
Report on the Situation of Roma Communities in the
Czech Republic

2006

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since 2004, the Bureau of the Council of the Government of the Czech Republic for Roma Community Affairs has drafted an annual Report on the Situation of Roma Communities in the Czech Republic. This practice was established by Government Resolution No 607 of 16 June 2004 enjoining the Deputy Prime Minister for Research and Development, Human Rights, and Human Resources to produce a report on the situation of the Roma communities and submit it to the government by 31 December 2004.

The Report relies primarily on the results of research carried out during the last few years by various academic and research centres. The 2006 Report strives to capture shifts in the context of the subject matter compared to the 2005 Report where such shifts are evident in practice or where they have been triggered by the activities of state authorities or other bodies. The Report also attempts to encompass the results of important research published in 2006. The results of this research are clearly not limited to the state of play in 2006, but deepen and expand general knowledge of Roma issues and their various specific points. The authors of the Report decided to delve into those aspects, thus increasing the informative value of the document for subsequent use in public administration and elsewhere.

Throughout the Report, as was the case with the 2005 Report, the expressions ‘Roma’, ‘members of Roma communities’ and ‘Roma population’ are essentially used synonymously. In its free use of these expressions, the Report follows up on existing government documents, in particular the *Concept of Roma Integration (2005)* and the *2004 Report*.¹

The Report is divided into three main chapters. The key chapter is Chapter 3, which addresses in detail the social factors affecting the Roma community’s quality of life (education, employment, housing, health care and social exclusion).

This Report differs from previously published reports primarily by emphasizing the promotion of examples of good practice in the individual chapters. The Report’s authors recognize the importance of publishing positive approaches to Roma integration in the Czech Republic.

¹ The government took due note of the Report under Resolution No 276 of 9 March 2005 concerning the Report on the Situation of the Roma Communities in the Czech Republic. The Concept of Roma Integration was approved under Government Resolution No 532 of 4 May 2005.

2. INSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF ROMA INTEGRATION

There were no fundamental changes to the institutional and political context of Roma integration in 2006. Two government advisory bodies contribute to the integration of members of Roma communities – the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs and the Government Council for National Minorities. Both Councils are government think tanks and advisory bodies and as such do not have any direct executive competence. At the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, and the Ministry of the Interior, there are special expert departments which also address this issue. Institutional arrangements at local level comprise ‘Roma advisers’, i.e. employees of the municipal authorities of municipalities with extended competence who are entrusted with the agenda for the integration of members of Roma communities, as well as coordinators for Roma affairs at provincial authorities.² In a broader sense, institutional arrangements also encompass other professionals employed by the central or local government, i.e. teaching assistants in schools and Roma field social workers in municipalities.

On 1 January 2006, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs started playing the role of a methodology centre for provincial coordinators for Roma affairs. It performs this function by holding consulting days with provincial coordinators for Roma affairs; three were arranged in 2006.

In 2006, parliamentary and local elections were held in the Czech Republic. From the information available, it is impossible to determine with any precision how many Roma were on political parties’ lists of candidates for the Chamber of Deputies. It is clear, however, that no Roma were elected. On the basis of available data, the 2006 municipal elections were exceptional in terms of the number of Roma candidates. Two separate Roma parties were formed for the municipal elections (the Roma Democratic Social Party and the Roma Citizens’ Initiative of the Czech Republic). However, most Roma appeared in the candidacies of other political parties.³ The Roma Democratic Social Party put forward candidates for the municipal assemblies in Cheb, Nový Bor, Obědkovice and Český Těšín. The Roma Citizens’ Initiative had candidates for the municipal assembly in Jablonec nad Nisou.⁴

Of those political parties approached, only the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) and the Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) were able to provide further details on the number of Roma featured in their lists of candidates for local government. Of 19 Roma candidates, four were elected to a municipal assembly (in Trmice, Benátky nad Jizerou, and Lysá nad Labem) and one was elected to a council (in Lysá nad Labem) on the ODS ticket. Of these 18 candidates, eight were in first place on the list of candidates; the others were listed in tenth place or lower.⁵ Thirty-eight candidates of Roma nationality appeared on the Czech Social Democratic Party’s lists of candidates for the municipal elections; three of them were successful and were elected to assemblies (in the provinces of Moravskoslezský kraj,

² The post of provincial coordinator for Roma affairs was established under Act No 129/2000.

³ Rena Horvátová, Stanislava Ondová: Co přinesly volby? [*Ramifications of the Elections*], Romano vodi 11, p. 4

⁴ Jarmila Balážová: Romové v komunálních volbách [*Roma in the Municipal Elections*], Romano vodi 10, p. 4

⁵ This information was provided by the secretariat of the Civic Democratic Party.

Královéhradecký kraj and Ústecký kraj).⁶ We know from other information available that the Roma Democratic Social Party won a seat in the Obědkovice municipal assembly. One Roma candidate of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia was elected to the municipal assembly in Slezská Ostrava. Another Roma candidate, standing for election as a member of a local party, was elected in Hostomice, in the Teplice area.⁷ There was another interesting municipal election result in Chanov, where the association Citizens for Most (Mostečané Mostu) won 96.51% of the vote (i.e. 12,650 votes).

However, the municipal elections again showed just how sensitive the issue of Roma integration can be. Numerous local politicians exploited the anti-Roma sentiment in society to raise their own profiles and achieve the best possible election result. Once again it was shown that in the run-up to elections any measures aimed at the Roma community are unpopular among local politicians and, in essence, unworkable. The opposite was true; evictions of Roma in the period just before the elections were more widespread than at other times. The expansion in the number of candidates representing extremist parties is also a cause for concern.⁸

2.1. Financing

Every year, the government channels significant funds into the integration of Roma communities; however, in relative terms these resources accounted for just 0.000096% of the 2006 national budget. Considering that these funds are inter alia earmarked for the social inclusion of members of Roma communities, including their employment, and thus for a reduction in the numbers of persons on welfare benefits, these financial resources are manifestly low. A subsidy scheme designed to handle housing-related emergencies was given a trial in 2006. The scheme's objective was to help improve the living conditions of Roma living in socially excluded localities and to eliminate hazards to life and health in cases where the owner was proven not to have sufficient funds to make housing repairs. Although the scheme was intended primarily for small municipalities and nongovernmental organizations, ultimately 90% of the subsidies were granted to municipalities with a population of more than 3,000. The scheme will be evaluated in 2007 and a proposal will be presented to the government on whether to continue the scheme and, if so, in what form.

According to feedback from the field, these funds are not always adequately targeted and do not address the problem of integrating socially excluded Roma communities systematically. The reasons for this can be seen, on the one hand, in the poor level of interdepartmental communication and coordination of subsidy schemes and, on the other hand, in the fact that territorial and material subsidies are not sufficiently targeted (if a ministry has, say, ten million crowns for the whole of the Czech Republic, it is hardly likely to channel all this amount into a single locality. In order to help kick-start change, it generally distributes the financial resources among multiple projects; however, as a result the subsidies do not trigger the necessary change, but only prevent the situation in the locality from

⁶ Drawn from information provided by the ÈSSD press officer. Of the 38 candidates, 8 stood for election in Prague, 5 in the Støedoøeský kraj, 2 in the Plzeøský kraj, 5 in the Královøhradecký kraj, 1 in the Pardubický kraj, 9 in the Ústecký kraj, 3 in the Liberecký kraj, 1 in the Olomoucký kraj, 2 in the Moravskoslezský kraj and 2 in the Jihomoravský kraj.

⁷ Rena Horvátová, Stanislava Ondová: Co pøinesly ... [*Ramifications...*], op. cit.

⁸ The National Party put forward candidates in Prague and in the districts of Mladá Boleslav, Domažlice, Most, Èeská Lípa, Jablonec nad Nisou, Liberec, Náchod, Havlíèkùv Brod, Brno-venkov, Znojmo, Bruntál, Karviná and Ostrava-mìsto. The Republican Party had candidates in Kolín, Tábor, Rychnov nad Knìžnou and Olomouc. Jarmila Balážová: Romové [*Roma...*], op. cit.

deteriorating). Another major problem is the absence of local comprehensive and long-term strategies to handle the challenge of socially excluded Roma localities.⁹ Accordingly, if the necessary changes are to be made, the whole system of subsidization will need to change profoundly, with the introduction of both territorial and material targets and backed up by a long-term local strategy. At present, however, the state's subsidy policy does not offer motivation for local strategic and long-term thinking. For the system to work, all subsidy funds need to be placed in the hands of a single (preferably nongovernmental or interdepartmental) institution.

Overview of national budget funds channelled into the integration of Roma communities and the social inclusion of socially excluded groups¹⁰

National budget heading	TCZK		
	2006 budget approved	2006 budget amended	2006 actual
Heading 313 – Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Support for projects aimed at the integration of members of the Roma community	30,766	59,715 ¹¹	57,844.60
Heading 333 – Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Support for projects aimed at the integration of members of the Roma community	25,000	27,500 ¹²	24,436.62
Heading 334 – Ministry of Culture Support for projects aimed at the integration of members of the Roma community	2,000	2,000	1,999.02
Heading 304 – Office of the Government Handling of emergencies in socially excluded Roma communities and localities			
Campaign against Racism	0	10,000 ¹³	9,999.28
Projects aimed at the integration of the Roma community.	4,000	4,000	1,280.67
	13,000	13,000	12,394.25
Heading 398 – Public Treasury Administration Coordinators of Roma advisers at provincial authorities	5,250	5,250	4,968.90
Prevention of social exclusion in Roma communities and elimination of the consequences thereof	30,000	0 ¹⁴	
Handling of emergencies in socially excluded			

⁹ According to an Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and the Absorption Capacity of Entities Operating Therein, only 1% of the municipalities examined had a long-term strategy or plan for socially excluded Roma localities. The dearth of such strategic documents results in support for projects and activities which have nothing to do with the social inclusion of Roma and, if anything, lead to their further exclusion (e.g. government subsidies for the construction of category-one vandal-proof container homes in Vsetín in 2005).

¹⁰ Information provided by the Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic.

¹¹ Heading 313 was increased by TCZK 28,949 from the Public Treasury Administration heading (item: Prevention of social exclusion in Roma communities and elimination of the consequences thereof).

¹² During the year, heading 333 was increased by TCZK 1,000 from the binding indicator 'Programme for the Support of the Education of National Minorities and Multicultural Upbringing' and by TCZK 1,500 transferred from the binding regional education indicator 'Preparation of the Children of Recognized Refugees'.

¹³ Funds of TCZK 10,000 were transferred via a budgetary authorization from the heading of the Public Treasury Administration (item: Handling of emergencies in socially excluded Roma communities).

localities	10,000	0 ¹⁵	
Total	120,016	121,465	112,923.34

Since 2004, it has been possible to draw on funds from the European Structural Funds for projects focusing on socially excluded Roma communities. In the 2004-2006 programming period, 96 projects were subsidized by the European Social Fund with total resources of approximately CZK 554,000,000 aimed at providing assistance to the Roma. A specific working party attached to the monitoring committees of the HRD OP, SPD 3 and EQUAL CIP is responsible for maintaining a detailed overview of these projects and for monitoring their implementation and efficiency. Although it is still too early at this stage to evaluate the effectiveness of these projects, it is safe to assume that in this programming period neither municipalities nor other local institutions appeared to show any real interest in seeking resources from European Structural Funds to run programmes targeting an improvement in the situation of socially excluded Roma localities, and local small nongovernmental organizations, for their part, are unlikely to be granted such funding. If, in the next programming period, an instrument of technical assistance for towns, municipalities and other local institutions is not created for the submission of complex projects and action (a global grant) is not taken to facilitate access to the European Structural Funds for local nongovernmental organizations, this will be a missed opportunity to exploit these financial resources to make the desired improvement in the situation of socially excluded Roma localities.

During 2006, there were also intensive preparations for the 2007-2013 programming period involving the promotion of even greater opportunities to draw on resources from the European Structural Funds for projects aimed at assisting socially excluded Roma. In the context of the Human Resources and Employment Operational Programme, there will be a specific measure aimed at the social inclusion of the Roma. Under the Education for Competitiveness Operational Programme, the Roma are one of the programme's target groups, especially in the context of the measure 'Equal opportunities for children and pupils, including pupils with special educational needs.' In the context of the Integrated Operational Programme, Priority Axis 2 – 'Improvement in the quality and availability of public services', some of the measures focus on the implementation of social services in the hardest hit socially excluded Roma localities as identified in the 'Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and Communities in the Czech Republic and the Absorption Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field'. The aim is to ensure interaction between investment needs and the activities that will be supported under the European Social Fund (the Human Resources and Employment Operational Programme). Under Priority Axis 3 of the programme – 'National support of territorial development', aid will be granted to several pilot projects selected in a survey supervised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs that focuses on socially excluded Roma communities typified by high unemployment and poor levels of education, and the possibilities of complementing social activities with activities related to the housing of inhabitants in these localities will be examined (within the scope of the Human Resources and Employment OP etc.).

The central question is whether, in the context of the European Structural Funds, we will see development similar to that currently existing under national subsidy schemes, namely poor interdepartmental communication about the activities and localities supported,

¹⁴ Funds were transferred via a budgetary authorization from Heading 313 – MoLSA

¹⁵ Funds were transferred via a budgetary authorization from Heading 304 – Office of the Government

lack of cohesion as regards the areas supported, departmentalism, and support for projects with no basis in comprehensive local strategies. It is therefore necessary to maintain and expand the competences of the monitoring committees' existing working party responsible for monitoring and evaluating value for money in this area. In particular, however, it is necessary to fight for the timely formation of an entity that will be involved directly in field work and technical assistance related to the preparation of comprehensive local strategies for the social inclusion of persons living in excluded localities. One recommendation worth considering is the proposal that two simplified 'global' grant schemes be set up under the HREOP, one for municipalities seeking to implement a field work programme, and another to increase the resources of local NGOs.

3. KEY SOCIAL CHAPTERS

3.1. Education

An analysis by GAC spol. s r.o. addressing socially excluded Roma localities notes, in the section on education, that most Roma adults living in socially excluded localities have completed primary [read: *lower secondary*] education at most. Several important factors are identified here, differentiating between the internal and external aspects that have a bearing on the failure rate among Roma pupils in the systems of primary and secondary education. The internal factors are: little motivation to learn and subsequently find a job, the lack of preparedness among Roma children from socially excluded localities for compulsory full-time schooling, the lack of success achieved by Roma pupils at primary schools and their subsequent transfer to special schools, the frequent absence of Roma pupils, and the minimum number of Roma students from socially excluded localities at secondary schools and secondary vocational centres. External factors contributing to the failure rate among Roma pupils are related to the approach adopted by those who have an influence on this issue. These factors are: the low level of cooperation and coordination of activities among stakeholders, the low level of awareness of social inclusion instruments, insufficient competence/willingness to address Roma integration.

