

III.

Minister for Human Rights

Roma Integration Concept for 2010–2013

December 2009

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. STARTING POINTS, FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND AIMS OF THE CONCEPT	4
2.1 Starting Points for the Concept.....	4
2.1.1 Human rights viewpoint	4
2.1.2 Nationalities viewpoint.....	4
2.1.3 Socio-economic viewpoint.....	4
2.2 Fundamental aims of the Concept	4
2.3 Fundamental principles of the Concept	5
3. THE INSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL FRAMEWORK TO ROMA INTEGRATION	7
3.1 The national level for securing Roma integration	7
3.2 The regional and local level for securing Roma integration	7
3.3 MEASURES TO SECURE INSTITUTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF ROMA INTEGRATION	8
4. SUPPORT FOR ROMA CULTURE AND LANGUAGE.....	11
4.1 MEASURES TO SUPPORT ROMA CULTURE AND LANGUAGE	12
5. EDUCATION	16
4.1 EDUCATION MEASURES	18
6. EMPLOYMENT	27
6.1 EMPLOYMENT MEASURES	30
7. OVERINDEBTEDNESS	38
7.1 MEASURES AGAINST OVERINDEBTEDNESS	40
8. HOUSING.....	43
8.1 HOUSING MEASURES.....	44
9. SOCIAL PROTECTION AREA	51
9.1. MEASURES IN THE SOCIAL PROTECTION AREA	52
11. SECURITY ASPECTS OF ROMA INTEGRATION	60
11.1 Protection of Roma against neonazism and racially motivated crime	60
11.2 Protection of Roma against crime and other forms of high-risk behaviour....	63
12. SUMMARY.....	70
13. LIST OF SOURCES	72
14. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED	74

1. INTRODUCTION

The *Roma Integration Concept for 2010 - 2013* (hereinafter the Concept) proposes measures to improve the situation of Roma in key areas of their lives.

The aim of the Czech government is to develop over the long term measures to even out the opportunities and compensate the starting disadvantages of Roma, which prevent them from taking a full part in the cultural, social and political life of society as a whole.

In the introduction, the Concept deals with the situation of Roma communities from the standpoint of their status as a national minority and concentrates on meeting their cultural needs.

The Czech government views the development of Roma culture and the building of respect for Roma history and culture not only as a legitimate right of the Roma national minority, but also as a means of improving the relationship between Roma and the rest of society.

By strengthening the awareness of Czech society of Roma culture, language and history one can fight systematically against stereotypes and prejudices applied to members of Roma communities. These stereotypes and prejudices are meanwhile also the cause of the symbolic exclusion of that part of the Roma who are not socially excluded and lives a normal life.

In the second part the material deals with a narrower target group, socially excluded Roma, and with resolving their situation.

Resolving the social exclusion of Roma is also fundamental from the viewpoint of society as a whole, because this phenomenon threatens social cohesion, brings to a head strained relations between the majority and the excluded minority, and also increases the risk of a growth in extremism in Czech society.

The measures proposed in this part are aimed at key areas of the lives of socially excluded Roma, and in particular at education, employment, overindebtedness, housing, health and the social area.

Whether it be because of structural or individually generated barriers, in these areas Roma do not have the same opportunities when compared with the majority population and often encounter unequal treatment.

The last key topic for Roma integration is the safety of Roma communities which encompasses two aspects - on the one hand, protection for Roma against right-wing extremism and on the other, a reduction in crime and the incidence of other high-risk behaviours in socially excluded Roma localities.

The Concept ends with a summary of its key conclusions. An Appendix to the material is also *Roma Integration Concept 2010 - 2013 Implementation Plan*, which contains the tasks for individual ministries and recommendations for other key persons and organisations, arising from the specific measures given in the Concept.

2. STARTING POINTS, FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND AIMS OF THE CONCEPT

2.1 Starting Points for the Concept

2.1.1 Human rights viewpoint

The government strives to have Roma, just like all citizens, enjoy in full and without any kind of discrimination all the individual rights guaranteed by the Czech Constitution, the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms and by international agreements on human rights to which the Czech Republic is signatory.¹

The Roma Integration Concept includes across the board support for more vulnerable groups within the Roma population, who are threatened on the basis of several overlapping discriminatory factors.

In addition to racial affiliation there are for example, gender, health problems, religion and nationality.

2.1.2 Nationalities viewpoint

This viewpoint is based on the specific rights of members of national minorities, as defined in Chapter III of the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms and in the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. In Art.3, para. 2, the Charter states: *"Everyone has the right to make a free decision about his or her nationality. It is forbidden in any way to influence such a decision or in any way to apply pressure leading to loss of nationality"*²

2.1.3 Socio-economic viewpoint

The government is striving for the socio-economic integration for Roma so that they are represented at all levels of Czech society and statistically achieve approximately the same results in socio-economic terms as the majority population.

In order to reach this goal it is necessary to develop measures which are sensitive to the differing cultural and social experience of members of Roma communities.

2.2 Fundamental aims of the Concept

¹ In particular these are: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; the International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

² The government has put the interests and specific rights of members of national minorities in the Czech Republic into Act No. 273/2002 Coll., on the rights of national minorities and on a change to later regulations, which refers to the setting up of National Minorities Committees at town/village level. This requirement is embodied also in the Act on towns/villages No. 128/2000 Coll., in the wording of Act No. 313/2002 Coll. The specific rights of members of national minorities are also part of Act No. 129/2000 Coll. on the regions, in the wording of Act No. 231/2002 Coll.

The main aim of the Roma Integration Concept is the achievement of co-existence without conflict between members of Roma communities and the rest of society.

The Concept defines six priorities as subsidiary aims:

1. Creation of a tolerant environment without prejudices in which membership of a group by race, skin colour, nationality, language, or membership of a national or ethnic group is not a reason for a different view of the individual and treatment of him
2. Removing external barriers which prevent the incorporation of members of Roma communities in society, in particular the removal of all forms of discrimination of individuals and whole groups defined by their race, skin colour, nationality, language, or membership of a national or ethnic group
3. Help in removing internal barriers which prevent the incorporation of members of Roma communities in society, in particular removing the handicap in education and qualifications
4. Improving the social level of members of Roma communities, particularly by reducing their level of unemployment, improving housing and subsequently health-care conditions, pre-empting social exclusion in Roma communities and removing its effects
5. Development and incorporation of Roma culture and language into the majority culture of Czech society
6. Securing the safety of members of Roma communities

2.3 Fundamental principles of the Concept

- ***Maximum Roma involvement***

The Roma Integration Concept is fully compatible with the emancipation process for Roma, where Roma are perceived as equal partners whose needs and opinions should be respected by all the institutions involved.

Respect for minority differences requires a positive effort to understand the difference in cultural values and behavioural patterns on the basis of which a member of a minority or a foreigner must not be condemned, excluded, limited or discriminated in general provided that he or she has not broken the law.

It is desirable that the measures being proposed open the way for the self-fulfilment of Roma and allow them job opportunities in solution development and management of Roma affairs.

- ***Sustainability and feasibility of the measures***

The proposed measures are not to be focussed on short-term solutions, but should improve the position of Roma over the long term.

Measures must be achievable in practice and sustainable in the long term both from the viewpoint of resources and in regard to their effect.

- ***Comprehensive solutions and partnership with interested persons and organisations***

A prerequisite for improving the social position of Roma is an interdepartmental approach and coordination of the steps of all interested institutions so that a synergistic effect is achieved from the steps taken.

A key role in achieving this principle is held by all Roma integration organisations described below, which operate at both national and local level.

The government is endeavouring to have the activity of these organisations linked up and working across all the key life areas of Roma requiring improvement.

- ***The use of equalisation measures as instruments to break down initial Roma disadvantages***

Equalisation steps lead to an expansion of opportunities, to compensation for the continuing disadvantages and to the achievement of an equal approach to disadvantaged groups in the population so that they are able to compete with the advantaged group³.

The Czech government supports the use of temporary equalisation measures in relation to Roma. It does not however make use of the quota route which would determine the numbers of Roma in particular jobs or in the education system, but the targeted assistance route which allows disadvantaged Roma to overcome their handicaps and deal with the demands placed on them. The government is using equalisation measures with a view to achieving the goals associated with them by 2020.

³ Equalisation measures are based on the assumption, that one cannot only adopt laws which guarantee equal access and forbid discrimination, and at the same time expect that equalisation of opportunities will occur naturally without any further involvement. There still exist in society certain mechanisms, institutions and structures which generate inequality and traditional prejudices and stereotypes. Equalisation steps must have clearly defined limits and use acceptable methods.

3. THE INSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL FRAMEWORK TO ROMA INTEGRATION

3.1 The national level for securing Roma integration

At national level, two government advisory bodies deal with long-term Roma integration - the Czech Government Council for National Minorities⁴ and the Czech Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs (hereinafter the Council). The Council is the only inter-departmental body whose purpose is the unification of Ministerial integration activities in relation to Roma communities. However as a government advisory body it may not audit goal achievement within the jurisdiction of regions, towns and villages. The Council promotes the resolution of Roma issues as part of more broadly adopted policies which are under the control of individual ministries and to this end works with specialist bodies of these ministries.

A new body which began to work in the field of Roma integration in 2008 is the Agency for Social Inclusion in Roma Localities. The Agency is a comprehensive programme for Roma integration and operates as a coordinating body for implementing state Roma integration policy at local level. The patron of the project is the Office of the Czech Government and specifically, the Department for Social Inclusion in Roma Localities. The aim of the Agency is the reduction and elimination of social exclusion in socially excluded Roma localities. Constituent aims are the mapping of the social and economic position of the inhabitants of these localities, the definition of their needs in the areas of education, employment, housing and social services, the establishment of local partnerships and in particular help and professional leadership in preparing and implementing local strategies aimed at the social integration of Roma. The Agency is endeavouring to become in the future a central administrative body, empowered with significant supervisory and audit powers when promoting Roma integration. At the present time the content is being prepared of an Act on the Agency for Social Integration.

3.2 The regional and local level for securing Roma integration

The Regional Government Offices are important bodies in Roma integration; they perform the function of regional coordinators for Roma affairs. Their work is defined in the legislation in Act No. 129/2000 Coll., on the Regions, in the wording of Act No. 231/2002 Coll. and is targeted at coordination and methodological support for other organisations at local level with the aim of improving the social, cultural and political position of Roma.

A key role in the implementation of the Concept is held as part of their transferred jurisdiction by the **municipal offices of towns and villages with extended jurisdictions**, who are to apply the integration policy relating to Roma. Within these municipal offices staff arranging the integration of members of Roma communities work in the administrative districts of towns and villages with extended jurisdiction. Staff organising and promoting the satisfaction of local Roma communities' needs handle smaller problems in socially excluded Roma localities and are actively involved in strategy development for towns and cities aimed at improving the position of disadvantaged Roma.

⁴ The current Czech Government Council for National Minorities was set up in the sense of §6 of Act No. 273/2001 Coll., on the rights of members of national minorities and on a change to certain laws, as subsequently amended.

The material presented puts regions, towns and villages in the role of implementers of certain measures, nevertheless, within the implementation of the Concept they are not given, in contrast to the Ministries, mandatory tasks but only recommendations. These reflect proven approaches and examples from best practice being implemented in some locations in the Czech Republic, leading to an improvement in the position of Roma communities.

3.3 MEASURES TO SECURE INSTITUTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF ROMA INTEGRATION

- **The content definition of tasks aiding the execution of the rights and integration of members of Roma communities into society and their inclusion in Act No. 273/2001 Coll., on the rights of members of national minorities and changes to certain laws, as subsequently amended.**

A fundamental role in Roma integration is played by regions, towns and villages with transferred jurisdiction, which in accordance with §6, para. 7 and 8 of *Act No. 273/2001 Coll., on the rights of members of national minorities and changes to certain laws*, are to perform tasks in their administrative districts which help the execution of the rights and integration of members of Roma communities into society⁵.

The actual implementation and audit of tasks in practice is difficult due to the absence of a content definition for these tasks, which allows regions, towns and villages with transferred jurisdiction to apply varying levels of attention to the affairs of Roma communities.

A solution to this is to expand Act No. 273/2001 Coll. by para. 9, in which these tasks would be defined as to content, in the following manner:

(9) The tasks helping the execution of the rights and integration of members of Roma communities in the administrative districts of regions and towns and villages with transferred jurisdictions include:

- a) Assessment of the position of Roma communities and the effectiveness of deployed integration measures
- b) The development of strategies and system measures to improve the position of Roma communities
- c) To secure access to services for members of socially excluded Roma communities, to establish partnerships with public administration bodies and with non-governmental organisations with this purpose
- d) The protection of the rights of members of the Roma national minority, particularly their right to develop their own culture and language and their right to education.

Implementer: Minister for Human Rights

- **Systematisation of the activities of the staff of municipal offices of towns and villages with extended jurisdiction who arrange for the integration of members of Roma communities in their administrative districts (hereinafter Roma advisors)**

⁵ Act No. 273/2001 Coll., on the rights of members of national minorities and on a change to later regulations, §6 para. (7) *The regional government office directs and coordinates in its administrative district the fulfilment of tasks in the section of state policy assisting the integration of members of Roma communities into society, (8) The local government office for towns/villages with extended jurisdiction fulfils tasks in its administrative district assisting the execution of the rights of members of Roma communities and the integration of members of Roma communities into society.*

The activities of Roma advisors are a fundamental instrument in applying the Roma Integration Concept at local level.

In practice the work of advisors is complicated by a number of obstacles, and in particular the performance of their accumulated functions where in addition to Roma affairs they also handle other, unrelated, topics (for example, probationary work, socio-legal child protection, etc.) which prevent them from devoting the requisite attention to Roma communities issues.

It can be financially demanding for towns and villages to allocate a member of staff to satisfy this particular agenda and to monitor on an ongoing basis the impact of his or her work on the position of Roma communities, as well as arranging further training and methodological support.

With this end in mind, it is necessary to implement the following:

- Develop a grant-aided programme "Support for the activities of Roma advisors"
The grant will provide the needs of the job of Roma advisors.
Recipients of the grants will be towns and villages with extended jurisdiction in the Czech Republic which will thereby secure finances for one year, with the option of applying for grants on a repeated basis.
The value of the grant will correspond to the workload of the employee, which will be calculated from the results of an analysis of the needs of Roma communities in the catchment area.
Part of the grant-aided support should also be finances to meet the training needs of, and methodological support for, Roma advisors.
The anticipated expenditure for these measures is 60 million CZK per annum.
- Develop a unified system of records and evaluation of the activities of Roma advisors.
The aim of these measures is to identify the impact of Roma advisors' work on the position of local Roma communities and to determine the fundamental barriers which prevent them from having an impact on the position of Roma communities at local level.
Using the data so obtained it will also be possible to set out the training needs for Roma advisors and areas in which they will require methodological support.
This information should be given to the Roma affairs coordinators at regional level, who are responsible for the methodological management of Roma advisors at the level of towns and villages with extended jurisdictions.
In connection with this it is necessary to develop software which will provide regular record-keeping and evaluation of the work of Roma advisors and fieldworkers operating at town and village level, including a training programme to advise how the software is to be used in practice.
- Develop a new recommended job description for Roma advisors
The recommended job description would serve towns and villages as a guideline in satisfying the Roma affairs agenda and should reflect tasks aiding the execution of the rights and integration of members of Roma communities into society.

Implementer: Minister for Human Rights

- **Support for members of Roma communities at the census**

In the Czech Republic in recent years there has been a drop in the number of people registering themselves as being of Roma nationality⁶.

⁶ According to the 1991 census 32 903 people declared themselves of Roma nationality, and 16 630 Czech citizens as having Romani as their mother tongue. At the next census in 2001 only 11 716 people declared themselves as of Roma nationality, with a further 784 people declaring Roma nationality in combination with

From a comparison of the number of registered and expert estimates of the number of Roma in the Czech Republic there can be seen the mistrust and unwillingness of Roma to register their nationality officially⁷.

The present ethnic climate in the Czech Republic does not create a safe environment for self-identification by Roma, whereas it is precisely the method of self-identification used in the census that is ethically the most acceptable method for obtaining sensitive data on membership of a national minority.

The long-term aim of the government is a total change of the ethnic climate in the Czech Republic such that Czech society becomes an open multi-cultural society without prejudices against members of national and ethnic minorities, in which individuals will not be afraid to declare their nationality openly.

In this area the Concept has the following goals:

- 1) To improve the awareness of Roma⁸ of the link between census results and the execution of the rights of members of a national minority (particularly rights to active Roma involvement in resolving minority affairs through the setting up of national minority committees⁹ and working on them)
- 2) Arrange access for socially excluded Roma to practical support in filling out census forms.

The following steps should lead to meeting these goals:

1. Create a working group to develop a Roma support strategy for the census

This working group should be composed of representatives of the Government Council for National Minorities and the Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs, with the involvement of representatives of the Czech Statistical Office, the Agency for Social Inclusion in Roma localities and Regional Roma Affairs Coordinators.

another nationality (Czech, Slovak). Expert estimates of the number of members of Roma communities which depend rather on identification of members of Roma communities by another person or group (most often by experts or staff of public institutions) put the number at 150 000 to 400 000 Roma in the Czech Republic. The number of Roma has been estimated by the office of the government Interdepartmental Commission for Roma Community Affairs at 150 000 to 200 000 (according to the Gabal report the current estimate of the number of Roma in the Czech Republic is 250 000, of whom 80 000 are designated as socially excluded).

⁷ The decline in the number of Roma declared can have a number of causes. In the past census counts of Roma were associated with a series of anti-Roma measures which has brought about mistrust on the part of Roma towards any state activities targeted at identifying people of Roma nationality.

⁸ A part of the census are information and explanatory campaigns organised by the Czech Statistical Office with the aim of achieving the best possible outcome to the whole process, nevertheless it is necessary to act in this regard in a targeted fashion on members of excluded Roma communities at local level in such a way that they obtain sufficient information and can make an informed decision as to their nationality.

⁹ According to §117 (setting up of committees) of Act No. 128/2000 Coll., on towns/villages, a town or village must set up such committees if at least 10% of citizens declare themselves as being of a nationality other than Czech. Roma representatives on the committee have the possibility of influencing policies aimed at members of Roma communities and by their membership to strengthen the involvement of the minority in public life. In addition to the setting up of committees, the willingness of state administration and local government authorities to implement measures favourable to national minorities depends on the number of people of Roma nationality. The declining number of Roma openly declaring their nationality thus also complicates the implementation of targeted government policies. Some institutions use the low number of inhabitants of Roma nationality as an argument for not implementing measures to the benefit of this minority. Other bodies use expert estimates when developing measures; these are not exact and make Roma passive subjects, as other attribute their nationality to them.

2. Having in mind the implementation of the strategy in practice, it is necessary to establish effective cooperation between towns and villages, particularly with Roma advisors, Regional Czech Statistical Office locations and the census commissioners who will operate in socially excluded Roma localities. This cooperation should lead to a transfer of key information and to coordination of the approaches of these persons and organisations at local level during the census.

Implementer: Minister for Human Rights in conjunction with the Chairman of the Czech Statistical Office

4. SUPPORT FOR ROMA CULTURE¹⁰ AND LANGUAGE

The Czech government has as its goal support for scientific and cultural activities aimed at preserving the cultural heritage of Roma and sees the development and protection of the Roma national identity as the natural right of the Roma national minority.

The loss of Roma identity, reduced standing for Roma culture and linguistic assimilation should not be the prerequisite for Roma integration¹¹.

The government's approach comes first and foremost from the conviction that with the consolidation of Roma identity there will also be a growth in their interest managing their own affairs and active promotion of their own interests within society and responsibility for these.

Consolidation of the cultural identity of Roma requires a change in attitudes and the openness of Czech society towards the Roma national minority such that Roma feel that they are fully fledged members of society in spite of their cultural difference.

