

# Czech Republic

## Social impact of austerity measures on the Fire and Rescue Service

Under the cover of austerity the former Czech right-wing government robbed all the career firefighters on average by 3548 CZK. There was an overall reduction in the salaries of state employees by 10% starting on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011. The above-mentioned reduction of firefighters' salaries will also have a negative impact on the level of their pension when they retire. This has reflected in the number of firefighter jobs (see below), staff cut-backs, and also in expenses on equipment. Austerity measures in the Czech Republic have had significant impact on educating and training of professional firefighters. Two of the original four training facilities for firefighters in direct service (uniformed) were canceled in 2010 and 2013. The educational system for operational firefighters (responding in front line) has only 35.44% of the running and investment costs, and 80.39% of wage expenses in comparison with the year 2008.

Czech Republic	31 March 2008				31 March 2014			
	Career FF	Part time FF	Volunteer FF	Total No. FF's	Career FF	Part time FF	Volunteer FF	Total No. FF's
	6800	0	0	10500	6500	0	0	9530

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### Explanation

The General Directorate of FRS CR manages Regional Fire and Rescue Services, which are organisational bodies of the state, accounting entities, and administrative authorities; and the Emergency Unit of FRS CR, which is an organisational body of the state and an accounting entity. The General Directorate of Fire and Rescue Service of the CR fulfils tasks of the Ministry of Interior, which is the central body of state administration for fire protection, crisis management, civil emergency planning and protection of population.

Tasks of the Fire and Rescue Service of CR are fulfilled by members of the Fire and Rescue Service of CR (in service employment – uniformed / career FF), and by other employees (non-uniformed). They all can become members of the trade union a constitute membership of the Czech Firefighters Union (OSH – Odborový svaz hasičů) which is politically independent.

<http://www.hzscr.cz/hasicien/article/fire-rescue-service-of-the-czech-republic-organisation-and-activities.aspx>

There are approximately 380 000 volunteer firefighters in the Czech Republic. 72,000 volunteer firefighters are paid by villages, municipalities etc. These fire officers (mostly commanders of (UVF) are periodically tested and have the same training and knowledge as professionals. All of them are members of 3 civic associations that are legally separate - Association of Fire Fighters of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia; Czech Fire Association; Moravian Fire Association.

Villages, municipalities and towns in the Czech Republic set up Units of Volunteer Firefighters (UVF), and fund them. The activities of volunteer firefighters are identical to the activities of the Fire and Rescue Service. In addition to firefighting they stand-alone, and they also intervene during floods, other natural disasters, environmental disasters, they help in accidents and other emergencies. They are controlled and dispatched / sent out by the Regional Control Centres like the professional/career firefighters.

Volunteer firefighters do not constitute membership of OSH.