One of the critical factors behind this failure is the negative motivation within Roma families, where children in socially excluded localities commonly grow up in a context where preparation for compulsory full-time schooling is not seen as a priority; this, combined with their lack of knowledge of the Czech language (children often speak a Romani ethnolect of Czech), severely hampers pupils' chances of success in the primary education system. From the perspective of external factors, the most far-reaching appears to be the absence of a common strategic approach; according to the analysis conducted by GAC spol. s r.o., individual solutions are fragmented among different stakeholders. Given the seriousness of this problem, officials at municipal authorities (social and education departments) tend not to accept responsibility, instead preferring to pass this problem back and forth between the education and social affairs departments without looking into possible solutions. There is evidently also a low level of cooperation between nursery schools, primary schools and

educational psychology centres in relation to the work they do with Roma families to ensure care for children who defer the start of their compulsory full-time schooling.¹⁶

3.1.1. Primary education

One of the critical negative elements preventing pupils from socially excluded localities from integrating into the educational mainstream is their lack of preparedness to start primary school (see above). The concept of preparatory classes has been established to aid children's smooth transition to primary school.¹⁷ As at 30 September 2006, there were 146 preparatory classes. Of these, 91 classes were set up at normal primary schools and 37 at special schools. In all, 1,713 children received schooling in these preparatory classes. Compared to the previous school year, there was a moderate rise in both the number of preparatory classes and the number of children. There were 123 preparatory classes with 1,441 children in the 2005/2006 school year.¹⁸

Table 1. Level of current use of preparatory grades in mapped schools educating pupils from socially excluded Roma localities

Number of schools	Primary schools	Special schools	Total
Preparatory grade set up	37	31	68
No preparatory grade set up	196	95	291
Information not supplied	17	7	24
Total	250	133	383

Source: GAC spol. s r.o.

In contrast to the absolute figures provided by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Table 1, based on the analysis conducted by GAC spol. s r.o., reveals the figures ascertained in an analysis of socially excluded localities, which only covers those schools attended by Roma children from these localities.

The important fact that there has been no success in increasing the number of socially disadvantaged children at nursery schools – essential for a successful start to primary education – must not be disregarded. Although the final year of nursery schools is now free of charge, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports still has problems complying with the Timely Care Concept as regards the plan to increase the numbers of Roma children at nursery schools. There is no systemic instrument to support the process of increasing the number of children from a socially disadvantaged background at nursery schools.

3.1.1.1. Teaching assistant

The concept of teaching assistants, introduced under the new Schools Act (Act No 561/2004) has proved its value. In this respect, this tool needs to be urgently extended en masse to schools attended by children from socially excluded localities. Chapter 3.5, describing the current state of social exclusion in the Czech Republic, contains a table (Table 1) prepared by reference to information collated in the analysis conducted by GAC spol. s r.o.

¹⁶ Gabal Analysis & Consulting (2006): Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and the Absorption Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field, Prague, pp. 52-58

¹⁷ Under Resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic No 686/97, the Minister for Education, Youth and Sports was tasked with the establishment of preparatory classes at primary and special schools.

¹⁸ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, information sent to the director of the Bureau of the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs by the Minister for Education, Youth and Sports on 22 February 2007.

This table sets out the different kinds of socially excluded Roma localities. It succinctly characterizes the extent to which teaching assistants are used in the education system throughout the Czech Republic. Teaching assistants are used almost exclusively by schools in large towns and cities with a population of more than 50,000. This is extremely alarming when we consider that the distribution of socially excluded localities is almost evenly divided between rural areas (small and medium-sized municipalities, small and medium-sized towns) and cities.¹⁹ The analysis by GAC spol. s r.o. points out that the post of teaching assistant has been set up at 64 primary schools and 63 special schools attended by children from socially excluded Roma localities; the position has not been established at 169 primary schools and 63 special schools (for percentages and an overview see Chart 1).²⁰

While the problems documented in relation to the position of teaching assistant are not serious, tackling them would significantly improve the way that classroom assistance generally operates. The problems are caused by the precarious financial security of this position. The current subsidy scheme does not give schools any flexibility in the way they set up the position. As they are required to apply for funds to cover the position on a yearly basis, schools have no choice but to enter into fixed-term contracts with assistants. This concept of classroom assistance will also have to be made more precise. In some schools, this position causes a certain degree of tension between teaching staff and the teaching assistant. The methodology applicable to assistance should be developed, and schools should be made aware of the significance of this sort of activity. The thematic report of the Educational and Psychological Counselling Institute arrives at similar conclusions (see below).²¹

In its thematic report ‘Teaching assistant for children, pupils and students from a socially disadvantaged background’, the Educational and Psychological Counselling Institute notes that, following a comprehensive assessment of the completeness of applications and a check of the formal requirements, in 2006 the subsidy was split into 318 teaching assistant posts (328 individuals) amounting to CZK 68,568,431 in schools set up and funded by municipalities, provinces or associations of municipalities, and 12 teaching assistant posts in schools set up and run by the ministry, registered churches or religious societies amounting to CZK 2,192,593 (these are absolute figures for the Czech Republic as a whole).²²

According to the report, the number of teaching assistants for socially disadvantaged children, pupils and students did not change that much compared to 2005. Some provinces did not take the opportunity to increase the number of existing teaching assistants (e.g. Liberecký kraj), while in other provinces there was even a reduction in the number of teaching assistants (Pardubický kraj and Prague). This was caused by the fact that schools sometimes finance assistants from resources provided by the employment office (or from grants made by the school’s founder) and by the fact that assistants employed in September 2005 left their job and the schools had not yet found suitable replacements. Schools in the province of Karlovarský kraj fully exploited the opportunity of increasing the number of places by 40% compared to the existing situation. Generally speaking, it was mainly provinces with a small number of teaching assistants in 2005 that had problems respecting the limit imposed on

¹⁹ See Chapter 3.5. Social exclusion, Chart 3

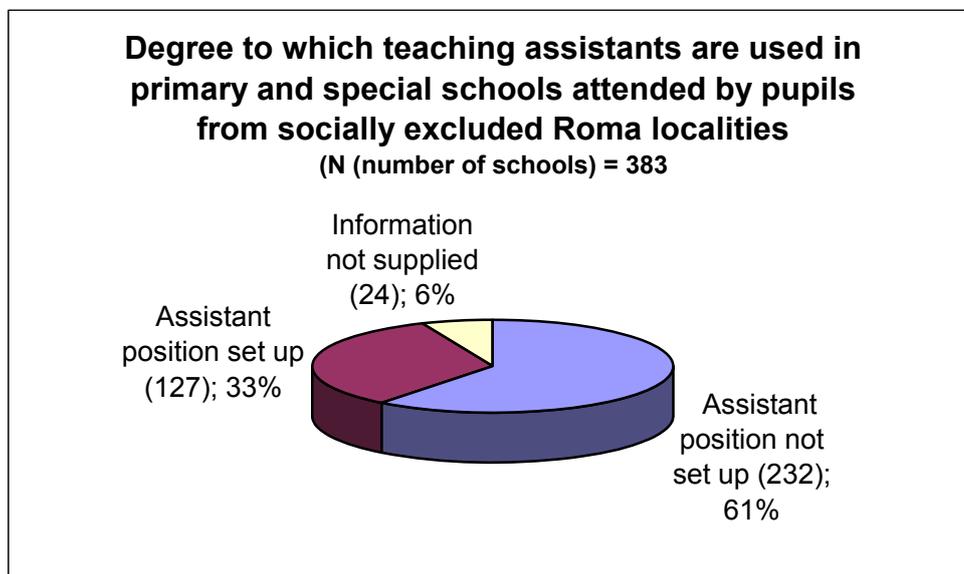
²⁰ Gabal Analysis & Consulting (2006): Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and the Absorption Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field, Prague, p. 63

²¹ IPPP (2006). Thematic report – Teaching assistant for children, pupils and students from a socially disadvantaged background.

²² IPPP (2006). Thematic report – Teaching assistant for children, pupils and students from a socially disadvantaged background, p. 11.

applications for resources to fund new teaching assistants (Vysočina, Zlínský kraj). Plzeňský kraj had just three applications in September 2005, and respecting the 20% limit was all but impossible.

Chart 1



Source of data: GAC spol. s r.o.

In many cases, the applicants did not distinguish between teaching assistance for health impaired children, pupils and students and teaching assistance for socially disadvantaged children, pupils and students; pay classifications and full-/part-time employment were stated incorrectly. It follows from the subsidy applications for new teaching assistant positions that there is often a very thin line between ‘teaching assistants for the health impaired’ and ‘teaching assistants for the socially disadvantaged’.²³

The findings during research conducted by the Educational and Psychological Counselling Institute of the Czech Republic (IPPPCR) in 2005 indicate that the development programme is rather inflexible (it is difficult for schools to acquire a teaching assistant outside the two windows advertised every year, and there is a certain degree of protraction). A greater problem – which will remain even if the redistribution of funds is transferred to the provinces and even if these resources are adequately treated to prevent a repeat of situations in the past when finances were refunded to the central level (ministry) – is the conflict with the Labour Code. The point here is that teaching assistants have been hired for fixed periods based on the duration of the subsidy. As it is not possible to enter into more than two fixed-term contracts with a worker, and as head teachers are concerned about hiring such workers on a permanent basis (because they would then have to make severance payments from school money), it is possible that some teaching assistants who have proven their worth have lost their jobs simply because of the worry that severance payments would have to be made if the position of teaching assistant is not approved for a given school. One of the possible recommendations of the IPPPCR is to announce the above-mentioned development programme in such a manner that head teachers are informed about the continued financing of a teaching assistant at their

²³ Ibid., p. 12

school more than three months before the end of the current programme. If, for any reason, the position is cancelled, head teachers may use the remaining funds as severance pay if the teaching assistant opts for the immediate payment of money (to which they would be entitled in this case because they would be made redundant for organizational reasons – the discontinuance of their position).²⁴

Step by Step o.p.s.

BLINKERS - JAKHORA²⁵

Most Roma children do not regularly attend preschool establishments where they can acquire the knowledge and skills required to make a successful start to primary school. Their lack of proficiency in the Czech language, the perceived cultural and behavioural differences, and insufficient preparedness to attend school mean that children are at a disadvantage when they start primary school. Against this background, Roma children are often viewed as backward and are inappropriately transferred to special needs schools. The education they receive is very closely connected with their subsequent quality of life. This project is geared towards preschool children.

Project objectives

To increase Roma children's preparedness for school by means of quality preschooling and to ensure a suitable choice of primary school and a successful start to the first level of the primary education system.

Sub-objectives:

To cooperate with Roma families with a view to ensuring that they appreciate the significance of pre-primary education for the future schooling of their children.

To train the teachers of those nursery and primary schools involved in such a way that they are able to cooperate with Roma families and provide a constructive multicultural environment in schools.

By way of the integration of Roma children into nursery schools attended predominantly by Czech children, to foster a positive relationship to the Roma minority among Czech parents and children based on their own experience, and to foster a positive relationship to the majority population among Roma parents and children.

To motivate nursery schools and primary schools to employ teaching assistants of Roma origin who can work closely with families from a socially disadvantaged background in such a way as to ensure their children attend school on a regular basis. Another of the teaching assistant's tasks is to liaise with the teaching staff of nursery and primary schools so that schools adopt a constructive approach to other nationalities. Teaching assistants cooperate with all the local Roma community on an ongoing basis and maintain intensive contact with it at enrolment time.

To establish cooperation with primary schools near the nursery schools involved so that Roma children are given the support they need for subsequent integration into primary schools attended by predominantly by Czech children.

Project addressees

The project is mainly intended for the Roma community and teachers of nursery and primary schools (level one).

Project content

Questionnaire survey

The project's first activity was a questionnaire survey to analyse the Roma community's attitude to

²⁴ Ibid., p. 12

²⁵ Information about the project is available at www.sbscr.cz.

preschool education and nursery schools' attitude to the Roma. This analysis was used as the basis for further project activities.

Seminars for nursery schools and field work with the Roma community

During the project, seminars and meetings for nursery school teachers and Roma parents were arranged. The aim was to break the mutual distrust and offer a helping hand in the process of establishing initial and subsequent successful cooperation. One of the project's sub-objectives was for Roma parents to enrol their children at the nursery schools involved and for children to start attending these schools in September 2004. Field workers – mainly of Roma origin (13 out of 15) and thus people with a sound knowledge of the Roma community and regarded as trustworthy by the Roma community – cooperated with Roma families.

Teaching assistant

The project focused on participation in activities that would motivate nursery schools to create the position of a teaching assistant of Roma origin to keep the process of integration children into nursery schools flowing after the end of the project.

Roundtables

In the 2004/2005 school year, the project included roundtable meetings designed to expand the project by establishing cooperation between the nursery schools involved and nearby primary schools with a low proportion of Roma pupils in order to prevent a trend of accumulation in the education system and to help integrate Roma pupils into primary schools attended by Czech children.

Project outcomes

In spring 2004, 43 children of Roma origin were enrolled under the project.

The appointment of seven teaching assistants in the nursery schools involved is a major achievement. We are confident that their presence at nursery schools and further cooperation with the local Roma community will result in the enrolment of increasing numbers of socio-culturally disadvantaged children in subsequent years.

Where the project took place

Brno, Ostrava, Pardubice

When the project took place

The Blinkers-Jakhora project was designed to run over three years. It began in September 2003. In the 2003/2004 school year it concentrated solely on liaison with the Roma community and nursery schools. In the 2004/2005 school year the project targeted an expansion in cooperation between nursery schools and primary schools. Regrettably, the project was brought to a halt in March 2005 due to lack of funding.

Project financing

From September to December 2003, the project was supported by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. From 2004, the project was financed by Step by Step v ČR, o.s

Between October 2004 and March 2005, the cost of roundtable activities was defrayed from a grant awarded by the OSF – Prague foundation.

3.1.1.2. Schools with a high percentage of pupils from a socially disadvantaged background

The 2005 Report on the Situation of the Roma Communities described in detail the issue of schools with a high percentage of pupils from a socially disadvantaged background. We are compelled to point out that no headway was made with this issue over the monitored period. Naturally, in the interests of integrating Roma pupils and members of socially excluded Roma communities in general into society, such schools should not be allowed to

mushroom; on the other hand, the complexity of ensuring quality education in a situation where there is a higher number of pupils from a socially disadvantaged background in classes needs to be reflected.

Although the issue of pupils with special educational needs is specified in Section 16(4) of the Schools Act (Act No 561/2004), there is no legal authorization to increase the budget of such schools. In Section 16(6), the Act provides that these pupils are entitled to the necessary conditions facilitating this education and to counselling from the school and educational advisory facilities; however, schools are not in a position to offer such services without additional funding. Decree No 73/2005 on the education of children, pupils, and students with special educational needs, and of extraordinarily gifted children, pupils, and students, addresses only the education of disabled pupils – social disadvantage is not mentioned here. In Part D (*Education of pupils with special educational needs*), Section 8.2 (*Education of socially disadvantaged pupils*) of Measure of the Minister for Education, Youth and Sports No 31504/2004-22 of 13 December 2004 issuing the Framework Curriculum for Primary Education, in the context of educating socially disadvantaged pupils a lower number of children in the class is stipulated. This condition was meant to be developed by a specific implementing regulation, which was never issued. If a lower number of pupils from a different socio-cultural background in classes is not set, their further successful education is in jeopardy.²⁶

3.1.2. Secondary education

In 2006, 3,237 applications were supported with funds of CZK 13,079,200 in the context of the programme for the support of Roma pupils at secondary schools.²⁷ Since 2003, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has run this programme twice a year, and informs schools of the possibilities and conditions of the programme via provincial authorities and city halls. The aim of this programme is to support the studies of those Roma pupils whose parents suffer considerable hardship due to the cost of a secondary education. Financial resources from this programme are intended for legal persons or organizational units of the state operating as schools (hereinafter referred to as ‘legal person’) with a view to supporting the education of Roma pupils and students who are Czech citizens and whose families suffer hardship due to the cost of secondary or further vocational education. Funding is available under this programme for legal persons registered in the schools register that provide: secondary education, secondary education with a certificate of apprenticeship, secondary education with a school-leaving examination, post-secondary vocational training or post-secondary education at a conservatory.²⁸

3.2. Employment

Employment, as one of the key indicators of social exclusion, did not record any major changes in 2006. There is a high unemployment rate within Roma communities; in provinces with generally serious unemployment (Severočeský, Moravskoslezský) the absolute figures

²⁶ From information supplied by the City of Prague coordinator of Roma advisers, Božena Filová, in an e-mail of 30 January 2007.