¹⁰ By Roma culture here is meant in the general sense of the word a set of sociocultural norms and values which taken as a whole are the basis for Roma identity, or more precisely define this identity with respect to the majority. It is self-evident that there can be more than one mutually defined Roma culture, but for the purposes of a political document dealing with government policy towards the Roma minority it is appropriate to treat Roma culture in this way. When declaring support for Roma culture one cannot of course avoid another meaning of the word "culture", as artistic creation, either popular or artistic.

¹¹ This requirement is based on the Charter of Basic Rights and Freedoms which forbids all forms of pressure aimed at denationalisation, loss of one's culture and language, and including indirect pressure. The Roma minority has faced several decades of forced assimilation, the purpose of which was the denationalisation and full cultural adaptation of Roma into majority society without any respect for their cultural differences and customs. The effort of state administration and local authorities in practice did not bring about the expected integration effect and led rather to cultural disintegration of Roma communities.

The current problem is the aloofness and negative attitudes of the Czech public towards this national minority and pressure to assimilate and to suppress ethnic identity.

The government is endeavouring to change these negative attitudes and to create a multi-cultural society which benefits from cultural diversity, in which there will be respect for the identity of members of a Roma national minority, demonstrated in their own culture, traditions and language.

In the preservation of Roma cultural heritage and history the following goals must be achieved:

- 1. Prevent the cultural exclusion of Roma and incorporate Roma culture in the majority culture of Czech society**
- 2. Prevent the loss of contact of Roma communities with their own culture and language**
- 3. Preserve a permanent remembrance of victims of the Roma holocaust and secure dignified homage to their memory.**

4.1 MEASURES TO SUPPORT ROMA CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

- **Support for R&D into the theory of Roma culture**

Research in Roma studies, anthropology, sociology and other related fields of knowledge should serve mainly to improve our knowledge of the laws of the Roma minority and how they operate.

At a secondary level the results of this research can also serve as an instrument for policy development for strengthening the position of the Roma minority in society, to initiate ethnoemancipation efforts and to suppress the mechanisms of social exclusion.

An important part of these efforts should also be direct support for university education in Roma studies, where it is necessary:

- 1) To provide access to Roma studies education to the future Roma elite, which will have the opportunity to reinforce the awareness of members of the Roma minority of their culture and history
- 2) To train additional university students from majority society, able to act as mediators between the Czech majority and the Roma minority

The government and relevant civil service bodies should:

- Develop mechanisms to support and finance research performed at academic locations, universities, research and specialist centres and also by trained non-governmental, non-profit organisation
- Support the institutional development of the university field of Roma studies and to support its extension to other universities

Implementer: Ministry of Education with the involvement of the Grant Agency of the Czech Academy of Sciences

- **Roma culture and history as part of the majority culture of Czech society**

The aim of the measures is to achieve public acceptance and recognition for Roma culture, history and language as a full part of the majority culture of Czech society.

With this end in mind the following steps must be taken:

- In conjunction with the Teaching Research Institute and the National Institute for Professional Training, to expand the curriculum in social science subjects and history by incorporating the topic of Roma culture and history into the schools framework education programmes in keeping with the timetable of reviews of framework education programmes, and into teaching materials issued by the Ministry of Education for pupils and students at all levels of the education system
- Also incorporate the aforementioned topics into the education system for teaching staff and into the methodological materials which they use in their work
- Through the Czech Schools Inspectorate, arrange for regular assessment of the conformity of schools education programmes with the augmented framework education programmes for schools
- In mainstream cultural institutions, support projects related to Roma culture (i.e. in normal museums, galleries etc.)
- Popularise knowledge of Roma culture and the history of the Roma in the press and public media
- Support the organising of cultural events (i.e. festivals, celebrations and acts of remembrance) in the public spaces of towns and villages.

At the same time, a fundamental prerequisite for success is the active cooperation and exchange of information and collections of Roma culture, history and language between Roma culture institutions and classical mainstream cultural institutions which can present Roma cultural heritage to the majority population in the individual regions of the Czech Republic.

Implementer:

1. **The Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Teaching Research Institute and the National Institute for Professional Training as the bodies ensuring the incorporation of the topic of Roma culture and Roma history into schools framework education programmes and into the methodological and teaching materials for pupils and students, as well as into the training of teaching staff**
2. **The Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Czech Schools Inspectorate as the guarantor of the assessment of the conformity of current teaching in practice and the expanded framework education programmes**
3. **The Ministry of Culture as the provider of financial support for projects dealing with Roma cultural events and publishing projects within existing grant programmes¹²**
4. **Regional government offices and towns and villages with extended jurisdiction as providers of financial support for the organising of Roma cultural events within their existing grant programmes.**

- **Preservation and development of the Romani language**

Support for the Roma language is an expression of the Czech government's effort to contribute, in line with international conventions, to the preservation and development of cultural heritage throughout Europe and the specific protection and support for minority and regional languages¹³.

SOCIOLINGUISTIC RESEARCH INTO THE POSITION OF ROMANI

The results of *Sociolinguistic Research Into The Position Of Romani*¹⁴ in the Czech Republic documents the linguistic exchange of Romani, which predominated in the communication of the older generations of Roma, for Czech, which predominates in particular in the younger generation of Roma.

The research¹⁵ documents that at the most one-third of Roma of school age will be able in future to hand on Romani to their children. One may thus assume a further deepening of this language shift in the future.

One of the factors which has a negative impact on the inter-generation transfer of Romani in the Czech Republic is the perception of Romani by its speakers as a superfluous language and a general undervaluing of Romani as a full language.

¹² The development and presentation of Roma culture is based on the government's approach to national minorities, which is aimed at supporting the development and presentation of the culture of national minorities, supporting multicultural upbringing and supporting the integration of Roma communities. With this aim the government also earmarks funds from the state budget and supports programmes focused on theatres, museums, galleries, libraries, on documentary work and other activities of the Roma national minority. The most important grant headings of the Ministry of Culture are *Support for Cultural Activities of Members of National Minorities; Support for the Integration of Members of Roma Communities; Dissemination and Receipt of Information in National Minority languages; Grant Tender for Professional Music; Library of the 21st Century*.

¹³ The preservation and development of Romani are embodied in the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

¹⁴ Sociolinguistic research into the position of Romani in the Czech Republic, implemented by the Seminar of Roma Studies of the Institute for southern and central Asia at the Charles University Arts Faculty, for the Czech Ministry of Education 2008. The aim of the research was to map the position of Romani in the Czech Republic with reference to the language competence of speakers of Romani, the domains of use of Romani, the types and structures of factors which influence the use of Romani.

¹⁵ Passive users of Romani include those who understand Romani (to differing degrees), but (for various reasons) do not make active use of it.

Support for research into, and the teaching of Romani is also key in connection with the education of Roma children for whom their language skills represent one of the education barriers¹⁶

Here we must:

- Support research into Romani in the Czech Republic (including research into language attitudes and investigation of the options for further use of this language and the development of the different dialects of Romani)
- Educate teaching staff within undergraduate and postgraduate training in the teaching of children speaking the Roma ethnolect of Czech
- Develop materials for the training and methodological support of teaching staff in work with non-native speaking pupils and pupils with inadequate language skills in Czech
- Support the development of methodological and teaching materials and aids for the teaching of Romani
- Incorporate Romani into minority broadcasting in the public media, including subtitling of Roma contributions in audiovisual media and support for minority Roma media (i.e. print and audiovisual media using Romani)
- Support literature written in Romani and its translation

Implementer:

- 1. The Ministry of Education as the provider of financial support for the teaching of Romani and the body responsible for the implementation of measures targeted at teaching staff and the teaching of Romani in practice**
- 2. The Ministry of Culture as the provider of financial support for publishing projects dealing with Roma periodicals and literature within existing grant programmes**
- 3. The Media Councils of Czech Television and Czech Radio as the bodies responsible for the incorporation of Romani into minority broadcasting**

- **The preservation of a permanent memorial to the sufferings of Roma during the Second World War**

The genocide of Roma during the Second World War has not yet been adequately dealt with. There is a lack of targeted research to obtain new historical knowledge of crimes during the Nazi occupation.

At the same time there is a rise in the number of people who deny the ordeal of Roma in the gypsy camps, which bears witness to the inadequate attention paid to the topic of the Roma holocaust in the public media and in teaching in schools.

With this aim in mind we must:

- Support research into the Roma holocaust and make this topic more widely known using the public media
- Support the establishment of a teaching centre in line with Government Resolution No. 589 dated 4th May 2009
- Support the maintenance of memorials at the sites of Roma internment camps in the Czech Lands - at Lety u Písku and Hodonín u Kunštatu.

¹⁶ On the one hand these are children for whom the education barrier is an inadequate knowledge of Czech as a result of a different language upbringing at home, but there is also the inadequate readiness of teaching staff to distinguish the causes and sources of this language barrier in their pupils and to work in a professional manner on overcoming it.

- Through the Czech Schools Inspectorate, assess the scope and quality of the teaching of the Roma holocaust topic, and determine further education needs in this area.

Implementer:

1. The Ministry of Education as the maintainer of the memorial at Hodonín u Kunštatu and the provider of finances for researching the Roma holocaust
2. The Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Czech Schools Inspectorate as instigator of schools inspection of the teaching of the Roma holocaust topic at all levels of the education system
3. The Ministry of Culture as the maintainer of the memorial at Lety u Písku in line with Government Resolution No. 589 dated 4th May 2009.

- **Development of the cultural identity of Roma in the public media**

The aim of these measures is to strengthen the cultural identity of Roma and to build a positive stance from the public to the Roma national minority using the public media.

In this regard it is necessary to apply more rigorously Act No 483/1991 Coll., on Czech Television, which includes the development of the cultural identity of the inhabitants of the Czech Republic, including members of national minorities.

With this aim in mind we must:

- Improve the operation of the Media Councils of Czech Television and Czech Radio in the matter of effective audit of the correctness of programmes, so that both media give objective and unbiased information about members of Roma communities, thereby preventing their stigmatisation and the dissemination of a negative image in the eyes of the public
- Change the programming content of Czech Television broadcasting so as to contain programmes with Roma themes
- Add to the Czech Television Codex the principle of openness to employing members of national minorities
- Check programme content more thoroughly to prevent extremist groups from disseminating their ideologies using state-owned media¹⁷ and develop the public's critical thinking by providing objective information about extremism and its consequences.

Implementer: The Czech Television and Czech Radio Media Councils

5. EDUCATION

A long-term priority for Roma inclusion is the area of education, which is a prerequisite for the success of Roma in the labour market, their economic independence and social advancement.

Higher educational achievement is key for the Roma emancipation process and opens the way to them to full participation in civic and political life.

¹⁷ One must prevent the bad practice which occurred on Czech Television before the elections to the European Parliament when Czech Television allowed the Workers Party to broadcast a clip from the National Party in an election campaign broadcast; this spoke of a final solution to the gypsy question, of parasitism and black racism.

Current research shows that Roma children from a socioculturally disadvantaged background have a lower probability of obtaining a good education and during their school attendance show worse results compared to their peers; this prevents them pursuing further study at secondary school or university, which in turns has a negative impact on their future working life.

The crucial causes of the school failure of Roma pupils at elementary schools include the lack of pre-school education, inadequate involvement of the parents of children from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds in the education process, the language barrier (the Roma ethnolect of Czech) and the process of diagnosing the special educational needs of pupils¹⁸.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH

The unequal opportunities in education are shown in research conducted by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Education Information Institute in the first half of 2009¹⁹. Of the total number of all Roma elementary school pupil, almost a third (26.7% to be precise) attend schools teaching according to the Framework Education Programme for Elementary Education of those with Minor Mental Disability (in Czech: RVP ZV LMP), whereas these schools are attended by only 2.17% of other pupils.

The investigation pointed out the unequal educational opportunities of Roma pupils in comparison with other pupils, since the probability that a Roma child will be educated in line with the RVP LMP is much greater than for other children.

Most pupils (more than 95%) who complete elementary education based on the Appendix for those with Minor Mental Disability go on to secondary schools offering education without the school leaving certificate. In the case of Roma pupils most of those completing the RVP ZV LMP go on to secondary schools offering apprenticeships - Code E (65%) and only 0.93% of them moved on to a secondary school offering the school leaving certificate.

In the case of Roma pupils educated according to the (standard) Framework Education Programme, more than 30% went on to study for their school leaving certificate. The investigation thus shows the great likelihood that if a pupil completes elementary education conducted under the RVP ZV LMP, he or she will attain only secondary education without a school leaving certificate.

In addition to limiting the changes of Roma pupils obtaining a good education, segregation has a negative impact on society as a whole.

The exclusion of Roma children from normal classes and their education in segregated schools in Roma localities prevents them and other pupils from having any mutual contact and thus threatens their preparation for future coexistence (increasing the risk of mistrust, the spreading of prejudices and xenophobia between both groups).

Multicultural education is also a fundamental area for improving the position of Roma pupils; this is already part of the Framework Education Programme for Elementary Education, whose aim is to provide pupils with knowledge of their own cultural base, but also understanding of other cultures, a developing sense of justice, solidarity and tolerance.

¹⁸ Education of Roma pupils in accordance with the Framework Education Programme for pupils with Minor Mental Disability takes place with the agreement of their statutory representative or guardian and the recommendations of the schools advisory centre.

¹⁹ Of the total number of 4 189 schools 2713 were involved in the research, 65%, which can be considered a representative sample.

The Czech government has already taken steps to equalise the opportunities of Roma children within the education process and for a number of years has been developing and financing inclusion measures, but in spite of this there has not been any break in the inter-generation transfer of low educational achievement within Roma communities, where there is still a low number of secondary school and university educated people within the Roma.

The government's aim is to continue further in the development and implementation of equalisation measure in education, to improve the overall educational achievement level of Roma.

EXPERIENCE FROM ABROAD

The United States has in the past had similar experience of the segregation of African Americans in education. The solution to this was the use of affirmative action the aim of which was to improve the generally poor position of this disadvantaged group in the education process. Measures to equalise opportunities for the disadvantaged were successfully implemented due to a broad consensus within American society in the 1960s, which wanted to face up to the historical reality of African American slavery and their long-term oppression. Affirmative action was implemented using a system of quotas defining the a minimum percentage of people from a disadvantaged group in education. Thanks to affirmative action in education the number of African Americans increased among professionals, that is among qualified and well-paid employees, managers and businessmen, which lead to emancipation and the strengthening of the social standing of this group within American society.

In education the following goals must be attained:

- 1. Increase the number of Roma pupils and students in the educational mainstream**
- 2. Develop conditions and models for inclusive education in educational establishments in the educational mainstream.**
- 3. Improve the educational results of Roma pupils and students**
- 4. Increase the number of Roma students studying at secondary schools and universities, thereby preventing their early entry into the labour market without appropriate qualifications.**

4.1 EDUCATION MEASURES

- **Development of a network of *early care services***

Early care²⁰ plays an irreplaceable role in preventing the educational failure of Roma children from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH

Ministry of Education research²¹ has succeeded in demonstrating the effect of integration tools on the educational success of Roma children. Roma children who went to kindergarten are clearly more successful in their educational careers. Kindergarten however are still attended by only a minor percentage of Roma children from socially excluded Roma localities or localities threatened with social exclusion (approximately two-fifths).

The impact of preparatory years on improving educational opportunity is not as strong as that of kindergarten. Kindergarten or preparatory years are used by a total of 48% of Roma children (in most cases parents choose only one of these options). Approximately 52% of Roma children from socially excluded localities or localities threatened with socially excluded have no pre-school preparation.

The aim of these measures is arrange for the availability of early care activities to families living in socio-culturally disadvantaged environments.

With this aim in mind we must:

- Increase the accessibility and interlinking of early care services at local level in all required socially excluded Roma localities.

For children from 0 to 6, there should be social activation services for families with children²², whose activity should be linked to the activities of schools advisory centres.

By means of these services there should be development of parental skills such that the parents are able to successfully arrange for the development of their children's potential, thus easing their entry into compulsory school attendance.

The topic of the accessibility and quality of the early care system at local level should be the subject of the development of medium-term plans for social services development, for which the regions bear primary responsibility in accordance with Act No. 108/2006 Coll.

For families with children in the 3 to 6 age bracket it is necessary to arrange for an accessible network of pre-school education, which takes place in kindergarten, in preparatory years, or in a combination of these with a programme of a teaching assistant for children, pupils and students with social disadvantages.

- Systematically work on the attitudes of the parents of disadvantaged children and increase their awareness of the positive impact of their children's attendance in early care on their educational achievement.

An effective instrument is the incorporation of education and advice specifically targeted at early care into the social services operating in excluded Roma localities (e.g. as part of field social work and other social services targeted at social inclusion).

Implementer:

²⁰ Measures targeted at Roma children of pre-school age are based on the *Concept of In-Time Care for Children from Socio-Culturally Disadvantaged Environments* prepared by the Ministry of Education.

²¹ The educational paths and educational opportunities for Roma pupils from elementary schools near socially excluded Roma localities, Ministry of Education Prague 2009.

²² Social activation services for children with children are provided, in accordance with Act No. 108/2006 Coll., on walk-in social services, to a family with a child where there is a risk of its development being at risk, or its development is at risk as a result of the impact of a long-term difficult social position, which the parents themselves are unable to deal with without help. The service contains childrearing, educational and activation activities, mediation of contact with the social milieu, therapeutic activities and help in invoking their rights and interests. The service is provided free of charge.

1. **The Ministry of Education as the umbrella organisation for meeting the requirements of the Concept of Early Care for Children from Socio-Culturally Disadvantaged Backgrounds**
 2. **The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs as the provider of financial support for the aforementioned types of social services within its existing grant programmes**
 3. **The Regions and regional government offices in conjunction with the Centres for the Support of Inclusive Education, as the instigators of the development of a network of establishments and services within the early care system at local level.**
- **Amendments to the work of schools advisory centres in relation to the diagnosis of pupils from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds**

A significant proportion of Roma children are still diagnosed as children with special educational needs and on the basis of this diagnosis are placed in elementary schools set up for children with minor mental disability.

In 2009 the Ministry of Education conducted an analysis of diagnostic tools used for pupils from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds with reference to Roma children and pupils.

The results of the analysis showed that these diagnostic tools are not discriminatory in respect of Roma children if they are correctly used.

It was determined that the problem is rather in the interpretation of the diagnostic results and lies more in how people work with the diagnostic tools.

With this aim in mind we must:

- Revise the usual approach of advisory centres in relation to the diagnosis of the special educational needs of children, pupils and students from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds
- Propose changes to the work of schools advisory centres in the process of diagnosing the special educational needs of children, pupils and students from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds
- Amend the current study and training programmes for teachers and school advisory centre workers, based on the results of the review and the proposed amendments to their work.

Advisory workers should be trained in the issue of the correct use of diagnostic tools in relation to children and pupils from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds so that they can distinguish the effects of minor mental disability from those arising from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds.

- Increase the permeability of the education system in which the success and skills of children educated under the RVP ZV LMP will be regularly assessed, which will be needed for education in the (standard) Framework Educational Programme for Elementary Education and develop additional support mechanisms which will ease the transfer to, continuance in the educational mainstream for pupils educated under RVP ZV LMP²³.

²³ Reallocation of a pupil being educated according to the RVP ZV LMP to a standard elementary school is at present possible on the basis of decree No.73/2005 Coll., on the education of children, pupils and students with special educational needs and exceptionally talented children, pupils and students. The provisions in §9, para.1 state that the allocation of a pupil with health problems to any form of special education in accordance with §3 is done by the school director (head teacher) on the basis of a recommendation from the schools advisory centre and the agreement of the statutory representative/guardian of a pupil or a pupil of legal age. Provision §9 para. 3 states that if a significant change occurs in the special educational needs of a pupil with health problems, the transfer of such a pupil to a special education regime will be reviewed by the school advisory centre, which will

This measure should be linked to education to increase the awareness of the parents of these pupils of the possibilities, benefits and steps of assigning their child to the educational mainstream.

