

GAMBLING IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC IN 2019

This issue of “Focused” contains a summary of the annual report on gambling in the Czech Republic in 2019 produced by the National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction (NMC). The report presents the latest information and trends concerning gambling-specific regulation and policies, the gambling market, gambling activities, problem gambling, the social implications of gambling, and gambling-related crime, as well as the prevention and treatment of problem gambling.

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activities, the Gambling Act requires registration. When a user's account is being established, provisions of the money laundering legislation concerning the sharing of identification details can be invoked in order to identify the player. Since 2020 some operators have offered this facility in association with banks.

- Since 1 January 2020 lotteries have come under a higher tax rate and there are thus two gambling tax rates in the Czech Republic at present: (1) 23% for fixed-odds betting, totalisator games, bingo, live games, raffles, and small-scale tournaments, and (2) 35% for lotteries and electronic gaming machines.
- The system for registering individuals excluded from gambling is still lacking. Once established, it should feature a register of those who excluded themselves voluntarily, as well as those who were barred from gambling on a statutory basis (people on subsistence allowances, those in personal bankruptcy, and those who have been ordered by a court to refrain from gambling or enter treatment). The register should be launched in mid-2020, and gambling operators will be required to prevent the individuals in the register from opening a player's account or engaging in gambling not later than by December 2020.
- The number of municipalities with generally binding ordinances (“municipal ordinances”) to regulate gambling continues to grow. As of 31 December 2019, specific ordinances to regulate gambling within their territories had been adopted by 706 municipalities (there were 685 in 2018), with 439 (62.2%) of them having introduced a total ban on gambling within their jurisdictions (418 in 2018).
- The legal framework governing the regulation of the advertising of gambling remained unchanged in 2019.

Executive Summary

Policy and Regulation

- In May 2019 the Government of the Czech Republic approved the National Strategy to Prevent and Reduce the Harm Associated with Addictive Behaviour 2019-2027 and in December 2019 it passed the accompanying 2019-2021 Action Plan.
- The Gambling Act underwent some changes in 2019.
- With effect from 1 January 2020, it is no longer required for card tournaments with a pre-determined minimum amount of winnings that the participants in such gambling activities deposit an equivalent of at least 50% of the predetermined minimum amount of the winnings.
- With regard to electronic gaming machines (EGMs), land-based fixed-odds betting, and online gambling

Gambling Market

> Since 2011, when there were almost 102,000 authorised EGMs (mainly slot machines), the number of licensed EGMs has been declining. The greatest decrease was recorded in 2013 and 2018. As of 1 January 2020, there were 36,900 EGMs authorised in the Czech Republic (6.8% less than in the previous year). A year-on-year decline was observed in all the regions, with the exception of South Moravia. Prague reports the largest absolute numbers of EGMs, while the Karlovy Vary region has the largest numbers of EGMs in relative terms. The fewest EGMs are in the Vysočina region.

> The number of outlets with EGMs (mainly slot machines), which reached its historical maximum in 2011 (8,367), has been declining in the long term. As of 1 January 2020, there were 1,162 of them in total, including 580 casinos and 582 gambling venues.

> The proportion of casinos in the total number of gambling outlets with EGMs has been rising since 2010; it reached 50% in 2019. Because of legal conditions, EGMs and live games tend to be concentrated in larger gambling venues and casinos.

> As of January 2020, there were 2,188 fixed-odds betting outlets at 2,022 unique addresses in the Czech Republic. Relative to the number of inhabitants, the largest numbers of these establishments were in the Moravia-Silesia and Olomouc regions.

> In 2019 the money lost by players on gambling amounted to a total of CZK 36.3 billion (operators' gross income), which is CZK 5.0 billion more (15.8%) than in 2018, but CZK 3.5 billion less than in 2017.

> As in previous years, land-based EGMs accounted for the greatest proportion of gambling income, representing 41.7% of the market. Online fixed-odds betting and land-based lotteries made up 21.3% and 17.1%, respectively. None of the other gambling activities accounted for more than 10% of the income from gambling.

> Without distinguishing between land-based and online gambling, EGMs accounted for almost half (49.5%), fixed-odds betting for 24.3%, lotteries 19.8%, and live games for 6.3% of gambling operators' income. Out of the total amount of money gambled away, 67.5% was lost in land-based settings and 32.5% online. The percentage of money lost on online gambling has been rising in the long term.

> A total of CZK 10.1 billion was collected from gambling tax¹ in 2019 (it was CZK 9.7 billion in 2018 and CZK 12.1 billion in 2017), with contributions from EGMs making up CZK 6.1 billion and the remaining gambling activities CZK 4.0 billion. As in 2018, the share of the gambling taxation-related money going to the national budget accounted for some 49% in 2019.

Gambling in the General Population

> The level of gambling among the adult population continues to rise, especially as a result of an increase in the level of participation in numerical and instant lotteries. Engagement in gambling activities in the last 12 months is reported by 40-50% of adults, with participation in

lotteries being mentioned with the highest frequency. A similar trend can be observed in both genders and in the group of young adults aged 15-34.

> The degree of men's participation in gambling activities other than lotteries is a multiple of that reported by women. The gambling activities reported with the highest frequency have long included fixed-odds betting (10-17% in the last 12 months), followed by EGMs (4-7%). Prevalence rates of participation in all types of land-based gambling showed a slight increase in 2019. A significant increase in online gambling, including fixed-odds betting, EGMs, and lotteries, is currently observed.

> In the last 30 days, 15-25% of individuals (20-30% of men and 15-20% of women) had engaged in a gambling activity, mostly lotteries (20%). Excluding lotteries, it was 4-8% of individuals, mostly men.

> The results from the ESPAD survey using a representative sample of 16-year-old students were available for 2019. Participation in gambling in the last 12 months was reported in 2019 by 10.5% of the students. The prevalence of gambling among the population of 16-year-olds thus maintains approximately the same levels as in 2015 and 2016.

> In terms of different gambling activities, the 16-year-olds showed a slight increase in land-based gambling in comparison with 2015, while a moderate decline in their engagement in internet-based gambling was recorded.

> The proportion of 16-year-olds who reported having gambled on slot machines at a frequency of at least once a week remained generally unchanged between 1995 and 2015, ranging from 1.0 to 1.5%. In 2019, for the first time, a significant decline in the level of regular participation in slot machine-type games was recorded (down to 0.4%).

Problem Gambling

> Made on the basis of the Lie/bet scale, estimates available from 2019 indicate that a total of 1.6% of the population aged 15 and above (2.9% of the men and 0.3% of the women) were at risk of problem gambling. When extrapolated to the population of the Czech Republic aged 15 and above, the results were equivalent to some 145,000 (92,000-196,000) individuals at risk of developing problem gambling.

> The levels of problem gambling have been since 2012. The comparison of such estimates, arrived at by means of various screening scales, suggests inconsistent trends. Estimates according to the Lie/bet scale have been declining since 2013, while the estimated numbers of problem gamblers arrived at on the basis of the PGSI scale have grown since 2012, reaching 5.7% of the adult population in 2016, which corresponds to 510,000 individuals.

> Among those who had engaged in gambling in the last 12 months, land-based EGM players accounted for the largest proportion of problem gamblers (23.9%), with online gamblers making up 13.6%. The greatest proportion of problem gamblers came from the 15-24 age category.

> The majority of the pathological gamblers in treatment reported in 2019 that the primary gambling activity

¹ tax on Gross Gambling Revenue" (GGR)

leading to their developing pathological gambling was playing EGMs (57%), which is a dramatic decline in comparison with 2013 (83%). There was a significant increase in the proportion of players who reported fixed-odds betting as their primary gambling activity, from 10% in 2013 to 24% in 2019. Among men, the primary problem gambling activities include playing EGMs (55%), followed by fixed-odds betting (28%). Among women, EGMs predominate (70%), followed by live games (17.5%).

- > The latest wave of the ESPAD survey showed that, according to the Lie/bet scale, 2.3% of the 16-year-old students (3.7% of the boys and 0.8% of the girls) were at risk of developing problem gambling. The figure was 2.7% in 2015.

Consequences and Treatment

- > The results of the Pathological Gamblers in Treatment study carried out in 2019 confirmed the high prevalence of psychiatric comorbidities among problem gamblers. Prior to their entering treatment, 63% of the gamblers were likely to have suffered from anxiety-depressive disorder and another 20% showed elevated levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms. Suicidal thoughts at any point in their lives were reported by 122 (49%) of the gamblers in treatment and 54 (22%) of the respondents reported having attempted suicide.

- > Alcohol use in the last 12 months was reported by 77% of the respondents and tobacco use by 69% of them. The most common illegal drugs reported by the respondents included cannabis (36% of the respondents) and methamphetamine (26%). The prevalence of alcohol use is thus approximately the same as in the general population, while that of smoking is double and that of illicit drugs use a multiple of the levels recorded for the general population.

- > The most common substance used while gambling in the last 12 months was tobacco; 69% of the gamblers had used it often or almost always while gambling. Alcohol had been used often or always while gambling by 57%, cannabis by 28%, and methamphetamine by 24% of the gamblers.

- > The average monthly gambling balance in the last 12 months prior to treatment entry was CZK -43,000. The overall financial balance was negative in 91% of the gamblers in treatment, with the average amounting to CZK -1.2 million, the median being CZK -500,000. 88% of the respondents were in debt. The average debt amounted to CZK 794,000, with the median equalling CZK 500,000. 40% of the respondents have been under personal property distraint or salary attachment orders at some point in their lifetime.

- > The number of specialised programmes for problem gamblers has grown in recent years, particularly thanks to the support provided by the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic/Government Council for Drug Policy Coordination. 15-25 programmes can be considered as specialised services for problem gamblers (gamblers account for over 20% of the clients or are "very common" clients) in the Czech Republic.

- > While in 2018 there were nine dedicated regional centres in the Czech Republic, since 2020 there have been ten

of them in operation altogether (another service came into existence in the Vysočina region). Outpatient care of problem gamblers is available in 36 Czech municipalities.

