

Community Initiative Programme EQUAL

Prague 16th April 2004



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Stands for
BCEA	Branch Classification of Economic Activities
BIC	Business Innovation Centre
CF	Cohesion Fund
CI	Community Initiative
CIP	Community Initiative Programme
CR	Czech Republic
CSF	Community Support Framework
CVE	Continuing vocational education
CVTS	Continuing vocational training survey
CZSO	Czech Statistical Office
DPA	Development Partnership Agreement
DP	Development Partnership
EAGGF	European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund
EC	European Communities
ECA	European Court of Accounts
ECDB	EQUAL Common Database
EE	Educational establishment
EES	European Employment Strategy
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESA	Employment Services Administration
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
FB	Final Beneficiary
FDCS	Foundation for the Development of Civic Society
GDP	Gross domestic product
HPS	Higher professional school
HRD	Human resources development
ILO	International Labour Office
ISS	Integrated secondary school
IT	Information technology
JAP	Joint Assessment Paper
JIM	Joint Inclusion Memorandum
JROP	Joint Regional Operational Programme
LFSS	Labour force sample survey
LO	Labour Office
MA	Managing Authority
MC	Monitoring Committee
MF	Ministry of Finance
MH	Ministry of Health
MI	Ministry of the Interior
MIT	Ministry of Industry and Trade
ML	Maternal leave
MoE	Ministry of the Environment

MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MRD	Ministry of Regional Development
NAPE	National Action Plan of Employment
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NIVE	National Institute of Vocational Education
NSS	National Support Structure
NTF	National Training Fund
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Statistical Units
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OLAF	European Antifraud Office
OP	Operational programme
OP IE	Operational Programme Industry and Enterprise
OP HRD	Operational Programme Human Resource Development
PA	Paying Authority
PAO	Programme Authorising Officer
PC	Personal computer
Phare	A form of EU pre-accession assistance (originally: Poland and Hungary: Action for the reconstructing of the economy)
PU	Payment Unit
RGIC	Regional Guidance and Information Centres
RILSA	Research Institute of Labour and Social Affairs
SCO	Supreme Control Office
SE	Social Economy
SF	Structural Funds
SME	Small and medium enterprises
SPD	Single programming document
SPD Objective 2	Single Programming Document for Objective 2 of the NUTS II Region Prague
SPD Objective 3	Single Programming Document for Objective 3 of the NUTS II Region Prague
SWIF	Social Welfare Initiative Fund
TA	Technical assistance
TCA	Transnational Co-operation Agreement
UHK	University of Hradec Králové

1. Introduction to the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL

1.1. DEFINITION OF THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE EQUAL

The Community Initiative EQUAL is defined in Article 20(1) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds, and in Commission Communication COM(2000)853, establishing the guidelines for the Community Initiative EQUAL, and in the Commission Communication COM(2003) 840, establishing guidelines for the second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL, as a separate form of assistance from Structural Funds, concerning transnational co-operation to promote new means of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in connection with the labour market.

The Community Initiative EQUAL adopted by the Commission follows up the preceding Community Initiatives ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT and, according to Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, is to be implemented in the programme period 2000-2006.

According to Article 21(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, laying down the principle of mono-funding for Community Initiatives, CIP EQUAL will be funded under the Structural Funds only from the European Social Fund (ESF).

1.1.1. FOCUS OF THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE EQUAL

The Community Initiative EQUAL applies to the whole territory of the European Union (EU). Therefore, CIP EQUAL will be implemented in the whole territory of the Czech Republic.

The main aim of the Community Initiative EQUAL is to promote new means of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in connection with the labour market. That is why CIP EQUAL is, unlike the other forms of assistance from the ESF¹, based on certain other principles, too.

In addition to the thematic approach (according to which Member States should select priorities within CIP EQUAL in compliance with the thematic fields announced by the Commission), the partnership approach principle (according to which activities should be implemented by so-called Development Partnerships), transnational co-operation (which makes it possible to share the experience and knowledge of different Member States or other countries involved in CI EQUAL) and the principle of innovation, the principles also include empowerment and mainstreaming. Empowerment means that all involved partner organisations including representatives of the groups that are most at risk of inequalities and discrimination in the labour market should be allowed to take part in the decision-making process within Development Partnerships. The aim of mainstreaming, which is one of the basic principles in CI EQUAL, is to provide for the dissemination of CI EQUAL results among national or regional policy makers so that the best ones of the newly developed tools of combating discrimination and inequalities in the labour market can be used for policy development and improvement of policy delivery mechanisms, notably in the preparation of national or regional strategic documents and

¹ In addition to CIP EQUAL, the Czech Republic will implement in the shortened programming period 2004-2006 the following programmes supported from the European Social Fund: The Operational Programme Human Resources Development, the Single Programming Document for Objective 3 and Measure 3.2 (Support to the Social Integration in Municipalities) of the Joint Regional Operational Programme.

development plans (e.g. in the preparation of national action plans of employment) and, later on, in the preparation of mainstream forms of assistance² in the next Structural Funds programming period.

On top of these principles the equal opportunities between women and men will be observed during all the implementation of this programme,

1.1.2. COMPLEMENTARITY OF THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE EQUAL

The principle of thematic approach is fulfilled in compliance with the aforementioned selection of programme priorities within the nine thematic fields as announced by the Commission of Commission Communication COM(2003)840. The Community Initiative EQUAL is a part of the European Employment Strategy in which Member States consider that transnational cooperation could assist them to improve delivery of their national employment and social inclusion policies. .

Due to its focus on combating discrimination and inequalities in the labour market, CI EQUAL is an important mean of social integration of the disadvantaged persons in the labour market. CI EQUAL is also complementary to other policies supported according to Articles 13 and 137 of the Treaty establishing the European Community.

The Community Initiative EQUAL differs from the mainstream forms of assistance from the ESF with its objective, which is to develop and promote new means of combating discrimination and inequalities in the labour market. Therefore, the results gained during the implementation of CIP EQUAL can be used to achieve better results of the ESF mainstream programmes focused on the support to the EES and the strategy of social integration in the next SF programming period. That is the reason why CIP EQUAL strategy is based on the common strategy for the assistance under ESF, which is implemented in the Czech Republic in the shortened programming period 2004-2006 and formulated in the Frame of Reference for the Support to Human Resources in the Czech Republic. Simultaneously, as all programmes of the Czech Republic which will be implemented in the shortened programming period 2004-2006 have common basic – the Frame of Reference for the Support to Human Resources in the Czech Republic, particular priorities and measures are focused towards similar groups. However, the main difference between EQUAL Community Initiative Programme and OP HRD/SPD Objective 3 is stressed in the main objectives of these programmes and due to the different definition of EQUAL Community Initiative objectives and the mainstream forms of assistance from the ESF different types of projects will be supported. EQUAL Community Initiative is a laboratory for development and testing new approaches to be subsequently supported within the mainstream programmes within the next programming period.

² In compliance with Article 7(1) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the mainstream forms of assistance are operational programmes and single programming documents defined by Article 9(e)(i) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 with the highest allocations from the budget on structural funds (approximately 94%), whereas according to Article 7(6) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, only 5.35% of the total budget on structural funds shall be allocated to the Community initiatives. The aforementioned percentage allocation of the total volume of structural funds applies to all structural funds and all Member States; that explains why the assumed allocation for CIP EQUAL in the shortened programming period 2004-2006 in the Czech Republic is not exactly 5.35% of ESF total allocation.

The CIP EQUAL was also prepared in co-operation with the Ministries responsible for the drafting and managing of the ERDF forms of assistance and therefore the CIP EQUAL is also complementary to these programmes.

Complementarity between EQUAL Community Initiative and the mainstream ESF programmes (OP HRD, SPD Objective 3 and partially JROP) and the mainstream ERDF programmes (especially JROP, OP IE and SPD Objective 2) as well as the complementarity between CIP EQUAL and the European Refugee Fund activities is further presented in the Annex No. 6.

The Managing Authority will ensure that all bodies involved to the implementation and monitoring of OP HRD, SPD Objective 3 and other relevant programmes will be regularly informed about the CIP EQUAL implementation and will further develop existing co-operation with other ministries and other involved bodies during the implementation of the CIP EQUAL. This will ensure that CIP EQUAL will be complementary programme to the mainstream ESF and also ERDF programmes.

The partner organisations collaborating in the preparation of CIP EQUAL included also the organisations that participate in the development of national action plans of employment and national strategies of integrating persons from disadvantaged groups, which ensured the material focus of CIP EQUAL being fully complementary to respective national strategies.

1.1.3. LINKS TO THE OBJECTIVES OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COHESION

Economic and social cohesion is defined in Article 158 of the Treaty according to which the Community develops and pursues activities leading to the enhancement of its economic and social cohesion to support its general harmonic development. Above all, the Community seeks to reduce the differences between the level of development in the regions and underdevelopment of the most disadvantaged regions.

The Community supports the objectives of economic and social cohesion defined in this way also by means of Structural Funds.

The Community Initiative EQUAL makes it possible to develop and use innovative tools for the solution of the existing problematic fields related to discrimination and inequalities in the connection with the labour market, contributing in this way to the achievement of the economic and social cohesion objectives. And as the Community Initiative EQUAL will be realised in the whole territory of the Czech Republic, it will contribute to the reduction of the differences between the level of development in the regions of Objective 1 and 3 and therefore to the achievement of the economic and social cohesion objectives in the Czech Republic.

1.1.4. TWO ROUNDS OF THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE EQUAL

The Community Initiative EQUAL is implemented in two rounds of calls for proposals. The first round started in EU countries in 2001 and the second one is planned for 2004.

The Community Initiative EQUAL is implemented in the Member States in keeping with Article 9(e)(ii) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 through a separate form of assistance, which is defined as the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL.

1.1.5. THE FIRST ROUND OF THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE EQUAL IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

As the first candidate country, the Czech Republic had joined the Community Initiative EQUAL first round in 2001. The first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL has been implemented in the Czech Republic under the project Phare No. 2002/000-282.08.02 prepared within the National Phare Programme 2002. As regards the other candidate countries, it was Hungary that also joined the Community Initiative EQUAL first round in 2002.

Under the first round, the Czech Republic prepared its participation in seven thematic fields. But regarding the quality of the application forms, only ten DP work programmes have been implemented in 2003 under six thematic fields (see Annex No. 3 for the survey of selected thematic fields for the Community Initiative EQUAL first round in the Czech Republic).

1.1.6. THE SECOND ROUND OF THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE EQUAL IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Because of its planned start after the Czech Republic's assumed accession to the European Union, the second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL will not be financed under Phare; it will be financed through the European Social Fund.

To join the second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), collaborating closely with partner organisations and regions, has prepared this Community Initiative Programme EQUAL.

The Community Initiative Programme EQUAL defines priorities and describes the implementation arrangement of CI EQUAL second round in the Czech Republic. In the compliance with the new Commission Communication for the second round of EQUAL Community Initiative the Czech Community Initiative Programme EQUAL is aimed to the fight against all forms of discriminations and disadvantages in connection with the labour market. As concerns the discrimination as such, it is mainly discrimination based on the sex, racial or ethnical origin, religion or belief, health diseases, age or sexual orientation. Within this programme there will be also big stress put to the current problems of the Romany minority (see 2.2.1. F and 2.2.2. of this programme).

The second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL will be implemented in the Czech Republic within the shortened programming period 2004-2006 in connection with the joint schedule³ for the Community Initiative EQUAL second round as laid down upon agreement between the Member States and the European Commission representatives (see Annex No. 1 for the updated version of the indicative schedule for the CI EQUAL second round implementation).

³ In case deadlines in the joint schedule for the implementation of CIP EQUAL second round are to be modified upon agreement between the European Commission and the Member States, the modification will be reflected also in the implementation schedule for the Community Initiative EQUAL second round in the Czech Republic.

The Community Initiative Programme EQUAL was prepared based on the requirements for the preparation of that form of assistance as stipulated by relevant EC legal standards, above all, by Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 and Commission Communications COM(2000)853 and COM(2003)840 and by the Czech legal acts. On top of this due to its aiming the EQUAL Community Initiative Programme concurs to the European legal rules from the field of anti-discriminating law *acquis*.

Taken into account in the preparation of CIP EQUAL were the lessons learnt in the Czech Republic during the previously implemented programmes with relevant scope (see 2.3.) including the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL and the experience of the Member States gained during the implementation of the Community Initiatives ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT.

1.1.7. ENVISAGED IMPACT OF THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE PROGRAMME EQUAL

In spite of predicted acceleration of economic growth, the stagnancy of employment is expected in next two years. Due to continuing restructuring the number of entrepreneurs should increase unlike the number of employees. Authors of ex-ante evaluation confirm this presumption, too. They indicate in relevant chapter of the aforementioned evaluation that regarding current economic development the significant revival of economic growth cannot be expected and as a consequence the situation in the labour market will get worse, particularly the situation of disadvantageous groups. Realization of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL in following period of time should contribute by supporting key fields to reduce deepening of negative features of the labour market and to improve the overall situation.

Another impact of realization of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL in the Czech Republic in the shortened programming period 2004 – 2006 should be improvement of absorption capacity of all regions in the CR and creation of functional links between cooperative organizations both within the territory of CR and within the territory of EU where Czech Development Partnerships will establish cooperation. During the implementation of this programme the new ways to promote employment of all disadvantageous groups at the labour market will be developed and these new tools will be used in the national and regional policies of the Czech Republic. The systematic evaluation of these new tools and their effectiveness will be ensured within the on-going evaluation.

2. Analysis of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL

2.1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE LABOUR MARKET IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The description of the situation in the labour market in the Czech Republic, which follows, was prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs within the preparation of the National Action Plan of Employment 2003. It is a general description of the labour market including basic economic characteristics of the Czech Republic.

The general context was followed by the analysis of the situation in the Czech Republic in relation to individual thematic fields under the Community Initiative EQUAL, which served as a selection for priorities and measures for CI EQUAL second round in the Czech Republic. The analysis is given in Chapter 2.2. of CIP EQUAL.

2.1.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION IN THE CZECH LABOUR MARKET

GDP and Labour Productivity

The gross domestic product, at fixed prices of 1995, following the year-to-year decline between 1997 and 1999, recorded a year-to-year growth, also in 2002, by 2.0 %.

Employment

In 2002, average annual employment in all spheres of national economy was 4,796,000 persons, i.e. 46.8% of the country population (an increase by 45,800 or 1.0% as compared to the year 2001). The employment of women achieved in that year 2,076,400, i.e. 43.3% of the total employment in the Czech Republic (an increase by 13,000 as compared to the preceding year; their share in the employment, however, decreased by 0.1 percentage point). The number of people engaged for a determinate period of time in their principal employment (including temporary, casual and seasonal jobs and other types of time-limited contracts) decreased over the period under review by 13,500 to 355,600, i.e. a decrease by 3.7%. On the other hand, the number of jobs for an indefinite period of time and the number of self-employed persons increased in the period being compared by further 56,300, i.e. 1.3%.

Economic Activity and Employment Rates

Economic activity rate (the number of economically active persons, i.e. the sum total of the employed and the unemployed divided by the number of all persons above 15 years of age, expressed in %) was 59.9% in the year 2002, down 0.1% on 2001. The rate of economic activity of men (69.4%) was traditionally higher than that of women (51.0%). The greatest economic activity is in the 30-44 age group. As regards the education level, the highest rate of economic activity was reported in 2002 by university-educated persons, the lowest one by persons with basic-school education only. The long-term decline in economic activity in the Czech Republic reflects demographic trends: the population is ageing.

Table No. 1: Economic Activity by Age and Gender in 2002 (in %)

Gender	Total	Age Group			
		15 - 29	30 - 44	45 - 59	60 +
Total	59.9	55.5	90.5	80.1	8.4
Men	69.4	64.0	96.9	88.4	13.6
Women	51.0	46.6	83.9	72.1	4.8

Source: CZSO - LFSS

Table No. 2: Economic Activity by Education in 2002 (in %)

Gender	Total	Education			
		Basic School	Secondary School Without Leaving Examination	Secondary School With Leaving Examination	University
Total	59.9	26.6	70.3	69.8	80.1
Men	69.4	33.5	78.4	75.2	82.3
Women	51.0	23.0	58.8	82.3	77.0

Source: CZSO - LFSS

Economic activity rate has traditionally been high in the Czech Republic, remaining among the highest in Europe. In European Union Member States, economic activity (EU methodology) in the year 2001 was 69.2%⁴ on average. In 2002, economic activity rate (EU methodology) was 70.9% in the Czech Republic (78.9% for men and 62.8% for women).

Employment rate for the population in productive age (15-64) has fallen during the transformation period. In the year 2000 it fell 0.7%, from 65.9% in 1999 to 65.2%. The greatest impact on that fall was the reduction in employment in the youngest age group, 15-24, where there was a 1.9% fall. That was primarily due to the extension in compulsory school attendance introduced in 1996, which extended the time of preparation for employment. In 2002 employment rate increased slightly to 65.7%. Employment rate in the Czech Republic is better than the EU average of 63.9% in 2001.

Table No. 3: Employment and Economic Activity in the Czech Republic

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Employment ^{*)}	69.0	69.2	69.4	69.3	68.7	67.5	65.9	65.2	65.3	65.7
Economic activity ^{**)}	61.4	61.6	61.5	61.2	61.1	61.0	61.0	60.4	60.0	59.9
Economic activity ^{***)}	72.1	72.4	72.3	72.1	72.1	72.2	72.2	71.6	71.1	70.9

^{*)} employment in age group 15-64 as a percentage of population in age group 15-64
^{**)} workforce as a percentage of the population aged 15+ (CZSO - ILO methodology)
^{***)} workforce as a percentage of the population aged 15-64 (EU methodology)

Source: CZSO - LFSS (MoLSA calculations)

⁴ Employment in Europe 2002, European Commission

Employment by Sector

Employment rose in absolute values in all three sectors of national economy; the growth was significant, however, in the sector of services only. Individual sectors' proportions in total employment reported just minor changes.

In the year 2002 employment in the primary sector increased up to 228,200 persons, which is an increase by 2,800 persons. The primary sector's proportion in total employment accounts for 4.8%.

Employment in the secondary sector was 1,900,800 persons, i.e. employment rose by 300 persons. The proportion of that sector is 39.6%. Employment in the tertiary sector rose by 41,100 persons as compared to the year 2001 (an increase by 1.6%) up to 2,666,900 persons. The sector's proportion is 55.6%.

The tertiary sector in the Czech Republic lagged behind advanced countries (EU Member States had an average of 69.4% in 2001). The sector does, however, promise to absorb the workforce into strategic services, IT and e-business, and employment in the sector is expected to increase by 1-2% in the near future.

Employment Types

4,561,900 persons, i.e. an increase by 109,900 (including an increase by 59,800 in the category of women) as compared to the year 2001, worked full-time in their main jobs. 231,400 persons, i.e. more by 4,500, were employed part-time. Three-quarters of those employed part-time are women. The number of people working in a second (additional) job, alongside their main job, again slightly declined, down 2,300 on the previous year to 116,000 (the number of women decreased by 4,600). Men accounted for 62.5% of people thus employed. Unlike in their main jobs, employment for a fixed period is much more common here.

Wages

The average nominal wage in national economy rose 7.3% in 2002 on the same period in the previous year (up CZK 1,067 to CZK 15,707), with the real gross wage up 5.4%. In the business sector, the average nominal wage rose 6.7% (CZK 1,011) to CZK 16,016, with the real wage up 4.8%. In the non-business sector, the average wage rose 10.0% (CZK 1,314) to CZK 14,476, with the real wage up 8.1%. Similarly to the year 2001, the intensity of the earning growth in the non-business sector (budget and contribution organisations) was higher rather than the dynamics in the business sector.

Against the same period in the year 2001, in 2002 the differentiation between wages became more marked in all cross-sections (sector, ownership type, region). According to estimates, the average wage for men is approximately 34% higher than the average wage for women (data for the year 2001).

Changes in Unemployment Trends

There was a short turn-around in developments on the labour market in the year 2000. Unemployment⁵ at 31 December 2000 was 8.8% (approx. 457.4 thousand people), down 0.6% on the 1999 year-end figure. The relatively favourable development continued until November 2001. There was a marked rise in unemployment in December 2001, reaching 8.9% at 31 December 2001 (in absolute terms, 461.900 job-seekers). In comparison with the end of the year 2000, that was a 0.1% increase. Average registered unemployment in the year 2001, especially due to lower values of unemployment in the first half of the year 2001, was 8.5% which is a drop by 0.5 point to the year 2000.

Due to the seasonal factors occurring on a regular basis, unemployment during the year 2002 developed similarly to the preceding period. A month-to-month increase in unemployment was reported in January, June, July, August and December. The development of unemployment was adversely affected by the usual wind-down in seasonal work in the year-end, which resulted in a month-to-month growth in unemployment in January from 8.9% to 9.4%. New graduates and school leavers appeared in Labour Offices' records in June already. In June, unemployment increased the month-to-month from 8.6% to 8.7%.

Unemployment increased until August when it achieved 9.4%. In the autumn, the level of unemployment was almost stable and did not grow until December when a month-to-month increase by 0.5% was reported, accounting for 9.8% unemployment, which is the highest level in 2002. The reasons included, above all, the arrival of job seekers due to the wind-up of seasonal work (especially in the agriculture, building industry, trade and services) and publicly beneficial work, as well as the usual practice of employers to terminate contracts in the year-end. Average registered unemployment in 2002 in the Czech Republic achieved 9.2%.

Unemployment in the Czech Republic in the year 2001 was slightly higher than the average for the EU 15 countries (Czech Republic 8.0%, EU 7.4%), although it is much lower in some EU states (e.g. Luxembourg 2.0%, Netherlands 2.4%, Austria 3.6%). Unemployment in the Czech Republic is, however, lower than in other transformation economies, e.g. Bulgaria (19.9%), Slovakia (19.4%) and Poland (18.4%).⁶

Great movement remains evident on the labour market. In the year 2001 653,600 new job seekers were registered, compared with 667,400 in 2002, more by 23,800, i.e. 3.6%. The year-to-year increase was due mainly to the higher number of the newly registered in the first half of 2002 (320,900) – the number of newly registered persons in the first half of the year 2001 was 307,200. In the second half of the year 2002, the number of the registered slightly increased (from 346,400 in the second half of 2001 to 356,500 in the second half of the year 2002). On the other hand, the number of job seekers taken off the records slightly decreased. In the year 2001, 649,000 job seekers were taken off the records, with 461,400 finding employment, and in 2002 the figure was 624,900 (a decrease by 3.7%), with 446,500 going back

⁵ Data on unemployment, if not stated otherwise, comes from MoLSA statistics. CZSO (LFSS) statistics can be used for international comparison and MoLSA statistics based on the number of registered unemployed persons are more suitable for analyses of the labour market on the national level.

⁶ Employment in Europe 2002, European Commission, July 2001 (Labour Force Sample Survey)

to work. Compared to the previous year, the figures were lower in both parts of the year (the first half of the year 2001 – 344,300 persons taken off the records, the second half of 2001 – 304,800).

Vacancies

Less vacancies, a reflection of the slowed down economic growth, was a factor in relatively unfavourable trends for unemployment in 2002. The number of vacancies announced to Labour Offices rose from 52,060 at the end of the year 2000 to 52,084 at 31 December 2001. The number of vacancies at the end of the year 2002 was, however, only 40,651, which is 11,400 less to the same period in the preceding year. From the beginning of 2002 350,400 vacancies were announced to the Labour Offices (251,600 new vacancies in the year 2001). Nevertheless, the average number of vacancies announced to Labour Offices was lower in 2002 (48,600) than in 2001 (58,200), mainly due to the higher number of abolished jobs in 2002 (272,400) as compared to 2001 (168,700).

Specific Unemployment Rates

The proportion of unemployed women in the total number of registered job seekers at 31 December 2001 was 50.2%, decreasing slightly to 50.0% at 31 December 2002. The proportion of women in total employment in the year 2001 was 43.4%, and 43.3% in 2002. Unemployment is substantially higher among women (11.2% at 31 December 2002) than among men (8.7%).

In terms of age, unemployment is highest among young people under 25 (25.3% of the total number of job seekers). This high unemployment, 21.1% at 31 December 2001, is more than a double of total unemployment. (Note: Specific unemployment rate in this group is due to the growing number of young people in the education system.) Unemployment in the other age groups is mostly below the overall figure for unemployment.

Unemployment Among School Leavers

At 31 December 2001, 57,400 unemployed school leavers were recorded, rising to 59,900 at 31 December 2002. Their contribution to total unemployment is subject to seasonal factors in the course of the year, being highest in September and lowest in May.

In the year 2000 school leavers and young people accounted for 13.5% of total job seekers (12.0% in May, 15.5% in September and 12.7% in December). Developments in 2001 show a relative reduction in the average percentage of unemployed school leavers in total unemployment (12.3%) compared with previous years (May 10.2%, September 14.8% and December 12.4%). That trend is the outcome of introducing the compulsory 9th year in 1996, meaning that fewer school leavers joined the labour market in 2000 and 2001 than in previous years. The average proportion of school leavers in the total number of job seekers was 12.4% in 2002 (being lowest in May – 10.9% and highest in September – 15.2%), which is approximately the same level as that in 2001. The absolute number of school leavers, however, considerably increased the figure in 2001. Their monthly average number in 2002 was 59,000 (in 2001 – 54,800). At 31 December 2002, Labour Offices recorded 59,900 school leavers (at 31 December 2001 – 57,400).

The employment of school leavers from individual fields, particularly secondary schools, on the labour market cannot be judged by the total numbers of unemployed school leavers from those fields. The risks facing school leavers from individual fields on the labour market have to be assessed in terms of their specific unemployment rates (the proportion of unemployed school leavers to the total number of school leavers in a given field).

Unemployment Among Disadvantaged Groups

Key disadvantaged groups are: school leavers and young people (11.6% of total unemployment at the end of 2002); the disabled (13.3% at the end of 2002); people aged over 50 (19.4% at the end of 2002) and people with small children.

Unemployment among the disabled is a serious problem, as the figure rose from 20,016 at the end of 1993 to 59,025 at the end of the year 2000. At the end of 2001 the number was 61,518, at 31 December 2002 the number of the unemployed disabled increased up to 66,907, which is 5,389 up the same period in the preceding year. One problem is the substantial shortfall of vacancies suitable for this group (only 1,747 vacancies at the end of 2002, so there are 38.3 disabled job seekers for each vacancy).

Long-term Unemployment

The number and proportion of long-term unemployed job seekers (unemployed for more than 12 months) has increased in recent years, in line with rising unemployment. The number of such job seekers rose from approx. 36 thousand in 1995 to over double that figure in 1998 (87 thousand). In 1999 the number of long-term unemployed job seekers rose markedly - while the total number of job seekers rose 26%, the number of long-term unemployed job seekers rose 67%, reaching 144,700. At 31 December 2000 this increase halted at 175,600, falling to 171,200 at 31 December 2001 and rising again to 191,300 at 31 December 2002. Their proportion of total job seekers followed a similar trend, rising from 20.2% in 1996 to 38.4% in the year 2000. That figure fell to 37.1% at 31 December 2001 and slightly increased to 37.2% at 31 December 2002.

