

# 2014 Open Data Index from the Czech perspective – promising but unfulfilled potential

Submitted on 17 Dec 2014 by Michal Kuban

The Open Knowledge Foundation has published its [2014 Open Data Index](#), which shows that whilst there has been some progress, most governments are still not providing key information in an accessible form to the public and private sectors. As the results reveal, the current state of open data in the Czech Republic is promising, while also slowly increasing, but there is still a good deal of unfulfilled potential. [The Czech Republic](#) has improved its position and moved from 30<sup>th</sup> (where it was ranked in [2013](#)) up to [12th](#) place in this years index.

The Global Open Data Index measures and benchmarks the openness of data around the world, and then presents this information in a way that is easy to understand and use. This increases its usefulness as an advocacy tool and broadens its impact. The Index ranks 104 countries based on the availability and accessibility of information in ten key areas - including government spending, election results, transport timetables, and pollution levels. The UK topped the 2014 Index (retaining its leading position with an overall score of 96%) closely followed by Denmark and then France in third (up from 12th last year). Finland came in 4<sup>th</sup>, while Australia and New Zealand share 5th place. Overall, whilst there was meaningful improvement in the number of open datasets (from 87 to 104), the percentage of open datasets across all the surveyed countries remained low at only 11%.

The Czech Republic shares 12th place with Colombia, Sweden and Uruguay. On the one hand, the Czech Republic reached 12th position thanks to its pioneering institutions such as and [The Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre](#). On the other hand, there is no solid and long-term conceptual strategy on the national level.

Let's briefly review the Czech part of 2014 Open data Index.

The great result has been achieved in [Election Results](#) (thanks to The Czech Statistical Office) and National Map (thanks to [The Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre](#)). Also, the [National Government Budget](#) is considered as a big achievement of Czech openness thanks to the [State Monitor](#) portal. Budgets are available from 2010 to 2014. The current budget is published in 3 phases (estimates, changes, actual expenditures) and updated on a quarterly basis. The Czech national budget for 2015 has not been approved by the Parliament and therefore has not published (not even as a framework). However, there is no detailed evidence on the exact numbers of the spending of individual ministries (i.e. ministry budgets).

The Czech Republic received its lowest ranking in the government spending. So what data is expected? Records of actual (past) national government spending broken down into a detailed transactional level - i.e. at the level of month-to-month government expenditure on specific items (usually this means individual records of spending amounts under \$1m or even under \$100k). The currently (2014-10-06) available data (as XML and CSV) are not detailed enough to be used as transactional data.

[Transport Timetables Data](#) has been one of the crucial issues recently, but these are still not being published in an open data format. Data at the national level are incomplete. Also, its machine readability is questionable - most of them are in XLS format, but some include various footnotes which makes machine readability complicated. Since 2001, the complete database is available only to one company which supplies IT services to the Ministry of Transport - CHAPS. The ministry promised to open the datasets and there is a new regulation that should come into force in September

2015.

In my opinion, the 2014 Open Data Index shows that Czech Republic is on the right track, but with the new-coming PSI directive in 2015, we still have a long way to go. More than ever we need an open data leader in the Czech Republic who can push open data up through the political hierarchy and onto the ministry level, to have open data anchored to its key points on the Czech digital agenda.

The main coordinator of this survey was [Michaela Rybičková](#) from [The Otakar Motejl](#) and with contributions from [Michal Kubáň](#) (Otakar Motejl Fun) [Jan Kučera](#) and [Jindřich Mynarz](#) from the University of Economics in Prague, datajournalist [Jan Cibulka](#) and geodata specialist [Jáchym Čepický](#).