



**NATIONAL PLAN ON EQUALIZATION  
OF OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**Approved by CR Government Resolution No. 256  
of April 14, 1998**

**Secretariat of the Government Board of People with Disabilities, Nábř. E. Beneše 4,  
118 01 Praha 1, 1998**

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

**RESOLUTION**  
**OF THE**  
**GOVERNMENT OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC**  
of April 14, 1998, No. 256

approving the National Plan on Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

T h e G o v e r n m e n t

I. a p p r o v e s the National Plan on Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities annexed to Part III of the submitted document complete with amendments arising from comments by the Government (hereinafter "National Plan" only);

II. e n j o i n s

1. Government Minister V.Mlynář, Executive Vice-Chairman of the Government Board for People with Disabilities, to work out the final version of the National Plan and to inform members of the Government about it,

2. the Ministers of Finance, Transport and Communications, Culture, Local Development, Industry and Trade, Labour and Social Affairs, Education, Youth and Physical Training, the Vice-Premier and Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Health and Vice-Chairwoman of the Government Board for People with Disabilities, Minister V.Mlynář, Executive Vice-Chairman of the Government Board for People with Disabilities, and the Head of the Office of the Government to ensure the gradual implementation of the measures listed in the National Plan in keeping with the possibilities of the national budget.

3. Ing. Pavel D u š e k , Vice-Chairman of the Government Board for People with Disabilities and Chairman of the Board of Representatives from Organisations of Disabled People, to discuss with non-governmental institutions provisions for the implementation of the tasks outlined in the National Plan..

Action

Ministers of Finance, Transport and Communications, Culture,  
Local Development, Industry and Trade, Education, Youth and Physical Training,  
Vice-Premier and Minister of Agriculture,  
Minister of Health and Vice-Chairwoman of the Gov. Board for People with Disabilities,  
Minister V. Mlynář, Executive Vice-Chairman of the Gov. Board for People with Disabilities,  
Head of the Office of the Government,  
Mr. P. Dušek, Vice-Chairman of the Gov. Board for People with Disabilities and Chairman of the Board of Representatives from Organisations of Disabled People.

Ing. Josef T o š o v s k ý  
Prime Minister  
on his behalf  
Ing. Josef L u x , m.p.  
Vice-Premier

## **Introduction**

Illness and disability are part of life in the same way as health. The risk of disability due to illness, injury or congenital defect threatens every person and grows with advancing age. There are some 1 200 000 disabled persons in the Czech Republic.

Unlike illness or disease, disability is understood to mean a long-term or lasting state which can no longer be entirely remedied by therapy. Yet, its negative impact can be mitigated by a system of well thought-out measures, in which the whole society has to be involved. Hence, in addition to their health and social insurance systems, advanced countries have been developing also systems designed to cushion the impact of disability. These countries include the Czech Republic.

**The Government Board for People with Disabilities** was set up in keeping with the CR Government's Resolution No. 151 of May 8, 1991. Soon after its institution, the Government Board devised its **National Plan of Actions for the Handicapped Persons** (hereinafter only) which the Government of the Czech Republic approved in its Resolution No. 466 of June 29, 1992.

The Government Board was reconstructed by the Government Resolution No. 670 of Dec. 2, 1992. The new Board updated the National Plan which was subsequently approved under the new name of **National Plan of Measures to Reduce the Negative Impact of Disability** (hereinafter NPM only) by virtue of the CR Government Resolution No. 493 of June 29, 1993.

Both National Plans were very favourably received by our disabled fellow-citizens. But they met with very positive rating abroad, too. Their compilation and adoption placed the Czech Republic among countries with the most advanced national conception of support for the disabled. It was not until **October 28, 1993 that the UN adopted what are known as "Standardised Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities"** which can be seen as a kind of international counterpart of our own National Plans.

While some of the principal requirements listed in the NPA have failed to be met so far, the major part of the measures specified therein have been implemented; for that reason, the Government Board for People with Disabilities at its joint meeting with representatives of disabled people's organisations in April 1996 decided to update the National Plan still further.

The handicapped persons' situation in the member countries is regularly monitored by the United Nations Organisation (special UN reporter for disabled persons' affairs), by the Council of Europe (Committee on the Rehabilitation and Integration of the Disabled), by the International Labour Office, indeed, it has become a statutory part of the "Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights" submitted to the US Congress (s. c. Dole amendment to the 1961 Foreign Aid Act "Disability Rights in American Foreign Policy Act of 1993").

In order to facilitate international monitoring of the situation in this country, our third national plan has adopted the form of the UN Standardised Rules. Within their scope, though, the constituent chapters preserve the structure of the National Plan of Action which has proved its worth, i.e., a brief description of the problem, the objective to be attained, and clearly formulated measures including the Government department responsible and the deadline to be met.

## **Contents**

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1. PUBLIC EDUCATION.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. MEDICAL CARE .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3. REHABILITATION.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4. SERVICES.....</b>	<b>9</b>
4.1. Technical aids and means of health care technology.....	10
4.2. Personal assistance.....	11
4.3. Community and home care services.....	12
4.4. Sheltered living services.....	13
4.5. Respite care.....	14
4.6. Institutional care.....	14
<b>5. BARRIER-FREE LIVING.....</b>	<b>15</b>
5.1. Environmental accessibility.....	15
5.2. Access to information and communication.....	17
<b>6. EDUCATION.....</b>	<b>18</b>
6.1. Counselling services.....	18
6.2. Education and vocational training.....	19
<b>7. EMPLOYMENT.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>8. INCOME MAINTENANCE AND SOCIAL SECURITY.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>9. FAMILY LIFE AND INTEGRITY OF PERSONALITY.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>10. CULTURE.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>11. RECREATION AND SPORT.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>12. RELIGION.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>13. INFORMATION AND RESEARCH.....</b>	<b>28</b>
13.1. Information about the disabled.....	28

13.2. Information for the disabled and their parents.....	29
<b>14. TACTIC AND PLANNING.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>15. LEGISLATION.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>16. ECONOMIC POLICY.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>17. CO-ORDINATION OF EFFORT.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>18. DISABLED PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATIONS.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>19. PERSONNEL TRAINING.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>20. INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>21. MONITORING THE NATIONAL PLAN ON EQUALIZING OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.....</b>	<b>35</b>

## 1. Public education

---

The quality of life of disabled persons is greatly influenced by the way they are treated by the general public. The behaviour of the public in this respect can to a large extent be shaped by systematic general and adult education. Apart from public education, though, it is also necessary to look for ways of educating disabled people themselves for integration in society.

As part of the implementation of the National Plan of Measures to Reduce the Negative Impact of Disability (NPM), the Government Board for People with Disabilities, the Board of Representatives from the Organisations of Disabled People, and individual organisations have put out a quantity of materials designed to inform the general public about the disabled, and documents designed to inform the disabled themselves. The Government Board has started awarding its Prize for the best work publicising the problems of disability, and the Minister of Health runs the Minister's Annual Award for work done for the benefit of disabled persons. Also annually is awarded the Olga Havlová Prize. The number of newspaper articles and radio and TV programmes keeps growing and, thanks to the declining number of architectural barriers, people are at last able to meet their wheelchair-borne neighbours more often than before. More disabled children attend main-stream schools, and the problems of disability have found their way into the school curriculum. However, the culturing of relations between the general public and the disabled requires sustained effort.

### TARGETS

1 - To keep the public ever better informed about the diverse types of disability and the relevant specificities, and thus to gradually change public attitudes to the disabled.

2 - To keep disabled persons and parents of disabled children informed about the possibilities of active participation in social life.

### MEASURES

1 a) The Government Board for People with Disabilities (or VVZPO in its Czech abbreviation) will regularly announce the Government Board's Award for the best work publicising the problems of disability.

*Government Board - annually*

*Estimated financial requirements - about 240 000 Kč annually*

1 b) The Ministry of Health (MH) will award the Minister's Annual Award for work done for the benefit of disabled persons

*MH - annually*

*Financial requirements - covered from the MH budget*

1 c) The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) and the Ministry of Health will promote the publication of informative material concerning the problems of the disabled, and the Ministry of Health will help disseminate this information in the field among primary care physicians.

*MLSA, MH - continually*

*Estimated financial requirements - MH about 5 mil. Kč annually,*

*MLSA about 1 mil. Kč annually*

1 d) The Ministry of Education, Youth and Physical Training (MEYPT) will compile information on the network of special kindergartens and special schools, special educational centres, and educational-psychological counselling centres with brief characteristics of the

schools and institutions, and the Ministry of Health will help disseminate this information in the field.

