

**Czech Republic:**  
The Government Approach toward  
Integration of the Roma People

November 2008

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## 1. ROMA IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

### 1.1. Number of Roma

For certain decisions on the measures leading to the integration of the members of the Roma communities it is necessary to know their number, demographic structure and their territorial distribution. The census of the population, houses and apartments in 2001 discovered that there are **11 716 citizens in the Czech Republic** who declare their nationality as Roma. The representatives of some of the Roma organizations however speak of **two hundred thousand to two hundred and fifty thousand members of the Roma communities**.

Estimates confirm that the Roma population remains rather progressive in terms of population growth.<sup>1</sup> High fertility rates influences the age structure of the Roma population. There is a large proportion of children who will soon enter the age of reproduction. Even if the average number of children in a family decreases the Roma population will continue in its growth.

Projection of the demographic development of the Roma communities in time (table):

Period	overall fertility	medium age		final number	number of births	absolute growth	Relative growth (in promile)
		men	women				
					(yearly average)		
1991-1995	3,392	67,06	73,35	174 832	4 781	4 168	25,39
1996-2000	2,638	66,10	73,02	191575	4 132	3 349	18,29
2001-2005	2,251	67,03	73,97	206 255	3 819	2 936	14,77
2006-2010	2,035	66,80	73,86	219 207	3 702	2 590	12,18
2011-2015	2,007	67,49	74,71	231 692	3 798	2 497	11,08
2016-2020	1,980	67,56	75,41	243 049	3 828	2 271	9,57
2021-2025	1,927	69,68	76,65	253 959	3 835	2 182	8,78
2026-2030	1,927	71,09	78,05	263 800	3 794	1 968	7,60
2031-2035	1,927	71,09	78,05	270 805	3 623	1 401	5,24
2036-2040	1,927	71,09	78,05	275 238	3 496	887	3,25
2041-2045	1,927	71,09	78,05	277 812	3 470	515	1,86
2046-2050	1,927	71,09	78,05	278 985	3 489	235	0,84

Source: 2004 Report, original source: Jitka Langhmerová and Tomáš Fiala: "How many Roma are exactly there in the Czech Republic?" Demografie, 2003

<sup>1</sup> Investigation into the observations of the officers on the municipal level who exercise public administration in relation to Roma communities under their competence, Internal material of the Czech government Council for the Roma Affairs, 2003.

According to the authors of the prognosis there are in the Czech Republic at present time approximately 200 thousand members of Roma communities and by 2050 their number will exceed 300 thousand, as long as the fundamental prerequisites are complied with: gradual improvement of their economic and social situation, improvement of standard of living and the education of the Roma women and men. This development may be anticipated only if the migration numbers will not significantly rise.

## **1. 2. Political Participation of Roma**

The first Roma MPs were elected into Czechoslovak parliament in June of 1990; six Roma were members of the newly constituted Czechoslovakian Federal Parliament, four more were in the Czech National Parliament and one in the Slovak National Council.

All were elected on the lists of larger non-Roma parties – the Czech-based Civic Democratic Forum, VPN in Slovakia and the Party of the Democratic Left. Monika Horakova Mihalickova served as an MP for the Union of Freedom in 1998-2002.

The number of Romani candidates in local and municipal governments is increasing due to their local involvement and the knowledge of local communities; often they are successful and run for the office.

In 1997 the Inter-ministerial Commission was established at the Government Office, later renamed to Government Council for the Roma Community Affairs. Beside the representatives of ministries, there are 14 Romani members in the Council. Roma are also often employed in civil services where they are proving their personal qualities required for the job.

## **1.3. Other Key Actors in Civil Society**

In 2003 there were 381 of Roma organizations<sup>2</sup> registered with the Czech Ministry of Interior, in absolute majority in the form of civic associations. A large number of these organizations exists only formally as they were established for the purpose of achieving one particular objective and had not been dissolved afterwards. From the Roma political parties, the sole remaining party is the Roma Civil Initiative with respect to which the Czech government proposed, by a petition to the Supreme Administrative Court dated 12 March 2003 No. 253, to suspend its activities.

The Roma civic associations are predominantly financed from public budgets and partially from foreign and local foundations funds, and in a negligible degree by membership

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<sup>2</sup> This includes organizations registered with the Ministry of Interior which in their name contain words such as Roma [in the form of a noun, adjective, plural etc – translator’s note] , or whose names are in Roma, whole or in part (such as Jekhetane – Together).

fees of its members and thus remains to a large degree dependent on the subsidy policies of the state, region and municipalities.<sup>3</sup>

**Most of the Roma civic associations focus on the work with the children and youth, on the maintaining and development of the Roma culture, and on the sports and recreation activities.** Some of the Roma association are focusing on the **counselling services for the citizens and on the social field work within the marginalized Roma communities.** The successes of the work of these civic associations in the marginalized communities, or communities which face the danger of exclusion were communicated to the Czech government on 15 December 2004 under reference No. 1674/04 in the Information on the good practice of local governments in the prevention of social exclusion of the Roma communities.<sup>4</sup>

Among the **major organizations** are the Association of Roma in Moravia (headed by Karel Holomek), Dzeno (Ivan Veselý), Romodrom (Marie Gailová), Romea (Jarmila Balážová), to name a few. Since 2004 the Delegation for the Decade of Romani Inclusion has played an important role, three Delegation members are represented in the Committee for the Decade at the Government Council for Romani Community Affairs. There is a large number of **pro-Romani organizations**, such as Slovo 21, Nova Skola, People in Need, Step by Step CR, League for Human Rights, IQ Roma Service.

**Civil society have played an important role in different aspects of design and implementation of policies related to Roma**, e.g. introduction of Romani teacher assistants (Association of Roma in Moravia and Nova skola), introduction of street social work (People in Need), support of Roma students (Athinganoi, Slovo 21), research, discrimination testing (Poradna pro obcanstvi a lidska prava) etc. The communication between the governments and civil society has improved in the past decade.

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<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs calls for projects / grants under the Program for promotion of projects for integration of the members of the Roma communities; Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has grants available under the Program for promotion of projects for integration of the members of the Roma communities and under the Program for the support of the Roma high school students ; Ministry of Culture has a grant under the Program for promotion of projects for integration of the members of the Roma communities; The Government Council for the Roma Affairs calls for grants to be financed by the funds from the chapter General exchequer administration of the state budget under the Prevention of the social exclusion in the Roma communities and remedy of its consequences and under the Promotion of projects for integration of the Roma community.

<sup>4</sup> The successes of the work of these civic associations in the marginalized communities, or communities which face the danger of exclusion were communicated to the Czech government on 15 December 2004 under reference No. 1674/04 in the Information on the good practice of local governments in the prevention of social exclusion of the Roma communities.

## 2. INSTITUTIONAL A POLITICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE ROMA INTEGRATION

The integration of the members of the Roma communities is dealt with by two advisory bodies of the government – the **Government Council for Roma Community Affairs**<sup>5</sup> and the **Government Council for National Minorities**<sup>6</sup>. Both councils are initiative-driving and advisory bodies of the Czech government without direct executive competences. **The Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, Education, Youth and Sports and Interior have their own expert units which are devoted to these themes.** Institutional resources on the local level comprise of the employees and officers of the local municipal authorities which have extended powers with respect to the agenda connected with the integration of the members of the Roma communities, the so-called “**Roma Advisors**”, and of the **Coordinators of Roma Affairs** at the Regional Authority level.<sup>7</sup> In a broader sense the institutional resources / manpower also include other professionals employed by the state or local governments such as **assistants of the pedagogues at schools and Roma field workers** in the municipalities.

The government approaches the resolution of Roma issues from **three viewpoints – from the perspective of human rights, from the perspective of nationalities and from the broader socio-cultural perspective.** These approaches are not in conflict; on the contrary they supplement each other. Reduction of the Roma issues to each single one of these approaches would mean an undesired distortion. The balanced approach which takes into account all three viewpoints reflects the structure of the advisory bodies of the government.

**The first of these perspectives arises from the necessity to ensure that all citizens of the Czech Republic, including the Roma,** could enjoy in full and without discrimination of any kind the rights granted to them by the Constitution, Bill of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms and by international conventions on human rights which are binding on the Czech Republic. The perspective of the human rights and its application on the Roma issues falls within the competence of the **Government Council for Human Rights**<sup>8</sup>. It is an advisory body to the government which monitors the domestic compliance of the concluded and ratified conventions on human rights and which prepares (in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic) the reports on the fulfilment of commitments arising from such conventions and which also proposes to the government or its individual members what conceptual steps to take to strengthen the protection of the human rights. In terms of the individual committees falling under the Government Council for Human Rights, the human rights of the Roma and related issues are dealt with predominantly by the committee for the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination, which prepares anti-discrimination measures on the level of the drafting of relevant legal measures and their application. In a smaller degree the Roma affairs are also handled by other committees of the Government Council for Human Rights such as the committee for social, economic and cultural rights.

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<sup>5</sup> Established by the Decree of the Czech government dated 17 September 1997 no. 581, on the establishment of the Committee for Roma Community Affairs (original denomination).

<sup>6</sup> Established in accordance with § 6 paragraph 3 of the Act No. 273/2001 Coll., On the Rights of the Members of the National Minorities.

<sup>7</sup> The function of the regional coordinator for Roma affairs has been established by the Act No. 129/2000 Coll.

<sup>8</sup> Hereinafter the Human Rights Council (established by the decree of the government No. 809 on 9 December 1998,)

**The second perspective that of the nationality, stems from the specific rights of the members of national minorities** as they are set forth by Head III of the Bill of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, Framework convention on the protection of national minorities, including the collective rights. This specific rights are regulated by the Act No. 273/2001 Coll., On the Rights of National Minorities and on the amendment of certain other laws (hereinafter the “Act on Minorities”, which has been amended by Act No. 320/2002 Coll.). A national minority is defined in the provisions of § 2 paragraph 1 of this Act through its subjective attributes (“[they] express their will to be considered as a national minority for the purposes of ...”) as well as objective attributes (“community of the citizens of the Czech Republic ..., who are different from other citizens usually by ethnic background, language, culture and traditions”). Similarly, the individual rights guaranteed by law and the above named Framework convention do narrowly coincide with the culture, language, subjectively felt collective identity (right to education in the language of the national minority, right to use this language in the official communication and before the courts, dissemination and provision of information in this language, the right to maintain and develop of one’s own culture and other). **Czech Republic acknowledges the Roma as a national minority which has its representatives in the Government Council for National Minorities**<sup>9</sup>, which is an advisory body to the government for the issues of national minorities, and which can work “towards the maintenance and development of its own original character, language and culture” as the provision of § 2 paragraph 1 of the said act promulgate. In this sense the Roma are the beneficiaries of the same rights as any other national minority in the Czech Republic.

**The third perspective, the socio-cultural perspective, stems from the broader approach to the “Roma community”** as determined in the explanatory report to the resolution of the government dated 29 October 1997 No. 686 issued with respect to the Report on the situation of the Roma community in the Czech Republic and to the actual situation in the Roma communities. This perspective is the basis for the activities of the third advisory body to the government which is the Government Council for Roma Affairs<sup>10</sup>.

Even though there is a basic division of the approaches to the Roma issue to human rights, national minorities and socio-cultural aspects it is understandable that in many areas at least two of these aspects blend together. For instance in the sphere of education or employment the resolution of social issues is linked to the general need for the protection of human rights, and especially with the protection against discrimination. The concept of the integration of the Roma as a governmental policy itself links together two imperatives which are to overcome the social exclusion and effort to preserve the Roma cultural identity. Integration of the members of the Roma communities into Czech society and prevention of further social exclusion is viewed by the Czech government as an urgent task which must be reflected in the governmental policies.

**The Czech government carries out the Roma integration efforts through its Concept of Roma Integration (hereinafter the “Concept”)** which contains concrete spheres of Roma integration on the national level. The Office of the Government acting as the coordinating agency and compiler of this conceptual material focused on the priorities arising from the local needs, i.e. the Concept already went through a number of amendments and development. The Concept was adopted by the resolution on 14 June 2000 No. 599 and there were four subsequent amendments to it. The first update took place by the resolution of 23

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<sup>9</sup> The Council was established in accordance with § 6 paragraph 3 of the Act No. 273/2001 Coll., On the Rights of the Members of the Members of National Minorities and on the amendment of certain other laws.

<sup>10</sup> The new statute of the Government Council for Roma Affairs was adopted by the resolution of the government No. 100 on 28 February 2004 (formerly the Interdepartmental Commission for Roma Affairs).

January 2002 No. 87, the second by resolution dated 12 March 2003 No. 243, the third by resolution dated 16 June 2004 No. 607 and the fourth on 28 February 2005. At present time the fifth update of the Concept is in the process of preparation.

The Concept contains the following chapters: Institutional and financial implementation of the Roma integration on the central and local levels, Antidiscriminatory measures, Equalizing principles, Social exclusion within the Roma communities, Education, Integration on the job market, Housing, Social-service work, Healthcare, Security aspects of the Roma integration, Promotion of development of the Roma language and culture, promotion of scientific research.

The government, among other, also formulates the overall fundamental principles of governmental policy in this field in the long-term horizon of approximately two decades i.e. to 2025, which is contained in the resolution No. 1573 dated 7 December 2005. The Roma integration process reflects also the progress of the Roma integration on the local level and the anticipated trends arising largely from the membership of the Czech Republic in the European Union and also from the accession of the Czech Republic to the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015.