- > While the number of problem gamblers in contact with counselling and treatment services is growing, their uptake of treatment is still low in proportionate terms. ✕

Gambling Regulation and Policy

- > The gambling policy has been incorporated into the drug policy since 2014. In that year, the Government redefined the drug policy to integrate the issues of substance use (including that of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs) and gambling. The advisory and coordination body of the Government for drug policy-related issues is the Government Council for Drug Policy Coordination (GCDPC).

The key strategic document determining the focus of the drug policy in 2019 was the *National Strategy to Prevent and Reduce the Harm Associated with Addictive Behaviour 2019-2027*, with its related Action Plan for the Implementation of the *National Strategy to Prevent and Reduce the Harm Associated with Addictive Behaviour 2019-2021* (the Action Plan). The Action Plan also covers the domain of gambling, including all of its four priority areas: (1) scaling up prevention and raising awareness, (2) ensuring a network of high-quality and accessible addiction services, (3) providing for effective regulation of markets in addictive substances and products with addictive potential, and (4) improving the effectiveness of management, coordination, and funding. In line with the principle of an integrated drug policy, the area of gambling has also been incorporated into the regional drug policies.

From 2013 to 2015, as part of its grant scheme, the Office of the Government/Government Council for Drug Policy Coordination provided CZK 3-5 million annually to support projects aimed at preventing and treating problem gambling. Since 2016 the amount earmarked for gambling-specific projects has ranged from CZK 20 to 25 million per year. In 2019 the GCDPC supported 17 gambling-specific projects with an amount totalling CZK 24 million. 13 of these projects involved outpatient treatment and two were concerned with aftercare.

The Gambling Act saw some changes in 2019. With effect from 1 January 2020, it is no longer required for card tournaments with a pre-determined minimum amount of winnings that the participants in such gambling activities deposit an equivalent of at least 50% of the predetermined minimum



Abbreviations used

EGMs	electronic gaming machines
GA	Gamblers Anonymous
GCDPC	Government Council for Drug Policy Coordination
NMC	National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction

amount of the winnings. This change makes it easier to hold tournaments in the Czech Republic and for Czech players to participate in international tournaments.

With regard to electronic gaming machines (EGMs), land-based fixed-odds betting, and online gambling activities, the Gambling Act requires registration. When a user's account is being established, the provisions of the money laundering legislation concerning the sharing of identification details can be invoked in order to identify the player. Since 2020 some operators have been active in offering this option in cooperation with certain banks. Additionally, from the beginning of 2021 the law will include a stipulation to the effect that the identification of a player can also be established on the basis of a high-level-assurance electronic identification, for example an electronic ID card. As of the same date, it will also be possible to establish a person's identity using a "banking identification means".

The system for registering individuals excluded from gambling is operational since the end of 2020. It features a register of those who excluded themselves voluntarily, as well as those who were barred from gambling on a statutory basis (people on subsistence allowances, those in personal bankruptcy,

and those who have been ordered by a court to refrain from gambling or enter treatment). Gambling operators are required to prevent the individuals in the register from opening a player's account or engaging in gambling. In June 2020 the Government passed a Bill which also bars from gambling those individuals whose child support responsibilities will be taken over by the state.

The number of municipalities with generally binding ordinances ("municipal ordinances") to regulate gambling continues to grow. As of 31 December 2019, specific ordinances to regulate gambling within their territories had been adopted by 706 municipalities (there were 685 in 2018), with 439 (62.2%) of them having introduced a total ban on gambling within their jurisdictions (418 in 2018). There are also large cities, including Ostrava and Děčín since 2019, among the municipalities with such total bans on gambling.

A study conducted in socially excluded communities showed that gambling is being perceived as a less serious problem than it used to be. This may be due to a general decrease in the availability of EGMs, a growing degree of their regulation on the municipal level, and mandatory registration of players. ✕

Gambling-specific responses outlined in the Action Plan

- > to support outreach work undertaken by addiction services in gambling establishments (Action 2.25)
- > to support gambling-specific harm reduction projects (Action 2.26)
- > to support harm reduction projects addressing the uncontrolled use of computer games, the internet, etc. (Action 2.27)
- > to evaluate the implementation of the Gambling Act (Act No. 186/2016 Coll.), submit the results of such analysis to the GCDPC, and, if appropriate, propose that the Gambling Act and the Penal Code be amended (Action 3.20)
- > to assess the regulatory measure of "protected buildings" for effectiveness (Action 3.21)
- > having analysed the situation, to propose measures aimed at reducing the attractiveness of both land-based and online gambling, including instant lottery tickets (Action 3.52)
- > having analysed the situation, to propose measures aimed at enhancing the protection of children and adolescents on the internet and while using modern communication technologies (Action 3.53)
- > to analyse the situation and propose suitable measures, including legislative ones, aimed at regulating gambling-related advertising and sponsorship in sports settings, high-risk digital gaming and high-risk elements of digital gaming (such as the use of "loot boxes" in digital games), and so-called "practice gambling sessions" (3.54)
- > if shown to be appropriate by analysis, to introduce the obligation to post warnings at points of sale and operation that minors are not allowed to participate in gambling activities and provide explicit statutory stipulations specifying the visual form of such warnings and specify in detail the visual form of warnings about the danger of gambling (Action 3.55)
- > to introduce measures intended to increase the level of protection of players in both the land-based and online settings, i.e. to develop an algorithm for searching for individuals who engage in problem EGM playing and online gambling and devise a tool for assessing the level of risk of all gambling activities pursued in the Czech Republic (Action 3.56)
- > to put into operation an information system accounting for the operation of gambling activities and a register of individuals excluded from participation in gambling (Action 3.57)
- > on the basis of analysis, to consider introducing new measures regulating the structural characteristics of gambling and making the existing ones more rigorous (Action 3.58)
- > having considered the results of ex-post RIA,¹ to determine the terms and conditions for the closing of a player's account and the termination of registration in order to ensure that such a termination is simple and quick (as simple and quick as registration itself) (Action 3.59)
- > to evaluate the effect of a ban on transferring money to a player's account from credit cards (Action 3.60)
- > to develop rules governing communication among gambling policy makers, the main objective of which is to prevent the public health policy from being influenced by the commercial interests of private entities associated with the operation of gambling (Action 3.61)

¹ Note: Concerning Act No. 186/2016 Coll., on gambling

Gambling Market

> As of 1 January 2020, 55 gambling companies were licensed to operate in the Czech Republic (two fewer than in 2019). 42 were authorised to operate land-based and six online EGMs, and six online and eight land-based fixed-odds betting. Altogether, three companies were formally based abroad.

Since 2011, when there were almost 102,000 authorised EGMs, the number of licensed EGMs has been declining. The greatest decrease was recorded in 2013 and 2018. As of 1 January 2020, there were 36,900 EGMs authorised in the Czech Republic (6.8% less than in the previous year). A year-on-year decline was observed in all the regions, with the exception of South Moravia (a 0.7% increase). Prague reports the largest absolute numbers of EGMs, while the Karlovy Vary region has the largest numbers of EGMs in relative terms. The fewest EGMs are found in the Vysočina region. In the last three years, the most significant decrease in the numbers of EGMs was observed in the Moravia-Silesia (by 63%), Vysočina, and Pardubice regions (by 50% each).

The number of outlets with EGMs, which reached its historical maximum in 2011 (8,367), has been declining in the long term. As of 1 January 2020, there were 1,162 of them (in comparison with 1,636 at the end of 2018), including 580 casinos (there were 548 of those at the end of 2018).

The proportion of casinos in the total number of gambling outlets with EGMs has been rising since 2010; it reached 50%

in 2019. This increase may be due to different legal regulation conditions for EGMs in casinos (such as 24/7 opening times and higher betting limits), different treatment of gambling venues and casinos under municipal regulation, and a higher social status enjoyed by casinos. The numbers of casinos relative to the population are particularly high in areas near the borders with Germany and Austria.

Because of legal conditions, EGMs and live games tend to concentrate in larger gambling venues and casinos. While at the end of 2017 approximately 72% of the premises had less than 15 authorised EGM player positions, by 1 January 2020 the figure had dropped down to no more than 2%.

In 2019 the number of gambling establishments recorded a year-on-year decline in all the regions, with the most dramatic drop in comparison with the previous year being observed in the Moravia-Silesia (by 52%) and Hradec Králové (by 44%) regions. The smallest decline in this respect was recorded in the Ústí nad Labem region (by 13%) and in Prague (by 15%). Relative to the population, the largest number of establishments is in the Karlovy Vary region, while the fewest of them are in the Vysočina and Moravia-Silesia regions.

As of January 2020, there were 2,188 fixed-odds betting outlets at 2022 unique addresses in the Czech Republic. Relative to the number of inhabitants, the largest numbers of these establishments were in the Moravia-Silesia and Olomouc regions, while the fewest of them were found in the Hradec Králové and Vysočina regions. The great majority of fixed-odds betting takes place online at present.

