



CIP EQUAL

1 Closing Conference of NTN 2 News 3 3 outputs, 3 questions for their creators
4 Projects highlights 5 International platforms based on experience with EQUAL programme operations 6 EQUAL in Europe 7 European Social Fund

Dear readers,

The year 2008 has already reached its second half and the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL (CIP EQUAL) is on the wane. Nevertheless, there is still a lot to manage before the official closing. Project managers are putting their brains to overall assessment of their project activities while creating closing reports. The Managing Authority works on particular projects' closings and prepares closure of the whole programme. Beside these activities we also pay attention to further usage of projects outputs. At the present time we are compiling a database of all innovative projects outputs in order to make "EQUAL outputs" accessible to all interested people. Even before all members of the "EQUAL family" delved into the termi-

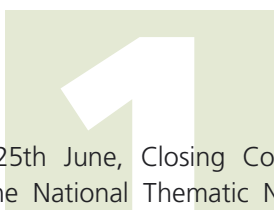
nation activities, the Closing Conference of the National Thematic Networks CIP EQUAL took place at the end of June. It was not only time to think over the activities that have been made from the year 2006 but also opportunity to perceive how these networks and projects could link to their work in the new or if you like current programme period 2007–2013. Experts who have been cooperating for a long time with the networks contributed with their independent opinions on the activities of particular thematic networks. Representatives of the Managing Authority summed up present results of the so-called vertical mainstreaming with the Managing Authority as an umbrella institution and intro-

duced cooperation possibilities in the period 2007–2013. Because of their importance, Closing Conference and National Thematic Networks are the main topics of this Bulletin copy.

I strongly believe that the diligence and considerable effort we all devoted to the EQUAL programme will not vanish at the end of the project and programme outputs – namely social innovations – will be successfully mainstreamed and used in practice.

After the deserved summer holidays and time of relaxation, I wish you nice reading.

Ing. Renáta Haroková
Head of Department for Management and Implementation of CIP EQUAL
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs CR



On 25th June, Closing Conference of the National Thematic Networks (NTN) of CIP EQUAL took place at the University of Economics in Prague. The Opening part of the Conference, realized in a form of plenary session, was followed by workshops of individual networks. The aim of the conference was to sum up actual results and experience that have been made during the enforcement of CIP EQUAL outputs into policies and strategies on the national as well as regional level (the so called vertical mainstreaming). There has also been room to discuss the possibilities to continue the work

Closing Conference of NTN

of NTN in the programme period 2007–2013 and by the help of NTN long-term external experts to sum up activities and outputs of each network. In the opening presentation a representative of Managing Authority CIP EQUAL summed up results and development of activities of the Managing Authority during the support and mediation of mainstreaming among institutions on the national level (especially among ministries). Managing authority addressed among others representatives of competent departments of the MPSV CR, MSMT CR, MPO CR, MMR CR, regional authori-

ties, chambers of commerce and all labour offices in CR. These institutions were asked for to give feedback in the form of filling in a questionnaire about relevance and utilization of particular outputs. Generally speaking, references were very positive. Some respondents confirmed the quality based on their own previous experience or they were willing to use the products under suitable conditions.

In the second part of plenary session, possibilities of financing the outputs in the current programme period were introduced. Participants were informed about all up to now announced and

planned calls incl. data about support alignment, enunciators, beneficiaries, effective period, financial allocation etc. Also discussed was the possibility of further functioning of thematic networks within the Operational Programme Human Resources and Employment (OP HRE). Finally the NTN long-term external experts described activities and outputs of particular networks and outlined the possibilities of future cooperation.

Expert evaluation of NTN's activities

The long-term external experts are among others supposed to evaluate outputs and activities of particular NTNs in their final reports. At the Closing Conference they had an opportunity to report the up to now results. As soon as they are finished, these final reports are going to be published on www.equalcr.cz.

On behalf of **NTN A (National Thematic Network Integration of individuals with difficulties to the labour market)**, Petr Víšek from Socioklub presented at the Conference. He stressed that the integration of disabled people into the labour market is a crucial condition for integrating them fully into the society. Among others, Mr. Víšek highlighted a new approach in employability of people with disabilities which is based on the so called positive labour recommendation. In this approach, the client is told what he/she can do instead of being told what he/she cannot do, which is a negative recommendation (currently most used approach). As one of the examples of modern trends which are successfully used abroad (e.g. in Switzerland), this new approach should be due to the activity of NTN A transferred into the Czech Republic. As another example that has been implemented by NTN A projects, a complex programme of integration of homeless people has been introduced. This programme is especially important in helping home-

less people (re)integrate into society as this problem cannot be solved only by temporary accommodation in asylum houses. Therefore, it is necessary to not only solve the problem of accommodation but all three inter-conditioning factors of homelessness – housing, education and employment. Effective integration of homeless people is due to our complex and systematic assistance in all three areas.