*MEYPT, MH - by Dec. 31, 1998*

*Estimated financial requirements - about 200 000 Kč, MEYPT*

1 e) The Ministry of Education, Youth and PT will channel efforts toward making disabled children and youth integrated in the healthy population.

*MEYPT - continually*

*Estimated financial requirements - about 100 000 Kč annually as from 1999*

1 f) The Ministry of Health will ensure the publication of the List of Disabilities and Their Categorization with regard to the potential limitation of social opportunities.

*MH - July 31, 1991*

*Financial coverage - as part of the MH budget chapter*

## **2. Medical care**

---

While working on the NPA and NPM, extraordinary effort went into the prevention of disability, though this remains a standing task. There has been a substantial expansion of home nursing care, and support has been given to the launching of geriatric centres and hospice-type care.

Despite the Ministry of Health methodological directions concerning the provision of medical care to mentally handicapped patients, there have of late been cases of medical care being denied to mentally handicapped and severely disabled patients on the grounds that it is too time-consuming and that there is no-one to defray the increased medical costs.

Decree No.1215/1992 Sb. makes it possible to start vocational rehabilitation while therapy is still in progress. However, it is necessary to find ways and means of covering the cost of retraining programmes while treatment is still going on in the case of persons expected to remain in permanent or long-term disability even after the termination of their course of treatment.

### **TARGETS**

1 - To ensure territorial, financial and physical availability of essential medical care also for severely disabled persons.

2 - To ensure the possibility of the simultaneous provision of medical care and rehabilitation as well as rehabilitation programmes even in the case of persons expected to remain in permanent or long-term disability even after the termination of their course of treatment.

3 - To ensure a closer interconnection of medical care and rehabilitation, and comprehensive assessment of the degree of disability and/or preserved abilities of each disabled person.



## MEASURES

2 a) To find ways and means of covering the extra cost incurred by health care providers in the treatment and nursing of severely disabled persons (especially psychic and mental patients)

*MH - by Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the draft legislative measure*

2 b) To prepare legislation anchoring the interconnection of therapy, rehabilitation and possible retraining, and the co-ordination of all the relevant bodies and institutions.

2 c) To assess the financial requirements of treatment for different types of disability to be met directly by the patient, particularly with a view to newly proposed legislation concerning health insurance and health care.

*MH - July 31, 1998*

*Funding - within the MH budget chapter*

2 d) To continue organising the foundation of and support to new and existing specialised centres for chronic and sudden illnesses (e.g. hospices, spinal centres, etc.)

*MH - continually*

*Estimated financial requirements - about 15 mil Kč annually*

2 e) The Ministry of Health to promote, as part of adult education aimed at the general public, programmes of disability prevention (including prenatal prevention)

*MH - continually*

*Estimated financial requirements - about 5 mil Kč annually as from 1999*

## 3. Rehabilitation

---

The purpose of rehabilitation is to minimise the immediate consequences of lasting or long-term disability, mainly by strengthening the body's residual functions, by boosting the affected person's knowledge, vocational abilities and habits conducive to finding a place in the chosen field of work, by practising the skills of self-reliance and performance of essential activities in some other, surrogate ways.

With regard to the disabled person's age, the primary aims of rehabilitation are met by **early care**. Early care is a system of services and programmes provided to children threatened in their social, biological and psychic development, to children with disability and to their families with the aim of preventing disability, eliminating or mitigating its consequences, and helping the family, the child and society achieve social integration. These services are to be provided from the time of the actual finding of the risk or disability in order to raise the child's degree of development in those areas which are threatened by the disability. In this respect, it is necessary to define the financing of early care as a standard service, to complete the network of early care centres for the diverse types of disability, and the correlation of early care and special-educational and educational-psychological counselling

In implementing the NAP and NUM, the department of health was able to develop 14 rehabilitation centres. However, their resultant effect falls short of expectations. It appears

that despite all their effort, the centres are unable to cope adequately with the whole range of the problems of rehabilitation for all groups of the disabled population. It is advisable to continue the development of rehabilitation centres, however on the basis of their higher specialisation to cover the different types of disability.

As part of implementing its share of the NPA, the Ministry of Education, Youth and PT has developed a network of **special educational centres** which offer counselling to families with disabled children of the pre-school age, and to the parents and teachers of disabled children receiving education at main-stream schools, and which, therefore, provide educational rehabilitation.

The services of **centres for the practising of orientation in space, self-service, and self-reliance** are at present run within the social rehabilitation framework mainly by disabled persons' civic associations, and funded from subsidies earmarked for the purpose by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. However, as these are all long-term and regular activities, the present mode of subsidising the civic associations in the form of annually assessed grants fails to give those activities sufficient stability.

An extraordinarily important component of rehabilitation as a necessary follow-up to medical rehabilitation must be seen in vocational rehabilitation, or else, disabled people's retraining to some other, more suitable, mode of occupation. However, our law fails to give any definition of the vocational rehabilitation centres or the methods of their funding and accreditation. The legal and financial status of those vocational rehabilitation centres which came into being in the past is quite vague.

Better managing of activities necessary for life or for the exercise of employment in some other, surrogate way so as to minimise immediate limitations due to disability can cut the need for services and benefits to be dispensed to the disabled in the coming period. However, it appears quite crucial for further progress in rehabilitation to define with more precision some of the notions used in this area as well as the terms of reference of the specific components of the process of rehabilitation. It is likewise necessary to achieve substantially closer co-operation between the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, Health, and Education, Youth and PT, civic associations, and health insurance companies.

## TARGETS

1 -To define with more precision the notions and terms of reference of the specific components of the process of rehabilitation, and to put all this on a legislative footing.

2 -To develop and promote in all ways rehabilitation specialised in the particular groups and age categories of the disabled.

3 -To achieve far closer co-operation between the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (and its subordinate Czech Social Security Administration offices), the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Youth and PT, civic associations and health insurance companies in dispensing rehabilitation services.

## MEASURES

3 a) To continue in the development of rehabilitation centres while emphasising their specialization in the particular groups of disabled persons, to ensure their funding, and to place them on a legislative footing.

*MH - relevant legislation by Dec. 31, 1998 -  
to be financed continually as from 1999*

*Estimated financial requirements - about 35 mil. Kč annually*

3 b) To introduce legislation concerning vocational rehabilitation centres and to lay down the mode of their funding

*MLSA - Dec. 31, 1991*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

3 c) To develop and put to practical use a system of accreditation for the running of centres of early care, rehabilitation centres, as well as vocational rehabilitation and retraining centres for each of the groups of the disabled.

*MH, MLSA - by Dec. 31, 1999*

*Financial coverage - as part of the departmental budget chapters*

3 d) In conjunction with health insurance companies to resolve the problem of payment for medical rehabilitation provided at special schools, institutions and special educational centres

*MH, MEYPT - by Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

3 e) The Ministry of Health to provide all centres of rehabilitation with informative material on rehabilitation services offered by civic associations of the disabled, rehabilitation-retraining centres, and ergodiagnostic units

*MH - by Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial coverage - as part of the MH departmental budget*

3 f) To transform the centre of Dédina into a state rehabilitation and retraining centre for the blind as a substitute for the former similar centre at Levoča (Slovakia).

*MLSA - by Dec. 31, 1999*

*Estimated financial requirements - initial investment: about 15 mil. Kč - cost of service: about 15 mil. Kč annually*

3 g) To develop co-operation with the Agrarian Chamber of the CR and the French MSA Mutual Social and Health Insurance Company in work on the already launched two pilot projects PHARE - PARTERNARIAT in support of developing model institutions for the disabled with job opportunities in farming and, subsequently, in other follow-up planned projects.

*Ministry of Agriculture (MA) - continually*

*Estimated financial requirements - about 10 mil. Kč annually as from 1999*

## **4. Services**

---

The purpose of social services is to help in those fields of life and in the performance of those activities essential to life and occupation which disabled persons cannot perform unassisted even after the termination of their basic or acute course of treatment and rehabilitation. Since successful rehabilitation has a positive bearing on the degree of the independent use of the different skills, often with the aid of special technical means, the resultant effect of rehabilitation ought to be taken into consideration in specifying the disabled person's need for each of the social services.