Implementer:

- 1. The Ministry of Education as the body responsible for reviewing the approach of advisory centres in relation to the diagnosis of the special educational needs of children, pupils and students from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds, and as the developer of the relevant recommendations and methodological instructions.**
- 2. Schools and schools advisory centres as the instigators of the training of their teaching and advisory staff²⁴.**

- Support and expansion of the Teaching Assistants for Socially Disadvantaged Children, Pupils and Students Programme.**

One of the equalisation methods in education is the Programme entitled Teaching Assistants for Socially Disadvantaged Children, Pupils and Students.

Its implementers come up against certain complications which reduce the effectiveness of this measure.

In practice in schools differences appear in the activities which teaching assistants perform, and therefore there is a current need of this Programme to set out clear competencies and tasks which these assistants are to achieve in practice.

At many schools teaching assistants lack options for further training, methodological support and supervision, here there is no responsible body to deal with these activities²⁵.

The aim of this measure is eliminate the aforementioned obstacles and thus improve the effectiveness of this inclusion measure.

With this aim in mind we must:

- Develop a methodological instruction for the setting up of the post of teaching assistant²⁶ in a class or study group in which a child, pupil or student with special educational needs is being taught.

The developer of the methodological handbook should be the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the regions (the aim is to create a Ministry of Education working group with the participation of staff from the regional government offices and Centres for the Support of Inclusive Education).

The output from the working group will be methodological material which will clearly define the competencies of teaching assistants and the activities which they should perform in schools and teaching establishments, as well as recommendations and clarifications of the teaching assistant's job description.

- To set up an efficient system of further training and methodological support for teaching assistants in schools.

propose an adjustment to the regime. In the event of transfer to another educational programme the school director will allocate the pupil to the grade which corresponds to his knowledge and skills.

²⁴ According to the prepared amendment to decree No. 73/2005 Coll. schools should be primarily responsible for preparing suitable equalisation measures; they should strengthen teachers' knowledge of the issue of socio-culturally sensitive work with children and pupils with social disadvantages.

²⁵ Report on the status of Roma communities in the Czech Republic for 2008 approved by Government Resolution No. 935, 20th July

²⁶ A teaching assistant is appointed by a schools director with the agreement of the regional government office on the basis of §16, para. 10 of Act No. 561/2004 Coll., on preschool, primary, secondary, higher professional and other education (the Education Act).

The quality of the teaching assistant Programme depends on the professionalism of those staff working in this position, where by means of further training, methodological support and supervisions a higher degree of professionalism can be achieved in their work with socially disadvantaged children, pupils and students.

This topic will also be part of the work of the aforementioned working group.

Implementer:

1. The Ministry of Education in conjunction with the regions as developer of the methodological instruction and the methodological handbook for the function of teaching assistant in schools.

• **Education and upbringing of children from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds as part of the training and methodological support for teaching staff**

A key role in the education of children from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds is played by teaching staff, and in particular by their preparation for education and bringing up children with special educational needs.

The aim of the current efforts by the Ministry of Education is to strengthen the skills of the school and schools advisory centres in respect of pupils from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds.

A key document for this area is the *National Action Plan for Inclusive Education*, currently in preparation, where support for pupils from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds is dealt with in a comprehensive manner.

The aim of the measure is:

1. To improve the professional competence of teaching staff so that they are able to react to the specific needs of these children
2. To change the climate in schools and ensure openness of the education system to children with different cultural and social experiences.

The training should be aimed at developing the skills of teachers in:

1. The diagnosis of pupils' educational needs
2. Setting up and implementing individual educational plans related to their specific needs arising from the different cultural and social experiences of these pupils
3. Effective cooperation with the parents of disadvantaged children in implementing these plans

With this aim in mind we must:

- Incorporate the topics of inclusive education, work with children from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds and the topic of Roma history, culture and language into the educational programmes of secondary schools with a teacher training emphasis
- Develop recommendations for universities also to include training for student teachers in the aforementioned areas in their accredited fields of study
Part of these recommendations should also be an emphasis on the importance of practical training of student teachers in institutions dealing with inclusive education and Roma integration.
- Make inclusive education and the upbringing of children from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds part of further training and methodological support for teaching staff in their normal work.

Linked to this methodological support is regular supervision, which permits teachers to obtain an overview of their own work and solve everyday problems which they face in teaching.

A key part in methodological support and training for teaching staff is played by the *Centres for Support for Inclusive Education*, which have been set up in each region²⁷. Specialist teams operate in these to provide methodological support to teaching staff in all levels of the education system.

Implementer:

- 1. The Ministry of Education as the developer of recommendations for universities**
- 2. Schools and schools advisory centres as the instigators of the training and development of their teaching and advisory staff.**

- **Support for Roma pupils from elementary schools when transferring to the secondary and tertiary education systems**

Because of individually and structurally condition obstacles it is not easy for Roma pupils and students to continue their studies in the secondary and tertiary education systems.

The aim of the measure is:

1. To offer support to Roma pupils and students in improving their school results and eliminating barriers to transferring to a higher educational level
2. To prevent the premature departure of Roma children from the education process and thereby prevent their future unemployment

With this end in mind the following steps should be taken:

- Closely link the activities of the schools advisory centres with the work of schools
The work of the staff at schools advisory centres should be closely linked to schools, where children requiring it should be offered individualised support in the form of targeted counselling, and the development and implementation of individual educational plans with the maximum involvement of pupils and their parents.
Part of this support should also be the provision of additional specialised and related services from specialists.
- Link the work of the school to tutoring programmes, to improve the educational achievement of Roma children from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds
The tutoring programme should operate intensively in particular for Roma children in the second level of elementary school where their achievement is demonstrably lower and the absence rate increases, but where success in the second level has a fundamental impact on the transfer of pupils into secondary education²⁸.
An important part in this area is played by the non-profit sector which offers tutoring programmes at local level and links them into a whole series of supplementary development activities.
- To apply a comprehensive approach²⁹ to resolving the position of pupils from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds.

²⁷ With the exception currently of the Karlovarský region.

²⁸ The educational paths and educational opportunities for Roma pupils from elementary schools near socially excluded Roma localities, Ministry of Education Prague 2009.

²⁹ A model for comprehensive work with the family is being developed by the Brno civic association IQ Roma service, which as part of its projects works with educational institutions in Brno and offers them a comprehensive "package" of social services aimed at stabilising the family situation of the pupils and students of secondary schools. The Methodology of comprehensive work with the inhabitants of socially excluded localities is described in *Methodological manual: Comprehensive Work with the Inhabitants of Socially Excluded*

One of the prerequisites for Roma children's success in school is a stable family situation and a good background for study preparation.

This prerequisite cannot be met if a child is growing up in a family whose position is complicated by a whole series of inter-related problems (e.g. housing problems, overindebtedness etc.)

Stabilisation of the family position is possible using the model of comprehensive social work with the family, by means of which the family's component problems can be solved and introduction made to additional specialised social services and development activities aimed at social inclusion³⁰.

In many localities there already exists an accessible network of providers of social services aimed at social integration, with which schools and teaching establishments can establish cooperation and thus secure a better background for the education of children from socially excluded families.

The development of medium-term plans for social services development is an opportunity to establish cooperation between schools and social service providers.

- Arrange for pupils from the final years of elementary schools to have access to careers advice with preparation programmes for the entrance exams.

Roma children growing up in a socio-culturally disadvantaged background, where there is a high level of unemployment, must overcome a number of obstacles in transferring to a higher level of education.

They often encounter a lower level of support on the part of their family, they lack positive employment models in their immediate surroundings, which reduces their motivation to continue in their studies and build a working career.

Support for disadvantaged Roma pupils should intensify and be individualised at the end of their compulsory school attendance (at elementary school).

Part of this should be work to motive Roma children and their parents to continue education, help with their choice of further study, planning for their future career, preparation for entrance exams and transfer to the next level of education³¹.

Career advice and individualised long-term preparation for the transfer to secondary-level education should be part of teaching at all elementary schools, while NGOs are also key in this area.

Established practice also is the involvement of local secondary schools, apprentice colleges and employers in preparing pupils for further study.

- Arrange at local level for access to programmes to prepare Roma secondary school pupils for university study.

AN EXAMPLE OF BEST PRACTICE

In a number of regions Slova 21 has implemented a project entitled "*Džadureder / Keep Going*" The project operated from March 2008 to July 2009 and followed on from the previous successful projects *Preparing Roma secondary school pupils for university* and "*Pale o Vudar – Opening Doors*" The aim of the project was allow Roma interested in university study to have good preparation and to contribute to improved acceptance rates in the entrance examinations. In 2008 in connection

Localities, Brno 2008. <http://www.iqrs.cz/download.php?sekce=15>

³⁰ A social work going into a family environment takes over the role of case manager who mediates and coordinates other detailed activities for stabilising the family position and supporting the success of a child in the educational mainstream (e.g. arranges tutoring, scholarships, etc.)

³¹ Targeted counselling should be linked to top-up courses, individual teaching consultations, to study camps before final examinations, "mock" tests as a way of testing the level of one's knowledge. Language courses and courses to improve computer literacy could be part of this measure.

with this project a brochure was published *"Džá dureder / Keep Going - A Handbook for University Applicants"*, with the aim of answering the basic questions of anyone considering university study. The author is Jiřina Šiklová. The project's activities, and preparatory courses in particular, took place for Roma secondary school pupils interested in continuing their studies in Prague, Pilsen, Ústí nad Labem, Olomouc, Ostrava and Tábor.

- Disseminate positive models in Roma communities using targeted locally directed campaigns, thus influencing the attitudes of disadvantaged Roma to education
The presence of educated Roma in Roma communities has a positive impact on the motivation of this target group in regard to education, obtaining work and building a career.

The presentation of positive models and their life stories in the form of discussions at schools with a large number of Roma pupils or as part of the activities of non-governmental organisations or campaigns using the media is one of the tools which leads to a change in attitudes of Roma in relation to education and life-long learning.

Implementer:

- 1. The Ministry of Education as the body responsible for grant support for educational activities as part of its existing *"Ministry of Education Programme to Support the Education of Socially Disadvantaged Children, Pupils and Students"***
- 2. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs as the provider of financial support for social services aimed at social integration, which are key for implementing comprehensive work with the families of socially disadvantaged pupils in difficult life situations.**
- 3. The regions³² and regional government offices with the involvement of the Centres for the Support of Inclusive Education, in arranging access to educational programmes and interconnected social services for disadvantaged Roma pupils and students.**

- **Support for Full-day Schools**

One means of developing human resources in excluded localities might be schools with full-day programmes³³, offering educational and leisure time activities not only to their pupils but to adults as well.

³² The region plays a key role in the development of the education system in its catchment area. According to §9, para.2 of Act No. 561/2004 Coll., on preschool, primary, secondary, higher professional and other education it prepares, in line with the Czech Republic long-term plan for education and the development of the education system, a long-term plan for education and the development of the education system in the region and submits to the Ministry of Education for its views. That part of the long-term plan for education and the development of the education system which concerns education in schools and teaching establishments in the region is submitted by the regional council to the regional representation for its approval. This plan contains an analysis of the education system in the region and sets out in particular, on the basis of demographic developments, developments in the labour market and plans for further development of the region, aims and tasks for the individual areas of education, the structure of the educational supply, and especially the structure of education fields, types of schools and teaching establishments and their capacity and a proposal for financing education and teaching services in the region. Long-term plans are assessed every 2 years and where necessary are adjusted or complemented.

³³ The activity of a school is based on the knowledge of members of the community, on their interests, needs and personal problems. Czech full-day schools currently offer educational and leisure activities, programmes targeted at difficult groups of young people, the organising of social events open to the public. The basic source

Characteristic features of schools with a full-day programme are the favourable climate with respect to the community, openness and an atmosphere of understanding in which all have the possibility and opportunity to develop their potential and meet their needs to the maximum possible extent.

Through their activities full-day programme schools in excluded localities can have a desegregating effect, since because of the attractiveness of the activities on offer and innovative projects they can prevent the drain of pupils from majority society and at the same time be a suitable means for improving relations between the majority and the inhabitants of excluded localities.

They can offer inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities development opportunities and greater participation in managing school issues, as well as employment possibilities.

Implementer:

- 1. The Ministry of Education as the body responsible for grant support for schools with a full day programme**
- 2. The regional government offices in conjunction with Centres for Inclusive Education as the instigators of the expansion of the network of these schools in their catchment areas.**

- **Support for life-long learning for socially excluded Roma with emphasis on the development of their functional literacy and other key skills**

Greater emphasis on the initial and further education of Roma can be an effective means of increasing their employability, and thus of increasing overall their position in the labour market.

A key area in the education of adult Roma is the development of key skills and functional literacy³⁴, identified by the World Bank research "*Opportunities to Improve the Employment of Roma*" as insufficiently developed.

of finance for those schools recorded in the schools register are grants from the state budget for direct costs, to which schools are entitled regardless of who set them up. Nevertheless a contribution from the founder of the school to its operating costs is still important. Further financing options are income from its own activities (e.g. the leasing of property under the school's management), complementary school activities (e.g. renting out the dining room as a restaurant for the public), income from courses and training events organised by the school, income from projects announced by the local authority in line with the school's work, funds provided by the European structural funds (operation of the school as a social, cultural and training centre), sponsoring, finance obtained from the labour exchanges (e.g. if they arrange requalification courses for the unemployed in the region). (Analysis of the preparedness of the environment in the Czech Republic and of the scope for developing community schools, Ministry of Education 2009.)

³⁴ Functional literacy is defined as the ability to take part in the world of information. A low level of functional literacy is becoming a factor in the competitiveness of the economy of a given country and of social cohesion, because a low level of literacy in certain groups of the populations can lead to their social marginalisation. Functional literacy affects the ability of people to learn effectively, thereby affecting the degree to which the idea of life-long learning can be implemented. From the new requirements of the workplace which are a result of globalisation and the development of new technologies, the organisation of work and the structure of companies, and thereby new demands on workers' qualification, come also requirements for further key skills, of which their transferability is characteristic, i.e. the option to use them in new and unforeseen situations. Typical examples of key skills, whose use is similar in varying situations, for different tasks and under different conditions, are for example methodological skills - problem solving, the use of information and communications technologies; communications skills - foreign languages, written and verbal expression; personal skills - critical thinking, teamwork skills, learning ability, self-management, self-control; environmental skills - the ability to react to the challenges and threats coming from the areas of the environment and health. So-called financial literacy is becoming part of these key skills, i.e. the ability of an individual and a household to develop a family budget, the choice of financial products and so on. (http://www.et2010.cz/dokumenty/funkcni_gramotnost.php).

Fundamental barriers in this are the low motivation of Roma for life-long learning and the lack of educational opportunities at local level for disadvantaged Roma to develop their skills³⁵.

With this aim in mind we must:

- Systematically influence the attitudes of this target group and increase their motivation for further education during their lives, after the end of compulsory schooling.

Attitudes to life-long learning are developed in childhood and therefore it is necessary to begin early in influencing the attitude of children and young people, so that ongoing education becomes a normal part of their lives; this is a prerequisite not only for success in the labour market, but also for the overall functioning of the individual in modern society, which is a challenge for contemporary teaching staff working in schools and teaching establishments.

Also key is work with the motivation for further training of adult job applicants during the provision of public employment services (particularly with disadvantaged job applicants, which also includes socially excluded Roma).

- Arrange access to educational activities³⁶ in excluded localities, by means of which disadvantaged Roma may develop their skills.

An important prerequisite for the development of a network of educational activities is intensive cooperation of labour exchanges with experienced and qualified providers of educational activities for members of Roma communities who come from the non-profit and private sectors using finance from European structural funds.

- Connect the implementation of educational activities with the provision of child care services so that Roma women can take part in these activities; because of their maternal responsibilities, they are often separated from further education opportunities for a long period.

Implementer:

- 1. The Ministry of Education as provider of financial support within its existing grant programmes**
- 2. Regions and towns and villages with extended jurisdiction with the involvement of the labour exchanges as the instigators of the development of a range of educational activities for adult socially excluded Roma with emphasis on the development of their functional literacy and other key skills.**

6. EMPLOYMENT

Research in the field of employment documents the unequal position of Roma in the labour market when compared to the majority population.

The long-term and repeated unemployment of disadvantaged Roma arises especially from³⁷:

³⁵ World Bank research estimated the reduced functional literacy of Roma at only 40%; this deficit significantly affects the ability of Roma to be successful not only in the labour market, but also in the majority environment overall.

³⁶ A significant obstacle in the process of lifetime learning for disadvantaged Roma is the unavailability of appropriate educational activities near their home. In socially excluded localities there is often a lack of suitable education for adults which would reflect the needs of the labour market as well as the needs and preferences of the local Roma community. From the experience of adult learning activity providers it can be seen that Roma prefer practically oriented courses in an ethnically homogenous group and are mistrustful of organisations which offer education to a wide circle of participants, because inside such a group they feel greater concerns over failure and prejudiced behaviour.

- A mismatch between the requirements of present-day employers and the professional skills level of disadvantaged Roma
- The existence of discrimination in the labour market
- A lack of jobs in the open labour market

Disadvantaged Roma are forced out into the secondary labour market where they obtain unstable work often without an employment contract.

The unemployment of Roma does not bring negative impacts just for the individual but also represents major economic losses for the economy as a whole and a loss of human capital which in other circumstances could be used to improve productivity.

State expenditure linked to the unemployed subsequently degrades the social standing of Roma, threatens overall social coherence and can be the basis for the growth of extremism in Czech society.

WORLD BANK RESEARCH³⁸

Roma unemployment represents major economic losses for the state linked to missing tax income and higher expenditure on social benefits. Experts from the World Bank and CERGE-E states that because of it the loss of productivity in the Czech Republic in 2008 reached 9.7bn CZK (€ 365m). Research from the World Bank "*Opportunities to Improve Roma Employment*" in monitored locations documents the fact that in 2008:

- Only 27% of Roma of productive age were employed, in comparison with the national average where 66% of economically active inhabitants were employed; a further 12% of Roma had only occasional employment
- Roma women at their most productive age participate in the labour market less (32%) when compared with the overall percentage of Czech women (62%)
- Roma men at their most productive age are also less economically active, only 63% of Roma men are part of the workforce, whereas among Czech men this is 95%
- 42% of young Roma in the age range 15-24 enter the labour market early in comparison with the national average, where 32% of young people are economically active.
- Older Roma in the age range 55-64 by contrast exceed their Czech counterparts by 2% in economic activity, probably for the reason that they do not meet the conditions for old-age pensions.

The governments sees the employability of socially excluded Roma as a fundamental prerequisite for the stabilisation of their life situation and the improvement of their socio-economic standing in society³⁹

³⁷ According to World Bank research "*Opportunities to Improve Roma Employment*" the willingness of Roma to take part in the labour market is also affected by their dependence on social benefits, particularly in Czech regions with low wage rates, where there is low demand for low-skilled workers and where many socially excluded Roma live. A further important factor is the high level of overindebtedness in excluded Roma communities, where income from legal employment is at risk from deductions to pay off debts and commitments. The Concept deals with this part in the chapter entitled Overindebtedness.

³⁸ Czech Republic - Opportunities for Improving Roma Employment. Office of the Czech Government and the World Bank, Prague 2008.

³⁹ Although there is a number of strategic documents and support measures to strengthen the employability and to increase the employment of the inhabitants of the Czech Republic, the position of Roma communities in the labour market over time and in spite of all these efforts is not improving. Support measures in the area of employment are contained in particular in the *National Action Plan for Social Integration 2008-2010*, in the *Lisbon Strategy* and in the *National Reforms Programme for 2008-2011*.

Government intervention in the labour market requires actions aimed at eliminating both structural and individually caused barriers.

With this aim, the government is developing and using equalisation methods in the form of targeted assistance, by means of which it wishes to make it possible for disadvantaged Roma to obtain and retain jobs⁴⁰.