**An important institutional element of the integration efforts of the Czech government** became also, after a year of preparations, in 2008 the **Agency for social inclusion in the Roma localities** (hereinafter the “Agency”). **The Czech government has committed itself in 2006 in its Programme Declaration to establish an institution which will carry out the tasks of the integration of the socially excluded members of the Roma communities.** The objective of the Agency is to primarily improve the cohesion of the programs of social integration, promotion of education and employment on the local levels and the testing of the integration method and processes in 12 selected localities. The concept of the Agency was approved by the Czech government on 23 January 2008. The Agency was established in the form of a Department for Social Inclusion in the Roma Localities under the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic.

### 3.1. Education

**In the area of education, there is a visible trend that shows an improvement in the overall education level of Roma.** Romani children and adolescents achieve a higher level of education than their parents or grandparents. This improvement is particularly evident in the growing number of pupils and students at secondary schools and universities. There are systematic programmes of targeted assistance such as preparatory classes, teacher's assistants and projects supporting the integration of Roma into mainstream education, nevertheless, these are limited by the definition of the target group (socially disadvantaged children, pupils and students) used by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport in targeting programmes directed at Roma. This definition is based on Act No. 561/2004 Coll., on pre-school, primary, secondary, technical and other education (the Education Act), however Romani children often face not only social exclusion, but also national differences and must often deal with the prejudices and stereotypes of majority society. In this respect, the Ministry have started the process of systemic and curricular changes.

#### 3.1.1. Preschool Education

In order to overcome their socio-cultural handicap, Roma children need a preparatory programme with targeted assistance. **The systematic approach of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports uses tools from the Concept Early Childhood Care**, which can be defined as a set of measures aimed at identifying possible risks in the development of a child's personality and at preventing the possible negative consequences of the socio-cultural disadvantages in education, and the ethical and social culture of the personality of children in this group. The aim of this timely care is to prevent the child failing at school and to provide both the child's family as well as society with the prerequisites for social integration.

**The preparatory classes are considered to be one of the effective tools of the Concept Early Childhood Care.** These can be set up both at schools operating according to the Framework Education Programme for Basic Education, as well as at special schools. Statistical data relating to the number of primary school preparatory classes for the 2007/2008 school year and the number of children in them are given as of 30. 9. 2007. There were 164 primary school preparatory classes in this school year and there were a total of 1,929 children in these preparatory classes. There were 146 primary school preparatory classes in the 2006/2007 school year, attended by 1,713 children. This means that there has been a significant year-on-year increase in both the numbers of preparatory classes and children in them.

**The integration process in terms of the integration of Roma children within the framework of preschool education is supported by a systematic project "Minorities Integration Centres"** implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the Educational and Psychological Counselling Institute. This project forms part of the Human Resources Development Operational Programme, Measure 3.3.1 "Improving the quality of education in schools and educational facilities and the development of educational support systems" and focuses on the creation of a support system for care for children and young people from socio-culturally disadvantaged and culturally different environments, in particular Roma. The project focuses on the possibility of integrating them into society, on the

course of their education, on the provision of social and pedagogical/psychological consultancy, and on different types of support services, including timely care.

### **3.1.2. Primary Education**

Each year, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport announces an education development programme in accordance with § 171, paragraph 2 of Act No. 561/2004 Coll., on pre-school, primary, secondary, technical and other education (Education Act) for **“Financing Teacher’s Assistants for Socially Disadvantaged Children, Pupils and Students (hereinafter teacher’s assistant)”**. The programme is intended for schools that already have a teacher’s assistant and schools that are interested in newly appointing a teacher’s assistant. In 2007, teacher’s assistants for socially disadvantaged children, pupils and students became the sole target group of the programme. In 2007, 307 teacher’s assistant positions were supported by a sum of CZK 75 642 253 at schools established by municipalities, regions or municipal associations and 11 teacher’s assistant positions at schools established by the Ministry, registered churches or religious organisations in the amount of CZK 2 306 896. For comparison, in 2006, subsidies were provided for 318 teacher’s assistant positions at schools established by municipalities, regions or municipal associations in the amount of CZK 68 568 431 and for 12 teacher’s assistant positions at schools established by the Ministry, registered churches or religious organisations in the amount of CZK 2 192 593.

Financing for teacher’s assistants is dependant on the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport subsidy programme and does not guarantee receipt of support or the retention of teacher’s assistants at schools. A positive example in motivating educational facilities in the past was the Kukadla project by Step by Step Czech Republic, which collaborated in activities designed to motivate mainly nursery schools to create a position for a Romani teacher’s assistant, who would help with the further integration process of children into nursery school when the project ended.

### **3.2.3. Secondary Education**

In secondary education there is a targeted programme of **“Support for Roma Secondary School Students”**. Explicit support is possible thanks to the fact students who label themselves as members of the Roma ethnic community apply for the programme. As part of this programme, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport supported a total of 2 715 applications in 2007 in the amount of CZK 9 939 300. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport announces the programme twice a year and posts this announcement on its website, as well as the subsequent results of selection proceedings. (The programme administrator provides more detailed information, both over the phone and by electronic mail.)

**The aim of the aforementioned programme is to support the studies of Romani students whose parents would find the costs of secondary education a considerable financial burden.** The subsidy programme is of a both social and motivational nature. Funds from this programme are intended for Romani pupils and students who are citizens of the Czech Republic. These funds are provided through legal entities entered in the Education Register, who provide secondary education, secondary education with a certificate of apprenticeship, secondary education with school leaver’s examination, vocational education and vocational education at a conservatory. Table bellow gives an overview of funds provided under the “Support for Roma Secondary School Students” programme in 2000 – 2007.

Overview of funds hitherto provided under the “Support for Roma Secondary School Students” programme in 2000 – 2007 (table):

Round-Year	Number of applications – students	Amount in CZK
I/2000	333	2 344 000
II/2000	561	510 000
I/2001	511	3 437 000
II/2001	1 021	3 400 000
I/2002	941	3 488 000
II/2002	1 409	4 992 948
I/2003	1 136	5 230 599
II/2003	1 441	4 742 833
I/2004	1 069	5 015 063
II/2004 regular closing date	894	4 054 700
III/2004 subsequent closing date	350	922 200
I/2005	1 292	5 986 000
II/2005	1 391	5 503 600
I/2006	1 315	6 713 500
II/2006	1 922	7 157 000
I./2007	1190	5 929 200
II/ 2007	1525	5 487 800
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15 586</b>	<b>74 914 443</b>

Source: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

### **3.1.4. College and University Education**

Support for Roma university students is addressed through public university Development Programmes, respectively, programmes for the support of handicapped students and applicants from disadvantaged social groups. **A highly motivational programme is the Roma Memorial University Scholarship awarded by the Roma Educational Fund.** In the past, this programme was administered by the Open Society Institute in Budapest.

Due to a lack of relevant data, a partial picture of the number of Roma students at university in 2007 can be formed on the basis of data from the civic association Athinganoi, which has become the contact point for students applying for the Roma Memorial University Scholarship. The association has approximately 50 Roma students at Czech universities in its database. This includes students at Charles University in Prague (Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Education), Masaryk University in Brno, University of Jan Evangelista Purkyně in Ústí nad Labem, University of Hradec Králové, University of Ostrava (economics and business law), University of Social and Political Sciences in Kolín and the Anglo-American University. The actual number of Roma students is probably higher, according to estimates by the civic association Athinganoi, this is hundreds of students.

### **3.1.5. Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport Subsidy Programme to Support the Integration of the Roma Community**

Each year the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport supports the integration of the Roma community in the area of education through its **“Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport Subsidy Programme to Support the Integration of the Roma Community.”** In 2007 the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport Programme to Support the Integration of the Roma Community was announced in three rounds with closing dates as of 30. 3. 2007, 31. 8. 2007 and 12. 11. 2007. In all rounds of subsidy proceedings, subsidies were provided for seminars, forums, educational programmes and other educational events. A total of 95 projects received support in the amount of CZK 13 722 000. In 2006 a total of 55 projects was approved in the amount of CZK 12 611 274. Compared to previous years, there is a continuing increase in the number of supported projects in the key areas of pre-school preparation of Romani children and the education of pupils from the Roma community at primary school. This trend can be seen as positive.

### **3.2. Development of Romani Culture and Language**

The development and presentation of Roma culture is based on the approach of the Czech government to national minorities, which **focuses on supporting the preservation, development and presentation of national minority cultures, the dissemination and receipt of information in national minority languages** (including the publication of national press titles), education in national minority languages, multicultural upbringing and support for the integration of the Roma community. **As part of integration efforts directed at the Roma community, it is important to focus on building understanding and tolerance in society by learning about the history and traditions of Roma culture and improving communication between members of the Roma community and majority society.**

**Roma culture is continually developing and, together with other national minority cultures, forms a multicultural environment in Czech society.** Roma have access to public television and radio: e.g. the regular Friday Roma radio programme **“O Roma vakeren – Roma Talking”** on Czech Radio. The Romani editorial team of this programme also produces a fifteen minute news programme, which is broadcast on regional studio frequencies. Czech Television currently only screens occasional programmes about Roma or for Roma in relation to significant events such as the presentation of the World Roma Festival, Khamoro. Five Roma work at Czech Television, two of them appear on television screens. There is also the **internet radio station Rota International**, which is operated by the civic association, Dženo.

Roma press in the Czech Republic is represented by the paper **“Romano hangos”**, which is published twice a month and the monthlies **“Romano vod’i”** (Roma Spirit) and **“Kereka”** (Circle) – a colour magazine, not just for Roma children. **“Romano džaniben”** is a specialist journal published twice a year (for linguists, historians, ethnographers, anthropologists, etc.). An information publication has been published twice as part of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in the form of the magazine **„Jekhetane, together into the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015”**. A major role in the presentation of Roma culture and the provision of current information on the Roma community in the Czech Republic and abroad is played by the **information web servers [www.romea.cz](http://www.romea.cz), [www.dzeno.cz](http://www.dzeno.cz) and [www.romove.cz](http://www.romove.cz).**

**Most Roma non-profit organisations devote their attention to Roma multiethnic events each year with the aim of promoting cultural dialogue and mutual knowledge of different cultures.** Roma music is featured at various ethnic music festivals. It's also worth mentioning several Roma festivals such as: Romská píseň (Roma Song), which was held, under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture, at the Wallachian Open Air Museum in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm for the 13<sup>th</sup> time in 2007 and the World Roma Festival, Khamoro. The promotion of Roma culture is also the subject of other projects that met with a positive response from the public, e.g. 8<sup>th</sup> Karviná Roma Festival 2007; the International Roma Festival, Gypsy Celebration 2007 held at Svojanov Caslte; 4<sup>th</sup> Multicoloured Music Festival in Trmice or the 7<sup>th</sup> Roma Music Festival in Lysá nad Labem.

Educational activities primarily focusing on the development of the Romani language are a focal point of the Seminar of Romani Studies of the Institute of South and Central Asia, which has been operating on the grounds of the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts at Charles University as an educational and scientific department since 1991 (first as a field of study, but from 2000 as a relatively independent department as part of the institute). **The range of interests of the Seminar of Romani Studies is very broad: it tries to explain anthropological, historical, political, religious, folklorist, literary and other elements of Roma culture and mutually interconnect knowledge from these individual fields.** The foundation of the work of seminar employees and students is linguistics and an active knowledge of the Romani language.

**The Museum of Roma Culture in Brno<sup>11</sup> (MRC) is one of the leading institutions building collections documenting the culture and history of the Roma community.** The MRC manages collections of traditional crafts and professions, types of housing, interior furnishings, clothing and jewellery, art, written material, posters and invitations, audio, photo and video documentation, libraries, echoes of Roma culture in majority culture and self documentation of the museum. Collections are mainly built through collection in the field and documentation, accompanied by exhibitions and cultural events. The museum has recently become involved in Brno's Museum Nights with its own composed programme.

**A separate element of preserving Roma culture and the historical legacy of the Roma community is the issue of the Roma holocaust.** The Terezín<sup>12</sup> Memorial, in collaboration with the Museum of Roma Culture, organises specialist seminars and educational activities in this area. The Museum of Roma Culture also actively helps to organise individual activities such as the event annually held in August to commemorate 21 August 1943 when the second mass transport of remaining prisoners was dispatched to the concentration camp Osvětim II–Březinka, where most subsequently died. Each year on 13 May, the Committee for the Compensation of Victims of the Holocaust organises a commemorative service in Lety near Písek. The issue of a memorial at Lety near Písek and the removal of the pig farm saw certain progress in 2007 and thanks to the constitution of a working group on the issue of the Roma holocaust attached to the Council for Roma Community Affairs, discussion has begun at government and local level to find a dignified solution.

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<sup>11</sup> Founded in 1991, it became an organization receiving state contributions established by the Ministry of Culture on 1 January 2005.

<sup>12</sup> An organization receiving state contributions, established by the Ministry of Culture.