FIGURE 1
Number of authorised EGMs, 2009-2019

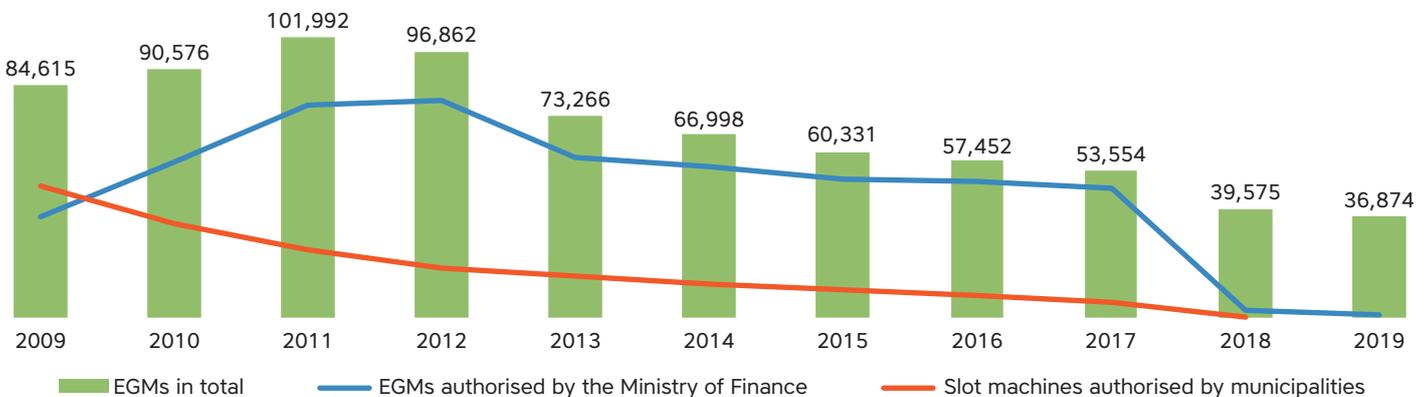
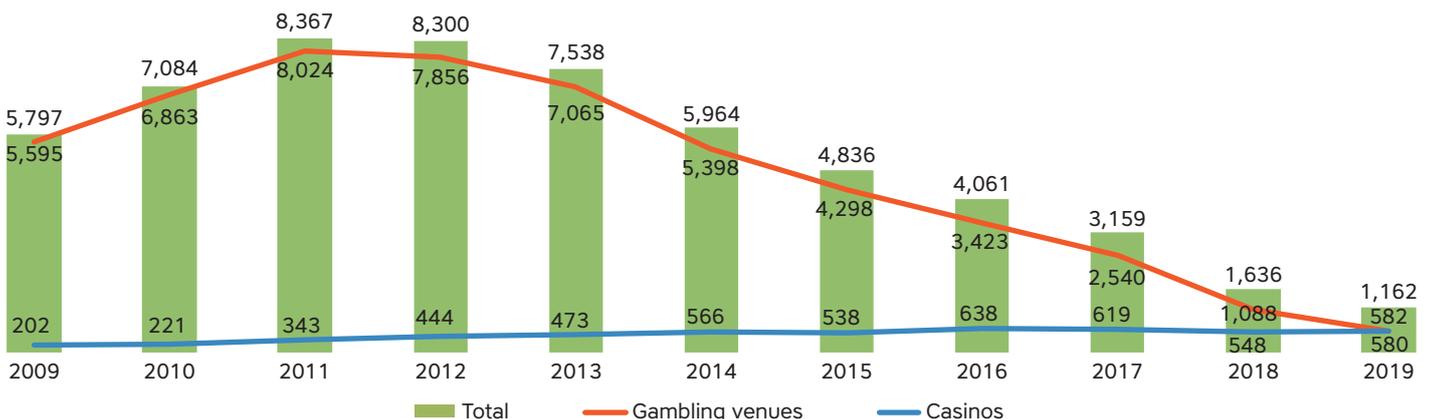


FIGURE 2
Number of gambling outlets with EGMs and/or live games authorised by the Ministry of Finance, by regions, 2015-2019



In 2019 the money lost by players on gambling amounted to a total of CZK 36.3 billion (operators' gross income) in the Czech Republic, which is CZK 5.0 billion more (15.8%) than in 2018, but CZK 3.5 billion less than in 2017.

As in previous years, land-based EGMs accounted for the greatest proportion of gambling income. Representing 41.7% of the market, they generated CZK 15.1 billion; in comparison to the previous year, their market share grew by 0.5%. Income from online fixed-odds betting amounted to CZK 7.7 billion (21.3% of the market, a 1% year-on-year increase) and from land-based lotteries CZK 6.2 billion (17.1%, a 2% year-on-year decrease). None of the other gambling activities accounted for more than 10% of the income from gambling (Figure 3).

The development of the market shares of different gambling activities according to operators' gambling income (money

lost on gambling) indicates a long-term increase in the share of online fixed-odds betting and a decrease in the share of EGMs, which, however, did not continue in the last year. The share of land-based fixed-odds betting, lotteries, and live games dropped in 2019. Without distinguishing between land-based and online gambling, EGMs accounted for almost half (49.5%), fixed-odds betting for 24.3%, lotteries 19.8%, and live games for 6.3% of gambling operators' income. Out of the total amount of money gambled away, 67.5% was lost in land-based settings and 32.5% online (Figure 4). The percentage of money lost on online gambling has been rising in the long term (Figure 5). The development of the gambling market in the last 18 years according to different gambling activities in terms of the absolute figures of operators' income is shown in Figure 6. A long-term increase in operators' income from fixed-odds betting and lotteries is particularly apparent.

FIGURE 3
Volume of the gambling market in the Czech Republic, 2002-2019 (CZK billion)

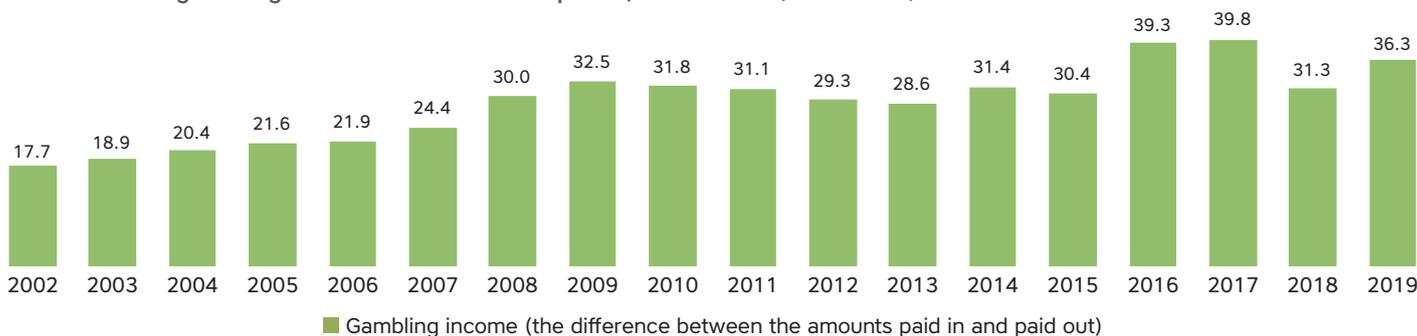


FIGURE 4
Development of market shares of different gambling activities according to gambling income, 2006-2019 (%)

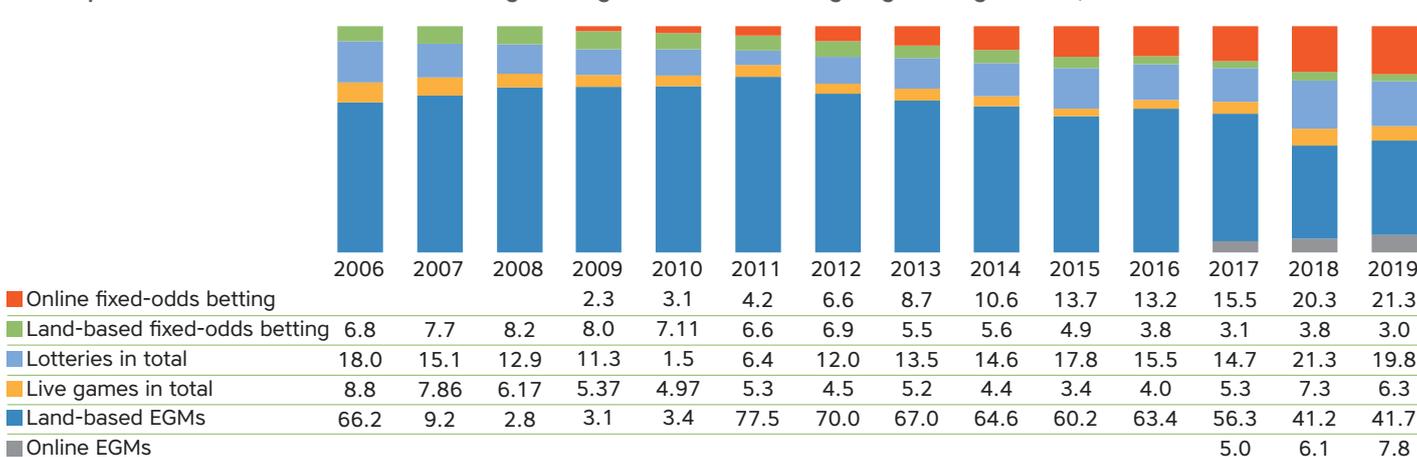


FIGURE 5
Development of market shares of land-based and online gambling according to gambling income, 2008-2019 (%)

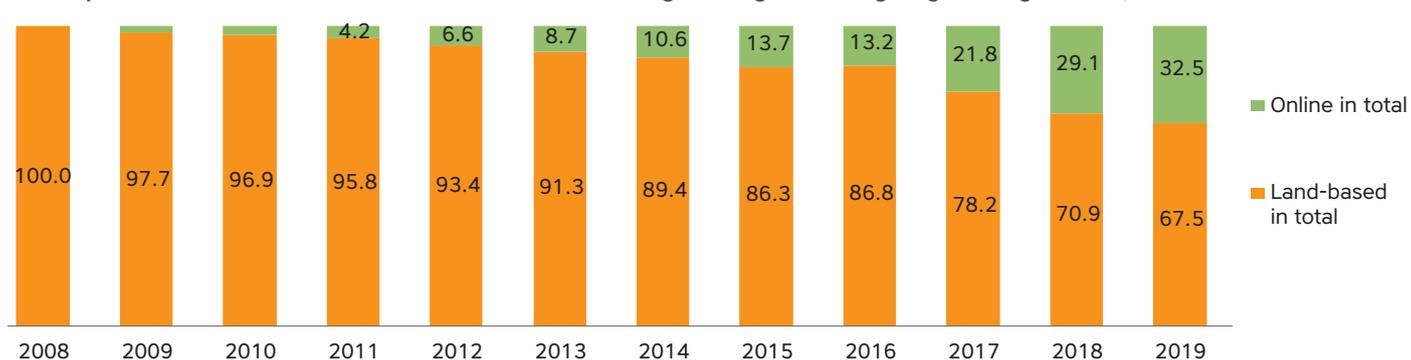


FIGURE 6

Development of gambling income from major types of gambling activities, 2002-2019 (CZK billion)



A total of CZK 10.1 billion was collected from gambling tax in 2019 (it was CZK 9.7 billion in 2018 and CZK 12.1 billion in 2017), with contributions from EGMs making up CZK 6.1 billion (CZK 5.9 billion in 2018) and the remaining gambling activities CZK 4.0 billion (CZK 3.7 billion in 2018); Figure 7. The share of the gambling taxation-related money going to the national budget is growing in the long term; as in 2018, it accounted for some 49% in 2019.