The development partnerships of **NTN B (National Thematic Network Entrepreneurship)** working on the background of current trends in policies as business support, education, labour or credit policy, focused on shaping and examination of measures and instruments, which would help moderate imperfections and improve the existing situation in the area of entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic.

According to Jaromír Coufalík, a long term expert of NTN B from the National Training Fund, the developing partnerships have produced a number of tangible outputs which meet quality, innovativeness and transferability criteria. These tangible outputs refer to several important areas of business support, e.g. support of early entrepreneurs, small and medium-sized enterprise development, consultancy and education for entrepreneurs, financial instruments of business support and support of specific groups of entrepreneurs such as women, people with disabilities or else disadvantaged individuals.

On behalf of **NTN C (National Thematic Network Social Economy and Community Services)**, Petra Francová introduced a number of networks outputs. Representatives of the NTN C and other relevant experts formed a National expert group for social-economic activities (NESEA), which postulated a definition, principles and standards of social entrepreneurship. These principles and standards are also going to be published in Wikipedia, the free encyclo-

pedia. The group will continue in its activities even after the termination of CIP EQUAL. Among achievements of this NTN belongs an enforcement of social entrepreneurship themes into new operational programmes and other strategic documents (e.g. Operational Programme Prague-Adaptability or National Strategic Reference Framework of the Czech Republic). Petra Francová appreciated cooperation possibilities within the NTN framework which enabled establishing cooperation with a number of experts and policy makers and thus promote the social economy in the Czech Republic.

František Barták from the Institute for Information on Education reviewed activities of the biggest thematic network focused on employees' adaptability and life-long learning. According to Mr. Barták, despite the diversity of its projects, activities of **NTN D (National Thematic Network Adaptability and Life-long learning)** were very successful and projects of this network created a number of quality outputs. These outputs include a wide range of themes from education of deaf people, Romany youth and people from distant country areas to training in special competences for the labour market, which is widely usable in and out of education and many others. The utilization of factual outputs is being discussed with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in CR and other potential users.

Linda Sokačová, a chairman of **NTN F (National Thematic Network Equal Opportunities for Men and Women)**, reported an evaluation of mainstreaming strategy of this NTN on behalf of Iva Šmídová, Ph.D., an expert from the Faculty of Social Studies at Masaryk university in Brno. Projects of NTN E have realized a number of activities, e.g. holding competitions for companies and statutory undertakers (for instance a competition called "Bureau of the Year" or "Equal Opportunities").

In the framework of NTN activities a gender analysis of strategic national documents was also elaborated and an "International Day of Equality" was organized for the very first time (on 19th June, 2006). Year on year, this occasion is joined by new organizations, which inform the general public about the issue of equal opportunities including legal counselling. As a positive evaluation of activities of this NTN we can consider the utilization of outputs from NTN E's publications for an OECD report and an offer from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to NTN E to become an advisory body for Operational Programme Human Resources and Employment (OP HRE). Ms. Šmídová mentions in her evaluation report that outputs chosen for the mainstreaming strategy of NTN E represent high-quality outputs of Equal projects. As a further topic to work on she named the need of closer cooperation of various development partnerships across all NTNs and cooperation during actual promotion and implementation of outputs that very often refer to the structurally similar problems but only focused on different target groups. In the end, the outputs of **NTN E (National Thematic Network Integration of Foreigners to the Labour Market)** focused on foreigners and asylum seekers on labour market have been evaluated by Andrea Gerstnerová from Department of Social Geography and Regional Development of Faculty of Natural Sciences, Charles University in Prague. Projects of NTN F supported this integration through education in Czech language and socio-cultural competences. As the biggest problem that limits foreigners when entering the labour market NTN F labelled a restriction that forbids the asylum applicant to enter the labour market for a period of 12 months. During its activity NTN F tried to promote such changes in legislation that would lead to elimination of this restriction.

Conclusions of NTN's workshops

After the plenary session of the closing conference participants split up according to their NTNs and discussed their experiences with the up to now results of mainstreaming and promotion of their products. In the second part of the conference future cooperation possibilities in 2007–2013 were discussed and eventual next steps were set.

Members of **NTN A** based the discussion about the possible future cooperation on the fact that, compared to other networks, NTN A had much wider range of target groups. To continue the operation also in the next period, the network would have to focus especially on the major problem of employment of people with disabilities. DPs, focused on other target groups (ex-offenders, homeless people), could create their own networks and cooperate with similar networks in the EU. Other DPs could eventually cooperate with NTN C and work on their themes in the framework of social economy conception.

Attendant delegates of DPs within **NTN B** agreed on a unity of interest to continue in cooperation even after EQUAL projects' termination. After this termination, common goal as well as output for the current programme period 2007–2013 will be defined. At the same time an involvement of foreign partners will be considered. Based on their experience within NTN B, the DP delegates are worried about an insufficient involvement of policy makers. The Managing Authority offered to the NTN members assistance in the elaboration of their project application forms such as consultations or even arranging motivational appointments with a chosen target group of policy makers.