### **3.3. Employment**

Each year Employment Services Administration (hereinafter ESA) of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs sets a focus and objectives for the realisation of active employment policy (hereinafter AEP) for Employment Offices in the given year. In 2007 they were given specific quotas for selected priority groups of unemployed, who were to be incorporated into AEP instruments and measures. Quotas were also set on funds expended on set AEP instruments. For example, Employment Offices were asked to incorporate at least 30% of persons belonging to the group of long-term unemployed (i.e. registered for at least 6 months) in AEP instruments and measures. However, it cannot be specifically said how many of the incorporated job seekers were Roma or members of Roma communities, as, in accordance with the Protection of Personal Data Act and the Employment Act, Employment Offices do not keep records on the colour of a job seeker's skin or whether they are part of a national or ethnic minority. Unfortunately, this is a problem that prevents the establishment of the actual number of unemployed Roma in the Czech Republic.<sup>13</sup>

**Projects realised by non-profit organisations in collaboration with Employment Offices that create a communication and motivational bridge between members of the Roma community and these institutions have proven successful.**

The Office of the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs established collaboration with the World Bank in the preparation of an analysis of the causes of Roma unemployment in the Czech Republic and a strategy to support their employment entitled **“Support Strategy for the Employment of Roma in the Czech Republic.”** The analysis was conducted within the framework of technical assistance provided to the Czech government by the World Bank in the period from November 2007 to October 2008. The result is a document entitled **“The Czech Republic: Improving Employment Chances of the Roma,”** which bases its conclusions on field research and data in the following areas: (i) effectiveness of Employment Offices and their ability to solve the problems of long-term unemployment and social exclusion, especially of the Roma community; (ii) obstacles on the part of job seekers (the unemployed, respectively potential employees) and (iii) obstacles on the part of employers. The document offers recommendations not only in the area of employment, but also in the area of education and looks at ways of overcoming obstacles leading to the greater participation of Roma in the labour market overall.

#### **3.3.1. European Social Fund and Roma Employment**

Many projects focusing on the integration of Roma have been realised with the support of the European Social Fund (ESF), **whose main mission is the development of employment, reduction of unemployment, to support social inclusion and equal opportunity with an emphasis on the development of the labour market and human resources.**

In the **Human Resources Development Operational Programme, Measure 2.1 Integration of specific groups of the population at risk of social exclusion** – employment, projects geared towards the integration of Roma on the labour market were supported with aid totalling CZK 15,532,500 in 2006 and 2007. In two calls for proposals, two projects were

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<sup>13</sup> Information provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for the preparation of a Report on the State of the Romani Community for 2007, in a letter, dated 12 February 2008

supported that directly focused on members of the Roma minority, and another two projects incorporated Roma as one of the target groups.

### **Projects directly focusing on the Roma community**

**Vsetín Municipal Technical Services** was implementing the project ‘**A working chance**’. This project addressed those who are excluded or at risk of social exclusion, in particular members of the Roma community. These are long-term unemployed unable to find work on account of their low level education and qualifications. The project offered job-seekers and persons interested in employment the chance to take part in retraining courses on the maintenance of green and public spaces and on tiling. Prior to placement in a retraining course, the 20 project participants went through counselling and non-vocational training to help identify their skills and opportunities; this benefit participants in working their way round the labour market and result in their labour-market activation. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 3,507,964**.

The civic association **IQ Roma Servis, Brno**, was implementing the project ‘**My life = my choice; a programme offering fresh prospects for the young Roma generation**’. The project concentrated on the support and assistance of members of the Roma community seeking to access education and the labour market. The project activated and developed the passive potential of a generation of young Roma aged 15-30 by reinforcing their self-confidence, individual motivation, capabilities and skills. The project activities were tailored to the needs of the client, with whom an individual action plan is prepared. This plan then served as the basis for specific training, retraining, individual guidance and the intermediation of employment. The services include individual tutoring and coaching. The project partner is Brno City Employment Office. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 3,915,372**.

### **Projects partially focusing on the Roma community**

The ‘**Beginning Together**’ community was implementing the project ‘**Opportunity**’. This project was designed to increase and reinforce the competences of unemployed young people at risk of social exclusion who were aged 15-25 as they look for employment opportunities on the labour market, and aims to support them as they enter the job market. These young people were a group with a low level of education and qualifications and belong to a different socio-cultural environment. The project draw on experience and contacts from previous pilot projects and offers an integrated approach in the searches and motivation of the target group (employment office clients, clients of the Probation and Mediation Service, and clients of field social workers). The project activities encompassed training courses for the development of social competence, skills and the knowledge required to look for work, computer skills, career advice and a model job interview, and subsequent individual assistance. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 1,507,356**.

The **Clubhouse in Jablonec nad Nisou** was implementing the project ‘**Open Doors**’. The target groups on which the project focuses include young Roma over the age of 15 who were at risk of long-term unemployment. The project prevented the negative impacts of social exclusion by means of education and professional counselling. The training activities covered practical work with computer technology, learning about labour market supply, basic information regarding labour, civil and family law, and courses focusing on specific skills – the rudiments of costume jewellery production and the rudiments of cooking. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 1,929,220**.

The implementation of the project '**Integration of Roma citizens excluded from the labour market in Hranice**', run by **EKOLTES Hranice, a.s.**, continued in 2006. The idea of the project was to identify and integrate 18 long-term unemployed Roma citizens into a working party to be led by a Roma supervisor. These workers are retrained to gain skills in various manual professions. The project results in the employment of Roma citizens with revitalized working habits, skills, and regular earnings, who are therefore independent of social benefits. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 4,672,500**.

**The Roman Catholic vicarage** in Toužim was implementing the project 'Job Centre' from October 2006 to June 2008 as part of the Human Resources Development Operational Programme, Measure 1.1 Support of the active employment policy. The project was taking place in the Karlovarsko Region, specifically in the towns of Toužim, Teplá, Bečov, Žlutice, Bočov and the surrounding area. The project was intended for approximately 250 long-term unemployed persons, predominantly of Roma origin. Project activities include motivational courses, retraining as cooks, waiting staff, receptionists and maids, and subsequent assistance in finding work. The project received assistance totalling approximately **CZK 6 million**.

Within the scope of Measure 1.1, Support of the active employment policy, the project '**Vladař Regional Training and Information Centre**' was taking place in the municipality of Valeč (in the Toužim area) with assistance of **CZK 3,700,000**. About a third of the project's target group comprises unemployed Roma.

### **3.3.2. Equal Community Initiative**

Two projects geared towards the integration of long-term unemployed Roma on the labour market continued under the programme of the **EQUAL Community Initiative**. (Both projects were launched in 2005. The overall implementation period was four years.)

**Drom, romské středisko, o.p.s.** in Brno was implementing a project of developmental partnership called '**Microbus**'. This project aimed to create a dynamic system to improve employability; it entailed the formation of an employment agency in four regions of the Czech Republic, an online database of job-seekers, a database of employers, and the training of a team of HR officers. The project partners were the Roma organizations o.s. Liga (Bruntál), o.s. Romano Jasnica (Ústí nad Labem - Trmice) and o.s. Association of Roma in Moravia (Jesenicko, Frýdek-Místek, Šternberk and Hodonín). The project was incorporated into transnational cooperation, which was an integral part of the EQUAL Community Initiative. In January 2006, work began on the implementation of the Microbus national project and the transnational European Specificity project.

The **Microbus** project was an attempt to create means to improve the employability of persons disadvantaged on the labour market. The basic target group of the project was predominantly Roma, among whom there tend to be more adverse factors, such as long-term unemployment, low levels of education and their ethnicity. Other target groups are potential employers and, not least, the broader public, including organizations and institutions working with the basic target group, such as employment offices, local government and state administration.

The project's basic instrument was the systemic interlinking of social service providers, i.e. organizations working with similar target groups and forming partnerships to share their work methodology and try out innovative approaches. The formation of the network of other relevant actors – representatives of local authorities, employment offices, professional and special-interest associations, etc., exceeds the framework of partnership. The key work method was the application of assisted placements for job-seekers. The aim of these

services was to provide specially trained HR officers who adopt a constructive approach to the needs of specific clients and cooperate with the relevant authorities, institutions and employers. Besides, consultancy services, job-seekers also took up the opportunity of training, designed to increase their job-searching skills, direct personal assistance, the mediation of training courses, retraining, etc. The **European Specificity** transnational project was based on international partnership, used to exchange information, experience, methods, practices and the diverse results obtained during the implementation of national projects. The international partner of the European Specificity project was the French agency Infrep, with its Kalo Dant project. For information about transnational cooperation, please refer to [www.eurospecificity.eu](http://www.eurospecificity.eu). The project received assistance totalling **CZK 15,460,849**.

The **Brno-based IQ Roma Servis, o.s.** was implementing a project called **“Partnership for the success of Roma on the labour market”**. The aim of the project was to increase the motivation and occupational skills of unemployed Roma and to assist them in their search for employment. By improving the social standards and overall social integration of Roma, the project was keen to cultivate a tolerant, prejudice-free environment where individuals were assessed primarily on their individual qualities and skills, and not on the basis of presumptions used to label a particular ethnic or social group. There were twelve project partners, mainly Brno organizations, including schools, community centres, a low-threshold club and training organizations.

Project workers have been trained in the following areas: labour market counselling (run by the Union of Supported Employment), EEG Biofeedback, IT technology, motivational communication, the presentation of the organization in the media, personality and social education, motivational lessons for job-seekers, seminars on the prevention of socio-pathological phenomena and legal updates related to social work. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 28,465,773**.

### **3.4. Housing**

The general objective in the area of housing is the endeavour to prevent the establishment of new segregated localities, to improve the situation in the already existing segregated Roma localities (ghettos) and to improve access to housing by socially weaker Roma. The institutions assigned to implement targets in the area of housing are the Ministry for Regional Development, State Housing Development Fund, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (the sphere of social services), the Council of the Government for Roma Community Affairs, local authorities and non-governmental non-profit organisations. Within the scope of their competence these institutions participate in the integration of Roma. In this aspect a key role is played by political will and specific decisions of local authority bodies.

The segregation of the Roma population in ethnic and social ghettos of larger towns and cities is a problem referred to not only by the Gabal Report<sup>14</sup> and the report of non-governmental non-profit organisations engaged in the matters of racial discrimination and human rights, but also a problem which is seriously detrimental for the affected towns and their local authorities. The existence of these ghettos has negative consequences both for the

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<sup>14</sup> Analysis of socially excluded Roma localities, prepared by Gabal Consulting in 2006 for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

actual residents of the ghettos (higher degree of isolation and social exclusion, evocation of feelings of hopelessness resulting in a nihilisms, crime, signs of aggression and subsequent intensification of mistrust leading to animosity of the majority towards the group) and for other citizens living, working or just temporarily present in the locality and its environs (risks of crime, noise and smell annoyance, hygiene and health risks, decline in the attractiveness of the site resulting in a drop in real estate prices). An important role in this process is played by field social work and non-profit organisations. Field social workers in many cases prevented the eviction of individuals and families who for example had arrears in their rent payments.

The well-developed solution systems are often implemented by the non-governmental non-profit organisations, one of the examples, which can be considered **as a system solution, has been under way for the fourth year running in Ostrava – Vítkovice and newly in other Ostrava districts, implemented by the Centrom, civic association.** It concerns a **three-stage housing system for groups of socially excluded citizens.** The first is represented by the standard rental housing, from where a “one-way” road very often leads to various types of last-resort accommodation (of the “third” stage). The change-over station allowing a return to the top is facilitated by the most important “second” stage, that is to say housing accompanied with social programmes. Another worthwhile example is the way of dealing with the unfavourable situation of the Roma community in Dobrá Voda and its overspill into the surrounding area. **Workers of the non-profit organisation - Český západ (Czech West) carry out their activities directly at places where people live and where problems are created or exist.** The association endeavours to deal with unfavourable situations by bringing about changes, which have an impact on the entire local community. The basis for solution of the problem spheres is the hidden potential of the community. The association tries to involve in decision making and problem solving all the people who the problem relates to, who are interested in its solution as well as those who can contribute to solving the issue. In this way they extend the possibilities of people influencing what is happening to them, supporting their abilities, good ideas, initiatives and the leadership qualities of people.

### **3.5. Health Care**

The department authorised to perform the objectives in the priority area of health care is the Ministry of Health. Socially excluded Roma communities are currently facing a problem of a low level of awareness about the possibilities of health prevention and care.

**In February 2005, the Ministry of Health submitted to the government a proposal of a project introducing health - social assistants.** The proposal presumed that the pilot programme of health - social assistants should be developed through a non-governmental organisation. The Roma civic association - Drom subsequently prepared a training programme and together with the Masaryk University in Brno and the Faculty of Health Studies of Ostrava University trained 18 health - social assistants. With the target of integrating the work of health assistants within the system, these activities were included under social services in 2007.

**The assistants’ role lies in actively searching for persons or groups with potential health risks whether as a consequence of unsafe behaviour, lack of information or the unavailability of healthcare - etc.** Their work focuses predominantly on care for pregnant women and mothers after giving birth, children, young people, hygiene conditions in

households and improvement of communication between parents, physicians and medical staff.

In November 2007 a **Sastipen project** was initiated, under the title of **“Health and the Roma Community – Analysis of the Situation in Europe”**, which is financed by the European Union within the “Public Health” programme. The project is performed in 7 European states by the Spanish non-profit organisation - Fundación Secretariado Gitano, which in the Czech Republic has formed a partnership with the Office of the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs and the civic association Living Together (Vzájemné soužití) o.s. The basic target of the project is to analyse the health situation of the Roma population and subsequently to propose specific strategies in the area of health and activities for this target group of residents.

The issue of the often mentioned sterilisation of Roma women should be dealt with in the **new act focusing on special health services, which contains rules not only for sterilisation, but also for example, for castration or artificial insemination**. The bill was prepared with the active involvement of the Minister for Human Rights and Ethnic Minorities Džamila Stehlíková and representatives of specialised governmental committees. The bill was introduced before the government by the Minister of Health Tomáš Julínek in August 2008. The conclusions of investigations carried out in recent years were one of the incentives for defining the essentials of the informed consent of a patient as well as the declaration of rejecting the recommended health care, set in the Ministry of Health Decree No. 385/2006 Coll. on medical documentation, in force from April 1, 2006. **Moreover, they were also projected into the amended Act No. 20/1966 Coll., on Public Health Care**, in the wording of subsequent regulations, where the rights of the patient, and persons close to him/her with regards to co-participation **in providing health care were significantly strengthened**.