In 2019 public budgets received CZK 947.00 per capita from the tax collected on gambling (it was CZK 911.00 in 2018). On average, the greatest income per inhabitant was reported by municipalities in the Karlovy Vary (CZK 938.00 per person) and Pilsen (CZK 823.00) regions, the lowest (CZK 231.00) in the Vysočina region. In terms of districts, as in previous years, the highest income from gambling-related contributions relative to the number of inhabitants went to the budgets

of municipalities situated in the Domažlice, Znojmo, Český Krumlov, Cheb, Tachov, and Prachatice districts. The ten districts with the highest municipal incomes include nine situated on the borders with Germany and Austria and the Pilsen-City district. Out of the municipalities with a population above 20,000, the highest relative income was reported by Teplice (CZK 1,722 per capita), Sokolov (CZK 1,499), and Mladá Boleslav (CZK 1,445).

Activities involving gambling elements are also emerging on the market. Digital games increasingly use “loot boxes”, paid items with an element of chance. Their nature and, in particular, whether they fulfil the definition of a gambling activity are currently being scrutinised by the Ministry of Finance.

Gambling operators, especially those operating in online settings, offer players financial bonuses which are permitted

Historical summary of the taxation of gambling income in the Czech Republic

- > Until 1 January 2012 gambling operators paid “contributions for public interest purposes” amounting to 6-20% of their income from gambling; gambling-related revenues were not subject to any income tax or other such government-imposed payments.
- > From 1 January 2016, on the basis of a government amendment to the Lotteries Act, there were two tax rates: while EGMs were subject to a tax rate of 28% of the gambling income and a daily charge of CZK 80.00 per machine, the remaining gambling activities were taxed at a rate of 23% of the gambling income.
- > Since 1 January 2012 gambling operators have been subject to corporate income tax. Also, a mandatory contribution amounting to 20% of their gambling income (i.e. the difference between the money paid in and paid out as prize money) was introduced. In addition, a daily charge of CZK 55.00 was levied on each licensed electronic gaming machine. The obligation to contribute money for public interest purposes was abandoned. On the basis of an amendment to the Lotteries Act, starting on 1 January 2014, operators of lotteries and fixed-odds betting (not any other games) were allowed to reduce the prescribed partial contribution from lotteries and fixed-odds betting from 20% to 15% by an amount provided as a monetary donation to the Czech Olympic Committee for sports purposes.
- > On 1 January 2017, Act No. 187/2016 Coll., on the taxation of gambling, introduced two tax rates: 35% for EGMs and 23% for the remaining gambling activities. This piece of legislation also removed the opportunity to claim tax deductions on the basis of a donation made to the Czech Olympic Committee.
- > By virtue of a governmental amendment to the Act on the Taxation of Gambling, since 1 January 2020 lotteries have been subjected to a 35% rate. There are thus two tax rates in effect: 35% for EGMs and lotteries and 23% for other gambling activities.

FIGURE 7
Contributions from EGMs and other gambling activities, 2013-2019 (CZK million)



by the Gambling Act. These generally include “welcome bonuses” (i.e. money credited to the user’s account on its opening), loyalty bonuses, and those provided as a reward for bringing in a new player. According to the Ministry of Finance, however, certain bonuses – such as “no-risk” betting (stakes are refunded in the event of losing) or “playthrough” bonuses (the bonus needs to be wagered repeatedly) – should not be offered to players.

The respondents participating in the *Pathological Gamblers in Treatment* survey were also asked in 2019 whether they had been offered specific incentives and rewards by gambling operators free of charge. At any point in their gambling careers, a total of 56% of the respondents were offered a drink or food during a gambling session (which is not allowed by the Gambling Act), 48% were offered credits, tokens, or lottery tickets, 20% were offered free transportation, 18% were offered tickets to sports or cultural events, 14% were offered drinks or food outside the gambling session, 10% were offered mobiles, tablets, or computers, and 6% were offered other giveaways or services (such as cigarettes, a camera, and loans). ✕

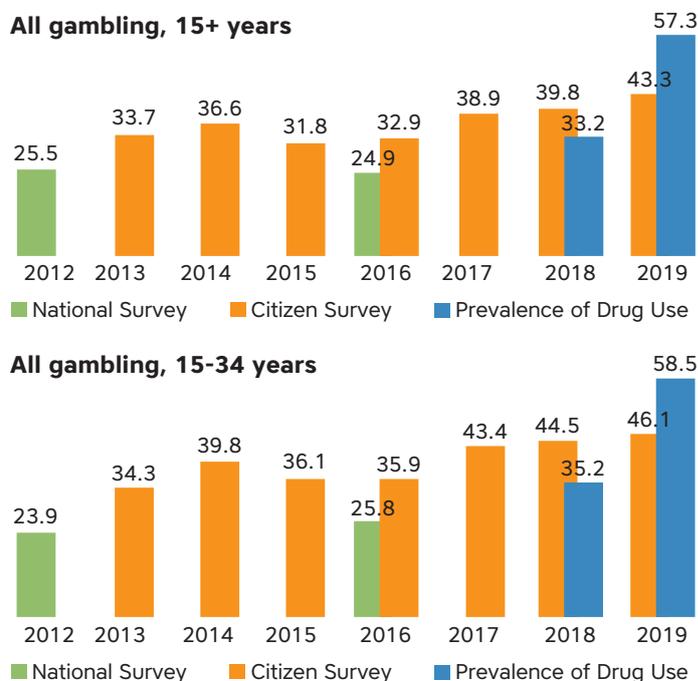
Gambling in the General Population

> The level of gambling among the adult population is currently on the rise, especially as a result of an increase in the level of participation in numerical and instant lotteries. Engagement in gambling activities in the last 12 months is reported by 40-50% of adults, with participation in lotteries being mentioned with the highest frequency. A similar trend can be observed in both genders and in the group of young adults aged 15-34. This increase also probably reflects the opening of online settings in 2017.

In 2019, after a slight decline in recent years, gambling other than lotteries returned to the prevalence rates recorded in 2014-2015. In the long term, markedly higher prevalence rates can be observed among young adults (aged 15-34). The degree of men’s participation in gambling activities other than lotteries is a multiple of that reported by women. The gambling activities reported with the highest frequency have long included fixed-odds betting (10-17% in the last

12 months), followed by EGMs (4-7%). Prevalence rates of participation in all types of land-based gambling showed a slight increase in 2019. A significant increase in online gambling, including fixed-odds betting, EGMs, and lotteries,

FIGURE 8
Prevalence of gambling in the last 12 months among the adult population aged 15+ and the population of young adults aged 15-34 – comparison of surveys carried out from 2012 to 2019 (%)



Note: The 2012 National Survey covered the 15-64 age group.

Surveys commissioned by the NMC



Since 2012 the National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction has conducted three series of surveys to examine the level of experience with gambling among the general population:

Citizen Survey

Every year since 2013 an omnibus survey on Czech citizens’ opinions about, and attitudes to, the issues of healthcare and health, carried out by INRES-SONES, has included the Lie/bet screening scale used to estimate problem gambling.

Prevalence of Drug Use

Every year since 2012, Prevalence of Drug Use among the Population of the Czech Republic, an omnibus survey carried out by ppm factum research, has included a module of questions concerning gambling.

National Survey

The National Survey on Substance Use is a general population survey carried out on a randomised representative sample of the adult population of the Czech Republic at four-year intervals. The latest wave of this survey took place in 2016.

FIGURE 9

Prevalence of participation in land-based lotteries in the last 12 months among the adult population aged 15+ and the population of young adults aged 15-34 – comparison of surveys carried out from 2012 to 2019 (%)

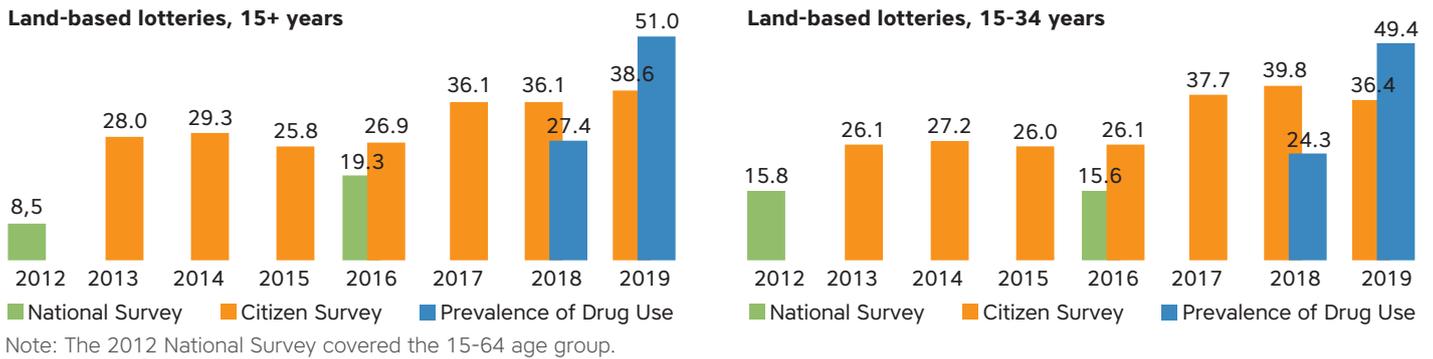


FIGURE 10

Prevalence of participation in gambling other than lotteries in the last 12 months among the adult population aged 15+ and the population of young adults aged 15-34 – comparison of surveys carried out from 2012 to 2019 (%)