EXPERIENCE FROM ABROAD:

In many foreign countries specific equalisation measures are embedded in law in order to equalise the opportunities for disadvantaged groups; the aim of these is to even out disadvantages in the labour market caused by the traditional attitudes of society to these groups or structures. The equalisation measures lead to the overcoming of the effects of the earlier discrimination so that the disadvantaged group can compete with the favoured group on the same terms. The most frequent forms of equalisation measures used abroad are:

- Quotas which set the percentage of persons from the disadvantaged group
- Preferential treatment for the disadvantaged group in job applications
- Allocation of specialist training or requalification courses only to the disadvantaged group
- Adaptation of job requirements to the position of the disadvantaged group
- Financial incentives for employers who apply equal opportunities policies

Increased participation and adaptability of Roma to the changing conditions of the labour market require a systemic, coordinated, interdisciplinary approach from all institutions at both central and local level.

In employment the following goals must be attained:

- 1. To increase the number of employed Roma men and women⁴¹, especially the long-term unemployed**
- 2. Improve the employability and work qualifications of Roma job applicants by more**

⁴⁰ Equalisation methods in employment consist in particular of grant support for social services aimed at social integration and educational activities targeted at improving the employability of members of Roma communities. Grant support and investment incentives to employers also act as equalisation measures; these are provided by labour exchanges with the purpose of creating new jobs, requalification and the training of new employees. These grants are provided across the board to all disadvantaged groups in the labour market without regard to nationality or ethnic affiliation.

⁴¹ Roma women are specifically included in this aim, because this is a particularly vulnerable target group which has to overcome more barriers to entry to employment when compared with Roma men. Roma women are often separated from participation in the labour market for a long period for reasons of maternity, and in view of this do not have so many opportunities to obtain work experience and to develop work careers. A fundamental role in this regard is also played by factors such as the perception of the traditional role of the Roma woman, associated with a caring role in the family. The demands of caring for the usually numerous family prevent Roma women from building a professional career. Similarly child care is a further factor putting them at a disadvantage, since it reduces employers' interest in employing women with children - they are assumed to be less flexible and more often absent from their work. Their very attribution to the Roma national minority is a further reason for being disadvantaged in the labour market. The chances for Roma women to obtain employment and build a working career are affected by a number of handicaps, and it is therefore necessary to pay specific attention to Roma women.

intensive use of active employment policy tools

3. Reduce the incidence of discrimination against Roma in the labour market.

6.1 EMPLOYMENT MEASURES

• **Reform of public employment services in favour of disadvantaged Roma job applicants**

The aim of this measure is to change active employment policy programmes so as to react more to the specific needs of long-term unemployed Roma⁴².

WORLD BANK RESEARCH

In the area of employment services related to the needs of long-term unemployed Roma World Bank experts identified a low level of connection between the education and social security systems and the services of Czech labour exchanges. In the Czech Republic there is also a lack of targeted measure to prevent the future unemployment of Roma children and young people from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds.

Greater specialisation on the part of labour exchange staff is also missing. Advisors focused on work with the Roma minority should be able to offer services which are sensitive to the differing social and culture experiences of disadvantaged Roma job applicants.

The reform of public employment services should include the following steps:

➤ Increasing the number of public employment services staff working directly with clients in order to have sufficient capacity to offer a job applicant with specific needs individualised support "made to measure" for his or her needs.

➤ Developing a system of methodological support, life-long learning and supervision for public employment services staff.

Training should be conducted in partnership with experienced social services providers and part of it should be topics concerning work with members of national minorities, instruction in work on the motivation of the long-term unemployed and socially excluded persons, as well as anti-discrimination training.

➤ Ensuring the specialisation of public employment services staff, on the basis of which there should be targeted investment in their training, so that advisors targeted on work with the Roma minority are able to provide their clients with culturally sensitive services.

➤ Developing a system of profiling job applicants with regard to their distance from the labour market and the need for professional help.

Profiling allows public employment services staff to more effectively allocate their time and other resources with regard to the potential of job applicants to obtain and retain a job in the open labour market.

EXPERIENCE FROM ABROAD

Public employment services staff in the EU usually rank clients into groups, from the easy to place up to the difficult to place, for whom there exists a number of obstacles in gaining access to the labour market.

The basis for ranking applicants are factors by which the ease or difficulty of placement in the labour market can be assessed, such as age, period of unemployment, education, professional experience, level of professional and

⁴² These needs include in particular individualised and more intensive support from labour exchange staff, the need for specific employment services, the need to harmonise family and work life, a guarantee of non-discrimination in the process of looking for work.

key skills, functional literacy and numeracy skills, ethnic origin, state of health and other personal characteristics.

On the basis of this categorisation of applicants, advisors then apply their time and resources differently to individual groups of the unemployed. First category applicants are given self-service methods for job hunting (e.g. access to a PC and the internet), while fourth category applicants (those furthest from the labour market) and offered interventions such as intensive counselling or special programmes aimed at improving their employability.

Implementer:

- 1. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - *Employment and Labour Market Policy Section*, as the umbrella body, in conjunction with labour exchanges in the individual regions.**

- **Support for social entrepreneurship in favour of difficult-to-place inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities**

By means of independent business activities and participation in the labour market, social entrepreneurship⁴³ deals with questions of employment, social cohesion and regional development.

Social entrepreneurship:

- a) Helps, through employment and ongoing support, to provide a real solution to the difficult life situations of citizens who are disadvantaged in the labour market
- b) Reduces the administrative burden associated with redistribution transfers in traditional system of social assistance (i.e. on social services; active employment policy)
- c) Contributes alternative sources of finance for assistance systems

Social entrepreneurship is one of the ways to ease entry of difficult-to-employ Roma to the open labour market and to eliminate their social exclusion (particularly for those without the necessary qualifications, work habits and experience).

The aim of the measure is to initiate the establishment of new social entrepreneurs for difficult-to-employ groups of the population, which includes Roma⁴⁴.

Not to be ignored is the impact of employment in a social business on the sense of self-worth of disadvantaged employees of such a business, who become full members and stakeholders in the running of the business and are remunerated in accordance with normal conditions on the open unprotected labour market.

⁴³ Social entrepreneurship entities (social companies) are private associations or companies arising at the express wish of grouped citizens with the purpose of meeting their jointly defined interest with the help of business activities or other economic resources, with access to public finances. This jointly and democratically defined interest, whether it relates to their own members or to a wider social context, is always given preference over the maximisation of profit, which is used as a means and not seen as a priority aim.

⁴⁴ The primary purpose of social entrepreneurship is not the generation of profit, but the conduct of socially beneficial activities using business methods. A social business has as its aim the increased ability and skills of disadvantaged persons in the labour market so that their chances of obtaining and keeping a job in the open labour market are increased. With this purpose it employs a maximum of 55% of disadvantaged people and its employees are actively involved in the company's business, where they must clearly understand their share of the work in running the company and share in its management. Thanks to this there is a systematic strengthening of the sense of joint responsibility and joint decision-making, and in addition employees are introduced in detail to the area of the business, which can help them in future to develop their own independent or business activities. Social entrepreneurship should not be narrowly understood as one of the instrument of active employment policy, but it can be linked by these instruments, if employees at the same time make use of motivational, advisory and requalification programmes. In addition to this their employer can arrange for further training and the development of their professional qualifications.

Important financial support for the establishment of new business activities targeted at social entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic is offered for the programme period 2007-2013 by the *Integrated Operational Programme* under the priority axis *Improving the Quality and Accessibility of Public Intervention Services 3.1c) Investment Support for the Providers of Social Services* as well as by the *Prague- Adaptability Operations Programme* and the *Human Resources and Employment Operational Programme*⁴⁵.

The aim of these grant programmes⁴⁶ is to initiate the establishment of new social entrepreneurial activities which expand the scope of help for disadvantaged groups (and so for difficult-to-employ Roma) and can at the same time offer an efficient way of distributing this help on a commercial basis, not on complicated and administratively demanding redistribution transfers (e.g. using grant aid systems).

In relation to the target group for the measures the current need is for support for businessmen concerned with social entrepreneurship in practice in the form of specialist consulting, as well as the offer of opportunities of training, shared experience and examples of best practice, so that they can more easily meet the contemporary needs of the market.

Implementer:

- 1. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs as provider of financial support for business activities focused on social entrepreneurship within the Human Resources and Employment OP, the *Integrated Operational Programme* as part of support 3.1 *Services in Social Integration*, also as the body supporting training and sharing of experience and examples of best practice from those concerned with social entrepreneurship**
- 2. The Agency for Social Integration in Roma Localities, as the coordinating body offering support for those interested in business activities and preparing projects targeted at social entrepreneurship at local level and scope for sharing of experience and examples of best practice.**

• **Business as part of schools Framework Education Programmes and requalification courses**

Strengthening of the economic activity of Roma can also take place through independent money-making or other business activities.

In practice, concerns and poor awareness about the starting and operation of a business have been identified, and not just for Roma but for Czech citizens overall.

The aim of the measure is to improve the awareness of the Czech population and to reduce its concerns of starting up a business.

Business should be part of the educational areas of the *schools framework education programmes* so that normal schools can include in their education programmes.

In the same way nominated Roma interested in business should be offered *requalification courses and individual professional counselling on starting up a business*.

At the same time it is necessary to also develop grant programmes which will allow education institutions to develop innovative programmes for those students or job

⁴⁵ Financial resources for social companies should also flow from public funds earmarked for public contracts, where public administration can under certain circumstances award the implementation of public contracts directly to social businesses so that can take part in these and obtain access to further business opportunities. The access of social companies to public contracts leads to savings in the public funds spent on unemployment (e.g. on unemployment benefit).

⁴⁶ This support also has as its aim helping to find and define an optimum model for social entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic environment and thus to develop the essential prerequisites for the implementation of social economics as a standard instrument of social policy and business support policy.

applicants interested in business (e.g. support for preparing business plans, study visits to companies etc.).

Implementer:

1. **The Ministry of Education, in conjunction with the Teaching Research Institute and the National Institute for Professional Training as guarantors of incorporation of the topic into schools framework education programmes in keeping with the timetable of reviews of framework education programmes**
2. **The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - Employment Policy Section, as the body support the implementation of such requalification course and professional counselling.**

- **Development and implementation of a strategy to develop the local labour market in socially excluded Roma localities**

With the aim of economic development and improving employment in excluded localities⁴⁷ it is necessary to develop targeted strategies for the development of the local labour market which would take account of the specific situation of a region and the level of its economic development.

This strategy should serve to develop component projects in the employment area and to set up effective active employment policies in the territory in question.

The aim of the strategy is:

1. To make full use of the potential and development opportunities which a locality has available
2. To increase the number of job opportunities in socially excluded localities
3. To secure for the socially excluded inhabitants of Roma localities access to activities which will enable them to find a job and retain it over the long term
4. To prevent possible fragmentation or collisions of measures aimed at inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities and thereby also prevent waste of finances expended on this.

AN EXAMPLE OF BEST PRACTICE

Since 1993 the *Regional Development Agency (plc)* has been involved in improving the position of a region by developing strategic plans and establishing partnerships between key players in economic development and employment. Its purpose is to assist in the restructuring of the North Moravia and Silesia region. In developing a regional strategy the agency has made use of the rich experience of partner agencies from European Union member states and the economic potential of the region. With the aim of economic development and secondarily the restructuring of the local labour market, it helps towns and villages and partner organisations to prepare strategic development documents on the basis of a socio-

⁴⁷ The employment of Roma is affected by the situation of the local labour market (i.e. the overall economic situation, the level of unemployment, the number and make-up of jobs available, the employment policies in use). The labour market in socially excluded localities gives people who are dependent on it few chances to obtain work, since characteristic of it is a lack of jobs, unsuitability of jobs in terms of job content, certainty of employment and low incomes without opportunities for increases. Local labour markets become traps for the inhabitants of localities whose options for travelling to work are limited. Moreover some categories of local inhabitants generally find work only with great difficulty because of low qualifications, inadequate work habits and other factors which disadvantage them, which increases the risk of long-term, repeated unemployment concentrated in households in this territory. According to reports on the situation in the regions Roma unemployment in excluded localities fluctuates in the range 75-90% The starting point for developing this strategy is Act No 248/2000 Coll., on support for regional development

economic analysis of the town/village, its development vision and priorities. The strategies so developed serve to create targeted measures and to prepare and implement projects at local, national and international level, leading to a strengthening of the economic base of the region, the acquisition of new investment, an improvement in the quantity, range and quality of job opportunities, and support for the establishment, growth and stabilisation of both new and existing businesses. In its work the Agency builds on one of the most important principles - the development of cooperation and partnership.

The strategy should be established on the basis of a dialogue of interested parties which can influence the position in the local labour market (i.e. labour exchanges, key employers, representatives of Roma communities, Roma advisors, social service providers, etc.)

In the first phase it is necessary to undertake a detailed socio-economic analysis of the local labour market⁴⁸.

Part of the measures should be targeted support for local employers to generate jobs and to develop the employability of inhabitants of Roma localities using labour exchange grants⁴⁹.

To strengthen employment it is necessary to increase work mobility by building a functional infrastructure, by financial support to those employers who arrange transport for their employees, and financial compensation for higher travel costs to work for inhabitants of excluded localities using social subsistence payments.

A fundamental task is to develop a functional and accessible network of services to increase the employability of disadvantaged inhabitants of excluded Roma localities, which will include both public employment services, as well the activities of organisations in the non-profit and private sectors (i.e. individual and group employment counselling linked to field social work with the users of services, as well as linked training activities and requalification courses).

The providers of the aforementioned activities should play an irreplaceable role in stimulating local employers and offer them support in looking for suitable employees from members of Roma communities as well as practical help during their probationary period (i.e. counselling, mediation, sourcing of further training or requalification courses).

A part of these services should also be an anti-discrimination service, by means of which there will be practical application of anti-discrimination legislation. Part of it should be the following activities⁵⁰:

1. Counselling to improve awareness of how to deal with unequal treatment
2. Mediation in the case of out-of-court settlements
3. Representation at court
4. Discrimination testing with the purpose of early detection of discriminatory practices by labour market participants.

⁴⁸ This analysis should contain the number and make-up of employers by industry, an analysis of demand for labour, findings on more detailed characteristics of the workforce and their specific employment needs, a determination of the effectiveness of the active employment policies in use, the potential and further resources in the locality which can be used to improve economic activity. The analysis of the local labour market could, in localities in which the Agency for Social Integration in Roma Localities operates, be linked to the implementation of long-term monitoring which was assigned by the government in Resolution No. 8/2006 dated 4th January 2006 to the Proposal for Conducting Long-Term Monitoring of the Position of Roma Communities in the Czech Republic.

⁴⁹ In particular these are contributions to the development of socially effective and publicly beneficial jobs, provided by labour exchanges.

⁵⁰ "Discrimination": A manual for institutional staff, Citizens Advice Bureau/Civic and Human Rights, Prague 2006.

Specific attention should be paid during the development of the strategy to vulnerable groups of Roma in the labour market, which include Roma women, for whom access to the labour market is complicated by demanding care usually for a numerous family, which prevents them from developing work qualifications, life-long learning and from building a career.

For this reason it is necessary:

- To develop flexible forms of work organisation which will permit the harmonisation of the family and working life of Roma women (e.g. the development part-time jobs)
- To develop specific training activities and requalification programmes to ease the return of Roma women to the labour market after maternity leave and to offer them practical help in adapting to the requirements of the labour market
- To ensure the availability of childcare in socially excluded localities

Implementer:

- 1. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - Employment Services Section, as the provider of financial and methodological support for implementing the active employment policy at local level**
- 2. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - Dept of Social Services and Social Integration, as the provider of grants from the state budget for the financing of normal expenditure for basic activities in the provision of social services, also as the provider of grants for implementing measures aimed at social integration from the European Social Fund as part of the Human Resources and Employment OP (priority area 3.2 - Support for the Social Integration of Members of Roma Localities)**
- 3. The Agency for Social Integration in Roma localities in conjunction with the Centres for Regional Development as the initiating and coordinating body for developing and implementing the *strategy for developing the local labour market in excluded localities*.**

- **Promoting the principle of diversity in the Czech business environment and in public administration**

In the Czech environment there continues to be restriction on the part of employers, the building of ethnically homogenous workforces and negative attitudes or directly discriminatory practices in respect of members of other national and ethnic minorities⁵¹.

The aim of the measure is:

1. To increase the interest of employers in employing Roma, who belong to the neglected work force
2. To increase the number of Roma employees in businesses and in public administration.

Promoting the principle of diversity in employment should in practice lead to the cultivation of working relations, to an understanding of mutual differences and to a reduction in the incidence of xenophobia.

This principle means creating such conditions in the business world and in public administration as will allow all workers to fully develop their personal potential regardless of their individual differences.

⁵¹ Experience from companies abroad speaks clearly of their business benefit, of the cultural enrichment of the working environment and of the inflow of new experience and ideas which are useful for business.

In particular public administration should, as a modern institution, be open to accepting members of Roma communities and creating support mechanisms which will to Roma obtaining and keeping jobs in this area.

Promotion of the principle of diversity should take place:

- In the form of national and regional campaigns aimed not only at employers in the public and private sectors, but also at the wider public with the aim of influencing their attitudes to people of other nationalities or race in the workforce
Campaigns should emphasise the benefits arising from diversity of the workforce and present positive models in Roma communities, that is, Roma who have successfully entered the labour market, and the experiences of their employers.
The predicted scope of financial costs for this campaign is roughly 6 million CZK.
- In the form of practical support for employers and employees during job hunting and employment of members of Roma communities.
Practical support should consist of setting up the correct process for recruitment in line with the principle of equal treatment and the principle of diversity, as well as counselling on creating suitable workplace conditions.
The potential implementer of the measures could be the providers of social services supporting the employment of disadvantaged Roma, who can make use of grant aid from the ESF for this purpose.

AN EXAMPLE OF BEST PRACTICE

Support to employers when employing Roma operates on similar principle in Spain, as part of the Acceder programme, the implementer of which is the Fundación Secretariado Gitano organisation. In addition to direct work with members of Roma communities, programme workers are in intensive contact with the employers of their Roma clients, providing them with counselling and contributing to the overturning of stereotypes and prejudices about Roma in employment which can be applied to Roma not only by employers but by employees as well.

- In the form of appreciation for employers who do not discriminate and are open to accepting members of other national minorities, that is, including Roma.

AN EXAMPLE OF BEST PRACTICE

Since 2007 Roma Servis awards the brand Ethnic Friendly Employer to employers who espouse the principle of equal treatment and do not discriminate in their work against job applicants and employees because of their ethnic origin and nationality. The organisation's clients and others (not only) of Roma origin thus obtain a clear signal that they should not give up on looking for work because of refusals due to their origins, because here there are employers who will give them the same opportunity as everyone else⁵².

Implementer:

- 1. The Minister for Human Rights as the umbrella person for the campaign and appreciation for employers who are open to accepting members of Roma communities as employees**
- 2. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - Dept of Social Services and Social Integration, as the provider of grants to providers of social services focused on practical support for employers while they employ Roma.**

⁵² For more information, see www.ethnic-friendly.eu

- **The fight against illegal employment**⁵³

The widely spread indebtedness of Roma families increases the willingness of socially excluded Roma to work illegally without an employment contract, which is one of the ways of protecting their incomes against attachment and other deductions.

This situation is abused by many providers of illegal work who deliberately go into socially excluded Roma localities and seek out cheap labour.

Socially excluded Roma often do not realise the long-term consequences of their actions, when providers of illegal work do not make transfer deductions for health and social insurance and thus expose them to debts for health insurance, put their social security at risk in times of illness, maternity leave, old age etc.

In particular the aim of the measures is to reduce the incidence of illegal working in socially excluded Roma localities and to increase the awareness of members of Roma communities of its long-term negative consequences.

With this aim in mind we must:

- Monitor on an ongoing basis the incidence of illegal working and penalise it consistently⁵⁴

Strengthen the role of the labour exchanges and labour inspectorates as the audit bodies and organisations issuing penalties

- Increase the awareness of members of Roma communities of all the negative consequences of illegal employment

Severe penalties should be accompanied by soft and preventively oriented measures to improve the awareness of Roma communities of the risks and long-term consequences associated with doing illegal work.

This public awareness work should be primarily aimed at young Roma who are just entering the labour market, as well as at unemployed Roma, for whom the lack of job opportunities on the open labour market increases their willingness to work illegally.

