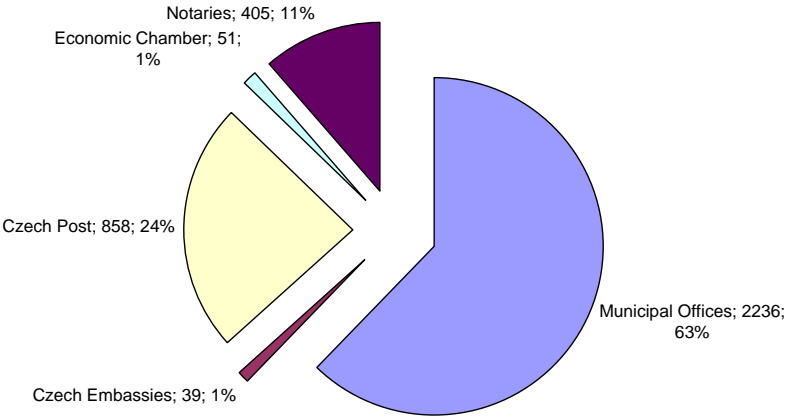


Table 2 - Number of issued outputs (by April 30, 2009)

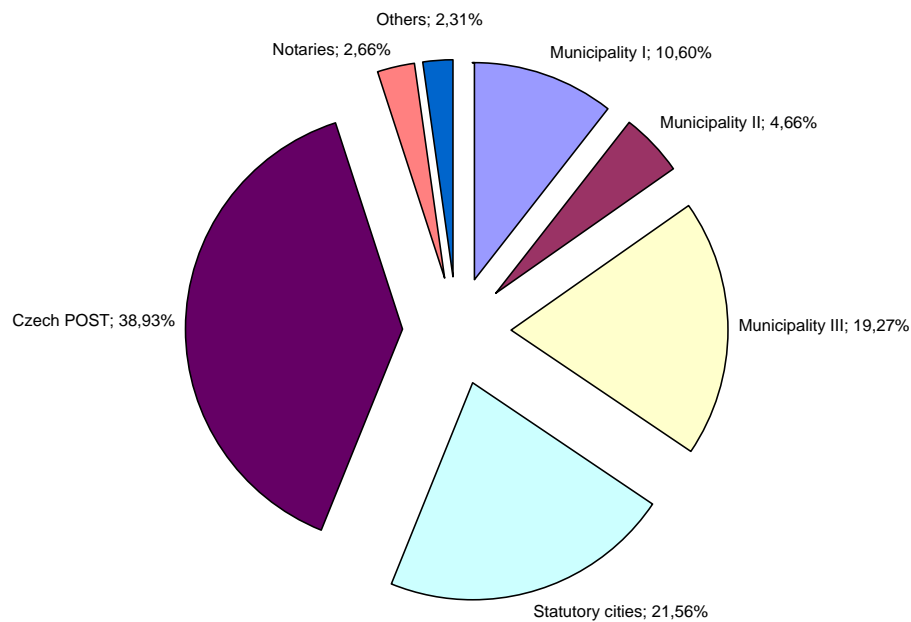
	2007	2008	2009	Total
Cadastre of Real Estate	28 379	230 406	128 974	387 759
Companies Register	24 144	150 791	77 847	252 782
Trades Register	1 338	7 656	7 857	16 851
Crime Register	0	595 615	237 058	832 673
Central Register of Drivers	0	0	51 146	51 146
System of Qualified Suppliers	0	0	1 333	1 333
Others	0	0	824	824
Total	53 861	984 468	505 039	1 543 368

Table 3 - Number of issued outputs (by April 30, 2009)

	CRE	ComR	TrR	CrR	CRD	SQS	Others	Total
Year 2007	28379	24144	1338	0				53861
January (2008)	14634	8767	642	34460				58503
February	19556	9420	413	46318				75707
March	19273	10647	354	47451				77725
April	19569	12809	402	41694				74474
May	16916	12363	334	37489				67102
June	16948	12063	426	45832				75269
July	18401	12667	560	51826				83454
August	17347	11488	563	53915				83313
September	20844	14654	732	69909				106139
October	23875	16650	1049	66297				107871
November	23540	15237	1124	52637				92538
December	19503	14026	1057	47787				82373
January (2009)	30255	17991	1466	60084	21499	704	201	132200
February	35233	17792	1608	54568	12471	165	51	121888
March	34230	20526	2171	63914	9678	244	29	130792
April	29256	21538	2612	58492	7498	220	543	120159
Total	387759	252782	16851	832673	51146	1333	824	1543368

CRE – Cadastre of Real Estate, ComR – Companies Register, TrR – Trades Register, CrR – Crime Register, CRD – Central Register of Drivers; SQS – System of Qualified Suppliers

Chart 3 - Structure of issued outputs - breakdown by providers (by April 30, 2009)



On the www.czechpoint.cz there was a poll question “How many times have you used services of Czech POINT during 2008” in the end of March 2009. There was no information about number of respondents that have been answered, percentage of chosen responds is available which shows that the majority of respondents (69 %) have not used services a single time, 18 % used services more than twice and the rest of respondents have used Czech POINTs once or twice. Currently there is a polling on “Should the number of Czech POINT services grow?” which shows that 92 % of respondents would welcome the increase of services (again without the information on number of respondents).