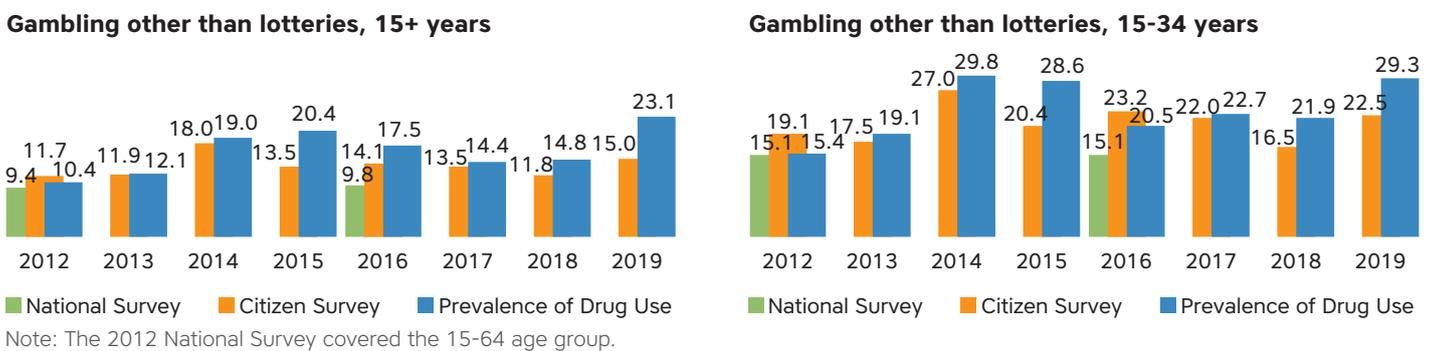
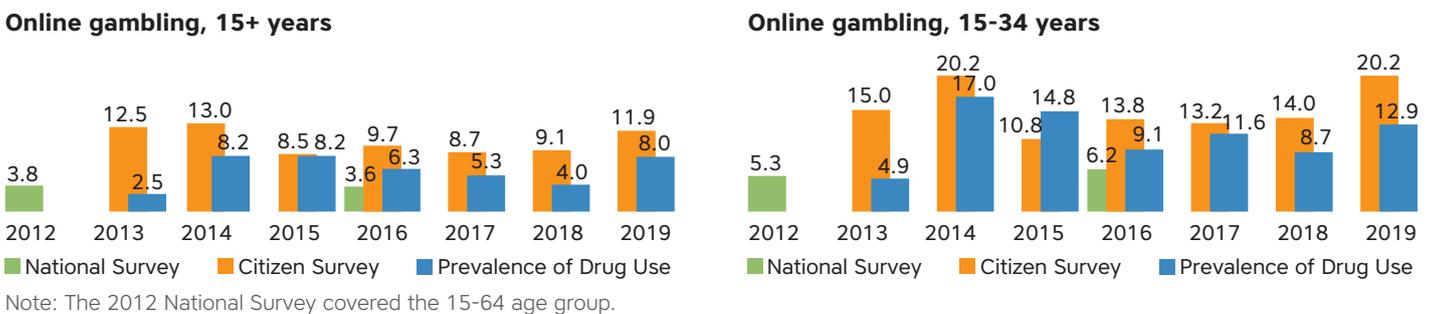


FIGURE 11

Prevalence of playing on land-based EGMs in the last 12 months among the adult population aged 15+ and the population of young adults aged 15-34 – comparison of surveys carried out from 2012 to 2019 (%)



Gambling among children and adolescents

The results from the ESPAD survey using a representative sample of 16-year-old students were available for 2019. A module of questions focusing on gambling was incorporated into the ESPAD questionnaire for the first time in 2015.

> A comparison with the previous wave of the survey in 2015 and the follow-up validation study carried out in 2016 revealed that the prevalence of gambling among the population of 16-year-olds maintains approximately the same levels; in 2015 gambling in the last 12 months was reported by 9.2%, in 2016 by 11.2%, and in 2019 by 10.5% of the students.

> In comparison to the previous years, there was a higher proportion of those who engaged in gambling monthly or less frequently, while the proportion of those who reported regular gambling declined. There was also a decrease in the proportion of the students who reported gambling for two or more hours on a single occasion, specifically from 3.6% in 2015 and 4.3% in 2016 to 3.2% in 2019.

> In terms of different gambling activities, the 16-year-olds showed a slight increase in land-based gambling, especially as regards lotteries and scratchcards and cards or dice, in comparison with 2015. A moderate decline in internet-based gambling was recorded,

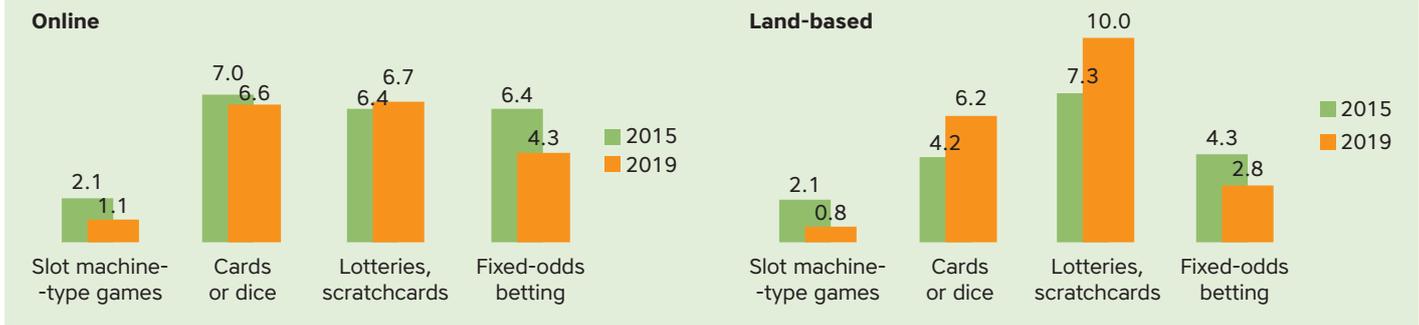
in particular with respect to slot machine-type games and fixed-odds betting, i.e. gambling activities which also witnessed a decline among this population in land-based settings.

- > Within the ESPAD study, a long-term development can be assessed for the variable “playing on slot machines (the kind in which you can win money)”, which has been followed on a regular basis since 1995. The results indicate that the proportion of 16-year-olds who reported having gambled on slot machines with a frequency of at least

once a week remained stable in the long term, ranging from 1.0 to 1.5%. In 2019, for the first time, a significant decline in the level of participation in slot machine-type games was recorded (down to 0.4%). It was probably due to the Gambling Act, which has curtailed the availability of EGMs and, in particular, adolescents’ occasional engagement in gambling, as it made it impossible to operate EGMs in establishments other than gambling venues and casinos and introduced mandatory registration of EGM players.

FIGURE 12

Comparison of online and land-based gambling between 2015 and 2019 – ESPAD survey (%)



is currently observed. The level of gambling has grown among both the general adult population and young adults (aged 15-34).

In the last 30 days, 15-25% of individuals (20-30% of the men and 15-20% of the women) had engaged in a gambling activity, mostly lotteries (20%). Excluding lotteries, it was 4-8% of the individuals, mostly men. The level of gambling in the last 30 days also grew in comparison to the previous year. ✕

Problem Gambling

- > The levels of problem gambling have been estimated as part of population surveys since 2012. The comparison of such estimates, arrived at by means of various screening scales, suggests inconsistent trends.

According to the PGSI scale, used in 2012 and 2016, the level of problem gambling among the general population grew, with the increase also applying to the number of individuals falling within the high-risk category. In 2012 and 2016 respectively, 3.2% and 5.7% of the adult population were found to be at risk of problem gambling as a result of their engaging in gambling activities other than lotteries, which corresponded to 290,000 and 510,000 people, respectively.

Made on the basis of the Lie/bet scale, estimates available from 2019 indicate that a total of 1.6% of the population aged 15 and above (2.9% of the men and 0.3% of the women) were at risk of problem gambling, with 0.8% of them (1.6% and 0.1%, respectively) coming under the high-risk category. Estimates according to the Lie/bet scale have been declining since 2013: while in 2013 and 2014, respectively, 3.6% and 3.9% of the adult population were found to be at risk of problem gambling, in 2016 the estimated numbers of problem gamblers dropped to 2.4% and continued to decline on a year-on-year basis. In 2019, nevertheless, the prevalence

of gamblers at high risk rose slightly in comparison with the previous year (from 0.7% to 0.8%),

In 2019 there was a slightly greater representation of online gamblers (13.6%) than land-based gamblers (10.9%) among those who had engaged in gambling in the last 12 months. Players on land-based EGMs accounted for the largest proportion of problem gamblers (23.9%). The greatest proportion of problem gamblers came from the 15-24 age category, while the greatest proportion of high-risk gamblers was found among those aged 35-44.

When extrapolated to the population of the Czech Republic aged 15 and above, the results obtained in 2019 were equivalent to some 145,000 (92,000-196,000) individuals at risk of developing problem gambling, with men and women making up 129,000 and 15,000, respectively. Out of those, approximately 74,000 (37,000-112,000) fell into the high-risk category (two points on the Lie/bet scale).

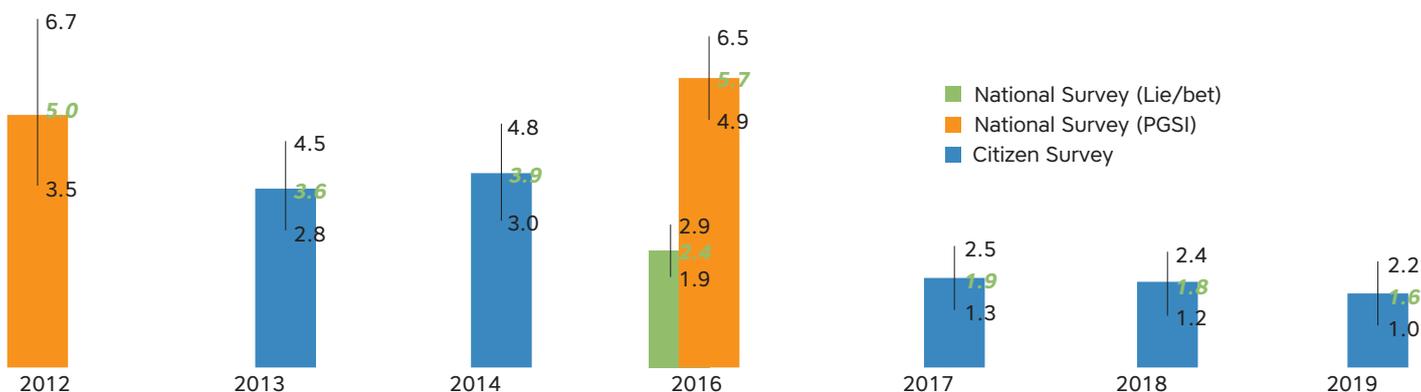
The latest wave of a survey among pathological gamblers in treatment, taking place every two years since 2013, was conducted in 2019. Women made up 16% of those gamblers (a stable long-term average) and the average age of the gamblers in treatment was 35.1, with the median being 33 years (the same as in 2017). Individuals in the 25-34 age category constitute the largest proportion of pathological gamblers in treatment in the long term.