If we add job seekers unemployed for 6 - 12 months to the long-term unemployed (over 12 months), at the end of the year 2001 all those job seekers accounted for 54.9% of total unemployment, rising to 56.4% at 31 December 2002. In absolute terms, that represents a moderate increase from 253,400 to 290,100 people.

The average period of registered unemployment continues to increase, from 9.5 months in 1998 to 15.3 months at 31 December 2001 and 16.1 months 31 December 2002. The period of an average terminated registration rose from 4.7 months in 1998 to 7.1 months in 2001 and 7.3 months in 2002.

For the most part, long-term unemployed job seekers face various handicaps, coming from their personal, educational, working and social characteristics, and their low level of motivation to work. In terms of individual groups of job seekers, this involves unskilled citizens, young people (without qualifications), the disabled, women with young children or people released from prison. In terms of nationality, the Romany often face long-term unemployment. Long-term unemployment among women is higher than among men, with women accounting for 52.2% of long-term

unemployment over 6 months and 51.9% of long-term unemployment over 12 months, and they account for 50.0% of total unemployment (at 31 December 2002).

Long-term unemployment (over 12 months) is strongly determined by education. The percentage of job-seekers⁷ with primary and lower secondary education unemployed for over 12 months (compared with the total number of job seekers with that level of education) comes to approximately 66.9%, while the figure for secondary vocational education without a school-leaving examination is 48.9%, 41.0% for secondary vocational education with a school-leaving examination and general education with a school-leaving examination, and 24.0% for university education.

In terms of age, the most problematic group is young people aged up to 25, who account for 25.3% of all unemployed people. There are increasing trends towards long-term unemployment among older age groups and disabled people. The proportion of unemployed disabled citizens is practically the same throughout the country, while for older people, long-term unemployment is higher in regions with a lower level of unemployment.

Comparisons with Other Countries

Despite the increasing proportion of long-term unemployment (over 12 months) in the Czech Republic, until 1999 that figure was lower than the European Union average. Unemployment has fallen in the EU since 1994, along with the proportion of those unemployed for more than 1 year. Long-term unemployment accounts for 3.3% of the workforce.

There are, however, significant differences between individual EU Member States. Four Member States were above the EU average (the highest level being in Italy – 5.9%, Greece – 5.4%). Four countries reported long-term unemployment below 1% (the lowest level was in Luxembourg – 0.5%).

⁷ Data from CZSO selective studies of the workforce.

Table Nos. 4 and 5: Long-term Unemployment (LTE) in the EU and the Czech Republic

EU	1994	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Workforce (thou.)	167 108	168 418	169 294	170 325	171 262	178 887	180 518
LTE as % of the workforce	5.3	5.3	5.2	4.7	4.1	3.6	3.3
Unemployment (%)	11.1	10.8	10.6	9.9	9.1	8.2	7.4

Source: Employment in Europe 2002, European Commission

CR	1994	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Workforce (thou.)	5 148	5 174	5 185	5 201	5 218	5 186	5 171
LTE as % of the workforce	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.9	3.1	4.1	4.2
Unemployment (%)	4.3	3.9	4.8	6.5	8.7	8.8	8.1

Source: CZSO - LFSS – Labour Market in the CR

In the transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the proportion of long-term unemployment in eight countries was higher than the EU average (the highest level being in Bulgaria – 12.5% and Slovakia – 11.3%). Figures were more positive only in Hungary (2.5%) and Romania (3.2% of the workforce). In the majority of EU states long-term unemployment has followed a downward trend and is below 1980s figures. In the transition countries, other than Hungary, it is rising, as is the case in the Czech Republic.

Regional Unemployment

Average unemployment rate hides substantial differences in unemployment between individual districts and regions⁸. At the end of 2002 registered unemployment in the Czech Republic was 9.8%, with the Prague - West district recording 2.8%, Prague - East 3.6%, Prague 3.7%, Benešov 3.9% and Pelhřimov 4.5%. Unemployment was over 12% in 21 districts, and was highest in Most (21.7%), Karviná (19.6%), Louny (18.6%), Teplice (18.2%), Chomutov (17.7%) and Ostrava (17.2%).

Long-term unemployment is highest (in absolute and relative figures) in districts with above-average unemployment due to the absolute shortfall of vacancies. Hardest hit by long-term unemployment are the Region of Moravia and Silesia (unemployment over six months 66.1%, over twelve months 46.6%), Region of Ústí (66.0% and 47.4%, respectively) and Region of Olomouc (57.5% and 38.8%, respectively) and the districts of Most (75.4%, 57.7%), Karviná (72.2%, 53.7%), Ostrava (68.7%, 49.4%), Teplice (68.5%, 50.4%), Ústí nad Labem (67.4%, 48.3%), Chomutov (65.9%, 45.9%), Frýdek-Místek (63.0%, 39.9%) and Louny (62.7%, 43.3%).

The lowest proportion of long-term job seekers is in districts with the lowest unemployment - Pelhřimov (30.5%, 13.9%), Benešov (31.9%, 12.7%) and Prague-West (33.0%, 16.3%). In terms of regions, those are South Bohemia (42.4%, 25.0%), Prague (43.0%, 23.3%) and Hradec Králové (45.8%, 25.8%).

⁸ Districts correspond to NUTS IV regional units, whereas regions to NUTS III units.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC BY THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE EQUAL THEMATIC FIELDS

This chapter analyses the situation in the labour market in the Czech Republic as regards thematic fields. It also specifies possible solutions, which development partnerships could further develop and test within the second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL.

The general description of the situation in the Czech labour market given in the preceding subchapter was taken over from the National Action Plan of Employment 2003. The analysis in this chapter follows up and complements the description as regards all nine thematic fields laid down for the Community Initiative EQUAL. The aim of socio-economic analyses preparation was to define main forms of discrimination and inequalities in relation to the respective EQUAL thematic fields. It is obvious that there are multiplied disadvantages in some cases (as mentioned in the text of socio-economic analyses) but this level of details will be provided in the application forms and assessed before the Action 1 starts.

The analysis of the situation in the Czech labour market given below uses partially the data prepared already for the implementation of CI EQUAL first round in the Czech Republic. Those data include documents used in the selection of thematic fields for CI EQUAL first round in the Czech Republic and partial outputs of DPs implemented during CI EQUAL first round in the Czech Republic. The thematic fields under CI EQUAL first round in the Czech Republic are listed in Annex No. 3.

All the data, where available, are presented in this chapter broken down by gender (as during the preparation of the CIP EQUAL the co-operation with national co-ordinator for the equal opportunities policy has been developed). But as the data broken down by gender are not always fully available, the Managing Authority will ensure that specific actions targeting on their collection will be planned and implemented within the overall evaluation strategy (which is considered to be developed as soon as the CIP EQUAL will be adopted by the European Commission and the Programming Complement will be adopted by the Monitoring Committee and realised during the whole programming period).

Given for each disadvantaged group within thematic fields, there are also main barriers preventing that group's access to the labour market. Nevertheless, because of the objective of the Community Initiative EQUAL, which is to promote new means of combating discrimination and inequalities in the labour market, some applicants can be expected to define in their application forms the main barriers in a different way. That is why the listed main barriers should not be considered as final and completely exhaustive.

Descriptions of some thematic fields are supplemented with possible ways of solution; nevertheless, it is the responsibility of applicants to propose the way of solution for respective issues. That is why potential solutions are not necessarily given for all thematic fields and the listed proposals do not have to be considered as completely exhaustive.

2.2.1. FACILITATING ACCESS AND RETURN TO THE LABOUR MARKET FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIFFICULTY IN BEING INTEGRATED OR RE-INTEGRATED INTO A LABOUR MARKET

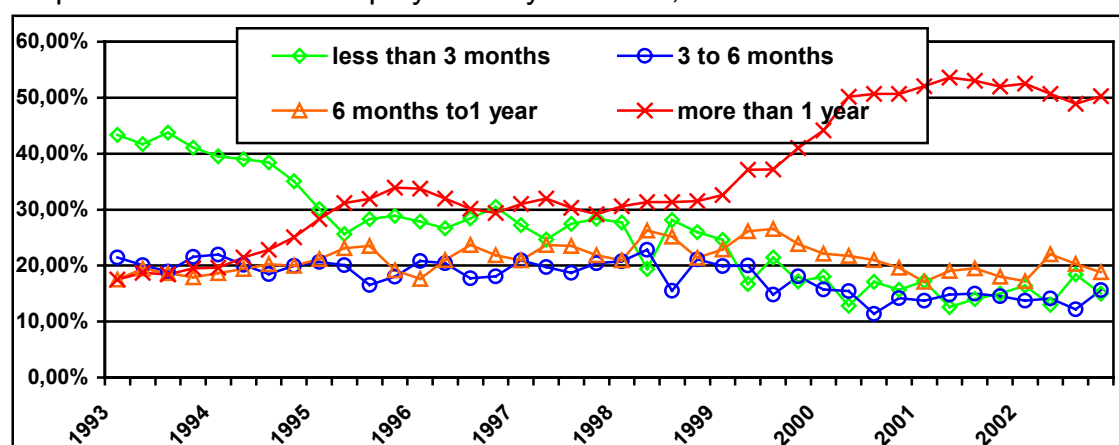
The persons suffering from disadvantaged positions in the labour market usually feature a low level of education, insufficient motivation to improve their education, little stimulating social background and health problems. Each disadvantaged group features specific risks that will be described in the analysis below.

A) Long-term Unemployment

Long-term unemployment (i.e. over one year) and repeated unemployment have recently become a very serious problem in the Czech Republic. Problematic is, above all, cumulated unemployment in certain social groups and age categories.

The situation in the Czech Republic indicates that the proportion of the long-term unemployed – in contrast to the other groups of job seekers – does not decrease even in the periods of economic revival. Long-term unemployment rose from 18% in 1993 up to 51% in 2002. According to CZSO data, the number of the long-term unemployed was 37,400 in 1993, 98,900 in 1998 and as many as 190,800 in 2002.

Graph: Structure of Unemployment by Duration, 1993–2002



Source: CZSO - LFSS,

The graph shows the long-term trend in the growing number of long-term unemployment in total unemployment as described in the paragraph above.

The table below gives a survey of long-term unemployment by Czech regions (NUTS III) at the end of the year 2002, including data on the highest and lowest levels of long-term unemployment in districts (NUTS IV) according to data from Labour Offices.

Since data can be collected from two different sources, from the Czech Statistical Office and from Labour Offices and their methodologies differ, the data on the proportion of long-term unemployment will be lower in the table below (for the Czech Republic, 51% according to CZSO, 37.2% according to LOs). The Czech Statistical Office uses LFSS method; Labour Offices use the number of recorded job seekers. Since CZSO (LFSS) statistics make it possible to prepare international comparisons and MoLSA statistics are better for analysing the labour market on the national level, data from both sources are given for objectiveness.

Table No. 6: Survey of Long-term Unemployment by Regions, data as at the end of 2002

	Unemployment rate in %	Long-term unemployment as percentage of total unemployment	Long-term unemployed	District with the highest percentage of long-term unemployed in total unemployment in the region	District with the lowest percentage of long-term unemployed in total unemployment in the region
Region					
Prague	3.7	23.3	5 515	Praha 7 – 29.7	Praha 5 – 13.8
Central Bohemia	7.2	32.1	13 422	Kladno 40.3	Benešov 12.7
South Bohemia	6.7	25	5 288	Strakonice. Český Krumlov 32.8	České Budějovice 17.9
Plzeň	7.1	31.8	6 431	Tachov 40	Plzeň-jih 23.7
Karlovy Vary	10.1	38.1	6 132	Karlovy Vary 42.6	Cheb 24.4
Ústí	17.1	47.6	35 109	Most 57.7	Litoměřice 37.6
Liberec	8.7	30.1	5 825	Liberec 33	Česká Lípa 26.2
Hradec Králové	7.3	25.8	5 290	Trutnov 30.1	Rychnov n. K. 18.9
Pardubice	8.7	31.3	6 916	Svitavy 38.2	Pardubice 23.1
Vysočina	8.3	29.8	6 428	Třebíč 33.8	Pelhřimov 13.9
South Moravia	11.2	35.5	22 659	Hodonín 40	Znojmo 29.1
Zlín	10.2	33.2	9 866	Vsetín 38.6	Uherské Hradiště 29.2
Moravia-Silesia	15.9	46.6	47 169	Karviná 53.7	Frydek-Místek 39.9
Olomouc	12.2	38.8	15 277	Přerov 42.7	Jeseník 32.0
Total Czech Republic	9.8	37.2	191 327		

Source: MoLSA – ESA, Czech Labour Market Statistical Annual Bulletin 2002; Labour Office Prague

As regards the level of education, the highest probability to stay in long-term unemployment is among persons with primary education (67% of the long-term unemployed are persons with primary education only).

Typically, the long-term unemployed are characterised by their low level of education. According to CZSO LFSS, 77% of the long-term unemployed were persons with primary education or secondary education without a school-leaving examination. In the year 2002 32% of the long-term unemployed were persons with primary education and 45% persons with secondary education without a school-leaving examination. 20% of the long-term unemployed had secondary education with a leaving examination and 3% of the category were university-educated people.

The low level of education makes it difficult to gain further skills that can be used in the labour market. Since no specific measures exist to support the access to further education for the long-term unemployed, that group's participation in re-qualification training courses organised by Labour Offices are absolutely insufficient (see 2.2.5).

As regards the proportions of long-term unemployed women and men, long-term unemployment is a higher risk for women. The proportion of women unemployed for over twelve months is about 55%.

Disability is a significant handicap in the labour market, too. According to Labour Offices, approximately two-thirds of the disabled unemployed were unemployed for over twelve months.

Main barriers in the access to the labour market:

- Cumulated disadvantage of different types is the gravest problem concentrating in long-term unemployment (low education, disability, age). The low level of education, however, becomes a prevailing sign in the group of the long-term unemployed;
- Low motivation to work due to the existing set up of the social care system;
- The insufficient implementation of regional and local partnerships resulting in a shortfall of adequate qualification programmes customised to specific requirements of regional employers.

Possible solutions which EQUAL DPs could develop and test within the second round:

- The solution is based on targeted and individualised consultancy stimulating motivation and activation of each individual, including specialised and customised qualification activities resulting in that individual's employment and in the increase in employment. It is also essential to set up the social system in such a way that the unemployed are better off if they work.

B) Older Persons

The signs of population ageing are more dynamic from the nineties and the future prospects are even less favourable. Currently, the proportion of persons aged 50-65 years in the total number of inhabitants is 20%; their percentage in the labour force in national economy is 23%. The proportion of the unemployed aged 50-65 significantly rose from 12% in 1993 up to 17% in 2002. Whereas the figure for that category was 27,300 in 1993, the number of the unemployed aged 50-65 was 65,900 in 2002. As regards the situation of older women and men, the number of the unemployed in that age category is more or less the same.

Economic activity of the age group 50-65 years increased in 1993-2000 by 16% (mainly due to the higher age limit for retirement), but the proportion of women in that age category (probably because of the opportunity to use premature retirement) features a decreasing trend (declining from 52.7% in 1995 to 44.8% in 2000). Unemployment among persons aged over 50 does not currently exceed the general level of unemployment – 5.2% according to CZSO, approx. 8% according to LOs. That is because the relatively high economic activity in that age category reduces unemployment. Another aspect is that many persons aged over 50 prefer premature retirement to looking for a new job. Considering the population ageing trend and the ever more dynamic character of economy that will be based on state-of-the-art technologies, older persons can be expected to face more difficulties in finding job. Unemployment among older persons can also increase due to the increasing age limit for retirement because the still higher age will result in fewer chances in the labour market.

Table No. 7 shows the proportion of persons aged over 50 in registered unemployment by regions and districts featuring the best and worst situations. Unlike in districts where the proportion of unemployment among older persons is higher in

places with lower unemployment and vice versa, no significant differences can be seen among regions. The proportion of women in the number of the unemployed aged over 50 is slightly below 50%; that does not mean, however, that their position in the labour market is better than that of men. Because of worse prospects to find job, older women often retire prematurely, thus decreasing the number of older unemployed women.

Table No. 7: Unemployment Among Persons Aged Over 50 by Regions, as at the end of 2002⁹

Region	Unemployment rate in %	Proportion of persons over 50 in registered unemployment in %	Proportion of women in the unemployed aged over 50	District with the highest proportion of persons over 50 in registered unemployment in the region in %	District with the lowest proportion of persons over 50 in registered unemployment in the region in %
Prague	3.7	23.8	49.9	Prague 1 – 29.6	Prague 5 – 18.5
Central Bohemia	7.2	20.3	50.0	Prague – West – 25.6	Kladno, Benešov 18.3
South Bohemia	6.7	18.4	48.4	Č. Krumlov – 20.6	Č. Budějovice – 16.1
Plzeň	7.1	21.3	45.3	Rokycany – 24.2	Plzeň – sever -20
Karlovy Vary	10.1	18.7	43.3	Cheb – 22.9	Sokolov – 14.6
Ústí	17.1	18.1	48.7	Litoměřice – 20.6	Most - 15.8
Liberec	8.7	19.6	48.1	Liberec – 23.1	Jablonec n. N. – 13.5
Hradec Králové	7.3	19.6	48.3	Trutnov – 22.8	Náchod – 16.5
Pardubice	8.7	20.3	46.3	Pardubice – 22.4	Ústí n. O. –18.6
Vysočina	8.3	17.8	49.0	Havlíčkův Brod – 20.9	Žďár n. Sázavou – 15.0
South Moravia	11.2	18.9	45.2	Znojmo - 21.5	Hodonín – 17.2
Zlín	10.2	19.9	43.3	Uherské Hradiště - 20.9	Kroměříž 17.8
Moravia-Silesia	15.9	19.1	46.6	Frydek-Místek – 22.0	Opava – 17.5
Olomouc	12.2	19.7	45.5	Olomouc – 20.6	Šumperk – 17.7
Total Czech Republic	9.8	19.4	46.9		

Source: MoLSA – ESA, Labour Office Prague

The chances to find job for persons in the higher age category depend on their skills and adaptability to the present requirements of the labour market. Employers tend to consider unemployed persons aged over 50 as less flexible, unwilling to learn and refusing in general any changes in profession.

Job seekers in that age category are usually less adaptable to new requirements of the labour market and less interested in re-qualification. They fear re-qualification, which reminds them of school. Besides, employers mistrust older re-qualified job seekers and prefer school leavers with practice in the branch and younger re-qualified persons to the older ones. Labour Offices offer re-qualification to those job seekers less frequently because the probability of failure is high – those job seekers do not believe in themselves, being unwilling to work on themselves.

When hiring new workers, employers prefer younger age groups. There are several reasons for that. Older employees are expected to ask for higher salaries on grounds of long practice, feature undesirable habits formed during their long career and health

⁹ Differences between the data in the table and the data in the preceding text are again caused by different methodologies used by CZSO and LOs.

problems reducing their work ability. Working in one profession for most part of one's life often resulted (in spite of long practice) in limited work skills and experience.

Labour Offices meet in general with unwillingness of employers to modify in any way whatsoever working hours. There are relatively few employers who are willing to allow part-time work. The option to employ more part-time workers per job is not used in the practice, although part-time work is a promising way for older persons who can gradually retire in this way and their employers can maintain continuity and have young workers settle down to new job. The government should support the employers who create conditions for such employment. Since money was often spent in the past in an inefficient way, the success and efficiency of funds spent both directly and indirectly in this way should be carefully assessed.

Main barriers in the access to the labour market:

- The main risk of the group is that released workers in that age category mostly face difficulties in finding new job. That is mostly because those job seekers, compared to the younger generation featuring higher education as a result of the social development leading to higher education, include a considerable proportion of low-educated persons, persons with health problems and persons in professions that are little demanded in the labour market;
- Main barriers include a shortfall of the adequate offer of suitable re-qualification courses for older persons;
- Lacking information and preventive measures in the field of acquiring new demanded skills and vocational knowledge to maintain job or prepare for further profession form an obstacle, too.

Possible solutions which EQUAL DPs could develop and test within the second round:

- It is essential to offer consultancy for older persons with qualified accompanying services for maintaining or looking for new job and to support employers that are willing to employ part time older persons by means of creating labour and legal conditions;
- Support motivation of older persons to remain in the labour market;
- Support motivation of employers to keep older workers and create more favourable conditions for keeping and hiring older workers;
- Solve the issue of age discrimination at workplaces and in the labour market.

C) School-leavers

Young people often feature an unstable system of values, they are easy to influence, they quickly adapt and get used to life without regular work and duties. The longer the period of unemployment, the higher the undesirable effects, such as the lower motivation to work, increasing apathy and loss of self-esteem including their reduced activity in looking for job on their own, lower chances in the labour market due to lost technical and theoretical knowledge and skills gained during the studies, a dangerous example for peers or their engagement in grey economy.

Unemployment rate of young people is permanently high, being double the average level of unemployment. It should be noted that the reason for high unemployment consists in the low proportion of young people in the economically active persons also because they are in schools. At 30 September 2002, Labour Offices registered

74,836 school-leavers and juveniles (i.e. 15.2%). Their average monthly number was 59,000 in 2002. According to the survey of September 2002, the largest group of school-leavers and juveniles consisted of those leaving apprentice centres (33.1%) and secondary technical schools with a school-leaving examination (26.2%). The juveniles educated only in basic or special schools (or with partial primary education) form the most risky group entering the labour market (7.6%). The table below shows proportions of school-leavers and juveniles in total unemployment by regions. In that aspect, the worst situation is in the regions of Vysočina, Moravia-Silesia, South Bohemia and Zlín, which is due both to the inadequate structure of the system of secondary schools (e.g. Moravia-Silesia), and to the rural character of the regional settlement (e.g. Vysočina). The table does not include data on female school-leavers and juveniles because no such data are available.

Table No. 8: Proportion of School-leavers and Juveniles in Unemployment by Regions, as at the end of 2002

Region	Unemployment rate in %	Proportion of school-leavers and juveniles in registered unemployment in %	District with the highest proportion of school-leavers and juveniles in registered unemployment in the region in %	District with the lowest proportion of school-leavers and juveniles in registered unemployment in the region in %
Prague	3.7	9	Prague 5 – 11.8	Prague 1 – 5.7
Central Bohemia	7.2	12.1	Benešov – 15.9	Mělník – 9.8
South Bohemia	6.7	13.3	České Budějovice - 15.8	Prachatice – 10.9
Plzeň	7.1	10.2	Plzeň-sever – 11.9	Tachov – 7.6
Karlovy Vary	10.1	10.7	Karlovy Vary – 11.5	Sokolov – 10.1
Ústí	17.1	8.8	Litoměřice – 14.0	Louny 6.9
Liberec	8.7	11.3	Jablonec n. N. – 15.0	Česká Lípa – 9.4
Hradec Králové	7.3	11.6	Náchod – 14.2	Hradec Králové – 9.7
Pardubice	8.7	11.5	Pardubice - 12.5	Svitavy, Ústí n. O. – 10.9
Vysočina	8.3	14.4	Pelhřimov – 17.5	Třebíč – 13.7
South Moravia	11.2	11.1	Hodonín 13.5	Znojmo – 9.1
Zlín	10.2	13.2	Kroměříž – 17.1	Zlín – 9.6
Moravia-Silesia	15.9	13.4	Karviná – 18.0	Bruntál – 8.4
Olomouc	12.2	12.3	Přerov – 15.6	Jeseník – 9.8
Total Czech Republic	9.8	11.6		

Source: MoLSA – ESA, Labour Office Prague

The insufficiently flexible school system in relation to the needs of the labour market is an aspect in unemployment of school-leavers. Significant problems can be found in branch structures of secondary schools in the regions of Ústí and Moravia-Silesia, which also report the highest level of unemployment among secondary-school leavers. Unemployment among school-leavers is quite high also in the region of Olomouc. Insufficient practical lessons also form a big problem for school-leavers. More than fifty percent of apprentices, for example, never enter during their apprenticeship the real working environment. It is also essential that the contents and method of teaching support the following skills: general knowledge, flexibility, teamwork, because those are the skills, which are required by current employers.

The big disadvantage on the part of school-leavers is the absence of practice, which usually causes lower productivity in the first months after hiring.

Another obstacle for joining the labour market, especially for women, is the probability of parental leave.

Most school-leavers lack the ability to orientate quickly in the market, lack sufficient information, contacts and necessary financial capital for setting up in business. They also lack necessary practice in the branch, which is a prerequisite for being granted a business license for most business activities.

Main barriers in the access to the labour market:

- The big disadvantage on the part of school-leavers is the insufficient or lacking vocational practice, which usually causes lower productivity and, consequently, lower remuneration than they expect;
- The barrier, especially for women, is the probability of parental leave and subsequent care for children;
- Obstacles also include the slow response of the educational system (especially of basic and secondary schools) to both current and expected social needs, as well as insufficient involvement of social partners, which results, amongst other, in the qualification structure of school-leavers being inadequate to that required in the labour market.

Possible solutions which EQUAL DPs could develop and test within the second round:

- Support the gaining of so-called key competences within initial education (knowledge of foreign languages, IT, etc.) in order to help the school-leavers to find a suitable job;
- Good services within the system of career guidance as early as during the studies and within the consultancy system of employment services after graduation play an important role in the orientation of young people. The aim of this solution is good awareness.
- Development of social measures to motivate the school-leavers not to stay outside the labour market.

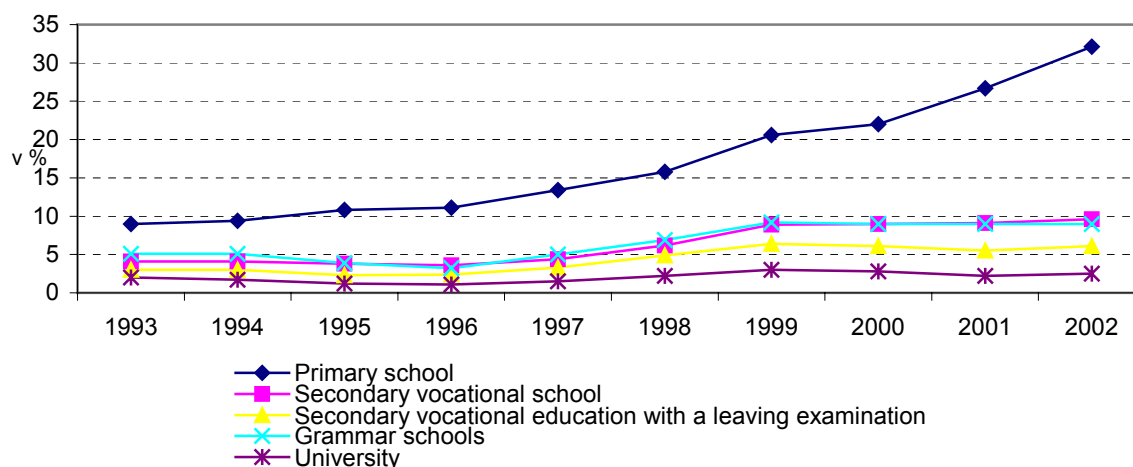
D) Persons with Low Qualification

The unemployed without education or with primary education only who account for a third of persons registered by Labour Offices form a problematic group.