Social services are provided mainly in the following forms:

- a) provision of technical aids including related services
- b) personal assistance services which include guides, reading companions, interpreters
- c) transport services to take disabled pupils to schools and institutions
- d) disabled persons transport services designed to serve other purposes
- e) community care services, home care services
- f) sheltered living services
- g) respite services
- h) institutions and social care homes for the disabled

#### ***4.1. Technical aids and means of health care technology***

---

Modern technologies have been improving substantially the quality of life of disabled people. The number of technical aids (referred to, in the department of health, as means of health care technology) has grown markedly over the past years, and the purchase of some of them is in part paid for by health insurance companies, others - by health departments of district authorities. Implementation of the National Plan of Actions revealed the impossibility of uniform payment for the technical aids as stipulated in the NPA.

The NPA also called for the setting up of a rehabilitation engineering centre and technical assistance centres. The first experience showed, however, that the concentration of too much power in a single entity, particularly as regards technical aids categorisation and their inclusion in the list of technical aids, opened the way to too much temptation to give in to pressure from technical aids manufacturers, and that it was in no way possible for the powers to be vested in a non-governmental entity. For that reason, it will be necessary in the coming period to enhance the role of the State Institute for Drug Control in the fields of disabled persons' technical aids categorisation and testing. Nevertheless, civic associations and other non-governmental bodies can have an indispensable role to play in the retrieval and provision of information on technical aids.

It will also be necessary to do away with the lack of uniform approach to the rating of imported aids as regards customs classification and inclusion among products eligible for lower VAT. The Ministry of Health and the State Institute for Drug Control ought to find a common interpretation of the concept of "means of health care technology").

#### **TARGETS**

- 1 - To improve disabled persons' and experts' rate of information on technical aids and means of health care technology for the disabled.
- 2 - To promote the development of information and counselling centres of disabled people's civic associations and/or other non-profit entities as regards technical aids and means of health care technology. The centres should be developed on the basis of specialisation in the different groups of the disabled.
- 3 - To ensure that all standard aids for the disabled and all didactic compensatory aids provided for children and pupils in schools and school institutions be imported duty-free and included in the lowest VAT category of products.
- 4 - To launch into practice legal provisions concerning state-controlled testing of technical aids and means of health care technology for the disabled, including aids which are not paid for from health insurance.

## MEASURES

4.1a) To promote the establishment and development of specialised counselling and information centres dealing with technical aids and adaptations of standard products. The centres should be developed on the basis of specialisation by disabled people's civic associations, centres of rehabilitation, and by other non-profit subjects.

*MH - continually*

*Estimated financial requirements - 10 mil. Kč annually as from 1999*

4.1b) As part of the amended Public Health Insurance Act, to standardise the concept of the "means of health care technology"

*MH - Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial coverage - as part of the MH budget*

4.1c) To make sure that standard technical aids for the disabled and didactic compensatory aids designed for children and pupils in schools and school institutions be exempt from customs duty, and classified as products charged with the lowest VAT. The departments concerned to compile background material for amended legislation by the Ministry of Finance (MF) by February 28, 1999.

*MF - the amendment to take effect as from Jan.1, 2000*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

4.1d) To institutionalise the system of testing those aids for the disabled which are not tested by the State Institute for Drug Control.

*MH, Ministry of Industry and Trade (MIT), Ministry of Transport and Communications (MTC) - by Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

### 4.2. Personal assistance

---

Personal assistants trained in care of disabled persons are an outstanding solution to the handicapped people's predicament. Experience accrued in countries where personal assistants have been used in fairly large numbers shows that this approach does enable even severely handicapped persons to live in their home environment, and that the resultant costs can be lower than those of any form of institutional care.

Guides, companion readers and digitizers of texts are specific types of personal assistants for the blind just as sign language interpreters and articulation interpreters are for the deaf.

Needless to say, parents and other close persons are the most natural personal assistants for disabled people of certain age groups. It is essential to extend the possibilities and encourage the willingness of families to keep their disabled members in their midst rather than to refer them to institutions.

## TARGET

To attain a situation in which personal assistance and care of a close person has become a real alternative to institutional care of the severely disabled.

## **MEASURES**

4.2a) In the Social Aid Act, to define the terms of procurement of personal assistance inclusive of the problems of the personal assistants' social insurance, particularly in the case of family members.

*MLSA - by Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

4.2b) To provide a legal framework for the minimum extent of free as well as partially defrayed companion reading, guide-type and digitalisation services for the blind, and the services of sign language interpreters and articulation services for the deaf.

*MLSA - by Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

4.2c) From the average expenditure on one inmate of state institutions of social care of the disabled to deduce the normative cost of permanent care of a severely disabled person. In the Social Aid Act to provide the legal framework for the granting of an allowance to whoever the disabled person or his/her representative in law will choose for his/her real provider of care, regardless of whether this is a close person, a personal assistant, sheltered living service, or a governmental or non-governmental institution of social care.

*MLSA - by Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

4.2d) To finance the training of personal assistants of severely disabled persons within the framework of assistant qualification courses

*MLSA - continually*

*Financial coverage - as part of the MLSA budget*

4.2e) To provide a legal framework for the potential participation at school of a personal assistant to children, pupils and students with multiple defects or severe disability in the form of "another worker acting in parallel"

*MEYPT - by Dec. 12, 1999*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the postponed legislation*

### **4.3. Community and home care services**

---

The community care service operates within the framework of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) while home care has been expanding considerably within the department of health. Both these services ought to be combined with personal assistance. Community care service should then be developed in places marked until now by a considerable concentration of disabled persons.

## **TARGET**

To go on developing community care and home care services and to provide scope for their suitable combination with the rest of the social services.

## **MEASURES**

4.3a) Systematically to develop and improve community and home care services with respect to the needs of the severely handicapped.

*District authorities, local councils, health insurance companies - continually  
Financial coverage - district authority and local council budgets, public health insurance scheme*

### **4.4. Sheltered living services**

---

Sheltered living services are intended for persons with the kind of disability that prevents them from living unassisted and that would otherwise require institutional care. Sheltered living is a substitute for permanent lifelong placement in an all-year institution of social care. This type of social service implies assistance provided jointly for, as a rule, a small group of disabled people living in a common flat or house. Thanks to this service they can enjoy life in normal integration in their community.

Compared with institutional care, sheltered living has the advantage of much lower, in some cases zero costs of investment, low cost of furnishings, lower operating expenses, but higher labour costs. Similarly as in personal assistance, most of the funds are channelled toward immediate service to the disabled, thus adding much to the quality of life of the handicapped.

## **TARGET**

To attain a state of things where sheltered living services will have become a true alternative to institutional care.

## **MEASURES**

4.4a) To provide a legal framework for the provision of sheltered living services. Rather than dealing with ownership or contractual relations to the flat (all options have been tested in practice, and the present legislation is adequate), the point is to create legislative conditions for the provision and funding of services.

*Ministry for Local Development (MLD), MLSA - by Dec. 31, 1998  
Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

4.4b) To promote capital development of small sheltered living houses, and to help cover part of the investment into barrier-free adaptation of ordinary flats for sheltered living purposes.

*MLD, MLSA, local councils - continually  
Financial coverage - as part of the MLD budget*

#### **4.5. Respite care**

---

The family's constant round-the-clock care of their disabled member is so exhausting that the impossibility to have a few days' respite from this unending service or to go to hospital for treatment makes the family seek institutional care for the disabled. If the families concerned are entitled to a certain volume of respite care, many of them will opt for keeping the disabled person in their own care.

#### **TARGET**

To promote the development of respite care centres and, in this way, to reduce the demand for institutional care.

#### **MEASURES**

4.5a) In the Social Aid Act to help create a legislative framework for the provision and funding of respite care.

*MLSA, MH - by Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

4.5b) To give financial support to the launching and development of respite care dispensed by governmental or non-governmental entities.

*MLSA - by Dec. 31, 1999*

*Estimated financial requirements - about 20 mil. Kč annually*

#### **4.6. Institutional care**

---

In its present form, institutional social care has outlived its time as large institutions are always bound to have a somewhat dehumanising effect. Similarly, the need to harmonise Czech communitarian law with that of the European Union countries will necessarily result in a gradual but consistent deinstitutionalisation. Hence the aim for the coming period must be to ensure that institutes in buildings restituted to former owners should not be replaced by new large institutes but by other forms of social services. The disabled person or his/her representative in law should always have the right of choice to opt either for a combination of personal assistance and community care service or for being placed in some of the newly developed community care homes. Using the form of normative for the client, equal conditions must be created for governmental as well as non-governmental institutional care providers in a way comparable to the conditions created for governmental and non-governmental schools and school institutions.