²⁷ The Programme for the Support of Roma Secondary School Pupils was set up under Government Resolution No 607/4.

²⁸ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, information sent to the director of the Bureau of the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs by the Minister for Education, Youth and Sports on 22 February 2007.

are several times higher. The growth trend of the Czech economy, the steep GDP growth, and the related increase in employment have virtually no impact on the employment rate in socially excluded Roma communities – no significant adjustments to employment figures have been registered. According to research conducted in 2006 by Gabal Analysis & Consulting for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, in most of the socially excluded Roma localities surveyed the unemployment rate was between 90% and 100%.²⁹

As a result of the high momentum of industrial changes, the transition to a knowledge society and de-industrialization – for which they are not prepared - most members of socially excluded Roma communities have no career prospects. This is one of the principal reasons for their social exclusion. Consequently, the knowledge society, composed of ‘producers’ and ‘consumers’, assigns those groups no status, thus marginalizing them even more in all spheres of societal life.³⁰ In his study of the factors behind social exclusion, Petr Mareš notes: ‘The Roma are forced out of better quality localities by neighbourly grudges or high rent, or they find themselves in deprived urban zones from which the middle classes have fled (I share the view that housing is one of the most burdensome forms of social exclusion faced by the Roma, together with unemployment – these two phenomena are closely linked).’³¹

One of the important instruments designed to have an impact on the current situation in the field of employment policy in the Czech Republic was the adoption of the new Employment Act (Act No 435/2004), which introduced new measures in the context of the active employment policy.³² This resulted in the reform of material security available during unemployment, the comprehensive regulation of the employment of disabled persons, and, in general, a new definition of instruments applied under the active employment policy. Unfortunately, this law does not address socially excluded groups of the population in the same way as it covers disabled persons (in Part Three). Some of the instruments found in the part on disabled persons could also be used to address the problem of unemployment among socially excluded persons. These include occupational rehabilitation, which mainly comprises career guidance, employment advice, theoretical and practical job training, intermediation, keeping or switching jobs, and the cultivation of conditions conducive to employment or other occupational activity.³³ A new measure incorporated into the active employment policy was employment-focused programmes that can be implemented by means of cooperation between employment offices and other institutions, including international cooperation. Employment offices are also in a position where they can put new active employment policy instruments and measures to the test that take account of specific conditions on the labour market. The programme of socially beneficial jobs was reformed. The level of financial assistance granted for these jobs is now linked to the relative unemployment rate in the region – contributions are higher in worse affected regions than in regions with a below-average unemployment rate. In addition, the provisions of the new legislation apply not only to newly created jobs, but also to jobs reserved for a certain category of the unemployed (e.g. school-leavers). In this respect, socially beneficial jobs have essentially replaced internship agreements, which were previously a separate (and widely used) instrument of the active employment policy. Other

²⁹ Gabal Analysis & Consulting (2006): Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and the Absorption Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field, Prague.

³⁰ Syrovátka, Tomáš; Mareš, Petr (2006): Chudoba, deprivace, sociální vyloučení: nezaměstnaní a pracující chudí. [*Poverty, deprivation, social exclusion: the unemployed and the working poor.*] Sociologický časopis, 42/4

³¹ Mareš, Petr (2006): *Faktory sociálního vyloučení.* [*Factors of social exclusion.*] VÚPSV. Prague, pp. 17-18

³² Act No 435/2004 entered into force on 1 October 2004.

³³ Definition of occupational rehabilitation (source: http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/ab_info/prac_rehabilitace). MoLSA, Prague.

active employment policy instruments remained unchanged (investment incentives, guidance, community work, subsidies for the transition to a new business programme, and sheltered workshops and workplaces).³⁴

It follows from the information supplied by the head of the Social Affairs Department at the Olomoucký kraj Provincial Authority as background documentation for this Report that tighter registration conditions at employment offices (in accordance with Act No 435/2004) have resulted in ballooning health insurance debts among deregistered clients.³⁵ We have good reason to believe that this lead situation also affects the long-term unemployed members of Roma communities in large part.

In keeping with the European Employment Strategy, in 2004 the Czech government approved the 2004-2006 National Action Plan for Employment.³⁶ This plan set out the objectives and means of achieving them up to 2006. As regards the issue of increasing employment among socially excluded members of Roma communities, the principal challenge of Priority No 7 (Support for the integration of persons disadvantaged on the labour market and the fight against their discrimination) of the plan is to create an instrument for this period that will facilitate the accomplishment of government policy tasks aimed at eradicating social exclusion in conjunction with regional and local authorities and with the use of the EU's Structural Funds. This instrument was meant to be an implementing agency.³⁷ The formation of this agency has been delayed. The initial steps for the establishment of the agency have been taken and the agency should be fully operational in 2008 or 2009. It will be under the wing of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic.

3.2.1. Unemployment as a key indicator of social exclusion

Long-term unemployment constitutes a high risk of social exclusion. This risk is all the greater if both partners are unemployed. This results in a paradoxical effect where, in some families, there is a concentration of employed persons (families of the majority population), while in others there is a concentration of unemployed persons (socially excluded families). In his study of social exclusion factors, Petr Mareš mentions, in this respect, Lydia Morris' finding concerning the 'growing tendency of the population to be divided into marriages where both partners are employed and marriages where neither partner is employed.'³⁸

Compared to other EU Member States, the Czech Republic reports an average general unemployment rate, but an above-average rate of long-term unemployment (i.e. unemployment lasting longer than 12 months) and very long-term unemployment (lasting longer than 24 months). The long-term unemployed account for a higher share in the total number of unemployed; this means that more than half of unemployed persons remain in the register for more than a year, and almost a third (31.3%) for more than two years.³⁹ In this

³⁴ Act No 435/2004; Syrovátka, Tomáš; Kulhavý, Václav; Horáková, Markéta; Rákoczyová, Miroslava (2006): *Hodnocení efektivity programů aktivní politiky zaměstnanosti*. [Evaluating the effectiveness of active employment policy programmes.] Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs, Prague.

³⁵ Based on information submitted by Ms Machová, the head of the Social Affairs Department at the Olomoucký kraj Provincial Authority, in a letter of 23 January 2007

³⁶ The 2004-2006 National Action Plan for Employment was approved under Government Resolution No 696 of 14 July 2004.

³⁷ 2004-2006 National Action Plan for Employment, Priority No 7.

³⁸ Mareš, Petr (2006): *Faktory sociálního vyloučení*. VÚPSV. Prague, pp. 20 -21

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 33-34

respect, the analysis by GAC spol. s r.o. notes that, in the context of socially excluded Roma localities, the unemployment is very frequently classified as long-term.⁴⁰

Therefore, unemployment is one of the key indicators of social exclusion. The main problem of social exclusion lies in the more difficult access to opportunities. In the case of unemployment, this might mean insufficient access to employment opportunities, which may be manifested as direct discrimination as a result of employers' personal prejudices or may be the result of the poor knowledge potential of socially excluded Roma job-seekers (which is a handicap that is very hard to overcome). It is quite clear that large employers in the Czech Republic (e.g. foreign investors) are demanding an increasingly high-skilled workforce. The resources invested by the state in this field are not of an adequate level or quality to improve the situation within socially excluded communities. The active employment policy, which addresses this problem primarily by means of retraining programmes, fails to a certain degree because of the structure of education among the Roma socially excluded population, where a very high percentage has only primary [*lower secondary*] education.⁴¹ In their analysis of the efficiency of active employment policy programmes in the Czech Republic, Syrovátka, Kulhavý, Horáková and Rákoczyová note that this group of unemployment persons (with primary education in general) has little chance of participating in retraining programmes, despite the intentions of labour market policymakers who view poorly skilled people difficult to place on the labour market as one of their priorities (see Table 1).^{42 43}

Table 1 – **Retraining ratio under the active employment policy, by level of education**

	retraining		unemployment		ratio
	(a)	(b) %	(c)	(d) %	(b)/(d)
no education	59	0.1	3,512	0.6	0.19
primary school (i.e. to 14 or 15)	6,664	13.9	162,349	30.0	0.46
apprenticeship	17,351	36.2	234,835	43.4	0.83
secondary without <i>maturita</i>	476	1.0	5,332	1.0	1.01
apprenticeship with <i>maturita</i>	3,640	7.6	21,695	4.0	1.90
complete secondary (grammar school with <i>maturita</i>)	2671	5.6	15,792	2.9	1.91
complete secondary school vocational education (secondary vocational school with <i>maturita</i>)	13,911	29.0	77,363	14.3	2.03
further education	535	1.1	3,044	0.6	1.99
tertiary	2,607	5.4	17,332	3.2	1.70
scientific	53	0.1	421	0.1	1.42
total	47,951	100.0	541,675	100.0	1.00

⁴⁰ Gabal Analysis & Consulting (2006): Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and the Absorption Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field, Prague, p. 42

⁴¹ Gabal Analysis & Consulting (2006): Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and the Absorption Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field, Prague, pp. 52-58

⁴² Syrovátka, Tomáš; Kulhavý, Václav; Horáková, Markéta; Rákoczyová, Miroslava (2006): *Hodnocení efektivitv programu aktivní politiky zaměstnanosti*. Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs, Prague, pp. 16-19.

⁴³ One of the fundamental documents defining the state's employment priorities is the 2004-2006 National Action Plan for Employment. The issue of poorly skilled persons is addressed in Priority 3, Measure 3.5.

Source: Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs (2004 figures)⁴⁴

Similar findings presented by the authors of the study come from the provincial coordinators of Roma advisers; some point out that although retraining courses are available at employment offices for the long-term unemployed, they are not adequately used.⁴⁵

Some provinces, besides running retraining courses via employment offices, work with socially excluded Roma and promote their employment, or increase their capacity to be employed, based on cooperation between non-profit organizations, municipalities and employment offices. The combination of these entities, each of which works in a different area, forms appealing potential for job-seekers who, for various reasons, are unable to take part in retraining courses organized by employment offices, as pointed out by the analysis above.

‘Try it Together’ project⁴⁶

The ‘Try it Together’ project of the Salinger civic association in Hradec Králové is funded from the Joint Regional Operational Programme (JROP) and focuses on improving client access to the labour market. The project is planned for 60 clients and offers incentive-based blocks organized as one-day events or excursions. Forty clients were involved in the first four blocks, with 32 complying with the graduation conditions and receiving a certificate. Two blocks are yet to be held. The project is run in cooperation with the employment office and concentrates on clients aged 15-25 from a socially disadvantaged background.

‘Support for the Employment and Education of Roma in Nový Bydžov’⁴⁷

The project ‘Support for the Employment and Education of Roma in Nový Bydžov’ is implemented by the municipality of Nový Bydžov. It is funded from the JROP. Twelve adult Roma (men and women) were involved in the project, geared towards the acquisition of basic work skills and habits. All 12 completed the retraining course in June; ten Roma still have jobs and two were dismissed due to absence from work. The project is run in conjunction with the employment office.

The examples above are symptomatic of the need to support this interaction (i.e. cooperation between private, municipal and state organizations) in a future amendment to the Employment Act.

The fundamental analysis carried out in 2006 by Gabal Analysis & Consulting (GAC) describes the nature of employment within socially excluded Roma communities, where illicit

⁴⁴ Syrovátka, Tomáš; Kulhavý, Václav; Horáková, Markéta; Rákoczyová, Miroslava (2006): *Hodnocení efektivitv programů aktivní politiky zaměstnanosti*. Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs, Prague.

⁴⁵ Based on information submitted by Radim Gabriel, the head of the Social Affairs Department at the Středočeský kraj Provincial Authority, in a letter of 19 January 2007

⁴⁶ Based on information supplied by Miloslav Plass, the deputy governor of Královéhradecký kraj, in a letter of 18 January 2007.

⁴⁷ Based on information supplied by Miloslav Plass, the deputy governor of Královéhradecký kraj, in a letter of 18 January 2007.

work (occasional seasonal work) predominates. This approach to life gives rise to specific alternative living strategies, applied by socially excluded Roma to ensure they have a means of subsistence.⁴⁸ Their marginal position on the on the labour market, combined with the use of the social security benefits system, means they nurture a specific set of ways to handle situations in their lives (this theme will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.5).

It is not surprising that, given the key significance of unemployment in the lives of the socially excluded, it is important to guide these people back to the labour market in order to break the spell of social exclusion. The GAC analysis states that ‘integration on the labour market appears to be a crucial requirement for the social inclusion of inhabitants of excluded localities.’⁴⁹ At the end of the chapter addressing this problem, the GAC analysis discusses the ineffective employment policy and makes recommendations regarding changes to the way the welfare system works, the penalization of discrimination and the improved efficiency of the employment policy.⁵⁰

Regrettably, we note that the active employment policy applied at employment offices, which should make a fundamental change to the alarming level of unemployment among socially excluded Roma, is failing (see above). Conversely, projects by non-profit organizations focusing on this are a positive, expanding trend (see 3.2.2. Examples of good practice). However, the fact that these projects exist should not mean the state can shy away from the action it should be implementing in this area itself.

3.2.2. Examples of good practice

In 2006, the Bureau of the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs, in liaison with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, organized a two-day seminar and workshop on the unemployment of socially excluded members of Roma communities and possible ways of increasing their employment by means of assistance from the European Social Fund.⁵¹ The seminar was a platform for the presentation of examples of good practice intended to reach out to the representatives of non-profit organizations working with socially excluded Roma and inspire them to create similar projects in the context of supported employment at their parent organizations.

⁴⁸ Gabal Analysis & Consulting (2006): Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and the Absorption Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field, Prague, pp. 41-43

⁴⁹ Gabal Analysis & Consulting (2006): Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and the Absorption Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field, Prague, p. 42

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 43

⁵¹ ‘Examples of good practice in the supported employment of Roma and the possibilities of their dissemination and implementation at local level by the public, non-profit and private sector by means of assistance from the European Social Fund’. Olomouc, 14-15 June 2006

Supported Employment Agency, Bruntál League, civic association

Green Workshop⁵²

Given the scarcity employment opportunities for citizens with various types of social exclusion, especially citizens with multiple handicaps on the labour market, and given the support of environmentally friendly economic activities, the LIGA (*LEAGUE*) civic association set up a sheltered 'Green Workshop', which specializes in the environmental disposal of electrical and electronic waste by making maximum re-use of secondary materials with the lowest possible impact on the environment.