The pattern of the development of problem gambling was found to be very similar to that identified in the previous waves of the survey: the respondents engaged in gambling (other than lotteries) for the first time when they were 20.6 on average, the average age of their first experience with their primary problem gambling activity was 22.5, and the onset of regular gambling (i.e. at least weekly) was reported at 24.7 years on average. The average age at which the respondents began to perceive their gambling as a problem

was 28.2 and the average age at which they sought professional help for the first time was 31.7. There are, however, significant individual variations.

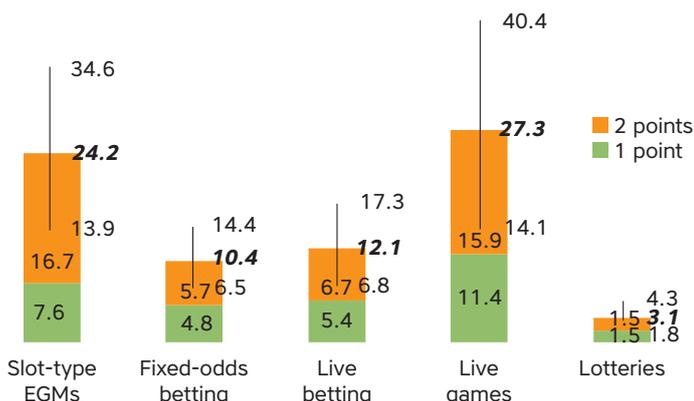
The majority of the pathological gamblers in treatment reported in 2019 that the primary gambling activity leading to their developing pathological gambling was playing on EGMs (57%),

FIGURE 13
Lie/bet and PGSI – comparison of results for the general population, 2012-2019 (%)



Note: The estimates cover individuals who reported having engaged in gambling activities other than lotteries in the last 12 months. The green figures in italics stand for the means of the total proportions of all the people at some degree of risk. The vertical lines indicate 95% confidence intervals for problem gambling estimates.

FIGURE 14
Results of the Lie/bet screening scale for last-12-month gambling according to different gambling activities – Citizen Survey 2019 (%)



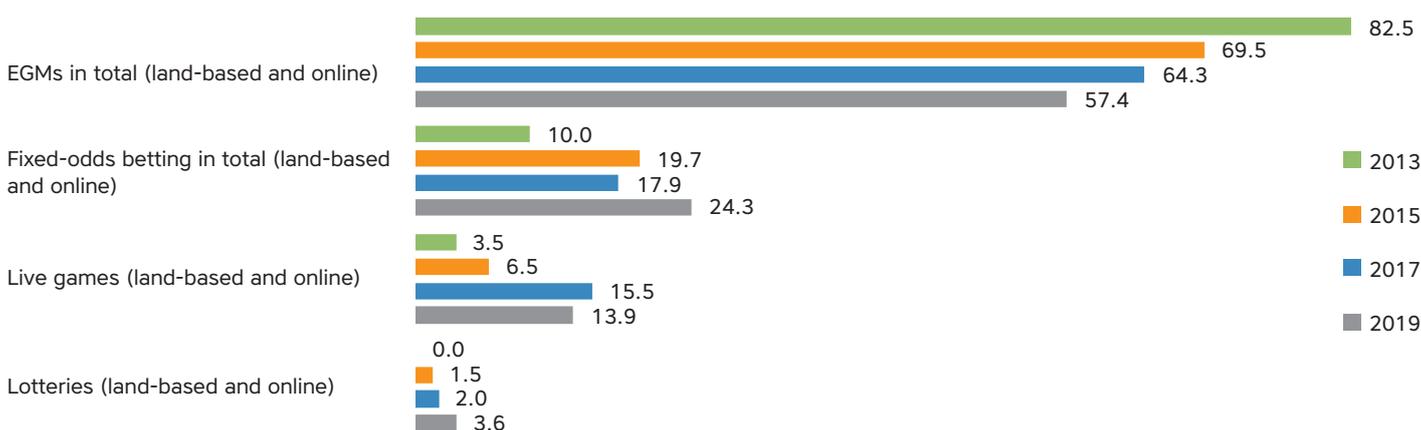
Note: The figures in italics stand for the means of the total proportions of all the people at some degree of risk (one or more points on the PGSI scale). The vertical lines indicate 95% confidence intervals for problem gambling estimates.

which is a dramatic decline in comparison with 2013 (83%). There was a significant increase in the proportion of players who reported fixed-odds betting as their primary gambling activity, from 10% in 2013 to 24% in 2019. The proportion of individuals with online fixed-odds betting as their primary gambling activity even tripled from 2013 to 2019 (from 6% to 18%). The percentage of those who reported live games as their primary problem gambling activity also grew between 2013 and 2019 (from 4% to 14%). Lotteries were reported as the primary problem gambling activity by 4% of gamblers in treatment in 2019. A general increase in the proportion of gamblers in treatment who reported online gambling as their primary problem gambling activity was recorded (from 10% to 26%).

Among men, the primary problem gambling activities include EGMs (55%), followed by fixed-odds betting (28%) and live games (13%). Among women, EGMs predominate (70%), followed by live games (17.5%) and fixed-odds betting (7.5%).

Addiction treatment services, too, record an increase in the number of gamblers experiencing problems with online

FIGURE 15
Primary problem gambling activity as reported by participants in the Pathological Gamblers in Treatment surveys from 2013 to 2019, by gambling activity (%)



Problem gambling among children and adolescents

The latest wave of the ESPAD survey showed that, according to the Lie/bet scale, 2.3% of the 16-year-old students (3.7% of the boys and 0.8% of the girls) were at risk of developing problem gambling, of whom 0.5% (0.9% of the boys and 0.2% of the girls) were found to be at high risk. After participants in lotteries and card tournaments were included among those who had engaged in gambling in the last 12 months, 3.2% of the students would be at risk of problem gambling according to the Lie/bet scale.

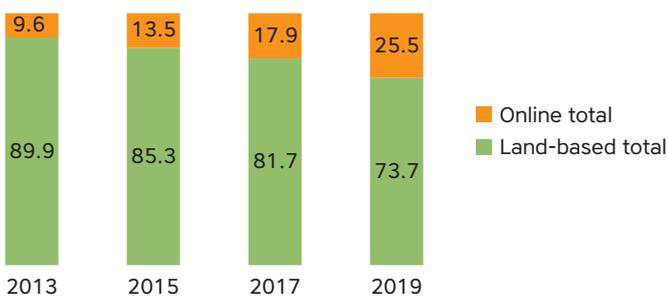
Using the CSPG scale, based on gambling frequency, time spent gambling, and gambling intensity, the ESPAD survey identified a total of 5.4% of the students (8.6% of the boys and 2.0% of the girls) as being at risk of problem gambling, including 2.8% of the students falling into the high-risk category. When those who participate in lotteries or play cards are included, the estimated proportion of the students at risk will rise to 6.2%, with 2.1% falling into the high-risk category.

The rate of problem gambling estimated on the basis of the CSPG scale is lowest among grammar school students, while its highest levels were observed among students at secondary vocational schools without the school-leaving examination ("maturita") and apprentice training centres.

In comparison with the previous wave of the survey in 2015, levels of problem gambling among 16-year-olds appear relatively stable, as indicated by estimates arrived at using both the Lie/bet scale (2.7% in 2015 and 2.3% in 2019) and the CSPG scale (from 6.3% to 5.4%). Despite the drop in the levels of problem gambling observed in the population of boys and students as a whole, attention should be drawn to a slight increase in this respect among girls and students at secondary vocational schools without the school-leaving examination and apprentice training centres.

FIGURE 16

Primary problem gambling activity as reported by participants in the Pathological Gamblers in Treatment surveys from 2013 to 2019, by gambling setting (%)



gambling, especially with fixed-odds betting, and a decline in the number of those playing on land-based EGMs. Individuals engaging in fixed-odds betting account for 40-50% of the gamblers in contact with the services. (Former) active athletes represent a significant proportion of their clients. ✕

Health and Social Consequences

> The results of the Pathological Gamblers in Treatment study carried out in 2019 confirmed the high prevalence of psychiatric comorbidities among problem gamblers. Measured using the MHI-5 scale, 63% of the gamblers were likely to have suffered from anxiety-depressive disorder in the last 30 days prior to treatment, while another 20% showed elevated levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms.

The frequent or regular use of antidepressants or medication for anxiety in the last 12 months prior to treatment was reported by 20% of the respondents, while 14% had used sleeping pills frequently or regularly.

Suicidal thoughts at any point in their lives were reported by 122 (49%) of the gamblers in treatment in 2019 (the figure was 65% in 2015 and 52% in 2017), and 54 (22%) reported having attempted suicide (it was 29% in 2015 and 19% in 2017), half of them repeatedly.

Alcohol use in the last 12 months was reported by 77% of the respondents and tobacco use by 69% (76% and 70%, respectively, in 2017). The most common illegal drugs reported by the respondents included cannabis (36% of the respondents, 29% in 2017) and methamphetamine (26%, 25% in 2017). The prevalence of alcohol use is thus approximately the same as in the general population, while that of smoking is double and that of illicit drugs a multiple of the levels recorded for the general population.

The most common substance used while gambling in the last 12 months was tobacco; 69% of the gamblers had used it often or almost always while gambling. Alcohol had often or always been used while gambling by 57%, cannabis by 28%, and methamphetamine by 24% of the gamblers.

Average monthly gambling expenses in the last year prior to treatment amounted to CZK 50,000 (CZK 45,000 in 2017 and CZK 38,000 in 2015), with the median of monthly gambling expenses reaching CZK 25,000 (CZK 20,000 in 2017). The average monthly gambling balance in the last 12 months prior to entry to treatment was CZK -43,000 (it was CZK -46,000 in 2017, CZK -44,000 in 2015, and CZK -39,000 in 2013).

