

Dear Ms Samardžić-Marković,

Dear Mr. Zima,

Dear Ms. Wildová,

Honourable guests,

Dear participants,

Let me first of all thank the organisers of the seventh Prague Forum for inviting me to open this event. I am very glad that this Forum takes place here in Prague, on the premises of one of the oldest universities in the world, Charles University.

The 7th Prague Forum is a result of a long-term work of the Council of Europe in the field of promotion of quality education. The role of education is crucial for the future of our societies. The public system of education is practically the only one that accompanies people from their early childhood until their adulthood on a daily basis. As such, education is the most powerful tool for the better future of people. Good and accessible education provides social, cultural and economic emancipation for all. Education is also fundamental for a functional relationship among generations, for cultural understanding and tolerance as well as for the development of democratic citizenship. All these are the values that we need to foster especially in the current difficult situation in Europe.

The Ministry of Education and the Czech Government is aware of the key role of education for a democratic and socially just society. Quality and accessibility of education for all is our political priority. Therefore, we prepare a system of support for children with special educational needs and changes in financing of educational system that will provide accessible education as well as leisure activities for children and youth. Of course, the system of higher education is of high importance as well – not only as a source of qualified workforce, but mainly as a system producing well-educated people and citizens.

The main theme of this Forum – Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education – is a topical and important issue. It is clear that in a quality system of education providing equal opportunities for all there is no place for unjustified benefits and other types of corruption, and, of course, any other forms of discriminatory or even harmful behaviour of all actors at all levels of educational systems.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am looking forward to your fruitful discussion and to various opinions on this topic and wish your conference success.

Thank you.