The sheltered workshop is one of the elements of the system for the separate collection, re-use, recycling and processing of electric waste as required by the EU Directive 2002/96/EC. Under this directive, as of 13 August 2005 manufacturers of electrical and electronic equipment have been required to contribute to the final disposal of their own worn products via a special new fund.

There are currently twelve sheltered workshops specializing in this activity in the Czech Republic. Modern technology smoothes the way for almost 100% reusability of all electronic and electrical waste. Electrical waste is a source of numerous secondary materials (iron, aluminium, copper, glass).

The direct disposal of selected electrical waste takes place on machinery with cutting-edge technical and technological fittings consistent with today's stringent demands on the proper processing of waste equipment in as environmentally friendly a manner as possible. The recovered materials are sold to processing companies and salvage centres for reuse. Only a small percentage of the waste which is genuinely impossible to reuse, is sent to designated landfills at the usual rates of payment. The Green Workshop currently employs 16 people. All 16 places are reserved for citizens with restricted mobility and orientation. About half of them are of Roma origin.

An intrinsic part of the activities on offer is the opportunity of cooperation for companies which, through the workshop, can meet the mandatory proportion of disabled employees as required under the Employment Act, as amended. The Green Workshop disposes of and reprocesses the following electrical and electronic equipment: television sets, video recorders, video cameras, tape players, hi-fis, monitors, computers, telephones, switchboards, faxes, printers, photocopiers, calculators, typewriters, logic boards, connectors, cables, kitchen appliances, electric heaters, vacuum cleaners, irons, hairdryers, and toasters.

The project emerged with the financial assistance of the Bruntál Employment Office, the Dalkia Ostrova Endowment Fund and the Siemens Prague Support Fund.

⁵² This is an edited text from the presentation made by the Bruntál League at the seminar 'Examples of good practice in the supported employment of Roma and the possibilities of their dissemination and implementation at local level by the public, non-profit and private sector by means of assistance from the European Social Fund'. Olomouc, 14-15 June 2006

Supported Employment Agency, Bruntál League, civic association

League Structures Programme⁵³

The League Structures Programme took on its present form at the beginning of 2002. At that time, the association started to address in more depth the issues surrounding the employment of citizens disadvantaged on the labour market.

Initially, the League Structures Programme was intended to help Bruntál resolve the catastrophic state of the town's roads and pavements. The association's work was based on the premiss – which subsequently proved correct – that it would be more expensive for the town to reconstruct a complete pavement than to replace tiles as soon as they became cracked.

Several people registered with the employment office were employed to carry out minor repairs to pavements. Over several years, 12 people from the ranks of the long-term unemployed who had successfully completed a retraining course in tiling were gradually hired. In 2004, a further nine people were retrained. In 2003 and 2004, these people were employed within the scope of the project 'Roma work and cleaning crews', which had the backing of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Moravskoslezský kraj and several private foundations. The volume of work on pavement repairs in Bruntál (the former 'Roma work crews' project) presently costs CZK 600,000. In 2005, the League Structures Programme was created, offering job opportunities to other workers, where they can put their skills and knowledge to good use in a smoothly running team. The sections of the League Structures employ 8 people on a full-time basis and a further 14 under work agreements. Contracts related to the construction of apartment blocks in Prague and Plzeň are worth CZK 2,000,000.

Czech Catholic Charity, Olomouc

Supported employment of Roma⁵⁴

The aim of this project was to find a suitable job for service users, to improve the status of Roma on the labour market, and to overcome prejudice in the recruitment of Roma job-seekers by potential employers.

The target group was long-term unemployed job-seekers, persons at risk of social exclusion, and motivated members of Roma communities who are interested in actively searching for work and in increasing their skills within the scope of lifelong learning. The objective is achieved if the user works for a company on the open labour market, the job offers long-term prospects (i.e. the user is not in a probationary period and has not agreed to short-term employment, e.g. by entering into an agreement on the performance of a specific task), and the user no longer needs any of the forms of assistance available under supported employment.

Method for the motivation of the target group:

- A tailor-made approach – completion of a personal questionnaire, preparation of a professional CV, appointment of a personalized plan
- The involvement of users in decisions on the use of services

⁵³ This is an edited text from the presentation made by the Bruntál League at the seminar 'Examples of good practice in the supported employment of Roma and the possibilities of their dissemination and implementation at local level by the public, non-profit and private sector by means of assistance from the European Social Fund'. Olomouc, 14-15 June 2006

- Job clubs – meetings of service users and experience sharing
- Positive experience – successfully employed service users

Methodology of work with the target group:

- Personal contact with the user
 - this contact follows an expression of interest from the user and is an opportunity for the delivery of detailed information and the user's basic requirements. Contact is very important in ascertaining the user's genuine interest in the social service of 'Supported Employment of Roma'.
- Repeated meeting with the user
 - these meetings, which mainly take place on the Charity's premises in Olomouc, are attended by a job consultant. During the meeting, the user's work-related abilities and possibilities are identified, an individual plan is drawn up, and arrangements are made to approach companies and meet again, or to take part in the Job Club.
- Creation of a tailor-made user plan
 - in the tailor-made plan, the user and the job consultant work together to formulate personal goals which may be adjusted to the current situation and needs of the user during the service as required. The tailor-made plan builds on the user's possibilities, abilities, skills, qualifications and interests, and on the user's ideas about future employment. The tailor-made plan describes the prime objective and ways of working towards the objective.
- Maintenance of documentation
 - documentation relating to the service user is maintained by the job consultants and project coordinator. They document all initial negotiations, negotiations in progress and the outcome of negotiations with the user or family; the employers approached, the course and result of negotiations with employers; the healthcare and social institutions approached, along with other sources to obtain the necessary information; negotiations with field workers from the Citizens' Advice Bureau; the procedure of the service provided to the user, deliberations on the way forward, meetings at Job Clubs, supervision, etc.
- Telephone calls
 - used primarily to contact companies and ascertain initial interest in cooperation under our programme, and to make appointments for personal meetings. We provide references on similar experiences in other companies and organizations, and try to identify whether there might be career prospects in the approached company for supported employment users.
- E-mail contact
 - unless we receive a rejection during telephone contact, the call is followed by the sending of detailed material about our service to the potential employer.
- Personal meetings with potential employers
 - a maximum of 14 days after e-mail contact, a request is made for a personal meeting with a company representative. The experience of SPOLU Olomouc suggests that if a personal meeting is held, an employment contract is usually concluded between the user and the employer.
- Introducing the user at a company
 - this takes place by appointment. The idea of the visit is to acquaint the company and the job-seeker with each other, to see the workplace, the activities and any fellow workers, and to agree definitively on a work start date.
- In-situ support
 - where necessary, a work assistant is present in the workplace to help the user acquire the necessary work skills and break down any communication barriers in the team (at SPOLU Olomouc, a work assistant was used twice for the target group of Roma; over the duration of the project at the Olomouc Charity no assistance has yet been provided).

⁵⁴ This is an edited text from the presentation made by the Czech Catholic Charity at the seminar 'Examples of good practice in the supported employment of Roma and the possibilities of their dissemination and implementation at local level by the public, non-profit and private sector by means of assistance from the European Social Fund'. Olomouc, 14-15 June 2006

Roles of the various actors and partners:

The project's main partner is the civic association and SPOLU Olomouc - Supported Employment Agency, which provides us with methodological management and consultation. The Olomouc Charity followed up on the good practices of the SPOLU Olomouc civic association which, since February 2004, has provided the service of supported employment for the Roma and which verified that the supported employment method is effective for the Roma community. Besides a project already implemented – the Khamoro Charity station (nursery school, extra-curricular lessons, leisure activities) – at our organization in the locality inhabited by the target group, the supported employment project smoothly follows on from the work with adolescents and adults and focuses on the labour market. There is also cooperation with other Roma and pro-Roma organizations, as well as community planning meetings and the organization of cultural and other events.

PROJECT OUTPUTS

Statistics from January 2006 to the end of December 2006

Contact established	120
Clients we work with	29
Employment contracts concluded	50
Working clients	23, of whom 16 have progressed between the three-month probationary period
Service provision agreements concluded	52

Project success

- Seeking out and cooperating only with motivated candidates suitable for a specific position
- The service was already known as it had been provided by the civic association SPOLU [TOGETHER] and Roma in Olomouc are aware of it
- The Roma job consultant, creating a confidential environment for clients, has made a major contribution to the project's success
- The provision of guidance to both clients and employers, assistance in handling difficult situations

Cooperation

- Active employment policy cooperation with an advice centre, a charity shelter house – clients are often plagued by more problems than unemployment alone. Therefore, where the client's situation dictates, we try to find a comprehensive solution with reference to the shelter and advice centre, and cooperate with the staff of these Olomouc Charity centres
- Efforts to reach out to new companies, acquaint them with the project. Employers who know about us and have positive experience of working with us turn to us when they have vacancies to fill.
- Employment offices – sending of a leaflet, project presentation, cooperation with individual officials, as required by the client's situation
- Local government – Social Assistance Department, again where required by the client's situation
- Olomouc Provincial Authority, Olomouc City Hall – cooperation with advisers on national minorities

Financing

PHARE 2003 Human Resources Development – November 2005 – August 2006 (CZK 1.2 million/10 months)

Measure 2.1 – Integration of population groups at risk of social exclusion

Joint Regional Operational Programme (JROP) – as of 1 September 2006 (CZK 2.4 million/2 years)
Measure 5.3.2 – Support of social integration in the regions

Ester Javorník, civic association

Employment and Activity Programme⁵⁵

The loss of day-to-day 'work' sows the seeds of HUMAN degradation. Work, as a mental and physical activity, is inherent in human life and determines how successful it is. A society devoid of permanent mental and physical inactivity is much healthier in all respects. The programme of employment in the context of therapy and rehabilitation is a central programme in the AXIS. Accordingly, it is one of the key points of the programme of Comprehensive Social Field Work. A person's degradation will end on the day he or she starts working again.

In 2005 and 2006, the Ester Javorník civic association created several dozen jobs.

The regions of Javorník and Vidnava – Žulová are suffering from chronic economic depression. Jobs are disappearing every year. By applying instruments under the employment policy of the state (represented by the employment office), NGOs can obtain subsidies covering up to 100% of wages for new jobs. The creation of an employment programme means the beginning of committed social involvement for any non-profit organization intending to operate in the field of social work. If we fail to create opportunities for people to return to work, we encourage a socially dependent, stagnant community of people who gradually lose contact with the real world (despite watching television 20 hours a day).

What jobs?

Any – that would be a start. However, it should be borne in mind that being an employer of people reliant on welfare entails the preparation of the organization, team and individuals for this experience. This requires a year of targeted preparation. It means taking the time to think through the implications of the decision and come to terms with the fact that you are creating great expectations and often disrupting a system of social and economic certainty based on state social benefits.

The community work format may seem too rigid. In the region in which Ester Javorník o.s. operates, it is one of the few available means of direct employment. Administration is simple (compared to EU projects). If an organization strikes up a solid working relationship with employment offices, community work can be combined with supplementary programmes – training, qualification and educational programmes.

Examples of jobs created by the Ester civic association in the field of employment (2005 and 2006):

- renovation of the Esterka building in Zálesí – by way of occupational therapy and community work
- renovation of the TREND building in Javorník – by way of occupational therapy and community work
- premises and facilities of the Centre for Children and Young People in Javorník – community work/EU
- TREND training workshops and classrooms – community work/EU

⁵⁵

This is an edited text from the presentation made by Ester Javorník at the seminar 'Examples of good practice in the supported employment of Roma and the possibilities of their dissemination and implementation at local level by the public, non-profit and private sector by means of assistance from the European Social Fund'. Olomouc, 14-15 June 2006

STERENA s.r.o. / a.s. EKOLTES Hranice

Supported employment of Roma⁵⁶

The whole project for the supported employment of Roma in Hranice was practically launched back in 2003, when the company's board of directors was presented with the issue of employing problematic and difficult-to-employ groups of the population in Hranice, with special consideration for the long-term unemployed. It is quite understandable why EKOLTES Hranice, a.s. was selected; it is a public limited company fully owned by the town of Hranice and has operations offering opportunities to less skilled workers without the need for in-depth training. Following a discussion on the whole affair by the company's governing bodies, the economic management drew up several requirements which, from the perspective of the company management, would have to be respected if the selected form – supported employment – was to have a hope of success and be viable. These requirements were set on the basis of many years' experience of working with this group of people.

a) Appointment of conditions:

1. Maximum and active project support from the company's governing bodies:
 - necessary for the support of new solutions to work organization,
 - explanation of the whole issue to junior managers and employees,
 - solutions to any problems and complaints from employees and the public.

2. The selection of project partners, in our case the town of Hranice and the Přerov and Hranice Employment Office:
 - the town's support of and interest in employing the group in municipal services,
 - public support for the project,
 - identification of the target group of people,
 - organization of selection procedures,
 - initial assistance from subsidies for the active employment policy.

3. The condition that the project will be targeted solely at the Roma:
 - in the past, mixed working parties proved to be ineffective and problematic from the perspective of human relations.

4. The Roma will organize the work themselves, preferably via a Roma company:
 - a feeling of pride and solidarity,
 - freedom as regards how and when they do the work, guidelines set only for the start and end of working time,
 - they will perform the work at their own expense and with their own resources, i.e. without any advance payments or financial or material assistance from the company.

5. EKOLTES Hranice, a.s. will be responsible for the methodological management of the work, i.e.
 - it will assign work,
 - during the day it will check the performance of the work so that flawed procedures and damage can be prevented,
 - it will take receipt of the work done.

⁵⁶ This is an edited text from the presentation made by a representative of the public limited company EKOLTES Hranice at the seminar 'Examples of good practice in the supported employment of Roma and the possibilities of their dissemination and implementation at local level by the public, non-profit and private sector by means of assistance from the European Social Fund'. Olomouc, 14-15 June 2006

6. The work will be carried out on the basis of normal contractual relations, and cash flow will be demonstrably channelled via normal invoicing and hence non-cash payments; EKOLTES Hranice a.s. will guarantee, by agreement with a Roma enterprise, regular cash-flow terms between companies and will supervise the proper and regular payment of wages to the employees of the Roma company.

b) Project objectives:

- 1) To teach the selected group basic work habits (daily arrival at work, the performance of work duties, respect for the organization of work, the required quality of work, etc.).
- 2) After integration in simple work activities, to identify the most skilful and enable them to retrain to a higher form of work (brush cutter, power saw, motorized lawn mower, through to driving licences or retraining courses in tiling and bricklaying).
- 3) After verifying their working and moral qualities, to release these workers onto the normal labour market with references from the company, the town of Hranice and the employment office for potential employers, or to help such workers obtain a trade certificate for self-employment.

c) Motivation of the target group:

- 1) A significant improvement in social status,
- 2) a significant improvement in societal status in general,
- 3) a significant improvement in societal status in the Roma community,
- 4) a guaranteed monthly income and therefore an increase in the quality of everyday life,
- 5) the possibility of enhancing career prospects as an employee, or in self-employment,
- 6) a certain pride in belonging to a purely Roma company.

d) Project risks and weaknesses:

- 1) The target group's possible lack of interest in the work offered owing to its low appeal and the level of pay,
- 2) the emergence of possible problems between Roma and rank-and-file company employees due to feelings of threat and rivalry,
- 3) the Roma group's feeling of isolation from other employees and the resulting feeling of unequal status,
- 4) problems transferring the best to new workplaces and replacing them with other candidates of the same quality (the local market is restricted to a certain degree),
- 5) the difficulty of finding a footing on the normal labour market and therefore the possible feeling that any effort is for nothing.