### **3.6. Social Cohesion**

By signing the Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion on 18 December 2003, the Czech Republic undertook to implement the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2004-2006. **The plan included the most important problems faced by the Czech Republic in the areas of poverty and social exclusion, while at the same time publicising the objectives, tasks and measures leading to their elimination**. The plan projected social inclusion policy into other relevant areas such as employment, social protection, healthcare, education, housing, the prevention of socially negative phenomena, etc. The plan was based on the EU Joint Objectives in the Fight against Poverty and Social Exclusion, as approved by the European Council in December 2000 in Nice.

The plan sets a broad framework in which policy to fight poverty and social exclusion will continue to be developed in the coming years. **The primary strategic document that formulates state policy in the area of Roma integration is the Concept for Roma Integration**. Compensatory procedures are used to meet objectives for the integration of Roma communities and the economic self sufficiency of community members. The government approaches these with the prospect of achieving associated objectives by 2020. A specific approach is combined here with the effort to adapt general measures and resources in relation to the specific conditions and needs of members of the Roma community. **The objectives of compensatory procedures also give rise to suitable measures, which are primarily activities leading to an improvement of education level and professional qualifications**. In the case of compensatory measures, the government does not proceed

according to quotas determining the number of Roma in certain jobs or among applicants accepted for study, but has gone the way of targeted assistance, which enables these people to overcome their disadvantages and come to terms with the demands placed on them.

One of the most important compensatory procedures is the Programme for Field Social Work in Excluded Roma Communities, which has been realised by the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs through local government authorities and numerous non-government non-profit organisations since 1999. Its aim is to contribute to the transition from social welfare benefits to social assistance with an emphasis on work with clients directly in the Roma community.

The issue of social exclusion is still one of the most pressing problems for the Roma community in the Czech Republic. Spatial and social exclusion manifests in employment on the labour market, increasing criminality and prostitution. Roma fall into debt and cannot free themselves from the trap of poverty.

Structural processes have been launched at central state administration level that should radically reverse this trend in coming years. This is the establishment of the Department for Social Inclusion in Roma Localities (the Agency) as part of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, which operates in this area and reinforce (support) the capacity of municipalities to solve the problem of social exclusion. In order to tap and ensure the positive impact of this integration instrument is be important to negotiate blanket implementation and a significantly longer time frame for its operation and only then to establish its definite status. Despite the proclaimed efforts of many government departments, this is de facto one of the few state intervention instruments in the area of social inclusion policy for socially excluded members of Roma communities. Another important change is the establishment of the Department of Equal Opportunities at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

**It is gratifying to see that independent integration activities are also appearing at regional level.** For example, the **Central Bohemia Region** has set up a working group on “Persons at Risk of Social Exclusion” as part of the Mid-Term Social Services Development Plan and has also set up the Central Bohemia Region Humanitarian Fund. The Central Bohemia Region expects results in the long term and has indicated a need for cooperation at local and community level and the acquisition of financial resources.

In the **Liberec Region**, the Mid-Term Social Services Development Plan includes a proposed strategy for the provision of services for national and ethnic minorities. It summarises the main problems of socially disadvantaged communities (rental and public utility debts, long-term unemployment, low education, poor housing culture, poor hygienic conditions, etc.). Among other things, missing services were identified as part of the plan, these are: field programmes, low threshold facilities for children and adolescents, social activation services for families with children.

In the **Moravia-Silesian Region** a target group of “people at risk of social exclusion” was identified (unemployment, low income, socially excluded localities). As part of the Mid-Term Social Services Development Plan, information has been prepared in the following structure – group characteristics, basic problem areas, description of target group through an analysis of already available information sources.

There are a large number of people at risk of social exclusion in the **Olomouc Region**, especially in the Jesenice area. The Olomouc Region has set 8 priorities in its strategy for the provision of social services. These include, for example, support for all activities leading to a greater awareness of ways to prevent social exclusion and resolving the state of social

exclusion; support for social prevention services, not only in accordance with community plans, but also current trends in social work.

The output of the **Pardubice Region** working group in the area of social services includes the following areas: long-term exclusion and the crisis with associated objectives such as optimisation of the advisory network, day centres, crisis intervention and field work in the area of social prevention, optimisation of the accommodation services network for social prevention, ethnic minorities and foreign nationals, optimisation of the advisory network for ethnic minorities and foreign nationals, support for employment, support for the development of field social work, support for the inclusion of socially disadvantaged persons into society, and support of education.

In the **Ústí Region** a specific area of services for members of ethnic minorities was defined, which mainly includes the aim to ensure accessible social services focusing on the integration of national minorities (expert counselling for asylum seekers and migrants, low threshold facilities for children and adolescents in socially excluded communities) and improving public awareness on the issue of national minorities.

In the **Zlín Region**, persons at risk from social pathological phenomena were defined. In the area of field and ambulant services, the expansion of the following services will be supported in selected localities in 2008: low threshold facilities for children and adolescents, professional social counselling, social activation services for families with children, field programmes. In defined areas, the establishment of, among other things, the following field and ambulant services will be supported: complex services for women without shelter (hostel, low threshold day centre, field programme), low threshold facilities for children and adolescents, social activation services for families with children.

Act No. 108/2006 Coll., on social services came into effect on 1.1.2007. **Field social work, which is one of the most effective instruments for solving the problem of social exclusion of people living in socially excluded communities, is defined by this law.** The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs places emphasis on improving the quality of all social services on the principal of protecting its users. The public contract for “Support for the Creation of a System of Field Social Work” leads to the creation of methodical handbooks for the execution of field social work for all social services providers that provide “field social work”.<sup>15</sup> The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs also supports these activities in the **Operational Programme for Human Resources and Employment (OP HRE)** for the programme period 2007 – 2013. Specifically, **Measure 3.2 Support for the Social Integration of Members of Roma Communities**, primarily aims to support the education of contracting authorities, providers, users of services and other subjects in the area of the social inclusion of members of Roma communities, to support social services and other instruments working in favour of the social inclusion of members of socially excluded Roma communities, and to support the processes of providing social services, including the development of partnerships at local and regional level. Connection is ensured as part of the **Integrated Operation Programme (IOP)**, specifically **Measure 3.1 Services in the Area of Social Integration**, which is targeted at investment support in ensuring the accessibility of services that enable members of socially excluded Roma localities at the greatest risk to return to the labour market and society and **Measure 5.2 Improving the Environment in Problematic Housing Estates**, which aims to support projects focusing on solutions for Roma communities at risk of social exclusion.

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<sup>15</sup> Information provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for the preparation of a Report on the State of the Romany Community for 2007, in a letter, dated 12 February 2008

Support for field work in 2007 was realised by the Office of the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs in the form of a subsidy programme for municipalities, which covered a large part of wage costs for field social workers. **The Field Work Support Programme** in 2007 was announced in two rounds, where 43 municipalities employing 77 field social workers were included in the programme in the 1<sup>st</sup> round and 7 municipalities with 12 field social workers were included in the programme in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round, representing support for a total of 50 municipalities and 89 field social workers. In total, a sum of CZK 12 000 000 was divided among municipalities. For comparison, in 2006 there were 94 field social workers (FSV) working in 56 municipalities and these municipalities received subsidies for field social workers' wages in the amount of CZK 10 380 426. The reason for the reduction in the number of social workers and increase in costs for the programme in 2007 is due to the fact that the sum per field social worker increased from CZK 160 thousand to CZK 200 thousand on the condition that FSV were employed full time. All those who met the set criteria received subsidies, in this case meaning all applicants. However this gave rise to an increase in funds for the programme and a relative reduction in FSV; relative because instead of two FSV working part time, some municipalities now employ one field social worker full time.

A number of non-government non-profit organisations also do social work in the field in the Roma community. Field work places emphasis on complex social work with the client directly, in his/her community. The social worker analyses the family's social situation and using suitable means and social work methods helps to eliminate undesirable factors preventing its integration into society. Field social workers most often have to resolve problems of housing, truancy, gambling, unemployment and drug addiction. However, they have not been very successful to date in the area of increasing employment among members of socially excluded localities.

### **3.6.1. European Social Fund and Social Cohesion in Roma Communities**

In addition to the conceptual level, the principle of social cohesion is also implemented locally, especially by the provision of social services in excluded Roma communities. Below are the examples of supported projects.

#### **Support of Social Integration in the regions (JROP, measure 3.2.)**

Under **Measure 5.3.2 (Support of social integration in the regions) of the JROP** (Joint Regional Operational Programme), 38 projects received aid totalling CZK 120,619,254 for the integration of socially excluded Roma in 2006 and 2007.

#### **Moravian Silesian Region**

**The organization Bílý nosorožec, o.p.s.** was implementing the project '**Integration programme for persons of Roma ethnicity at risk of social exclusion in the Železná locality**' in Ostrava (Mariánské Hory and Hulváky). This project focused on increasing the social integration of socially disadvantaged Roma families with accumulated problems (long-term unemployment, problems with school attendance). The families received educational services, counselling, mediation, help in the development and maintenance of buildings, flats and the surrounding area, the revitalization of work skills and services connected with free-time activities. The project also concentrated on better career prospects and the reduced

occurrence of socio-pathological phenomena. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 2,463,643**.

The objective of the project **‘Comprehensive social care system’ implemented by the civic association CENTROM**, Vítkovice, was to halt the social exclusion of whole families from the Roma minorities, kick-start the process of their social integration, and promotion crime prevention and drug prevention among children and young people from socially excluded strata of the population, predominantly Roma communities. An intrinsic characteristic of the project was the social integration of maladjusted groups of the population (90% of Roma ethnicity). This envisages an expansion in the range of resocialization programmes to include introductory education in information technology for adults and children, the operation of a low-threshold centre, and the operation of a nursery school for children from families with a severely restrictive handicap and for children from the first level of primary school. The project was implemented from 1 January 2006 to 30 April 2007. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 2,051,989**.

**The Association of Christian Helpers in Orlová** is implementing the project **‘Amaro Del Roma Centre’**. This project was geared towards pre-primary education, extra-curricular lessons, preparation for schooling and help with homework, information literacy for children and adults, job guidance, field social work, health awareness and other services. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 2,108,537**.

**The Association of Roma in Moravia (Společenství Romů na Moravě, o.p.s.)** was implementing the project **Integration of Roma in the Moravian Silesian Region**. The aim of the project, which takes place in Ostrava, Frýdek-Místek, Nový Jičín, Bruntál and Rýmařov, was to increase the social integration and employment of Roma in the Moravskoslezsko Region and to reduce the occurrence of socio-pathological phenomena by means of field social work, a training programme for young Roma people, civil and social guidance and the development of low-threshold centres for Roma children and young people. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 4,533,300**.

**The chartered city of Havířov** was implementing a project of **social assistance services for families with children**. The aim of the project was to prevent socio-pathological phenomena and social exclusion by means of assistance in selected problem families. This assistance includes educative, educational and activation activities to find remedies for problem families with children in the fields of education, working and payment discipline, hygiene and crime prevention. A secondary intention of the project was to create and operate a coherent system for the monitoring of social issues in the city; this was used in the implication of social assistance services. The observations made were used to draw up new or update existing development documents for the city, such as the Strategic Plan, Community Plan and Housing Concept. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 2,479,000**.

**The Ostrava-Opava Diocesan Charity** was implementing the project **Development of programmes for employment and the prevention of socio-pathological phenomena**. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 3,687,426**.

**The Silesian Diacony** was implementing the **Contact II – Bohumín, Karviná** project between June 2006 and March 2007. The aim of the project was to gradually cultivate a comprehensive range of services for socially weak families, predominantly of Roma ethnicity, from the localities of Bohumín – Pudlov and Karviná and the surrounding area, which was based on their needs and interests. This mainly entails support in the handling of acute problems related to housing, employment, education, conflicts with the law, negotiations with authorities and institutions, the handling of basic situations in life, and the use of addictive substances. The project included the operation of two low-threshold centres. The

comprehensive service will enable clients *inter alia* to gain a basic overview of the labour market, come to grips with computers and especially the Internet, acquire basic skills needed to manage a household and home economics, gradually adopt working habits, and acquire sufficient motivation and self-confidence for employment and self-learning. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 5,258,453**.

## **Ústí Region**

**The Most District Charity** was implementing the project **'Social Guidance Centre'**. This project aimed to provide social guidance to Roma and socially weaker members of the majority, both directly in communities at risk of social exclusion and via a help and advice centre. The projects activities include a field social programme, including individual and group social-law consultations, and a programme of morning and afternoon clubs (social integration mini-courses focusing on practical skills and consultancy services with a view to teaching families how to organize children's free time correctly, how to manage schoolwork and schooling together, the rudiments of computing, etc.). This project was implemented from January 2007 to June 2008. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 1,896,030**.

**People in Need (Člověk v tísní, o.p.s.)** was implementing two identical projects – **'Support of Social Integration' in Ústí nad Labem, Krupce, Bílina and Chomutov**. The aim of the projects was the social integration of disadvantaged groups and an improvement in their labour market position. Project activities include social and legal consultancy services in the form of field social work, as well as psycho-social activities, support of low-threshold activities and the development of social communication skills required for future career prospects. The projects received assistance totalling **CZK 11,309,764**.

**The Litvínov – Janov Primary School and Nursery School** was implementing the project **'Training in Computer Literacy'** from 15 June 2006 to 30 June 2008. This project is mainly geared towards families with children with a social handicap, predominantly those of Roma origin. The school used the project to equip a computer classroom and, within the scope of extra-curricular activities, to teach children and their families how to use computers and the Internet. The project, combined with other motivational courses, helped older, long-term unemployed relatives gain a better overview of the labour market.