There are more than 600 social care institutes in the Czech Republic, including institutes tailored for persons with visual, physical and mental impairment. Completely unattended, however, have remained the needs of elderly deaf people who communicate in the sign language and for whom the company of other deaf persons is an optimal living environment. The deaf represent an exception from the need to have special schools and social care institutions decentralised as they constitute a language and cultural minority preferring mutual co-existence to integration in the normal-hearing population. This is what society owes them and that is why homes for elderly deaf persons have to be created with speed.

#### **TARGETS**



1 - To start transforming large institutes of social care for severely disabled people into more modern forms of permanent care.

2 - To ensure that every severely disabled person or his/her representative in law should have free choice between personal assistance, family care, community social care, sheltered living, institutional social care, and other forms of social services.

3 - Equal conditions to be created for governmental and non-governmental social service providers.

## **MEASURES**

4.6a) A legislative framework to be created for the gradual reduction of the number of existing governmental social care institutions and their replacement by other forms of social services.

*MLSA - by Dec. 31, 1999*

*Financial coverage - from the MLSA budget*

4.6b) To promote the capital development of sheltered and group housing.

*MLD - continually*

*Financial coverage - from the MLD budget*

4.6.c) The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to carry out a needfulness survey, and in case it comes out positive, to pursue the prospective transformation of some of the existing institutes into deaf elderly people's homes.

*MLSA - by July 31, 1999*

*Estimated financial requirements - initial investment about 15 mil. Kč, running costs to be covered by the normative created as per 4.2a).*

## **5. Barrier-free living**

---

Being able to use buildings and means of transport, to move about freely, and to acquire information is an essential condition for man's active involvement in the life of society. This is the exercise of the right to freedom of movement, the right to education in the broadest sense of the word, and the right to information which, in the case of disabled citizens, is limited by architectural, orientation and communication barriers. Their appearance is, in most cases, unsubstantiated, their removal helps in general to humanise the living environment for the majority of the population.

### **5.1. Environmental accessibility**

---

Work on the NPA was marked by the adoption of the Building Act Amendment which stipulates that public buildings be accessible. Hence, there are legislative provisions to prevent the construction of more architectural barriers, but the law fails to be enforced consistently enough. In the past period, only a minimum has been achieved in the elimination of barriers in public transport.

#### **TARGET**

To prevent the appearance of new architectural, orientational and public transport barriers and to have existing barriers removed.

## MEASURES

5.1a) To ensure objective certification of selected products for the building industry (e.g. handrails, platforms, WC and bathroom furnishings, tactile elements for pedestrian communications layout, telephone booths and semi-booths, etc.)

*MIT, MTC - by Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial impact - from the MIT budget*

5.1b) As part of the provision of national budget subsidies for housing development and local technical infrastructure to see to it that at least 10% of the total number of state-supported housing development are built as accessible flats.

*MLD - continually*

*Financial coverage - from the MLD budget*

5.1c) To subsidise with grants the gradual removal of architectural barriers from public buildings, especially those providing services for the public. Particular attention to be given to the elimination of existing barriers in schools of all degrees.

*MLD, MEYPT - continually*

*Estimated financial requirements - as from 1999 about 100 mil. Kč annually*

5.1d) To adjust technical specifications for newly imported means of public transport in terms of their uses and accessibility to persons with impaired ability of movement and orientation.

*MTC - by Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial coverage - from the MTC budget*

5.1e) In legal regulations - either amended or newly conceived - to create conditions for the gradual accessibilization of all types of transport for persons with impaired ability of movement and orientation.

*MTC - continually*

*Financial coverage - from the MTC budget*

5.1f) Financial incentives to be created for more accessible means of transport to be introduced in public transport.

*MTC - continually*

*Estimated financial requirements:*

*- in electrical-traction municipal transport an increase of about 50 % in the purchase of low-floor vehicles*

*- municipal and suburban bus transport an increase of roughly 40 % for low-floor buses*

*- transport infrastructure - an increase of 2.5 to 3 %*

*- in passenger transport vehicles and other types of transport - a cost increase of about 4 to 5 %.*

*Financial coverage - from the budgets of district authorities and local councils, or from specific-purpose subsidies on vehicular renovation*

5.1g) The conditions to be created for the gradual introduction of a luminous signalling and information system for the deaf in public means of transport.

*MTC - conditions by Dec. 31, 1998 - materialisation as from 1999*  
*Estimated financial requirements - about 10 mil. Kč*

5.1h) The conditions to be created for the gradual introduction in the means of public transport of an acoustic signalling and information system for the visually impaired.

*MTC - conditions by Dec. 31, 1998 - materialisation as from 1999*  
*Estimated financial requirements - about 10 mil. Kč*

## **5.2. Access to information and communication**

---

Modern technologies make it possible to eliminate most of the information barriers for the blind and the deaf, and modern didactic techniques permit to widen substantially access to information even for verbally non-communicative persons and for mentally handicapped persons.

### **TARGET**

To make use of modern technologies for the gradual elimination of information barriers for the disabled

### **MEASURES**

5.2a) To define uniform user conditions for dealing with public information systems (public buildings and public transport) so they could be of good use even to persons with sensory impairment.

*MLD, MTC - by Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial coverage - definition of conditions - from the MLD and MTC budgets;*  
*materialisation by district authorities and local councils*

5.2b) Legislative anchoring to be given to the duty of the public-law television company to broadcast on one of its channels a five-minute daily news bulletin in the sign language with spoken accompaniment in the backscene.

*We expect initiative to be taken by members of parliament in a short amendment to the Radio and TV Broadcasting Act*

*Financial coverage - from the Czech Television budget*

5.2c) Support to be given to the production of sound books and Braille prints as the basic assortment of literature for the blind, including technical literature and adult education in law.

*Ministry of Culture (MC) - continually*

*Financial coverage - from the MC budget*

## 6. Education

---

Education of the disabled in the broader meaning of the term, including education of their parents and representatives in law, ought to start as soon as the disability has been found. In this first phase, it takes mainly the form of counselling for families with disabled children. The disabled child's family has the right to early care, i.e., enhancement of the child's development with qualified specialists working within the family and offering compensatory and therapeutical recommendations. Interdisciplinary co-operation involving parents, counselling specialists and physicians is a necessity. This phase is followed by school education and vocational training. Education must be provided for every disabled child without any exception. A fairly large part of the disabled need certain forms of lifelong education.

### 6.1. Counselling services

---

Counselling comprises a wide range of services designed to help disabled persons and their families and representatives in law in their integration in social life and in coping with their personal problems and crises arising from their own or their children's disability.

Counselling is understood to mean recommendations by a team of experts where equally important parts are played by the psychologist, physician, lawyer, special pedagogue, physiotherapist, social worker, technician, and, last not least, successful individuals with disabilities as vivid examples for parents and teachers and models for the disabled child to identify with. The parents of the disabled child or an adult with disability, too, are natural members of the team. Effective counselling must be widely available and free of charge.

During the implementation of the NPM and NPA, a basic system of counselling for the disabled and their parents has been developed in the Czech Republic. The providers include in particular:

- a) early care units
- b) institutions of educational-psychological counselling (e.g. state-run as well as private special educational centres, educational-psychological counselling centres, etc.),
- c) medical rehabilitation centres (rehabilitation centres)
- d) disabled people's civic associations
  - d1) civic associations' general counselling services
  - d2) social and legal counselling centres
  - d3) early care centres
  - d4) centres of information on the specific disability
  - d5) interdisciplinary information centres,
  - d6) standing exhibitions of technical aids with counselling

The primary task at present is to focus attention on the elimination of those shortcomings which still exist in counselling, on the final solution to the problem of counselling services funding, and, in particular, on ensuring a comparable form of the services on offer by introducing accreditation and by laying down the standards. This does not pertain to counselling within the department of education where accreditation is effected by inclusion in the network.

## TARGET

Further to develop counselling for families with disabled children as well as for disabled adults. Using standardised programmes, to ensure a comparable standard of the counselling services available. By means of uniform criteria of payment for the actual service (not for the institution) to create comparable conditions for the governmental and non-governmental sectors in the provision of services.

## MEASURES

6.1a) To develop a system for the accreditation and funding of counselling centres operating outside the department of education.