Unemployment in this education group keeps sharply growing from 1993 – according to LO data, that type of unemployment was 32.1% at the end of 2002. Unemployment of low-qualified persons by regions ranges between 20.1% and 48.8%.

The graph below shows the unfavourable trend in unemployment among persons with primary education according to CZSO data. Because of the different methodology, unemployment is lower and the group is excluding persons without education.

Graph: Unemployment by Education in 1993 - 2002



Source: CZSO - LFSS

The survey of unemployed persons without completed education and with primary education only by regions is given in the table below. Differences in the proportion of low-qualified persons in regions are due to the disproportions in the qualification and profession structure in individual regions due to the concentration of certain heavy industries. Women are represented in that group of the unemployed slightly above the average value (except for the region of Karlovy Vary), the proportion of women in the regions with high unemployment is lower.

Table No. 9: Unemployment in the Category of Persons Without Completed Education and with Primary Education by Regions, as at the end of 2002

Region	Unemployment rate in %	Proportion of low-qualified persons in unemployment in %	Proportion of women in the category of low-qualified persons in %	District with the highest proportion of low-qualified persons in unemployment in the region in %	District with the lowest proportion of low-qualified persons in unemployment in the region in %	Commentary
Prague	3.7	20.1	52.9	Prague 7 – 30.7	Prague 6 – 15.4	One of the lowest proportions in the Czech Republic
Central Bohemia	7.2	33.4	54.4	Kladno – 43.1	Benešov – 20.5	
South Bohemia	6.7	28.5	54.3	Český Krumlov – 41.1	Tábor – 22.0	
Plzeň	7.1	33.1	51.1	Tachov – 43.4	Klatovy – 29.0	
Karlovy Vary	10.1	48.8	45.8	Sokolov – 55.8	Cheb – 42.6	The highest proportion in the Czech Republic
Ústí	17.1	43.3	50.2	Teplice – 47.2	Litoměřice 33.3	
Liberec	8.7	34.8	51.4	Česká Lípa – 40.3	Semily – 25.6	
Hradec Králové	7.3	29.5	51.1	Náchod – 32.1	Rychnov nad Kněžnou – 28.0	
Pardubice	8.7	27.5	51.4	Ústí n. O. – 30.6	Svitavy – 25.9	
Vysočina	8.3	20.9	55.5	Jihlava – 26.5	Žďár n. S. – 17.2	One of the

						lowest proportions in the Czech Republic
South Moravia	11.2	27.6	53.4	Břeclav – 30.9	Blansko 23.3	
Zlín	10.2	22.3	53.4	Zlín. Kroměříž – 23.0	Uherské Hradiště 21.3	
Moravia-Silesia	15.9	31.8	50.3	Ostrava-město – 36.7	Frýdek-Místek – 22.1	Affected by the former structure of industries for the unqualified
Olomouc	12.2	27.9	51.1	Jeseník – 33.8	Olomouc. Prostějov – 26.3	
Total Czech Republic	9.8	31.5	51.4			

Source: MoLSA – ESA, Labour Office Prague

Low qualification results not only in the limited access to jobs that require at least basic professional preparation, but also in adverse social effects, such as the inability to solve problems on one's own and reliance on external assistance. Some low-qualified persons even have unrealistic salary expectations, especially those who had worked for long time in the mining industry or metallurgy. Because of the social system set-up, which offers relatively easily certain types of benefits, those persons often prefer being on the welfare rather than work.

The juveniles with primary education only, i.e. early school leavers, form a specific problem. Current educational opportunities for those persons are not usually attractive on time or organisation grounds or are not easily accessible.

The following groups can be considered as most at risk of early school-leaving:

- Students in basic schools coming from socially weak or affected families or from different social and cultural environments;
- Pupils in secondary schools who have unrealistic ideas of their future profession or face difficulties during their studies in selected higher education branches.

Table No. 10: Proportion of Endangered Groups of Pupils and Young Job Seekers in the Population

Category	Number	
	Men	Women
Pupils at risk of leaving early the compulsory school	4 % of the total number of boys (basic-school pupils)	3 % of the total number of girls (basic-school pupils)
Pupils in apprenticeship centres (two-year branches for pupils without completed nine-year education)	0.7 % of the age-group	0.5 % of the age-group
Pupils leaving prematurely three-year branches in apprenticeship centres	1.5 % of the total number of boys	0.9 % of the total number of girls
Students leaving prematurely four-year branches in apprenticeship centres or secondary schools or integrated secondary schools	1.9 % of the total number of boys	0.8 % of the total number of girls
Pupils who did not start any secondary education, i.e. having primary education only	1.2 % of the age-group	0.9 % of the age-group
Young job seekers	2.3 % of the population aged 15–17	2.1 % of the population aged 15–17

Source: NIVE examination conducted as part of project preparations for CI EQUAL first round, 2002.

Education in basic and secondary schools is often burdened with too much information without evident links and examples of potential utilisation in the practical life; that is why it does not activate pupils. Individual needs of pupils are not answered in an adequately sensitive way, teachers and educational workers are not actively involved in the revival of the educational process. That is why some pupils are not motivated at all to stay in the educational process. Teaching subjects focusing on the improved orientation in the labour market are not yet offered into a sufficient extent and adequate quality, though such subjects are essential for pupils to form realistic ideas of their future professions. It is also essential that parents actively collaborate with the school so as to improve professional orientations of their children.

In case insufficient qualification is joined by another handicap, that group of people becomes practically unemployable. According to estimates, 14.9% of the total number of unemployed low-qualified job seekers feature a health handicap and 12% have children aged below 15 or seriously disabled family member in their care. Low-qualified job seekers meet with problems not only when looking for job, but also with maintaining job. 43% of those persons were registered by Labour Offices repeatedly, three or more times.

All available sources confirm the fact that the poor position in the labour market of non-qualified job seekers results from a shortfall of adequate jobs and, above all, from a significant reduction in their number during the nineties (when compared to the reduction in other types of jobs, the decrease in jobs for the non-qualified was faster). The attitude of employers indicates that those job seekers are too risky for them and it is the responsibility of state and educational institutions to integrate them in the labour market.

Because of the higher offer of the labour force, employers prefer skilled persons even for jobs with low qualification requirements to workers with primary education only. For the employer, the skilled person is a guaranty of the required quality of manufactured products, because such person can build on work experience and skills associated with work habits. Evidently, skilled job seekers will eliminate those without qualification as long as there are sufficient skilled unemployed persons in the labour market. Considerable opportunities of work in grey economy play an adverse role in their employability, too.

Main barriers in the access to the labour market:

- The main barrier to the integration in the labour market of that group of persons, which is their low qualification, results in the other obstacles, too: low motivation and ability to get rid of dependence on welfare benefits, low activity and lack of interest in gaining higher qualification and in finding job;
- Poor orientation in professions and poor motivation of basic and secondary school pupils who do not pay attention to the problem.

Possible solutions, which EQUAL DPs could develop and test within the second round:

- Potential long-term solutions include active work with job seekers, efficient support in qualification and work habit improvement of those persons, improvement of their work practice and assisted hiring. The consultancy, motivation and educational services for that group should respect their specific situation and include individual diagnosing, a modified methodology of qualification and re-qualification courses, the interconnection of work and educational activities. Such activities should respect the different situation of women and men, especially because women used to be employed in different professions than men;
- The basic measure reducing the risk of premature school leaving is to adapt the contents, form and methods of education to the specific needs of persons at that risk. Proposed measures are described, for example, in the Long-term Plan of Education and Educational System Development in the Czech Republic. A better orientation of basic-school pupils in ideas of their future professions should be enhanced by a complex consultancy system that could be easily used both by pupils and by career advisors. The Employment Services Administration publishes within NAPE the Atlas of Schools for pupils in the ninth grade of basic schools, listing all schools and study branches in each region, and the Calendar on the Road to Profession for pupils in the eighth grade of basic school, which is a guide of steps to be taken by the pupil so as to get a selected job. It is also essential that parents be involved in those activities. Endangered students of secondary schools might be helped by a modification in the studies, giving them an opportunity of completing their education on a lower level, i.e. complex blocks of studies, which would be accepted by the labour market and which would help those pupils looking for job;
- Create within the school system optimal conditions for the access to qualification using the formalisation of non-formal and informal education and formalisation of work experience gained in industries;
- Supported, probably in exceptional cases only, could be those persons' self-employment. The systematic support should, however, be more complex than

that rendered to qualified job seekers. In addition to qualification and motivation courses, the support should also include permanent consultancy services and monitoring, tutorship and marketing support by local bodies. If direct financial support is given to businesses of those persons, the aspect of efficient expenditures should be carefully observed;

- The improved position in the labour market for that groups of people could better motivate them to work. The key measure should consist in a significant differentiation between the amounts of welfare benefits and wages paid to those persons (close to minimal wages) and reduced availability of welfare benefits. Proposals for a complex solution of unemployment of low-qualified persons should, therefore, deal with those aspects, too.

E) Disabled Persons

The position in the labour market of disabled persons is very difficult. The total number of disabled persons aged over 15 was 471,900¹⁰ at the end of 2002, which accounts for 5.5% of the population in the respective age category. According to Labour Offices, there were 166,000 disabled persons. However, only 101,400 of that number are employed (approximately 2% of all unemployed persons). The earnings of those persons are very low, averaging 64% of the average wage in national economy¹¹.

Disabled persons accounted in 2002 for 13.4% of the unemployed registered by Labour Offices¹². Specific unemployment¹³ was almost 40% and the indicator keeps quickly growing. The number of unemployed disabled persons registered in the past years by Labour Offices rises, amounting to 66,900 at the end of the year 2002. Long-term unemployment is a very unpleasant aspect in the group of disabled persons and the duration of their unemployment keeps increasing. According to Labour Offices' estimates, 58% of the disabled unemployed were registered for over a year, whereas the same duration of unemployment for all unemployed persons (including disabled ones) was 36% in 2001 and 37.2% in 2002.

The situation of disabled women and men does not differ significantly in the Czech Republic. According to CZSO, women account for 44.7% in the number of disabled persons. The proportion of women in the region of Moravia-Silesia is one-third only, because disability in the region is more frequently associated with mining and metallurgic professions.

The structure of disabled persons evidently reflects the fact that most persons became disabled in their productive age, mainly due to working in mining and metallurgic professions. Most disabled persons are in the age group below 40, which is also reflected in the structure of registered unemployed persons (almost three-fourths of the disabled unemployed are aged over 40). The above-average numbers of persons have primary education only or, in the better case, secondary education

¹⁰ Labour force sample survey, 2002, CZSO. In addition to that ESA statistics report 385,000 persons receiving the full disability pension and 150,000 persons receiving the partial disability pension.

¹¹ RILSA survey conducted in 1996; the next survey was conducted in 2002.

¹² Labour Offices' data on the number of disabled unemployed persons are higher (averaging 63,800 in 2002) than the data reported by RILSA (37,200 persons only).

¹³ Calculated of the group of employed disabled persons according to RILSA and unemployed disabled persons registered by Labour Offices.

without a school-leaving examination (the two groups account for 86% of the disabled unemployed as compared to 73% in the average unemployed population).

The regional distribution of the disabled reflects the fact that most persons in the category come from the working-class environment from regions with heavy industries. The relation is not, however, clear. Economic activity and employment of disabled persons are associated, amongst other, with the development of the respective region. The proportion of disabled persons in total unemployment by regions is given in the table below.

Table No. 11: Proportion of the Disabled Persons in Total Unemployment by Regions, as the end of 2002

Region	Unemployment rate in %	Proportion of disabled persons in unemployment in % / Number of disabled unemployed persons	District with the highest proportion of disabled persons in unemployment in the region in %	District with the lowest proportion of disabled persons in unemployment in the region in %	Commentary
Prague	3.7	12.1 / 2 866	Prague 3 - 16.3	Prague 1 – 7.1	
Central Bohemia	7.2	13.4 / 5 603	Rakovník - 20.7	Beroun – 9.9	
South Bohemia	6.7	13.1 / 2 761	Prachatice – 18.5	Český Krumlov – 8.9	
Plzeň	7.1	13.2 / 2 663	Tachov – 18.3	Plzeň-sever – 7.8	
Karlovy Vary	10.1	10.1 / 1635	Cheb – 11.9	Sokolov – 8.7	The lowest proportion of the disabled in unemployment in the Czech Republic
Ústí	17.1	11.3 / 8 374	Liřim – 15.0	Chomutov – 8.5	
Liberec	8.7	13.7 / 2 643	Česká Lípa – 14.9	Semily – 10.4	
Hradec Králové	7.3	14 / 2 866	Rychnov n. K. – 16.3	Náchod – 10.0	
Pardubice	8.7	15.5 / 3 398	Pardubice – 20.4	Ústí n. O. – 10.3	The highest proportion of the disabled in unemployment in the Czech Republic
Vysočina	8.3	13.7 / 2 958	Žďár n. S. – 17.6	Třebíč - 11.4	
South Moravia	11.2	14.2 / 9 059	Blansko – 17.8	Znojmo - 10.7	
Zlín	10.2	14.8 / 4 407	Uherské Hradiště – 18.9	Zlín – 11.5	
Moravia-Silesia	15.9	12.5 / 12 656	Bruntál – 17.5	Ostrava-město – 10.8	The highest proportion of the disabled unemployed (Frýdek - Místek, Karviná, Ostrava)
Olomouc	12.2	12.7 / 5 018	Prostějov – 17.4	Přerov – 10.6. Šumperk – 10.9	
Total Czech Republic	9.8	13 / 66 907			

Source: MoLSA – ESA, Labour Office Prague

As regards the profession structure of the disabled unemployed persons¹⁴, they are most frequently represented in the groups of non-qualified or low-qualified professions. The most frequently reported professions were labourers, guards, junior clerks or cleaners. Most of them feature lower productivity and higher absence on

¹⁴ Data from the survey conducted by RILSA in 1996

grounds of health. Workplaces for disabled employees often have to be adapted or furnished in a special way. A large part of health handicaps appear in the productive age, often in less qualified manual professions. Because of lower education in that group of people, it is difficult for them to change qualification and find another job.

Registered vacancies for disabled people are scarce. In December 2002, there were almost 38.3 registered disabled job seekers per suitable vacancy, whereas the rate in the whole set of the unemployed was 12.7. The worst situation was in region of Moravia-Silesia: there were 240 registered disabled job seekers per one vacancy. On the contrary the most favourable situation was in capital city of Prague where there were 9.4 disabled job seekers per one suitable vacancy. There are significant differences between regions in creation of vacancies suitable for disabled people, clearly because of the different attitude of local authorities towards this problem. Most vacancies for disabled people were created in region of Ústí (242) and Liberec (166), least in region of Karlovy Vary (1) and Vysočina (4). Most vacancies for disabled persons are those requiring low qualification and low education only.

As regards motivation to work, Labour Offices estimate that a lesser part of the disabled unemployed actually want to work (the estimate is about a third, which is confirmed by subjective responses of job seekers). The examination conducted at employers indicate that it is the higher illness rate in certain groups of disabled people, which is the gravest problem preventing their hiring. Low qualification and lower productivity follow. The other reason why employers are unwilling to hire disabled people consists in their statutory protection in the event of redundancies.

Main barriers in the access to the labour market:

- Unconcern of most of local authorities to participate in solution of this problem that causes big differences between regions.
- The big barrier preventing their access to the labour market consists mainly in the combination of the following factors: lower qualification and education, higher age, higher illness rate and restrictions on grounds of health.
- Generally, employers are not too willing to hire disabled persons and the social climate does not help too much to solve the problem. Not even employment in sheltered workshops is quite successful because economic conditions created for employers are not sufficient.
- The infrastructure for the disabled at employers is underdeveloped (e.g. most employers do not have no-barrier buildings).
- The demotivating effect of welfare benefits and weak hope to find a job form a barrier to the integration in the labour market for the long-term unemployed or economically non-active.

Possible solutions which EQUAL DPs could develop and test within the second round:

Prevention of dependence of disabled school-leavers and disabled adults on welfare benefits, e.g. by connectivity of education and employment; by delivery of individual services

- Labour offices must strive to improve the awareness of potential employers of disabled persons to enhance their interest in employment of disabled job seekers, to help them understand the problem of employment of this group of people and to increase their motivation to employ disabled workers.

- Develop social services focusing on the support to the integration in the labour market of disabled persons. It is necessary to focus on enhancing the role of local authorities.
- Develop services of “sheltered workshop” type where disabled persons can prepare for the access to the labour market or develop escort/assistance services, such as “supported and temporary employment” that promote the disabled persons’ integration in the free labour market.
- It is possible to provide for specific qualifications in the school sphere and targeted re-qualification programmes (preparation for employment) within employment services for a given job. It is also essential to develop new forms of supporting services, especially escort services, to enable the disabled persons to contact employers, gain work experience and support their mobility, commuting or work at home, etc.
- A suitable mean for solution of this problem could be cooperation of non-governmental organizations and schools, particularly special schools.

F) Romany Minority

The situation of the Romany minority is characterised by a hampered access to the labour market. Labour Offices, however, may not register job seekers by nationality, unless a job seeker states himself/herself the nationality; that is why no exact official data on the total number and structure of Romany job seekers are available. Besides, most Romany declare the Czech or Slovak nationality. In addition to the Romany community, the majority population includes integrated individuals who do not consider themselves Romany. The number of the Romany minority members is estimated to range between 100,000 and 200,000¹⁵.

According to the information on the territorial settlement of the Romany in 1970-1991, almost a third (29.5% in 1991) of the Romany lived in the region of North Bohemia (at present, that region corresponds to the regions of Ústí nad Labem and Liberec). The region of Moravia-Silesia takes the second place in the concentration of the Romany population, accounting for about a fifth of the Romany¹⁶. In the past the Romany concentrated in those regions, which are currently hit by the process of restructuring, mostly because of the local demand for low qualified labour force.

Unemployment in the Romany population ranges between 19% and as much as 70%. Most Romany are classified by Labour Offices as hardly employable (long-term and repeated unemployment, low qualification, different social and cultural environment). The Romany are estimated to account for 30% up to 70% in long-term unemployment in the regions. The main causes for high unemployment in the Romany population include the low education level and qualification across the population and an inadequate level of necessary work habits and skills, which exclude them from the integration in work teams. According the 1997 estimate, long-term unemployment in the Romany population throughout the Czech Republic was about 50%. Considering the trends in labour unemployment in the entire population, the proportion of the Romany unemployed long-term can be expected to have considerably worsened.

¹⁵ Report by the Government Representative for Human Rights on the present situation of Romany communities, 2000. www.vlada.cz.

¹⁶ The Romany in the Czech Republic (1945-1998). Socioklub, Prague 1999.

Seasonal and occasional jobs are one of a few opportunities for the Romany to be employed; that is why the Romany account for such a high percentage in repeated unemployment. Those forms of employment, however, do not yield regular income, which is a condition for achieving security in life. Jobs within grey economy are quite frequent in the practice. That way of employment is problematic because the Romany employees can be easily manipulated in this way. That is why it is important to expand the access to consulting services of different types for the Romany and inform them about their rights.

As regards the educational structure, 87% of the Romany job seekers are without education or with primary education only, 12% are skilled workers, whereas higher levels of education are represented into a minimal extent (approximately 0.2%)¹⁷. The structure of the Romany population, however, changes dynamically and the number of the Romany in basic and secondary schools and in universities keeps growing. In addition to the groups of non-qualified persons depending on welfare benefits, new social groups appear (self-employed persons, representatives of associations, Romany advisors, assistants, policemen). Considered as positive trends can be measures promoting the qualification structure of the Romany minority members, such as prep classes, scholarships for Romany students in secondary schools, special programmes within the employment services, etc.

The access to further education is quite limited, especially because most Romany leave the school system very early. The reasons include both their different structure of values (education is not yet an acknowledged value in the Romany community), and the social environment motivating young people rather to be on welfare benefits after they complete compulsory education rather than continue their schooling. The system of welfare benefits is not adjusted properly in this sense. Benefits should be granted only in case Romany parents enable their children to be educated. Besides, Romany pupils do not meet the requirements of usual basic schools because they do not know well the Czech language. That is why they usually attend so-called special schools (schools for less apt children). The level of education in special schools is not, however, sufficient as regards the curriculum, thus limiting their opportunities of higher education. Re-qualification courses include just a few courses for non-qualified persons because most employers would not accept mere initial training. Although certain training courses for non-qualified persons do exist (e.g. practical re-qualification, "Most"- and "Šance"-type programmes), the older Romany are not interested enough in such courses.

Data on differences in the position of Romany women and men are not available.

Main barriers in the access to the labour market:

- The barrier consists in the majority society's unwillingness to solve and support with positive attitudes the integration trends of the Romany minority. Communication barriers created often due to the attitudes of both communities' representatives are difficult to overcome.
- Barriers include low qualification, low motivation to work and education and dependence on welfare benefits associated with long-term and repeated unemployment. Motivation and educational courses should be supported and

¹⁷ The Romany in the Czech Republic (1945-1998). Socioklub, Prague 1999.

supplemented with complex consultancy covering all areas of labour, educational, social and legal aspects.

Possible solutions which EQUAL DPs could develop and test within the second round:

- Occasional jobs prevail in employment; work within grey economy is quite frequent, too. It is important to look for ways of opening up opportunities of better and more attractive employment for the Romany minority members through new measures and new approaches in the hiring policies.
- Create community centres; integrate the Romany minority through the mediation of co-operation on the local level and on the community level. The integration measures include, for example, new means of co-operation between firms, educational and consulting institutions and community centres (see 2.3.3.). It is essential to involve into a greater extent the Romany or pro-Romany civic associations and business groups. The role of central administration institutions should be that of coordination and control, guarantying certain national-wide DPs (e.g. the integration of a multicultural component in the curriculum in basic and secondary schools, the solution of unemployment among the Romany population, etc.).
- Support the implementation of all forms of social work in the excluded Romany communities, especially with the aim of preventing or relieving the phenomena leading to the social exclusion and unemployment (social and material poverty, socially pathologic signs, destabilisation of the family environment, etc.).

G) Other Marginalized Groups

The other disadvantaged groups in the labour market include, for example, the drug-addicts, alcoholics, persons in prison and those leaving prison, homeless persons, etc. The list is not exhaustive, it is just indicative. Those groups are not monitored in statistics on a systematic basis that is why it is difficult to analyse them. The inclusion in those groups is often a result of marginalization, not its cause, because a criminal offence or drug-addiction is usually the effect of other social handicaps or their cumulating.

Homeless Persons

The homeless persons represent the most visible marginalized group. Their exact number in the Czech Republic is not known, estimates range between 35,000 and 75,000. Homeless persons are mostly in lower age categories.¹⁸ A growth in the number of juvenile homeless persons, drug-addicts and women suffering from home violence was recently recorded. Women are homeless in exceptional cases only, a vast majority of homeless women are alcoholics. No exact data on homeless women, however, are available. The highest concentration of homeless persons is recorded in Prague because of the offer of asylum homes, high level of migration and anonymity of the city¹⁹. Homeless is usually a result of a combination of two or more handicaps. The factors that can lead to the homeless include family problems, expulsion from school, loss of job, low qualification, drug-addiction, illness, imprisonment, leaving children's home, home violence, etc. According to the

¹⁸ Obadalová M., "Approach to the Living of Socially Endangered Groups", RILSA, 2001.

¹⁹ Horáková M., "Present Form of the Homeless in the Czech Republic", RILSA, 1997.

statistics compiled by the Czech non-profit organisation Naděje (Hope), 90% of their clients suffered from diseases, 50% were drug-addicts or alcoholics, 25% of homeless persons went through children's homes, 15% through mental hospitals, 35% through prison. Almost a half of the homeless persons achieved lower than secondary or primary education²⁰. Most homeless persons do not have any sources or opportunities, their access to the social assistance is hampered, they are stigmatised in the society and feature low self-confidence²¹. Homeless brings about further socially adverse effects, such as prostitution, higher criminality, mental and other diseases, alcohol- and drug-addiction, etc.

Persons in Prison and Ex-prisoners

The (re)-integration of persons leaving prison is a very serious social problem. That is confirmed by the alarming fact that more than 80% of convicts are in prison repeatedly, which means they tend to relapse into crime after they leave prison. Labour Offices do not have a specialised approach to such risky, marginalized groups of the population. Persons leaving prison become unemployable, although most of them could be able to earn their living. Social services are not rendered in combination with the work of Labour Offices. Rendered social services should provide for such conditions (accommodation, material provisioning, social and psychological consultancy), which make it possible for persons leaving prison to fully join the labour market (employment consultancy, motivation, re-qualification, mediation). Although it is necessary to solve problems for people leaving prison, the core of the solution should consist in the preventive approach, i.e. services should be rendered when they serve their sentences (secondary prevention) or even within primary preventive measures against criminality of the youth.

16,500 persons served their sentences in 2002. The group is not homogenous; groups of men and those of women differ considerably not only in numbers (men highly prevail – 96%), but also in terms of quality (by types of offences; women rarely participate in violent crimes, they mostly serve sentences for offences against property, such as fraud or larceny; their sentences, i.e. the period of time outside the labour market, differ, too; women's family backgrounds usually endure; their education is different). That is why different tools should be selected for the integration in the labour market of women and men. Most persons from that group cumulate more factors of disadvantage (drug-addiction, family problems or general absence of family, home violence, etc.). More than 85% of convicts have lower than complete secondary education and more than a half of them have primary education only and 12% only incomplete primary education. The number of convicts who are given the opportunity to complete their education and re-qualify is too small. Juvenile convicts pose a great problem. Although the proportion of juveniles kept declining with a double general growth of convicts from the early nineties, the gravity of that social problem as regards their future integration is still high. The age structure of convicts confirms how serious the problem is; approximately 30% of convicts are aged below 30. Therefore, preventive work with the youth and their proactive integration in the educational process or in the labour market seems to be the most important.

²⁰ Estimates prepared by the foundation Naděje: Obadalová M., "Approach to the Living of Socially Endangered Groups", RILSA, 2001.

²¹ Obadalová M., "Approach to the Living of Socially Endangered Groups", RILSA, 2001.