The topic of illegal work should be part of counselling in employment, civic studies and financial education in schools.

This education should also be incorporated in the provision of social services taking place in socially excluded Roma localities, as well as social counselling as part of the system of subsistence payments.

Implementer:

- 1. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - Employment Policy Section, in conjunction with labour exchanges in the region as the bodies responsible for monitoring and penalising illegal work and for public awareness as part of public employment services**

⁵³

Illegal work is a concept which is defined in Act No.435/2004 Coll., on employment. According to this Act, illegal work is: 1) if an individual does not perform work for a legal entity or individual on the basis of an employment contract or other contract, where the individual is not the husband or child of the individual or 2) if a foreigner does not perform work for a legal entity or individual on the basis of an employment contract or other contract, where the individual is not the husband or child of that individual or if he performs it in contravention of an issued employment permit or without such a permit, should such a permit be required by the Act.

⁵⁴ The audit system relating to illegal work and penalties for administrative delict, which is how illegal work is considered, are defined in Act No. 435/2004 Coll., on employment, in §139 and §140. An individual who performs illegal work is at risk of a fine of up to 10 000 CZK. An individual who allows illegal work to take place can be fined up to 500 000 CZK. A legal entity or individual in business who allows illegal work to take place can be fined up to 5 000 000 CZK.

2. Delegated towns and villages⁵⁵ as the bodies for subsistence payments in the role of implementers of public education

7. OVERINDEBTEDNESS

The social exclusion of Roma communities has its economic dimension, which is usually linked to material deprivation and to adaptive strategies focused on the present.

Some excluded Roma families resolve their subsistence difficulties through loans and the use of non-standard financial products leading to an increasing level of indebtedness in this target group.

The inadequate incomes and poverty of Roma families set off a vicious circle of debts where debtors attempt to pay off their debts with additional loans.

⁵⁵ Towns/villages which are the bodies making subsistence payments, pay out subsistence payment benefits. Illegal work without an employment contract can be one of the reasons for penalty suspension of benefits payments or directly for their termination, which can result in many further subsequent serious problems associated with the suspension of finances in the form of benefits (e.g. rent arrears, overindebtedness, a worsening of poverty etc.). It is necessary for the application of penalties in the form of benefit suspension to be linked to intensive and preventatively focused public education aimed at the long-term effects of illegal working. This public education linked to the provision of appropriate benefits should be part of a more comprehensive concept of subsistence help, linked also to the provision of social counselling focused on the social integration of person needing subsistence support.

The most serious problem is the destructive indebtedness of Roma families⁵⁶ with providers of very expensive credit, where there are persons and organisations operating in this business who deliberately abuse shortcomings in the legislation and people's ignorance to make easy profits, paid for for the most part by the taxpayer⁵⁷.

A critical moment is the situation when debtors are no longer able to meet their repayments - this situation is known as overindebtedness⁵⁸.

Overindebtedness in families living in conditions of social exclusion represents one of the greatest obstacles to their integration and reduces their willingness to work legally.

WORLD BANK RESEARCH

World Bank research⁵⁹ assesses overindebtedness as one of the fundamental factors negatively impacting the motivation of inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities to participate in the labour market.

As soon as Roma sign an employment contract their wages become subject to debt recovery, so that in this respect illegal working and collecting social benefits is for overindebted Roma households one of the strategies for protecting their income from deductions.

Part of this research is also a recommendation to make counselling to deal with indebtedness and programmes aimed at improving financial literacy the main element of mobilising the long-term unemployed recipients of social benefits.

The issue of overindebtedness, which concerns many more than just Roma families, is so serious that it requires a number of preventative, repressive and audit measures leading to an arrest in the deeper social decline of overindebted households.

⁵⁶ In particular these are costs for the prevention and resolution of crime associated with positions of acute indebtedness, costs for institutional care of children taken from their families for socio-economic reasons, losses on mandatory payments arising as a result of the illegal working of people affected by distraint, costs for social benefits and so on. ("Indebtedness": An evaluation of the anti-debt programmes of the Agency for Social Integration in Roma Localities; Agency for Social Integration, Prague 2009.)

⁵⁷ The reason for using disreputable financial products is the unemployment of debtors who are not active in earning money: they turn for a loan to informal loan providers and to disreputable repayment lenders because they have no access, as a result of their lack of employment and lack of means, to sound financial products where the solvency of a potential user is monitored.

⁵⁸ "Time to try another way": a conceptual report from IQ Roma servis, o.s./ Collective, IQ Roma servis, o.s., Brno 2008.

⁵⁹ Czech Republic - Opportunities for Improving Roma Employment. Office of the Czech Government and the World Bank, Prague 2008.

In dealing with overindebtedness the following goals must be attained:

- **Increase the awareness of socially excluded members of Roma communities of the operations of the financial market and thus improve their standing as consumers for financial products⁶⁰.**

7.1 MEASURES AGAINST OVERINDEBTEDNESS

- **Building financial literacy⁶¹ among inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities**

The increasing level of overindebtedness and the practices of the providers of financial products indicate the need for a systematic development of financial literacy among the inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities, which can be strengthened by means of financial education and targeted debt counselling.

The area of financial education⁶² is based on the *Financial Education Strategy*⁶³, which is an integrated systematic approach to resolving the low level of financial literacy among Czech citizens.

The building of financial literacy among the younger age groups of Roma (i.e. pupils and students) is part of the broad financial education already taking place in line with the

⁶⁰ The building of financial literacy should also be accompanied by legislative protection for the users of financial products. An important step in this respect is the in-preparation *Draft Act on Consumer Credit and a change to certain laws* (hereinafter the Consumer Credit Act) which transposes European Parliament and Council Directive 2008/48/ES, on Consumer Credit Contracts and on the repeal of Council Directive 87/102/EHS dated 23.April 2008 (hereinafter the Consumer Credit Directive) The aim of the submitted draft is the creation of a legal framework for a more sensible and efficient operation of the consumer credit market as part of the harmonised internal market of the Community. This is an important area of legislation whose significance corresponds proportionally to the development of various new forms of consumer credit and the growing indebtedness of households. The Consumer Credit Directive sets out a lender's obligation to make a proper assessment of the creditworthiness of a consumer if that is essential, on the basis of a search in a relevant database. A lender also has this obligation in the event of a significant increase in the overall size of a loan, where this requirement will be duly transposed into Czech legislation. This Directive also deals with advertisements offering consumer credit, defining in fact the list of information which a lender will be obliged to include in an advertisement for consumer credit. The draft legislation also provides the consumer with the right to withdraw from a consumer credit contract without penalty within 14 days of signing it. Thanks to it, there is also a tightening up of supervision of consumer credit providers.

⁶¹ According to the Financial Education Strategy financial literacy is the set of a citizen's knowledge, skills and value judgments essential for securing himself and his family financially in present-day society and for active participation in the market for financial products and services. A financially literate citizen can find his bearings in the issue of money and prices and is able to manage a person/family budget in a responsible manner, including managing financial activities and financial commitments with regard to a changes to their life situation. Financial literacy has three components: Financial literacy with money, which represents the skills essential for managing cash and non-cash and transactions with them, as well as the management of the instruments need for this (e.g. current account, payment instruments etc.); financial literacy with prices represents the skills essential for understanding price mechanism and inflation; financial literacy with a budget represents the skills essential for managing a personal/family budget (e.g. the ability to manage a budget, set financial targets and make decisions on the allocation of financial resources).

⁶² Financial education in the rapidly developing area of financial products and services supports an active role for the citizen as consumer and leads to understanding and accepting personal responsibility for financially securing oneself and one's family.

⁶³ The Financial Education Strategy was developed by an inter-departmental working group for financial education, in which are represented the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Education, the Czech National Bank, representative of professional associations from the financial market, representatives of bodies offering educational projects, consumer associations and specialists in the field of education. A priority of financial education is active and responsible participation in the financial markets, the aim of which is for consumers to make good decisions on the basis of full, transparent, accurate and comparable information and to have an adequate level of financial literacy. A second priority is the prevention of overindebtedness in Czech households so that these households do not get themselves into a spiral of debt. A third priority is provision for old age, which aims to accustom the population to other forms of provision for old age in addition to the social security system, where citizens should be able to select a suitable product for themselves.

System for Building Financial Literacy in Elementary and Secondary Schools and with framework education programmes in elementary and secondary schools.

A current requirement for members of Roma communities is to strengthen the awareness and further financial education of adult members of overindebted Roma households, who have not had the possibility of being introduced to this during their schooling in elementary and secondary schools.

At the same time help is not available in all localities in the form of fee debt counselling, through which socially excluded Roma may resolve situations involving overindebtedness⁶⁴.

With this aim in mind we must:

- Expand public education and arrange access at local level to educational activities focused on improving the level of financial literacy of socially excluded Roma, as part of their life-long learning.

This education should be focused on understanding and on accepting personal responsibility for financially securing oneself and one's family and thereby on preventing overindebtedness in Roma families.

- Develop a network of free debt counselling for overindebted Roma households and link it to social services⁶⁵ (in particular services for social prevention) which will lead to social integration and the stabilisation of their socio-economic position

<p>EXPERIENCE FROM ABROAD</p> <p>Debt counselling is a standard part of social policy in many OECD and EU economies. These services are normally provided by non-governmental and non-profit organisations and by voluntary and church organisations, often from public funds.</p> <p>Debt counselling generally includes the provision of personal counselling to indebted individuals and the provision of help with paying off a debt, where the usual approach is setting up a debt management plan. Mediating contact between debtors and creditors is also part of debt counselling. The Irish Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) serves within the EU as an example of best practice. MABS provides free, independent and confidential counselling to individuals using trained counsellors. The Service began its work in 1992, it currently operates throughout Ireland and operates 52 independent local companies whose financing is secured mainly through the Dept of Social Affairs and the Family.</p>

Free debt counselling helps users to:

1. Become familiar with the household's situation, particularly with the causes and consequences of overindebtedness
2. Set up a repayment plan and negotiate with the providers of financial products, with bailiffs and other persons or organisations involved in the resolution of the overindebtedness issue

⁶⁴ This fact is also confirmed by Roma affairs coordinators, according to whom debt counselling is available more in the large cities, but is very limited for inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities, who cannot travel away to use it, because of the distance or lack of money.

⁶⁵ A suitable form of social services is for example field social work, where a field social worker does not only take the role of facilitator for communication between debtor and creditor, but also increases the motivation of his/her client to be economically active and pay off his liabilities. Part of social work should also be long-term financial planning (i.e. the creation of savings for education, for the purchase of durable goods, for one-off events such as the birth of a child). To implement these activities it is possible to obtain finances from Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs grants for registered social services or directly from ESF.

3. Develop users' ability to manage such negotiations independently in the future
4. Plan the household budget and make responsible decisions on present and future household income and expenditure
5. Increase awareness of financial products and of the risks which appear on the financial market.

Financial support from ESF, provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is key for the development of a network of free debt counselling in the Czech Republic.

Of current relevance in the 2007-2013 programme period are calls as part of the Human Resources and Employment OP, from which providers may draw down grants.

- Enable providers of social services to train social workers and social services workers in training programmes aimed at resolving the overindebtedness issue and support the development of training programmes aimed at this

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs annually declares a grant programme as part of non-investment support for social services, where training and education course for social workers and social services workers are aimed at the renewal, reinforcement and completion of qualifications in line with §111 of Act No. 108/2006 Coll., on social services, taken to be a tax allowable cost as part of a grant provided.

In the same way finances can be obtained from European structural funds (currently from the Human Resources and Employment OP) for training social workers and social services workers in debt counselling.

Implementer:

1. **The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs as provider of grant-aided support for the implementation of debt counselling as part of the Human Resources and Employment OP (priority area 3.2 - Support for the Social Integration of Members of Roma Localities)**
2. **The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs as provider of grants from the state budget for financing current expenditure associated with basic activities in the provision of social services and expenditure associated with training social workers and social services workers in line with §111 Act No.108/2006 Coll., on social services**
2. **The regions as bodies key to securing access to the aforementioned activities at local level.**

8. HOUSING

Roma belong to one of the groups under threat with a marginalised position on the housing market, where to a large extent they are subject to inequalities and structural barriers.

A long-term problem for socially excluded Roma has been the poor quality of housing, well under the Czech standard, where poor housing conditions threaten the health and safety of Roma tenants.

One of the priorities in housing is to prevent unlawful treatment of excluded Roma on the part of both private and public bodies, which abuse their low level of legal awareness and disadvantaged social standing.

With this in mind it is necessary to develop a network of providers of specialist support targeted at improving Roma awareness of the rights and obligations of tenants, and of resolving situations which they may face in the housing area.

A fundamental role in resolving the housing position of inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities is played by general housing policy, which influences the establishment of these localities, but can however also contribute to preventing their spread and can directly instigate their elimination.

In housing the following goals must be attained:

- **Prevent the spread of socially excluded Roma localities and the spatial segregation of their inhabitants**
- **Increase the accessibility of social housing for Roma households with low incomes**
- **Reduce the incidence of discrimination and unlawful practices applied to Roma in the housing market and at the same time offer them practical support in dealing with such practices**
- **Prevent the loss of accommodation by socially excluded members of Roma communities as a result of rental arrears**

8.1 HOUSING MEASURES

- **Revitalisation of socially excluded Roma localities by developing integrated urban development plans**

A joint aim of the state and towns and villages should be the revitalisation of the deprived areas in which members of Roma communities live, the creation of conditions for the social inclusion of the inhabitants of these and prevention of the growth of other excluded localities.

Resolution of the problems of social exclusion requires a comprehensive approach and the active involvement of bodies operating at all levels of public administration, as well as of those for whom social inclusion programmes are intended⁶⁶.

A good practice adopted by a number of cities is the development of integrated urban development plans, by means of which one may start up the cultivation of excluded areas and increase the spatial mobility of the inhabitants.

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

In April 2007 ministers responsible for urban development adopted the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities during the German Presidency of the EU.

This charter recommends that European cities try to develop integrated development programmes for cities as entities. These implementation oriented tools should: 1) Describe the strong and weak points of cities, city districts and districts, based on a situational analysis 2) Define consistent development goals for urban areas and develop a vision for the cities themselves 3) Coordinate plans and strategies for different parts of cities and sector strategies and technical plans for city districts, "take care" that planned investment contributes to balanced development of parts of a city 4) Concentrate and coordinated the use of resources by private and public players from a territorial point of view 5) Coordinate plans at local level and the level extending into the region; involve citizens and other partners who can significant help with forming the future economic, social and environmental quality of each territory⁶⁷

The Integrated Urban Development Plan (IUDP) is the fundamental coordinating framework linking the overall vision and strategy for urban development with the aim of identifying and resolving the problems of the development areas of city.

Before developing the plans themselves, a sociodemographic analysis and urbanistic locality study should be conducted in the selected localities; these will identify their possibilities, opportunities, weak points and other threats to the development of burdened localities.

Both investment (hard) and non-investment (soft) projects aimed at stabilising the socio-economic position of local inhabitants and the development of human resources should be represented in the IUDP.

⁶⁶ In addition to the local authority, the process of plan development should involve all bodies which are key to Roma integration (educational institutions, employers, social services providers, commercial organisations), as well as the actual representatives of the members of Roma communities.

⁶⁷ Draft Concept of a state approach to solving the problem of deprived city districts mainly inhabited by citizens from the Roma ethnic minority, Ministry for Regional Development, Prague 2008.

In developing an IUDP emphasis is placed on individual projects being interconnected and implemented on the principle of partnership between the private and public sectors.

The planning of soft measures for social integrations should be linked to the outputs from the medium-term plan for the development of social services.

A good practice at local level is build into integrated urban development plans an accessible system of social housing, which takes into account the specific requirements of needy tenants and the level of their ability to find and keep accommodation in the open property market.

Part of a let should be a broad range or directly the proviso of using support social services, the purpose of which is to stabilise the socioeconomic situation of tenants' households, to arrange developmental educational and leisure activities for families with children and services for needy tenants aimed at developing the skills which are key in the housing area, so that clients themselves will in the future be able to find and keep accommodation in the open property market.

Towns and villages should also cease the widespread and unconsidered privatisation of municipal housing, so that part of the municipal housing supply remains available for the social housing sector at reduced rents.

AN EXAMPLE OF BEST PRACTICE

The Ostrava association Centrom is implementing a project by the name of *Housing with Accompanying Social Programme*.

The association has developed a three-stage bilaterally accessible housing system. The III stage of housing indicates a situation where tenants are living in unsuitable conditions in apartments, accommodation blocks, as squatters or on the street.

To improve their housing position they are offered II stage housing with a subtenancy agreement and an agreement for the provision of social services. At this stage the user does not have his/her own tenancy agreement, but on signing the subtenancy agreement undertakes to take part in the social programme.

If a tenant in II stage housing turns out to be successful, he transfers to stage I housing with the best housing conditions, in which he lives for a year on the basis of a subtenancy agreement with the pledge of his own tenancy. At this stage tenants are offered a limited range of services, but there is still the requirement to work with a field social worker and make use of professional social counselling. Apartments which are provided for tenants are the property of the local authority or a private landlord.

Support to cities in developing IUDP should consist of:

- Securing appropriate long-term financing by means of grant programmes at national level and at European structural funds level

In 2009 it was possible to obtain financial support for the implementation of measures in a plan from European Union structural funds in the 2007-2013 programme period (in particular for drawing grants from the Regional Operational Programme - ROP and the Integrated Operational Programme - IOP).

- Offering professional help to cities in preparing Integrated Urban Development Plans and to develop opportunities for sharing the experience of the developers of these plans (i.e. arrange for experts as consultants, create an internet portal for submitting current information on regional development and for sharing examples of best and worst practice at the national and international level; also to arrange regular congresses and seminars on this topic for representatives of towns, villages, cities and regions).

Implementer:

1. **The Ministry for Regional Development as the provider of financial support for cities as part of the Regional Operational Programme - ROP and the Integrated Operational Programme - IOP, also as professional consultant for plan developers**
 2. **The Agency for Social Integration in Roma localities in conjunction with the Centres for Regional Development as the initiating and coordinating body in the development and implementation of IUDP.**
- **Support for access to social housing for low-income Roma households**

Apart from discrimination in the property market, one of the barriers for excluded Roma in obtaining good housing is poverty⁶⁸.

The Ministry for Regional Development has been developing a Concept for Social Housing for some time. In April 2009, by means of Government Resolution No. 1113 dated 31st August 2009, Government Decree No. 333/2009 Coll., was approved, on conditions for the use of funds from the State Housing Development Fund to cover part of the costs associated with building social housing in the form of a grant to private persons and legal entities, which elaborates the social housing area, and in particular the conditions for the awarding of grants.

The Decree also defines the target group for this measure, where the main criterion for concluding a tenancy agreement on social housing is the income limit of the household, and possibly an assessment of the presence of other handicaps.

A positive benefit is the fact that the government decree opened the way to implementing the measure not only to towns and villages, but to other investors, so that the grant recipient and later provider of social housing can be any legal entity or private person.

In addition to grants for building social housing which will be provided by the State Housing Development Fund in line with the new government decree, the Ministry for Regional Development also provides building grants as part of the Support for the Construction of Supported Housing sub-programme, which contains two grant headings, Entry-level Housing and Community Care Housing.

Supported apartments are intended as social housing for those who have problems with access to housing not only for reasons of low income, but also because of other health and social handicaps, on which greater emphasis is placed than on a simple lack of income.

However until 2009 the target group for supported housing was not adequately specified (with the exception of community care housing, in the case of which they are for persons with health problems and for senior citizens).

A loose definition of the target group for entry-level housing leads to the potentially most risky tenants being pushed out of this form of social housing as well. In view of this fact it would be right to define more closely the target group for entry-level housing.

A key area is also the monitoring of the access of low-income (i.e. including Roma) households to housing and securing the accessibility of social housing as part of municipal housing policy.