*MLSA, MH, VVZPO (Czech abbr. for Government Board for People with disabilities) - Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial coverage - from the respective departmental budgets*

6.1b) To prepare information materials for physicians in the field about counselling and information services available for each of the different disabilities.

*MH - continually*

*Financial coverage - from the MH budget*

6.1c) Special educational centres to be set up also independently of special schools.

*MEYPT - July 31, 1999*

*Financial coverage - from the MEYPT budget*

6.1d) The services of the special educational centres to be made available also to disabled students trained at ordinary secondary schools.

*MEYPT - July 31, 1999*

*Financial coverage - from the MEYPT budget*

6.1e) In allocating grants to civic associations, a high priority to be given to the promotion of the number and range of improved activities of specialised counselling centres run by disabled people's civic associations (inclusive of early care centres, centres of training in self-reliance, standing exhibitions of technical aids for the disabled with counselling services, counselling in matters of technical adjustment of vehicles for the disabled, etc.).

*MH, MLSA - continually*

*Financial coverage - as part of subsidies to disabled people's civic associations*

## 6.2. Education and vocational training

---

Over the past few years, the Czech Republic has made a great deal of progress from segregated education at special boarding schools toward disabled children's and pupils' integration in ordinary kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. The vacancies at special schools have been made available to regular systematic education of children with severe and combined forms of disability, and to autistic children. In the past, these children were exempt from compulsory school attendance, and remained in their families' care or were referred to institutional care.

Despite the increased number of disabled children who now attend main-stream schools, there is no doubt about the need to maintain a certain network of special schools as an

alternative to meeting the educational needs of those disabled children who require for the optimum development of their abilities an environment which suits them better - with regard to their specific needs and individual peculiarities - than main-stream schools. Special schools also serve as places of accumulation and creation of knowledge of new, optimum methods of teaching the most severely disabled children.

The rise of new state-run but mainly non-state special schools has widened the range of options of primary and secondary education for disabled children. As for elementary schools, a certain anomaly persists in the education of the deaf who, owing to inadequate teaching methods, used to acquire substantially lower formal education than the rest of elementary school leavers.

A permanent challenge remains in the need to provide as much education as possible to those disabled who - until recently - used to be practically deprived of the right to education (the severely mentally handicapped, the blind-and-deaf, some children with CSP). In the Czech Republic we still use, however in exceptional cases and under strict legal provisions, the term "exemption from compulsory school attendance", a term seen as contradictory to the EU countries' legislation. The very institute of "exemption from compulsory school attendance" ought to be abandoned. The problem of exercising the right to education of children with severe mental or multiple handicap can be solved, among other ways, by the institute of "exemption from the duty to go to school" unless in exceptional cases the child's regular presence in school is possible.

In the coming period, it will be necessary to enable a larger number of disabled persons to attain university education. This entails, in particular, elimination of all types of barriers, in particular information barriers, but also the introduction of state scholar-ships for the deaf so that they could study at specialised universities with lectures given in the sign language, a situation existing merely abroad.

Apart from that it will be necessary to widen the range of opportunities for lifelong education of the disabled.

## **TARGETS**

- 1 - To see that every disabled child receives as much elementary education as possible.
- 2 - In keeping with the recommendations of international declarations and standards, to regard as natural and as a priority to have the disabled child placed in the environment of a normal school with special educational support.
- 3 - To preserve the fairly good standard of our special schools while using them increasingly merely for children with the severest types of disability.
- 4 - To create all the conditions necessary for raising the number of disabled people receiving secondary-level and university education.
- 5 - To promote secondary-school educational programmes comprising maximum knowledge immediately exploitable in practical life on the free labour market.
- 6 - To widen the range of opportunities for disabled people's lifelong education.
- 7 - To remove from our law the institute "exemption from compulsory school attendance". The exercise of the right to education in the case of children with severe mental handicap, i.a., by means of the institute of "exemption from the duty to go to school" should in exceptional cases the child's regular presence at school prove impossible.
- 8 - The education of severely mentally handicapped children to be effected mainly in the form of individual educational plans and in the form of their regular transport to special schools or institutions where the Ministry of Education has arranged special educational care.

## MEASURES

6.2a) By means of new school legislation to strengthen the parents' right of choice as regards the line of education for their disabled children.

*MEYPT - by Dec. 31, 1999*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

6.2b) Legislative framework to be provided for disabled children's integration in main-stream schools (methodological directions will not do).

*MEYPT - Dec. 31, 1999*

*Financial coverage - from the MEYPT budget*

6.2c) To amend the provision of Art. 2, para (4) of MEYPT Decree No. 291/1991 Sb. concerning elementary schools so that it could be possible to admit even mentally disabled children.

*MEYPT - by Dec. 31, 1999*

*Financial coverage - from the MEYPT budget*

6.2d) To eliminate from our law the institute "exemption from compulsory school attendance". The exercise of the right to education of severely mentally handicapped children to be effected, i.a., in the form of the institute of "exemption from the duty to go to school" should in exceptional cases the child's presence at school prove impossible.

*MEYPT - Dec. 31, 1999*

*Financial coverage - from the MEYPT budget*

6.2e) To make sure that every person, whose state requires it, be assessed by a team of specialists called to propose an individual method of developing his/her abilities and skills - and thereby to ensure the exercise of his/her right to education in the broader meaning of the term. The right to apply for such an assessment shall be accorded also to the parents (or adults with disability) who are members of the team.

*MEYPT - continually*

*Financial coverage - from the MEYPT budget*

6.2f) In legislative and financial terms, to ensure reimbursement for the cost of transport, personal assistance, guides, sign language interpreters, articulation interpreters and companion readers for integrated disabled pupils and students of main-stream elementary and secondary schools and universities and training centres.

*MLSA - by Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

6.2g) To promote occupational qualification for disabled young people at 35 special apprentice training centres in the department of agriculture, mainly in such fields as farm works, florist and window-dressing works, vegetable and fruit growing works, confectioner's, baker's, painter's, locksmith's and repairman's works.

*MA - continually*

*Estimated financial requirements - about 1 mil. Kč annually as from 1999*

6.2h) To prepare a legislative framework for the duty of secondary schools and universities to adjust the form of enrolment and final examinations to the type of the applicant's disability.

*MEYPT - Dec. 31, 1999*

*Financial coverage - from the MEYPT budget*

6.2i) At special secondary schools, the conditions to be created for the running of group B driver's licence courses for disabled students.

*MEYPT - Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial coverage - from the MEYPT budget with MLSA budget contribution*

6.2j) To develop a system of grant-based assignments (subsidies allocated on a competitive basis to projects submitted in writing) with regularly announced themes concerning the architectural redevelopment of buildings aimed at creating a barrier-free environment at schools, pre-school and school institutions with respect to the needs of disabled children and youth.

*MEYPT - Dec. 31, 1998*

*Estimated financial requirement - about 50 mil. Kč as from 1999*

6.2k) Problems of the creation of a barrier-free environment to be incorporated into the curriculum of vocational secondary schools and institutions of higher learning.

*MEYPT - Dec. 31, 1998*

*Estimated financial requirements - about 1 mil. Kč annually as from 1999*

6.2l) Themes designed to promote disabled people's lifelong education to be included in some of the MEYPT grant-based projects.

*MEYPT - Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial coverage - from the MEYPT budget*

6.2m) MEYPT grant-based assignments to comprise themes designed to promote integrated education of disabled children. This pertains mainly to problems of personnel, individual curricula, special methodological manuals production, educational standards and curricula in relation to disabled children.

*MEYPT - announcement July 31, 1998; implementation as from 1999*

*Estimated financial requirement - about 1 mil. Kč annually as from 1999*

## **7. Employment**

---

The market economy competitive environment inevitably leads to fewer job opportunities for the disabled. Even large enterprises can now no longer afford to keep a body of the so called "social jobs" reserved for disabled persons without expecting them to put in a working performance comparable with that of the rest of the workforce. Disabled people are threatened with redundancy more than anyone else, which accounts for the prolonged average duration of their unemployment, the rate of which hits them much more and tends to grow much more dynamically.

The NPM and NPA stimulated employment for the disabled by offering tax reliefs to employers, by increased legal protection of employees with reduced working ability, by a system of compulsory quotas of the number of disabled employees, by financial subsidies to entrepreneurial entities offering jobs to persons with reduced working ability, and by setting up sheltered workplaces.