Before the closing conference of **NTN C**, Petra Francová, an expert, distributed a list of questions to verify an interest in future network cooperation, main themes and activities.

On the basis of these suggestions and further discussions, main goals and activities of the future thematic network should be defined.

A project representative from Nový Prostor, Mr. Sztarovics, informed the participants about the company called "New Economy o.p.s." which should be focused on research, analytical and promotional activities in the framework of social economy for projects and outputs produced within the DP and NTN. According to the proposal of Mr. Sztarovics and Ms. Francová, this company should also ensure administrative and organizational operation of the future thematic network and therefore the company should be a beneficiary within a project for network realization. Factual activities of the network would be set by an elected commission of representatives of particular engaged organizations which would be independent from New Economy. Ms. Šagátová, on behalf of the Kazuist beneficiary, introduced an alternative approach to the thematic network realization when she proposed realization of network activities as a project of development partnership. After discussing the pros and cons of both proposals (for example openness to new people interested in cooperation) everybody was supposed to send his/her opinion via email. It is assumed that the network will be connected to the European networks or the relevant networks in other member states.

Within the discussion, a long time expert of **NTN D** František Barták, expressed his opinion that projects of NTN D should cooperate in the future. Representatives of several DPs stated that they have already started negotiations about the future network cooperation with other projects. According to the representative of the Managing Authority, the Managing Authority is willing to consult proposals for future cooperation with NTN and stressed that at this time a prime initiative from the DP side is expected. Furthermore, she recom-

mended focusing the new networks according to their target groups (for example Romany) or specific areas or aspects of adaptability and education. Attendants agreed to further intensively discuss the cooperation possibilities (with the help of a long term expert) in order to frame factual proposals for network cooperation. Attendant representatives of **NTN E** projects claimed that the vertical mainstreaming was executed not only with the support of the Managing Authority but also in other ways and in general this was very successful.

Projects managed to arrange contacts with policy makers on national as well as regional level. Regarding the future, project representatives are willing to further cooperate, nevertheless, they stressed that there are certain limitations within the NTN for particular organizations as most of these organizations are non-profit institutions facing financial and capacity problems. According to the representative of the Managing Authority, this issue could be solved by establishing a project for realizing common activities which could be financed from OP HRE.

A discussion of **NTN F** has above all been focused on the future. Rather than the closing conference within CIP EQUAL this discussion was the first meeting of new projects. Attendant representatives are willing to further act in the field of foreigners' integration into the Czech labour market and apply for financial support from European Social Fund. During the conference concrete steps to apply for a project within the OP HRE in the area of International cooperation in mid-August 2008 have been stated.

News

Seminar on Closure of Projects

With the upcoming end of the program, it is necessary to pay attention to the closure of particular projects. Therefore, on 9 June a seminar on project closures for DP representatives was held. This was the second seminar in a row regarding this topic and its main goal was to remind attendees about the rules of the program closure process and to present an updated guideline for closure of CIP EQUAL projects. Several projects have already wound up their activities; nevertheless, the majority of the projects will finish at the end of August 2008. At the seminar, a recommended schedule of project closure procedures was presented which should help project managers' plan and lay out all relevant actions. Furthermore, an updated template of final technical and financial reports which are obligatory for each project was presented. Technical reports should summarise the general project realisation process, the main

CIP EQUAL Monitoring Committee

Already, the ninth meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Community Initiatives Programme EQUAL (MV CIP EQUAL) was held on 20 June. The attendees were informed about the current state of CIP EQUAL implementation, the drawing of financial resources and the successes of innovative outputs created with regards to their implementation within relevant policies and practice. Members of MV CIP EQUAL approved the Annual Implementing Report of CIP EQUAL for the year 2007, which was afterwards submitted to the European Commission, and a new version of the national CIP EQUAL mainstreaming

outputs and "products" and last but not least the implementation of CIP EQUAL principles (partnership, common decision making, international cooperation and gender mainstreaming) while reaching project goals. In the financial report, beneficiaries have their last chance to record the eligible project expenditures and also an advance payment will be accounted here. During the seminar the importance of sub-license agreements and how they were to be presented was also mentioned. These sub-license agreements provide the Managing Authority with the rights to exercise products created within particular EQUAL projects. Closure of projects is one of the first steps of the whole closure programme which is planned on 31 March 2010. It is necessary to accomplish final certification by that date (payment request sent to the European Commission) and elaborate the final reports of the Managing Authority.

strategy. Participants were also informed about how the results of the evaluation studies that were realised within CIP EQUAL (3. period of running evaluation, international cooperation principles evaluation and evaluation of gender mainstreaming) have been maintained. Three representatives of the European Commission (EC) were also present at the conference, two of them visited the Gender Studies company that drives a project called "Half-and-Half – Equal chances for women and men" (for more details, see part 4: Highlights from projects).