The project as described above was launched on 1 April 2004. Despite the teething problems, some of which I mention, the Roma company now has 14 employees. It should be pointed out that there are no problems regarding attendance or the work done. The combined wage appraisal of workers is an important incentive in this respect. Another incentive is clearly the reputation of a.s. EKOLTES Hranice as a partner which, as a municipal company, is known for the steady flow of its contracts and the fulfilment of obligations arising from business relations. Cases where the work done is not to the required quality are resolved on the spot in the presence of the Roma entrepreneur and the company's responsible representatives. The Roma enterprise handles breaches of working discipline and other violations in its competence. In the first year, the Roma company's payroll expense was subsidized from the active employment policy in cooperation with the employment office. However, since 1 June 2005, the whole project has been run on a purely commercial basis without any subsidies from the central government, province or town. In view of the successful launch, the good experience and efforts to expand operations, in 2005 a new project was drawn up and an application for a subsidy from the HRD OP was subsequently submitted for it. In the context of this 'new' project, the Roma company was accepted as an equal partner of existing partner organizations, i.e. the town of Hranice and the Pířerov and Hranice Employment Office. In 2006, a subsidy was awarded. Since its establishment, the Roma company has earned public respect and a solid reputation. Over time, and in relation to the financial

rewards, work in this group has become appealing for the Roma, and it is possible to trace the status duly accorded to the members of the group in their community. As such, within the local Roma community there is keen interest in working for this group, and the Roma company currently has to turn away people enquiring after work. Over the duration of the project, six group members were given the opportunity to take retraining courses in work with brush cutters, power saws and motorized lawn mowers. Two have been only trained in tiling and paving for the time being. During the project, four workers left for the open labour market.

3.3. Housing

The analysis of socially excluded Roma localities conducted by GAC spol. s r.o. notes that a large proportion of socially excluded localities has emerged in places which are not particularly attractive for residential purposes.⁵⁷ An interesting finding was that the overwhelming majority of localities did not arise until the 1990s, when they were affected by various transformation influences. The most important factors in this respect were: the discontinuance of the state system of apartment allocation, the restitution of apartment buildings and the privatization of housing stock (for an overview of the ownership structure, see Chart 2). During the 1990s, the numbers of Roma inhabitants congregating at these 'sub-prime locations' – localities unattractive for residential purposes – started steadily increasing.⁵⁸ These localities are characterized by a parlous state of housing (see Chart 1) or by poor environmental conditions in the surrounding area. One such case is the Poschla area in Vsetín prior to cleanup work in readiness for the construction of new residential units near existing low-category flats for rent-dodgers.⁵⁹ The findings made by GAC spol. s r.o. are also confirmed by the authors of other analyses and reports, e.g. Petr Mareš, in his analysis of social exclusion factors, writes that the Roma commonly dwell in unsatisfactory, overcrowded flats located in wrecked areas starting to look very much like slums.⁶⁰ Zuzana Machová, the head of the Social Affairs Department of the Olomoucký kraj Provincial Authority, pointed out that, as in other Czech provinces, in Olomoucký kraj ethnic enclaves are forming in certain localities.⁶¹

For example, the information sent by Zuzana Machová, the head of the Social Affairs Department of the Olomoucký kraj Provincial Authority, as background material for the 2006 Report on the Situation of the Roma Communities mentions a hostel which does not figure in the map of socially excluded localities drawn up by GAC spol. s r.o., but where **100 adults and approximately 52 children up to the age of 15** – 90% Roma – are living in the building's 32 rooms.⁶²

⁵⁷ Gabal Analysis & Consulting (2006): Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and the Absorption Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field, Prague, p. 27

A very illustrative example is the environmental analysis conducted by AQ-test in the Poschla area of Vsetín, coupled with the comments and suggestions of the provincial hygiene station concerning the same locality (see FSS MU Brno Grygar, Jakub; Stöckelová, Tereza (2006): Pořičiny a souvislosti stihování Romů z pavlačového domu ěp. 1336 v řijnu 2006. Zpráva z řetøení. [*Causes and contexts linked to the removal of Roma from Gallery Apartment House 1336 in October 2006. Investigators' Report.*] FSS MU, Brno.)

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 27

⁵⁹ See footnote 2 and Grygar, Jakub; Stöckelová, Tereza (2006): Pořičiny a souvislosti stihování Romů z pavlačového domu ěp. 1336 v řijnu 2006. Zpráva z řetøení. FSS MU, Brno.

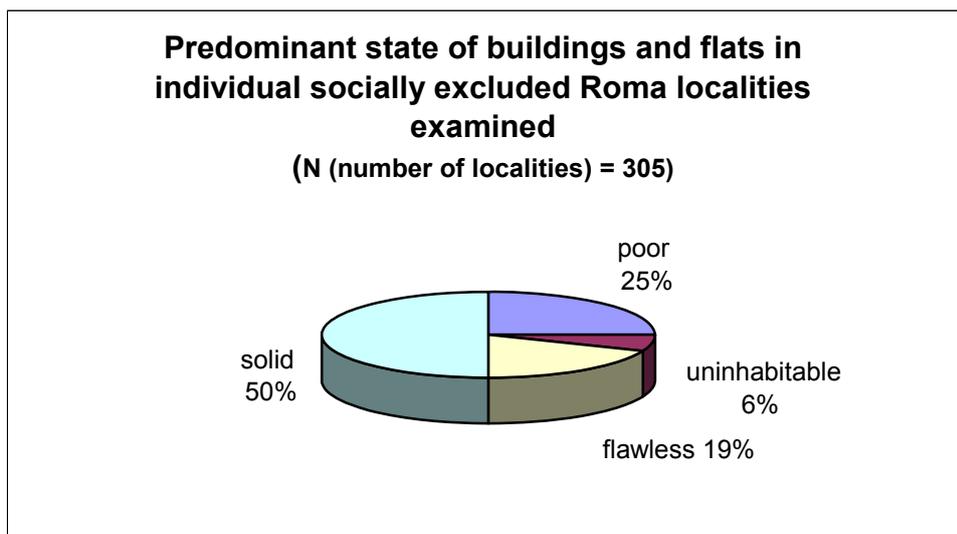
⁶⁰ Mareš, Petr (2006): *Faktory sociálního vyloučení*. VÚPSV. Prague, p. 17

⁶¹ Based on information submitted by Ms Machová, the head of the Social Affairs Department at the Olomoucký kraj Provincial Authority, in a letter of 23 January 2007

⁶² Ibid.

This concentration of socially weak Roma families can usually be found in individual municipalities with the socially excluded localities occupied by these families in their territory. As the analysis by GAC spol. s r.o. observes, there are different ways of (mis)handling spatial segregation. Some municipalities believe that such segregation is an effective solution and actively apply it; others do not see the situation of socially excluded localities as a problem and, through their idleness, intensify social exclusion and fail to stop the spread of socially excluded localities. Only a handful of municipalities try to stall the further social decline of inhabitants in these localities by applying various means of integration.⁶³

Chart 1



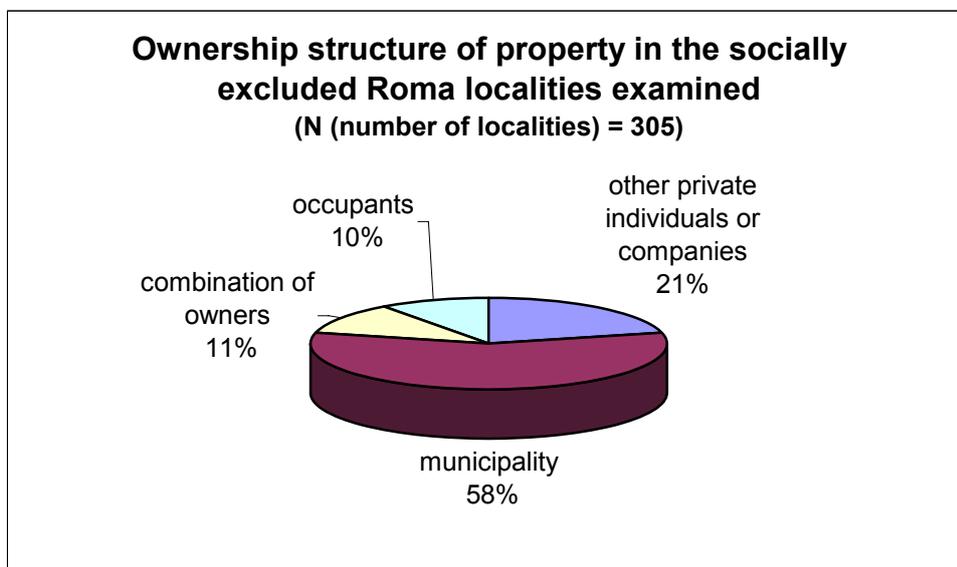
Source: GAC spol. s r.o.

Chart 1 shows the distribution of the standard of housing in the socially excluded Roma localities examined.⁶⁴

⁶³ Gabal Analysis & Consulting (2006): Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and the Absorption Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field, Prague, p. 28

⁶⁴ GAC spol. s r.o. came up with the following classification to grade the quality of dwellings. (See pp. 17-18.) 'Flawless' – sporadically peeling and/or cracking plaster, infrequently broken windows or doors, sound roofing, etc. 'Solid' – certain windows or door broken, larger-scale peeling/cracking of plaster, mould to a lesser degree, sporadically common areas not properly maintained. In certain respects, this classification is inconsistent with common living standards adopted by the majority population. Therefore, compared to other property, this housing should be regarded as being in a worse state. 'Poor' – sanitary facilities and distribution systems in bad repair, destroyed common areas, poor roofing – leakage, broken windows and doors, statics not entirely sound, etc. 'Uninhabitable' – the structure falls short of the necessary technical specifications for residential dwellings, serious problems with statics, broken roof, buckling walls, widespread mould, social facilities and distribution systems in very bad repair or absent, completely broken windows and doors.

Chart 2



Source: GAC spol. s r.o.

Chart 2 illustrates the approximate distribution (%) of the structure of ownership of the housing stock in socially excluded localities. We can only assume that the towns which own buildings try to keep them in at least a solid condition (based on the classification used by GAC spol. s r.o.) and make the effort to provide essential maintenance in order to avoid penalties that could be levied against them by state authorities if buildings are found to be in a decrepit state.⁶⁵

The analysis by GAC spol. s r.o. notes that the localities often comprise low-quality buildings containing small lower-category flats; in most cases the sanitary facilities are outside the flat, there is no hot water, and in many localities electricity is also unavailable long term. Despite this very parlous state, these flats tend to be rented out at high prices. Many residential buildings in socially excluded localities are characterized by unsatisfactory health conditions (damp walls, mould, etc.), which naturally has an impact on the state of health of their occupants. Flats are occupied by an inordinately high number of persons considering the size of the flats (as the parents' flat is shared by adult children and their young families, who have little chance of finding their own home; in other cases, relatives who have lost their own home or who have moved from Slovakia move into these flats too). The unsatisfactory state of the buildings is gradually getting worse. Given that the housing quality is already so bad (see Chart 1), we can expect a significant deterioration in subsequent years.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ See the various steps taken by Vsetín Town Hall in relation to the repair of Buildings 1336 and 409, in Grygar, Jakub; Stöckelová, Tereza (2006): *Pořízení a souvislosti stihování Romů z pavlačového domu ěp. 1336 v ěijnu 2006. Zpráva z ěetření*. FSS MU, Brno.

⁶⁶ Gabal Analysis & Consulting (2006): *Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and the Absorption Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field*, Prague, p. 30

Český Západ o.s., Dobrá Voda

Housing Programme⁶⁷

In its mission statement, the Český západ [Bohemian West] civic association proclaims that it will strive, in the Toužim area, to foster a civil society devoid of social exclusion, manifestations of xenophobia and racial intolerance, and which is characterized by interest among citizens in finding solutions to public affairs. It operates in the middle of the Roma community in Dobrá Voda. The 78 Roma here account for 92% of the total population and are therefore in the majority. All these inhabitants are tenants in a single high-rise building which, until recently, was in a dilapidated state. The alarming situation in which these inhabitants lived necessitated a solution to their housing which encompassed not only building repairs, but also a change in the tenants' attitude to the place where they live.

Naturally, changing the way they think will take longer than the actual repair of the roof, flues and electrical wiring, and the replacement of windows and sewage piping, which took place in the high-rise block at the end of 2006 thanks to financial assistance from the Office of the Government and the involvement of the tenants themselves. What then, does the association do and what specific housing-related results has it achieved?

When, in November 2005, the Český západ civic association became the owner of the high-rise block, it had already been involved in three months of full negotiations with all the adult members of the Roma community, the association's management board, experts in building administration, and the former owner of the building – the Town of Toužim. The aim of all the negotiations was to ensure that the Roma citizens would assume a more hands-on approach as regards responsibility for their own affairs, including in the field of housing, about which they had not previously been forced to care. Members of staff from the Český západ association, opted for a social work method – community work – for the implementation of the housing programme. The objective of the community work is to promote social change which, as far as possible, will be permanent. Specifically, the goal is to foster a desirable relationship between individuals and groups within the community so that the members of the community identify their needs, seek change and draw on their own resources to make this change. The idea is to motivate the population to work together, formulating and implementing real plans from their ideas.

One of the requirements for the success of community work is to set up a committee (an initiative group) elected from the community in order to identify the needs, ideas and wishes of community members, to find out more about their divergent views and opinions, to think about strategies that can accomplish objectives, to make plans, to discuss them in the community, and to invite further resourceful members of the community to join in with the shared work.

There is a six-member committee at Dobrá Voda, the formation of which was initiated in mid-2005 by the staff of Český západ with a view to finding effective solutions to the local community's housing issues. When the committee first came into being, the members of the community held a secret ballot to elect six representatives from among themselves. These representatives, after an initial get-to-know-each-other period, they started intensive training and

⁶⁷ This text was prepared by Jana Kosová from the Český západ civic association by way of e-mail correspondence on 16 February 2007

took measures to improve the quality of co-habitation in the high-rise building. However, this is no easy challenge. It involves regular meetings with community workers, discussions among other community members, contributions to the administration of the building with all that entails – handling specific repairs in individual flats, organizing crews of tenants to carry out renovation work, debates, explanations, information, motivation for tenants to take part in the regular cleaning of the building’s common areas, etc.

The five years’ intensive cooperation between the civic association’s members of staff (50% of the work team currently comprises workers from the target group) and members of the Roma community, the relations which have formed, and experience of the effect that their own involvement in housing issues can have are a solid basis for the further cultivation not only of housing, but of the municipality as a whole.

CENTROM o. s., Ostrava

Housing with a contract for an accompanying social programme⁶⁸

Project partner: Borough of Ostrava – Vítkovice

Target group: Families from socially excluded (largely Roma) communities in the ethnic and social ghetto in Ostrava – Vítkovice.

Essence of the project: The resocialization of clients with an emphasis on forming a set of competences for the functioning of families in rental flats (payment, treatment of housing stock, observance of building rules).