⁶⁸ Currently gradual deregulation is taking place as well as a unilateral increase in rents, accompanied by increases in energy prices, which is a disproportionate burden on economically weaker households. As a result of poverty some excluded Roma themselves from choice seek out cheap housing in the outlying parts of town or are forced into moving to these localities by towns/villages or landlords. The environment in these localities reduces the quality of life of their inhabitants and is a source many further barriers preventing them from living a life which is normal in majority society.

Implementer:

1. The Ministry for Regional Development as implementer of changes to the Support for the Construction of Supported Housing sub-programme
 2. Towns and villages - both independent and with transferred jurisdiction - as the instigators⁶⁹, and possibly as implementers of the establishment of social housing
- **Protection of Roma households against the unlawful practices of persons and organisations in the property market**

Disadvantaged Roma are a vulnerable group which, in view of their low level of legal awareness, is threatened by unlawful practices on the part of both public and private organisations in the property market.

At local level there is insufficient capacity from non-governmental organisations and public administration bodies, who might provide disadvantaged Roma with professional legal help.

This aim of this measure is to set up protective mechanisms by means of which it will be possible to seek out and effectively deal with cases of unlawful practices by landlords.

With this aim in mind we must:

- Actively monitor the incidence of discriminatory and unlawful practices in the property market which occur to Roma and point out the unequal treatment by public institutions of members of Roma communities in the housing area
- Apply supervisory and audit activities more thoroughly in the state administration and local administration system, improve the awareness of citizens of the activities of public institutions at local level⁷⁰ which perform supervisory activities, and which as part of their work could offer them professional help in dealing with unlawful practices

For example it is necessary to strengthen the activities of the Czech Consumer Chamber, which deals with cases of unlawful practice in access to housing.

Part of the social services provided in Roma communities should be public education targeted in this way.

- Ensure equal access for Roma to municipal housing and set up a transparent and fair system for the renting of municipal housing⁷¹

It is established practice at town and village level to include the system of renting municipal flats in municipal ordinances, which are subject to inspection by the Ministry of the Interior.

⁶⁹ The initiation role of towns/villages should consist of searching out those groups of the population whose housing is at risk; also of pointing out the non-existence of measures by means of which the needs of groups at risk in the property market can be satisfied (e.g. by warnings during the development of medium-term social services development plans at town/village and regional level); of starting a dialogue with donors and potential implementers of measures, particularly with other organisations who can influence the availability of a required measure.

⁷⁰ In its way, discrimination in the property market is also supported by the public's low level of awareness of current legislative protection, of effective approaches to dealing with discrimination and other unlawful housing practices as well as the activities of organisations which should help citizens in such situations. These organisations should increase their efforts to help people in their everyday lives. Breaches of the ban on discrimination on the part of businesses whose activities relate to the provision of housing and accommodation are dealt with by the Czech Trade Inspection Authority, which applies Consumer Protection Act in practice. §6 of the Consumer Protection Act applies specifically to these organisations; this contains a ban on discrimination on the part of hotels, hostels and other accommodation providers.

⁷¹ In practice there is a lack of clarity on the rules and criteria by which housing applications are assessed, while often these criteria are not even published. The lack of clarity and transparency of the set criteria increase the risk of discriminatory behaviour from members of the commission when selecting applicants.

The Ministry of the Interior is the guarantor of the system of municipal housing allocation being transparent and non-discriminatory for applicants for municipal flats.

- Ensure methodological support and anti-discrimination training for the staff of public institutions working in the housing area
- Ensure access to an antidiscrimination service and free legal counselling for Roma who are threatened with unlawful practices or are immediately faced with them⁷². By means of these activities Roma can invoke their right to equal treatment and effectively deal in practice with discrimination in the property market (e.g. by out-of-court negotiations or direct application of the anti-discrimination service) and other unlawful practices from persons in the property market (potential implementers of these measures are the non-governmental organisations⁷³).

Implementer:

- 1. Independent towns and villages, and towns and villages with extended jurisdiction in the role of the owner of the municipal housing stock, as instigators of the development of municipal ordinances covering citizens' access to municipal housing**
 - 2. The Ministry of the Interior as the body securing supervisory and audit activities in relation to municipal ordinances in respect of citizens' access to municipal housing**
- **Preventing loss of accommodation as a result of rent arrears**

Following the amendment to Act No.40/1964 Coll. of the Civic Code some tenants are threatened with total loss of their accommodation in view of the fact that the amendment allows landlords to give, under conditions set out in the Act (i.e. for gross breach of their tenancy obligations) notice on their tenancy without a court order⁷⁴.

However some towns and villages apply this new provision without using the available preventative instruments for preventing loss of accommodation before moving tenants out.

A fundamental recommendation for towns and villages in this area is to use in-time prevention tools, which prevent the growth of rent arrears, loss of accommodation and the deeper social decline of indebted families.

⁷² The Ministry for Regional Development currently offers grant aid for organisations which provide legal and professional counselling to the public in dealing with a broad range of housing problems. In 2008 the Ministry for Regional Development distributed 6.5m CZK for this purpose. Counselling can also operate within a social services regime as professional social counselling and grants for this are also provided from other public budgets (e.g. from the state budget via the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, from regional and town/village budgets and from European Structural Funds).

⁷³ With this in mind it is necessary in future to amend in the legislation the area of free legal help and to open the way for its provision by other implementers as well, also to develop a grant programme for providers of this activity. The embodiment of this area in legislation would permit disadvantaged Roma to protect their rights using legal help defined and paid for by the state and offered on a systematic basis. Currently people who cannot for various reasons and causes obtain legal help from a lawyer can make use of free legal help or subsidised legal help from the Czech Bar Association if they meet the conditions laid down in §18 of Act No.85/1996 Coll. This is one specific legal service which absolutely needs, or obligatorily must have representation by a lawyer. At the present time this service is available only in the regional cities of the Czech Republic and is thus difficult to secure.

⁷⁴ Thanks to an amendment to Act No.40/1964 Coll., the Civic Code, there are no longer the long court proceedings which earlier deferred the eviction of tenants in breach of their obligations under a tenancy agreement. One of the gross breaches of obligation arising from a tenancy is non-payment of three months rent and payment of costs associated with the use of an apartment. In its way the amendment has also brought about a positive educational effect - it has contributed to improved payment discipline from non-payers.

With this aim in mind we must:

- Secure for towns and villages methodological support for working with those with rent arrears having regard to legislative changes
- Set up at town and village level a system of in-time checks on the payment of rent by tenants in order to capture in time any non-payment of rent

For the recipients of housing benefit it is good practice to require proof each month that housing costs have been paid and in the event that costs have deliberately not been paid, one may make use of other preventative tools such as the institute of special recipient and the option to have payments made directly to the landlord⁷⁵ where both measures should be used on a temporary basis only and should always be linked to individualised social work⁷⁶, which leads to gradual stabilisation of the socioeconomic situation of the indebted household and to the development of the tenants' skills needed for housing.

- A best practice which some towns and villages have started to use in their work with non-payers is the creation of a joint methodology for work with tenants in arrears

The methodology specifies the procedure for dealing with rent arrears for all parties involved (i.e. managers of property, housing and social departments, partner providers of social services) and defines their procedures which are connected and the skills and steps which they should take.

The methodology also contains individual instruments of in-time prevention and motivational elements for work with debtors, among which can be included:

1. The setting up of a payment calendar having regard to the household's budget
2. Setting up a special recipient for housing benefit
3. Paying directly to the landlord
4. Concluding a tenancy with debtors for a fixed term only, extending it if the tenants pay off their debt and pay their rent
5. The option of working off a debt (e.g. by cleaning the communal spaces in a building or public area)
6. Remission of late payment charges if debts are being paid off on a regular basis
7. Linkage of housing to social services for tenants who are unable to keep to a payment calendar

⁷⁵ The use of the institute of special recipient is enabled by Acts relating to the provision of social benefits, in the housing context these are Act No.111/2006 Coll., on subsistence benefits and Act No.117/1995 Coll., on state social support. Of housing benefits, housing benefit supplement can be paid directly to a landlord or services provider, this is one of the subsistence benefits (§42 para. 3 of the Act on subsistence assistance). Housing benefit supplement can thus be used without the recipient's agreement to pay directly for rent or services associated with housing, such that the payer of the supplement (the relevant government department) transfers it directly to the landlord or services provider. This approach cannot be used for housing benefit which is part of state social support benefits. For housing benefit one can only set up the institute of special recipient, who is then authorised to pay rent arrears and costs associated with the use of a flat, both without the consent of the tenant. Only an individual or legal entity which agrees with the appointment can be set up by the relevant department as a special recipient.

⁷⁶ Individualised social work can be secured either from the social services department as part of subsistence assistance or field work operating under a local authority or through another provider (e.g. NGO). In working with a user of the services, social workers should also focus on improving his financial literacy and ability to plan a family budget, also on increasing his motivation to repay his rent arrears and helping with setting up and keeping to a repayment calendar, and with negotiating with all interested parties. The financing of accompanying social services can be arranged using the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs grant programme for registered social services, as well as through the grant programme of the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs, also from the European Social Fund. The accessibility of the programme should be the subject of development of medium-term social services development plans.

The service will be planned and implemented with regard to the tenant's abilities which are important for housing (recommended types of services are field social work and professional social counselling). Part of these services should be counselling and systematic education, the aim of which is to improve awareness of the rights and obligations attached to a tenancy agreement and of ways of resolving problems associated with housing

8. The institute of caretaking.

➤ Develop and apply community work in the area of housing

A very effective instrument which has been shown to work in some localities in the area of housing is community work, by means of which one may join tenants together in a joint effort to improve the quality of housing in a building and resolve together those problems associated with housing which exceed the scope of individual households and relate to the maintenance of common areas in a building.

All the aforementioned instruments should be used in time, effectively and synergistically.

Implementer:

- 1. Towns and villages with independent status and towns and villages with extended jurisdiction, in the role of owner of the municipal housing stock and the instigator of new measures at local level**
- 2. Labour exchanges in the role of provider of state social support benefits (particularly housing benefit) and bodies for subsistence payments in the role of providers of subsistence payments (particularly housing payments) as key institutions for deploying the institute of special recipient and paying housing payment direct to the landlord.**

9. SOCIAL PROTECTION AREA

The centre of gravity for the social protection of excluded Roma should be shifted from the payment of social benefits as part of the system of state social support and help with subsistence to the provision of integrated social services part of which will be targeted social work with individuals and their families, leading to the development of their skills and independence so that in the future they will be able to operate independently of help from the social institutions.

The provision of social benefits should always be linked to individualised social work, the basis for which will be the development of individual plans leading to social inclusion. The benefits systems should react flexibly to the desire of benefit recipients to be involved in their plan development and the implementation of steps which lead to their social integration.

In the area of social protection at the same time the Czech government supports reform of the system of care for children at risk and the implementation of the *National Action Plan for the Transformation and Unification of the System of Care for Children at Risk for the 2009-2011 period*⁷⁷.

A fundamental prerequisite for effective social intervention is a culturally sensitive approach and non-discriminatory behaviour from staff of the protective social network, which are in line with the principles of good administration⁷⁸, therefore it is fundamental aim to introduce these principles consistently in the operation of the whole Czech social system.

⁷⁷ The transformation and unification of the system of care for at-risk children aims to 1) improve the quality of work and availability of services for at-risk children and families; 1) unify the approaches of workers in dealing with the position of an at-risk child; 3) reduce the number of children placed long-term in all types of institutional care; 4) increase the life opportunities of at-risk children, support their potential and protect their standard of living.

⁷⁸ The ombudsman has defined 10 main principles of good management. The first principle includes **keeping within the law**, which means the obligation of government offices/departments to act in conformity with Czech legislation and obliges civil servants to use their powers only for the purpose for which they were entrusted with them by law. The second principle is **impartiality**, which requires equal treatment of all interested parties, where all participants are given the option to express an opinion on the matter in question. The third principle is **punctuality**, which obliges government offices/departments to deal with every submission in reasonable time without unnecessary delays, and as required, to advise the sender of the reasons for any delay and of the expected date for the issue of a decision. The fourth principle, **predictability**, requires of a government office/department that it decide in line with the way it has decided on similar cases in the past, or as required justify why it has departed from its previous practice in the case in question. The fifth principle, **plausibility**, assumes that the government office/department provides a person during the proceedings with adequate information on the facts as determined and on their obligations with respect to the department, as well as informing him about its future steps. The sixth principle, **appropriateness**, assumes that when applying its powers a government office/department takes account of the exceptional situation of a particular person and his legitimate interests so that its approach is not inordinately harsh in respect of this person. The seventh principle, **cooperation**, means that a government office/department always endeavours to provide a comprehensive solution to a person's problem and to cooperate with other departments, to establish mutual cooperation and exchange of information between its own departments and organisational units. The eighth principle, **responsibility** requires of a government office/department that it does not avoid the assessment of a preliminary question or taking a decision in a matter which falls into its jurisdiction. The ninth principle, **openness**, assumes that a government office/department will allow people to look at all official documents and make copies of them. This right of persons is limited only to the extent that is required by protection of personnel data, privacy, the justified interests of other persons or other legal limits. The tenth principle of **helpfulness** obliges civil servants to behave with respect and courtesy to people. A government office/department tries to help a person achieve the aim which they are pursuing through their submission, and only in the event that this is impossible, because the law or the justified interests of another person forbid it, will the office refuse the submission.

In social protection the following goals must be attained:

- 1. Develop at local level an accessible system of high-quality social services which would react flexibly to the development of the position of Roma families and the growth in social competences of their members**
- 2. Set up a functional system of records and evaluation of social programmes to identify their impact on the position of Roma communities**
- 3. Consistently apply the principles of good management to the operation of the broad protective social network**

9.1. MEASURES IN THE SOCIAL PROTECTION AREA

- **Building the capacity of social service providers in socially excluded Roma localities**

For the area of social integration a key instrument of social help are social services, and in particular services for social prevention.

To secure the social integration of excluded Roma it is necessary to arrange a comprehensive range of mutually interconnected and logically related social services for all age groups of disadvantaged Roma, which would react to the broad range of their needs and take account of their level of activation and the degree of development of their competencies.

The trend in this area should a shift from the field form of services (i.e. from field programmes) to walk-in forms, which will lead to the achievement of complete independence on the part of users so that they are able to take full responsibility for their lives⁷⁹.

A neglected form of work with excluded Roma communities which should be extended within excluded Roma localities is community work, which has high potential for change thanks to its sensitivity to ethnic specifics, family ties, and the customs and traditions of the Roma.

With this aim in mind we must:

- Implement a functional state grant policy with a range of linked grant programmes at national and international level (in particular from European structural funds⁸⁰)
Of high importance is the linkage of grant programmes so that providers of social services have the possibility of continuous and ideally long-term draw-down of financial support and can thus ensure long-term sustainability of a comprehensive range of social services and other development activities, while at the same time building up their own capacity⁸¹.
- Develop a functional system of training for workers operating in the social field

⁷⁹ The end point should be a life which is based on active participation in the open labour market, on the ability to adapt flexibly to the requirements of the labour market through lifetime education, ensuring the developmental needs of children who will be motivated to reach the highest possible level of education, to build a career, to participate actively in civic life, and on the possibility of planning finances over the long term and building up savings.

⁸⁰ In the past the time delays between individual grant programmes has threatened the stability of social services providers. Up to 2008 a number of social services were financed from the European Social Fund, and in particular from the Human Resources Development Operational Programme and from the Initiative of the Equal Community. Drawing down of finances from both programmes was terminated in the middle of 2008. In the period which followed a number of providers were threatened with termination of their activities because of a lack of finances, because here there is a lack of follow-up grant programmes through which providers could obtain finance to maintain their services.

⁸¹ Effective grant policy allows organisations to build up sufficient capacity, to reinforce the skills of their workforce, professionalise the services they offer, and introduce more effective, innovative approaches.

A current need is to secure training for these workers as well as methodological support in introducing quality standards for social services in the organisation⁸².

- Secure methodological support for the regions, towns and villages in the process of developing and implementing medium-term social services development plans⁸³

The development of medium-term social services development plans is also an opportunity for coordinating the activities of local authorities (in particular the activities of the social departments) with the activities of local non-governmental organisations).

It is necessary to change the relationship between both these organisations so that there is no collision between their activities and also to prevent the duplication of social services offerings.

The developers of the medium-term social services development plans should have the possibility of meeting regularly and sharing examples of best and worst practice and to develop jointly new and more efficient approaches to the development of social services at local level.

Implementer:

- 1. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs as the body responsible for the provision grant aid to providers of social services; also as provider of methodological support to the developers of medium-term social services development plans at regional level**
- 2. Regional government offices in conjunction with towns and villages with extended jurisdiction as initiators of the development of a system of comprehensive and high-quality social services for members of socially excluded Roma communities.**

- **Systematisation of recording and evaluation of social programmes aimed at the social integration of Roma**

A current and urgent topic in this area is the question of the consistent monitoring and evaluation of social programmes implemented on behalf of excluded Roma.

It is necessary to identify as precisely as possible the impact and influence of these programmes on the position of excluded Roma so that follow-up measures reflect in a dynamic manner the current needs of socially excluded Roma and changes in the state of Roma communities in the Czech Republic.

⁸² In their reports on the situation of Roma communities in the regions, Regional Roma Affairs Coordinators have noted as a threat to the availability of social services for disadvantaged Roma this very failure on the part of providers to meet social service quality standards.

⁸³ In Gabal's *Analysis of socially excluded Roma localities* from 2006 it was determined that only 1% of towns/villages studied have a developed specific strategic or plan to resolve the situation in socially excluded Roma localities, in 9% such a strategy was part of the outputs from community planning and 90% of towns/villages had no strategy at all. At national level a number of concepts and strategies are being established to resolve the situation of socially excluded localities, nevertheless they are not in practice being consistently implemented. In practice there can also be seen a difference in the quality and specificity of community plans (the plans of some towns/villages are too general, containing only aims without planning steps to achieve them in practice). In defence of these towns/villages one should add, that in this area they have not been provided with sufficient intensive methodological support (particularly in the smaller towns and regions). Thanks to the varying scale and quality of the methodological support there has arisen a number of differing community plans, in which differing degrees of attention are paid to Roma affairs. From the work of the Regional Coordinators it can be seen that only a few identified socially excluded localities have been included in the community planning process.

The current system of recording and evaluation of social programmes is not systematic, since missing data on the effectiveness of programmes complicates further strategic planning not only at local, but also at national level.

The bodies which are key to Roma inclusion do not have the appropriate data on the effectiveness of integration measures and on the current position of Roma to develop new measures or improve existing ones. Also complicated is decision-making on the redistribution of finances to these activities.

With this aim in mind we must:

- Initiate a professional debate on the topic of recording and evaluation of social programmes for the inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities including experts, the aim of which should be:
 - The sharing of best and worst practice
 - The establishment of a unified definition of the key concepts which are important for the monitoring and evaluation of social services
 - The development of a basic set of indicators relating to the position of the Roma communities in the Czech Republic, the monitoring of which should be delegated to the providers of social programmes
- Set up a system of methodological support for providers of social services and develop training programmes focused on recording and evaluating social programmes
- Arrange grant aid for service providers to secure software for recording and evaluating social programmes

Implementer:

- 1. The Minister for Human Rights with the involvement of the Agency for Social Integration in Roma localities in conjunction with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs**

- **Consistent application of the principles of good management to the operation of the broad protective social network**

The aim of the measures is to apply an equal correct approach and respect for minority differences on the part of staff from the institutions of the broad protective social network.

Respecting minority differences does not in any way mean the same as increased tolerance for unlawful behaviour from members of minorities.

Respect for minority differences requires a positive effort to understand the difference in cultural values and behavioural patterns on the basis of which a member of a minority or a foreigner must not be condemned, excluded, limited or discriminated in general provided that he or she has not broken the law.