Increased legal protection of disabled employees ran into problems. The arrangement brought an advantage to disabled persons already employed. However, it discouraged potential employers from even trying to offer jobs to the disabled, in the first place. Sanctions for failure to abide by the compulsory quotas were exacted fairly benevolently, and the sum total of the sanctions collected was hardly worth the effort.



Entrepreneurial entities employing persons with reduced working capacity have to stand their ground in an increasingly competitive environment, which is hardly possible without a sufficient number of able-bodied employees designed to ensure work for the disabled. It appears necessary to lower the compulsory number of employees working for those employers from the present 60% to 50%.

The most severely disabled persons are employed in sheltered workshops. However, sheltered workshops can never be expected to meet the challenge of competition on the normal market. Rather than to make profit, their purpose is to offer to the worst handicapped at least some degree of occupational assertion and scope for a share in vocational rehabilitation, i.e., to enable the handicapped to try out which type of work they could do. Sheltered workplaces should, among other things, offer practical training to pupils of one-year practical schools and to pupils of the working grade of educationally subnormal schools. Hence, wherever the need arises, sheltered workshops should be speedily transformed into non-profit general-benefit companies, and given increased subsidies to keep them going.

As an intermediate degree between disabled persons' employment on the free labour market and in sheltered workplaces, it seems necessary to develop in this country, too, a system of assisted job giving, in which specially trained personal assistants (occupational assistants) help the disabled understand and cope with the required operations and attain the expected degree of performance.

## **TARGET**

To ensure that as many disabled people can be employed as possible.

## **MEASURES**

7 a) In the course of amending the Employment Act to revise the wording of the concept of "person with reduced working ability".

*MLSA - by Dec. 31, 1999*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

7 b) The compulsory percentage of employees with reduced working ability to be specified in the Employment Act amendment itself.

*MLSA - by Dec. 31, 1999*

*Financial impact - no claim on the national budget*

7 c) To prepare a legislative framework for the institute of assisted employment.

*MLSA - Dec. 31, 1999*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

7 d) The percentage of disabled employees working with entrepreneurial entities active under normal competitive terms, employing persons with reduced working ability and entitled to subsidies from the national budget, to be reduced to a total of 50% of employees with reduced working ability.

*MF - Jan. 1, 1999*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

7 e) To continue reimbursement for social security payments and further support to employers giving jobs predominantly to disabled persons and doing business in a normal competitive environment. Prospectively, to deal with the promotion of employment for the disabled throughout the body of legal regulations, the funding of active policies of

employment, and reimbursement for social insurance to be incorporated in the provisions of the Insurance Premium Act.

*MF, MLSA - continually, amended legislation by Jan. 1, 1999*  
*Estimated financial requirements - some 500 mil. Kč annually*

7 f) To reassess those problematic legislative measures which were supposed to protect disabled employees.

*MLSA - Dec. 31, 1999*  
*Financial impact - no claim on national budget resources*

## **8. Income maintenance and social security**

---

In implementing the NPA, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has developed two systems of state of health assessment, and the consequences resulting thereof, one of determining the rate of reduction of the disabled insured persons' ability of sustained wage-earning activities for purposes of pensions insurance (Art. 39 of the Pensions Insurance Act No. 155/1995 Sb., and Decree No. 284/1995 Sb.), and a system of disability classification for purposes of state social support benefits (Decree No. 207/1995 Sb.).

Since the two systems undoubtedly paved the way to a more objective state of health assessment and the consequences arising from it, it is only natural that like any other entirely new system they, too, need very careful and sensitive "fine tuning". In the process, it is essential to preserve a degree of proportionality within the systems, particularly with regard to mutual relations between the different types of disability so as to prevent unsubstantiated advantages or again disadvantages for this or that group of the disabled.

At the same time, it should be emphasised that any assessment of the degree of reduction of the disabled person's fitness for sustained gainful activities has to be preceded by detailed examination of the person's body functions. The final assessment ought to contain also what is called "positive recommendation", i.e., a statement of the range of occupational activities that the disabled person can perform.

The purpose of social security is not to increase the number of occupationally unplaceable invalids entirely dependent on the dole and social care benefits. The purpose is to lend respectful support to those who, for objective reasons, cannot do regular work, and, at the same time, to offer effective aid to those who, thanks to their preserved fitness for gainful employment, can work given suitable rehabilitation and optimum placement.

## TARGETS

- 1 - Throughout the social security system, gradually to develop a maximum-objectivity system of comprehensive assessment of disability and the resulting consequences.
- 2 - The conditions to be created for maximum correctness in the attitude of social security public servants dealing with disabled citizens.
- 3 - New legislation to be drafted for amending the system of benefits and allowances accorded to the disabled.

## MEASURES

8 a) Continually to improve the systems for rating the degree of reduction of disabled insured persons' fitness for sustained gainful activities, and for the classification of disabilities.

*MLSA - continually*

*Financial coverage - from the MLSA budget*

8 b) To arrange methodological schooling for medical specialists and GPs with stress laid on the relevance of their findings and medical reports as background material for the assessment of the disabled persons' state of health and the social security consequences concerned. Regular courses of proper conduct in dealing with the disabled to be arranged for second-opinion MOs.

*MLSA, MH - continually*

*Financial coverage - from the MLSA and MH budgets*

8 c) In their mutual co-operation, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Health will arrange adequate specialist education for second-opinion MOs to raise their qualification in keeping with the requirements of the particular welfare subsystems in the assessment of the state of health and the resulting consequences.

*MLSA, MH - continually*

*Financial coverage - from the MLSA and MH budgets*

8 d) Legislative conditions to be prepared for the particular Labour Offices to be able to set up, whenever necessary, a multidisciplinary team designed to deal with the problems of employment for disabled persons. Members of the team could include a physician called to assess the disabled person's state of health and the resulting employment consequences, the respective LO public servant, the disabled person's attending physician, a psychologist, representatives of the local council, rehabilitation and retraining institutions, and possibly another invited specialist.

*MLSA - Jan. 1, 1999*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

8 e) Legislation to be drafted for amending the system of allowances and benefits for disabled persons

*MLSA - Dec. 31, 1999*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation.*

## 9. Family life and integrity of personality

---

Similarly as for the general population, for the disabled, too, the family is the most natural environment. It is necessary to generate all the conditions to make sure that families could avoid having to place their disabled children in boarding schools, not to mention institutional facilities.

Our legislation does not discriminate against disabled persons seeking marriage. Rather, the problem lies in public opinion and in a number of prejudices which need be overcome by sustained effort in adult education.

Family care or a close person's attention is the most natural way of personal assistance in certain periods of life. This mode of care requires long-term financial and moral support (see chapt.4.2) as an alternative to institutional care. Legislative initiative must be taken to make sure that a member of family providing such care be regarded as an employed person.

Disabled persons are particularly vulnerable to abuse in the family, in the community or in institutes, and should be warned and instructed how to prevent such abuse, how to recognise that an act of abuse has occurred, and how to report it.

### TARGET

All available methods to be used for the promotion of disabled people's right to family life at all ages, and to their personality's integrity.

### MEASURES

9 a) Support to families with severely handicapped children to be intensified even in the course of their vocational training

*MLSA - Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

9 b) Disabled persons to be warned and instructed in matters of protection against sexual abuse.

*MH - continually*

*Financial coverage - from the budgets of the Government departments concerned*

## 10. Culture

---

Disabled people's cultural activities are an immensely important form of psychotherapy. For nearly all types of disability it is possible to find the kind of cultural activities, in which they are not substantially disadvantaged against others and through which they can even make a significant contribution to developing the whole country's standard of culture.

As part of the Ministry of Culture grant proceedings, support is given annually to cultural events run by disabled people's organisations and to their cultural and artistic activities, thus exercising a positive effect on public attitudes to disabled persons and their capabilities.

## TARGETS

- 1 - To lend maximum support to developing disabled people's cultural activities.
- 2 - To eliminate architectural and information barriers in cultural institutions

## MEASURES

10 a) The Ministry of Culture to go on subsidising cultural and artistic activities of the disabled and their organisations.

*MC - continually*

*Estimated financial requirements - about 10 mil. Kč annually*

10 b) The Ministry of Culture to continue supporting the elimination of architectural and information barriers in cultural institutions.