## **Olomouc Region**

**The Association of Roma in Moravia (Společenství Romů na Moravě, o.p.s.)** was implementing the project **'Integration of Roma in the Olomoucko Region'**, which focused on improvements in the socio-economic conditions of socially excluded Roma in the localities of Olomouc, Šternberk, Kobylá nad Vidnávkou and Velké Kunčice. Project activities include field social work, the organization of free-time activities for children and young people, education and vocational training to increase career prospects. The project, running from January 2007 to May 2008, received assistance of **CZK 3,992,500**.

**The Upre Roma association** was implementing the project **A Chance for Roma – support of the integration of Roma at risk of social exclusion, especially due to unemployment, and their integration into the labour market**. The aim of the project was to nurture work habits and socially rehabilitate socially excluded Roma. The project also included steps to influence public opinion and tackle the negative view of Roma. The project will be implemented in municipalities to where, in 2002, Roma from the demolished colony at Svatá Anna in Prostějov were relocated. These municipalities are Tištín, Němčice nad Hanou,

Dobromilice, Klenovice na Hané, Kojetín, Doloplazy and Nezamyslice. The activities concomitantly covered employment and retraining. For municipalities, this form is economically beneficial, which could have a secondary influence on the perception of such programmes by local authorities. The project, running from 1 March 2007 to 31 May 2008, received assistance of **CZK 3,997,325**.

**People in Need (Člověk v tísni, o.p.s.)** was implementing the project **‘Support of the integration and education of inhabitants of socially excluded localities in the metropolitan area of the Olomoucko Region’**. Key project activities were field social work with complementary measures, support for the education of children, and career and legal guidance. An integral part of the project was assistance at the level of local authorities, with networking among multiple partners from the non-profit and public sector. The project, running from January 2007 to May 2008, received assistance of **CZK 3,999,310**.

**The civic association Ester Javorník** was implementing a follow-up **project of social work**, carried out by the association in the Jeseník area since 2000. The association was compiling a comprehensive range of social services intended for the group of inhabitants at risk of social exclusion in the Jeseník district (persons with a disability, members of minorities, persons released from prison, young people from socially dysfunctional families, etc.). The project activities contain long-term training, the acquisition of new skills and habits, the creation of jobs, the support of sheltered and subsidized housing and field social work. The project, running from February 2007 to the end of May 2008, received assistance of **CZK 3,788,900**.

Since September 2005, the **Olomouc Charity** has been implementing the project **‘Supported employment of Roma’**. The aim of this project was to find a suitable job for service users, to achieve a general improvement in the status of Roma on the labour market, and to overcome prejudice in the recruitment of Roma job-seekers by potential employers. The project’s target group was long-term unemployed job-seekers, persons at risk of social exclusion, and motivated members of Roma communities who were interested in actively searching for work and in increasing their skills within the scope of lifelong learning. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 2.3 million**.

## **Karlovarsky Region**

**The Roma Civic Association in Karlovy Vary (Romské Občanské Sdružení Karlovy Vary)** was implementing the project **Establishment of an Educational and Support Centre for Roma Students, as part of the association’s premises in Karlovy Vary**. The key aim of the project was for a significant swathe of the Roma population in the Karlovarsko Region to achieve secondary education with the *maturita* (school-leaving qualification) in the period from 2006 to 2016. The way to achieve this objective was to help candidates for the Secondary Vocational College of Social Law in Sokolov before they were admitted to the programme, during their studies, and at the end of their studies as they seek to apply their knowledge in practice. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 2,664,325**.

**The Czech West civic association (Český západ, o.s.)** was implementing the project **Community work in Dobrá Voda and the Toužim area**. The project addressed the adverse living and social situation of members of the local community, which is almost exclusively composed of Roma. The general aim of the project was the human resources development of the population in Dobrá Voda and the Toužim area. The principal project activities were the support of education, the reinforcement and development of personal and social capital, an

improvement in career prospects and reinforcement in the independent of local Roma. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 4,329,281**.

**People in Need (Člověk v tísní – společnost při ČT)** was implementing the project **‘Support of the integration and education of inhabitants of socially excluded localities in the Sokolov area and in Karlovy Vary’**. The project’s target group was persons at risk of social exclusion or persons in a situation of social exclusion. The project content entailed the provision of field social work services, educational support in families and legal advice culminating in the improved integration of persons from socially disadvantaged groups into society and the labour market. The project took place in the municipalities Dolní Rychnov, Karlovy Vary, Sokolov, Chodov, Oloví and Rotava. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 6,902,271**.

### **Vysočina Region**

**Žďár nad Sázavou Municipal Social Services**, an organization partly funded from the public purse, was implementing the project **“Development of the activities of the Roma programmes of the Day Centre for children and young people in Žďár nad Sázavou”**. The specific activities of the project include work and art clubs, an ICT club, a drama, dance and music club, and a rambling club. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 1,900,000**.

### **Central Bohemia Region**

**People in Need (Člověk v tísní – společnost při ČT)** was implementing the project **‘Support of the integration and education of inhabitants of socially excluded localities in the Kladno’**. The project focused on the provision of social and legal advisory services, educational support and motivational activities culminating in the improved integration of persons from socially disadvantaged groups in Kladno into society and the labour market. The social and legal advisory services provided in the field to adult clients, families with children and unorganized young people from socially deprived localities inhabited predominantly by the Roma population. Training and employment activities also took place. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 6,937,705**.

### **Plzeňský Region**

**People in Need (Člověk v tísní, společnost při ČT, o.p.s.)** was implementing the project **‘LOCUS – Support of social integration in Plzeň and the surrounding area’**. The project focused on persons and families from socially excluded localities in Plzeň and the surrounding area. These socially excluded localities (ghettoes) are inhabited primarily by inhabitants of Roma origin. The project focused on the provision of social, legal advisory and training services to persons and families from socially excluded localities in Plzeň and the surrounding area. Specifically, this involves field social work with families and unorganized young people and education in the development of social and communication skills. The project was implemented in a broad partnership with three cooperating non-profit organizations. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 5,221,940**.

## **South Bohemia Region**

**KoCeRo Community Centre (KoCeRo – komunitní centrum o.p.s.)** was implementing a project, the aim of which was to establish a community centre focusing on training, cultural, sports and other activities. A specific area of the programme was geared towards increasing the motivation of clients to find work. The project also wanted to launch documentation of the Roma culture in the Český Krumlov area, and to promote this culture. The total aid is **CZK 2,780,437**.

## **Liberecky Region**

The **children's home in Jablonné v Podještědí** was implementing the project '**Preparation of young people to enter life outside the children's home**'. This project focuses on the disabled, young people and Roma at risk of social exclusion. The aim of the project was to gain the necessary skills and reinforce existing skills for integration into society and to find a career, eliminate risks and reduce the occurrence of socially undesirable phenomena. The reasons for the implementation of the project were based on the current needs of young people in children's homes aged 15-25. The activities *inter alia* include training and motivational courses and psychological guidance. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 4,842,640**.

The **civic association JILORO** was implementing the project '**Guidance, assistance and social and personality training for the integration of the inhabitants of Ralsko**'. This project was prepared ready to provide activities in the renovated vicarage in the centre of Ralsko. It is a follow-up project to the project 'Local centre for meetings and the hosting of cultural, training and social programmes in Ralsko', also implemented within the scope of the JROP. This project concentrated on the integration of members of national and ethnic minorities into society, the development of services in the field of personality and social training, and an improvement in the career prospects of socially excluded persons. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 1,720,818**.

## **Integration of specific groups at risk of social exclusion – social services (HRD OP, measure 2.1)**

The **civic association Living Together (Vzájemné soužití)** in Ostrava was implementing the project '**Key to Change**'. This project followed up on Co-existence's eight-year experience in socially excluded Roma communities around Ostrava and the surrounding area, field programmes and community work in these localities, and draw on stimuli and feedback from clients. The project provided services directly in socially excluded localities via a team composed of Roma and members of majority society. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 13,699,302**.

The **Romodrom** organization was implementing the project '**Romodrom for Regions II**'. The aim of the project, implemented in the Central Bohemia, Ústecký, Liberecký and South Moravian Regions, was the integration of persons at risk of social exclusion and support for those who find themselves in an unfavourable social situation. These were mainly clients from the ranks of the Roma national minority. The project is the basis for the creation of a comprehensive, coordinated programme of field social work. A benefit of the project was the cooperation it establishes between individual Roma non-profit organizations operating in social areas (Liberec Roma Association, Nymburk Roma Association of Civic Understanding, Chomutov Municipal Council of Roma, Association of Roma in Moravia). This project

employs 22 field social workers, who operate in socially excluded Roma localities. Since October 2006, they have been providing their services mainly to Roma, the most common cases concern housing, social benefits, schooling, career prospects, hygiene and home economics. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 13,266,400**.

**The Association of Roma in Moravia (Společenství Romů na Moravě)** was implementing the project **'Field social work in Roma communities'**. The project focuses on the provision of field social services for Roma citizens who fall in the category of socially excluded persons or at risk of falling in this category. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 7,941,475**.

**The Moravian Silesian Regional Authority** was implementing the project **Terne Chave (Young People)**, involving the **'Training of professional staff of centres for the development of functional literacy of young Roma people'**. The project entailed the creation of seven implementation teams and their training in social work methods, focusing on the development of the functional literacy of young people coming from the Roma minority. The project paved the way for a functioning network of providers of specific social services designed for users at risk of social exclusion as a result of living in spatially segregated localities in the Moravia Silesia Region. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 4,127,600**.

**The civic association Sananim** was implementing the project **'Systematic training for social service providers in the field of addiction-related diseases'**. This is a coherent educational programme for social service workers in the field of drug addiction, following up on a basic course for new workers of low-threshold facilities and advice centres with a specific expansion to incorporate Roma employees and employees from national minorities in this area. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 3,020,600**.

**The civic association Horizonty** was implementing the project **'Programme of support in the introduction of quality standards in social services'**. The content of the project was educational and training programmes for five non-profit organizations tailored for each organization following an analysis of its requirements. Each training programme contains a series of workshops focusing on the introduction of social service quality standards. The project's target groups are the employees and management of five non-profit organizations offering social services: Drom Roma Centre (Brno), IQ Roma servis (Brno), Co-existence (Ostrava) and the J.J. Pestalozzi Centre (Chrudim). The project received assistance totalling **CZK 3,330,394**.

**The Jan Evangelista Purkyně University** in Ústí nad Labem was implementing the project **'VIA II – Training of field social workers'**. The project follows up on a previous project implemented under the Phare 2003 programme in the Ústecký Region. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 3,641,800**.

### **SPD 3, measure 2.1**

The civic association **Romodrom** was implementing the project **'Vinařice Work Programme'**. The aim of the project was to improve the prospects of those released from Vinařice Prison. The project primarily addressed Roma convicts. The project's activities include retraining, career advice and employment in a sheltered workplace. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 10,810,387**.

The civic association **Athinganoi** was implementing the project **Romaverzitas**. This project focused on support for students and young people from disadvantaged groups of the

population so that they can study and remain in secondary and further education. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 2,769,000**.

The civic association **Romea** was implementing the project **‘Development of the specialist knowledge of employees of Romea and an improvement in the quality of the social services provided’**. The content of the project was the training of employees who work as employment intermediaries or in the managerial positions of the organization. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 1,040,400**.

**People in Need (Člověk v tísni, o.p.s.)** was implementing the project **‘Comprehensive field programmes for Prague’**. The project expands the services provided in Prague by field programmes to the poorest localities, enclaves with an ethnic (often Roma) label. The project received assistance totalling **CZK 2,506,080**.

### **Global Grant - HRD OP, measure 2.3**

Under **Measure 2.3 Reinforcement of the capacity of social service providers – the Global Grant**, focusing on expanding NGO capacity, eight projects received assistance totalling CZK 4,680,905 with a direct focus on the target group of Roma communities.

## **3.7. Discrimination of the Roma in Czech society**

**In 2007, at its meeting of June 11, the government approved the bill of equal treatment and on legal measures of anti-discrimination protection and on the amendment of certain acts (Anti-discrimination Act)**. On July 12, 2007 the government introduced the anti-discrimination bill before the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. The Chamber of Deputies discussed the bill in the second half of 2007 as Chamber Print No. 253. The Chamber of Deputies gave its consent to the bill in March 2008; the Senate approved it on April 24, 2008. On May 16, 2008 the President of the Czech Republic, Václav Klaus vetoed this bill on his own authority. The bill was returned to the Chamber of Deputies, which will include the reading of the bill in its agenda.

## **3.8. Equal Opportunities for Men and Women**

Based on the Resolution of the Government No. 6 of January 7, 1998 the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is authorised to co-ordinate the domestic policy relating to the position of women in society. **The Ministry as the national co-ordinator of the policy of equal opportunities for women and men encourages other ministries to systematically, purposefully and efficiently contribute towards the development of equal opportunities for women and men within the framework of their material policies**. In accordance with the Resolution of the Government, No. 456 of May 9, 2001, as from January 1, 2002 each department set up a new job position for an employee (the so-called “gender focal point”), who is engaged in matters of equal opportunities for women and men.

With its Resolution No. 1033 of October 10, 2001 the **Government established the Government Council for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men as its advisory body**.

The Council prepares proposals leading to promoting and achieving equal opportunities for women and men.