The following measures should lead to meeting this goal:

- Training of staff from the institutions of the broad protective social network in the application of the principles of good management to their everyday activities and multicultural training
- Development of related legislation and methodological instructions for staff with consistent application of the principles of good management
- Publication of the methodological instructions and regulations by which staff from the institutions of the broad protective social network will work with recipients of aid so that the public has access to them (e.g. through the use of websites, notice boards and other information resources)

- Ongoing monitoring of the attitude of recipients of help to the operation of the system of the protective social network from the standpoint of meeting the principles of good management

Implementer:

- 1. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs as the developer of methodological instructions and the instigator of training for staff in the system of the broad protective social network**
- 2. The Ministry of the Interior as the administrator of training for staff from local authorities.**

10. HEALTH CARE

The state of health of excluded Roma is affected by a large number of factors which include for example social exclusion and other sociocultural characteristics of this target group.

The health of excluded Roma communities is affected by a number of associated problems such as accommodation in dwellings in poor construction condition, with a widespread incidence of damp, mould and various pests as disease carriers.

The spread of infectious diseases is aided by common social facilities, the absence of a bathroom in III and IV category apartments and the sharing of small spaces by a large number of people.

A further negative factor is physically demanding work performed over the long term in unhealthy conditions.

The incidence of illnesses is encouraged by the stress caused by everyday concerns as a result of the impact of social exclusion on the lives of Roma families.

The state of health of inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities is affected by high-risk behaviours which occur in excluded localities (e.g. drug use and alcoholism).

From the foregoing it can be seen that the health position of excluded Roma requires a comprehensive approach and the use of mutually linked health, housing and social policies.

In healthcare the following goals must be attained:

- **An increased awareness among excluded Roma of a healthy lifestyle and the operation of the health service and so minimise their risk behaviours**
- **Arrange practical support for excluded Roma in resolving their everyday health problems**
- **Increase the awareness of health workers of the sociocultural nature and oral tradition of the Roma lifestyle in relation to health**

10.1. MEASURES IN THE AREA OF HEALTH CARE

- **Support and expansion of a programme of health social assistants, extension of further public education activities in socially excluded Roma localities**

A fundamental problem in health is the low awareness of Roma of a healthy lifestyle and about the operation of the health care system⁸⁴

REPORT ON THE SITUATION IN THE REGIONS

A well-established practice is the programme for health social assistants. Assessment of the programme on the part of the Ministry of Agriculture in 2008 documents the positive impact on the position of Roma communities in the Czech Republic, particularly in increasing the awareness of Roma communities about a healthy lifestyle⁸⁵.

In 2008 there were some 12 assistants operating in the Czech Republic, in only 6 of the Czech regions, while regional coordinators for Roma affairs mention in their reports a much greater need to implement the programme for health social assistants.

The aim of the measure is:

- 1) Increase the awareness of excluded Roma of a healthy lifestyle
- 2) Strengthen public education activities in the area of a healthy lifestyle in excluded localities

The aims will be met using the following:

- **Ensure access to the programme for health social assistants in needed localities**
The programme operates within the regime of social services, where it is possible to obtain finances for its implementation through grant aid from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs while meeting the conditions of Act No. 108/2006 Coll., on social services, or from ESF.
The programme should be linked to implementation of **information campaigns and other public education activities** with the involvement of health workers operating in the catchment area.
The measure may also have a secondary positive effect on Roma employment, since it will permit suitable Roma applicants to obtain a job and to improve their qualifications through further training.
- **Training and methodological support for health social assistants**
There is also a need to set up and complete a training programme for health social assistants as part of further training using finances from the European Social Fund.

⁸⁴ These results are also documented by an international research studied entitled "*SASTIPEN - Health and the Roma Community - an Analysis of the Situation in Europe*". In addition to the Czech Republic, where the office of the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs, the Vzájemné soužití (Mutual Coexistence) organisation and other non-profit organisations were involved in its implementation, the research also took place in Bulgaria, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Greece, Slovakia and Spain. Its aim was to analyse the health situation of the Roma population and subsequently to propose specific strategies and activities in the health area for this target group in the population.

⁸⁵ About disease prevent, the consequences of not keeping to the principles of a healthy lifestyle and treatment regime, about the issue of planned parenthood and the need to attend check-ups and keep to the inoculation plan for young children. In addition to public education health social assistants can help users of services in dealing with doctors in arranging check-ups and prosthetic aids, in registration and pre-registration at the doctor, and in applying for invalidity benefit.

An alternative to the programme for health social assistants in regions with a strong requirement for support for excluded Roma in the area of health and with an inadequate capacity with service providers is the possibility of training local field social /field workers in the area of health social help to members of Roma communities⁸⁶.

A related topic is the development of methodological materials which will contain up-to-date information which is key to their work in practice.

- Closer linkage of the health social assistant programme with the activities of health facilities

Experience has shown the requirement for closer cooperation between health social workers with healthcare facilities in the form of partnership.

To this end it is necessary to increase the awareness of medical personnel of the existence and objectives of the programme.

AN EXAMPLE OF BEST PRACTICE

Since 2003 a programme of health mediators in Romania has been a nationwide measure as an integral part of the public healthcare system, where health mediators work closely with, or themselves are, employees of healthcare facilities. In Romania mediators handle the communication between patients and doctors, help their clients in completing questionnaires and in dealing with the administrative matters necessary for medical procedures. Mediators are also primary prevention operatives, visiting the sick and attending them when visiting the doctor.

In 2004 Romanian health mediators helped with the registration of 108 632 children, assisted 40 015 people in arranging health insurance and helped 1 180 people obtain personal documents. The data from 2004 also show that 3 521 Roma women were registered with their general practitioner through mediators, while 12 836 children were inoculated and 4 259 health awareness events took place for Roma with mediator support.

Implementer:

- 1. The Ministry of Health in the area of training and methodological support for health social assistants**
- 2. Towns and villages with extended jurisdiction and healthcare facilities as the instigators of the establishment and implementation of measures at local level**

- **Preparation and training of health workers for work with people with differing social and cultural experience**

Roma are at risk from prejudiced behaviour and limited helpfulness on the part of health workers in the provision of healthcare services.

THE SASTIPEN RESEARCH

Researchers identified the following factors affecting the quality of medical care:

- 1) *A cultural barrier in the doctor - patient relationship* (different traditions, customs and habits, life style and relationship to illness itself)

⁸⁶ One good practice is the development of a training programme which will begin to be implemented in Ostrava, Olomouc, Brno, Hradec Králové and Most. A total of 50 field workers will be trained as part of the planned training programme. Each training session will end with a major conference, as part of which field workers will meet health care workers from the surrounding regions and where Roma lecturers and a doctor (who was involved in developing the pilot health social assistant project in Ostrava) will lecture on the customs and traditions of the Roma.

2) *A culturally conditioned form of speech and forms of presentation of difficulties and emotional accompaniment, problems of differential diagnosis and therapy while not knowing the social background to the illness.*

In mutual contact between health care provider and user the following factors are to be seen on the part of the user:

3) *A presentation of subjective complaints conditioned by lifestyle and resulting from it;* these may be different from the generally accept norms valid for the majority population (awareness of illness on the part of the patient, a willingness to be ill, to acknowledge and take on the role of the patient), where for those around him such a presentation may appear to be aggravation or faking.

4) *Differing seeking for help, expectations from the doctor*

The aim of the measure is:

- 1) To systematically break down the prejudices of health workers in relation to people of different nationality and race
- 2) To improve the awareness of health workers of the factors which can affect the diagnosis of illnesses and the course of health care provision for persons with differing social and cultural experience.

A means for meeting these aims is to train health workers⁸⁷ in whom should be incorporated the knowledge and practical experience of the regional Roma affairs coordinators, Roma advisors operating at the level of communities with transferred jurisdiction and experienced providers of social services to members of Roma communities.

As part of the minimisation of possible misunderstandings and conflict situations arising from cultural differences, greater emphasis should be placed during teaching on the relationship of health workers to members of minorities, and on the rules for mutual communication which significantly affects the quality of health care.

Implementer:

1. **The Ministry of Education as the body responsible for changes in the training of future health workers**
2. **The Ministry of Health in conjunction with the Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs as the manager of increased awareness of health workers about the factors which affect the state of health of Roma communities**

⁸⁷ The training of health workers takes place on the basis of Decree No. 187/2009 Coll., on the minimum requirements for the study programmes in general medicine, dentistry, pharmacology and for the educational programme for general practitioner work and Decree No. 39/2005 Coll., which sets out the minimum requirements for study programmes to obtain professional eligibility to exercise a non-medical healthcare professions, defining minimum requirements for teaching, greater emphasis on the relationship of healthcare workers to members of minorities, so as to minimise possible misunderstandings and conflicts arising from cultural differences.

11. SECURITY ASPECTS OF ROMA INTEGRATION

The security of Roma communities has two fundamental aspects - on the one hand there is *right-wing extremism* and *racially motivated criminal activity* which impinges on Roma from outside regardless of their social standing, on the other hand there is *crime and other forms of risk behaviour* as a result of the adaptation of socially excluded Roma to the specific conditions of the environment in which they live.

Securing the safety of Roma is one of the government's priorities in the area of Roma integration.

The task of the institutions delegated with this is to⁸⁸ continuously analyse the security position of Roma communities, assess the risks and take measures to efficiently eliminate them.

11.1 Protection of Roma against neonazism and racially motivated crime

Right-wing extremism is a socially dangerous phenomenon which threatens the social cohesion of society and brings with it security risks for members of Roma communities.

A specific and more or less typical topic of Czech right-wing extremists is anti-gypsy feeling as a special form of racism direct at the Roma minority.

Extremist movements attack Roma at their public events, using web pages and party publications and by disturbing Roma commemoration events where these movements cast doubt on the genocide of Czech and Moravian Roma⁸⁹.

REPORT ON THE ISSUE OF EXTREMISM IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

This report from 2008 documents the growth and qualitative transformation of right-wing extremism, its overall professionalisation, the growth in sympathisers from the middle classes, which is of course connected to the extremists' increasing efforts to become involved in politics⁹⁰ In 2008 the neonazis confirmed their return from enclosed locations to public spaces with a series of event, the purpose of which is an attempt to draw attention to themselves.

The growing activities and success of extremists with part of the public is also reflected in the results of the Workers Party, which won 1.07% of the votes in the elections to the European Parliament, thereby also obtaining a financial contribution from the state.

A fundamental and long-term aim of the Czech government is a change in the ethnic climate of Czech society and the negative attitudes of citizens towards members of Roma communities, in order to weaken the strength of the neonazis which comes in part from the poor awareness of citizens of extremism in relation to the violation of human rights and the security risks which arise from it.

A priority in reducing the security risks arising from extremism in relation to Roma is combating racially motivated crime, limiting its trivialisation and improving its detection.

⁸⁸ The security of Roma communities is handled as a priority by the Ministry of the Interior and the Czech Police.

⁸⁹ Collection "Dangerous Acquaintances. Right-wing extremism in the local cross-border context", Kulturbüro Sachsen e. V., Dresden 2009.

⁹⁰ A Report on the Issue of Extremism in the Czech Republic in 2008 is part of the Strategy for the Fight against Extremism, approved by Czech Government Resolution No. 572 dated 4th May 2009.

In protecting Roma from extremism the following goals must be attained:

1. Secure Roma a safe and dignified life, without their being attacked physically or verbally because of their Roma origins
2. Systematically eliminate negative stereotypes and prejudices and inadequate objective awareness of the Roma national minority in Czech society.

11.1.2 MEASURES TO PROTECT ROMA FROM EXTREMISM

A coherent and interconnected complex of measures, whose aim is the marginalisation of extremism in Czech society and the setting of limits for its existence within the democratic mechanisms of the Czech Republic, is contained in the *Concept for the fight against extremism*⁹¹.

CONCEPT FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST EXTREMISM

The fundamental starting points for the Concept are contained in five pillars. **Pillar No. 1 *Using communication against demagogy*** is focused on target propaganda to reveal the true nature of extremism. This aim will be achieved using *open and responsible reporting and PR* so that the public receives flexibly quick, understandable and objective information. In addition *by mapping extremism thought and its supporters*, which will permit the obtaining of relevant sociological data focused on perception of neonazi ideas, racism, antisemitism, antiforeign feeling and other manifestations of xenophobia. Part of these tasks is also *Internet without hate propaganda*, the purpose of which is the unconditional removal of pages with illegal content.

Pillar No. 2 *Using Knowledge Against Totalitarians* is aimed at the teaching activity which must be undertaken with emphasis on developing the critical thinking of pupils and students so that they are able on the basis of their own judgment to understand the basis of extremist and totalitarian ideologies. The first task is the *training of teachers* in the form of further education in the area of teaching against extremism, racism and xenophobia. Part of this task is an amendment to the methodological instruction for education against manifestations of racism, xenophobia and intolerance and targeted inspections to assess the education of pupils and students in the area of preventing racist, xenophobic and extremist attitudes. In addition research will be undertaken into mapping seminars focused on the issue of extremism in the regions and by the dissemination of examples of best practice from abroad. A further task is the *development of training and public education materials* on the multicultural issue, equal opportunities and extremism; also the implementation of *preventative events*, part of which is support for media activities, methodological leadership of regional schools prevention coordinators in the area of racist, xenophobic and extremist attitudes and support for similarly focused projects from NGOs and other organisations.

Pillar No. 3 *A unified antiextremist platform* aims at active involvement of other departments, cities and towns, the academic sphere and non-governmental persons and organisations in joint efforts in the fight against extremism. This pillar contains the following tasks: *Establishment of coordination agreements* when dealing with extremist events, through which will be defined cooperation and coordination of activities between the Czech Police, local government offices, local police forces and other bodies at local level. A prerequisite for the successful resolution of extremist events is communication and effective cooperation between the police and cities, towns and villages. For these the following have been completed -

⁹¹ The Concept of the Fight against Extremism is part of the *Strategy for the Fight against Extremism*, adopted by the Czech Government in Resolution No. 572/2009.

development of a Manual for Assemblies, a calendar of high-risk days and an analysis of current Act No. 84/1990 Coll. on the right of assembly.

The aim of **Pillar No. 4 Expertise and Immunity** is to prepare specialists who will have adequate room to exercise their authority and to prevent extremists from infiltrating the security services and misusing know-how thus obtained for their own ends. This aim will be met by means of training commanders measures with the involvement of non-governmental organisations, in addition a new teaching subject will be developed for the Czech Police Academy focused on developing the abilities and acquiring the skills for managing large police events and the command of such events. A further task focuses on training police specialists and stabilisation and completion of police specialists, who should target extremism in their catchment area and have an absolute overview of the current situation in their region. An associated task is training of judicial workers to be able to effectively assess cases of racially motivated crime and crimes arising from extremism and to make decisions on them. The final task systemic and sweeping prevention of infiltration by extremists is the setting up of a functional and effective "immune" system against infiltration by extremists, which should operate not only at the police, but also in other services such as the army, customs service and prison service.

Pillar No. 5 Acting effectively and correctly against violence is focused on targeted and firm penalties for those individuals who break the law and the prevention of such activities. The task is thorough monitoring, processing and documentation of individual extremists and extremist groups so that this knowledge is usable in preparing security measures, as well as the management of extremist events with emphasis on quick apprehension and penalisation of perpetrators in criminal proceedings.

The Concept of the Fight against Extremism is fully aimed at meeting the aims which must be achieved in securing protection for Roma against extremism.

It is necessary to support the rigorous implementation of this concept in practice and in relation to the protection of Roma against extremism, and at the same time to initiate its assessment and regular updating following fulfilment of the tasks contained in it.

11.2 Protection of Roma against crime and other forms of high-risk behaviour

Safety risks for Roma communities are also brought about by crime and other forms of high-risk behaviour in socially excluded Roma localities.

Fertile ground for their establishment and expansion is the environment itself and the high concentration of socially excluded inhabitants who easily become the victims of persons or organisations (e.g. drug dealers, loan sharks and providers of illegal work), who abuse their critical socioeconomic position, lack of legal awareness and lack of a legal living to their own benefit and enrichment.

An environment where crime and other high-risk forms of behaviour become the norm is dangerous from the viewpoint of the upbringing and integration of children and young people from excluded Roma localities who can adopt and apply these behavioural models in their own life in future.

The Czech government gives precedence to solving crime and high-risk forms of behaviour through preventative measures rather than through the use of repressive methods.

A condition for effective prevention is multidisciplinary cooperation and dialogue between key organisations such as the police, local authorities, educational institutions, social work institutions and other experts at local level.

In preventing crime the following goals must be attained:

- 1. Reduce the incidence of crime and other high-risk forms of behaviour in socially excluded Roma localities**
- 2. Uncover latent crime, identify the players and intervene in time in their position**
- 3. Increase the number of applications of alternative punishment and reduce the number of incarcerations for socially excluded members of Roma communities**
- 4. Reduce the supply of drugs and the demand for them and reduce the incidence of dependence among inhabitants of socially excluded Roma communities**

11.2.1 MEASURES AGAINST CRIME AND HIGH-RISK FORMS OF BEHAVIOUR

To improve the position of the inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities, a key priority is the consistent introduction of law and justice into the socially excluded environment and an improvement in the relationship between the police and inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities, so that inhabitants gain trust and learn to make use of institutional help in protecting rights guaranteed to them by the law.

Security policy should also be aimed at uncompromising penalisation of those persons and organisations which abuse the position of socially excluded Roma households for their own enrichment (loan sharks, drug dealers, providers of illegal work, etc.)

A fundamental area is also to target the attitudes of children living in an excluded environment, offering them an alternative lifestyle through leisure and developmental activities.

Measures for the prevention of crime in socially excluded Roma localities are based above all on the *Strategy for Crime Prevention 2008 - 2011* and also the *Strategy for the Work of the Czech Police in relation to Minorities 2008 - 2012*⁹².

CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGY 2008-2011

The main aim of the Strategy is to improve the safety of citizens and lower the level of crime. In the 2008-2011 period the following tasks should be achieved:

- 1) The setting up of a functional and stable system of crime prevention at all levels of public administration
- 2) The strengthening of the authority of the regions, towns and villages in planning and implementing preventative measures.
- 3) The achievement of systematic partner cooperation between the appropriate bodies at all levels of public administration
- 4) Achievement of career stabilisation for qualified crime prevention managers in regional and city level, who will be given the necessary authority
- 5) Achievement of career stabilisation for qualified Czech Police and local police staff in the area of crime prevention.
- 6) The securing of finances from the state budget, regional and municipal budgets and EU funds to implement the tasks arising from the Strategy
- 7) Involvement of a broad spectrum of persons and organisations in preventative programmes, their preparation, organisation and support for them.

STRATEGY FOR THE WORK OF THE CZECH POLICE IN RELATION TO MINORITIES 2008 - 2012

The purpose of the work of the Czech Police in relation to minorities was to develop and apply in the work of the Czech Police mechanisms and measures which will permit police officers to communicate effectively with members of minorities and build trust between the police force and the minority.

The Strategy is based for this period on the following priorities:

1st priority: Refinement of the systemic measures of the Czech Police for work with minorities

The main systemic measure of the Czech Police for its relationship to minorities are the contact officers for minorities and the members of their working groups. These police officers are staff who specialise in the issue of police work in relation to minorities, filling the role of mediators between the police and minority communities, offering members of minorities help in resolving specific problems

⁹² The main principle of both strategies is community policing, where the work of the police is based on cooperation between the police, the public, local authorities and other organisations and institutions at local level.

which fall within the legal jurisdiction of the Czech Police. At the same time they act as consultants in handling all matters which in the view of the Czech Police concern the minorities question. They monitor the structure of minorities in their localities on an ongoing basis and share in the work of preventing and combating crime.

2nd priority: *Distribution of information on the priorities, aims and tasks arising from the Strategy for the Work of the Czech Police in relation to Minorities 2008 - 2012*

To arrange for the awareness of police officers at all levels of police work with minorities and its purpose, and of the priorities, aims and tasks arising from the Strategy.

3rd priority: *Training and preparation of police officers for work in relation to minorities*

Arranging this priority consists of systematic lifetime training and preparation of police officers for police work in relation to minorities and in the use of external supervision. Police officers are trained in the area of national minorities, human rights, the issue of social exclusion, tolerance and non-discrimination in conjunction with knowledgeable specialists from the field, the non-governmental sector, the academic community and minority representatives.