3

3 outputs, 3 questions for their creators

Centre for employee support – Programme focused on development of employee skills and success of the applicants on the labour market

The Centre for Employee Support (CPPZ) presents one of the main outputs of the "Outplacement for big companies" project (www.equal.cd.cz) within the frame of CIP EQUAL. The beneficiary is Dopravní vzdělávací institut a.s. (Traffic educational institute), 14 partners participate in the project realisation.

This training and counselling centre resides in Ústí nad Labem and provides its services to a wide spectrum of subjects on the labour market with. Not only regional employers (firms) and institutions (employment bureaus, etc.) benefit from the services, single clients also make use of them. The services of the centre were intended only for employees of the beneficiary CD, a.s. (Czech Railways) in the first phase of the project.

The purpose of CPPZ is to advise and provide concrete services to those who want to develop their careers or change their jobs. The Centre also offers help to all people who have lost their jobs or are apprehensive about losing them in the near future. All services are provided free of charge. The Centre offers systematic services in the area of education, consultancy and employment mediation. Apart from the technical, training and information equipment, the Centre guarantees an individual approach to its clients,

which enables them to resolve or optimise their specific life situations quickly.

Independent methodologies and learning materials, including e-learning modules, were developed in terms of educational and counselling services. The training programme of the Centre includes special seminars and optional lectures. It includes a) seminars: Labour market; Presentation and self-presentation skills – interview preparation; Computer skills and b) optional lectures: Being Your Own Boss and Basic Knowledge of the Legal System.

Within the counselling services, clients can individually use career, vocational or psychological consultancy, further advisory for people exposed to gender discrimination and consultancy for handicapped customers. Cooperating companies were also offered individual educational bespoke modules. More information about the Centre for Employee Support can be found on www.cppz.cz.

Mgr. Iva M. Tahová,
TARA Professionals o.p.s.
koordinátorka řešitelských týmů

Mgr. Luděk Svoboda
specialista marketingu a PR

1) What do you consider to be the greatest success of your project?

I consider our clients' satisfaction with our services to be the greatest success. All participants of our educational and counselling programme were always absolutely satisfied. These were mostly employees of ČD a.s. and clients of employment bureaus in Teplice and Ústí nad Labem, but also firms that cooperated with the Centre for employee support. They were provided with educational services such

as a Seminar on PC skills, a lecture on basic knowledge of the legal system, language courses and other services modified directly according to the needs of a concrete employer and his employees.

Another area, in which the project achieved success, was the organisation of national and international conferences, which always generated interest and brought positive reactions from the participants.

2) What are the reactions of the public to your outputs?

Public acceptance was and still is positive, the visit rate of our Centre is gradually rising and the clients' satisfaction with the work of our lecturers and advisers is high. However, we would appreciate if the Centre were even more known to the wider public for its status as a reliable partner for education and skilled guarantee for a job search. We can achieve that, above all, by increasing the number of clients and firms cooperating with us and by satisfied clients effectively spreading positive information about us.

3) Where do you see your product in three years?

We would like to become a regional educational and counselling centre that would be intended for labour market subjects such as companies and employment bureaus as well as individuals.

We would like to work closely with regional employment bureaus and provide them with necessary services for unemployed individuals and vulnerable groups (e.g. through participation in the selection procedure). We would also like to cooperate more closely with CD a.s., Cargo a.s. and

other employers that are going to undertake restructuring. The development of the Czech economy suggests that the number of firms that are going to discharge employees is probably going to grow.

Operational manuals "Foundation of social cooperative" and "Foundation of social municipality cooperative"

The "Social cooperative and enterprise" project implemented in four regions of Moravia and Vysočina was aiming at practical targets from the very beginning. Our motto is "We do not want to advise only, we do want to help". We subordinated and gradually adapted our approach and methodology to this motto including selection, education and assistance during the preparation and realisation of entrepreneurial plans. Work manuals contain common passages and specific attachments including model documents, examples and recommendations. These documents lead the interested person clearly and comprehensibly under the supervision of an adviser-trainer through the difficulties from initial enthusiasm and ideas to clarifying the knowledge of his market position, technical and organisational conditions, personal relationships and entrepreneurial intention and also through the neces-

sary administrative steps. They contain references to legal regulations, rule models, subsidy cards (sources of European finances and support). A Manual for municipalities and micro regions is a specific output formed during the project, on the basis of the initiative and interest of several addressed municipalities. Inconvenience of universal copying of designs and documents is an example of gained experience. It is always necessary to adapt the application to concrete conditions. First fifteen social cooperatives that were founded and are now in different stages of development already know that the planned intention and all documents are only beginning – tenacity, pertinacity and vision of people and the ability to fight for a place in the sun make the decisive background.