The requirement of complying with the constitutional principles of gender equality penetrates all areas of social life and its enforcement in the course of public administration performance is the responsibility of individual ministries (which are responsible to the government) within their material scope of competence. While doing so, they follow the National Action Plan “Priorities and Procedures of the Government for the Enforcement of the Equality of Women and Men” approved by the Resolution of the Government No. 236 of April 8, 1998. This programme document contains approximately 40 measures, the performance of which is evaluated by the government every year and measures are possibly updated. Measure 1.8. of the “Priorities” imposes on all ministries the subordination of the conceptual, decision-making and evaluation processes in all the phases of their preparation and implementation to the aspect of equal opportunities for women and men. This also fully relates to the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015.

The Resolution of the Government No. 638 of June 11, 2007 appointed the Chairwoman of the Government Council for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, namely MUDr. Džamila Stehlíková, the Minister for Human Rights and Minorities, who is also the Chairwoman of the Government Council of the Roma Community Affairs. On the strength of her office she may interlink the activities of both of the advisory bodies of the government.

**The Concept of Roma integration reflects the principles of equal opportunities for women and men in all priority sections, which it sets up.** The year of 2006 saw the foundation of the Working group of Romani Women under the Council of the Czech Government for Roma Community Affairs. The Working Team of Roma Women was set up on the basis of the initiative of the participants in the Political Training of Roma Women, which in 2006 was organised by Athinganoi o.s. and Manushe, the Roma women’s group, with the support of the Office of the Council of the Government for Roma Community Affairs. In 2007 the Working group of Romani Women was participating in the process of commenting materials relating to the Agency for Social Inclusion.

### **3.8.1. Activities of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All in 2007 in the Czech Republic**

**With regard to the general objectives of the European Year of Equal Opportunities 2007** (hereinafter “European Year”) – **Right, Representation, Recognition, Respect** – which was promulgated by Decision No. 771/2006/EC of the European Parliament and the Council, the Government of the Czech Republic, through its Resolution No 864 of 12 July 2006, ordered the intensification of activities in the area of human rights in order to increase knowledge and awareness in society about the right to equal treatment, initiate discussion, increase the involvement of socially disadvantaged groups, promote such concepts as diversity and equality and ensure support for a more cohesive society.

The objectives of the European Year in the Czech Republic were derived from the general objectives of the European Year and were further specified in the following tasks: **to inform citizens about their right to non-discrimination, to promote equal opportunities for members of socially disadvantaged groups in all walks of life in society and to show how cultural diversity may become a benefit for Czech society.** The conceptual basis of

the implementation of the European Year was contained within the document “National Strategy of the Czech Republic for the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All (2007) – Towards a Just Society” and the priorities of the European Year (hereinafter “National Strategy”). This document strives to ensure a balanced view of all the causes of discrimination set forth in Article 13 of the Treaty Establishing the European Community and puts a special emphasis on gender mainstreaming and multiple discrimination.

### **3.9. Department for Social Inclusion in Roma Excluded Localities (Agency)**

**Based on the resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic No. 85 from 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2008 was established the Agency for Social Inclusion.**

The goal of a unique Agency project, which started to work in April 2008, is a pilot verification of comprehensive model solutions leading to the improvement the socio-economic conditions of socially excluded Roma, their access to education, housing, labor market and public services. **This is a direct intervention at the local level through assistance in creating local partnerships, assistance in the development of local comprehensive strategies targeted at eliminating the socially excluded Roma localities, assistance in the implementation of these strategies through the exchange of good practices and through national and European subsidy programs.** Model of the pilot project is being verified in 12 selected localities. Pilot phase of the Agency will also draft national implementation and finalization methods applicable in all socially excluded localities in the Czech Republic. It is assumed that the Agency will invest directly and through the local partnerships around 150 million CZK on the local level in the favor of the integration of excluded Romani communities.

Agency local officers are in direct contact with members of the Romani communities at the local level, they have the opportunity to monitor as well the cases of indirect discrimination. Similarly, they are in contact with the local authority official, non-governmental non-profit organizations, employment agencies, schools and school facilities, potential employers, who are members of local partnerships. To some extent, they have the opportunity to monitor and positively influence the position of various institutions toward Romani communities as well as to influence stereotypes that plays important role in the process of integration.

The majority of non-governmental non-profit organizations that are operating in the field of social services are providing expertise and advice often related to the cases of discrimination.

An integral part of the activities of the Agency is also to provide legal advising. During the operation the Agency has been recorded no case of discrimination, direct or indirect discrimination case settled. Roma often speaks of the fact that over the phone they have been promised employment in the event that, however, when they arrive at a specific workplace, it is occupied already. Nevertheless, it is reflecting past personal experience without a specific evidence, and therefore can not be addressed immediately with the relevant authorities.

The Agency also monitors projects, which in recent years has been focused on assistance to victims of discrimination, projects aimed at training in the field of discrimination

for civil servants, youth workers and other helping professions, then the projects that are made for pupils and students in schools.

One of the good resources are programs of the Foundation of Societal Development (NROS) such as the programmes of Transition Facility "**Strengthening the activities of non-governmental non-profit organizations to monitor and promote the interests of the citizens**", "**Increasing the effectiveness of the activities of non-governmental non-profit organizations to protect consumers**" and "**Support the implementation of anti-discrimination law and anti - aquis NGOs**" has supported a number of activities. The results of the projects will be generalized and examples of good practice will be used in the pilot localities of the Agency.

**In selected localities are school directors acquainted with the project of the League for Human Rights, the "Fair school."** This project aims to promote the most open environment for all children irrespective of their origin or handicap. Primary schools, where human rights are respected, where there is discrimination, and where they are integrated pupils with special educational needs, can obtain a certificate "Fair school."

Another challenge that the Agency may incorporate in its activities, in the context of the current situation, is also to monitor any migratory sentiment in the localities where they operate, identify causes and work through local partners at their disposal.

## 4. STRATEGY FOR THE WORK OF THE POLICE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC IN RELATION TO MINORITIES

**The Strategy for the Work of the Police of the Czech Republic in relation to National and Ethnic Minorities**<sup>16</sup> (hereinafter referred to only as the *Strategy*), which was adopted by Resolution of the Czech Government No. 384 of April 9, 2008, is a fundamental strategic source defining the principles of police work in relation to minorities. It follows up the previous strategic materials, the **National Strategy** from 2003 and the **Strategy for the Work of the Police of the Czech Republic in relation to Minorities for 2006 – 2007**, further developing their measures.

The purpose of police work in relation to minorities is the enforcement of an equal and correct attitude and respecting the differences of minorities. According to the principles and targets of the *Strategy* the systematic police work with minorities should result in:

- a professional attitude of police and police officers towards members of minorities,
- maximum awareness of police concerning the specifics of the minorities,
- mutual trust between the police and members of minorities,
- successful import of law and justice into the specific environment of social exclusion,
- contribution of the police towards the integration of members of minorities and minority groups in the majority society.

### 4.1. Important Activities

#### 4.1.1. Assistant to the Police of the Czech Republic for Work in Socially Excluded Localities

The assistant to the Police of the Czech Republic for work in socially excluded localities is a mechanism used at local level since 2003. This service is **a type of social work facilitating contact and communication with the police for residents in socially excluded localities**. The clients of Police Assistants are mainly victims and witnesses of latent criminality (extortion, procuring and soliciting prostitution, drug distribution, people-trafficking, juvenile delinquency etc.), which is very difficult for the police to detect due to the unwillingness of witnesses and victims to cooperate. The job of the Police Assistant is to improve the relationship between the police and the residents of these enclaves in many areas and to contribute towards the creation of conditions that provide people living in socially excluded localities with easier access to the services and help of the Police of the Czech Republic.

Police Assistants can, for example, provide for their clients escort to a police station, assistance with the preparation of a criminal information, can support an injured party when they are deciding whether to cooperate with the police, can remind witnesses and injured parties of the date of a summons and also accompany them to a department of the Police of the Czech Republic, arrange with injured parties or witnesses the preparation of their statements for the Police of the Czech Republic at locations they approve, such as in their homes, in a community centre and so on.

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<sup>16</sup> Source information: for the work of the Ministry of Interior of the CZ and Police of the CZ in relation to minorities and crime with extremist overtones.

The legal framework for the standardisation of the Police Assistant is provided by **Act No. 108/2006 Coll., on Social Services**. The main advantage of anchoring the Police Assistant within the framework of legally defined terrain programs is the systematic nature of this solution, especially the possibility of continuous financing for this service from the state budget.

The basic principles of police assistance are the **principles of partnership and transparency**. The Police Assistant service is based on the principle of ‘community policing’ and is therefore always built around partnership and close cooperation between the Police of the Czech Republic and the service provider (a territorial self-governing unit or non-governmental organisation) that employs the Police Assistant. At the present time five district directorates of the Police of the Czech Republic work with Police Assistants: Ostrava, Brno, Plzeň (in cooperation with non-governmental organisations), Cheb and Karviná (in cooperation with the territorial self-governing unit).

Police Assistants work completely transparently, meaning that in the localities in which they operate as well as among their clients, their role, aims and capabilities are clear right from the start. Police Assistants never operate covertly and strictly comply with the basic ethical fundamentals applying to social work.

During the implementation of the projects it has been shown that the use of assistance services in police work is justified, as it is an **effective tool for significantly reducing criminality in socially excluded localities**. On the basis of the experience acquired it is possible to say that thanks to the work of Police Assistants there has been an improvement in the detection of latent criminal activities in socially excluded localities. Officers of the Police of the Czech Republic have acquired a wider awareness of the local situation and are better able to understand the current problems faced by the residents of these localities. Thanks to the activities of Police Assistants, people in socially excluded environments are better informed of both their rights and their obligations and are thus able to use standard institutional facilities when addressing their situations. The long-term use of Police Assistants is also making a significant contribution to the systematic removal of factors promoting the social segregation of these people.

The activity of the Police Assistants is thoroughly detailed in the document **Methodology of the activity of the assistant to the Police of the Czech Republic for work in socially excluded localities**, which is a guide based on the experience to date of the operation and use of Police Assistant services in the CR.

#### **4.1.2. The Minority Liaison Officer and his/her Working Group**

The function of Liaison Officers for work with minorities (hereinafter only a “*Liaison Officer*”) was established in 2005 at all regional administrations of the Police of the Czech Republic as a measure to facilitate contact and communication with minorities and closed communities for the police. The Liaison Officer is an **employee who is specialised in the issue of police work with minorities**, and who takes the role of intermediary between the police and minority societies, and offers members of minorities help in resolving specific issues falling within the legal competency of the Police of the Czech Republic. At the same time he/she operates as a consultant in the resolution of all matters that, from the perspective of the police, involve minorities. The Liaison Officer also continually monitors the structures of the minorities in the locality and participates in the prevention and abatement of criminality.

The Liaison Officer and his/her working group are established on the basis of instructions from the heads of the regional authorities. The working groups are composed in

the majority of employees of the Departments for the Detection of Extremist Criminality from district directorates; of employees of the Preventive Information Groups from districts and regions; while employees of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service charged with other issues have also been earmarked (the majority in the abatement of juvenile criminality); of the Foreigners and Border Police Service; while members of the management of district authorities and directorates have also been allocated to some working groups. The composition of the working groups always depends on the local conditions and on which district in the region in question the officer wants to concentrate his/her attention and efforts.

Among the positive impacts of the operation of this systematic measure in practice within the framework of the Police of the Czech Republic is, in particular, an improvement in the effectiveness of communication with members of minorities and with other involved institutions and in the improvement in the quality the work of the police in relation to detecting latent criminality in minority communities. The fundamental assumption for the success of the work of the Liaison Officer is the maximum possible information and overall overview of the situation within the minority and closed communities. Thanks to this information, the police officer has a good knowledge of the specific environment and can recognise the structures within the minority communities. He/she concentrates on detecting latent criminality and attempts to find new approaches for the resolution of these types of criminality. The starting point is that serious latent criminality is a consequence of the social situation, the closed nature of the minority groups and also a cause of petty criminal activities that impact the whole of society. With this knowledge he/she also proceeds in the resolution of the problems of the minority groups and their members.

In their work, Liaison Officers make maximum use of the members of their working groups, and cooperate with colleagues at lower levels because they have more comprehensive knowledge of the situation in the locality in question.

For each year, Liaison Officers and their working groups set a **plan for the activities of the relevant regional administration of the Police of the Czech Republic in relation to minorities**. They have the possibility of consulting their experience, problems and findings at nationwide **meetings and seminars**. At the start of each year there is a short seminar for all eight Liaison Officers, at which each of them presents their activity plan to their colleagues, and here they also have the opportunity to arrange cooperation between the individual regions in this area. At the end of each year there is a multi-day meeting of the Liaison Officers and the members of their working groups, the aim of which is the acquaint the others with the results of the work they have done during the year and also to enable these police officers to acquire additional education in the issue in question. One important aspect of these meetings is also a short training session on current themes.

#### **4.1.3. The Employment of Members of Minorities in the Police of the Czech Republic**

In 2006 there was an **information campaign focused on the recruitment of members of minorities into the Police of the Czech Republic, the aim of which was to inform members of minorities of the possibilities and conditions of work at the Police of the Czech Republic**. The target group was members of all national and ethnic minorities in the Czech Republic who fulfilled the basic conditions for recruitment into the police, while applicants for work in the police from minorities are recruited under exactly the same conditions as anybody else.

One of the main ideas behind the whole project was to present the police as a modern company, without prejudices, which is open to recruiting members of minorities and which

also understands this step as an enrichment of its corporate culture. The campaign was run in Prague, Ústí nad Labem and Brno and was financed by the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic and the Embassy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Police of the Czech Republic are continuing to recruit members of minorities as part of an extensive recruitment campaign called “*Help and Protect*”, which was launched at the start of 2008.