Employment of prisoners is an important re-socialisation and educational factor in their successful integration in the society after they leave prison. The proportion of employed prisoners highly differ by penitentiaries (ranging between 9% and 100% of convicts²²) and multiple factors are involved, e.g. the general level of employment in the region, the maintenance of economic activities in the penitentiary, the willingness of firms to employ convicts and the efficiency of prison wards. That is why it is also important to support leisure-time activities of prisoners because prisoners can improve in this way their knowledge and skills, enhancing their chances to integrate after they leave prison²³.

Pre-release services are not too efficient in most penitentiaries, in some penitentiaries no services of the kind are rendered, although they are evidently very important; after some time in prison, prisoners lose contact with the real world and their integration in the society after they leave prison highly depends on the quality of pre-release services (advice how to seek assistance after release, co-operation with the probation officer, etc.)²⁴. It is essential to integrate rendered services, consultancy and assistance for persons in prison and after they leave prison. That includes, above all, the collaboration between social workers in penitentiaries and respective local probation officers.

Drug and Alcohol Addicts

Outpatient departments rendering care to alcoholics and drug-addicts registered in 2001 14,373 addicts.²⁵ The number of hard drug-addicts is estimated to be 3,000 up to 4,000 of those registered by outpatient departments. A fourth of them apply drugs by injection (the men to women rate was about 2:1)²⁶. No exact number of drug-addicts in the Czech Republic is known; nevertheless, the actual number of drug-addicts in the Czech Republic is estimated to be much higher. The most affected regions by number of registered clients in outpatient departments include Prague, Olomouc, Plzeň, Moravia-Silesia, South Moravia and Central Bohemia. The data can, however, be distorted because of the high level of drug-addiction among the Romany who do not seek treatment in outpatient departments. Therefore, the situation in the regions of Ústí and Liberec can be expected to be worse than that indicated by the statistics. The most affected age structure is that aged 15-19. The total average age of all drug-addicts is 20.8 years. More than 58% of all registered drug-addicts are unemployed or they work only occasionally. The information on education of the drug-addicts aged 20 or more indicate that most part of problematic drug-addicts have secondary education without a leaving examination (37.5%) and 30.2% of newly registered drug-addicts have only primary education (or incomplete primary education)²⁷.

Drug-addicts and consumers in general (incl. occasional consumers) pose a highly risky group endangered by HIV infection or other infections, homeless, family problems and criminal behaviour associated with production, distribution and, above

²² Yearbook of the Czech Penitentiary Service, 2000.

²³ Final report of "Juristic" project. "Penitentiary Monitoring in the Czech Republic in 1999", Czech Helsinki Committee, NROS and Ford Foundation.

²⁴ Penitentiary Monitoring in the Czech Republic in 1999, Czech Helsinki Committee.

²⁵ Czech medical Yearbook 2001, UZIS Czech Republic, 2002.

²⁶ Highlights on Health in Czech Republic, EC and WHO 2001.

²⁷ Incidence of Problematic Drug-Addicts in the Czech Republic in the Fourth Quarter 2000. Prague Health Office – Central Department for Drug Epidemiology.

all, need of money to buy drugs. Besides, the group tends to be self-enclosed. Most drug-addicts have partner relations inside their community and are not willing to give up their addiction. To accept that basic assumption is a great problem in relations with institutions. It is very difficult for drug-addicts to get all documents that are required for getting a legal job, social security and, sometimes, living²⁸. Drug consumption thus becomes not only a road to drug-addiction, but also to cumulation of further handicaps excluding the individual to a vicious circle of problems – that means the escape is looked for again in drugs.

Alcoholics are a significant marginalized group, too. Their number – that of alcoholics registered in outpatient departments rendering care to alcoholics and drug-addicts – was 28,582²⁹ in 2001, though the actual number of persons addicted to alcohol will be higher, similarly to the situation with drug-addicts. The highest number of registered alcoholics is in the regions of Moravia-Silesia, Prague, Central Bohemia, South Moravia, Hradec Králové and Olomouc. The average consumption of 100% alcohol is about 10 litres per person and year, which exceeds the EU average. The consumption of alcohol kept growing in the nineties. 16% of men and 2% of women consumed large amounts of alcohol (264 and 180g per week, respectively).³⁰ Alcohol drinking is widespread across social groups, age groups and genders. The groups most at risk include the homeless, long-term unemployed, people with low income, people from incomplete families, as well as middle-aged women; that means people who resort to alcohol instead of solving actively their own problems. In addition to the breakdown of the social background, diseases, car accidents and violent criminality, alcohol-addiction directly and very adversely affects one's productivity and reliability, as well as one's ability to find job and improve qualification.

Victims of trafficking

As the trafficked persons may be often treated by national authorities as illegal migrants and criminals and as they face arrest, detention or expulsion, they are to be considered another target group supported within the second round of the EQUAL Initiative in the Czech Republic.

Action within the European Union is being developed taking a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach towards preventing and combating these phenomena. In terms of financial support, Community programmes are an important tool for strengthening policies, practices and cooperation in the EU and between EU Member States and accession countries in the fight against human trafficking. Therefore Czech Community Initiative Programme EQUAL will promote innovative tools, in accordance with national law, the social and vocational integration of its beneficiaries, to make it possible for them to return safely to their countries of origin or to receive adequate protection in the Czech Republic.

Therefore in the second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL in Czech Republic, support for victims of trafficking will be particularly sought in all thematic fields.

²⁸ Tyrlik M et al., "Assessment of the Drug Situation in the Czech Republic", 1996.

²⁹ Czech medical Yearbook 2001, UZIS Czech Republic, 2002.

³⁰ Highlights on Health in Czech Republic, EC and WHO 2001.

Asylum Seekers

Asylum in the Czech Republic is sought each year by thousands of immigrants, of which only a small part is granted asylum. Although asylum seekers cannot at present work in the Czech Republic in the first year, it is desirable that those people be given an opportunity to learn the language, receive vocational education and work so as to maintain their work habit even in case they will have to return to their home country.

The specific character of that marginalized group is due to a combination of several handicaps because most asylum seekers come from economically less developed countries (Ukraine, Vietnam, Slovakia, former Soviet Union countries). Those immigrants had often suffered in their home countries from long-term unemployment, they are low-qualified or disabled. That group of people is also disadvantaged by the language barrier.

Similarly to the programme focusing on the integration of asylum seekers, which has been implemented in the Czech Republic, activities should be undertaken to enhance asylum seekers' chances to find job, either in the Czech Republic or in their home countries.

The issues concerning asylum seekers are discussed in more detail in chapter 2.2.9.

Possible solutions which EQUAL DPs could develop and test within the second round:

- Measures to assist the integration of homeless people should not be limited to the issues of accommodation or rendering temporary shelter, those measures supported within the CI EQUAL should be combined with complex consultancy services (a combination of personal, psychological, social and profession consultancy), medical care, motivation and especially re-qualification courses, assistance in looking for job, inclusion in social care services³¹ etc. as the providing of accommodation and consultancy services is only a basic prerequisite for the integration of homeless people into the labour market;
- Penitentiary – Enhance the opportunities of employment, treatment programmes, leisure-time activities for prisoners, education and re-qualification; look for ways how to motivate employers to hire prisoners; integrate services of social workers and probation officers; render complex consultancy, therapeutic and re-socialisation assistance to prisoners; enhance the integration and re-socialisation role of pre-release services;
- After leaving prison – Enhance the position of probation officers in terms of staffing and powers; regular visits in penitentiaries to identify in time and solve problems; involve probation officers in programmes focusing on how to treat prisoners; prepare an innovative methodology, instructions and information for integrated and complex activities of probation officers; pay special attention to the issue of employment of marginalized groups or specific methods to

³¹ As the assistance provision, including the provision of care services can be supported by the ESF interventions only in case that the care services are offered for the ESF beneficiaries, MA will ensure that provision of all such care services supported within all the CIP EQUAL thematic fields will be reasonably connected with other activities of supported Development Partnerships.

motivate hardly employable persons leaving prison; support the co-operation between probation officers and Labour Offices;

- Drug-addicts and alcoholics – Development of innovative means and services of preventive character, especially of new educational programmes concerning the job opportunities of the youth; training of teachers and trainers for programmes focusing on the prevention of drug and alcohol consumption in relation with the labour market needs and prerequisites; enhancing of powers of street workers in terms of strengthening their co-operation with labour offices, offering alternative services for drug-addicts, e.g. leisure-time clubs integrated with contact centres, expanding of the coverage of detoxication and rehabilitation centres and strengthening of their consultancy and integration functions and their co-operation with labour offices; training and providing of further education for workers in the field of drug-addiction; ensuring special services in relation with the labour market for drug consumers – ethnical minority members with specific cultural and language needs; special services for women – drug consumers; programmes for partners of drug-addicts; innovative programmes for parents; ensuring follow-up care and job mediation to young people who come of age and are released from children's homes or youth custody centres.

H) Women

Women are considered being another disadvantaged group at the labour market in the Czech Republic. Regarding to strengthened and more advantageous position of men in the society, women have to accept the existing mechanisms and to adapt themselves on them. Women are much more employed by the housework and child-care in the Czech Republic than men and it makes them in comparison with men significantly disadvantaged at the labour market. As the equal opportunities between women and men at the labour market are treated in two specific thematic fields, the detailed description of the disadvantaged position of women in the Czech Republic is to be found in 2.2.7. and 2.2.8. sections of this document. Besides these two specific thematic fields, the promotion of equal opportunities between women and men will be also supported in all thematic fields by the gender mainstreaming strategy, which is to be found in 3.4.4. section. Unlike in 2.2.7. and 2.2.8. sections, proposed solutions in this section are related specifically to the issue of facilitating access and return to the labour market.

Possible solutions which EQUAL DPs could develop and test within the second round:

- Develop tools enabling women and men access to non-traditional jobs;
- Develop vocational training and retraining programmes facilitating women's search for adequate self-realisation at work;
- Promote training of consultants in the area of women's career development.

2.2.2. COMBATING RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA IN RELATION TO THE LABOUR MARKET

Except for a small part of the population inclining to the ultra-right political orientation, adverse attitudes to foreigners and certain ethnical groups settled for a long time in the territory of the Czech Republic (especially to the Romany) arises, above all, from xenophobia³².

From the early nineties, xenophobia in the Czech Republic has considerably declined (in 1991 the xenophobia index among the Czech population was 1.54 on the scale 0-5; in 1999 the xenophobia index in the CR was 0.9).

The attitudes of the majority community towards the Romany minority pose the greatest problem. The Romany suffer from considerable isolation associated with the mutual lack of knowledge of the other group, which is often reflected in prejudices and stereotypes in their mutual relations. In certain cases, that can result in xenophobic and even racist attitudes of employers or collaborators towards the Romany. Nevertheless, adverse attitudes to Romany job seekers who are frequently uneducated, unqualified and long-term unemployed (see 2.2.1 F) cannot always be assessed as racist-based.

In addition to the problems with the Romany minority, however, migration, i.e. the formation of a multicultural society, will probably be a considerable factor in the future development. In spite of the relatively small number of immigrants and still quite high homogeneity of the Czech population, a great part of the Czech inhabitants (43%) believe that the Czech Republic is too open to immigrants and foreigners and would prefer to reduce their number only to those who are necessarily needed (the missing labour force, experts, etc.)³³ That is why it is essential to focus especially on prevention, which can avoid more serious problems caused by the inflow of immigrants after the Czech Republic's accession to the Union.

The access to the labour market in the Czech Republic for foreigners is a separate theme of the Concept of Integration of Foreigners because the possibility to support one's existence and the existence of one's family is a crucial need for all. For foreigners to be accepted by the majority community, it is essential how the majority community perceives the foreigners' efforts to earn their living, contribute to the common advancement and not to be a burden for public finances. That is why it is very important to improve the foreigners' position in the Czech labour market and any progress in that direction will positively reflect also in other fields, such as the social integration, social security, health insurance, reduced xenophobia and enhanced economic development.

Factors in the Xenophobic and Racist Trends in the Czech Republic

- Ethnical homogeneity of the Czech post-war society.
- Search for Czech identity in the conditions of transformation.

³² Racism and xenophobia are often interchangeable in the usual use. Racism is the expression of the opinion that races are unequal, usually in connection with supremacy of the majority or dominating community. In contrast to racism, the term of xenophobia expresses a general dislike, hatred, fear and mistrust in connection with foreign elements in the community, e.g. with national minorities or foreigners.

³³ Potůček M. et al., "Vision of the Czech Republic's development by 2015". Prague, 2000.

- The economic and social situation of the Czech society, social instability, growing unemployment and growing number of people on welfare benefits.
- Negative influence of mass media.
- Low education and related poor employability among the Romany population.
- Poor knowledge of minority cultures is a factor in xenophobia and intolerance, resulting in prejudices and stereotypical perception of the problem and enhancing the fear of strangeness.
- Inadequate communication both between representatives of the minority and majority population and among members of the two communities; mutual mistrust.
- Demographic changes (the growth of the Romany population, decrease of the majority population, shortfall of the labour force, growing number of immigrants).
- The Czech Republic's accession to the EU and related higher inflow of foreigners (the Czech Republic will cease to be a mere transit country, becoming the destination for many refugees).

Possible solutions that EQUAL DPs could develop and test within the second round:

- Improve the level of education and employability of the Romany minority (see 2.2.1 F). Using the measures of that type, reduce unemployment among the Romany community members, thus supporting respect to the Romany.
- Develop innovative programmes supporting a multicultural environment in organisations including educational programmes for all, develop and implement policies and approaches of equal opportunities at the workplace, stress the benefits of the cultural and ethnical diversification of employees, propose legislative measures, etc.
- Special educational programmes for young people focused against potential or actual signs of xenophobia and extremism in connection with labour market.
- Special joint programmes of re-qualification and employment for young people of both communities with the aim to enhance mutual knowledge and respect as a prerequisite for the formation of multicultural society.
- Provide for multicultural education of the entire society, enhance the awareness of the life, history and culture of minorities and improve the majority's attitudes towards minorities, above all, towards the Romany minority in order to ensure the equal opportunities of all ethnic groups in the labour market.
- Support the equal position of foreigners in the labour market in the Czech Republic, focusing especially on the support to activities undertaken by the foreigners themselves, claiming their legal rights.

2.2.3. IMPROVING CONDITIONS AND TOOLS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUSINESS RUN BY PERSONS FROM DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

This subchapter deals with the thematic field defined within the Entrepreneurship priority. The full title of the thematic field is: Opening up the business creation process to all by providing the tools required for setting up in business and for the identification and exploitation of new possibilities for creating employment in urban and rural areas. The purpose of the thematic field is to support business as one of possibilities for the disadvantaged groups to provide for themselves not only in urban areas, but also in rural areas.

Although starting entrepreneurs have to face unfavourable conditions as regards stability of the economic development in transforming Czech economy, capital availability and complexity of the administrative and legislative environment, etc., the business sphere had developed very dynamically during the nineties. That was reflected especially in the high, inner motivation of persons running their own business. Although private business almost had not existed before 1989 and individuals had had no experience with business, the proportion of entrepreneurs in total employment, both with and without employees, was 15.3% in 2002, which is a value comparable to EU countries.

Table No.12: Proportion of Persons Running Their Own Business in Total Employment (in %)

	1993	1995	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002
Entrepreneurs with employees	2.7	3.8	4.0	4.1	4.1	3.9	4.0
Entrepreneurs without employees	6.3	7.5	7.9	9.7	10.3	10.6	11.3

Source: Labour force sample survey, CZSO

There are 228 entrepreneurs per 1000 inhabitants in the Czech Republic³⁴. According to that criterion, the following regions are more significantly below the average: Moravia-Silesia (182 entrepreneurs / 1000 inhabitants), Vysočina (193 entrepreneurs / 1000 inhabitants) and Ústí (199 entrepreneurs / 1000 inhabitants). The real number is, however, lower, because some persons – entrepreneurs do not actually run a business of their own, but they are in fact employees under the so-called “Svarc” system (i.e. a system under which employees do not have working contracts, but they work based on their own business licenses).

Running a business on one’s own account is a great opportunity for creating jobs. The proportion of those persons in certain branches amounts up to one-fourth of total employment (36% in estate agencies and services for firms, 35.5% in the building industry, 27.1% in the other public and social services, 28% in the trade).³⁵ Small and medium-sized enterprises, i.e. the firms employing up to 250 employees, contribute significantly to the creation of GDP (40%), as well as to total employment (60%).

³⁴ Entrepreneurs include natural persons running their own business, private farmers and free-lancers.

³⁵ Labour force sample survey, Fourth quarter 2002, CZSO.

Barriers and problems in the development of small and medium-sized enterprises listed below prevent the generally higher development of business, posing even a greater obstacle to business run by disadvantaged groups in the labour market.

- Still low enforceability of law and low functionality of commercial courts.
- Tax and financial problems, relatively still high taxation and difficult access to financial sources.
- Technical, administrative and legislative obstacles to business (e.g. mutual inconsistency and lack of transparency of numerous regulations in the field of labour safety and technical standards; strict conditions for business license, etc.).
- Difficult access to the capital (e.g. there are no regional tools to support the financing of business activities, such as low loans and manageable and transparent financial mechanisms associated with setting up in business).

Possible solutions, which DPs could develop and test within the second round:
ROMANY MINORITY: As regards the opportunities for that group to set up in and run their own business, the characteristics of the group pose a considerable obstacle in that field, too (see 2.2.1 F). The establishment of Romany firms can, however, be a good example for other Romany entrepreneurs; that is why it is desirable to support the starting of Romany firms.

OLDER PERSONS: The opportunities for older persons to start a business of their own depend mainly on the level of their education, health and on the type and employability of their previous professions. Older persons are not too interested in business because their flexibility is lower. For certain individuals experienced in professions that are demanded in the sector of services, business of their own might be an interesting opportunity in case they lose their previous employment. They would need, however, specialised and adequate information-consultancy background and efficient support in starting up and maintaining business.

WOMEN: Only a small percentage of women run their own business. Women account for 21.9%-28.9%³⁶ of entrepreneurs, which is a small proportion, considering the fact that women in total employment account almost for 43.2%. Therefore, more training and consultancy services are needed to support businesses run by women. Women should be given opportunities to access financial sources (credits and loans), because that is the area where, according to the statistics, women are less successful than men. It is also essential to expand services for families, leisure-time activities for children and social services so as to create necessary time for women to run business.

DISABLED PERSONS: The opportunities for disabled persons to run business of their own are in principle limited by their health and by their on average lower education. The state assistance to disabled persons' entrepreneurship is not sufficient. For example, if it is worth to obey the obligation to employ disabled people by paying a fee rather than buy services and goods from disabled people, the

³⁶ Labour force sample survey, Fourth quarter 2002, CZSO, (women account for 21.9% of entrepreneurs with employees and 28.9% of entrepreneurs without employees).

situation of disabled entrepreneurs is not going to be better and their number is not going to increase.

Possible solutions which EQUAL DPs could develop and test within the second round:

Set up in business can be in certain cases an alternative for disadvantaged groups to integrate into the labour market. Although business opportunities differ by different problems of each group, certain general approaches exist, which should be respected when conditions are created for self-employment in this form:

- When working with those groups, it is essential to provide for more intensive systematic preparation for business, which requires a specific approach. It is also necessary to overcome the situation when many unemployed persons would not dare to set up in business of their own because they lost contacts with the work environment for a long time and they prefer to wait for an offer of job.
- It is essential to provide for an intensive systematic approach of experts and consultants from the practice, offer complex consultancy services including, in addition to profession and economic services, also social, legal, health and other services and give examples of good practice and good experience.
- After a business is set up, the professional tutorship should continue because it is most needed in the “start-up” stage.
- To maintain a business, it is essential that local authorities render assistance in marketing researches and involve businesses run by disadvantaged persons in municipal activities and services.
- To explore methods for overcoming the financial exclusion faced by disadvantaged groups or certain types of organisation during the business creation.
- To develop innovative financial tools available for persons of the most disadvantaged groups who want to set up own business.

2.2.4. STRENGTHENING THE SOCIAL ECONOMY (THE THIRD SECTOR), IN PARTICULAR THE SERVICES OF INTEREST TO THE COMMUNITY, WITH A FOCUS ON IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF JOBS

Social economy includes the activities of both public and private organisations (non-profit and for-profit ones), which provide for the social integration of people, create new jobs, develop skills, knowledge and work habits in marginalized groups. The function as a whole is performed mainly by the so-called community sector, which includes, in addition to local non-profit organisations, also local small and medium-sized businesses, local service organisations, self-employed persons, etc. Regional and local authorities play an important role in social economy. Social economy represents a complex of social services, profitable activities and job creation (for marginalized groups too) with important participation of local and regional authorities.

Although the sector so far accounts for mere 3-4% (or 5-6% if voluntary work is included) in total employment in the Czech Republic and its economic power (measured by income) is approximately on the level of CZK 35-50 billion annually, it is the sector, which has been dynamically developing.

As regards the scope of services, social economy in the Czech Republic still focuses mainly on (mentally, physically or sensually) disabled persons, which is provided in healthcare centres mostly based on medical services. The feature of these services will change towards social inclusion services and it will result in retraining of a big number of staff in healthcare centres. In addition, social economy focuses on sheltered workshops for disabled people or in the usual environment in the form of supported employment or temporary employment (those services are rendered by daily service centres). There are also different types of so-called relief services and specialised consultancy, i.e. the services that help family members taking care of disabled persons to be gainfully employed. Those services include, above all, daily and weekly wards, daily service centres, personal assistance, etc. Social economy partially deals also with other problematic groups, which include unemployed persons (especially through publicly beneficial work), drug-addicts (within therapeutic communities), mentally ill people and people without the usual social and, mainly, family background (so-called half-way homes, asylum homes, which are establishments for those who have lost their housing or family background).

Implemented insufficiently are services for the following groups: mothers with young children, school leavers without practice, persons in the pre-retirement age, immigrants or asylum seekers, ethnical minorities, low-educated persons, homeless persons, persons leaving prison (in individual cases only, e.g. by parish charities) or mental hospitals, persons after long-term disease.

The present third sector can be said to cover with its extent just a small part of the working population that face difficulties in finding job or running business; that part includes mainly the disabled persons and their needs are not sufficiently answered.

Non-profit organisations are currently involved more in social services than in employment services, although the co-operation between non-profit organisations and Labour Offices within the Community Initiative EQUAL is possible and desirable. Most services in the third sector do not include the assistance in helping marginalized

groups to improve their chances to find job, those services focus on their other basic needs (accommodation, food, therapy) and their re-socialisation. Clients in the establishments of the asylum type do not usually receive consulting or educational services, which would focus on their integration in the labour market.

As regards the regional distribution of NGOs, the organisations operate in all Czech regions, most of them being concentrated in Prague, Central Bohemia, South Moravia and Moravia-Silesia and in large cities. Many NGOs covers whole regions or the whole country (e.g. some foundations). About a third of NGOs operate on a local level, a third on the regional level and a third on the national and international levels.

After the regional administration was established in 2001, regions became important actors in strengthening the social sector, because social economy is based on the development of local and regional services increasing employment and employability. Regions become important initiators of the development of social economy – both as founders of certain organisations rendering services and as providers of financial sources for activities of NGOs (especially in the segments of social and health care and education). Representatives of regions do not, however, pay adequate attention to social economy.³⁷ Regions involved in Development Partnerships established within the second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL in the Czech Republic will be able to co-operate better with non-profit organisations.

And as the social economy organisations can be also businesses, the CIP EQUAL of the Czech Republic will also support their active participation in the Development Partnerships.

Main **causes of the third sector's small capacity**, especially in the field of employment services, include:

- The non-government and non-profit sector is not yet adequately developed in the Czech Republic (a shortfall of human and other capacities);
- Fragmentation – the low ability to create all-branch communication and representation platforms – both countrywide (e.g. as a voluntary association of Czech non-government and non-profit organisations), and in regions (at present, preferably in the regions of Olomouc, Plzeň and Moravia-Silesia), as well as in individual places (in the form of a community coalition, discussion forum, association of legal entities, etc.) – there are many positive examples already;
- Capital weakness – financial dependence on government subsidies (one-year financial subsidies only), underdeveloped corporation sponsoring, the lacking possibility to assign taxes by taxpayers-employees;
- A shortfall of programmes supporting the development of social economy;
- A “monopoly” of Labour Offices, which acquired unwillingly the position because they are the only institutions to solve with their activities and using the tools of the active employment policy the issues of employment and re-qualification of people from excluded groups;

³⁷ A positive development can be seen, for example, in the region of Karlovy Vary that prepared the “Draft Strategy of the Region of Karlovy Vary in the Non-Profit Sector” and established a working group, which should deal in the future with mutual relations between the non-profit sector and the Region; a function of coordinator for the co-operation with the non-profit sector is considered.

- Incomplete decentralisation – at present, regions or municipalities are founders of former budget organisations (hospitals, libraries, museums, schools, as well as social care establishments), their current legal form is that of contribution organisation. Municipalities and regions can transform such organisations into publicly beneficial organisations.

Prospectively, social economy can cover the needs of specific, socially excluded groups also as regards their employment. That requires, above all, suitable financial tools and, in certain case, legislative changes. At that, the Community Initiative EQUAL is a good opportunity how to expand the co-operation between non-profit organisations and central administration bodies and enlarge the coverage of those organisations.

Possible solutions, which EQUAL DPs could develop and test within the second round:

- Support partnerships on the regional and local levels – support the implementation of community planning, involve NGOs in the creation and implementation of community policy, support co-operation between NGOs and Labour Offices, etc.;
- Support and improve systems of planning, monitoring and evaluation of the delivery of services of community interest by social economy (SE) organisations.
- Support the improvement of management skills among SE organisations.
- Improve the quality of advice and support available to SE organisations.
- Improve the availability of investment capital for SE organisations.
- Support new forms of social services rendered to users in their natural environment (in the municipality, home);
- Support the functioning of the umbrella bodies associating organisations in the locality or organisations of the same profession orientation – support not only the communication, but also the development and guaranty the quality of service providers of similar type;
- Support NGOs rendering social services so as to integrate into the usual way of life, including employment, the persons discriminated or disadvantaged in the labour market;
- Support working opportunities and improve the quality of workers in the sector of social economy.

2.2.5. PROMOTING LIFELONG LEARNING AND INCLUSIVE WORK PRACTICES WHICH ENCOURAGE THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF THOSE SUFFERING DISCRIMINATION AND INEQUALITY IN CONNECTION WITH THE LABOUR MARKET

Lifelong learning as a complex system was not yet created in the Czech Republic. Missing is a framework to support the development of adults further education (with necessary links to initial education) and involve in lifelong learning both individuals and organisations. That is why only a lesser part of the population undergoes lifelong learning as compared to the percentage as is usual in developed countries. That applies to all basic types and forms of further education, which can be received in the form of part-time classes in secondary schools, higher professional schools or at universities, and also in one's employment and in re-qualification courses within the active employment policy.