*MC - continually*

*Estimated financial requirements - for the elimination of architectural barriers in MC institutions - about 10 mil. Kč annually as from 1999*

## 11. Recreation and sport

---

Like activities in the field of culture disabled people's sports undertakings, too, represent an extremely important activity likely to enrich not only the disabled but the general public, too. Support for disabled people's participation in large-scale and well established events such as the Deaflympics, Paralympics and Special Olympics as well as in local events must remain in the focus of attention of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Physical Training. An analysis ought to be made to see if the funding of organisations of disabled athletes within the framework of ordinary sports organisations does represent an optimum way of expenditure.

All available methods to be used for publicising and supporting of travel agencies, arranging recreation and travelling accessible for particular groups of the disabled.

## TARGETS

- 1 - To enable as many disabled people as possible to engage in sports activities, and to facilitate their participation in domestic and international sports events.
- 2 - To increase the number of recreational opportunities for different groups of the disabled.
- 3 - Wherever it proves possible, to combine disabled people's recreation with rehabilitation.

## MEASURES

11 a) The Ministry of Education, Youth and PT to make an analysis of the optimum funding of disabled people's sports organisations with an invitation extended to representatives of those organisations

*MEYPT - July 31, 1998*

*Estimated financial requirements - only a possible restructuring of existing finance is envisaged*

11 b) Disabled people's organisations will systematically review and publicise travel agencies planning events accessible also to diverse groups of the disabled.

## **12. Religion**

---

In the Czech Republic there is no discrimination against the disabled wishing to engage in religious life. It is, however, necessary to advise ecclesiastical representatives on what kind of measures they should adopt to facilitate disabled people's religious activities.

### **TARGET**

To eliminate architectural and communication barriers impeding disabled people's participation in religious life

### **MEASURE**

12 a) The Government Board Secretariat to inform church representatives of the kind of measures they should adopt to facilitate disabled people's involvement in religious activities, and to advise them that in running special church schools they ought to widen their range of work to include also pupils with multiple handicaps.

*VVZPO - Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial coverage - from the Office of the CR Government budget*

## **13. Information and research**

---

In connection with the disabled, two different categories of information are under discussion: information **about** the disabled as it is crucial for qualified decisions made by public service bodies and for the monitoring of our local situation as required by international bodies; and information **for** the disabled concerning available services, technical aids, etc.

### ***13.1. Information about the disabled***

---

The National Plan of Actions for the Handicapped Persons (NPA) of 1992 and the National Plan of Measures to Reduce the Negative Impact of Disability (NPM) of 1993 both called for more precise statistical data to be provided about the number and structure of the disabled population. Since, however, none of public service central bodies could be persuaded to take up the job, the NPA envisioned - as a kind of compromise - support for data bases to be developed by disabled people's civic associations as a first step. In order to make the data thus retrieved compatible, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs came forward with a structure of data which the civic associations were to collect. Regrettably, the results obtained are minimal. Only a few civic associations keep data bases on their membership, and their prevalence and compatibility are for all practical purposes nil. However, the need to know with more precision the actual numbers of disabled persons with regard to the type and gravity of their disabilities has arisen with new urgency. Exact data are essential for public service bodies decision making, and precise information about the

numbers of the disabled and their structure and opportunities for social assertion is expected from us in the bodies of the European Union. No less pressing is the need for a qualified analysis of disabled people's situation in the fields of social and other services.

## **TARGET**

The retrieval of statistical data on the number and structure of the disabled population and an analysis of their needs, mainly in the sphere of social services, are sine qua non for any qualified decision making by the central bodies of the public service and for this country's integration in the European structures.

## **MEASURES**

13.1a) The Ministry of Health - to retrieve data on disabled children of pre-school age receiving dispensing care in health institutions

*MH - July 31, 1999*

*Estimated financial requirement - about 0.5 mil. Kč annually*

13.1b) The Ministry of Education, Youth and PT - to retrieve statistics on disabled schoolchildren placed in institutions of the department of education.

*MEYPT - July 31, 1999*

*Estimated financial requirement - about 0,5 mil. Kč annually*

13.1c) The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - to retrieve information on disabled persons in institutions under its own administration within the scope of its departmental statistics.

*MLSA - July 31, 1999*

*Estimated financial requirement - about 0.5 mil. Kč annually*

13.1d) In one of its EU-sponsored projects, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will try to acquire the means for building a data base compatible with EU standards concerning the disabled population.

*MLSA - Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial coverage - within the framework of some of the EU projects*

### **13.2. Information for the disabled and their parents**

---

Counselling services as described in chapter 6.1 are the main source of information for the disabled and their parents. During the implementation of the NPA and NPM, the maximalistically conceived Handihelp information system was started but only to fall short of expectations where it could really serve disabled people. With the development of data networks intended to serve the general public (e.g., Internet and Teletext) the creation of specialised information systems has lost its point. Instead, it seems necessary to encourage disabled people's organisations interest in systematic data collection within the range of their specificity, and enable them to have the data made available both in the conventional printed form and in the digitalised version.

## **TARGET**

Disabled people's access to all information relevant to their disability to be widened.

## **MEASURES**

13.2a) To promote the compilation of directories of services for the different types of disability.

*MH, MLSA - continually*

*Financial coverage - from subsidies to civic associations*

13.2b) By subsidising the purchase of computers and modems and the costs of operation to help make the INTERNET accessible to all disabled people's civic associations capable of coping with the problem in technical and organisational terms.

*MH - continually*

*Estimated financial requirement - about 1 mil. Kč annually as from 1999*

## **14. Tactic and planning**

---

The three national plans for the disabled compiled in co-operation with their civic associations and adopted by the Government of the Czech Republic are evidence of the high standard of planning the country's national policies for the disabled .

However, it is equally necessary for the regions and local councils to formulate their goals in this respect. Hence, the need to support the mapping of available services, schools and organisations but also of accessible buildings of public utilities in their regions and localities.

A certain problem persists in that a disabled young child comes first under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health, later under that of the Ministry of Education while any possible social benefits are well within the terms of reference of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. At this age, the child's family are the recipients and co-ordinators of the respective services. All the three Government departments concerned ought to prepare a joint conceptual and legislative document for an optimum division of endeavour, and to help involve all the entities operating in the given field (including disabled people's organisations, parental organisations, and service-providers).

### **TARGETS**

1 - Longer-term planning of support for the equalisation of opportunities for the disabled to be brought to regional and local levels, too.

2 - To provide comprehensive early care of disabled young children and to specify the terms of reference of the Government departments concerned, and the economic provisions.

### **MEASURES**

14 a) The Ministry for Local Development shall invite district authorities, local councils and other non-governmental entities to devise their own programmes for the disabled.

*MLD - deadline for the invitation - June 30, 1998,*

*deadline for the submission of the programmes - Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial coverage - from the budgets of the departments concerned*

## **15. Legislation**

---

National legislation concerning the disabled can be instituted in three possible ways:

a) by the adoption of special laws dealing exclusively with problems of disability,



- b) by incorporating issues of disability into existing specific laws,
- c) by a combination of both.

For the time being, the situation in the Czech Republic is dealt with in the second way. This appears insufficient for the protection of specific rights of some of the groups of the disabled (the deaf, psychotics, mentally handicapped). Very much missing, for instance, is legislation banning any discrimination against disabled persons.

## **TARGET**

To make the equality of the disabled enforceable, and to stipulate all the disabled people's rights in the relevant legal regulations.

## **MEASURES**

15 a) The conditions to be created for social-law protection of the disabled in keeping with the Charter of the Basic Human Rights and Freedoms.

*MLSA, VVZPO - July 31, 1999*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

15b) Rehabilitation (including the chronically and mentally ill) to be covered by legislation.

*MH, MLSA, MEYPT - Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

15c) To solve the problem of identity proving by certified persons.

*Ministry of Interior (MI) - Jan. 1, 2000*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

## **16. Economic policy**

---

The Government's economic policy relative to the disabled has been taking shape in the Czech Republic ever since the year 1990. Periodic and single-time social benefits and pensions come under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Projects put forward by disabled people's civic associations operating on a national scale are financed in the form of grants and on the basis of clearly defined rules, by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Culture. The Ministry for Local Development subsidises two civic associations of the disabled. Entrepreneurial entities giving jobs to persons with reduced working ability receive support from the Ministry of Finance. Similar funding of relevant projects put forward by the disabled, however, has yet to be introduced at the Ministry of Education, Youth and PT. Regional- and local-level financing of projects designed to help equalise opportunities for the disabled, however, still remains a moot point.