Activities of the Ministry of the Interior in this area are continuing in particular through the Secondary Police School project of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic in Holešov entitled “**Police for Everybody**”. The aim of this project, which was launched in the 2008/2009 school year, is to enable members of nationality minorities to complete their secondary education at the secondary police school, meaning that they will subsequently be prepared to commence service in the Police of the Czech Republic.

#### **4.1.4. Education and carrier development of policemen**

Policemen’s education as a key to professionalism is one of the pillars of the Czech Police Reform (*Reforma PČR*). Topics related to the police work in relation to minorities, i.e. integration of minorities, human rights and rights of minorities, issues of multi-cultural society, etc. are incorporated into the **training programmes** at Secondary Police Schools and Educational Police Centres, which prepare newly-hired policemen for their work through a “Basic Professional Training”. Besides a theoretical background, teaching specific topics also involves a practise of model situations and utilisation of case studies, which predominantly focus on communication with minority group members.

Also, **continuous preparation and training of police educators** is provided via additional trainings focusing on police work with minorities and fight against racism and xenophobia. Professional support is provided for police educators by the **Centre for Human Rights**, which was opened in March 2004 as a part of the Secondary Police School in Prague-Hrdlořezy. The Centre is an informational expert centre in the field of human rights and minority protection, processing and providing information from the respective sphere, organizing training activities and contributing to the development of teaching aids. In 2007 the Centre published a comprehensive teaching material “**Police among Cultures**“, which contains a range of model situations and focuses on communication of policemen and minority group members.

In the past Police CR asked also **external lecturers** to prepare policemen for work with minorities within projects “**Training of Police CR members focusing on integration of foreigners in the Czech Republic**“ and “**Anti-discrimination training of Police CR members** “. The first of the aforementioned projects focused on topics like multiculturalism, migration and integration of foreigners and related safety risks, improvement of policemen’s communication skills in contact with foreigners and further on forms of cooperation with non-government organizations and other institutions focusing on the given field. Within this project, 29 workshops, lectures and training sessions were organized for policemen, who at their work come into contact with foreigners and their communities and for policemen who are appointed to work with minorities (e.g. members of working groups of liaison officers for minorities). Thanks to the project policemen were also provided with professional documents dealing with the respective topics. The project was funded from departmental resources earmarked for activities related to integration of foreigners.

The project “**Anti-discrimination training of Police CR members**“ was carried out in cooperation of the Czech Ministry of Interior, civic association of lawyers Counselling

Centre for Citizenship, Civil and Human Rights and the Czech TV partner organization People in Need. The project was financed from EU funds (Transition Facility Programme 2005) and Open Society Fund Foundation. The crucial activity of the project consisted in training **workshops for policemen**, which were held at all the regional police administrative centres and their main topic was related to **the right for equal treatment and legal aspects of social exclusion phenomenon**. Workshops were attended by the staff at various service levels, incl. management; several workshops were intended also for the newly-hired policemen and for teachers at the secondary police schools of the MoI and instructors of Training Police Centres of Police CR. According to the original plan, 700 policemen were to be trained but because of a huge interest of policemen in these workshops, the project was extended and the number of the trainees increased to 900 policemen. The project also included a publication of the project document "*Know and don't discriminate!*"<sup>17</sup>.

In 2009, another **training campaign** will be organized, which will focus in particular on topics such as communication, equal approach, observance of human rights and specifics of minority communities. The project will mainly aim at assistance at the integration of minority group members into the majority society and reinforcement of their institutional protection in the CR.

To fulfil the aim mentioned above, the organizers will carry out at least 50 educational workshops, training thus at least 1,200 Police CR members in 14 regions of the Czech Republic. As a part of the project 1,300 training documents and other instructional materials will be published.

Within the continuous training of policemen regarding minority issues, each 6 months a several-day **meeting of liaison officers for minorities** and members of their working groups is held, where policemen inform each other about specifics and results of their work in the given regions in the past period and also policemen complete a training focusing on current topics concerning minorities.

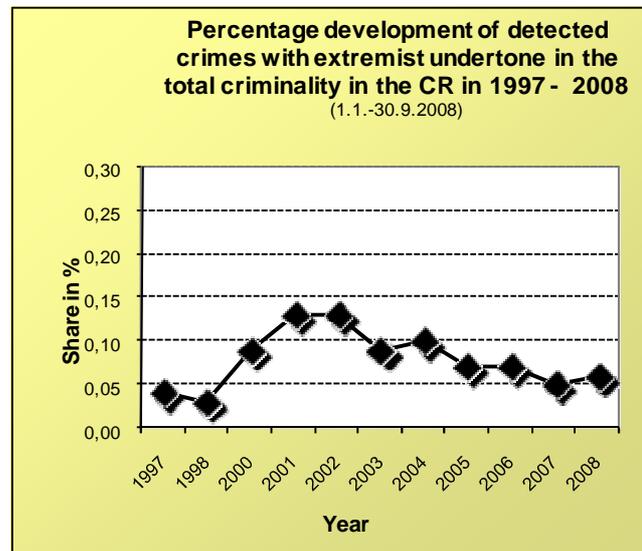
In order to facilitate further education and transfer of experience, best practise and information about minority integration and approach of the police towards minority group members, **expert placement abroad** of liaison officers for minorities and members of their working groups will be organized in EU member states in 2009–2010. Purpose of the placements will consist in acquiring specific information on best practise examples from the particular areas of the police work relating to the minorities in selected EU countries which will be useful, effective and applicable in practise for Czech policemen. At the same time, a great emphasis will be put on organizational and institutional prerequisites and experience of EU countries while ensuring concepts and practical programmes for support of high-quality and equal approach towards members of minority communities and establishment of cooperation among the Police CR and partners in the respective area from the EU member states.

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<sup>17</sup> The published document can be found at the web address [www.diskriminace.info/dt-publikace](http://www.diskriminace.info/dt-publikace)

## 4.2. Criminology with an extremist undertone on the territory of the Czech Republic from 2000 till 30 September 2008 (crimes recorded by the Police CR)

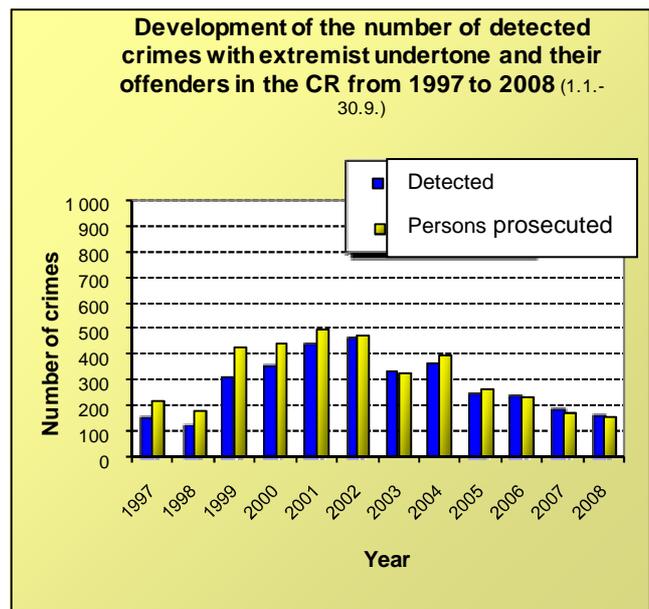
Crimes with an extremist undertone, including hate crimes, are in focus of the Czech Republic in the long run. At present, statistical data are available for a period of more than ten years. They imply that **from 1997 till 30 September 2008 a percentage of detected crimes with an extremist undertone in the total criminality recorded in the CR did not exceed 0.1%**. Despite this criminal activity is characterised by its marginality, it is perceived as a high social hazard. At the present time, the issue of extremism and related criminal activity is focused on by approx. 130 police experts at the level of the Police Presidium of the CR (Office of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service), ÚOOZ SKPV (Extremism department as a part of the Extremism and Terrorism division), Regional Administrative Offices of the Police CR and its district directorates. Regarding extremist criminality, the said entities collect and process statistical data, based on which the overall situation of this type of criminality is monitored in the long term on the territory of the CR and in regions, structure of crimes pursuant to specific provisions of the criminal law, structure of crime offenders and other data enabling a characterization of development trends in this type of criminality. In this sense, the Czech Republic ranks among the EU states which collect and process statistical data and maintain statistics of this type of criminality.



### 4.2.1. Characteristics of criminal offences in 2000 to 2008 (01.01. - 30.09.)

#### Recorded criminal offences

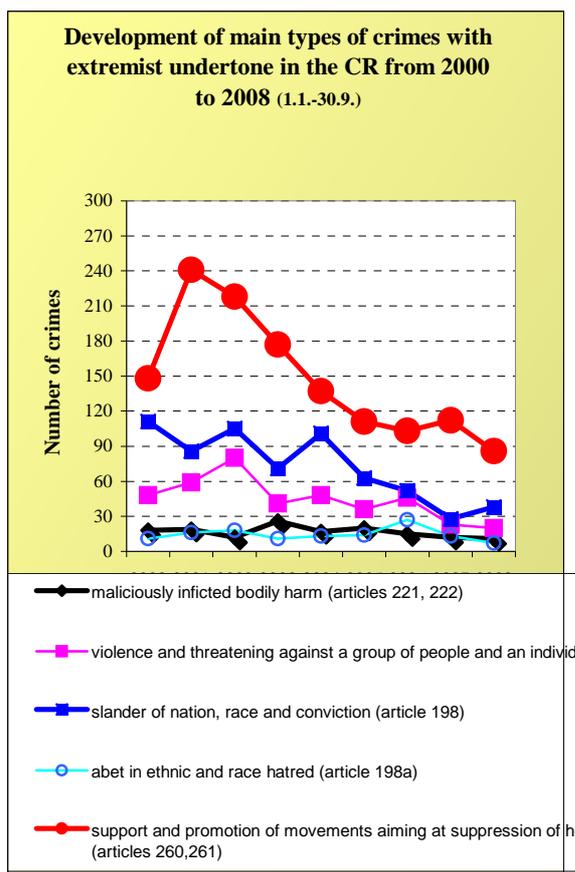
The highest number of crimes with an extremist undertone was recorded in 2000 till 2002. However, it does not mean that compared to previous years at this time an enormous increase in this type of criminality. It was caused by an improved quality of work and ability of the police CR to seek, identify and punish. In 1999 adoption of internal management acts at the level of the Ministry of Interior and Police Presidium contributed to this substantially. They have ensured systematic police work regarding extremism



and measures to eliminate extremist criminality, which showed a positive impact on the work of police in subsequent years.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, continuous training of policemen dealing with extremism has been determined as a priority, contributing thus to deepening their knowledge in the given area and consequently to professionalism of their work. Additionally, in 2002 an Extremism department was founded as a part of the newly-constituted Terrorism and Extremism division of the Police CR in the Section for Detection of Organized Crime (ÚOOZ), Service of the Criminal Police and Investigation of the Police Presidium CR. Job content of this department involves fighting against nation-wide organized extremist criminality having an international outreach. Organizational changes within the Police CR were reflected by adoption of a Police President's Binding Instruction no. 100 of 6 June 2002. This internal management act in force integrated provisions of previous internal acts and provides a comprehensive line of approach of all the police units at all management levels.

From 2003 till 2007, except for 2004, criminality with extremist undertone showed a decreasing trend, which according to preliminary data corresponds to the so-far development in 2008.<sup>19</sup>

#### **4.2.2. Structure of crimes from 2000 to 2008 (01.01. - 30.09.)**



During the entire monitored period between 2000 and 2008 (until 30 September) **crimes significantly prevailing within the structure of crimes were those pursuant to articles 260, 261, 261 a) of the criminal law – support and promotion of movements leading to suppression of human rights and freedoms** (it is e.g. heiling, appliqués, symbols, tattoos) - **in 2007 these crimes represented 57.1% and in 2008 (until 30 September) 58.2% of all the crimes with extremist undertone recorded by the Police CR.**

In all the monitored years far lower was the percentage of crimes pursuant to article 198 of the criminal law – (so-called situational conflicts, insults with racial undertone prevail) and pursuant to article 196 of the criminal law (violence and threatening against a group of people and an individual).

The entire period is characterised by a low number of criminal offences pursuant to articles 221, 222 (maliciously inflicted bodily harm) and article 198a (abet in hatred of a group of people or in suppression of their rights and freedoms).

<sup>18</sup> Foundations for fight of the Police CR against extremism were laid by establishment of a specialised department within the Police Presidium CR (in 1995) and introduction of specialisation at the level of regions and districts (in 1996).

<sup>19</sup> The statistical data are preliminary; the evaluation of criminality with an extremist undertone in 2008 and its trends will be possible not earlier than in 2009.

Within the monitored period, the prevailing method of completion of the criminal proceedings, delimited by the police investigation of criminal offences with racial or other extremist undertone and their offenders, was a filing of a suit.