Participation in training courses in companies is low, too. Czech companies, which are still capitally weak, are not willing to spend too much on education of their employees. According to the recent survey, the level of those expenditures is about 1.14% of wages, which is a fourth of the percentage allocated by companies abroad. The low ability of management to create an innovative climate supporting education is a factor, too. The problems pertain mainly to small businesses. Training courses in companies are very important for the improvement of the knowledge of skills of employees, thus preventing their unemployment, because those employees can easily find another job, if necessary.

Table No. 13: Proportion of Companies Rendering Continuing Vocational Education (CVE) by Size of Company

Size Structure	Proportion of Companies Rendering Any Form of CVE, Incl. Study Circles and Participation at Conferences (in %)	Proportion of Companies Rendering CVE Courses (in %)
10 - 19 employees	56	45
20 – 49	67	59
50 – 249	83	79
250 – 499	95	95
500 – 999	95	95
1000 and more	98	98
Total	67	59

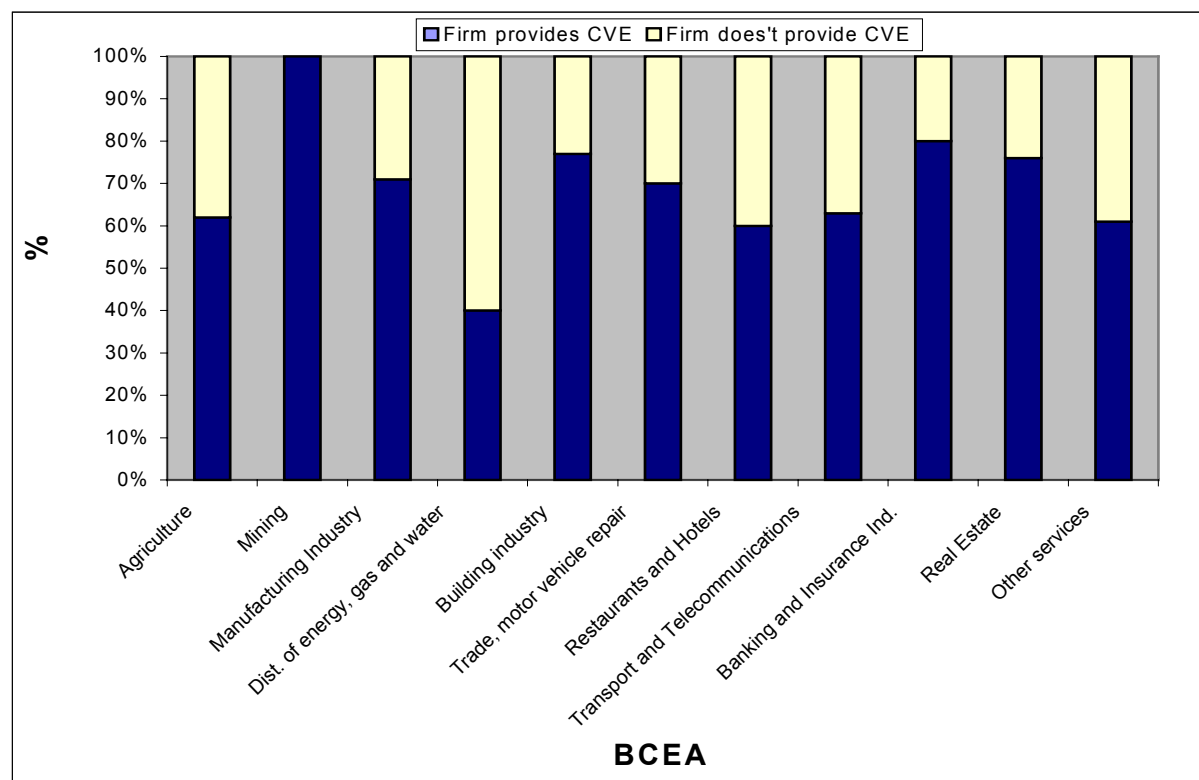
Source: CZSO - EUROSTAT: CVTS II, own calculations

Table No. 14: Structure of Rendered Continuing Vocational Education in Companies by Size of Company (proportions in the number of companies rendering any form of CVE, in %)

Size Structure	CVE Courses	CVE in the Labour Process	Job Rotation	Self-education
10 - 19 employees	81.1	38.4	7.1	22.2
20 – 49	88.5	34.7	3.7	22.7
50 – 249	94.4	45.3	8.0	28.5
250 – 499	99.4	65.4	14.5	34.3
500 – 999	99.1	67.1	14.0	41.7
1000 and more	99.6	81.1	28.1	55.9
Total	87.9	41.0	6.9	25.1

Source: CZSO - EUROSTAT: CVTS II, own calculations

Graph: Continuing vocational education of employees according the BCEA areas



Source: ÚIV 2002 (Institute for educational information): Continuing vocational education as a part of lifelong learning – Education in firms.

Evening classes, which are rendered by secondary and higher professional schools and universities and which are similar to regular studies for the youth, being completed with a respective certificate, are not suitable at all for disadvantaged groups because those persons do not have the required previous preparation, which is missing in those groups, and those types of education are too long (usually 4-5 years). On the other hand, secondary schools, higher professional schools and universities render also lifelong learning courses, which can be completed with a certificate. The duration of those courses is from one week (i.e. approximately 40-45

hours) up to about three years. As regards the entrance requirements for previous education, those differ by type of the course; nevertheless, those types of courses are attended in the Czech Republic also by persons from disadvantaged groups.

The active employment policy includes educational activities specifically focused on disadvantaged groups, which are usually of innovative character and include a complex of further additional or follow-up services (socialisation, motivation, consulting, try-job, etc.).

Various educational activities are organised within individual social programmes, such as those controlled by national or regional authorities or non-profit organisations. The activities are not, however, interconnected with those organised by Labour Offices. Numerous varied educational activities are organised by the non-profit sector. Their advantage consists in a direct focus on the needs of specific groups at risk of social exclusion. No complete information on the scope and types of such courses, numbers and structure of trainees are, however, available. Because of financial limits in the non-profit sector (see above), the scope and structure of training and motivation courses offered in this way do not by a long way correspond to the scope of needs.

The re-qualification focus on the most disadvantaged groups is very low due to the excessive general character of respective programming documents (National Plan of Employment, National Action Plan of Employment). Nevertheless, the focus of re-qualifications was enhanced by the implementation of the programmes First Opportunity and New Start, which are designed mainly to prevent long-term unemployment. The programmes "Most" and "Šance" are being expanded to cover the disadvantaged groups (the long-term unemployed and low-qualified persons).

The created functional network of balance-diagnostic centres with a unified methodology according to Government Resolution No. 640 of 1999 in all NUTS II is not yet adequately used by employment services as a new consulting element. The activities of the network include, above all, the integration of those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market.

Measures supporting the access to education for disadvantaged groups are prepared only in the form of re-qualification courses organised by Labour Offices. Those re-qualifications are designed, however, only for the unemployed registered by the Labour Office and the employed persons at risk of unemployment in case their employer pays a contribution to the courses. Other persons are not admitted, which reduces the preventive character of those training courses for the unemployed. The Employment Act (Act No. 1/1191) stipulates in paragraph 11 subparagraph 1 that employers may render re-qualification courses to their employees.

With the participation of the unemployed in re-qualifications being generally low, the involvement of disadvantaged groups is insufficient except for the category of school leavers. As indicated by the results of analyses³⁸, mere 2.4% of the long-term unemployed, 4% of the disabled unemployed and 4.2% of the low-qualified unemployed were included in 2002 in re-qualifications (the average participation in

³⁸ Rákoczyová, M. – Sirovátka, T.: Analysis of the Targeted Character of Re-qualifications, Research Institute of Labour and Social Affairs, 2001.

re-qualifications was 9.3% of total unemployment). The utilisation of re-qualifications in those groups does not correspond to unemployment in the region. On the contrary, the proportion of disadvantaged groups in re-qualifications is the lowest in the regions with the highest unemployment. The numbers of persons from disadvantaged groups in re-qualification courses keep growing. In 2002, for example, re-qualification courses were attended by 4,672 job seekers registered over 12 months and 3,927 job seekers registered over 24 months, i.e. approximately 21% of job seekers included in the re-qualification scheme (39,837) in 2002.³⁹

The low-qualified persons are not too interested in the re-qualification scheme⁴⁰. Consultancy and re-socialisation courses stimulating the interest have been quickly developed in the past two years. The problems appearing most frequently in the inclusion in re-qualification courses of disadvantaged groups include the low level of interest and motivation on the part of the unemployed and insufficient penalisation in case they refuse offered re-qualification.

The participation in re-qualification courses of school leavers is highly above average (approx. 22%) compared to the other groups of the unemployed. The re-qualification programmes organised by Labour Offices and designed for school leavers focus on additional and improved skills as required by the labour market. The purpose of those re-qualification courses and consultancy programmes is to re-integrate young people in a school. The leaving certificate can replace qualification certificates required by employers for certain professions and can be fully respected as a formal school-leaving certificate.

The participation of women in education within the category of initial education is comparable to that of men. It is only education in universities, where the participation of women is lower in Master's studies and Doctoral studies programmes. The main reason is that girls prefer shorter forms of tertiary studying. The women's participation in further education in the form of evening classes is stable and the proportion of women correspond to their proportion in employment. In average, women account for 46% of persons being educated in this way (approx. 55% in evening classes with a school-leaving examination in secondary schools and as much as over 70% in evening classes in higher professional schools; the proportion of women is lower only in apprentice courses). The participation of women in re-qualification courses offered by Labour Offices is relatively high (women accounted for 60% of trainees in re-qualification courses in 2002, with their proportion in total unemployment being about 50%). Their participation in training courses in companies is, however, lower than that of men, approximately by one-fourth. That confirms certain discrimination of women by employers

The low offer of distant courses and the still low level of Internet utilisation (a small percentage of households are connected) pose a further obstacle to the involvement of young women, both those with children and those taking all-day care for family member.

³⁹ Source: MoLSA, Structure of Job Seekers in the Re-qualification Scheme.

⁴⁰ Questionnaire survey in Labour Offices, 1998. Research Institute of Labour and Social Affairs

Most Labour Offices do not organise special training and re-qualification programme for the Romany⁴¹ because Labour Offices do not register persons by their ethnical origin⁴². The Romany are included in usual courses or courses for the disadvantaged groups on the labour market. In certain cases, specific courses are organised in the regions where that ethnical group has a higher representation. Such courses are mostly re-socialisation and motivation, focusing on practical skills, preparation for guarding services and for consultancy and assistance jobs. Although good examples of successful training courses do exist, whether or not being designed explicitly for the Romany⁴³, it can be stated in general that there is a shortfall of re-socialisation and motivation courses focusing on problems of that ethnical group, which is due to the lack of interest in educational activities on the part of the Romany minority members. In several cases, the funds under the active employment policy are used to finance the programmes for further education of Romany advisors and assistants for central administration, public services and local administration. The programmes are organised by five secondary or higher professional schools. The issues of education of the Romany minority are also discussed in chapter 2.2.1.F.

Non-existence of a complex system of lifelong learning adversely affects the group of disabled persons, too. The unsuitable qualification and education structure of those persons is in fact conserved. Although the system of re-qualification is open to disabled persons, they don't use it too frequently because their qualification is in general lower (considering the number of the disabled unemployed, their proportion is about a half as compared to total unemployment). Further education within employment depends considerably on the quality of job. Because the quality of jobs for which disabled persons are usually hired is on average lower, a lower level of qualification improving in employment can be expected to be lower, too.

Possible solutions which EQUAL DPs could develop and test within the second round:

- Non-existence of a system background for lifelong learning, which results in low motivation to become involved in lifelong learning and partially, the missing legislative treatment of the concept of lifelong learning is a factor, mainly with regard to the financing of, interconnection and links between individual stages or cycles and their certification and a connection to the international system of certifications.
- The consultancy services adapted to disadvantaged groups, which would efficiently support their orientation and interest in improving education and which would help to solve related social, legal and health problems, are rendered into a lesser extent than needed. Consulting services should be individualised and not only focused on the stage of education selection, but those services should help their recipients to manage learning, maintain skills and achieve practical experience in order to help them to find and maintain a suitable job.
- The existing forms of education only partially cover the needs of adult education, in particular those of disadvantaged groups. That is why it is

⁴¹ Most Labour Offices (75%) stated in the questionnaire survey Country Monograph – see Annex – that no courses for the Romany are organised.

⁴² National legislation does not allow to register the unemployed by nationality.

⁴³ For example, the programmes implemented by the Labour Office at Most.

essential to develop new approaches, which would better suit disadvantaged groups in their methodology, contents and time requirements.

- New methods should be developed to expand educational opportunities in companies, in particular in small and medium-sized enterprises (distant forms of education, a support to companies to include low-qualified workers in vocational training courses).

2.2.6. SUPPORTING THE ADAPTABILITY OF FIRMS AND EMPLOYEES TO STRUCTURAL ECONOMIC CHANGE AND THE USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER NEW TECHNOLOGIES

To restructure large metallurgic and mining corporations is a long-term process, which requires extreme amounts of financial funds, both in terms of direct financial stabilisation of the firms and in terms of the subsequent problems to be solved. Those problems include re-qualification and further employment of redundant employees. A smooth and conflict-free process of restructuring in the most affected regions (NUTS II North-West and Moravia-Silesia) depends into a considerable extent also on how new jobs are created in those regions, either in newly set up firms (foreign direct investments), or in small and medium-sized enterprises. What is very problematic is the integration of redundant workers who often suffer from a handicap or a combination of multiple handicaps. Adverse effects of the unilaterally orientated economic structure reflect also in the regions where agricultural production is reduced and in the peripheral areas with an underdeveloped infrastructure and public transport.

Successful restructuring and improved competitiveness of Czech firms is a prerequisite for the creation of new jobs, which can become an opportunity for the disadvantaged groups in the labour market. The development of small and medium-sized enterprises is very important for that because SMEs considerably contribute to employment (60%). The development strategy for SMEs and for the support to the innovation process is included in the operational programme Industry and Business.

One of the possibilities of creating jobs for marginalized groups by companies is to support the development of flexible forms of job organisation. That would be a good form of integration into a labour market for women taking care of family members, for disabled persons, for school leavers, etc. Such forms are not yet usual (see above).

Low information literacy and poor accessibility of information technologies pose a great obstacle for marginalized groups. Information literacy considerably improves chances to find job both because of the better orientation in vacancies and because of higher qualification. The situation will improve in the future due to the State Information Policy within which computer literacy programmes have already been implemented in schools. Those programmes are designed also for the adult population. It will take a couple of years, however, before marginalized groups can benefit from the policy because most people in those groups are already outside the school system. That is why conditions should be created for the general public to be able to join the DPs. Relevant re-qualification courses organised by Labour Offices is a way of improving IT literacy. It is also essential to increase the availability of information technologies by means of reducing Internet connection fees, reducing VAT for services and providing computers with free Internet connection, for example, in Labour Offices, in libraries, local offices, etc. Because the State Information Policy has already created material and technical conditions, it is essential to develop within IT literacy improvement activities the methods and procedures for the use of hardware and software. The issue of employee adaptability is described in detail in HRD OP.

Possible solutions, which EQUAL DPs could develop and test within the second round:

- Development of small and medium-sized enterprises through their networking and linking to large corporations;
- Development and management of human resources in small and medium-sized enterprises using the distant forms of education and job-rotation methods (job-sharing);
- Financial motivation of the unemployed to their participation in such forms of training and job-rotation;
- Integration programmes for employees released during the process of large corporation restructuring;
- Support to the development and broad availability of information and communication technologies.

2.2.7. RECONCILING FAMILY AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE, AS WELL AS THE RE-INTEGRATION OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE LEFT THE LABOUR MARKET, BY DEVELOPING MORE FLEXIBLE AND EFFECTIVE FORMS OF WORK ORGANISATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Asymmetric division of labour to the detriment of women can be found in the Czech society, which is due to the unilaterally strengthened and privileged position of men. The situation forces women to accept into a considerable extent and adapt to the established mechanisms. Women spend much more time taking care of family than men, which reflects in their position in the labour market. The economic activity of women in the Czech Republic is relatively high and does not decline even in the age of active maternity below 60%. Most women in the age category 35-55 concentrate on their careers and their economic activity is about 90%, which value does not differ from economic activity of men. Nevertheless, economic activity of women is still considerably lower than that of men. Also employment of women was lower in 2002 than employment of men, amounting to 43.3%. Unemployment of women is 2-3% higher than unemployment of men. The long-term trend is due to the higher proportion of women registered by Labour Offices, which was, however, interrupted in the first months of the year 2003 by a contrary development. The proportion of men registered by Labour Offices was higher than that of women, mainly in the regions hit by the process of restructuring (at 31 May 2003, the total proportion of women in the Czech Republic was again more than 50%, although higher numbers of men registered by Labour Offices still prevail in certain districts – those are mainly districts in the region of Moravia-Silesia). Women permanently suffer more than men from long-term unemployment because it is more difficult for them – on grounds of family and children – to find new job. The average duration of women's registration at 31 March 2003 was 524.2 days, whereas that of men's was 468.6 days. Employment of women in 2002 was also lower than that of men, amounting to 43.3%. Business activities of women are still weak if compared to businesses run by men, although their involvement in self-employment could rise under suitable conditions (see 2.2.3).

The impact of the problems is multiplied by the low level of conditions that would enable women to reconcile their family and professional life. The supporting services for families of employed mothers are in general poorly accessible. That is the greatest problem for families from marginalized groups, which cannot afford the services due to their low income. The situation stimulates many, mainly young and educated, women to accept the previously typical man's responsibilities (responsibility for earnings, household organisation, etc.), which results in their departure from maternity (the number of born babies per one thousand inhabitants declined from 12.6 in 1989 to 8.8 in 2000, though there was a slight increase in the absolute number in 1999-2002 from 89,471 to 92,786 babies). The average age of mothers at childbirth rose from 24.7 in 1991 to 27.2 in 2000. Young women prefer cohabitation to marriage and family (the rate of marriages decreased in 1990-1998 from 8.8 to 5.3 marriages per one thousand inhabitants) and those who decided for maternity have less children. Although the regulations pertaining to the reconciliation of family and professional life (e.g. the parental leave, the leave in case family member needs nursing, the right to refuse relocation or business journey, the adequate adjustment of working hours) guaranty same rights for women and men, in practice those are mostly women who use the rights due to stereotypical attitudes of the public, in the family and in employment. That is why it is more difficult for women

to find job because the employer must take into account their future requests for those rights more than from men. Recently, however, gradual change in opinions appears mainly in the young generation and the role of men in practical care for children in the family increases.

In spite of the aforementioned trend, employers fear higher absences of women taking care of young children and their refusal to work in a multi-shift operation. Only one-fourth of employers offer training courses for women returning from maternal leave, higher willingness can be seen in companies with foreign capital. About one-third of employers⁴⁴ refuse any adjustment of working hours for women, although they are obliged to do so according to the Labour Code unless serious operation reasons prevent so. That is why the proportion of flexible working hours used by women is low (approx. 8% of women work part time). On the contrary, significant is the proportion of women working in shifts or in excess of usual working hours in the form of overtime work and second job. Part-time work is not considered as interesting even by women themselves, that is due not only to the lower wages in general, but also due to that the request decreases the chance to get a job. Therefore, the support to the implementation of flexible working hours needs an appropriate legislative treatment of employees' rights and extensive consultancy focused both on employers and employees.

Regional cumulation of problems can be seen mainly in the limited catchment regions (the lower accessibility of not only local labour markets) where problems to utilise one's qualification are even deeper. Women usually solve the problems by taking up jobs that require lower qualification than they actually can offer. The more complicated situation in the region, the higher the rate of unemployment of women (above all, in the regions of Ústí, Moravia-Silesia, Olomouc). The situation is worse also in rural areas (the regions of Vysočina, Pardubice, South Bohemia) where unemployment of women as compared to that of men was twice as high. Those regions feature higher trends among women to solve the situation by means of moving out of the region. Such strategy is, however, problematic for older women and those with children; women thus are trapped by various requirements of three systems (the labour, social and health ones).

The persons (usually mothers) who take all-day care for disabled children or persons taking care of other dependents, e.g. for a long-term ill family member, represent a specific group. Their realistic employability as compared to the other job seekers is practically zero. That group of disadvantaged persons can work only part time and their more frequent absence can be expected. The position implies a higher rate of social dependency, the loss of achieved qualification, negative impact on that person's psychic and his/her social isolation. On grounds of taking care of their seriously disabled children, many such persons cannot achieve higher education and they usually have primary education only. There is no structure of educational opportunities as regards the possibilities and orientation of the group of disadvantaged job seekers.

⁴⁴ Questionnaire survey of 270 employers, conducted by the Masaryk's University of Brno in 1999.

Possible solutions, which EQUAL DPs could develop and test within the second round:

- Restore a network of services for mothers with young children, such as day-care centres, nurseries, home services, public services (transport, administrative services, recreational facilities), which would be affordable by marginalized groups;
- Supporting flexible employment schemes and modern employment methods – which can be used by women;
- Provide for the opportunity of further education for the persons (usually mothers) who take all-day care of dependent persons; an expanded offer of job opportunities could also result from the development of the system of consultancy services, system of social consultancy, expanded offer of suitable re-qualification courses or qualification courses within lifelong learning.

2.2.8. REDUCING GENDER GAPS AND SUPPORTING JOB DESEGREGATION

The cause of differences in gender employability can be seen in that employers consider women as less stable and less efficient labour force, mainly because the woman spends at present much more time taking care for family as compared to the man (see 2.2.7). The other cause is the mental stereotype that the woman does not have the same prerequisites for management as the man.

That way of perceiving women in the society results in their unequal access to employment, women lose job more frequently, the value of their work is lower, they are less represented in management positions both in the private and public spheres. There is a horizontal segregation, too, as women often have so-called traditional women's occupation, being teachers, nurses, clerks in public administration and shop assistants.

The representation of women among managers on different management levels is about 4% in 100% of employed women, whereas the percentage of men is 9%. The lower representation of women in the so-called top-positions is even more evident (the men to women proportion in those positions is 74:26). The situation does not significantly change.

As indicated by surveys⁴⁵, the average wages of women were 25.6% down in 2001 to the wages of men, mainly in the business sphere. Differences in the labour income are due both to the horizontal and vertical segregations of women into the low-income professions, to their achieved education and salary discrimination. The reasons for the wage difference between women and men are discussed in the research report prepared by the Research Institute of Labour and Social Affairs of 2002 "The Analysis of Differences in the Labour Income of Men and Women – Proposed Model Approach to the Identification of the Discrimination Rate".

Differences in education reflect in the lower number of female university graduates and in the lower proportion in training courses in companies (see 2.2.5).

Possible solutions, which EQUAL DPs could develop and test within the second round:

- Enhance the awareness of equal opportunities among employers, in public offices, trade unions, employees themselves and eliminate women and men's stereotypes;
- Development of tools providing for equal remuneration of women and men.

⁴⁵ LFSS - CZSO

2.2.9. ASSISTING ASYLUM SEEKERS IN THEIR ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET

This mandatory theme is based on the assumption that access to the labour market by asylum seekers is in the majority of Member States either forbidden or hedged around with restrictive conditions. The term of asylum seekers can be defined like persons whose applications are being processed (the asylum proceedings is in progress).

The CIP EQUAL activities concerning the asylum seekers will focus on their special needs. The minimum standards for reception conditions for asylum seekers are defined in the Council Directive 2003/9/EC.

The assistance to the asylum seekers is to be provided in the form of education and vocational training courses, which could be also utilised by asylum seekers after their return to their home countries. Another type of assistance to the asylum seekers within the CIP EQUAL will be provided in form of educational and vocational training courses to help improve capacity of the people working with asylum seekers in the Czech authorities and NGOs and networking between these authorities and organisations.

The Czech asylum policy has already been harmonised with EU *acquis communautaire* laying down the standards for the asylum proceedings. The issue of asylum seekers in the Czech Republic is regulated by Asylum Act⁴⁶. Asylum seekers are entitled to free medical care, accommodation, food and other services as listed in paragraph 42 subparagraph 1 a) of the Asylum Act. Asylum seekers are also entitled to receive spending money.

The asylum proceedings and general asylum-related issues are the responsibility of the Czech Ministry of the Interior (Asylum and Migration Policy Department). The presence of asylum seekers involves various aspects, such as the social field, access to the labour market, internal security, etc., which are covered by relevant departments across the central administration. The issues related to their access to the labour market are solved in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Asylum seekers used to have the same position as regards employment as the persons who had been granted asylum, that means the same position as Czech citizens. The amended act, which came into effect on 1 February 2002, however abolished that provision. According to paragraph 2e of the Asylum Act, the asylum seeker is not allowed to join the labour market for one year from the date of opening the asylum proceedings. Unless his/her application is decided in one year, the asylum seeker can be granted work permit under the same conditions as those applying to other foreigners (i.e. with respect to the situation in the labour market). The reason for the amendment is that the preferential treatment of asylum seekers in access to the labour market had frequently been misused by foreigners working without permit, which was demonstrated, for example, by the increase in the number

⁴⁶ Act No. 325/1999. The act regulates, inter alia, the legal status of the asylum seekers, his/her rights and duties and stipulates the conditions for his/her entry to and stay in the Czech Republic, the reasons for granting asylum, and the asylum on humanitarian grounds.

of asylum seekers from Slovakia and Ukraine in past years. The amendment also forbids to relocate asylum seekers after they ask for asylum from the establishments for foreigners detention to asylum homes which they can easily and legally leave, thus avoiding administration deportation. The amendment showed immediate results.

Table No. 15: Numbers of Asylum Seekers in the Czech Republic by Years of Applying for Asylum

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Total
Number of persons	2,207	1,187	1,417	2,211	2,109	4,085	7,220	8,788	18,094	8,481	55,799
Change	162 %	-46 %	19 %	56 %	-5 %	94 %	77 %	22 %	106 %	-53 %	
Asylum	250	116	59	162	96	78	80	133	83	103	1160

Source: Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic

In the year 2003 (by April) asylum was sought by 3,165 persons and asylum was granted in 19 cases. Until 1997 the development in the numbers of asylum seekers was even, ranging between 1,000 and 2,000 persons annually. A steep increase in the numbers of asylum seekers from neighbouring countries in the recent years was due mainly to the misuse of the asylum seeker's preferential position in the labour market as compared to that of other foreigners (the numbers of asylum seekers rose twice up to three times after 1999). Asylum was sought between the years 1993 and 2002 by 55,799 persons. The numbers of asylum seekers culminated in 2001 (as regards the number of applications, the Czech Republic was on the ninth place in Europe) to drop to about a half after the aforementioned amendment (in January 2002 asylum was sought by 1,334 persons, in February only by 678 persons and the numbers then average 650 persons per month). No data on the representation of women among asylum seekers are available in the statistics.

The nationality structure of asylum seekers has also changed in the recent years. Whereas asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, India and other Asian countries and Yugoslavia had prevailed in the past, in 2002 asylum is sought mainly by people from Ukraine (20%), Vietnam (11%), Slovakia (10%), Moldavia (9%) and the former Soviet Union.