Project methods:

Field social workers and cooperation with the social affairs department of the relevant borough as a means of selecting clients for the programme
the provision of temporary housing (for a fee) over the resocialization period as a prerequisite for the implementation of the project and as an incentive for clients
the provision of a genuine chance for clients to acquire a rental flat if their resocialization is successful – an incentive for clients
cooperation with public administration and the private sector (PPP) as a way of obtaining flats
the implementation of non-resident resocialization programmes as a method for the general resocialization of clients
the provision of guidance and the supervision by a social worker as a means of forming the habits required for the smooth realization of landlord-tenant relations (focusing inter alia on how to cope with social benefits)

Project history:

5/2005 receipt of a promise by the Borough of Vítkovice to provide flats
7/2005 receipt of subsidies from Ostrava City Hall for the programme
8/2005 the first four flats in the programme of contract-based housing are put into operation
12/2005 creation of a centre for contract-based housing, totalling ten flats for the contract-based housing programme provided by the Borough of Vítkovice in Sirotčí Street, Vítkovice
2006 receipt of further subsidies from Ostrava City Hall

⁶⁸ This text was drawn up by Jan Houdek, the chairman of the CENTROM Steering Committee, in e-mail correspondence of 29 January 2007

2006 first two clients (families) placed in the rental housing scheme
12/2006 acquisition of the first flat from the private sector for the purposes of placing a resocialized family in the scheme of social worker assisted rental housing, acquisition of a preliminary promise from the private sector to provide further flats for the same purpose
12/2006 acquisition of the first binding written promise from the Borough of Vítkovice to provide four flats for the purposes of placing resocialized families in the scheme of social worker assisted rental housing

Near-term plan (2007):
The placement of the remaining clients from Siroťčí 45 into the scheme of social worker assisted rental housing, the launch of a new resocialization cycle in Siroťčí (new families in the programme)

Related activities:
the formation and operation of an NP centre for children and young people from excluded population groups at Siroťčí 45 (funded in the context of the JROP, Measure 5.3.2, and a subsidy from Ostrava City Hall)
the formation and operation of a toddlers club for preschool children with multiple social handicaps at the NP centre (funded in the context of the JROP, Measure 5.3.2, and a subsidy from Ostrava City Hall)
organization of courses for field social workers – Roma assistants and supported employment of course graduates to provide social prevention services (funded in the context of the HRD OP, Measure 1.1)
guidance for selected groups disadvantaged on the labour market (HRD OP, measure 1.1)

3.4. Health care

The analysis by GAC spol. s r.o. notes that, although valid data are not available in this field, there is certain information indicating that many inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities suffer from poorer health. The reasons for this lie primarily in the more difficult access to ordinary health care, the lower quality of housing, which falls short of the basic hygiene requirements for housing, and poor dietary habits.⁶⁹ The appalling living conditions in excluded localities are characterized by a passage from an analysis of the eviction of the inhabitants of Gallery Apartment House 1336 in Vsetín, drawn up by sociologists from the Social Studies Faculty of Masaryk University, Brno. In the part describing the preparation of changes to the buildings in the Poschla locality, there is a quotation from a study by AQ-test conducted to gauge the environmental conditions in the area, i.e. the degree of pollution, and to estimate the cleanup cost.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Gabal Analysis & Consulting (2006): Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and the Absorption Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field, Prague, p. 85

⁷⁰ It should be noted that in 2004 (i.e. before the construction of the residential units), low-category flats for rent-dodgers (which received planning permission as temporary housing) were built in Poschla and were allocated to several Roma families.

Study by AQ-test⁷¹

A survey of the surface layer of earth confirmed the blanket occurrence of contamination with arsenic and benzo[a]pyrene in concentrations exceeding the relevant RBC toxicological limits and, on average, comparable to the already certified contamination of landfill content at depths 1 m below the surface.

As a result of the significant transgression of toxicological limits for soil, in line with the study's conclusions it was stated that there was an unacceptable risk in the locality, and the need to take remedial action to the extent outlined in the study was confirmed.

....

In the context of the conclusions thus formulated, attention must be drawn to the presence of residents in the immediate surroundings of the locality. These persons are inevitably at risk of permanent exposure to harmful substances in the form of dust. Given the unrestricted access to the complex and the landfill, children are particularly at risk of exposure to direct dermal contact with the contaminated earth. In this respect, the planned remedial action appears to be inevitable and urgent, irrespective of the planned construction of flats.

3.4.1. Non-consensual sterilization of Roma women

In 2006, the ombudsman published a report containing a comprehensive analysis of sterilization in the Czech Republic before and after 1989. On 11 November, the Provincial Court in Ostrava, in the first case relating to sterilization, ruled that the sterilization had been unlawful. In late 2005, both the applicant and the defendant in this case appealed. This appeal was originally meant to be heard on 13 December 2006, but at the defendant's request was adjourned until 17 January 2007, when the court upheld the applicant's claim. The court ruled against the hospital and granted the injured party an apology. In addition to that case, pre-trial criminal proceedings based on complaints lodged by the ombudsman have taken place or are pending. The overwhelming majority of them have been shelved by the police or the public prosecutor because healthcare professionals contended that the women had been fully informed and therefore no criminal offence had been committed. In this situation, the notifier had no means of evidence other than her testimony and a record in the documentation which is bereft of evidence as to whether she had been properly informed. In most cases, the police concluded that the absence of written proof that the notifier had been informed did not mean that the doctors did not inform the woman orally.⁷²

As at 25 January 2006, 86 complaints of non-consensual sterilization had been lodged at the Ministry of Health; 61 had been heard. With a view to investigating these complaints,

⁷¹ Grygar, Jakub; Stöckelová, Tereza (2006): Pořičiny a souvislosti stihování vsetínských Romů z pavlačového domu čp. 1336 v říjnu 2006. Zpráva z šetření [*Causes and contexts linked to the removal of Roma in Vsetín from Gallery Apartment House 1336 in October 2006. Investigators' Report*], p. 50

⁷² This information was provided by Michaela Kopalová from the Liga lidských práv (Human Rights League) by way of e-mail correspondence on 19 January 2007

the Ministry set up a Ministerial Advisory Body which included representatives of the professional medical public. The investigation by the Advisory Body concluded that errors occurred in sterilization but that this was by no means a national or racially or ethnically conditioned policy; instead, errors were made by individual healthcare facilities. Therefore, these were individual cases where the conclusions of the investigation differed significantly. In the overwhelming majority of cases, a key issue regarding sterilization among both women and men was the method used to obtain the informed consent of the patient before the operation. In the past, the provision of informed consent was a major problem in other branches too. Therefore, the Ministry of Health drew up Decree No 64/2007 on healthcare documentation, in force since April this year, which, together with Section 27c of Act No 20/1966 on human health care, as amended, regulates the formalities of written informed consent. The whole issue of sterilization will be covered comprehensively by a law on specific health care, preparations for which have now reached the initial stages of the legislative process. Guidelines will also be issued, which will include the recommended content of informed consent to sterilization, and the recommended procedure for the provision of information about sterilization to the patient, including the procedure if the patient's signature cannot be obtained. In the field of postgraduate education, the recommendation will be made to the director of the Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education to ensure that doctors are trained in 'general patient rights, including the condition of a patient's informed consent to the provision of health care' and to provide a standardized scope of teaching on informed consent.⁷³

In 2006, from the perspective of the issue in question, a significant event was the address delivered by the Czech delegation to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)⁷⁴ as part of the 751st and 752nd sessions held on 17 August 2006 at the UN headquarters in New York. At its 751st and 752nd sessions, CEDAW assessed the Czech Republic's third periodic report. At this hearing, the Czech delegation was asked *inter alia* about the issue of sterilizing Roma women in the Czech Republic. CEDAW notes the existence of this problem, and in its concluding observations expresses its concern that 'Roma women and girls remain in vulnerable and marginalized situations, in particular in regards to health, education, employment and participation in public life and decision-making.'⁷⁵ Points 21, 22, 23 and 24 of the concluding observations formulate the steps that the Czech Republic needs to take to resolve the problem of the involuntary discrimination of Roma women. These steps include action to accelerate the achievement of Roma women's *de facto* equality by strengthening coordination among all organizations working on Roma issues, the implementation of targeted measures to eliminate discrimination against Roma women in all areas, and monitoring of their implementation. The Committee also calls upon the Czech Republic to provide, in its next periodic report, a comprehensive picture of the situation of Roma women, including data disaggregated by sex in regard to their educational opportunities and achievements, access to education and healthcare services, and participation in public life and decision-making. In point 24 of the concluding observations, the Committee calls on the Czech Republic to take urgent action to implement the recommendations of the ombudsman with regard to involuntary or coercive sterilization, including a clear definition of informed, free and qualified consent in cases of sterilization in line with the Committee's general recommendation 24 and Article 5 of the

⁷³ Ministry of Health, information sent to the director of the Bureau of the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs by the Minister for Health on 19 January 2007.

⁷⁴ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Woman – CEDAW

⁷⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Czech Republic, of 25 August 2006, p. 3

European Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine. It also calls for the elaboration of compensation to victims of involuntary or coercive sterilization and for the provision of redress to Roma women who are victims of involuntary or coercive sterilization.⁷⁶

On 11 October, at the Warsaw Human Dimension Implementation Meeting of the OSCE⁷⁷, the US representative called on the Czech Republic to implement the ombudsman's recommendations.

The Government Council for Human Rights, at its meeting on 6 February 2006, adopted a resolution stating that it had addressed the results of the ombudsman's investigation, values the work carried out by the ombudsman in this matter, and enjoins the Committee for Human Rights and Biomedicine to continue dealing with these issues. At its meeting on 29 May 2006, the Government Council for Human Rights revisited the problem of involuntary sterilization and returned an initiative to the Committee for Human Rights and Biomedicine that was inconsistent with the law to be revised.

Court ruling in the case of the illegal sterilization of Helena Ferenčíková⁷⁸

17 January 2007 – The High Court in Olomouc today upheld a judgment of the Provincial Court in Ostrava concerning the illegal sterilization of Helena Ferenčíková. Vítkovice Hospital must apologize to her for sterilizing her in October 2001 without her proper and informed consent during a delivery by Caesarean section.

The high court, like the Ostrava court, again dismissed an application for the financial compensation of the claimant on the grounds that this claim is statute-barred. The statute of limitations in this case has been an issue that has long divided the Czech legal community. The high court has consistently taken the view that claimants cannot seek financial compensation, only an apology, once the three year limitation period has elapsed. In contrast, the Supreme Court of the Czech Republic has ruled that limitation cannot apply in this case. This dispute means that citizens, including Ms Ferenčíková, remain in a state of legal limbo. Ms Ferenčíková will therefore appeal to the Supreme Court, and hopes that this will also help other victims whose physical integrity has been violated as they seek justice and the definitive streamlining of the legal view held by courts on this matter.

Notwithstanding the Supreme Court's ruling, the League, in keeping with the recommendations of the ombudsman from December 2005 and those of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women from August 2006, will continue to take action forcing the Czech government to apologize to all victims of coercive sterilization under the Communist regime and to victims of illegal sterilization in the 1990s and at the beginning of this century. Any apology should include a draft mechanism for the financial compensation of victims. The League will soon take this issue to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and Human Rights Committee (HRC). These institutions will assess respect for human rights in the Czech Republic this March (CERD) and July (HRC).

3.4.2. Health and social assistants – SASTIPEN Czech Republic project⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 3-4

⁷⁷ Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe – OSCE

⁷⁸ Press release. Taken from the server of the Human Rights League, a member of the FIDH (Fédération Internationale des Droits de l'Homme), www.llp.cz

The project ‘Health and social assistants in excluded localities (SASTIPEN CR)’ has been under way since 2 September 2005. The bearer and implementer of the project is the Drom Roma Centre and the project is financed from the Human Resources Development Operational Programme of the European Social Fund. This project implements Government Resolution No 219 of 23 February 2005. This project is implemented in seven provinces throughout the Czech Republic. The aim of the project is to create and test a network of health and social assistants for Roma at risk of social exclusion, especially in terms of their health.

The activities of the health and social assistants began in January 2006 and, in accordance with the project, will end in May 2007. To this effect, 18 full-time jobs were created (see Table 1).

Table 1

Province	Locality 1	Assistants	Locality 2	Assistants	Locality 3	Assistants	Locality 4	Assistants	Assistants in the province
1 Jihočeský	Jindřichův Hradec	1	Prachatice	1					2
2 Moravskoslezsko	Ostrava	2	Karviná	1	Bruntál	1	Orlová	1	5
3 Jihomoravský	Břeclav	2							2
4 Zlínský	Vsetín	1	Kroměříž	1					2
5 Pardubický	Pardubice	1							1
6 Olomoucký	Jeseník	1	Olomouc	1	Prostějov	1	Javorník	1	4
7 Králové-Hradecký	Hradec Králové	2							2
Total									18

Source: DROM, Roma Centre

The jobs were filled based on a duly run award procedure. The structure of workers from the aspect of selected criteria is illustrated in Table 2.

The activities of health and social assistants are subject to central methodological management and control by the project implementer, the Drom Roma Centre; locally, they cooperate with contact persons responsible for the monitoring of assistants’ activities in the field and checks on their collaboration with local institutions (doctors, healthcare facilities, social authorities, etc.). There are 15 contact persons; they are employees of city halls (5), provincial and municipal authorities (6), and organizations fully funded from the public purse and non-profit organizations (2).

The contact persons play a very important role in the project; they supervise and provide consulting to the assistants, monitor their activities in the field, and provide assistance in the handling of specific problems. Interim project evaluation reports indicate that all the approached contact persons are very pleased with the work of ‘their’ assistants and with the project in general. In particular, they appreciate the specific results achieved and the general benefit the project has in their locality. Connected with this is the clear interest in continuing the assistants’ activities after the end of the project.

⁷⁹ Information prepared and supplied by Ivana Šimíková, DROM / Roma Centre by way of e-mail correspondence on 12 February 2006

During the project, the health and social assistants gradually created a group of clients; they are now sufficiently integrated, with their own set of clients and own system of work. The concept of the work done by individual assistants differs from person to person. This is due to the different nature of the problems tackled in the various localities and the different style of work cultivated by the assistants under the guidance of their contact persons. While some assistants address a relatively wide range of problems, others have a narrower focus, depending on the needs and preferences of their clients or based on their experience and assessment of the meaningfulness of their various activities.

Table 2

STRUCTURE OF ASSISTANTS		number	share
ethnicity	Roma	13	72%
	non-Roma	5	28%
	total	18	100%
sex	men	0	0%
	women	18	100%
	total	18	100%
education	primary	3	17%
	secondary without <i>maturita</i>	10	55%
	secondary with <i>maturita</i>	4	22%
	tertiary	1	6%
	total	18	100%
age	average	37 years	
	minimum	21 years	
	maximum	55 years	

Source: DROM, Roma Centre

After almost a year's work, the health and social assistants have registered 837 clients, 80% of whom are women. The assistants find themselves handling multiple cases with most clients, i.e. individual clients tend to have several specific problems that are interrelated but require a different solution. In all, the assistants handled 1,984 cases over the reporting period. The success rate is relatively high; the assistants achieved the set objective in 90% of cases.