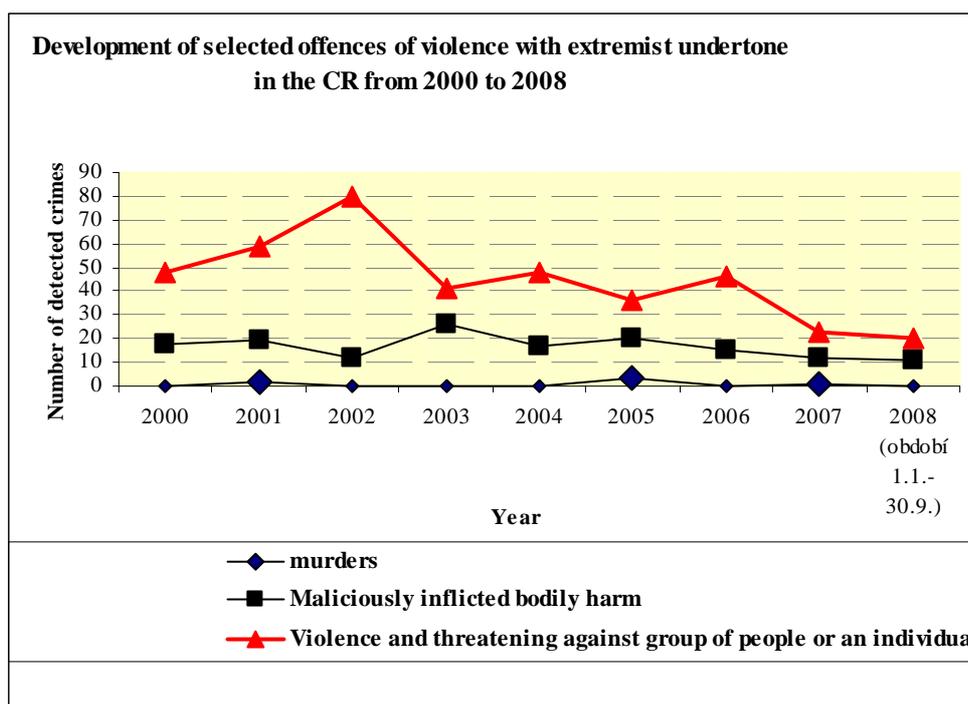
#### **4.2.3. Development of selected offences of violence with extremist undertone in the Czech Republic in 2000 – 2008 (01.01.2000 - 30.09.2008) recorded by the Police CR**

**Development of criminality with extremist undertone in the Czech Republic from 2000 to 2008**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
									(period 1.1.-30.9.)
<b>Total criminality</b>	391 469	358 577	372 341	357 740	351 629	344 060	336 446	357 391	262 432
<b>Criminality with extremist undertone</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>169</b>
<b>i.e. % of the total criminality</b>	<b>0,09</b>	<b>0,13</b>	<b>0,13</b>	<b>0,09</b>	<b>0,10</b>	<b>0,07</b>	<b>0,07</b>	<b>0,05</b>	<b>0,06</b>
<b>of which:</b>									
<b>- murders</b>	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	1	0
<b>-maliciously inflicted bodily harm</b>	18	19	12	26	17	20	15	12	11
<b>- violence and threatening against group of people or an individual</b>	48	59	80	41	48	36	46	23	20

Among offences of violence, the share of which in the total criminality with extremist undertone is relatively low (in the monitored period, it amounted to approx. 19.7 % in average):

- Crimes pursuant to article 196 of the criminal law (violence and threatening against group of people or an individual) prevail in the long run;
- number of crimes pursuant to articles 221, 222 of the criminal law (maliciously inflicted bodily harm) was considerably lower;
- Criminal offence of murder with a racial undertone pursuant to article 219 g of the criminal law was recorded six times by the Police CR in 2000 – 2008.



#### **4.2.4. Offenders of crimes with extremist undertone in 2000 – 2008 (1.1.-30.9.)**

The structure of offenders in criminality with extremist undertone did not show any substantial or significant changes in 2000 to 2008 (until 30.09.). It comprised of both activist and fans of extremist movements, members of the majority population without any obvious link to the rightist extremist entities, in some cases offenders were also Roma. Men prevailed. Their education structure also remains unchanged – significantly prevailing groups were people who completed a secondary school with an apprenticeship certificate and elementary school without any qualification. The age structure of offenders did not change dramatically – with prevailing age category under 29 years – the least offenders were recorded in the age category under 15 years and then above 50 years. Foreigners as offenders of extremist crimes in the CR were seldom recorded by the Police CR.

#### **4.2.5. Victims of crimes with extremist undertone**

The basic units of the criminality statistic recording system, the sponsor of which is the experts section of the Police Presidium CR, are criminal offences (acts) and their offenders. Victims of the criminality are recorded in this system only in a limited extent. It results from the structure of statistic outputs when one of the items is “object of attack” and physical victim of the crime (woman, men, group) are recorded as an option next to the other kinds of objects of attacks (“object of general criminality”, “object of economic criminality”, or public interest). In terms of criminal offences with extremist undertone, the attack is often recorded as an attack of “public interest”. This reporting method is related to the general principle of the criminal statistics, when physical victims are recorded only for selected types of criminality, violence and vice criminality, and several types of economic criminality. The official statistics, in compliance with Act on the protection of personal data, does not record personal, sensitive data about victims, such as their ethnicity, nationality or religion. The police experts dealing with extremism and related criminality have, however, sufficiently

detailed information about the nature of the attack and structure of victims of hate criminal offences at their disposal.

### **Summary**

- In the long term, the Czech Republic has paid an increased attention to the issues of extremism and criminal activity with an extremist undertone, both at the level of the Ministry of Interior and Police CR and other government authorities, including intelligence services. This issue ranks among safety risks.
- The percentage of criminal offences with extremist undertone in the total, recorded criminality in the CR does not exceed 0.1% in the long run.
- Also the structure of crimes does not show a significant share of violent, hate or racial or other xenophobic crimes of murder or bodily harm resulting in death in the long run.
- Crime of murder with a racial undertone pursuant to article 219 g) of the criminal law is rather an exceptional phenomenon, it occurs sporadically. E.g. it was reported in 2001 and then not earlier than in 2005.
- The Czech Republic ranks among the part of EU member states which collect and process data on hate crimes and maintain statistics of this type of criminality. The mechanism of data collection for recording of racial and other xenophobic incidents is considered good by the EU authorities.
- The situation in the Czech Republic in the area of extremism does not differ significantly from the situation in the other EU countries.

### **Supplementary information:**

#### **4.3. Czech Interior Ministry Activity in the Area of Extremism in 2008**

##### **General**

In 2008 as in the previous year, the situation regarding extremism in the Czech Republic remained comparable with the general situation throughout the European Union.

The Interior Ministry has given the problems of extremism its continuing attention, cooperating with all other government departments, including departments operating in the criminal justice system and also with the intelligence services. (*Specific questions in the area of extremism were resolved through regular meetings of the intelligence group*).

The priorities in anti-extremist policy continue to be efforts to detect and curtail the manifestation of extremism and an attempt to eliminate both visible and latent forms of extremism. With this aim in mind the emphasis is to severely punish the propagation of the ideology and manifestations of neo-Nazism, racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance, including the propagation of hate crime through Internet websites.

Both the existing criminal law and the amended law which comes into force 1/1/2009, include paragraphs defining punishment for hate crime and its support and propagation etc.

##### **The Interior Ministry**

The anti-extremist policy of the Interior Ministry reflects the positions of the EU and international organizations and is a priority in security policy. Furthermore this policy is reinforced by a range of measures both long-term and permanent including preventative

programmes as well as in the area of punishment and deterrents. With these measures in mind some of the main activities to be mentioned are:

- Fulfils the role of national contact point with the Institute for democratic institutions and human rights OBSE in the area of hate crime.
- Activities of advisory bodies within the Interior Ministry or working groups concerned with the problems connected with extremist right-wing music production.
- Solving current problems arising from the law concerning the right to public assembly and a range of other complex problems, preparation of legal standpoints in reaction to specific problems in the area of extremism and hate crimes (gatherings of extremists, marches and demonstrations, usually announced as being for another purpose other than the one actually intended).
- Information on the problem of extremism in the Czech Republic in 2007 has been prepared and is available to the public on the Interior Ministry web pages in the documents archive section under the heading Extremism. ([www.mvcr.cz](http://www.mvcr.cz))
- A Crime Prevention Strategy 2008- 2011 has been prepared,
- Focus on projects in the areas of police training and preventative programmes.

#### **Some significant events in 2008**

- Meeting of the V4 and Austria fight against extremism working group ( April 2008; the next regular meeting takes place in November 2008),
- Visit of ODIHR representatives to the Interior Ministry and other institutions, which marked the high-level of cooperation between the Interior Ministry and the ODIHR.
- Meeting of the working group concerned with the legal aspects of the problem of extremism, which focused on the problems connected with public assembly (2.10.2008)
- A discussion forum organized by the Interior Ministry took place 30.10.08. at which representatives of the Roma community and non-government organizations as well as Interior Ministry officials and representatives of the Police of the Czech Republic (Police CR) took part. The aim of the forum was to present the recent activities and successes of the Interior Ministry and Police CR in relation to ensuring the safety of ethnic minority communities and to present further goals and plans in accordance with the proposals and recommendations of the Roma community and non-government organizations.
- A meeting took place 31.10.2008 between the department for security policy and non-government organizations concerned with the current right-wing extremist problem and its manifestation in the Czech Republic.

#### **The Police of the Czech Republic (Police CR)**

The Police of the Czech Republic has around 130 specialists working in the area of problems connected with extremism, racism and other manifestations of xenophobia, in the following areas:

- Police Presidium of the Czech Republic (Police Services Institute for criminal matters and investigation PPCR, department of general crime - methodology; Police Services Institute for criminal matters and investigation PPCR, organized crime division/UOOZ/- serious crime with extremist motivation and an organized character),
- Czech Regional Police Authorities
- Czech District Police Authorities

Police specialists are engaged in the monitoring of extremism, racism and their manifestations, also the resolution of specific cases and incidents which occur in their region of authority. They also take part in maintaining order at public events organized by extremists, gathering intelligence on their activities etc.

### **Parliamentary advisory working group for Roma affairs in Interior Ministry and Police matters**

On the initiative of the Interior Ministry a parliamentary advisory group on Roma affairs was established “The parliamentary advisory working group on Roma affairs for the Interior Ministry and Police CR” The chair of this working group is the first deputy interior minister and its members are specialists from the Interior Ministry and the Police CR, representatives of the parliamentary advisory group on Roma affairs, the office of the advisory group and most importantly Roma coordinators from regional authorities. At the start of 2004 the working group created an action plan for future activities which contained the following topics: the work of the Police CR in relation to national and ethnic minorities, discrimination and racism, the specific problems of the Roma community (social exclusion and crime connected with it ( usury), high percentage of substance abusers, the role of public authorities, Roma migration, the activities of Roma coordinators with regional authorities, the work of Roma advisors at local level, general guidelines.

The working group provides a valuable platform for communication between state authorities and the representatives of public authorities, for the exchange of information, the formulation of common attitudes and joint proposals for problem solving.

Between 2004 and 2007 the working group concentrated on for example racially motivated crimes in which the victim is Roma and the improvement of the work of the Police CR in this area, the migration of Roma to the Czech Republic from Slovakia, the migration of Roma to other EU countries, the improvement in selection and professional training of future and serving police officers, the opportunities for employment for Roma in local police forces, crime prevention systems at a local level, research activities etc. In the period mentioned three “on the road” meetings of the group took place. The first was held in the Pardubice region to discuss problems particular to the region also positive activities in the area of support for the integration of the Roma community by the Police CR, the regional authority, communities and non- government charitable organizations were presented. The second meeting focused on a description of the problems of socially excluded Roma communities and ways to solve these problems mainly from the point of view of local authorities and the Police CR. These recommendations were based on research commissioned by the Interior Ministry in the Ustecky and Karlovarsky regions. The problems described were chiefly usury, loan fraud, higher than average debt and exclusion from social benefits. The third meeting focused on the level of debt among socially disadvantaged and excluded groups as a factor in criminality and

social destabilization. Part of the working group meeting hosted by the Olomouc region in October 2006, was an open discussion with the theme “In the debt trap”. The topic of debt among socially disadvantaged and excluded individuals was one of the working group’s most significant topics in subsequent years. In 2007 the Olomouc region carried out a pilot project with state support of CZK 578,000. The project was called “Nothing is for free”. The aim of this project was to start an education campaign, enlarge advisory services and improve the professional skills of workers in the sector and at the same time test new methods in the fight against the fast spreading phenomenon of debt which can be the root cause and reason for criminality at a later date. The project was judged to be a success and as part of the crime prevention strategy for 2008-2011 will also be offered to other regions.

The Interior Ministry reacted to the problem of debt by producing the booklet “Debt prevention in Czech households with special focus on socially disadvantaged and excluded groups” which was issued in early 2008 and accompanied by a series of seminars for local authority and non-profit sector workers. The aim of the material and follow up seminars was to give information about the problem of debt in socially disadvantaged groups and among excluded individuals to professionals working with in-debt clients at various stages of debt and give them practical guidelines for the prevention, resolution and elimination of the negative effects associated with debt.

The Parliamentary advisory working group for Roma affairs in Interior Ministry and Police matters will continue to serve as a forum for the exchange of information between the representatives of state authorities of the Czech Republic and representatives of the Roma community. Within the framework of the forum it will be possible to identify problems which the representatives of the Roma community encounter and propose and help to implement effective measures to reduce or eliminate the consequences of these problems.

## **The right-wing extremist scene**

### **Paramilitary organizations – beginnings**

The organization known as the National Guard was established by the National Party in 2007. It is an unregistered body which in the opinion of the security services is only a theoretical project and according them does not represent a security risk. The intelligence services and the Police CR continue to closely monitor the situation.

A similar situation exists in the case of the Workers’ Party which in 2008 set up “protection units”. Here too the situation is being closely monitored. In November 2008 the Minister of Interior submitted a proposal that the Workers' Party (DS) to be abolished.

### **Right-Wing Extremist Bodies in relation to Roma Problems**

Xenophobic statements, mainly on their web pages but also in their activities largely aimed at Roma and immigrants- in general similar to xenophobic activities in other EU states. At the present time activity is increased in an attempt to gain media exposure before the October elections- even negative publicity is publicity.

A new tactic is that extremist bodies are trying to be more visible in street demonstrations, marches etc. Concerts are ceasing to be their main activity.