## **TARGET**

To finish work on a transparent system of funding regional- and local-level projects of equal opportunities for the disabled.

## **MEASURES**

16 a) The Ministry of Education, Youth and PT to undertake a study of the feasibility of separate funding in support of sports and educational activities for the disabled in the form of independent grant-based projects with the aims of making the flow of finance more transparent, and of standardising its methods with the other Government departments (MH, MLSA, MC).

*MEYPT - July 31, 1998*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the proposed legislation*

16 b) The Ministry for Local Development to propose a conception of funding local-level projects designed to help equalise opportunities for the disabled.

*MLD - Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial impact - to be specified in the conception*

## **17. Co-ordination of effort**

---

The years 1991 saw the setting up of the CR Government Board for People with Disabilities which meets all the basic requirement placed on a body of its kind by the UN Standard Rules. The Board's executive (Secretariat), though, has, from the very beginning, been conceived as a body of minimum size, which is why the Board has no financial means of its own. However, the procurement of all sorts of background material for conceptual documents and expertise is increasingly difficult merely on a "good-will" basis.

## **TARGET**

To boost the Government Board Secretariat's potentialities for drafting major analytical, information and conceptual materials for the Government of the Czech Republic.

## **MEASURES**

17a) From the Office of the Government budgetary chapter to boost the VVZPO Secretariat's budget with extra finance for the purchase of information and expertise and for remuneration paid out to groups of specialists of the Government Board (VVZPO).

*Office of the Government of the CR - annually*

*Estimated financial requirement - as from 1999 about 300 000 annually*

## 18. Disabled people's organizations

---

Disabled people' organisations, associations and clubs are of great importance for the disabled and for their parents.

Organisations of people with disabilities devote themselves to club-type activities such as active uses of leisure time, cultural and sports events and excursions, charity campaigns, promotion of legislative and organisational measures, adult education activities designed to draw the general public's attention to problems of disability as such, adult education aimed at therapeutical, rehabilitation, dietary, reconditioning and psychological care of individuals with different types of disability, publishing activities for keeping their own members, the general and professional public well informed, children's recreation, and keeping in touch with foreign partners.

In addition, however, civic associations often found and operate all sorts of facilities of their own providing services to the disabled population (schools, school institutions, community care services, personal assistance services, facilities for counselling and education, social rehabilitation, etc.).

In order to keep up those activities, civic associations need accomplished professionals as much as governmental and local organisations. Professionals of such calibre, though, can hardly be expected to stay on for prolonged periods of time without adequate remuneration. The departments of labour and social affairs, health and culture have years of experience with the funding of projects of civic associations working in their line of jurisdiction, and have developed specific methods for the granting of such subsidies, which is something missing in the department of education, youth and physical training, not to mention well defined methods of financing local-level civic associations. Another pressing problem is in that the funds for subsidising civic associations from the budgets of the decisive Government departments have for years remained stagnant without keeping up with the rate of inflation. Co-funding from the associations' own resources remains a major problem, too.

### **TARGET**

Falling back on experience accumulated in the departments of labour and social affairs, health and culture, to complete the development of a simple, effective and transparent system of funding the activities of disabled people's civic associations, including those operating on a local level.

### **MEASURES**

18 a) See 16 a), b).

18 b) The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will commission a suitable public opinion poll agency to undertake a study on how the different types of disability are seen by the public with regard to recruiting potential sponsors.

*Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - Oct. 31, 1998*

*Financial coverage - from the MLSA budget*

## 19. Personnel training

---

The standard of information of the persons who come in touch with disabled people in the medical, educational, technical, psychological, legal and administrative fields, and sometimes even the knowledge of professionals working in those fields systematically, fall short of expectation.

### TARGET

Maximum support to be given to all forms of secondary and university institutions training specialists for work with disabled people.

### MEASURES

19a) The Secretariat of the Government Board to scrutinise the list of secondary-school and university courses aimed at training specialists for work with the disabled, and for helping to eliminate architectural, orientational and information barriers.

*VVZPO Secretariat - Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial impact - from the Office of the Government budget*

19b) As part of the university development programmes, to promote the drafting of specialised courses of study aimed at disabled people's problems and accessible to the disabled (sociology of the disabled, rehabilitation engineering, elimination of architectural and information barriers, communication of the deaf, etc.)

*MEYPT - continually*

*Estimated financial requirement - as from 1999, the university development programmes to be funded with another about 10 mil. Kč. annually for this particular purpose.*

19c) Counselling services to be provided for disabled elementary school pupils within the framework of special qualification training for disabled youth in apprentice training institutions of the department of agriculture.

*MA - continually*

*Estimated financial requirement - some 300 000 Kč annually as from 1999*

19d) Counselling services to be provided for disabled students as part of the university development programmes.

*MEYPT - continually*

*Estimated financial requirement - as from 1999, the university development programmes to be funded with another about 55 mil. Kč annually for this particular programme*

19e) Within the framework of post-graduate education of teachers, sign language courses to be organised for teachers and social workers helping deaf children and pupils.

*MEYPT - continually*

*Estimated financial requirement - about 300 000 Kč annually as from 1999*

19f) Competence in sign language communication to be made a prerequisite for the profession of deaf children's teachers.

*MEYPT - Dec. 31, 2000*

*Estimated financial requirement - about 300 000 Kč annually as from 1999*

## **20. International co-operation**

---

Disabled people's situation in all countries is regularly monitored by the UN (UN Special Representative for Problems of the Disabled), the Council of Europe (Committee on the Rehabilitation and Integration of the Disabled), International Labour Office; indeed, it has become a regular component of the Annual Report on the Observance of Human Rights submitted to the US Congress (s.c. Dole amendment to the 1961 Foreign Aid Act "Disability Rights in American Foreign Policy Act of 1993").

It is in the Czech Republic's interest to keep European and world bodies regularly posted on the results it has attained as regards disabled people's maximum integration in the life of society. Our own disabled people's civic associations keeping in touch with top-level European and world organisations can become our country's important "envoys" in this particular field.

However, the existing rules of granting subsidies to civic associations do not enable to apply for a national budget contribution for the promotion of foreign relations, which makes it impossible for a number of organisations to take part in the work of top-level European and world organisations. This is obviously at variance with our nation-wide effort to join all European structures as soon as possible. In the coming period, maximum support must be given to the foreign relations of civic associations, specialists working with the disabled, and disabled people themselves.

### **TARGET**

European bodies and the UNO to be regularly informed on the results attained in the Czech Republic in field of equal opportunities for the disabled, and maximum support to the given to the foreign relations of our disabled people's civic associations.

### **MEASURE**

20) The Secretariat of the Government Board for People with Disabilities (Czech abbr. VVZPO) to work out a review of all European and salient world bodies monitoring the situation of the disabled.

*VVZPO - Dec. 31, 1998*

*Financial coverage - from the Office of the Government budget*

## **21. Monitoring the National Plan on Equalizing of Opportunities for persons with Disabilities**

---

In comparison with the previous National Plans, a considerably more rigorous approach is called for in checks on the implementation of each of the measures, and any failure to implement them should be met with sanctions from the Board Chairman making stricter use of his powers. In the process of monitoring, maximum advantage should be taken of the experience and knowledge of the Board of Representatives of Disabled People's Organisations (Czech abbrev. SZOZP) as the principal consultative body of the Government Board.

## **TARGET**

To monitor with more efficiency the implementation of the measures of the National Plan of Equal Opportunities for the Disabled.

## **MEASURES**

21a) In monitoring the implementation of the National Plan, the Board will keep in close touch with the Board of Representatives from Organizations of Disabled People (BRODP) and its expert groups.

*BRODP, VVZPO - continually*

*Financial coverage - from the Office of the Government budget*

21b) The Government Board Executive Vice-Chairman and the Chairman of the Board of Representatives from Organisations of Disabled People to hold biannual talks on the state of implementation of the National Plan, and to propose further measures in cases of unsubstantiated failure to abide by the measures adopted.

*Executive Vice-Chairman of the Government Board - annually*

*Financial coverage - from the Office of the Government budget*

21c) Once in a year, the Executive Vice-Chairman of the Government Board and the Chairman of the Government Board shall meet to discuss the state of implementation of the National Plan and to propose further measures in cases of unsubstantiated failure to abide by the measures adopted.

*Executive Vice-Chairman of the Government Board - annually*

*Financial coverage - from the Office of the Government budget*