By reference to the findings made so far, we can divide assistants' activities into several groups:

- a) **Awareness of a healthy lifestyle** (healthy eating, cutting back on smoking, etc.). Most assistants limit themselves here to the passing on of information and try to persuade clients of the need to change their habits. This category of problems accounts for 30% of all problems addressed.
- b) **Assistance in handling and preventing health problems** (vaccinations, preventive medical examinations, visiting a doctor, help in making appointments for the necessary examinations, escorting of clients, explanation of information, incentives to seek treatment, etc.). Although the handling of these cases is highly demanding, requiring major effort, communication skills and thoroughness on the part of the assistants on the one hand and the high motivation of clients on the other, the

assistants are achieving sound results in this area. Very good cooperation with doctors is also imperative for success. Judging by the experience gained to date, it is in this area that assistants appear to be most beneficial. This category of problems accounts for 40% of all problems addressed.

- c) **The mediation of health information and contact details of healthcare institutions** (registering with a doctor, issues related to health insurance companies, assistance in securing assistive technology, etc.). These are usually short-term assignments and assistants do not encounter any major problems with them. The assistants have an in-depth knowledge of the health system and related matters, and therefore they can tackle this type of assignment very well. In most cases, a successful solution can be found even without high client motivation because this area is less difficult than the two above. This category of problems accounts for 20% of all problems addressed.
- d) **Assistance in handling social problems** (housing, help in finding furniture or clothing, etc.). In these cases, assistants replace the work of field social workers or other institutions, which they justify by the clients' needs and requirements and by the focus and priorities of their umbrella organization. The commonly unappreciated efforts to forge good relations with clients, especially in cases where material assistance is needed, may also play a role here. This category of problems accounts for 10 % of all problems addressed.

The tasks of health and social workers also include improving their professional competence to provide this service. In this respect, they take part in an educational programme for health and social assistants which lasts for 400 lessons and is under aegis of the Medical Faculty of Masaryk University, Brno, and the Health Faculty of Ostrava University.

The activities of the health and social assistants within the scope of the project will end in May 2007. Two municipal authorities and one city hall are keen to keep the assistants until the end of 2007 via the grant scheme *Support of Field Social Work 2007*, organized by the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs, which offers them the chance to apply for a grant. For the other assistants, financing in the upcoming period is uncertain; it depends on the announcement of a field social work support programme for non-profit organizations and on the programmes of the European Social Fund. On completion of this pilot project, the way forward will depend on the Ministry of Health.

3.5. Social exclusion

The issue of social exclusion in the Czech Republic is addressed in current studies and analyses through various prisms. For example, Pavel Barša, in his analysis of the discourse on social exclusion in the Czech Republic, identifies a left and a right wing.⁸⁰ According to Barša, the left wing of the discourse on social exclusion views the excluded as victims of social injustice and proposes limiting market forces by means of a robust welfare state, whereas the right wing plays down the significance of the socially unjust system in preventing

⁸⁰ Barša, Pavel (2007): *Zapomenutí cikáni v nás* [The forgotten gypsies in us]. Lidové noviny, 6 January 2007

participation in societal life, and highlights the system, the ‘culture of poverty’,⁸¹ as a specific reaction to exclusion.⁸² The dividing line between these two wings is formed by the approach to the issue of the political recognition of the Roma ethnonational identity. The right wing rejects the political recognition of this identity, as well as the fact that this recognition and distribution of resources to organizations allegedly representing that identity could resolve the situation of those excluded persons identified as Roma by majority society.⁸³

Keeping to Pavel Barša’s classification, leftwing proponents are state organizations, the institutions of the European Union and local and trans-national Roma non-profit organizations and associations. It is evident that this division does not particularly shed much light on the opposite leftwing pole, which is less focused, and the stances of its players are negotiated over a broader range of views. However, it is clear that, in the context of the European Union, there is pressure on the political representation of Roma and their greater participation in public life. In 2005, for example, the European Parliament drew up a resolution referring to the discrimination of the Roma and calling for their greater integration, including involvement in elections at all levels.⁸⁴ Nor can the rich seam of activity by advisory bodies set up directly to address the Roma issue within the Council of Europe and the European Union be disregarded; their key objective is to foster political discourse clearly conveying recommendations to national governments across Europe.⁸⁵ Work on the ethnonational identity of the Roma is common in the context of the documents of the Council of Europe and the European Union.⁸⁶ Bodies of state and public administration addressing the issue of social exclusion naturally follow this line and actively seek out and promote cooperation with non-profit organizations proclaiming themselves to be Roma as a welcome partner. There are therefore two possible inclusion paradigms; according to the division made by Pavel Barša, the leftwing thinking is fully predominant, at least as far as state administration is concerned. The Czech Republic strives to increase Roma participation and find solutions to the social exclusion of some of them, in part by means of their ethnonational identity. This Report and the operations of the Council of the Government of the Czech Republic for Roma Community Affairs are particularly clear proof of this.

Petr Mareš, in his study ‘Factors of Social Exclusion’, agrees with Pavel Barša in that he identifies an intensifying concept of social exclusion in the Czech Republic that is

⁸¹ ‘The culture of poverty is a subculture of modern comprehensive society, on which it is dependent in many respects; on the other hand, it functions as a relatively autonomous cultural system with most of the conventional attributes of such a formation, but “has its own cultural logic and own method of life handed down in families from generation to generation”. ... This specific cultural paradigm, the heart of which is a set of alternative values and the derived behaviour, enables the people concerned to live in (survive) and weather their given situation, but prevents them from re-integrating into the structures of majority society – these people are unable to “seize the opportunity” to change their lifestyle that is offered to them, nor are they capable of using the programmes offered to them by the state or nongovernmental organizations.’ (Jakoubek, Marek (2006): *Pøemýšlení (Rethinking) Romù* [The (re-)thinking of the Roma] in Jakoubek, Marek, Hirt, Tomáš (2006): *Romové v osidlech sociálního vyloučení [Roma in Socially Excluded Settlements]*. Vydavatelství a nakladatelství Aleš ěnik. Plzeň, p. 324)

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid. Here, Pavel Barša names Marek Jakoubek and Tomáš Hirt, anthropologists from the Faculty of Arts, University of West Bohemia, as major proponents of this wing..

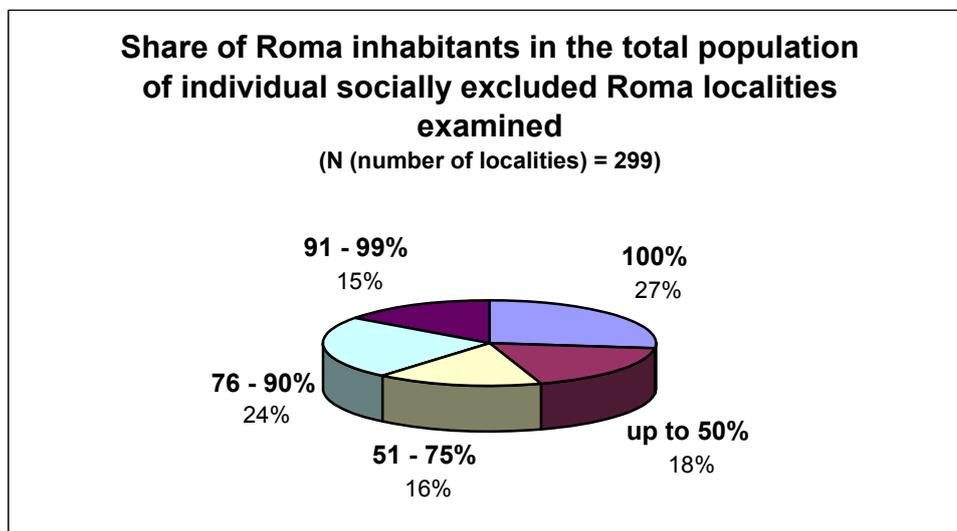
⁸⁴ EU, European Parliament, *Roma in the European Union – European Parliament resolution on the situation of the Roma in the European Union (P6_TA(2005)0151)* of 28 April 2005, published in the Official Journal of the European Union 2006/C 45 E/01, Volume 49, 23 February 2006, pp. 129–133

⁸⁵ *Implementation and Harmonization of National Policies on Roma, Sinti and Travellers: Guidelines for a Common Vision*. International Conference of the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), Bucharest, Romania, 4–5 May 2006.

⁸⁶ Action plan on improving the situation of Roma Sinti within the OSCE area (2003): OSCE.

concentrated on individual rights.⁸⁷ Mareš labels this flow a liberalist concept⁸⁸ of exclusion, where ‘people are excluded as individuals and not as members of particular communities, and instruments facilitating their re-integration into society should again focus on them as individuals and not as the communities they belong to (with a stress on social rather than cultural rights).’⁸⁹ Mareš, in line with numerous other authors (in this respect, Byrne (1999) and Hirt (2005) are quoted here⁹⁰) notes that the civic integration of the members of minorities is conditional on a weaker minority identity. However, Petr Mareš also mentions the fact, generally hard to challenge, that the ethnic dimension of the social exclusion of the Roma in the Czech Republic would be difficult to ignore (see Chart 1). The distinction between majority society and Roma is very visible and sharply focused. The Roma are viewed primarily as members of a different ethnic group and only secondly as citizens.⁹¹ As a result of similar sharp divisions, society is losing direct control and (due to the collapse of its principle social institutions, such as the labour market, the education system and socialization, political parties and the church in that environment) indirect control of socially excluded localities.⁹²

Chart 1



Source: GAC spol. s r.o.

Chart 1 illustrates the degree of homogeneity of the socially excluded Roma localities examined in the Czech Republic. The graph shows that these are predominantly localities where the share of Roma inhabitants is higher relative to the total population of the given locality.⁹³

⁸⁷ Mareš, Petr (2006): *Faktory sociálního vyloučení*. VÚPSV. Prague.

⁸⁸ Barša labels this concept ‘rightwing’ (see above).

⁸⁹ Mareš, Petr (2006): *Faktory sociálního vyloučení*. VÚPSV. Prague, p. 32

⁹⁰ Byrne, David (1999): *Social Exclusion*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Hirt, Tomáš (2005): ‘Svět podle multikulturalismu’ [*The World According to Multiculturalism*], pp. 9 – 76, in Soudobé spory o multikulturalismus a politiku identity [*Contemporary Disputes on Multiculturalism and the Politics of Identity*], ed. by Hirt, Tomáš. Plzeň.: Aleš ěník

⁹¹ Mareš, Petr (2006): *Faktory sociálního vyloučení*. VÚPSV. Prague, pp. 17, 32

⁹² Ibid., p. 31

⁹³ Gabal Analysis & Consulting (2006): *Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and the Absorption Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field*, Prague, p. 15

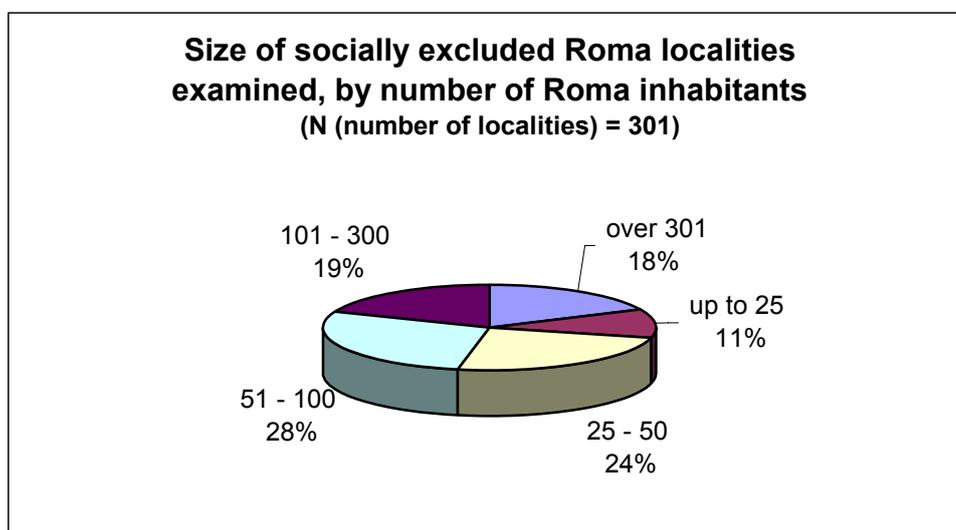
3.5.1. Analysis of socially excluded Roma localities

In 2006, GAC spol. s r.o. implemented the project ‘Analysis of socially excluded Roma localities and the absorption capacity of entities operating in this field’, which was commissioned by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in liaison with the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs. The project was financed from the European Social Fund and the national budget of the Czech Republic. The outputs of this project were the publications *Analýza sociálně vyloučených romských lokalit a absorpční kapacity subjektů působících v této oblasti* [Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and Communities and the Absorption Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field] and *Mapa sociálně vyloučených nebo sociálním vyloučením ohrožených romských lokalit* [Map of Roma Localities Socially Excluded or at Risk of Social Exclusion].

In particular, the project was designed to collate basic information about the situation of excluded Roma localities with a view to the correct configuration of the system for the absorption of funds in the 2007-2013 programming period, and to identify the possibilities and level of the absorption capacity of entities operating and providing services in this field.

The research conducted under this project returned unprecedented data that had been missing for the way forward in addressing the issue of the social exclusion of members of Roma communities in the Czech Republic. The data confirmed the expansion in the social exclusion of members of Roma communities across the Czech Republic and revealed alarming information about the number of such localities. According to the analysis by GAC spol. s r.o., there are 330 socially excluded Roma localities in the Czech Republic. It is estimated that approximately 80,000 members of Roma communities suffer from social exclusion in the Czech Republic.

Chart 2



Source: GAC spol. s r.o.

Chart 2 depicts the composition of all the examined socially excluded localities from the perspective of the total number of Roma inhabitants in the given localities. The various types of localities naturally have different intrinsic characteristics and a different structure of problems and resources to address them. More light on the types of localities mentioned

above is shed in Table 1, where the basic characteristics of socially excluded localities and aspects beneficial in the fight against social exclusion are shown.

