



Architecture and Building Culture Policy of the Czech Republic

Updated Version 2022



This leaflet contains brief information about the document *Architecture and Building Culture Policy of the Czech Republic Updated Version 2022*. More detailed information can be found on the websites of the Ministry of Regional Development www.mmr.cz and the Institute for Spatial Development www.uur.cz.

The Architecture and Building Culture Policy of the Czech Republic is a strategic document with a national scope. The first Architecture and Building Culture Policy of the Czech Republic was approved by the Government on 14 January 2015 and it was evaluated six years later including the implementation of the set measures. The Government, based on this evaluation imposed by Resolution No. 287 of 15 March 2021 preparation of an updated version by the end of 2022, which resulted from the cooperation of a large working group. Parts of the texts have been adapted, the goals have been modified and a lot of the measures already completed have been replaced by new ones. Moreover, new issues have been addressed. The Government approved the updated version on 4 January 2023 by Resolution No. 6.

Purpose

The Architecture and Building Culture Policy of the Czech Republic promotes development of the architecture and building culture as a principle of improving the built environment quality. Its purpose is to introduce an improvement in people's quality of life by enhancing the quality of the environment in which they live. Buildings and their surroundings, public spaces and the landscape form an essential part of this environment.

Authors

The Architecture and Building Culture Policy of the Czech Republic was developed by the Ministry of Regional Development in close cooperation with the Institute for Spatial Development. The Czech Chamber of Architects, the Czech Chamber of Chartered Engineers and Technicians and the Association for Urban and Regional Planning of the Czech Republic also played a major role in its development. In connection with the Architecture and Building Culture Policy of the Czech Republic - Updated Version, a working group comprising more than forty members, who consulted on its draft, was created in the middle of 2021.

Vision

The vision of the Architecture and Building Culture Policy of the Czech Republic is to introduce improvements in people's lives by enhancing the quality of the environment they live in. Its basic goal is to promote architecture and building culture development resulting in the quality of the built environment. Meeting the individual goals shall lead to:

- High-quality architecture,
- Cost-effective buildings that fit well into their surroundings,
- Welcoming public spaces,
- Harmonious towns and countryside, including the surrounding landscape,
- Respect for the local specifics of individual areas of the Czech Republic,
- Perception of architecture as both an existing and a future integral part of our cultural heritage,
- Adaptation of settlements and landscapes to climate change and their greater resilience and self-sufficiency.

Architecture and Building Culture Policy of the Czech Republic also:

- Supports the education of both the professional and the lay public,
- Contributes to stimulating the interest of the population in the quality of the environment they live in,
- Increases local pride and personal responsibility of citizens concerning the built environment,
- Increases the international prestige of Czech architecture.



Themes - Goals - Measures

The Architecture and Building Culture Policy of the Czech Republic within the framework of individual themes defines goals which fulfilment shall contribute to increasing the quality of the built environment. The themes are ordered firstly according to the scale, from the basic spatial framework of the built environment, later supplemented by specific themes related to education and awareness-raising. These measures often have an impact on several themes due to the complexity of the whole issue. The document identifies the responsible and cooperating institutions as well as deadlines for the implementation of each measure. The Ministry of Regional Development monitors, evaluates and publishes the implementation of these measures in regular cycles.

Theme 1 – Landscape and Settlements Arrangement

The landscape, settlement structure and spatial arrangement of settlements determine the basic conditions for a high-quality built environment. A long-term concept is crucial for the sustainable development of both the settlements and the landscape. The landscape represents the basic environment that determines not only the possibilities of development, but also the habitability of settlements. The degree of climate risk is determined by the planning and subsequently by the use of the open landscape. Therefore, the quality of open landscape planning is a major determinant of the quality of settlements and should be given appropriate attention.

Theme 2 – Public Spaces

The Architecture and Building Culture Policy of the Czech Republic requires sufficient provision of the territory with suitable public spaces, their easy accessibility and interconnection. It is required to carry out planning studies to verify the solution and regulatory plans to stabilize the design of the area. Competitions should be held for the design of significant public spaces. It is required to avoid the creation of building complexes that prevent the permeability of the territory. The public should be involved in improving public spaces.

Theme 3 – Integration of Buildings into the Environment

The sensitive incorporation of the buildings into the surrounding environment is the result of respect for spatial relationships, the atmosphere of the place, the structure of the existing buildings as well as the relationship to the cultural and natural heritage. The existing building stock is an asset that should be protected and developed. It is, therefore, necessary to respect and cultivate the existing environment and build on its values, giving priority to the reuse, regeneration, lifespan extension and redevelopment of existing buildings over the construction of new buildings. The quality of the environment enables residents to identify with the place, leading to greater citizen involvement in the creation of the environment. At the same time, new high-quality urban, landscape and architectural interventions that enrich the existing environment and bring new values to it should be encouraged.

Theme 4 – Public Procurement

Quality planning documentation and quality building design are essential for a quality built environment. The procurement procedure significantly influences the final quality of the buildings and the environment, as it is the initial stage of project preparation. The use of design competitions is recommended as a priority for significant buildings. It is essential to evaluate both the acquisition costs and the whole life cycle costs to improve the quality of buildings.

Theme 5 – Quality of Buildings

The high-quality built environment meets functional, technical and economic requirements. However, it must also meet the esthetic, social and psychological needs of people. The requirement for high quality must be considered at the same level as economic or technical concerns. The quality of buildings includes both their aesthetic value and their integration into the environment, their purposefulness in harmony with form, their social value, their technical design and, last but not least, their user-friendly maintenance and low operational and energy requirements.

Theme 6 – Education

It is requested to enhance the training of both the designers and other persons involved in construction and to intensify the life-long training of relevant public officials. Most important, however, is the promotion and development of education and training in the fields of architecture, urban and spatial planning, landscape architecture, building culture and environmental quality at all levels of schools.

Theme 7 – Awareness and Media

Awareness in the field of architecture and building culture should be aimed both at professionals and especially at the general public. Education of potential builders is essential. Examples of good practice play a crucial role in education, and public building projects should play the leading role. Public buildings and public spaces should serve as a showcase of society and its culture.

Theme 8 – Research and Development

Support for research activities in the fields of architecture, urban planning, spatial planning, landscape architecture and building culture, and their interconnection with the economic and social sciences, should also contribute to the quality of the built environment. Emphasis should be placed on the research results to be applicable in practice and transferrable into education in the corresponding field.

Theme 9 - Leadership, Coordination and Cooperation

The cooperation of a wide range of institutions and the sharing of experience and examples of good practice are important for the successful implementation of the policy. It is, therefore, necessary to establish permanent platforms for monitoring and supporting policy implementation at a regional and local levels, in the form of working groups, centres and persons or institutions acting as main architects to take care of the built environment in a systematic way.