Karel Rychtář,
project's expert "Social cooperative and enterprise", SČMVD

1) What do you consider to be the greatest success of your project

Our biggest achievements are not only the fulfilment of set objectives and "indicators" but above all the fact that we managed to prove the possibility of founding and developing social cooperatives in a contemporary environment, which in the Czech Republic neither provides exceptional advantages and starting capital nor legally defines this sort of subject. Its success is foremost the work result of a competent team of managers, advisers and partner representatives (inc. foreign partners) who pull together. The project victory in the "employment" category – winning the award "European Regional Awards 2007" in November 2007 was one of our successes.

2) What are the reactions of the public to your outputs?

The public response to our outputs is surprisingly positive. We have man-

aged to grab quite a number of people from all levels, including the highest, with the help of not only formal outputs and output presentations at workshops and conferences, but also by the direction of the consequential "Entrepreneurship in social economy" mainstreaming project from additional calls which derived benefits from the outcome and experience of the main project.

3) Where do you see your product in three years

We assume that in a few years (also due to the initiative of the National thematic group C) we will be able to take a first move toward the institutionalisation of social entrepreneurship. Additionally, we create support instruments for the formation of social cooperatives, which are an excellent opportunity for the development of the synergy of local services and production together with the creation of entrepreneurial and labour

opportunities for disadvantaged people in the labour market.



The "Employment support for the visually impaired people" methodology of the Tyfloemployability project

The Tyfloemployability project executed within the Equal Czech Community Initiative Programme has been focused on improving the position of visually impaired people (hereinafter VIP) in the labour market. Beyond the beneficiary, the Czech Blind United (hereinafter CBU), its nine partners have participated in the project realisation. The project ran from June 2005 to May 2008 and it has brought a number of interesting and useful outputs. One of them is a successfully validated methodology named "Supported employment for visually impaired people" (thereinafter Methodology).

The aim was to create a compact methodology material focused on visually impaired people employment procedures. This aim is followed by specifications and differentiations of employment support for various categories of visual impairment. The Methodology is a complex tool

intended for CBU's consultants and assistants and CBU's generally beneficial associations – TyfloCenters. There was no compact material concerned with employment support of visually impaired people prior to the project's initiation. On this account, the Methodology is an entirely innovative product in the Czech Republic. The Methodology is available both in print and electronic form. Not only were the product's users interested in the creation of the Methodology, but also visually impaired people themselves. Based on the recommendations of validation experts, the part about "Characteristics of a well suited user for employment support" has been added to the Methodology.

Vladimír Kňažko
Mgr. Milan Pešák
Project's experts

1) What do you consider to be the greatest success of your project?

We consider finding employment for 33 of our clients to be the biggest success of the project. Also, we consider the improvement in employer awareness about the possibilities of employment of visually impaired people as another success. (About two thousand companies and entrepreneurs have been addressed.), We also consider the rising interest by visually impaired people in work exercises in the form of soft skills courses to be a very important positive. These people are mostly long-term unemployed individuals, whose level of motivation for work has increased after passing the course.

2) What are the reactions by the public to your outputs

There are three levels in which we can assess the public's reaction. Unambiguously positive public acceptance comes from visually impaired people, who are aware of the significance of their careers. Activities concerning employment of visually impaired people are also perceived positively by the general public.

Among employers that we have also addressed, we managed to establish co-operation and consequently these employers employed some project users. Employers assessed the multimedia DVD very positively, as it was full of information and they assessed the work-assistance service as being no less positive, where the work-assistant accompanied the user on his way to work and helped him practise routing, acquire an orientation at workplace, etc. Satisfactory awareness, building confidence and maintaining co-operation with employers constitutes a long-term process in which the effects of the project are actively maintained after the close thereof.

3) Where do you see your product in three years?

We are going to mainstream the Methodology into the TyfloCenters which have not gotten acquainted with this Methodology yet. We believe that we can mainstream our experience with its usage and get valuable feedback from broader user groups (working consultants and assistants) as well as from the visually impaired people themselves. Regard-



ing the fact that we count on consecutive projects which will be based on experience acquired through pilot verification of the Methodology of supported employment and which will improve the initiated process, we assume we can further verify the possibilities of careers of visually impaired people and extend the scope of the employers being addressed.

4 Projects highlights

Entrepreneurial skills fair

On 14 June, the Different reality project run by the beneficiary Creative Bazaar organised the "Festival for the entrepreneurial" in Hradec Králové. This two-day event which was primarily intended for people with disabilities, who are interested in entrepreneurship, has been held due to financial support from additional appeals for proposal No.5 of CIP EQUAL. Arrangement of this festival can be considered to be the working climax of this project.

During the festival a "fair" has been also held, where other organisations dealing with employment support and with helping disadvantaged people in the labour market had an opportunity to introduce themselves. There were also other projects financed by CIP EQUAL in the festival, for instance Association of businesswomen and managers in the Czech Republic or AG Synerko. Therefore, this festival was a good example of the establishment of successful co-operation among projects involved in National thematic networks.