It is axiomatic that the size of localities varies both by population and by residential geography, i.e. the type of settlement in which the locality is situated. The analysis identifies six basic types of locality: relatively small rural locality, relatively large rural locality, relatively small urban locality, relatively large urban locality, relatively small city locality, relatively large city locality (see Table 1).⁹⁴

Table 1

Locality type	Number of Roma inhabitants in the locality/whole municipality	Building owner	Physical state of property	NGO activity	Teaching assistant
Relatively small rural locality	max. c. 50 / up to 5,000	- municipalities - occupants - other private individuals	poor	no	no
Relatively large rural locality	more than c. 50 / up to 5,000	- municipalities - occupants - other private individuals	poor	no	no
Relatively small urban locality	max. c. 100 / 5,000 - 50,000	- municipalities	relatively good	cannot be generalized	no
Relatively large urban locality	more than c. 100 / 5,000 - 50,000	- municipalities	relatively good	cannot be generalized	yes/no
Relatively small city locality	max. c. 150 / more than 50,000	- municipalities	relatively good	more than 1	yes
Relatively large city locality	more than c. 150 / more than 50,000	- more types of different owners, including business entities	relatively good	more than 1	yes

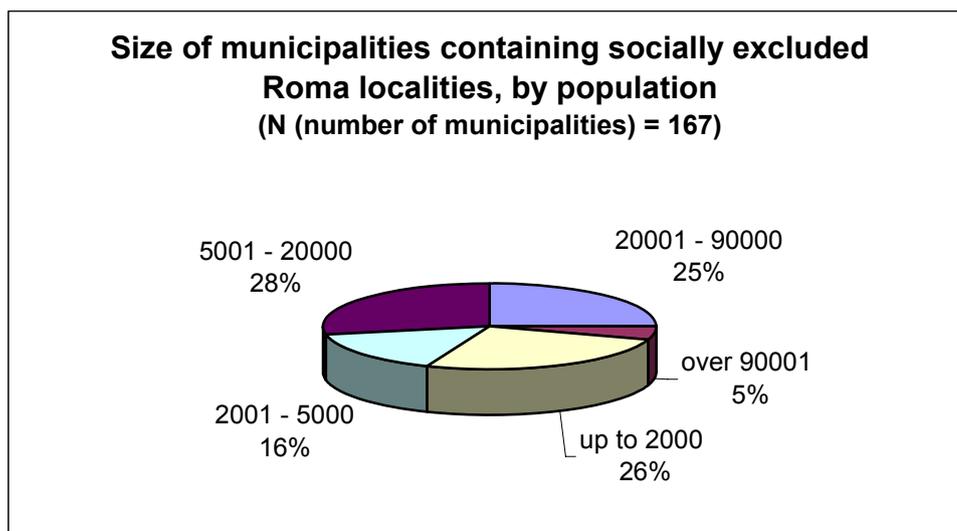
Source of data: GAC spol. s r.o.

⁹⁴ Gabal Analysis & Consulting (2006): Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and the Absorption Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field, Prague, pp. 15-25

According to the authors, this typology will make it possible, at least to a certain ‘degree, to clarify the salient features of the individual socially excluded Roma localities’, which are generally quite different.⁹⁵

Chart 3 shows the high occurrence of socially excluded Roma localities in relatively small and relatively large municipalities (i.e. with populations of anywhere between 5,000 and 90,000 inhabitants) which have the status of towns; these account for 53% of the total presence of socially excluded localities.

Chart 3



Source: GAC spol. s r.o.

Therefore, it would be wrong to say that the issue of social exclusion in the Czech Republic is exclusively a problem of either towns or rural areas. The *Population and Housing Census* (SLDB 2001), which although it allows us to precisely identify those on low incomes, but not those who are on low incomes and are simultaneously socially excluded⁹⁶, still reveals certain data that can be used for an approximate indication of the residential distribution of socially excluded members of Roma communities. Petr Mareš, in his analysis of the factors of social exclusion, draws the following conclusions from SLDB 2001: ‘Low-income families are more likely to live in smaller blocks of flats (up to ten flats). As for the type of site, high-rise housing estates (30%) and rural communities (37%) are the most numerous. In terms of these shares in the various types of settlement, there is no difference from other sections of the population, the structure of which, from the aspect of the type of settlement, is virtually the same. Only in the case of extreme poverty (income below 40% of the mean income distribution) do we encounter a higher proportion of housing in historical town centres and within developments of urban blocks of flats...’⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Gabal Analysis & Consulting (2006): *Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and the Absorption Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field*, Prague, pp. 22-25

⁹⁶ It would be wrong to assume that poverty is the main feature of social exclusion. Poverty is just one of the facets of social exclusion. Social exclusion is not an economic problem; it mainly concerns the blocking of access to opportunities which are normal for members of majority society.

⁹⁷ Mareš, Petr (2006): *Faktory sociálního vyloučení*. VÚPSV. Prague, pp. 23 -24

According to Trbola and Sirovátka, authors of an analysis of the effectiveness of social transfers in the Czech Republic, the effectiveness of social transfers in reducing poverty in the Czech Republic is relatively high, and as a result a broad swathe of the population does not suffer from poverty. What is important in grasping the problem of socially excluded members of Roma communities in this respect is that poverty tends to be concentrated on specific social categories, such as the unemployed and families with multiple dependant children (see Table 2).⁹⁸ The situation in excluded communities matches these features; in most cases the families are large, with numerous dependant children, where both partners are unemployed and generally only have primary education (for more details see Chapter 3.2 Employment). By way of illustration, according to Sirovátka and Trbola the level of poverty is highly pronounced among families with four or more children; almost 80% of these families are below the poverty line before the distribution of social transfers. The distribution of social benefits reduces poverty in this group to 45% (see Table 2). Prior to social transfers, roughly 71% of the unemployed are below the poverty line, a figure that drops to 36% after distribution. Sirovátka and Trbola observe that the effect of benefits on eradicating poverty in this social category is 50%, which is relatively low. In this respect, it is also interesting to monitor the evolution of distribution among those who left school after their primary [lower secondary] education, where the poverty rate prior to distribution is 62%, but falls to 13% after distribution, which is a relatively high value.⁹⁹ As we note elsewhere in this Report, structural changes on the labour market in the Czech Republic increasingly require a higher level of education among the population. Table 2 shows that the poverty rate in social categories of people who are unemployed and lack a quality education is very high, even after the distribution of social transfers.

Table 2 Poverty rates before and after social transfers¹⁰⁰
(poverty line = 60% median), **education, livelihood, number of children**

Education	before ST	SD	OD	NEM	NEZ	RP	PD	SP	PnB	PnD	OSSP	JSP	DSP
no education	35.42	33.47	31.42	29.65	28.77	24.90	20.95	18.69	17.47	17.33	17.29	16.98	14.33
primary	61.77	30.03	23.94	22.69	22.02	21.63	19.68	18.64	18.05	17.81	17.81	17.52	13.33
apprenticeship	43.17	19.66	15.12	13.67	13.03	11.73	10.35	9.40	9.06	8.89	8.89	8.62	7.06
complete secondary	26.40	11.88	9.61	8.78	8.27	6.81	5.52	5.37	5.25	5.20	5.17	5.10	3.94
tertiary	19.70	5.06	3.86	3.29	2.97	2.73	2.62	2.46	2.46	2.46	2.46	2.37	1.93
EA of person, livelihood													
EA total	14.84	10.05	8.18	6.86	6.35	5.40	4.10	3.71	3.48	3.40	3.39	3.33	2.77
manual worker	21.73	15.14	12.03	10.22	9.41	7.99	5.91	5.12	4.77	4.62	4.62	4.53	3.49
other employee	9.15	5.61	4.51	3.31	2.95	2.49	1.76	1.59	1.45	1.39	1.37	1.32	1.01
unemployed	71.17	65.34	63.45	61.45	57.72	56.99	55.79	53.28	52.61	52.32	52.32	52.32	36.04
non-working pensioner	83.78	16.10	7.90	7.53	7.42	7.35	7.18	6.94	6.78	6.73	6.73	6.47	5.07
parental allowance beneficiary	48.20	46.40	45.95	43.83	43.83	28.30	24.27	21.90	21.03	21.03	20.87	20.87	18.96
type of household (OECD classification)													

⁹⁸ Trbola, Robert; Sirovátka, Tomáš (2006): Efektivnost sociálních transferů při eliminaci chudoby v České republice [*Effectiveness of Social Transfers in Eliminating Poverty in the Czech Republic*]. VÚPSV. Prague, p. 9

⁹⁹ Trbola, Robert; Sirovátka, Tomáš (2006): Efektivnost sociálních transferů při eliminaci chudoby v České republice. VÚPSV. Prague, pp. 10-12

¹⁰⁰ KEY: ST – social transfers, SD – old-age benefits, OD – other pensions, NEM – sickness insurance benefits, NEZ – unemployment benefits, RP – parental allowance, PD – child allowances, SP – social allowance, PnB – housing benefit, PnD – transport allowance, SSP – state social support benefits, OSSP – other state social support benefits, JSP – other welfare income, DSP – social care benefits, EA – economic activity

fully employed	11.66	7.27	6.22	4.89	4.74	4.44	3.09	2.74	2.40	2.34	2.34	2.34	2.10
unemployment – no EA	97.36	58.72	49.75	49.35	48.92	48.51	48.26	46.24	45.67	45.49	45.49	44.70	34.50
partially employed	47.57	36.88	30.15	28.19	26.00	20.12	15.64	13.57	12.80	12.49	12.41	11.97	9.42
out of the labour force	99.62	8.87	5.81	5.81	5.81	5.81	5.81	5.81	5.70	5.70	5.70	5.52	5.44
number of children in the household where the person lives													
0	48.36	11.90	7.42	6.81	6.28	6.28	6.26	6.26	6.18	6.18	6.18	6.06	4.35
1	28.22	24.13	21.70	19.89	19.45	16.19	15.02	14.07	13.74	13.56	13.56	13.18	9.78
2	26.76	25.37	22.79	20.86	19.73	17.67	13.63	12.45	11.96	11.61	11.55	11.26	9.97
3	44.75	39.04	34.97	33.86	33.86	29.56	23.57	20.06	16.43	16.43	16.43	16.43	13.54
4 or more	79.92	79.92	75.96	75.96	75.96	70.47	60.31	47.00	45.15	45.15	45.15	45.15	45.15

Source: Trbola, Sirovátka (2006). Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs, calculations by the authors by reference to the 2002 Microcensus (Czech Statistical Office).

The analysis by GAC spol. s r.o. notes three fundamental dimensions behind the social exclusion of inhabitants living in the examined localities: restricted access to **quality housing**, the **labour market** and **education**.¹⁰¹

In his analysis, Petr Mareš opts for a different, more theoretical prism and, based on the work of Bhalla and Lapeyre, distinguishes between the **economic**, **political** and **social** dimension of social exclusion, the content of which approximately corresponds to the above-mentioned dimensionality of GAC spol. s r.o., but elaborates on the quality of the restricted access.¹⁰² He claims that economic exclusion comprises exclusion from the quality of life (life opportunities) usual in society, which is accompanied in particular by long-term unemployment, financial poverty, exclusion from the labour market, exclusion on the labour market¹⁰³, exclusion from consumption, exclusion from the possibility of saving money, and exclusion from production. Political exclusion comprises the denial of political and civil rights for certain individuals and communities. For the socially excluded, the political dimension of exclusion means not only the absence of the life opportunities common in society, but also their restricted influence in decision-making. According to Mareš, social exclusion in the narrower sense prevents people from sharing certain social statuses or social institutions, and from participating in social systems (social, economic, political or cultural) conditioning their social integration.¹⁰⁴

3.5.2. Indebtedness

On 17 October 2006, Olomoucký kraj hosted an expert discussion on the theme of ‘Caught in the Debt Trap’. This event included a presentation of material drawn up by the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic and scrutinized by numerous bodies. The head of the Social Affairs Department of Olomoucký kraj Provincial Authority observes that debtors need specialized guidance. An investigation at the municipal authorities of municipalities with extended competence found that distraint is becoming increasingly common among Roma who, egged on by advertisements and offers in the media, take out

¹⁰¹ Gabal Analysis & Consulting (2006): Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and the Absorption Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field, Prague, p. 26.

These themes are developed in the relevant chapters of the Report (see 3.1, 3.2, 3.3).

¹⁰² Mareš, Petr (2006): *Faktory sociálního vyloučení*. VÚPSV. Prague, p. 22

¹⁰³ In relation to these two terms, Mareš refers to an article by G. Rodgers (What is Special about a Social Exclusion Approach), which distinguishes between *exclusion from the labour market* – a rising number of unemployed people and greater difficulty in reintegrating them into paid jobs, and *exclusion on the labour market* – the placement of individuals and social categories on the secondary labour market, with its precarious and unconventional work contracts. (Ibid., p. 22)

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 22

loans and are unable to repay them. Roma who have a job take out loans for their unemployed relatives. In most cases, debts are related to rent, services, telephone bills, and consumer credit. There are often health insurance debts, too, which incur heavy penalties.¹⁰⁵

The issue of health insurance debt has been discussed in Chapter 3.2 (Employment). One of the reasons for the emergence of this potential area of debt among socially excluded Roma may be the tighter registration conditions at employment offices (in accordance with Act No 435/2004), resulting in ballooning health insurance debts among deregistered clients.¹⁰⁶ For the sake of illustrating the breadth of this issue, we can refer to the situation in Olomouc, where the local District Court received approximately 600 private distraint applications every month. The largest proportion of these applications is for distraint related to health insurance debt.¹⁰⁷

At the above-mentioned conference, Václav Šaroch from the Severomoravský kraj Provincial Administration of the Czech Police Force illustrated this problem with a specific case. He pointed out the case of a distraint order where a mother failed to pay health insurance for her daughter when the girl was aged between 15 and 16. After seven years, when the debt was ascertained, the amount outstanding was calculated at CZK 6,000. The fine and interest came to CZK 17,200. For writing up an order demanding social benefits, the bailiff billed CZK 18,000. Of the original CZK 6,000, the debt eventually spiralled to CZK 42,000.¹⁰⁸

The analysis by GAC spol. s r.o. notes that the issue of indebted families living in conditions of social exclusion is one of the greatest obstacles hindering their integration. As for the scale of the problem, the analysis mentions many families which have rent and energy arrears and goods acquired by hire purchase. Where these families are at risk of distraint or even eviction on account of outstanding debt, they often tackle the situation by borrowing from usurers or companies providing ‘fast loans’ at high interest rates.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Based on information submitted by Ms Machová, the head of the Social Affairs Department at the Olomoucký kraj Provincial Authority, in a letter of 23 January 2007

¹⁰⁶ Based on information submitted by Ms Machová, the head of the Social Affairs Department at the Olomoucký kraj Provincial Authority, in a letter of 23 January 2007

¹⁰⁷ This information comes from a presentation by Eva Krejčiovská, the distraint and civil judge of the District Court in Olomouc, delivered at the conference ‘In the Debt Trap’ in Olomouc on 18 October 2006.

¹⁰⁸ This information comes from a presentation by Václav Šproch delivered at the conference ‘In the Debt Trap’ in Olomouc on 18 October 2006.

¹⁰⁹ Gabal Analysis & Consulting (2006): Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and the Absorption Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field, Prague, pp. 78-79

4. CONCLUSIONS

In coming years, quality sources of data concerning the structure of social exclusion will have to be found so that any systemic measures drawn up by central government have a positive impact in socially excluded localities. In that regard, Government Resolution No 8 of 4 January 2006 concerning a proposal for the implementation of the long-term monitoring of the situation of Roma communities in the Czech Republic should make a positive contribution to this issue. As of 2008, CZK 1,500,000 will be released every year from the Public Treasury Administration budget heading (item: Prevention of social exclusion in Roma communities and the elimination of the consequences thereof) for an appraisal of the situation of Roma communities in the Czech Republic.

Trends have recently surfaced where individual political associations or political parties, or their members, abuse the theme of Roma integration to garner political capital for themselves, their party or association. Regrettably, we are compelled to note that, given the high degree of latent racism and anti-Roma sentiment within Czech society, such an approach clearly benefits the perpetrators at a political level.

The fact of the matter remains that in 2006 members of Roma communities were among the largest groups of long-term unemployed, and are a large section of the population closed off in spatially and socially separated enclaves. This is a persistent problem of Czech society. In 2006, the state failed to trigger a change in this situation or even lay foundations for such a change in the future.

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