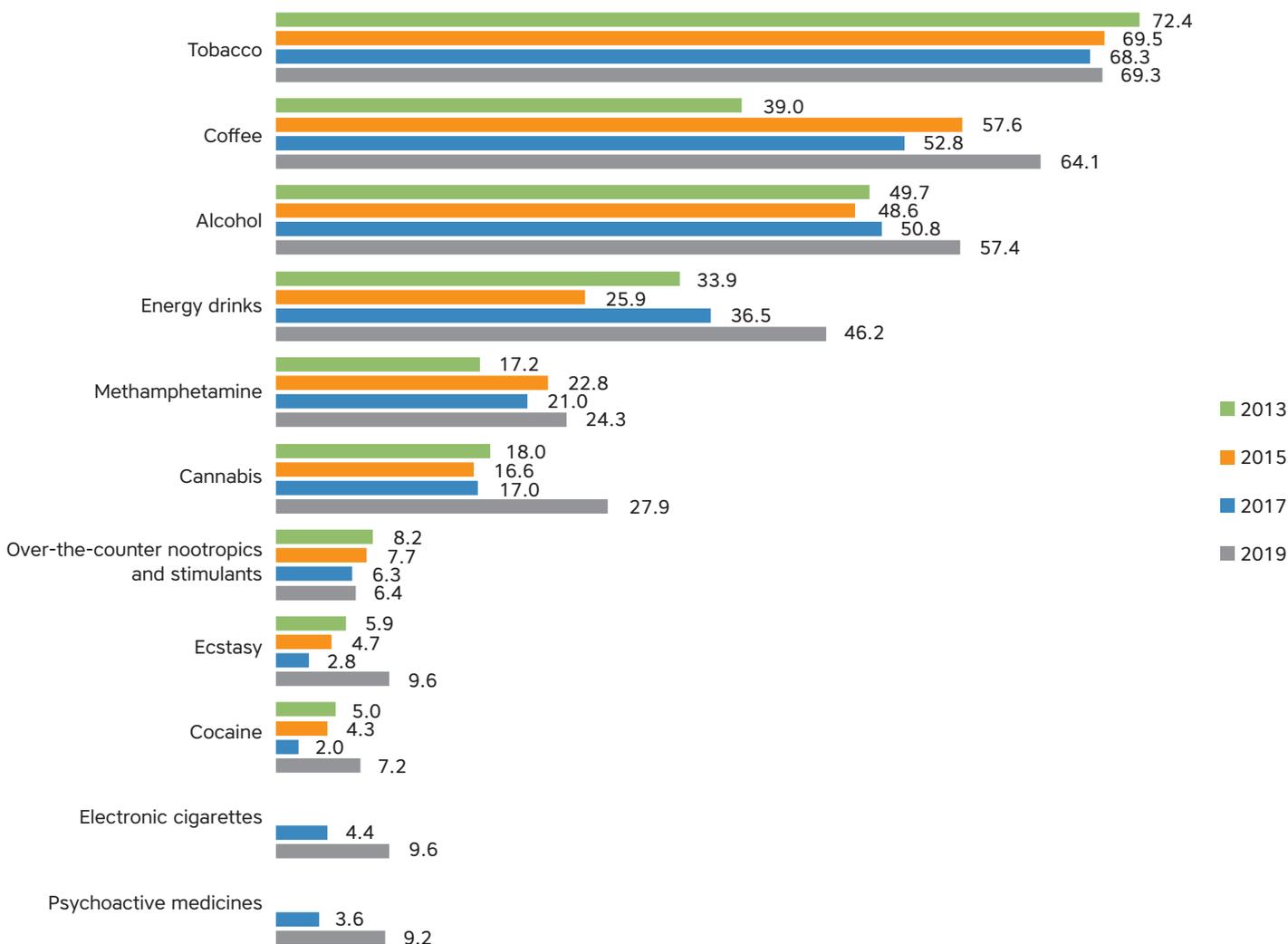
The overall financial balance was negative for 91% of the gamblers in treatment. The average balance was CZK -1.2 million (CZK -1.1 million in 2017 and CZK -745,000 in 2015), with the median equalling CZK -500,000 (CZK -350,000 in 2017 and CZK -300,000 in 2015). The worst

TABLE 1
The level of risk of anxiety and depressive symptoms according to the MHI-5 scale – Pathological Gamblers in Treatment 2015-2019

Risk Categories according to MHI-5	2015 (N=259)	2017 (N=249)	2019 (N=251)
High probability of anxiety or depressive disorders	66.4	69.9	62.5
Presence of anxiety and depressive symptoms	17.0	17.7	20.3
Good mental health	16.6	12.4	17.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

FIGURE 17

Substance use while gambling in the last 12 months prior to treatment – results of the Pathological Gamblers in Treatment surveys from 2013 to 2019 (the aggregate of the “Often” and “Almost always” categories) (%)



balance was reported in 2019 by a respondent who had lost CZK 11 million during his gambling career.

88% of the respondents were in debt (the figure was 89% in 2017 and 92% in 2015), with the greatest proportion of the indebted gamblers being found among those engaging in fixed-odds betting (97%) and playing on EGMs (85%) and live games (86%). The average debt amounted to CZK 794,000 (it was CZK 780,000 in 2017, CZK 894,000 in 2013, and CZK 596,000 in 2015), with the highest debt reaching CZK 7 million and the median indebtedness equalling to CZK 500,000 (CZK 400,000 in 2017). The median indebtedness among EGM gamblers (those reporting EGMs as their primary problem gambling activity) was CZK 500,000, while it was CZK 525,000 and CZK 750,000 among the indebted gamblers who had engaged in live games and fixed-odds betting, respectively.

40% of the respondents have been under personal property distraint or salary attachment orders at some point in their lifetime (it was 44% in 2017 and 39% in 2015). Among the gamblers engaging in playing on EGMs, live games, and fixed-odds betting the figures were 46%, 43%, and 25%, respectively.

Legal work was the main source of income for the gamblers in the last 12 months prior to their entering treatment;

it accounted for an average of 43% of their total income (it was 42% in 2017 and 37% in 2015). Other sources included loans (27%; 26% in 2017 and 28% in 2015), very often from non-bank providers (11%), and criminal activities (8%).

Crime

> Criminal offences and misdemeanours involving the operation of gambling or engaging in it are referred to as primary gambling-related crime. Since the beginning of 2017 the supervisory body for land-based gambling has been the Customs Administration, which in October 2019 took over the regulatory powers from the Ministry of Finance in order also to oversee online gambling.

In its capacity as a gambling supervisory body, in 2019 the Customs Administration conducted a total of 1,347 audits (there were 1,462 in 2018) and identified 862 violations of the Gambling Act (there were 876 in 2018). 862 illegally operated electronic gaming machines (in 2018 the figure was 1,800), including 750 quiz-type EGMs, were seized.

In addition, financial resources to the tune of almost CZK 800,000 were seized. This sum is much smaller than those seized in previous years (in 2018, e.g., it was CZK 2.5 million).

Illegal EGMs were seized in 232 gambling venues (the figure was 423 in 2018). As in the previous year, the largest numbers of instances of breaches of the law were identified in the Ústí nad Labem region (117), with Prague coming second (103). The greatest numbers of illegal gambling venues were detected in the Moravia-Silesia (36) and South Bohemia (33) regions, and the greatest numbers of illegally operated EGMs were seized in the Moravia-Silesia (135) and Pilsen (216) regions.

In 2019 a list maintained by the Ministry of Finance of blocked websites offering gambling was extended to include another four sites (*lottoevents.com*, two variants on the *agentlotto.com* website, and *bet2u.com*). As of 31 July 2019, the list contained 121 websites (including 100 variants on *1xbet.com* and 11 variants on *betworld.com*).

A comparison of the results of the different waves of the survey among pathological gamblers in treatment (2017 vs. 2019) showed a drop in the percentage of individuals who gambled via websites run by operators who did not possess the relevant authorisation for the Czech Republic.

One form of illegally operated online gambling is “dipping” (a gambling activity involving elements of raffles or lotteries, mainly for jewellery, children’s clothes, or cosmetics). Countering this form of illegal gambling is currently one of the priorities of the Ministry of Finance. In 2019 the police registered 119 criminal offences (there were 26 in 2018) and 44 offenders (22 in 2018). Public prosecutors and courts registered 12 and 36 individuals, respectively, who had been indicted or convicted, as applicable, of acts which, by definition, involved the operation of gambling. The year-on-year increase in the number of criminal cases and offenders kept on file by the police is probably due to the change in the competencies of the bodies involved in criminal proceedings, i.e. enforcement responsibilities on the part of the Customs Administration and the ensuing criminal implications, and a rise in the cases associated with “dipping”.

As regards secondary gambling-related crime, the Pathological Gamblers in Treatment survey conducted in 2019 indicated that theft had been committed at some point in their lives by 51% of the pathological gamblers (43% in 2017), fraud by 37% (29% in 2017), embezzlement by 33% (27% in 2017), drug manufacturing and/or dealing by 28% (24% in 2017), and robbery by 12% (8% in 2017). In conclusion, the level of secondary gambling-related crime as reported by the pathological gamblers grew. ✕

Prevention

> The prevention of gambling is incorporated in the system of the school-based prevention of risky behaviour. In 2019 the Government adopted the national strategy to prevent risky behaviour among children and adolescents for the period 2019-2027 and the related 2019-2021 action plan.

In December 2019 the certification of professional competency for primary prevention was held by a total of 62 organisations (there were 58 of them in January 2018 and 62 in May 2019) providing 94 programmes (90 in 2018). 80 of them (75 in January 2018 and 78 in May 2019) delivered addiction prevention, which incorporates gambling. The Ministry of Education discontinued the certification process in May 2019. It should be resumed in September 2020.

A total of 2,065 schools reported their school-based prevention activities to a dedicated register in the 2018/2019 academic year (the figure was 2,352 in the 2017/2018 academic year). Primary and middle schools altogether dedicated an average of 13.8 lessons per year to the issue of addictive behaviour related to non-substance addictions, which includes gambling, and secondary schools dedicated 7.1 lessons to it. The greatest amount of time, 2.8 lessons per year, was spent on the topic in the ninth grade. The volume of prevention activities addressing non-substance addictions grew on a year-on-year basis.