Beside the project display, the participants could take part in various mini-

courses, competitions for both children and adults. The event authenticity has also been stressed by the presence of handicapped entrepreneurs who could give valuable hints to other participants about business start-ups and motivation. Stories of these successful entrepreneurs were gathered up into a project brochure, which were also available in the festival.

The display was brought to a close with the Blaník performance by Jara Cimrman Theater, whereof a wheelchair bound Jan Kašpar has enacted one of the roles and also stood for another example of people with disabilities.

Part of the actual project outputs is a series of three motivational movies – one of them intended for people with disabilities (inclusive of deaf individuals), another one for the gender disadvantaged (particularly women) and the last one for blind people (in a special edition also for all other individuals). All parts of this trilogy are available for download on the web sites of the project www.jinarealita.eu (in the Films section) or distributed on DVD's and screened at various events. The Different reality also organises a chat

series with target groups and skilled seminars for professional organisations and policy makers.

An important part of the project is a Consultation centre providing free consultancy to disadvantaged individuals through its web page (see part Poradna), phone and personal consultations.



EC representatives visited CIP EQUAL project in the Czech Republic (beneficiary - Gender Studies)

On the occasion of monitoring committee held on 20 June 2008, the representatives of European Commission Liana Perneti, programme manager for ESF – contact person for CIP EQUAL in CR, and Szilárd Tamás,

head of the office for Luxembourg, Portugal and the Czech Republic within the ESF department and for monitoring of respective national policies I, visited Gender Studies beneficiary project.

The representatives of the managing authority, namely Renáta Haroková and Filip Kučera, and the NSS assistant Ivana Sobolíková, accompanied them. Alexandra Jachanová-Doležalová, the coordinator of for-

eign activities, presented the project to foreign guests. The Gender Studies beneficiary launched two projects within the CIP EQUAL; the first one is focused on the Prague area, and the other is focused on the remaining regions of the Czech Republic. The EC representatives were among others interested in meeting the principle of international cooperation.

The Equal opportunities project created two development partnerships and it cooperated with both, the new EU member states and the old ones. In the VEGA partnership (Valuing Empowerment in Gender Attitudes) the beneficiary cooperated with Denmark, Spain and Austria. Especially the best practises regarding equal opportunities for men and women

were considered very useful. In the EWA partnership (European Women's Advancement), the cooperation was established only within the new EU member states, namely Poland and Latvia, which above all brought an experience exchange.

In brief

- From 25 to 26 June, a social gathering named "Labour cultivates a man, or else a job fair from theory to practise" was held in Krásná Lípa. Within this gathering guests and interested individuals could visit the final conference of the "Community centre for Bohemian Switzerland" project or a job fair.
- Gender Studies published its third Bulletin called "Equal opportunities in firms" whose main theme was diversity management. The Bulletin

is available on the page: www.zpravodaj.genderstudies.cz.

- In the "Employment Week" fair held on 11 and 12 June in Brussels, the RPIC-ViP beneficiary introduced its soft-skills development trainee programmes. According to organisers, over 700 visitors from both EU and non-member countries came and discussed ways of how Europe could adapt to an ageing population and immigration.

- The Association of citizens dealing with emigrants published dissemination handbooks on the projects "Work in Czech" and "Work in Prague" on its web pages. These handbooks should make the public more familiar with the processes and outputs of both projects. Among others, integration and Czech courses were realised within these projects.

International platforms based on experience with EQUAL programme operation

Within the strong internationally focused CIP EQUAL programme, international cooperation has been realised partly at the level of particular projects within the scope of their international partnerships and partly also at the level of managing authorities. For this purpose, the EC pronounced in 2006 two rounds of calls for grant proposals submitted by particular member countries, or by the CIP EQUAL managing authorities for the organisation of Pan-European gatherings and platform formations. These actions or platforms were prepared and operated by a member state which has gotten the grant respectively in co-operation with the minimum one "new" and one "old" member state. In this manner quite a number of platforms were formed. These were aimed either topically (e.g. the evaluation platform operated by the Czech Republic) or on pursuing particular principles of CIP EQUAL. The EC decided to pursue this practise, since this practise has proven to be good, it managed to establish a number of valuable partnerships, gather the best practise and give support to possibilities of transfer into the current programme period and programmes co-financed from ESF. Therefore, the EC initiated another call for proposals for the managing authorities of the ESF programmes. These programmes facilitate either continuance of already established community platforms or form new platforms and herewith ensure transfer of good procedures and experience to help jeopardised groups in a labour market and support employment. In this Bulletin, we introduce two of these platforms to you.

Community platform for innovations and mainstreaming

A new regulation regarding the European Social Fund stresses in Article 7 the necessity to promote an innovation implementation in the operational programmes. This requirement reflects quick changes in today's world, where effective results that help jeopardised groups in a labour market can be attained, if interventions reacting flexibly to the changing needs of these target groups are supported.