4th priority: *Implementation of the Strategy for the Work of the Czech Police in relation to Minorities 2008 - 2012*

Meeting this priority consists of developing action plans to implement aims and tasks prepared in the Strategy.

The government supports the implementation of both strategies in relation to members of Roma communities.

Specifically with the aim of reducing the incidence of crime and other forms of high-risk behaviour, it is necessary to support the following measures in excluded Roma localities:

- **Systematic monitoring of the growth of crime and other high-risk behaviours in socially excluded Roma localities and the development of a target crime prevention strategy in this area**

The aim of this measure is to obtain relevant sociological data on the security situation in the localities and to identify all players who affect it, either negatively, such as the perpetrators of crime and other high-risk forms of behaviour, or positively, such as those persons or organisations which can contribute to their reduction⁹³.

On the basis of information so obtained, a crime prevention strategy should be developed for the excluded Roma localities, on the development of which should work a multidisciplinary team composed of representatives of the Czech Police and local police, as well as child protection bodies, social services providers for the area in question and educational institutions.

The measures given below should also be a part of the strategy.

Implementer:

⁹³ In the Report on the Status of Roma Communities in the Czech Republic for 2008 there is reference to the need for more systematic monitoring of crime and the incidence of other high-risk forms of behaviour. In most of the regions there is no precise information on crime trends related to life in socially excluded environments. This information is most often based on expert estimates by district departments of the Czech Police, crime prevention working groups, Roma advisors and NGOs.

1. **Towns and villages with extended jurisdiction, in conjunction with the Czech Police, as the instigators of measures at local level⁹⁴**
 2. **The Agency for Social Integration in Roma Localities, as coordinator and consultant in this area.**
- **Support for, and the use of social work in relation to victims and witnesses of crime⁹⁵**

Established practice which should be extended to other excluded localities, are the **specialised forms of field social work aimed at helping socially excluded people who have become the victim of a crime** (the institution known earlier as "assistant to the police").

The aim of the work of these field workers is **spreading the law and the principles of civic society into the environment of social exclusion, through assistance provided to people living in socially excluded environments in their dealings with the police and other official bodies.**

Field works mediate contact between inhabitants of socially excluded localities and the police and other bodies, thus contributing to the development of conditions which will give people living in this environment easier access to services and help from these institutions.

Thanks to counselling from these workers, people from socially excluded localities are better informed about their rights and obligations, and are thus able to handle their position using standard institutional means.

The most frequent clients of these workers are the victims and witnesses of latent crime (moneylenders, pimps, young criminals, people trafficking) and discrimination, which the police can uncover only with great difficulty due to the unwillingness of witnesses and victims to cooperate.

The provider of this service can be either a non-governmental organisation or the local authority. The disadvantage of the first mentioned option is the general financial uncertainty associated with the non-profit sector, and therefore the risk of long-term lack of sustainability of the service. Support for the use of the second option is, inter alia, the use of the institution of so-called **coordination agreements**, which towns and villages can sign with the Czech Police (§16 of Act No. 273/2008 Coll., on the Czech Police - Cooperation with Towns and Villages).

If the work of these field workers is to be performed as a social service in the sense of the Act on Social Services, and specifically as part of social prevention services or field programmes (§69 of Act No. 108/2006 Coll., on Social Services) or as part of social counselling (§37 of Act No. 108/2006 Coll.) **it is essential to keep strictly to the rules and conditions for their provision given in Act No. 108/2006 Coll. on Social Services and by the Methodological Handbook for Performing Field Social Work⁹⁶.**

⁹⁴ One of the options for obtaining finance for crime prevention at town/village level is the Ministry of the Interior grant programme *Crime Prevention Programme*, by means of which one can support partial and specific crime prevention projects submitted by the local authorities in regions and cities, but the implementers can also be, among others, NGOs. The aim of these projects is to eliminate or alleviate the social exclusion of Roma communities, the consequence of which is also increased risk of racial and extremist feelings.

⁹⁵ Handbook for Social Integration, Collective of the Agency for Social Integration in Roma Localities, the People in Need organisation and the Security Policy Dept. of the Czech Ministry of the Interior, Office of the Czech Government, Prague 2008.

⁹⁶ The University of Ostrava, Methodological Handbook for Performing Field Social Work. Prague, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2007.

Some ten of these field workers were operating in the Czech Republic in 2008, which is a woefully inadequate number in view of the seriousness of the problem.

The need for this measure in various localities should be derived from an analysis of the needs of their inhabitants and its fulfilment should be the subject of the development of medium-term social services plans, in the development of which representatives of the Czech Police and local police should be actively involved.

This methodological project is under the aegis of the Security Policy Department of the Ministry of the Interior, on whose website the Methodology for the work of these field workers can be found⁹⁷. At the present time at Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs level the stabilisation of the programme is being settled, as well as its institutional basis and methodological support for assistants in practice.

Implementer:

- 1. The Ministry of the Interior in conjunction with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Minister for Human Rights as administrators of the systematisation of this activity**
- 2. Towns and villages with extended jurisdiction as initiators of the origin of the measure.**

- **Support for and expansion of the *Roma Mentor* programme**

The main aim of the Mentor service is to reduce the risks of relapse into crime and social exclusion of Roma clients of the Czech Probation and Mediation Service who have been given alternative sentences or measures.

The aim of the measure is to increase the probability that Roma clients will meet the conditions of their alternative sentence or measure and will not be incarcerated.

AN EXAMPLE OF BEST PRACTICE

The Mentor service is a form of field work with members of Roma communities and helps in working more effectively with them in the event that they have been given an alternative sentence. The implementer of the programme is the Association for Probation and Mediation in Justice⁹⁸. The service leads to a strengthening of the legal awareness of members of Roma communities and their ability to recognise the seriousness of breaking the law and the consequences of their behaviour and assists them in gaining the knowledge to deal with this situation.

The success of a mentor consists of linguistic and cultural proximity to the client, in detailed knowledge of the Roma community, in his/her ability to establish contact with the client, keep his trust and not lose to function within the community as a positive model.

Available at: www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/4031/Metodicka_prirucka_TSP.pdf

⁹⁷ www.mvcr.cz (Sections: About Us / Safety and Prevention / Prevention / Minorities and the Police / Documents on the Topic of the Police and Minorities).

⁹⁸ In 2008 the project was implemented in the following regions: Prague, Jihočeský (České Budějovice, Český Krumlov, Jindřichův Hradec, Písek, Tábor), Středočeský (Beroun, Kladno, Kolín, Kutná Hora, Nymburk), Pardubický (Pardubice, Ústí nad Orlicí, Chrudim), Královéhradecký (Hradec Králové, Rychnov nad Kněžnou), Liberecký (Liberec). The Mentor service is financed from the European Social Fund and from the state budget. In 2008 (June to December) the project was financed from a grant from the Office of the Czech Government, from sub-programme A "*Preventing social exclusion and eliminating its consequences*", also from sub-programme B ("*Preventing social exclusion and community work*", and then from grants from the Jihočeský region and from Prague in the social area.

A Roma mentor is an intermediary between the client and the Czech Probation and Mediation Service, as well as other state institutions, often devotes himself to the client over the long term and helps him also to deal with problems related to job hunting, housing, debts etc.

At the same time a Mentor training qualification course has been developed and accredited with the Ministry of Education, by means of which selected Roma applicants can upgrade their qualifications.

Specific attention needs to be paid both by the mentor, and by the social assistant in crime matters, to the recruitment of suitable candidates to perform this work, which can be done through closer linking of the programme implementer and work providers (labour exchanges and non-government organisations) who have an overview of job applicants who are members of Roma communities.

Implementer:

- 1. The initiator of the establishment and implementation of the measure should be the district centres of the Czech Probation and Mediation Service.**

- Effective resolution of the issue of drug use and other types of dependence in Roma communities**

The issue of drug use is a serious phenomenon which destabilises the social, economic and health position of the members of Roma communities, and in particular of those who live in socially excluded Roma localities.

An effective resolution of this area requires cooperation and a multidisciplinary approach which sees the issues of drug use on three interconnected levels:

- 1) Reducing the supply of drugs and other risk factors which increase the probability of using habit-forming substances and the rise of dependence**

This level aims at preventing the manufacture, distribution and sales of drugs and is fully within the remit of the Ministry of the Interior and the Czech Police. Both of these operate from the principle of "zero tolerance".

A significant role is played here, however, by towns and villages which may, with the aim of reducing the incidence of gambling in excluded localities issue an ordinance regulating gaming machines.

- 2) Reducing the demand for drugs, which includes:**

- a) Specific primary prevention* a) generally in the normal population b) selective in selective groups, and c) indicative, targeted at at-risk individuals, where the aim of the preventative activities is to defer the age of first contact with drugs or other forms of high-risk behaviour (e.g. with gambling) or to entirely prevent such contact.

- b) Treatment, counselling and other professional help* for persons using habit-forming substances who have decided to break their habit, and for their families and others close to them (i.e. detox, walk-in, residential or institutional treatment⁹⁹)

⁹⁹ (1) Detoxification treatment is a treatment method whose purpose is stop a client using drugs and where withdrawal symptoms and the risk of damage are minimised. (2) Walk-in treatment takes place without removing the user of habit-forming substances from their original environment. During walk-in treatment the client attends a facility where the treatment is provided, but where the length of treatment and frequency of attendance can vary according to the different types of facility, nevertheless in all cases this should be embodied in an agreement between the client and therapist (in the Czech Republic, for example, walk-in treatment is provided by AT Clinics/Walk-in Therapy Clinics). (3) In residential or institutional treatment the client lives in a protected environment in the treatment facility. This type of treatment attempts to create a positive drug-free environment, develops a clear regime and rules for living, and uses various therapy methods to help the client

- c) *Resocialisation activities* to involve cured users in productive life in the family, in work and in society, with the aim of improving the quality of their lives to the maximum extent possible.

This level is within the authority in particular of the Government Council for Coordination of Anti-Drug Policy, the Ministry of Health, The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, regional and local anti-drug coordinators operation at the level of towns and villages with transferred jurisdiction, which arrange grant support and also support the planning and building of the capacity of providers of social and addictology services for the users of habit-forming substances.

3) Reducing the risks associated with the use of habit-forming substances ("*harm reduction*")

This includes measures to protect public health and to minimise damage from drugs in those who currently use drugs and are not motivated to obtain treatment for their dependence. This level is also in the remit of the aforementioned bodies.

Implementer:

- 1. Regions, town and villages in the role of the coordinators and assessors of regional anti-drug policy.**

- Support and development of the network of "*easy access*" facilities for children and young people and social activation services for families with children**

A priority in the fight against crime and the rise of high-risk forms of behaviour is the implementation of preventative activities.

Specific attention must be paid in particular to Roma children and young people who spend their free time in a non-organised way in the environment of excluded localities and have insufficient opportunities to learn about the way of life outside these localities.

At local level it is necessary to develop the network of "easy access" facilities for children and young people and social activation centres for families with children, where they will be offered free of charge the option for meaningful using of leisure time, further developmental and socially therapeutic activities.

These activities will stimulate inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities to overcome individually conditioned barriers which inhibit their social inclusion.

The need to implement these services should again be the subject of the development of medium-term social service development plans.

Implementer:

- 1. The regions as the developers of medium-term social service development plans.**

clarify his attitude to habit-forming substances and solve the wide range of problems related to his previous life, either on drugs or without them.

12. SUMMARY

The Roma Integration Concept for 2010-2013 does not change the fundamental standpoints of the previous government approach to resolving the position of Roma communities. Above all, the Czech government is endeavouring to achieve **linkage and coordination of the activities of the key bodies for Roma inclusion at both national and local level** and to develop instruments for easier implementation of national concepts and strategies at local level.

Easier implementation of state Roma integration policy at local level should be achieved by content definition of tasks aiding the integration of members of Roma communities into society, which should be incorporated into *Act No. 273/2001 Coll., on the rights of members of Roma communities and on a change to certain laws, as subsequently amended*. Additional measures in this area consist of financial support for the work of Roma advisors, of the development of their new recommended job description, in which should be reflected the tasks arising from Roma integration, of setting up an efficient system of recording and evaluating their work and in strengthening methodological support for them.

In the part dealing with **support for Roma culture and language** we look at members of Roma communities from the point of view of a national minority. By means of the measures proposed the government is endeavouring to support and develop Roma culture and to incorporate it into the majority culture of Czech society with the aim of preserving Roma cultural heritage and presenting it to the widest possible public. Roma culture, language and history should also be part of schools framework education programmes, of methodological and teaching materials for pupils and students at all levels of education. And not least, the government supports the preservation of a permanent memorial to victims of the Roma holocaust through upgrading the memorials at Lety u Písku and at Hodonín u Kunštátu, through targeted research and promotion of the topic of the Roma holocaust.

The Concept also dealt with resolving the position of that part of the Roma national minority which suffers social exclusion as a result of structurally and individually conditioned barriers. In the part devoted to **education**, measures are formulated for increasing the educational standards of members of Roma communities and for preventing the segregation of Roma pupils from a socio-culturally disadvantaged background outside the educational mainstream. These measures respond to the educational needs of Roma of all ages from the extension of in-time care, to measures giving pupils easier transfer into secondary and tertiary education and including support for lifetime learning for Roma.

In the area of **employment** the government is striving to increase the number of Roma men and women in employment. It wishes to achieve this aim by a change in public employment services, by supporting social entrepreneurship in excluded Roma localities and by including business in the schools framework education programmes. The government is also promoting the consistent monitoring of the incidence of discrimination and other unlawful practices in the labour market in relation to Roma, as well as their penalisation, and supports the expansion of the network of an anti-discrimination service through which Roma may invoke their right to equal access to employment, as guaranteed to them by current legislation. A fundamental task in this area is to affect the attitudes of employers and promote the principle of diversity in the private sector and in public administration, thus increasing the willingness of employers to accept members of Roma communities as employees.

A new theme in the Concept is that of **overindebtedness**. In this area the government supports increasing the financial literacy of members of overindebted households, by means of financial education in schools, in requalification courses and as part of further education. Part of this measure is also the development of a network of free debt counselling linked to social services aimed at improving the socioeconomic position of indebted Roma.

In the housing area the government is endeavouring to revitalise socially excluded Roma localities and increase the supply of affordable social housing for low-income households and to link it to an accompanying social programme for socially excluded tenants in unstable socio-economic positions. A key measure is again the monitoring of discrimination in the property market and the expansion of the network of an anti-discrimination service for Roma tenants who are at risk from unequal treatment in the housing area or are facing it directly.

In the area of **social protection** the government supports a shift in the centre of gravity of social protection from the payment of social benefits towards the provision of integrated social services and towards targeted social work with individuals and their families which will aim at achieving independence from the help of social institutions on the part of socially excluded Roma. With this aim in mind it is necessary to support the availability of a comprehensive system of mutually interconnected social services for all age groups of socially excluded Roma.

Measures on **health care** are aimed at achieving public awareness and at minimising high-risk behaviours with negative impacts on the state of health of Roma communities. An established practice which should be expanded into other regions is the programme of health social assistants who should work closely not only with the Roma users of services, but also with healthcare facilities. The government also supports the expansion of multicultural training and educational programmes focused on increasing healthcare workers' awareness of state of health in excluded Roma communities and of other specifics which can affect the course of health care offerings to this target group. These programmes should be part of undergraduate and postgraduate preparation of healthcare staff for their careers in medicine.

In its conclusion the concept deals with the **security of Roma communities** which includes the issue of *right-wing extremism and racially motivated criminal activity, as well as crime and other high-risk forms of behaviour*. In relation to the protection of Roma, the government supports the *Strategy for Crime Prevention 2008 - 2011 and the Strategy for the Work of the Czech Police in relation to minorities 2008 - 2012*. In addition, it is endeavouring to expand established best practice at local level, represented by social work in relation to the victims and witnesses of crime - as well as the Roma Mentor programme. These instruments also have a secondary positive effect on Roma employment and the building of positive models in Roma communities. The government's attention is also directed towards an efficient solution to the issue of drug use in socially excluded Roma localities.

In conclusion it should be emphasised that isolated and unsystematically implemented activities lead to results which can be sustained only with difficulty. A sustainable solution leading to the full integration of Roma into society can be achieved only using a comprehensive approach which connects measures in key areas of Roma life and ensures the cooperation of all relevant state and non-state institutions at both national and local level.

13. LIST OF SOURCES

Report on the Issue of Extremism in the Czech Republic in 2008, Czech Ministry of the Interior 2008.

Crime Prevention Strategy 2008-2011, Czech Ministry of the Interior 2007.

Strategy for the Work of the Czech Police in relation to Minorities (2008 - 2012), Czech Ministry of the Interior 2008.

Proposed improvements to the memorials at Lety u Písku and Hodonín u Kunštatu, Office of the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs 2009.

Czech Republic - Opportunities for Improving Roma Employment. Office of the Czech Government and the World Bank, Prague 2008.

Christian Bodewing and Eva Hromádková. The Social Exclusion of Roma - an Economic Loss for the Czech Republic. Prague 2008.

Recommendations for towns and villages to prevent the expansion and establishment of socially excluded localities with emphasis on securing housing needs, Czech Ombudsman, Brno 2008.

The key to strengthening integration policy in towns and villages: Roma Social Exclusion and Czech Society, Otevřená společnost, o.p.s. and GAC s.r.o., Prague 2008.

Social exclusion at local level, Labour and Social Affairs Research Institute, Prague 2008.

An analysis of socially excluded localities and Roma localities and the absorption capacities of bodies operating in this area, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs 2006.

Sociolinguistic research into the position of Romani in the Czech Republic, Charles University Faculty of Arts, Prague 2008.

Collection "Dangerous Acquaintances. Right-wing extremism in the local cross-border context", Kulturbüro Sachsen e. V., Dresden 2009.

"Time to try another way": a conceptual report from IQ Roma servis, o.s./ Collective, IQ Roma servis, o.s., Brno 2008.

The educational paths and educational opportunities for Roma pupils from elementary schools near socially excluded Roma localities, Ministry of Education Prague 2009.

National Report from the international *Sastipen - Roma Population and Health* research, Office of the Czech Government 2008.

Methodological manual: Comprehensive Work with the Inhabitants of Socially Excluded Localities, IQRS Brno 2008.

"Indebtedness": An evaluation of the anti-debt programmes of the Agency for Social Integration in Roma Localities; Agency for Social Integration, Prague 2009.

Summary of the conclusions of legal analyses of case studies from the area of the law on equal access to adequate housing, Agency for Social Integration in Roma Localities, Prague 2008.

Roma Integration Concept for 2005–2009

Draft Concept of a state approach to solving the problem of deprived city districts mainly inhabited by citizens from the Roma ethnic minority, Ministry for Regional Development, Prague 2008.

National action plan to transform and unify the care system for children at risk, 2009-2011, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs Prague 2009.

Handbook for Social Integration, Collective of the Agency for Social Integration in Roma Localities, the People in Need organisation and the Security Policy Dept. of the Czech Ministry of the Interior, Office of the Czech Government, Prague 2008.

Analysis of the preparedness of the environment in the Czech Republic and of the scope for developing community schools, Ministry of Education 2009.

14. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

The Integrated Operational Programme (IOP)	
European Social Fund (ESF)	
Integrated Urban Development Plan (IUDP)	
Non-governmental, not-for-profit organisation (NGO)	
Ministry of Education (MinEd)	
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA)	
Ministry of the Interior (MI)	
Ministry of Culture (MC)	
Ministry For Regional Development (MRD)	
Ministry of Health (MH)	
Minister for Human Rights (MHR)	
Kindergarten (Czech: MŠ)	
Human Resources and Employment Operational Programme (HREOP)	
Probation and Mediation Service (PMS)	
Regional Operational Programmes (ROP)	
Government Council for the Coordination of Anti-drug Policy (GCCAP)	
Framework Educational Programme for Elementary Education (FEPEE)	
Framework Educational Programme for Elementary Education for pupils with Minor Mental Disabilities (FEPEE - MMD)	
Secondary School (Czech: SŠ)	
University (Czech: VŠ)	
Elementary School (Czech: ZŠ)	