As for the average length of time, in which the decision concerning asylum confirmation or non-confirmation is made, the latest data are available from the year 2002. According to the statistics in 2002 the asylum were confirmed to 103 persons. The average length of time, in which the asylum seekers were waiting for the decision, was 908 days (about 2,5 years). This length was caused by the fact that some of the asylum seekers received the asylum confirmation after an appealing procedure and also by the fact that some groups (Chechen people for example) were not treated directly regarding to lack of reliable information about the country they where from.

In 2002 there was 5 139 decisions about asylum non-confirmation. In 2 430 cases the shorter procedure were used and the request for asylum confirmation was rejected as unreasonable. The average length of time, in which the decision about non-confirmation was held in the shorter procedure, was 16 days, in case of a standard non-confirmation of the request it was 178 days.

Underage foreigners without documents and unaccompanied by adult persons pose a problem in the recent years. Those asylum seekers should be taken care of by educational institutions. That group is one of the target groups under the Concept of Placement and Education of Children with Language Barrier Incl. Underage Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers in Educational Establishments, which was approved by the Government in its Resolution No. 395 of 17 April 2002. The Concept includes the aspects of placing children in educational establishments and of subsequent pedagogic and social care for them both in the establishments and after they leave the educational establishment.

The group of asylum seekers includes persons suffering from different, mostly multiple handicaps. That is why the characteristics of asylum seekers' handicaps are included in the descriptions of the other disadvantaged groups in subchapter 2.2.1. G).

Possible solutions which EQUAL DPs could develop and test within the second round:

- Assistance to asylum seekers through special integration courses developing their language knowledge and practical employment of their skills;
- Assistance to asylum seekers in looking for job and integration in the community;
- Development of skills of the asylum seekers who can be expected to return to their respective countries in order to give them better chance to find a suitable job in their countries;
- Provision of the pedagogic and social care to the underage foreigners without documents and not accompanied by their parents;
- Educational and vocational training courses for the people working with asylum seekers;
- Networking of organisations and authorities working with asylum seekers.

Regarding to the Asylum Act of the Czech Republic all the direct types of assistance concerning the access to the labour market of asylum seekers (e.g. looking for the job) could be provided only to the asylum seekers after one year from the date of opening their asylum proceedings. All the other direct types of assistance could be provided to all asylum seekers.

2.3. ANALYSIS OF IMPLEMENTED PROGRAMMES AND MEASURES IN RELATION TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN THE LABOUR MARKET

In this part of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL the summary of experience gained in the up-to date realised programmes and projects connected to the equal opportunities at the labour market is to be found. The conclusions of the gained experience confirm the conclusions of the socio-economic analyses presented in 2.2. section of this document. In case that there are some additional experience relevant for the scope of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL based on the up-to date realised programmes and projects concerning the equal opportunities at the labour market, these additional conclusions are described directly in the 2.3. section of the document. Since then there are some additional possible solutions for the second round of CI EQUAL in this summary. All the possible solutions proposed either in 2.2. section or in 2.3. section of the document are summarised in the chapter 3 where the description of priorities and measures is given.

The complementarity between CIP EQUAL and up-to date realised programmes and projects will be assured through on-going evaluation and consultation process involving the key stakeholders participating in the Monitoring Committee and in the Thematic Networking Groups.

2.3.1. PROGRAMMES SUPPORTING EMPLOYABILITY (PRIORITY 1)

A) Programmes and Measures to Support the Integration of Low-qualified Persons

Without the active employment policy tools, chance to find job by low-qualified persons who are long-term unemployed is almost zero. Labour Office experts recommend for that group:

- Training (at any cost);
- Individual plan of personal development (which are included in the programmes First Opportunity and New Start);
- Motivation courses;
- Re-qualification courses (adapted to the possibilities and needs of low-qualified persons);
- Publicly beneficial works for those who cannot or are not willing to work on themselves;
- Socially purposeful employment opportunities;
- Starting self-employment after adequate training.

Publicly beneficial work implemented within the active employment policy programmes is a short-term solution of one's situation. Evidently, the interest of employers grows along with the growing subsidies to such jobs. Nevertheless, many firms are not willing to employ those persons regardless of any support by the Labour Office because low-qualified job seekers mean too high a risk for the company, quality of its production and organisation.

To support the involvement of more persons in lifelong learning, it is necessary to offer more educational and training opportunities, as well as related information and

consultancy. In this context, the national information database of continuing vocational education providers and their training courses was put into operation. A network of diagnostic centres was formed, in which one's skills can be assessed and measures proposed to improve that person's chance to find job.

Present evening classes organised by schools for adult persons are too long and inadequate. Although private sector institutions offer a broad mix of shorter courses, their quality is questionable. Re-qualification courses for the adults are not yet adequately focused on the needs of unqualified or low-qualified persons.

Unfortunately, the statistics of the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs do not include the category of low-qualified persons in the active employment policy tools. Publicly beneficial works can, however, be expected to involve, above all, that group – 10,821 persons in 1995, 11,905 persons in 1998, 19,977 in 2001 and in 2002 Labour Offices managed to place 16,573 job seekers in this employment tool.

Re-qualification for that group means the completion of formal education – which is a priority in the event of underage job seekers. The statistics reported by MoLSA – ESA do not show numbers of low-qualified persons included in re-qualification courses, but experience of Labour Offices indicate that the group is not willing to take part in further education (there is probably a connection with the social system). Specific consultancy and training courses exist for low-qualified job seekers, such as qualification for underage job seekers, practical re-qualification, motivation courses, courses in job-seeking.

There are also special projects designed for the low-qualified unemployed. Palmif, for example, participated in the implementation of an important and appreciated programme “Šance”, which dealt mainly with Labour Office clients who face difficulties in the society as regards the social aspect, education, integration into a labour market and ethnic origin. The programme includes more than fifty Czech districts and, commencing from 1991 (when it started), 2,000 persons received re-qualification in this way. More than 80% of persons included in the programme found job in one month from the end of the course. The programme is an obligatory part of the active employment policy of each Labour Office. Experts recommend establishing more similar centres. Employment services organise a similar programme entitled Most for young, low-qualified and long-term unemployed job seekers.

B) Programmes to Support Disabled Persons

In 1998 the Czech Government adopted the National Plan for Equalizing Opportunities for Disabled Persons. Its fulfilling is assessed each year and measures are updated. It was also created the Governmental Committee for disabled persons, which is co-ordinator and advisory body of the Government for the disabled person area. Its aim is to support in the creation of equality conditions for disabled persons in all fields of society life. Via the members directly at the Committee disabled persons are involved to participate in all activities of this Committee. The other members of the Committee are state administration, National Council for disabled persons and the representatives of employers.

The Czech legislation pays higher attention to the disabled persons in relation to the labour market. Special programmes and measures can be found not only in

Employment Act, which defines the principles of the employment policy (as regards the disabled persons, that includes mainly sheltered employment, labour rehabilitation, re-qualification, socially purposeful employment opportunities), other standards also include motivation of both the disabled persons (preferential treatment in preparation for employment, the support to self-employment of disabled persons, tax allowances) and of the employers (the employer is obliged to report positions for disabled persons and allocate a proportion of positions for the disabled, the investment support programme for the employers who employ more than 50% of disabled employees, lower taxation, preferential treatment in public service contracts of firms employing more than 50% of disabled employees).

In general, however, the measures already included in regulations are not able to cope with the adverse trends in employing the disabled persons; that is why new regulations should be enacted and the existing ones amended.

The issues of employment of the disabled are also included in strategic documents in the field of employment, either in the National Action Plan of Employment or in the new Employment Bill. The group of the disabled is always mentioned as one of the disadvantaged groups, above all in relation to the resolution of long-term unemployment, which is a result of the not too efficient system of opportunity levelling for the disabled. Certain special Palmif programmes (e.g. supported employment) were designed for the disabled.

The Ministry of Education announces each year Development and Transformation Programmes for universities under which the Programme to Support the Integration of Disabled Students was subsidized in 2003 (the programme was designed to level out the opportunities to study for applicants from different disadvantaged social groups – Programme No. 5).

The programme will support projects focused on education of disabled students in all types and forms of education including lifelong learning and their maximal integration among the other students.

Chance for the disabled persons to find job is promoted also by activities of universities, which should enable them to achieve university education:

- The Laboratory Teresa was established at Nuclear and Physical Engineering Faculty at Czech Technical University in Prague; the laboratory is furnished to be used by all students with sight problems from all universities;
- The Institute of Rehabilitation of Persons with Sight Problems (until the end of April 2001 at Faculty of Physical Training and Sports, Charles University in Prague, from May 2001 at Faculty of Arts) – the Institute organises programmes for university students with sight problems, workshops for teachers educating children with sight problems;
- The bachelor study programme Educational Dramatics for Deaf Persons at Theatre Faculty, Janáček's Academy of Music and Drama;
- The master study programme Applied Physical Training, which is open also to the disabled students, at Faculty of Physical Training, Palacký's University at Olomouc;

- The bachelor study programme Philology with the branch The Czech Language in Communication for Deaf Persons at Philosophical Faculty, Charles University in Prague;
- The Typhlopedy Cabinet at Department of Special Pedagogy, Pedagogic Faculty, University of Hradec Králové (UHK); the primary purpose of the Cabinet is to support students with sight and combined handicaps in UHK study programmes;
- When reconstructing buildings and in newly erected buildings, universities create no-barrier entries in line with regulations.

C) Programmes and Measures to Support the Romany Ethnic Group

The Community Initiative EQUAL will also contribute to the support of the Romany ethnic group and therefore support the achievement of the recommendations from the Annual monitoring reports from the European Commission.

Participation of the Romany as such in programmes is not monitored; their unemployment is only estimated, too. Similarly to the other institutions, Labour Offices are not allowed to register the Romany separately as a specific group. Non-existence of information makes harder the development of targeted programmes. That is why the civic approach as a base for equal opportunities is hardly feasible. Unemployment of the Romany should, however, be solved with the help of the Romany themselves, the Romany consultants and the Romany civic associations.

So far there is no general state policy in the field of employment of the Romany community, which would systematically and conceptually solve in the long-term prospect that problematic field. The only explicit activity can be seen in the Concept of the Government Policy Towards the Romany Community Members from 2000. The Concept, however, is a mere general description of problems of the community and general expression of willingness to solve the situation. It does not propose any particular objectives to be achieved and, consequently, it does not provide for means and ways of achieving them. The reason might be the fact that the causes of the undesirable situation are of multi-dimensional nature and require a systematic intervention across sectors and all problematic fields.

Partial changes are sought for in particular by non-profit, pro-Romany organisations, mostly through the mediation of various projects. The point is that even those efforts suffer from the lack of systematic approach, lack of conceptuality and time limitation. Since their implementation depends on financial subsidies by external entities and is limited by the existing system opportunities (the labour market, state employment policy, etc.), their existence and operation in the future are unclear.

The active employment policy, as well as the action plans of employment, which are being prepared, focus in general on the assistance to the unemployed and, save for several exceptions, the plans do not include specific measures for the Romany.

Pro-Romany organisations use very often one of the forms of the active employment policy, which is the possibility to employ their "clients" within the scheme of publicly beneficial work. Responses from the field point out to certain system limits, which prevent the activities from being used more frequently and profoundly (above all, the inflexible financial and organisation rules).

As regards the programmes focusing directly on the support to persons who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market (PALMIF) and the programmes focusing on the enhancement of the level of social services (SWIF), the principle shortage of those programmes in relation to the issues of the Romany community members consists in their too general coverage. The programmes do not focus specifically on the Romany community, laying down too high requirements on the project preparation, which cannot be met by most pro-Romany organisations.

Although the situation and management level of the organisations dealing with the Romany community members and their problems keep increasing, the need to promote their information, qualification and competence is ever more evident. That is a must for the already established organisations to survive, otherwise the organisations will not be able to get financial funds and know-how so as to improve their activities and services. A broad sphere of competence is opening up for various educational institutions; what is needed, however, is a systematic and targeted government regulation, in this particular case by the Government Council for the Affairs of the Romany Community.

The Government Council for the Affairs of the Romany Community supported last year only one project (of 279 projects monitored within the evaluation conducted by the Research Institute of labour and Social Affairs at Brno), which related directly to that field, and only one project focusing on employment.

The projects focusing on the founding of and support to sheltered workshops for the persons who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market seem to be original and viable. In the event of the Romany community, the projects focus on the restoration of traditional Romany trades.

This issue is the responsibility of the Czech Government Council for the Affairs of the Romany Community. The Council is a consulting body for the Government without executive powers. It can, however, propose both conceptual materials and targeted measures. From 1997 when the Council was founded, the Government passed four resolutions the fulfilment of which is monitored. Two resolutions deal with educational issues⁴⁷. Included measures deal, however, mostly with initial education of the Romany children and youth. As regards further education, the measures focus more on the “systemic” aspects, such as training of teachers teaching in schools with higher percentages of Romany children, educational programmes for Romany advisors operating in the central administration or Romany assistants in schools. The aforementioned Government materials do not include objectives focusing on training courses for the adult Romany and enhancement of their motivation to further education. The educational level of the adult Romany is very low, considering the fact that even the young Romany population includes mere 3% of persons with secondary education⁴⁸.

⁴⁷ Government Resolution No. 686/1997 to the report on the situation of the Romany community in the Czech Republic and Government Resolution No. 599/2000, Concept of the Government Policy Towards the Romany Community Members Helping Their Integration into the Society.

⁴⁸ Concept of the Government Policy Towards the Romany Community Members Helping Their Integration into the Society.

The issue of employment and education in the labour market is the responsibility of the Commission of the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs implementing measures to support the employment of persons who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market with regard to the members of the Romany minority. The Commission supports and recommends activities within the employment services leading to employment and improvement of qualification, thus creating conditions for communication between Romany communities, civic associations and non-profit organisations and business entities and the representatives of local administration, the social partners and Labour Offices.

MoEYS subsidizes within the support to education of the Romany the implementation of the Programme to Support and Develop Educational Activities of Public Universities (Transformation and Development Programmes 2003). The sub-programme The Support to Selected Study Programmes – in the field of study programmes for future teachers:

- Deals with the issue of multicultural education;
- Prepares educational staff in social pedagogy, in social pathology prevention and in training of pupils for skills required for employment.

D) Programmes and Measures for School Leavers

- Within the active employment policy, Labour Offices offer: vocational practice for school leavers – graduate positions (instead of graduate positions, certain regions prefer to create socially purposeful employment opportunities);
- Qualification for the minors;
- Group and individual consultancy;
- Consultancy programmes (JOB clubs, motivation courses);
- Psychological consultancy;
- Information and consultancy activities for those considering their further studies within the Information and Consultancy Centre for Career Selection and Change;
- Inclusion of the subject Career Selection (orientation in the labour market);
- Re-qualification – educational stays;
- Non-specific re-qualification;
- Additional re-qualification;
- Practical re-qualification;
- Specific (targeted) re-qualification.

Labour Offices consider subsidies for graduate practice with employer and graduate educational stays as the most efficient measure for school leavers who can thus work in their respective branches.

5,502 graduate jobs were created with the help of Labour Offices in 1995. In 1998 the figure increased to 9,464 to achieve 11,478 in 2000 and decrease to 8,132 in 2002 (situation at 31 December 2002). The creation of those jobs, however, does not correspond to the sharp increase in the numbers of unemployed school leavers. At 31 December 1995 Labour Offices registered 20,085 school leavers and as many as 59,895 at 31 December 2002. It should be noted, however, that the growth of graduate jobs is monitored from 1998 in relation to the growth in the numbers of school leavers. Nevertheless, the numbers of those jobs don not suffice and their

quality is not quite adequate. A plan of vocational practice to be prepared in collaboration with the employer should be required as a condition for the subsidy to vocational practice of school leavers and qualification of the minor. The plan should include (into a feasible extent) the school-leaver rotation in various positions related to his/her qualification.

In the event of many school leavers, re-qualification courses make up for certain shortages in the structure of school subjects (those include, for example, PC Basics since school leavers are not adequately prepared for the practice and demand that the Labour Office include them in a re-qualification course of that type). School leavers currently account for 40% of the total number of re-qualified persons. Since their proportion in the registry of the unemployed is about 15%, it can be said that school leavers are more interested in re-qualification than the other job seekers. The efficiency of re-qualification is in the category of school leavers slightly lower than that in the “remaining” part of re-qualified persons (approx. 60%). That is because unspecific re-qualification is more frequent in that category. The minors with primary education only are not interested in re-qualification and, unfortunately, their parents do not exert any positive effects in solving the serious problem.

Understaffing of Labour Offices (as well as a shortfall of rooms and office equipment) prevents the other mentioned activities to be conducted into the necessary extent – the services of the information and consultancy centre, individual and groups consultancy.

Taking into account the difficult situation of school leavers entering the labour market, the National Action Plan of Employment for the year 2003 strives to enhance preventive measures for young people. The Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, however, does not have enough sources to offer to each young person a new opportunity in the form of qualification or re-qualification courses, practice, job or other measure with respect to such person’s efficient integration into a labour market in six months of his/her unemployment.

New measures under Palmif to support jobs for the young people and school leavers were tested and projects specifically orientated to school leavers were implemented. “Most” is one of the important projects. The project is designed for the unemployed young people aged 15-18 with primary or incomplete secondary education. Under the project re-qualification courses are organised and enriched with the programme of personal and social development of young people in the form of group work. The aim of the programme is to encourage the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development. The project also includes vocational practice at the employer who can train the young worker for his needs. The project proved successful, received positive evaluations and, at present, it is not an experiment anymore, but a regular tool that can be applied to any group of the unemployed in any region.

The programme “Šance” is another of important and appreciated projects. The programme deals mainly with Labour Office clients who have difficulty in the society as regards the social, educational, professional or ethnic aspects.

The subject “Career Selection” turns out to be most needed. It should be taught in all basic schools and should facilitate young people to orientate in the adult world,

contribute to their life adaptability and flexibility, as well as to their self-confident, proactive participation in the labour market. At present, however, teachers are not prepared to teach the subject and many schools do not really care about their pupils' employability.

Following up Czech Government Resolution No. 325 of 3 April 2000 to "The Measures to Increase Employment of School Leavers", MoEYS issued its "Methodical Instruction to Include in Secondary School Curriculum the Introduction to the World of Labour". According to the Instruction all secondary schools in the Czech Republic should include from the school year 2000/2001 the subjects the main purpose of which is to provide students with the most important pieces of knowledge and skills related to their integration into a labour market and with competencies that should help them decide their future profession and educational orientation when they enter the labour market and exert their labour rights. Fulfilment of the methodical instruction at schools met with numerous troubles, which consisted mainly – in addition to the low level of equipment with necessary teaching aids and materials – in the lack of preparation of teachers for teaching the "Introduction to the World of Labour". That is why the National Institute of Vocational Education prepared the Methodical Guidelines for teachers and the Methodology for Teaching the Introduction to the World of Labour. The Institute had also prepared five years ago the textbook "Introduction to the World of Labour", which includes most of the themes contained in the curriculum Introduction to the World of Labour. The theme is also laid down in the general educational programmes being prepared for secondary vocational schools in the form of the cross-sectional theme The Man and the World of Labour.

Conclusion: Unemployment of school leavers should be prevented in the first place. That is why it is essential to control the system of vocational education of both the youth and the adult (using the tools usual in market economy), i.e. the duration, the structure by types of school, by groups of branches, the contents and quality of education so that it enable continual adaptation to the future needs of the labour market. Besides, it is essential to create a system of information about both the present and the future labour market trends, about the educational opportunities (re-qualification) and to enhance the system of consultancy so that individual ways in one's education and professional development can be found, respecting the condition of each individual.

As regards consultancy for school leavers, it is essential to support and implement in an efficient way the system of balance diagnostics so as to improve mediation activities and recommendations for re-qualification, to demand strictly that the subject "Career Selection" be included as obligatory into the curriculum in basic and secondary schools, to provide for the training of teachers, to amend regulations as necessary, to specify the contents and form of the subject.

Simultaneously, it is essential to resolve the problem of the demotivating relation between the amount of welfare benefits and remuneration for work. The solution should include not only a general relation between the minimal wage and the official life minimum, etc., but also other measures to support the school leavers' interest in joining a labour market (e.g. the payment of unemployment benefits only after a certain period of time from leaving school). It would be good to precondition welfare

benefits granted to the school leavers and minors by their participation in vocational practice or another form of further education. That is why it is necessary to support so-called combined studies.

2.3.2. PROGRAMMES SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP (PRIORITY 2)

A) Programmes and Measures to Support Setting up in and Running Business

The support to setting up in business for the unemployed is implemented through the mediation of measures under the active employment policy, which is implemented by Labour Offices – the support to self-employment.

The condition is a presentation of a good business plan, which will be assessed by the Labour Office as regards its feasibility. In more complex or unclear cases, the Labour Office will ask for opinion an expert organisation or certified specialist.

The job seekers who wish to start self-employment are recommended to be granted a financial contribution providing that they successfully attend a re-qualification course for starting self-employed persons. The maximum contribution is CZK 80,000. The allocation is determined with respect to the expenditures reported in the business plan and to one's own investments. Crucial for the grant of contribution is the quality of the business plan and adequacy of reported expenditures.

The problematic fields needing higher attention include:

- Intensive and affordable consultancy, information and training.
- Preparation and implementation of qualification and re-qualification programmes in relation to the labour market and lifelong learning system.
- Creation of a regional information system on the labour market.
- Pilot projects to support employability of young people without education (various motivation courses, basic labour skills, labour and social habits).
- Integration of all disadvantaged groups and support to their integration into a labour market.

The support in the field of information technologies should focus in particular on:

- The support and development of Euro Info Centres activities in the Czech Republic.
- The support to the integration into the e-commerce.
- The completion of a web-based information system on the support to business in the Czech Republic.
- Providing for the Internet access to the registered patents, registered designs, trademarks and industrial designs.
- Public access to ISAP information database, mainly to translation into Czech of EU legal standards.
- Preferential participation in international trade fairs and shows.
- Subsidies to the marketing information, marketing education in the field of exports, marketing promotion, Internet marketing, export and marketing consultancy.
- Creation of a tourist information system and so-called information kiosks.

Programme Support to Setting up in and Stabilising New Business

The research of available materials of the industrial policy indicated that supported will be new businesses manufacturing tangible products or rendering auxiliary industrial or business services. The support will be given also to stabilisation of initial business operations. Special attention should be paid to the support to new manufacturing activities and new types of services based on the utilisation of information technologies (such as e-commerce, virtual organisation, new types of mediation and partnership, etc.).

B) Programmes and Measures Pertaining to Social Economy

Certain basic strategic tasks to be tackled by the non-profit sector are included in the Strategy of Non-profit Sector Development adopted in January 2000.

The Government Council for Non-state and Non-profit Organisations is one of the supervisory bodies controlling the allocations of funds designed for the Foundation Investment Fund established in 1992. Non-state and non-profit organisations often undertake educational activities for target groups that are otherwise neglected by the state policy. Although the Government contributes finances to such services, the support by the government is not guaranteed, being rendered as a grant for one year. The practice adversely reflects the possibility of maintaining the educational courses and other services on a permanent basis. Besides, the offer of services rendered by non-state and non-profit organisations is not sufficient. In spite of problems appearing in the non-profit sector, it is still the mainspring of change as regards specific problems of groups at risk of social exclusion.

Since there is no information or organisation interconnection between individual further education actors and institutions rendering social services, no regular programme exists to solve the problem. Therefore, individual training courses are often of limited effect.

Active Employment Policy – The policy is very extensive, depending in specific results on activities of respective Labour Offices (great differences between regions). Of the measure under that policy, in particular the support to the creation of socially purposeful employment opportunities, publicly beneficial works and, partially, re-qualification are in keeping with the purpose of EQUAL.

Practical Educational Policy – Both the section focusing on the youth (in school and out-of-school segment of education) and that focusing on the adult practically do not reach specific groups, which are socially excluded. Preparatory classes in basic schools (designed mainly for the Romany) are the exception. Those classes will not, however, directly influence employment in the next fifteen years.

National Action Plan of Employment – With its contents and form of pillars, the Plan practically copies the priorities of EU employment policy and, therefore, the priorities of the initiative EQUAL. As regards social economy, it is Pillar 4, which is important. The measures against the discriminative practice of employers were partially successful. After the pressure on forbidding discrimination ads, the problem partially shifted to a hidden discrimination practice that employers do not hire members of so-called problematic groups (mothers after maternal leave, persons taking care of children or other dependent persons, older persons, Romany, etc.), not manifesting such behaviour. No significant effect was recorded in the intention to create

conditions for the founding and operation of both public and private pre-school establishments or in substitution care for adult family members. Certain effects can be seen in the non-government sector with its day-care centres, for example, for mentally disabled children or for seniors who need all-day care. That is rendered instead of family members during their daily employment by a non-profit organisation.

PALMIF – The programme fully complies with the purpose of the initiative EQUAL. In the Czech Republic it was implemented through the mediation of Labour Offices from 1991, yielding 173 supported projects, 2,220 new jobs and 14,734 participants in vocational training courses according to NTF data. Projects were implemented both by commercial and non-profit organisations – for example, by Sananim Olomouc, Centre of Services for the Disabled at Zlín, Helping Children at Prostějov, Charity at Frýdek–Místek.

SWIF – Unlike PALMIF, the programme SWIF focuses on social services (not education), though rendered only by non-state and non-profit organisations. SWIF has been implemented from 1996 on the level of districts. Supported in three rounds were 126 projects designed in particular for the physically disabled persons, seniors and homeless persons. Contributions were granted to Services to People in Psychosocial Distress at Havířov (guidance bureau), Charity at Kutná Hora (community centre), Advaita at Nová Ves u Liberce (care for drug-addicts), Fokus Myklub Liberec (field care for the mentally ill), Arkáda Písek (guidance bureau), Centre of Non-profit Organisations at Plzeň (guidance bureau) and other.

Phare 2000 (Development of the Civic Society) and Phare 1999 (Access) can play a supporting role in the development of social economy because the programmes render contributions to the building of NGO capacities. Besides, one of the priorities under Access focuses explicitly on equal opportunities (along with the protection of the consumer, the development of the social dialogue and the promotion of rights of working people) and another priority on the social re-integration of persons and social support to marginal groups.

Projects implemented by the non-profit sector include the already mentioned sheltered workshops, supported jobs, employment of persons by parish charities (also otherwise than as regular employees), day-care centres, guidance bureaus and special projects (e.g. selling the journal New Space by homeless persons). The scale of activities within the sector is not yet fully mapped. That is also due to the fact that there is no registry of “active” non-profit organisations and their activities and because projects undertaken by NGOs are financed, in addition to sources under the state budget and EU funds, from their own revenues, from public collections, by corporation sponsoring, supranational non-government foundations and by funds granted by governments of other countries (in the Czech Republic, for example, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the USA, Canada, Germany).