Current evaluation information is scarce. Therefore the author of the paper sent an e-mail request for consultation to IT practitioners of the Ministry of Interior and the Statutory City of Brno and its Municipal Part in March 2009 in order to gain their comments on existing Czech POINT functionalities, its management and possible benefits and perceived challenges, but none of the representatives has replied so far (till 8 May).

3.2.3 Web pages devoted to Czech POINTs and the project promotion

Special website www.czechpoint.cz was launched by the Ministry of Interior in order to promote information about the project. The website informs about

- locations of Czech POINTs in each of the 14 regions (the introductory web page also contains a clickable map of the Czech Republic with borders of individual regions);
- the project itself (about its aims and offered services);
- ways how municipalities may become involved in the network of Czech POINT providers (this includes requirements of the application, training of employees and also downloadable documents like application forms, guides and related legislation and help desk contact information);
- FAQs (currently questions of Czech POINT providers prevails); and about
- statistics of use (number and structure of Czech POINT providers and number and structure of services used by customers).

Information about Czech POINTs of a methodical type can be found also on website www.egoncentrum.cz launched also in order to realize the current Strategy of eGovernment Implementation. This website contains also FAQs related to various Czech e-government projects,

including Czech POINTs. Not all of the information has their analogies on the website czechpoint.cz (and vice versa) however.

Besides the websites, Ministry of Interior realized an initiative “Czech POINT Roadshow – visit mobile Czech POINT in your region” (in 14 towns) and “Czech POINT on rails” and placed also advertisements in media. This should have addressed also of comprehensibility of the label “Czech POINT” itself. Some may understand the name as a describing Czech public authority situated abroad. The name has an English component – “Czech” – and acronym POINT means (if translated au pied de la lettre) National Terminal for Submission, Authentication and Information.

4. Conclusive remarks - innovativeness of the project, lessons learned and transferability

The project of Czech POINTs has brought larger possibilities for e-government development. The innovation is apparently of an incremental rather than of a radical type. It has not established new institutional arrangements, but improved processes in existing institutional system which may make service delivery faster. The ICT application has been more used to automate existing procedures, but brought also certain redesign of existing procedures which will (or shall - according to existing plans) be further developed. The object of innovation has been focusing particularly on administrative processes in order to improve the service to citizens and businesses. Changes were initiated particularly internally, by the Ministry of Interior, but they have taken into account (also in the case of future steps) improvements brought by other projects discussed and launched on lower administrative levels (e.g. project Virtuos launched by the Plzeňský region and other initiatives as introduced above). The innovation brought by the Czech POINT project is citizen- as well as administration-oriented and impacted central as well as municipal (and partly also regional) administrative level.

The project has caused improvements for public authorities and administrative system, its government-to-government (G2G) aspects focusing upon a change of an internal service and processes which shall bring more automation are introduced above. Changes may bring and brought savings in terms of money and time. The up to now development of Czech POINTs also clearly show smoother horizontal (between central authorities) as well as vertical administrative cooperation (between the centre and regional and municipal governments) in top-down as well as bottom-up directions. The project has also brought enhanced cooperation between central government and other stakeholders (Czech POST, the Economic Chamber, the Chamber of Notaries) and thus joined-up services involving more organizations. The project is supported by local government representatives, its future practice depends on sustainability and improvements of the existing cooperation. The text above pointed out the question to what extent the European funding has helped to make cooperation smoother than before, according to the introduced ministerial information European funding secures for follow-up and long-term sustainability of the project (at least in the IOP period) and to a certain level it also guarantees transparency of funding of the project. It is a question of the day to what extent current political situation in the Czech Republic (the fall of the government) will affect the long-term success of the project and its further diffusion.