Community platform for innovations and mainstreaming, financed from EC grants and operated by the Portuguese Managing Authority of CIP EQUAL, was aimed at sharing best practises among member states to meet the innovation requirement of the new operational programmes. Up to now the community established an Internet platform – <http://innovation.esflive.eu/>, where more than 30 sources or instruments supporting innovation can be found. In the last copy of the Bulletin we have informed you about the seminar organised by this platform in April in Warsaw. Since that time, a meeting of the managing committee took place in Rotterdam, where the representative of Czech Managing Authority, Renáta Haroková was again present. Within this meeting a visit in the Netherlands Centre for Social Innovation (see <http://www.ncsi.nl/English/>) was also organised and a presentation with discussion about the Netherlands call for proposals regarding grants for social innovations in firms within the new ESF programme (2007–2013) and also preparations for the next event which the platform plans for October 2008 were initiated.

In October another workshop on the theme innovation in ESF will be held in Lisbon. The main discussed themes will be the following:

- How to innovate? (who are social innovators, how to validate innovations, networking, strengthening the decision-making powers of target groups, etc.)
- How to mainstream and promote innovations? (transfer of social innovations among regions and organisations, influencing policies, etc.)
- Preparation of calls for innovative projects in the new ESF (evaluative criteria, evaluation and choice, etc.)

Future cooperation within this platform should develop facilities for introducing innovation in the ESF programmes of the new programme period, incl. e.g. the coordination of calls within the projects specialised in international cooperation in the area of social innovations.

Community of Practice on Inclusive Entrepreneurship (CoPIE)

The Representative of Czech Managing Authority of CIP EQUAL, Filip Kučera, addressed a conference in Hannover, held in July 2007, devoted to entrepreneurship of disadvantaged people to consider the involvement of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in the Czech Republic in already existing CoPIE platform which resolved to advertise, share experience and assess instruments of employment support especially for disadvantaged individuals in the labour market.

At the conference, two key outputs of CoPIE – web pages (<http://www.copie.esflive.eu/>) acting as a communication platform for CoPIE and gathering important documents and outputs of the ESF projects in the scope of this topic were introduced, and the so-called CoPIE Tool which is an analytical instrument enabling elaboration with simple and transparent analysis of the employment support system of disadvantaged individuals at the regional level. The representative of the Czech CIP EQUAL was called upon to take over and test this instrument in one of the regions in the Czech Republic. After selection of an expert and his training during the seminar in October 2007 in Spanish Oviedo, the analysis of entrepreneurship in the Ústecký region was undertaken. Findings from this report were together with reports from the other regions: Basque, Ireland, etc. presented at a seminar for European regions organised in February of this year in Brussels with the aim of propagation of employment support for individuals and making these activities in other regions of the EU more effective.

Similar to other platforms of the EU formed on the basis of cooperation of EQUAL participants, this community also wants to take advantage of the possibility offered by the new ESF programmes in the period of 2007–2013 and at the same time also make use of the support directly from the European Commission. The chief members of CoPIE (Germany, Belgium, Spain and Wales) are preparing a project which will be a base for also continuing CoPIE activities in the next years. The Czech Republic would also like to join the project, namely with the themes of coordination of employment support policies, financial instruments, business lessons at schools and colleges, and managing the quality of employment support services. Simultaneously, the Managing Authority of CIP EQUAL appealed to the members of NTN B to take up the Czech network cooperation and form platform, which could cooperate with the CoPIE.

EQUAL in Europe

6

- Interesting articles from http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/index_en.cfm

Reinventing a future for compulsive gamblers in Estonia

Problem gambling is a relatively new issue in Estonian society. Casinos started to spread here in the early 1990s when people were still not aware of the devastating consequences of gambling. A decade later the public started to hear stories about people who had serious problems with gambling – broken families, lost jobs, criminal records for stealing money, etc. But still, the attitude to casinos in Estonia is quite liberal. For the approximately 1.4 million people who live in Estonia there are 169 casinos, which is a relatively high ratio if compared to other member states. The research has shown that there is positive correlation between the number of casinos and problematic gamblers, the number of which in Estonia is estimated at 20 000–25 000 people. Considering the fact that one problematic gambler affects on average 3 other people (family members, friends, employers, etc.) the number of people that are directly affected by problematic gambling is reaching 100 000 people, or about 7.14 % of the whole population in Estonia.

(http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/news/200802-esto-gamb_en.cfm)

„Social Entrepreneur 2007 in France“

... and the first prize goes to the founder of an EQUAL childcare project !!!

The Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, in an effort to expand its social entrepreneur network, annually selects prime “social entrepreneurs” from the whole world. Within each country, in cooperation with media partners, the Foundation announces a contest called “Social entrepreneur of the year”. Successful participants receive three-year financial support, get involved in the global network of the Foundation, and are invited to Social Entrepreneur Conferences or to the annual meeting of Davos World Economic Forum (which was founded by the same person as the Schwab Foundation, namely Klaus Schwab). There are criteria such as innovation helping the society, sustainability, the direct social impact or transferability. In 2007, the Foundation awarded its prize in France for the very first

The Institute of Problem Gambling and Treatment was the first one in Estonia to consider the gambling phenomenon and take steps to find its solution. Within the EQUAL development partnership “Reintegration of Compulsive Gamblers into the Labour Market and Prevention of Social Exclusion”, a rehabilitation centre was established, providing free individual or group therapy for casino addicts and realising prevention programmes.

The DP had to deal with the problem of financing the centres after the EQUAL project ends (in June of this year). Therefore, in co-operation with the EQUAL Managing Authority, the project set up a very successful mainstreaming plan. The overall aim was to change the Gambling Tax Act so that a rehabilitation centre would be financed directly from the budget of the gambling tax. The changes in the legislation are being implemented and are expected to come into force in the beginning of 2009.

time. The winner was Anne-Karine Stocchetti, who was acknowledged for her achievements in the field of childcare – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – developed in her Gepetto and Alice EQUAL projects.

Stocchetti convinced the ten high-flying members of the WEF jury that **Optimômes**, her childcare company, was the best and the most promising candidate. Her project **Gepetto** had joined the first round of EQUAL, followed by **Alice** in the second round. Optimômes now has eight staff members and the whole Gepetto network employs 45 people. All are concerned with providing quality care services at home for children whose parents work on so-called “atypical” schedules; such parents represent 30% of the workforce in France. The costs of this service are

borne primarily by the parents' employers but are also partially met by a means-tested contribution from the family.

Since 2003, the two EQUAL projects have delivered 60 000 hours of childcare to 1 800 children from 1 200 families. The projects' evaluation has shown that this form of home support has provided stability for the children and contributed to their development, whilst removing one of the major obstacles to the employment of their parents, 60%

of whom were single parents. For the employers of the parents, it has also reduced absenteeism amongst these employees and increased their productivity.

Her strategic vision for the future includes a franchise network of 70 crèches and mini-crèches, auditing services, a series of mapping tools on childcare as a contribution to local development, a reinforcement of the partnership with the family benefits services and, last but not least, promoting the place and role of men in the field of childcare.

(http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/news/200802-socent_en.cfm; www.schwabfound.org)

European Social Fund

Simplification of the project administration in Operational Programme Human Resources and Employment (OP HRE)

Council Regulation No. (EC) 1081/2006 on the European Social Fund, due to the simplification of ESF project administration and their subsequent check, enables applying so-called indirect costs according to detailed national rules of a particular member state in the period of 2007–2013. Indirect costs represent part of costs which are not or cannot be unambiguously linked to concrete activities of a particular project. Nevertheless, these costs are necessary for the successful realisation of this project (e.g. rent, energy, auxiliary staff of the project, etc.). These costs are proven by proper documentation of direct costs, which means costs recorded in the project budget, and they do not need to be further illustrated. In 2004–2006, records of indirect costs made up almost three-quarters of all records submitted by beneficiaries in grant projects. The illustration of indirect costs therefore now represents a significant reduction of the clerical load of beneficiaries.

The Managing Authority of OP HRE in cooperation with other Managing Authorities of ESF programmes has for a long time prepared rules for indirect costs to put them into practise in the Czech Republic. After the Ministry of Finance accepted conformity between indirect costs and the Act on budget rules, the last restraint for application of indirect costs in the OP HRE grant projects has been surpassed. Therefore, calls for proposals announced within OP HRE at the end of July were adjusted to enable the utilisation of indirect costs. After the subsequent budget update in Benefit, it is possible to submit grant projects utilising indirect costs with a significant reduction in the clerical load of beneficiaries. Detailed rules for the utilisation of indirect costs are part of the Methodology of Eligible Costs (D5) which is available on www.esfcr.cz.

Call for International Cooperation

Within the Call No.12 Priority Axis 5 of OP HRE – International Cooperation, the first round of receiving applications for financial support from OP HRE was closed as at 15 August 2008. In total, 106 proposals were received and the total amount of required financial support comes to CZK 641 944 790. At this time proposals pass through formal assessment and assessment of acceptability.

In July, three seminars were organised for applicants regarding this Call (No.12). On 10 and 29 July, there were two seminars in Prague; on 15, July one seminar took place in Brno. Seminars were very sought-after which is also demonstrated by the number of about 170 participants. Participants learnt general information about OP HRE, especially changes compared to the former programme period, information about necessary elements of project publicity and rules for filling up the electronic application form in the Benefit7 application. The afternoon was devoted directly to Call No. 12, with basic information and caution about particular specifics and a discussion at the end.

Detailed information about Call No.12 is available at www.esfcr.cz in the folder named International Cooperation.