Inadequately solved problems and desirable innovative directions of the programme support to the third sector.

As indicated by incomplete analyses, the problems that urgently need to be solved include:

- Complex community services for persons who have difficulty in being integrated into a labour market;

- Internal economy of the non-profit organisation or community enterprise operating in social economy (low capital to get investments and credits, poor cash flow);
- Qualification and re-qualification preparation of hardly employable persons including obligatory stays during unemployment and supporting services to maintain or improve employability;
- Re-qualification for persons who are not registered by the Labour Office but who are at imminent risk of the loss of employment or have difficulty in looking for job (e.g. women considering their return to the labour market after maternal leave);
- Founding social enterprises, in particular those of self-help type;
- Career counselling, mainly with the help of coaches;
- Enhancing partnerships with public administration subjects and business subjects on the national, regional and local levels. That also includes promoting higher involvement of elected or generally acknowledged representatives of the non-profit sector in determining priorities of the development of the Republic, regions and municipalities, in sectoral and regional operational programmes, etc.;
- Creating necessary capacities within non-profit and community organisations in social economy (training courses, etc.);
- Improving NGO's ability to solicit donations for their activities (above all, corporation sponsoring contributions) and render paid (and auxiliary) services to generate revenues. That is also connected with improvement of their activities in marketing, public relations, communication and financial management;
- It is necessary to link training and employment services.

2.3.3. PROGRAMMES SUPPORTING THE ADAPTABILITY OF FIRMS AND EMPLOYEES (PRIORITY 3)

A) Programmes Supporting the Adaptability of Firms and Employees

Measures supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change are included in Pillar 3 of the National Action Plan of Employment, which was prepared by the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The aim of the measures is to form prerequisites for the achievement of a dynamic and flexible labour market throughout national economy. Therefore, the measures focus on the creation of conditions for the modernisation of labour organisation and forms of working hours and on the support to the adaptability of firms and employees. The pace of practical implementation will depend on reconciliation of the need of employers who must succeed in the competition fight, amongst other, by introducing new forms of labour and work organisation, and the trade unions who wish to maintain an adequate level of employee protection under the new conditions.

Selected measures:

- Test the feasibility of a suitable combination of the employment, studies, re-qualification or care for family during one's lifelong career using flexible forms, such as job rotation or sharing.
- Enhance the motivation of employers to improve qualification of their own employees as a preventive measure aimed at the increase of competitiveness and, subsequently, of employment.

- Enhance the scope of and support to re-qualification in the process of restructuring firms and changing production programme with the aim to maintain employees or help them to find new jobs.
- Test in selected firms the efficiency of company training programmes aimed at the maintenance of flexibility and adequate qualification of the labour force.

B) Supporting the Use of Innovation and New Technologies

Long-term competitiveness of national economies demonstrably depends on investments in efficient innovations. The strategy of the support to business means in this field the creation of a significantly more favourable environment for technological innovations as a counter-balance to the shortfall of credits and capital. That will result in the improved efficiency of firms and better competitiveness of their products and services. The Czech Government declared its support in this field through seven crucial actions:

- Development and transfer of technologies and product innovations;
- Development of quality;
- Development of production processes and management systems;
- Development of technologies for information sharing and transfer;
- Development of projects using national resources of powers and raw materials;
- Support to the use of energy-saving technologies;
- Technical harmonisation.

In addition to the aforementioned actions, the Programme of Support to the Industrial Research and Development will continue. The Programme focuses on the research and development of new products and technologies, on the support to long-term co-operation between the research sphere and industrial organisations, on the solution of R&D projects orientated to the improvement of efficiency and competitiveness of the Czech industry.

The problems that need more attention and the desirable ways for their more efficient solving

- The terms of different programmes (in particular those administered by the Czech-Moravian Guaranty and Development Bank) are often limited by the volume of available financial funds in the respective year, which poses a problem. All funds are frequently used up in the first part of the year and many prospective projects thus cannot be financed.
- The so-called firm networking is an appreciable shortage. It is essential to create business networks of both small and large enterprises that would create a platform for counselling, assistance, new business opportunities and business partnership for small enterprises.
- The low support to innovations, to the implementation of new technologies in SMEs and large reserves in the human resources development. Many entrepreneurs cannot implement new promising projects on financial grounds. The research also revealed that the policy of human resources development and employee education is not included at all in many cases in company strategies and where such a policy is included, financial funds to implement it are lacking.

2.3.4. PROGRAMMES SUPPORTING THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN IN THE LABOUR MARKET (PRIORITY 4)

In 1998, the Czech Government adopted the programme document Priorities and Procedures of the Government in Promoting the Equality of Men and Women. The document is subject to annual assessment by the Government and its measures are updated. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs was appointed by the Government the co-ordinator for the gender equality agenda. Being aware of the importance of promoting equality between women and men, the Government established as its advisory body the Council for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men. Represented in the Council is the central administration (deputy ministers), trade unions, employers, NGOs. District commissioners, the chairperson of the Parliament Standing Commission for Family and Equal Opportunities and the representative of the Union of Municipalities are in the position of permanent guests. Within the application of gender mainstreaming in all fields, each ministry has from 2002 its own programme document, which includes the priorities and procedures in promoting equal opportunities for women and men. Each ministry created in January 2002 a position for an expert in promoting gender equality.

In addition to the government structures for the promotion of gender equality, the agenda is discussed also by trade union bodies (Committee for Equality at the Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions), employers (within activities of the Union of Industry and Transport) and NGOs. Within the NGOs, about 20 organisations under the Association for Equal Opportunities are the most active. Those include the Czech Union of Women and the Union of Catholic Women. After the election in 2002, the Parliament established the Standing Commission for Family and Equal Opportunities.

Important legislative changes to promote gender equality occurred in 1999-2003, in particular in the Labour Code, in regulations on remuneration, in Employment Act and in the Code of Civil Procedure. The Czech Parliament has been discussing an amendment to the Labour Code, which puts the issues in line with new European directives. The support to equal opportunities is also included in basic documents of the employment policy, such as the National Plan of Employment and National Action Plan of Employment for the year 2001 and subsequent National Action Plans of Employment for the years 2002 and 2003. Measures focus on the creation of equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market.

Part of measures under the active employment policy specifically focuses on women. The participation of women in programmes is relatively good; that includes, above all, the use of re-qualification courses in which women participate more than men. In addition to the usual re-qualification courses, organised are courses for women returning to the labour market after maternal leave. Certain discrepancies appear, however, in the practice and the conditions do not enable certain groups of women, especially those on maternal leave and women with young children, to take part in education. Special support should be given to low-qualified women with young children who are hardly employable and their willingness to enhance their qualification should be stimulated.

The low level of using flexible working hours is one of the barriers to the continual integration of women with young children returning to the labour market. The objective to enhance such forms of labour organisation is formulated both in the Plan of Employment and in the National Action Plan of Employment. It is still a mere declaration because the objective is not prepared in the form of applicable steps, e.g. in the field of consultancy, financial stimuli, etc.

The programmes enhancing the availability of support services, which could be used by families of employed mothers, are little developed. Social services within activities of the local administration, social and non-profit sector should be made more variable and should be individualised. The still low level of co-operation between the non-profit sector and the central administration, including the lack of financial sources and non-existence of an adequate information system pose a problem.

2.3.5. PROGRAMMES ASSISTING ASYLUM SEEKERS IN THEIR INTEGRATION TO THE LABOUR MARKET (PRIORITY 5)

Programmes and projects supporting the integration of foreigners into the labour market of Czech republic has started being realised in 2003. The public authority responsible for their realisation is Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs although the realisation of projects is carried out in co-operation with the NGOs.

The overview of the most important projects realised under this co-operation of the MoLSA and NGOs in 2003 is given below.

The Pilot project “Integration of foreigners and support of organisations and communities of foreigners in the territory of the Czech Republic”

Project promoter: International organisation for migration;

Duration of the project: March – December 2003;

Main activities:

- Research of Ukraine, Armenian and Vietnamese communities as for dimension of their social exclusion;
- Support of organisations for foreigners – support of magazine and information publication;
- Creation of webpage for foreigners concerning practical information for foreigners living in Czech republic. The webpage will be accessible in Czech, Russian, English, Vietnamese and Armenian.⁴⁹

Hotline for foreigners

Project promoter: Poradna pro uprchlíky (Advisory body for refugees);

Duration of the project: March – December 2003;

Main activity:

- Legal and social consultations provided by phone in Czech, English, Russian, French, German, Portuguese, Arabic and Georgian.

Psychological assistance in integration of foreigners

Project promoter: Poradna pro uprchlíky (Advisory body for refugees);

Duration of the project: March – December 2003;

⁴⁹ Webpage for foreigners created under the project will be accessible on address www.domovcr.cz.

Main activity:

- Psychological assistance for foreigners living in the territory of the Czech Republic for longer period of time.

Assistance for foreigners in the access to the labour market in the region of Ústní nad Labem:

Project developer: MoLSA;

Project promoter: Poradna pro uprchlíky (Advisory body for refugees);

Main activity:

- Individual assistance for foreigners and their preparation for the access to the labour market in the Czech Republic.

Project objective: To provide foreigners with assistance helping them in preparation for the access to the labour market and while looking for a suitable job. The assistance is provided on basis of volunteer co-operation between the foreign person and Advisory body for refugees and individual approach to every client.

Project results: The project has confirmed the necessity of further development of the co-operation with labour offices and other relevant bodies dealing with labour market and the necessity of development of similar activities in long-term programmes.

International conference “Integration of foreigners in Europe”

Project promoter: Slovo 21 (Word 21)

Main purpose: The exchange of experience and ideas concerning the policy of integration of foreigners in the territory of the Czech Republic and in EU Member States.

E-learning programme concerning migration and integration of foreigners

Project promoters: MoLSA and GCOMP, I. t. d.

Main purpose and further details: At the end of 2002 the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has started the preparation for the pilot e-learning programme for own employers and employers of organisations managed by the ministry. The programme is dealing with migration and integration of foreigners as the necessity of training the employers of public services in the integration of foreigners in the Czech Republic and communicating special needs of pre-dominant foreign communities in the Czech Republic has been discovered. The programme provides the participant with basic items of information concerning the migration and integration processes in both Europe and the Czech Republic, institutional arrangements of their integration and legal acts relating to the residence of foreigners in the Czech Republic. At the same time, the programme informs about the cultural background of several foreign communities and deals with the most important milestones for the multicultural society. As another important part of the programme, practical exercises modelling the communication of employers of public services with foreigners has been also introduced. The main purpose is to empower the respect of equal opportunities and support of better understanding of foreigners in everyday communication with them, as the result of such a communication should be successful and sound co-operation between the foreigners and the majority population of the Czech Republic.

Everyday life of women-immigrants

Project developer: MoLSA;

Project promoter: Ms. Pavlína Brzáková;

Main purpose: To be provided with the basic overview of the ideas and experience of representatives of women-immigrants who are mothers in other than their native country as they are one of the most threatened target group in the process of integration to the new society. The MoLSA will further use the information provided by this project in order to prepare as efficient integration measures for this target group as possible.

Intercultural workshops

Project promoters: People in Need Foundation and MoLSA

Two workshops for 20 participants coming from the labour offices in the Czech Republic were realised during 2003. The workshops prepared the participants for their communication with foreigners in order to change general attitudes of employers of public services concerning opener and more professional communication with foreigners.

The detailed information about the projects is to be found on webpage www.cizinci.cz.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Information published on the webpage www.cizinci.cz is available only in Czech.

2.4. SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION IN THE CZECH LABOUR MARKET AS REGARDS DISCRIMINATION AND INEQUALITIES

2.4.1. STRENGTHS

- Existence of a basic institutional framework pertaining to the labour market.
- Experience gained during the implementation of the active employment policy.
- Pieces of knowledge collected during the implementation of the programmes used as preparation for the future drawing from the ESF, including the lessons learned during the implementation of the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL in the Czech Republic.
- Legislative coverage of the anti-discrimination access to education.
- Relatively equal access to education for women and men.
- Quite dense and relatively evenly distributed regional network of educational and training facilities.

2.4.2. WEAKNESSES

- Ever increasing share of the long-term unemployed.
- Deepening regional differences in the labour market.
- Growing numbers of the unemployed in the groups of disadvantaged persons due to the low integration of disadvantaged persons into a labour market.
- Demotivating system of social benefits.
- Underdeveloped third sector, regional disparities.
- Incomplete interconnection between in particular secondary schools and the needs of the labour market.
- Non-existence of a complex system of lifelong learning, in particular the lack of interconnection among educational programmes.
- Low information literacy and bad information technology accessibility.
- Unequal positions of women and men in the labour market as regards their employability.
- Low integration of the Romany minority in the society.
- Low co-operation between the public and the private sectors.
- Xenophobia in the society.

2.4.3. OPPORTUNITIES

- Enhance the development of the third sector and the use of the third sector to support disadvantaged groups in the labour market.
- Enhance prevention in the active employment policy.
- Adapt the system of secondary schools to the conditions in the labour market.
- Create a complex concept and system of lifelong learning including also a system of re-qualification and define competencies of each subject.
- Create a system of training for people working in pedagogic-psychological counselling and those working with disadvantaged persons.
- Create a complex institutional system (in compliance with the principle of partnership) responding quickly to the requirements of the labour market.
- Higher involvement of SMEs in the system solving problems of groups disadvantaged in the labour market.
- Supplement financial sources with funds from the European Union.

- Create conditions for persons from disadvantaged groups to set up in businesses of their own.
- Develop a multicultural society.
- Social dialogue and enhancing civil society.
- Increase the labour market flexibility.

2.4.4. THREATS

- Uncertainty in the issues pertaining to the financing of the third sector.
- Low absorption capacity to use financial funds from the European Union.
- Incomplete concept and institutional system in relation to the labour market.
- Continuing low ability of secondary schools to respond to the needs of the labour market.
- Continuing lack of conceptuality and fragmentation of the system of lifelong learning and re-qualification.
- Persisting mistrust in minorities on the part of the majority population.
- Low support to the development of SMEs and their involvement in the system of solving problems of groups disadvantaged in the labour market.
- Non-implementation of the general system of changes, which would contribute to the motivation of disadvantaged individuals to improve their qualification.

3. Community Initiative Programme EQUAL Strategy

3.1. GENERAL STRATEGY OF THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE PROGRAMME EQUAL

The CIP EQUAL strategy has been formulated on the basis of an analysis of the economic and social situation of persons from discriminated and disadvantaged groups in the labour market in the Czech Republic and existing experience based on the up-to date realised relevant programmes and projects (see Chapter 2), identification of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and risks (see SWOT Analysis in Chapter 2.4), contents of related European and national and regional policies, as well as lessons learned by the Czech Republic during the implementation of CI EQUAL first round in respect of the EQUAL thematic fields.

The CIP EQUAL contents were set in accordance with Article 20 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 and Commission Communications COM(2000)853 and COM(2003)840, which specify the objective and scope of CI EQUAL as a separate form of the ESF assistance, and with Article 3 of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1780/1999, which specifies the scope of activities eligible for support from the ESF.

3.1.1. GLOBAL OBJECTIVE OF THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE PROGRAMME EQUAL

The global objective of CIP EQUAL in the Czech Republic is laid down in compliance with the overall aim of the CI EQUAL as defined by the European Commission for all Member States.

The global objective of CIP EQUAL in the Czech Republic is to ensure promoting of innovative solutions for the existing problematic fields in connection with discrimination and inequalities in the labour market.

3.1.2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE PROGRAMME EQUAL

When formulating specific objectives of the CIP EQUAL, the differences of CI EQUAL as compared to the ESF mainstream form of assistance were taken into account.

The specific objectives were formulated in relation to the analysis of the social and economic situation in a given thematic field, identification of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats in a given thematic field and contents of related national and regional policies within the context of the European Employment Strategy.

Both from the socio-economic analyses and the summary of the existing experience based on the up-to-date realised relevant programmes and projects concerning the equal opportunities at the labour market, the need for support a wide scale of thematic fields in the second round or the CI EQUAL has risen up. This methodical approach for the CIP EQUAL strategy definition was also used regarding to the total amount of financial resources for the CIP EQUAL, which makes this form of assistance in the conditions of the Czech Republic being a considerable programme also as for its scale.

As in the Czech Republic in the shorter programming period 2004-2006 all the 9 thematic fields of EQUAL will be supported (more details to be found in section 3.2.) and as the technical assistance will be defined as the separate priority, ten specific objectives of the Community Initiative EQUAL was defined. Specific objectives of CIP EQUAL were formulated so as to their synergic effects fulfil the programme global objective:

The CIP EQUAL specific objectives are the following:

- Increase the involvement in the labour market of persons from disadvantaged groups;
- Improve the co-existence between the majority society and minorities;
- Develop business activities of persons from disadvantaged groups;
- Increase the capacity of the third sector;
- Develop all elements of the lifelong learning system focused on disadvantaged groups;
- Enhance the usage of information technologies to structural changes;
- Develop all elements of the system providing for smooth harmonisation of the family and working life;
- Enhance the principle of equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market;
- Facilitate the access to the labour market in the Czech Republic for asylum seekers (especially those whose request will not be solved in the period of 1 year);
- Provide for the proper implementation of CI EQUAL second round.

3.2. PRIORITIES AND MEASURES OF THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE PROGRAMME EQUAL

Commencing from 2002, CI EQUAL first round has been implemented in the Czech Republic, focusing on seven of nine thematic fields of EQUAL. The number of thematic fields to be supported within CI EQUAL first round was selected based on the analysis of the situation in the labour market and on the total volume of funds designed for the implementation of CI EQUAL first round in the Czech Republic.

Ten DPs have been implemented within Action 2 during CI EQUAL first round. The DPs focus on six of seven selected thematic fields for the first round in the Czech Republic. With regard to the global objective of the second round of CI EQUAL and with regard to the experience gained in the Czech Republic during the first round, more thematic fields seem to be feasible. The experience shows that CIP EQUAL objectives can be achieved in a better way by means of implementing a limited number of larger DPs, which would focus on more thematic fields. That is why the implementation of more thematic fields will be supported within CI EQUAL second round in the Czech Republic because – as indicated by the experience from the first round – the proactive involvement in the thematic field results in valuable motions and pieces of knowledge from other countries participating in CI EQUAL. The assessment of experience from CI EQUAL first round in the Czech Republic indicates that the strict compliance with the rule of assistance concentration is not appropriate for CI EQUAL as regards the definition of its aim and underlying principles. (See Annex No. 3 for more detailed information on CI EQUAL first round.)

Based on the experience gained during the implementation of CI EQUAL first round the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL will support in the Czech Republic all nine thematic fields.

In compliance with the Commission recommendations, 8 thematic fields defined within four original EES pillars will be considered being measures and original four pillars of the EES together with the thematic field concerning the support of the asylum seekers and with the technical assistance of the program will be considered being priorities.

The summary of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL priorities in the Czech Republic:

List of CIP EQUAL Priorities in the Czech Republic
Priority I: Employability
Priority II: Entrepreneurship
Priority III: Adaptability
Priority IV: Equal Opportunities
Priority V: Assisting asylum seekers in their integration to the labour market
Priority VI: Technical Assistance

The summary of the measures defined according to the thematic fields of EQUAL is to given in the following chart.

Summary of the measures for the Community Initiative EQUAL
<p>Priority I: EMPLOYABILITY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market which must be open to all • Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market
<p>Priority II: ENTREPRENEURSHIP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening up the business creation process to all by providing the tools required for setting up in business and for the identification and exploitation of new possibilities for creating employment in urban and rural areas • Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs
<p>Priority III: ADAPTABILITY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market • Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies
<p>Priority IV: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the re-integration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services • Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation
<p>Priority V: ASSISTING ASYLUM SEEKERS IN THEIR INTEGRATION TO THE LABOUR MARKET</p>
<p>Priority VI: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE</p>

For the further details concerning the structure of measures supported within the CIP EQUAL please see the Programming Complement.

The following part describes thematic priorities of the CI EQUAL. They differ from the mainstream forms of ESF assistance. And it is the reason why the biggest focus is given to the description of the thematic fields and that is why the description of the thematic fields is already to be found at the level of the CIP EQUAL.

Technical Assistance (Priority 6) is a cross-sectional priority helping in the achievement of specific objectives of all thematic fields. In compliance with Commission Regulation (EC) No. 448/2004 and Commission Communication COM(2003)840, Priority 6 is divided into two separate measures (as described in section 3.2.10.).

Every description of the thematic fields contains for better understanding of their scope also examples of the eligible activities, which could be realised in the framework of the CI EQUAL second round DPs. These activities are based on the socio-economic analyses of the existing forms of discrimination and inequalities at the labour market (as provided in details in 2.2. section) and on the summary of the existing experience gained from the up-to-date realised programmes and projects with relevant scope (as provided in details in 2.3. section). The more detailed list of

the activities to be supported in the framework of each thematic field will be given in the Programme Complement, but besides the activities described in these lists, regarding the innovative scope of the CIP EQUAL there will be the possibility to support for another activities which could solve the problematic areas of the Czech labour market (as described in 2.2. section). At the same time it will be possible – in a reasonable case – to support activities proposed within one of the thematic fields also under another thematic fields (but with keeping the rule of not financing the same operation under more thematic fields). If both of these cases (the proposal for additional reasonable activity or proposal for supporting the activity under another thematic field) the Managing Authority will inform about the scope of the application forms the Monitoring Committee which is approving the form of application forms to be supported under the CIP EQUAL.

3.2.1. THEMATIC FIELD NO. 1

Facilitating Access and Return to the Labour Market for Those Who Have Difficulty in Being Integrated or Re-integrated Into a Labour Market

Description and Rationale:

Supporting this thematic field is an important opportunity for the Czech Republic to expand the existing tools and enhance their efficiency so as to reduce the current high level of unemployment. The rate of long-term unemployment is high and the problem pertains, above all, to persons from discriminated and disadvantaged groups in the labour market.

Therefore, this thematic field will be solving specific problems and barriers faced in the labour market by persons from discriminated and disadvantaged groups, which include the long-term unemployed, elderly persons, graduates, low-qualified persons, disabled or partially disabled persons (so-called persons with altered work capacity), the Romany minority, migrants or other marginalized groups.

For persons from discriminated and disadvantaged groups in the Czech Republic, the support to this thematic field is an important tool for the direct improvement of their chances in the labour market.

Supported within this thematic field will be DPs focusing, for example, on the formation of a system of prevention and assistance, which would capture the juveniles leaving prematurely schools in order to give them better chance to find a suitable job. DPs will also focus on the re-integration in the labour market, innovative procedures and support to the hiring of the long-term unemployed, low-qualified and marginalized groups, support to the integration of disabled persons in the open labour market, to complex consultancy, education and assisted jobs for members of the Romany minority. Another group of DPs can deal with motivating and involvement of employers and other social partners, such as trade unions, in the solutions of problems faced by people from discriminated and disadvantaged groups in the labour market, in the enhancement of integration services and agencies, etc. It is also necessary to activate and to increase the awareness of authorities on the local and regional level.

Activities that can be pursued within the DP work programmes implemented under this thematic field are specified in detail in Section 2.2.1.

The global objective of thematic field 1 is to increase the involvement in the labour market of persons from disadvantaged groups.

3.2.2. THEMATIC FIELD NO. 2

Combating Racism and Xenophobia in Relation to the Labour Market

Description and Rationale:

The social and economic analysis, which was conducted (see 2.1.2.), indicate that the Czech society features a negative attitude to foreigners and certain ethnical groups living historically in the Czech Republic.

Preventing efficiently such negative attitudes and other xenophobic signs under this thematic field should be a contribution for the future development when growing migration can be expected with the Czech Republic's approaching accession to the European Union. Indeed, a large part of the Czech population believes the Czech Republic is too open to immigrants and foreigners even though the Czech population is quite homogenous from the national point of view and the number of immigrants in the Czech Republic is relatively small. Because of the expected growing trend in migration in the Czech Republic, prevention of adverse impacts of xenophobic attitudes is most desirable.

Supported DPs under this thematic field can also help considerably to solve a big problem, which is the Czech majority society's attitude to minorities, above all to the Romany minority. The Romany minority suffers from its great isolation associated with mutual lacking knowledge in both groups. That is why prejudices and stereotypes in mutual relations between the majority society and the Romany frequently appear and although not each refusal of a Romany job-seeker can be interpreted as racist, considering the low level of qualification in this groups of people, the support to this thematic field might be an efficient tool for the solution of the persistent problem.

Within the thematic field, examples of activities could be pursued are:

- Supporting the multicultural environment and education in the Czech Republic in order to ensure the equal opportunities for all at the Czech labour market;
- Preventive measures combating discrimination of Romany minority in the labour market.

Activities that can be pursued within the DP work programmes implemented under this thematic field are specified in detail in Section 2.2.2.

The global objective of thematic field 2 is to improve the co-existence between the majority society and minorities.

3.2.3. THEMATIC FIELD NO. 3

Improve Conditions and Tools for the Development of Business run by Persons from Disadvantaged Groups

Description and Rationale:

Supporting the development of business activities of self-employed persons is an alternative way of integrating in the labour market the persons from disadvantaged groups. The support should, however, be given in the form of complex care for the starting entrepreneur who should be helped to overcome his existing disadvantage.

Besides, there are several significant barriers in the Czech Republic, which generally prevent the more extensive development of self-employment; those are the poor enforceability of law, relatively high taxes, difficult access to financial sources, etc. That is why it is essential – in the support to business run by persons from disadvantaged groups – to provide for more intensive, systematic preparation for self-employment, which would include social and legal consultancy with the aforementioned complex care in addition to career and economic advice. Tutorship not only in the stage of setting up in business can considerably help to improve the general integration in the labour market of those groups.

Essential for maintaining self-employment activities of persons from disadvantaged groups also is the assistance rendered by local authorities, as well as involvement of disadvantaged persons in community activities and services.

Within the thematic field, examples of activities could be pursued are:

- Training courses and consultancy for starting entrepreneurs from disadvantaged groups;
- Support of leisure time activities for children and social services in order to create necessary conditions for women to run business.
- To explore methods for overcoming the financial exclusion faced by disadvantaged groups or certain types of organisation during the business creation.

Activities that can be pursued within the DP work programmes implemented under this thematic field are specified in detail in Section 2.2.3.

The global objective of thematic field 3 is to develop business activities of persons from disadvantaged groups.