The project has also brought similar benefits for citizens in both of its internationally recognized areas – government-to-citizens (G2C) and government-to-businesses (G2B). Kusak summarizes that one of the lessons learnt is definitely the confirmation that inclusive eGovernment service can bring strong benefits for the users even when it is provided in the traditional way, i.e. not via internet. In this way, also the people without access to internet or lacking ICTs skills are not excluded. In the case of Czech POINT services citizens are not required to visit more public authorities to arrange some administrative requirements as it was before. Thanks to the project also citizens who do not own qualified electronic signature may use e-government initiatives. Some of Czech POINT services can be ordered by citizens from their home (the service Czech POINT E-SHOP – extracts by post), majority of them requires citizens’ effort to visit a provider during office hours, but Czech POINTs

clearly attempt to transfer administrative burden back to public administration itself. Current practice and legislation require especially adaptation of public administration and its processes. More requirements will be prescribed when other necessary legislation enters into force. Currently it is particularly the case of the approved act on electronic transactions and the authorised conversion of documents and of the legislation on the basic registers.

One must agree with Kusak's opinion that the Czech POINT project is one of the fastest implemented e-government projects in the Czech Republic, that is why it is possible to consider it as the Czech showcase. Further back-office integration would be beneficial to citizens, however, if - for example - it follows the way in which the "internal Czech POINT" is currently organized for the purposes of obtaining extracts or transcripts from the Crime Register. Only in similar cases the data, not citizens, are running around.

According to Kusak, the amount of savings can be hardly estimated but its significance is well documented by the number of target users and number of issued documents. He also states that the growing interest in use of the Czech POINT services confirms the user impact and satisfaction. One must be aware of the still insufficient evaluation of the project (which is apparent among published information) however. Published evaluation reports do not cope with demand aspects sufficiently which raises questions about the demand-centricity of the project. User-centricity does not always mean demand-centricity if evaluation of demand is scarce in existing materials. Available information mostly refers to opinions of Czech POINT providers rather than to opinions of their users (citizens and businesses), and particularly consider only opinions of municipalities. Deeper transparent and independent research is necessary. Still, available information does reveal some issues of the project development which are summarized below and which indicate possible inadequacy of demand-centricity of the current form of Czech POINTs (particularly in opinions of their providers on future services as intermediated the study from April 2008). Available information indicates growing public awareness of the project.

It is necessary to notice that the project is in its beginning, plans are ambitious and we will see what will happen after political issues is settled (new, but temporary government is going to be appointed on 8 May 2009) and what issues will be brought by changes in legislation. Some of the Czech POINT functionalities are stabilized and may be inspiring for national governments which attempt to address problems of heterogeneity and duplicity of existing information systems and to improve cooperation in their administrative system in order to bring faster delivery of administrative services. The above elaborated text show possible points of discussions that can also be made with regard to the comparability with other countries. The transfer of the project is conditioned upon further stabilization and embeddedness even in the Czech Republic and also on the approval of the responsible Czech governmental institutions, particularly of the Ministry of Interior.

Available information warns of the following:

- The project transfers most of the requirements on its providers (it is necessary to ensure adequate equipment and other tangibles as well as abilities and skills of their employees), but still requires more back-office integration to reduce the administrative burden on citizens. The Ministry of Interior itself committed to guarantee the same level of Czech POINT services across the state territory, but published information are scarce of more *systemic evaluation*. Development of evaluation and open and transparent management is crucial.
- *Administrative fees* for extracts are considered as incomes of Czech POINTs providers by law. This may motivate institutions to take part in the network, however, for some customers it may be cheaper and also faster to visit the relevant public authority themselves to obtain required services. It is especially a case of customers of 205 municipalities with extended competences (whose responsibility is often organized according to a domicile of a customer) whose municipal offices exercise the relevant state administration activities (Trades Licensing Office, activities of the cadastre office, transport departments). Public authorities may reduce fees for extracts delivered by Czech POINTs however. If not services delivered by Czech POINTs may be more expensive than if delivered by traditional way because administrative fees are not unified.

- For some municipalities *information referring to funding* is not clear enough to meet required criteria successfully.
- Some representatives of municipalities participating in the Czech POINT network pointed out that *the used technology - 602XML Filler - could discriminate providers as well as customers.*
- *Some of the existing services are not so seamless* (e.g. submissions to the Trade Register, authorized extracts from the Crime Register), sometimes also because of the faulty communication between public administration databases. Users of Czech POINTs are not provided for the use of the service which allows citizens to check their records in the registry (it is for example the case of the service “look-in the transcript from the Crime Register”). Czech POINTs issued only the mentioned extracts and did not provide their customers with authorised extracts of cadastral maps as *other services* of the Cadastre allow today. If they require cadastral maps they have to visit cadastral office responsible according to the location of the real estate. Some civil servants of municipalities still prefer to use the service of the Cadastre “distant access to data of the Cadastre” to Czech POINT system when they are required to issue extracts, because it is more user-friendly.
- Potential issues may be source from the existence of *two websites* which are currently providing methodical help for Czech POINT providers, their information is not always present on both of them;
- Ministerial information warns that extracts obtained through Czech POINTs can be primarily used *only on the territory of the Czech Republic.*

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