In 2019, as part of the grant scheme of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, specifically the Government Council for Drug Policy Coordination, support was provided to a total of 15 programmes engaging in specific addiction prevention (there were 11 in 2018), including gambling-related prevention. The offer of online educational and counselling services for the general public, as well as gamblers and the people close to them, has increased in recent years.

Starting from 2017, the Gambling Act introduced the obligation to offer self-commitment options and provide players with numerous pieces of information. According to the Citizen Survey, a general population study, conducted in 2019, 8.2% of the respondents who had engaged in gambling in the last 12 months were offered a self-commitment option by means of having limits set for their sessions (the figures were 7.7% in 2018 and 5.7% in 2017). A year-on-year rise was observed in this respect among land-based gamblers, while individuals engaging in online gambling reported a decline in their experience with self-commitment options.

In 2019 74.3% of the gamblers had relevant information about gambling-related risks and options for the treatment of problem gambling. The level of awareness raised by means of gambling websites is increasing; this may be due to the effect of the Gambling Act.

Information about gamblers’ experience with self-commitment options and their awareness of gambling-related risks is available from the Pathological Gamblers in Treatment survey. In its latest wave in 2019, 40% of the respondents reported having been offered a self-commitment option by means of having limits set for their gambling sessions. This figure is much higher than that recorded in 2015; see Figure 18. The self-commitment options were used by 12% of the respondents (31% of those who had been offered them), while in 2015 such an opportunity was used by 6% of the gamblers (35% of those who had been offered the chance to do so). ✕

Treatment

> Information about gamblers’ experience with treatment for problem gambling and their seeking professional help, as well as about factors which determine or influence their entry to treatment, is available from the *Pathological Gamblers in Treatment* survey, carried out by the NMC every two years. Its results from 2019 indicate that 41% of the gamblers in treatment have undergone treatment for pathological gambling repeatedly.

A total of 81% of the pathological gamblers participating in the 2019 survey had attempted to reduce or stop their gambling without professional assistance at some point in their gambling career, which is approximately the same percentage as in the previous years. As in the past, the main reasons for seeking professional help included financial

and interpersonal problems, followed by mental health and employment issues.

In the Czech Republic, services for problem gamblers and their families are provided by outpatient addiction treatment programmes and outpatient psychiatric clinics, as well as residential programmes. Online counselling and treatment interventions are developing.

The number of specialised programmes for problem gamblers has grown in recent years, particularly thanks to the support provided by the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic/GCDPC. The objective of this support is to establish a general network of specialised programmes for problem gamblers in all regional capitals.

While the number of problem gamblers in contact with counselling and treatment services is growing, their uptake of treatment is still low in proportional terms.

15-25 programmes can be considered as specialised services for problem gamblers (gamblers account for over 20% of the clients or are “very common” clients) in the Czech Republic. Out of the programmes supported by the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic/GCDPC in 2019, a total of 63 projects (56 in 2018) reported providing services to at least one problem gambler, with 2,230 problem gamblers being in contact with such services (2,093 in 2018). A year-on-year increase in the total number of clients, contacts, and counselling and therapeutic interventions was observed. While in 2018 there were nine dedicated regional centres in the Czech Republic, since 2020 there have been ten of them in operation altogether (another service came into existence in the Vysočina region). Outpatient care of problem gamblers is available in 36 Czech municipalities.

In 2019 the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic/GCDPC granted support to a total of 17 programmes primarily targeted at providing services to gamblers. 13 of them involved outpatient treatment, two were aftercare programmes, one programme involved counselling provided within a drop-in centre, and one programme was conceived as online counselling. Out of the total of 2,230 problem gamblers who maintained contact in 2019 with services supported by the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic/GCDPC, programmes targeted specifically at gamblers reported 1,941 clients (87%) from among gamblers and 505 people close to them.

Services provided by the grant-supported programmes focusing on problem gamblers generally comprised therapeutic and

counselling interventions, such as both individual and group counselling, social counselling with a focus on indebtedness, and psychotherapy for gamblers and the people close to them. Anonymous telephone or online consultations for gamblers who do not wish to disclose their identity are also offered as part of the services.

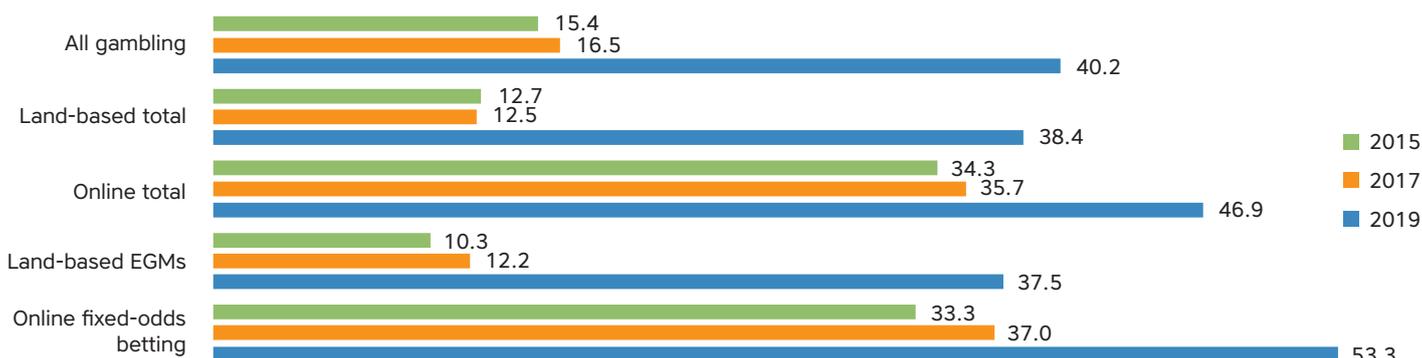
In 2018 outpatient treatment for pathological gambling (F63.0) was reported by 230 outpatient psychiatric clinics for 1,032 patients (there were 1,256 in 2017). Psychiatric hospitals and psychiatric wards reported 304 inpatients (434 in 2017). The data for 2019 was not available at the time of the writing of this report.

In the Czech Republic, treatment can also be undertaken in prisons. Specialised units with voluntary addiction treatment programmes, intended for pathological gamblers, too, had been established in 11 out of the total of 35 prisons in 2019 (in 2018 there were ten of them). In 2019 the number of prisons with an option of voluntary treatment was enlarged to include the Hradec Králové Remand Centre, where the treatment programme has a capacity of eight slots. The overall capacity of specialised units was 349 places (there were 340 in 2018). Gambling was reported as their primary problem by five individuals (1.5%) out of the total number of 326 inmates entering prison-based treatment programmes.

The offer of help via the internet and telephone is developing. The *National Gambling Helpline* (800 350 000) has been in operation since 2018. There are a total of eight online counselling and information services for gamblers and the people close to them in the Czech Republic. The most widely used online counselling facility is *koncimshranim.cz*, operated by the SANANIM organisation, which had 183 newly registered clients in 2019 (there were 74 of them in 2018). The *Podané ruce* association developed an app, *Port*, which provides gamblers with anonymous and free help by keeping a record of their finances and time spent on gambling.

Self-help initiatives are also developing in the Czech Republic. Since August 2019 a new Gamblers Anonymous (GA) group has existed in Prague. Altogether, thus, there are three GA groups in the Czech Republic, two in Prague and one in Brno. Additionally, in Brno “recovery coaches” are available as part of the *Zotavení Brno* initiative. A patients’ advocacy association, RECOVERY, has been active since 2018. Its objective is to protect and champion the interests of people with addiction issues. ✕

FIGURE 18
Lifetime offer of self-commitment, by primary problem gambling activity – Pathological Gamblers in Treatment survey, 2015-2019 (%)



This issue is based on the document *Gambling in the Czech Republic in 2019 – Annual Report* [MRAVČÍK, V., ROUS, Z., CHOMYNOVÁ, P., GROHMANNOVÁ, K., JANÍKOVÁ, B., ČERNÍKOVÁ, T., CIBULKA, J. 2020. Výroční zpráva o hazardním hraní v České republice v roce 2019. MRAVČÍK, V. (Ed.). Praha: Úřad vlády České republiky.]. For detailed information and its sources specified according to citation standards see the Annual Report.

Bibliographic Reference

Rous, Z. 2020. Gambling in the Czech Republic in 2019. Zaostřeno EN (Special Edition), 1-16.



National Monitoring
Centre for Drugs
and Addiction

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND LINKS

Information about substance use and gambling in the Czech Republic is available at

<http://www.drogy-info.cz>.

All the publications released by the National Focal Point (National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction), including all the issues of the “Zaostřeno” bulletin, are downloadable in electronic format in Czech form <http://www.drogy-info.cz/publikace>.

Any orders for hard copies of the publications should be sent to drogyinfo@vlada.cz.

Map of Aid

<https://www.drogy-info.cz/mapa-pomoci/>.

Changes in contact information should be sent to: drogyinfo@vlada.cz.

Calendar of events

<http://www.drogy-info.cz/kalendar-akci/>. Information about training events and seminars that concern addictology or are relevant to it and can be posted in the calendar should be sent to: drogyinfo@vlada.cz.

For the UniData and PrevData applications for maintaining a record of the clients and interventions of drug services, including user support, visit <http://www.drogovesluzby.cz/>.

Website of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA):

<http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/>.

The EMCDDA best practice portal

<http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/best-practice>

The EMCDDA European Drug Report

https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/edr2020_en.

National smoking cessation website

<https://www.koureni-zabiji.cz/>.

National smoking cessation hotline (800 35 00 00)

National gambling-related harm reduction website

<https://www.hazardni-hrani.cz/>.

National website to support alcohol use reduction

<https://www.alkohol-skodi.cz/>.

National Helpline for Substance Use Cessation: 800 35 00 00.

Project “Systemic Support for the Development of Addictology Services within the Framework of the Integrated Drug Policy”

<https://www.rozvojadiktologickychsluzeb.cz/>.