3.2.4. THEMATIC FIELD NO. 4

Strengthening the Social Economy (Third Sector), in Particular the Services of Interest to the Community, with a Focus on Improving the Quality of Jobs

Description and Rationale:

Non-profit and non-government organisations (NGOs) which are the important part of social economy had appeared after political changes in 1989. Their activities can be found practically in all fields of the public life, especially in the protection of the environment, social services, health care, protection and development of local cultural heritage, leisure activities, etc. NGOs are mainly characterised by their focus on the primary solution of a problem; NGOs work neither for profit, which is the case of businesses, nor for tasks, which is the case of the public administration. That is why it is easier for NGOs to find “gaps” in services, which are needed for the healthy functioning of the community. Usually, services identified in this way by NGOs are cheaper rather than those rendered by organisations controlled by the state or municipality. NGOs are also characterised by their primary orientation to the maximum efficient result; NGOs do not try to maintain their activities for a prolonged period of time. Regions and municipalities form integral part of the third sector, being responsible for the rendering of certain social services, financing activities in the field and coordinating such activities. That is why it is essential to instigate the interest of local administrations in social economy and strive for the improvement of communication between regions and municipalities on the one hand and social services providers (above all, NGOs) on the other hand.

NGO activities are mainly financed from the state budget through subsidy policies of ministries. The other sources include – for example – revenues of their own activities, contributions from private persons, sponsorship gifts from legal entities, financial support from foreign countries. In the long-term prospect, their activities can be characterised as under-financed, what is the reason of limited possibilities to train NGO management and improve quality of activities. NGOs’ involvement in the development and implementation of regional development documents, which is on a low level, is another problem of their activities.

The support to the thematic field will also help to achieve the objectives stipulated in other Czech key documents, such as the White Paper on Social Services, Joint Memorandum on Social Integration, Operational Programme of Human Resources Development, Single Programming Document for Objective 3, Joint Regional Operational Programme, National Action Plan of Employment, etc. Community planning of social services is a most suitable tool, being supported by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Community planning provides for the availability of social services on the local or regional levels. Community planning stresses the involvement and partner co-operation of all entities operating in the given field.

Pursued within the thematic field could be, for example, the system development and diversification of services rendered within the third sector, which focus on the problems of persons from discriminated or disadvantaged groups in the labour market, on the enhancement of NGOs and their co-operation in that field or on the development of new forms of social services rendered by NGOs and others social services providers so as to expand the opportunities of new jobs in the field and

enhance the education, professional growth and quality of work in the sector of social economy.

Activities that can be pursued within the DP work programmes implemented under this thematic field are specified in detail in Section 2.2.4.

The global objective of thematic field 4 is to increase the capacity of the third sector.

3.2.5. THEMATIC FIELD NO. 5

Promoting Lifelong Learning and Inclusive Work Practices Encouraging the Recruitment of Persons Suffering Discrimination and Inequality in the Labour Market

Description and Rationale:

Lifelong learning covers the entire field of education, which also includes the education of persons who are disadvantaged in a way (socially or physically).

Certain activities aiming at the improvement of educational opportunities for disadvantaged groups have already been implemented or partially implemented (e.g. preparatory classes are opened in nursery and basic schools for socially disadvantaged children; projects focusing on the integration in usual classes of disabled pupils and students are supported; projects supporting training courses for teachers in the communication with and teaching of minorities and immigrants in the Czech language are pursued, etc.). Nevertheless, the problem neglected for a long time is still solved insufficiently in the initial education and a systemic approach is completely missing.

The field of further education, including evening classes and different forms of continuing vocational education, is limited by the absence of a systemic design, which adversely affects the position of disadvantaged persons in the labour market. Except for re-qualification courses, no measures exist, which would support in a systemic way the development of further education of handicapped persons. The existing offer of further education (evening classes, courses, etc.) does not focus on disadvantaged persons, which means their educational opportunities are limited as compared to those available to the other groups of the population. Missing in general are courses, which would encourage the motivation to further education of their participants. Indeed, it is the low level of education, which is the biggest obstacle to the integration in the labour market. Labour offices may not keep records on job seekers by their nationality, which makes it difficult to use specific tools or projects in connection with minorities, above all the Romany.

Disadvantaged persons receive education, above all, in the form of re-qualification courses, which are organised by Labour Offices and also in special courses offered by special schools; nevertheless, the involvement of such persons is quite insufficient.

The support to the thematic field will also help to achieve the objectives stipulated in other Czech key documents (Long-Term Plan of Education and Educational System Development in the CR, White Paper, National Action Plan of Employment), which include the change in the traditional concept of education and adapting its contents, forms and methods to the needs of clients (pupils, adults) with specific educational needs, the enhancement of the role of the guidance system, the preferential treatment of disadvantaged groups in re-qualification courses, the expansion of re-socialising courses, etc.

Pursued within the thematic field could be, for example, the systemic and innovative development of lifelong learning for the integration in the labour market of disadvantaged groups, development of new methods how to expand educational

opportunities in companies (distant forms of education) or support to companies to include low-qualified workers in vocational training courses, etc.

Activities that can be pursued within the DP work programmes implemented under this thematic field are specified in detail in Section 2.2.5.

The global objective of thematic field 5 is to develop all elements of the system of lifelong learning focused on disadvantaged groups.

3.2.6. THEMATIC FIELD NO. 6

Supporting the Adaptability of Firms and Employees to Structural Economic Change and the Use of Information Technology and Other New Technologies

Description and Rationale:

For businesses, the greater support to the development of flexible forms of work is one of possible ways of creating new jobs for persons from disadvantaged groups in the labour market. Such types of work are not too common in the Czech Republic, although they would make it possible to involve in the labour market such persons who cannot have full-time jobs, e.g. mothers taking care of children, partially disabled persons, school graduates, etc.

Information literacy and poor accessibility of information technologies among employees disadvantaged in the labour market seem to be the biggest issues. The support to the development of IT literacy and improvement of the situation in IT availability for persons from disadvantaged groups would simultaneously help to achieve the objectives of the State Information Policy under which programmes of computer literacy in schools have already been implemented. Nevertheless, the situation for persons from disadvantaged groups is more complicated because most of them are outside the school system and school programmes cannot directly involve them. That is why the support to relevant courses specialising in computer literacy is a way of improving IT literacy, which is a precondition not only for better orientation in offered jobs, but also for better chances to get job since IT literacy is often a requirement.

Some of the following activities could be pursued within the thematic field:

- Development of small and medium-sized enterprises through their networking and linking to large corporations;
- Development and management of human resources in small and medium-sized enterprises using the distant forms of education and job-rotation methods (job-sharing) and related solutions for the financial motivation of the unemployed to their participation in such forms of training and job-rotation;
- Integration programmes for employees released during the process of large corporation restructuring;
- Support to the development and broad availability of information and communication technologies.

Activities that can be pursued within the DP work programmes implemented under this thematic field are specified in detail in Section 2.2.6.

The global objective of thematic field 6 is to enhance the usage of information technologies to structural changes.

3.2.7. THEMATIC FIELD NO. 7

Reconciling Family and Professional Life, Developing More Flexible and Effective Forms of Work Organisation and Support Services

Description and Rationale:

In spite of equal opportunities for women and men, which are declared in the Czech legislation, the actual life is different. Because of deep-rooted stereotypes and usual roles in the family, the prevailing portion of care for the household and children, as well as other family dependants, is rendered by women. The situation then results in the existence of unequal conditions between women and men in the labour market because it is more difficult for women to have a job with higher responsibilities, which is better paid and more time-consuming. The career and professional growth for women is limited, too.

Evidently, changing the system of values in the Czech society and eliminating prejudices and stereotypes is a long and slow process. The man's co-participation in family duties – especially in the care for children and family dependants – and the partnership attitude to the household are one of ways that can lead to higher professional self-fulfilment of women. It is necessary to look for means and create conditions, which would facilitate the harmonisation of the family life and professional life and a fairer distribution of partners' roles, i.e. the distribution of both partners' duties in connection with the family and children between women and men. Supported within the thematic field, which focuses on the harmonisation of the family and professional life, should also be the development of social services and establishment and operation of facilities rendering care for children and family dependants, especially if the facilities supplement or replace care rendered by employed people.

It is also possible to enact an adequate regulation of labour relations, providing for variable labour schemes that would facilitate the harmonisation of employment and parental duties for employees taking care of children and families or returning to the labour market after parental leave.

Some of the following activities could be pursued within the thematic field:

- Providing for the opportunity of further education for the persons (usually mothers) who take all-day care of dependant persons;
- Supporting flexible employment schemes and modern employment methods which can be used by women;
- Reintegrating women returning to the labour market through suitable re-qualification courses or qualification courses.

Activities that can be pursued within the DP work programmes implemented under this thematic field are specified in detail in Section 2.2.7.

The global objective of thematic field 7 is to develop all elements of the system providing the smooth harmonisation of the family and working life.

3.2.8. THEMATIC FIELD NO. 8

Reducing Gender Gaps and Supporting Job Desegregation

Description and Rationale:

In spite of equal opportunities for women and men, which are declared in the Czech legislation, the actual life is different. Because of deep-rooted stereotypes and usual roles in the family, the prevailing portion of care for the household and children, as well as other family dependants, is rendered by women. The related unemployment of women, especially in the age category 25-35 years, is higher in a long-term prospect rather than that of men. That is because women in that age usually have or are expected to have children.

The gender inequality in the actual professional life is also demonstrated by almost 25% difference between the work income of women and men – to the detriment of women. The detailed analysis of the work income of women and men in the Czech Republic indicates that most inequalities in the income are due mainly to the distribution to the so-called men's and women's professions. As a rule, "women's" professions feature a lower income than the "men's" ones (the feminisation of the health care and in schools – which are traditionally the low-income professions). Simultaneously, the income inequality is directly proportional to the education and position, i.e. the higher the education, the higher the difference between men's and women's salaries, and the higher the position, the higher the inequality in the appreciation to the detriment of women. Women are seldom seen in management positions; again, the rule is the higher the position, the fewer women in such positions. Last but not the least, is the income inequality due to the interruption in the woman's career because of her maternal role.

Gender mainstreaming will be used to take into account the differences between women and men and stress the issues of gender equality in the community. The equality between women and men should be promoted efficiently across the policies.

Pursued within the thematic field could be, for example, application of gender mainstreaming methods, enhancing the awareness of equal opportunities among employers, in public offices and trade unions, the development of tools providing for equal remuneration of women and men, etc.

Activities that can be pursued within the DP work programmes implemented under this thematic field are specified in detail in Section 2.2.8.

The global objective of thematic field 8 is to enhance the principle of equality of women and men in the labour market.

3.2.9. THEMATIC FIELD NO. 9

Assisting Asylum Seekers in Their Integration to the Labour Market

Description and Rationale:

The support to asylum seekers in their access to the labour market in the Czech Republic seems to be a very important form of preventing that group's social exclusion. Asylum seekers staying in the Czech Republic, who may work at the earliest after one year of their stay in the country, are disadvantaged as compared to the other job seekers because of the language barrier.

Besides, a growth in the number of asylum seekers can be expected after the Czech Republic's accession to the European union in 2004. One of the forms of assistance to that group, in addition to programmes focusing on the elimination of the language barrier, could consist in the targeted development of skills facilitating their integration in the labour market in the Czech Republic (including the basic information on regulations of different forms of employment and on conditions of the Czech health and social systems). Special attention should be paid to the asylum seekers who can be expected to return to their motherlands. The development of their skills should be focused, above all, on such fields that can be used by asylum seekers after their return to their own countries.

Besides, the support to the thematic field can help considerably to resolve the existing, most problematic situation of underage foreigners without documents and not accompanied by their parents. Rendering care to that group by educational institutions would, simultaneously, contribute to the achievement of objectives of the Concept of Placement, Training and Education of Children with Language Barrier.

Some of the following activities could be pursued within the thematic field:

- Assistance to asylum seekers through special integration courses developing their language knowledge and practical usage of their skills;
- Educational and vocational training courses for the people working with asylum seekers;
- Support of networking of organisations and authorities working with asylum seekers.

Activities that can be pursued within the DP work programmes implemented under this thematic field are specified in detail in Section 2.2.9.

The global objective of thematic field 9 is to facilitate the access to the labour market in the Czech Republic for asylum seekers (especially those whose request will not be solved after 1 year).

3.2.10. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE PROGRAMME EQUAL

Description and Rationale:

For the Managing Authority and organisations involved in Development Partnerships, the second round of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL implemented in the Czech Republic in the shortened programming period 2004-2006 will be the first experience with the implementation of a Community initiative under the management rules for that kind of assistance from EU Structural Funds.

The experience gained during the preparation and implementation of the first round of CI EQUAL under the Phare rules is a great contribution both for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and for the organisations involved in the existing Development Partnerships. Both the first round and the second round of CI EQUAL is managed by the same department within the MoLSA, but compared to mainstream forms of ESF assistance, the implementation of CI EQUAL is even more difficult. Therefore, it is essential that the top-quality technical assistance be rendered for the lifetime of CIP EQUAL.

The technical assistance under CIP EQUAL is defined, according to the Commission recommendation and agreement made between the Commission and the existing Member States during the preparation of the programming documents for CI EQUAL first round in the existing Member States, as a separate priority.

The priority describing the technical assistance of the CIP EQUAL is cross-sectional, i.e. the technical assistance supports all CIP EQUAL priorities and measures in order to achieve all of the specific objectives of the programme.

Global objective of the technical assistance:

Provide for the proper implementation of CI EQUAL second round.

In line with Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1685/2000 as amended by Commission Regulation (EC) No. 448/2004 and in line with the Commission Communication COM(2003)840, the activities to be financed under that CIP EQUAL priority can be divided into two basic categories based either on the rule 11.2 or on the rule 11.3. of the Regulation (EC) No. 1685/2000.

On the basis of the above-mentioned thematic scope of technical assistance, and in compliance with the Regulation No 1685/2000 on the detailed principles of implementation of the Regulation No 1260/1999 on the coverage of expenses of activities co-financed by structural funds, activities undertaken under technical assistance have been grouped and presented in the table below. All activities listed in the table will include all categories of costs, where appropriate (salaries, travel, running costs, low-value assets, costs for external services, office telecommunications costs, and overheads).

Category of expenditures	Type of activities	Indicative budget allocation
<p>Regulation (EC) 1685/2000; rule 11.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The preparation, selection, appraisal and monitoring of the assistance and of operations (but excluding expenditure on the acquisition and installation of computerised systems for management, monitoring and evaluation); • Meetings of monitoring committees and sub-committees relating to the implementation of assistance. This expenditure may also include the costs of experts and other participants in these committees, including third-country participants, where the chairperson of such committees considers their presence essential to the effective implementation of the assistance; • Advice and support of individual DPs in technical, methodological and thematic matters; • Audits and on-the-spot checks of operations. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparation of CIP EQUAL implementation (preparation of all the necessary operational guidelines of implementation bodies) 2. Systematic training of both MA and NSS staff for the management of CIP EQUAL 3. Establishment of a management and monitoring system for EQUAL 4. Organisation of meeting of the Management Committee and of its secretariat and expertise 5. Organisation of meetings of the Monitoring Committee and of Evaluation steering group or further established steering groups within the Monitoring Committee, their secretariat and expertise 6. Support in handling proposals and assessment of proposals 7. Training of DPs related to management and implementation of their work programme 8. Preparation of methodological tools for DP's related to management, implementation, monitoring, mainstreaming, and trans-national cooperation 9. Guidance to DPs in setting up partnerships, and achieving the milestones of their workplans 10. Support to DPs in establishing trans-national partnerships, and in effective trans-national co-operation 11. Support to DPs in strategy development, planning, monitoring and self-evaluation of their activities and achievements 12. Support to DPs in organisational and financial aspects 13. Support to DPs in horizontal and vertical mainstreaming 14. Further required support to DPs 15. Verification of payment claims 16. Audits and on the spot checks 17. Preparation of call (s) for tenders for external service providers 18. Preparation of annual reports to the Commission 19. Collecting information requested by the Commission or national administration 	<p style="text-align: center;">5%</p>

<p>Regulation (EC) 1685/2000; rule11.3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies, seminars, information actions, the collection, editing and dissemination of the experience and results; • Support to thematic networking, dissemination activities and the setting up of mechanisms for policy impact; • Co-operation in European networking and ensuring the sharing of all relevant information with other Member States and the Commission; • Evaluation; • The acquisition and installation of computerised systems for management, monitoring and evaluation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparation and dissemination of general information about EQUAL activities through seminars, publications, media; according to the EQUAL strategy for information and publicity 2. Development of guidelines and support materials for DPs 3. Support to develop, monitor and implement a national mainstreaming strategy 4. Organisation of seminars, workshops and conferences related to the identification, validation and dissemination of good practices 5. Support to establishing and running national thematic networks 6. Organisation of conferences related to mainstreaming activities 7. Participation in European meetings 8. Organisation of information and exchange visits at national and trans-national level 9. Support in comparative assessment of results; organisation of peer reviews, support in benchmarking 10. External programme evaluation 11. Development of overall evaluation strategy 12. Acquisition and installation of computer software and hardware necessary for management, monitoring and evaluation 	<p>3%</p>
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* All activities listed in the table will include all categories of costs, where appropriate (salaries, travel, running costs, low-value assets, costs for external services, office telecommunications costs, and overheads).

The total allocation of the Priority 6 is 8 % of total allocation of the programme for the reason that even the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL will be implemented in the shorter programming period 2004-2006, the real realisation period of the programme will be finished in 2008 (regarding the n + 2 rule). From this point of view the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL is not a three-year programme but five-year programme. And the Managing Authority has to ensure a reliable technical assistance services for all the realisation of the programme. Regarding to the trans-national co-operation principle the Managing Authority has to ensure broader gathering and transfer of data concerning the implementation of individual DPs (as required for the ECDB database) in comparison with the mainstream forms of ESF assistance. Since then it is necessary to ensure reliable monitoring systems. Additionally, it is also necessary to ensure the on-going evaluation for both the second and the first round of the CI EQUAL. The outputs of the on-going evaluation will serve as bases for the final and ex-post evaluations, which will concern the evaluation of both first and second round of the CI EQUAL (as even the Czech Republic has been already participating in the first round, the mid-term evaluation will not be prepared as explained in section 4.5.2.).

National Support Structure (NSS)

The agreement with the National Support Structure appointed to render chosen services under the programme technical assistance will be signed in compliance with the national and European public procurement legislation. The exact form of the National Support Structure selection is being considered also in the connection to the progress of negotiations of TA selection under the mainstream ESF assistance. Nevertheless, the selection procedure will be in compliance both with the national and the European public procurement legislation. But if the selection of the NSS for the second round of EQUAL was considerably delayed and if this possible delay could cause delay in the second round implementation, MA will ensure own financial resources for all necessary technical assistance activities provided till the time of regular NSS appointment.

The main tasks of the National Support Structure will include the support to the efficient programme management and the support to the achievement of CIP EQUAL objectives both on the national level and on the trans-national level.

Therefore the main NSS task on the national level will be support to the consolidation of an adequate and efficient system of assessment of application forms, the review of the National and Transnational Co-operation Agreements and the monitoring of all DPs, including everyday work with monitoring systems, and the efficient communication with the Managing Authority through on-time providing of MA with all the necessary information concerning project and programme implementation.

The National Support Structure will provide the Development Partnerships with methodical advice in the preparation of the application forms and during the setting up of the Development Partnerships, in developing a joint strategy and work programme, in agreeing on a work programme for trans-national co-operation (Action 1), in the consolidation of partnerships and in the execution of National and Transnational Co-operation Agreements, in the preparation of regular and final monitoring reports (Action 2), in the activities implemented within thematic networking, dissemination of good practice and making an impact on national policy (Action 3).

In order to carry out these tasks, the National Support Structure will establish EQUAL support mechanisms to provide comprehensive advice, guidance and support to potential partners participating in the EQUAL programme, to DPs and their networks.

Furthermore under the responsibility of MA, National support structure will develop and support the implementation of a national mainstreaming strategy; support the development and implementation of the EQUAL communication action plan; organise EQUAL events; commission EQUAL related studies and establish an internal quality management system for its services, etc.

As the Community Initiative EQUAL is testing new approaches, the MA will introduce the quality and effectiveness control mechanisms of all the NSS activities to make it possible to generalise the experience with technical assistance for other Structural funds operations. The MA will regularly monitor the working plans of the NSS and assess their results. The basic principles of the quality control of the technical assistance activities have already been introduced during the first round of EQUAL Initiative in the Czech Republic.

In order to ensure an overall co-ordination of the CIP EQUAL implementation, MA will set up a Managing Committee as an operational body consisting of key MA and NSS staff. If needed, also representatives of PA, PU or other bodies will be invited to meeting of the Managing Committee. The regular Managing Committee meetings will provide MA staff with all the necessary and on-time information about the CIP EQUAL implementation and will serve as a basis for the quality management system for technical assistance services. The Managing Committee will prepare up-date timetables and workplans related to the CIP EQUAL implementation and will stipulate the responsibilities of MA and NSS in ensuring individual planned activities. The overall responsibility of all the planned activities realization is laying on MA staff, which will also carry out the on-going quality control of the individual activities of NSS. The National Support Structure will base its activities on a rolling annual workplan, endorsed by the Managing Authority after consulting of the Monitoring Committee. It will ensure sound implementation of its task, ensuring competence and quality.

Technical assistance will also be used to support the monitoring, audit and evaluation of actions both for the Czech Republic and at the European level as well as studies, seminars, information actions, collection, editing and dissemination of the experience and results.

The Managing Authority will ensure that all activities to be conducted within the technical assistance, which will not be rendered by the national support structure, will also be rendered in compliance with Czech and EC public procurement legislation.

Additionally, the Managing Authority will implement a sound system to document and to verify NSS real costs/expenditure actually paid, in line with the provisions of Art. 32 of Regulation 1260/1999.

The Managing Authority will ensure that as of beginning of May 2004 all the necessary technical assistance services will be in place. Therefore the Managing

Authority will also ensure with its own resources that all the necessary NSS activities will be available already in time before the NSS official appointment.

3.3. LINKS BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE PROGRAMME EQUAL AND EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS

The Community Initiative Programme EQUAL is a form of assistance financed, in compliance with Article 21(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, on the mono-funding principle and, in compliance with Article 31(2)(d) of the same Regulation, from Structural Funds only within the European Social Fund (ESF).

In compliance with Article 1 of the Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1784/1999 and referring to Articles 146 and 158 of the Treaty, the activities financed under the ESF include measures preventing and combating the unemployment, as well as measures supporting the development of human resources and social integration in the labour market, so that the ESF contribute to a high level of employment, to the equal position of women and men, to the sustainable development, as well as economic and social cohesion. In keeping with the same article of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1784/1999, the ESF contributes mainly to actions, which are conducted to implement the EES and employment guidelines laid down on an annual basis.

Having conducted a social and economic analysis of the CIP EQUAL and building on lessons learned under the first round of the CI EQUAL, the Czech Republic will support during the second round of the CI EQUAL all nine thematic fields.

The decision to support all nine thematic fields within CI EQUAL second round was taken in compliance with the aforementioned aspects also because of the experience from the first round, which indicates that the strict compliance with the rule of assistance concentration is not appropriate for CI EQUAL as regards the definition of its objective and underlying principles. Nevertheless, the Czech Republic has made the decision also with regard to the links between the declared and supported thematic fields and own measures implemented in the Czech Republic within the joint HRD policy frame of reference for the shortened programming period 2004-2006 as laid down in the Policy Frame of Reference for the support to human resources in the Czech Republic and with regard to the measures as defined in the National Action Plan of Employment 2003 in keeping with the EES.

3.3.1. LINKS BETWEEN THE CIP EQUAL THEMATIC FIELDS AND THE HRD POLICY FRAME OF REFERENCE

The policy frame of reference for the support to human resources is defined in Article 9(c) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 as a frame under which EU Member States lay down their own contexts for the assistance from Structural Funds (above all, from the ESF) in relation to the employment and human resources development in the entire Member State.

The HRD policy frame of reference had been prepared in the Czech Republic already during the preparation of the Operational Programme Human Resources Development and the Single Programming Document for Objective 3 of the NUTS II

Region Prague and the common strategy of developing the human resources in the Czech Republic, which is defined in the documents, guarantees the co-ordination of the support to human resources in the Czech Republic financed under EU Structural Funds throughout the country and within all relevant forms of assistance under Structural Funds. In addition to the mainstream forms of assistance, the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL is also based on the strategy as formulated in the HRD policy frame of reference. Unlike the other forms of assistance under the ESF, which are being prepared in the Czech Republic for the shortened programming period 2004-2006, CIP EQUAL stresses the principle of innovation. Regarding to the innovation principle as well as to the other principles of this form of ESF assistance the new methods and tools for the fight against discrimination and inequalities at the labour market in the Czech Republic will be developed, tested and promoted. And like this, the outputs of the Community Initiative EQUAL can help in reaching the objectives of the human resources development policy not only in the shorter programming period 2004-2006, but also in the programming period, which follows.

The following global priorities to be supported from Structural Funds in the field of human resources in the Czech Republic were selected: Increasing the level of employment and labour force qualification and flexibility, Integrating socially excluded groups and Enhancing the competitiveness of firms.

The links between supported thematic fields under CIP EQUAL in the Czech Republic and the supported fields of the human resources development as laid down in the HRD Policy Frame of Reference are given in the table below.

Links Between CIP EQUAL Thematic Fields and HRD Policy Frame of Reference Priorities	
Supported HRD Fields	CIP EQUAL Thematic Fields
Expand the tools and increase the efficiency of the active employment policy so as to help to the quick integration of the unemployed in the labour market and prevent the unemployment	Thematic field 1 - Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market Thematic field 2 - Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market
Reduce the number of persons at risk of social exclusion through the mediation of the integrated approach and elimination of barriers preventing from the participation in the labour market; Providing for the equal treatment of women and men in the labour market	Thematic field 1 - Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market Thematic field 4 - Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs Thematic field 7 - Reconciling family and professional life, developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services Thematic field 8 - Reducing gender gaps

	and supporting job desegregation Thematic field 9 - Assisting asylum seekers in their integration
Develop the system of lifelong learning by means of increasing the quality of the offer of education and training, respecting the needs of the knowledge society, and by means of expanding the involvement of all in the educational process	Thematic field 5 - Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market
Support the development of the flexible and innovative labour force so as to develop the efficiency and competitiveness of firms and create and maintain suitable jobs	Thematic field 3 - Improve Conditions and Tools for the Development of Self-employment Activities of Persons from Disadvantaged Groups Thematic field 6 - Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies

3.3.2. LINKS BETWEEN THE CIP EQUAL THEMATIC FIELDS AND THE EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY AND THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN OF EMPLOYMENT 2003

The European Commission in collaboration with Member States assessed in 2002 the experience gained during the implementation of the European Employment Strategy in the past five years and prepared a draft innovated employment strategy. The new strategy is based on three overarching and interrelated objectives (full employment, labour quality and productivity and social cohesion and integration) and ten specific guidelines. The priorities contained in the original four pillars were maintained and new ones were added (e.g. combating illegal work). Simultaneously, coordination mechanisms of the economic policy and employment policy were harmonised so as to achieve a higher interconnection between the policies. The current strategy is oriented in a more long-term way, the objectives and recommendations will be approved basically in three-year cycles, which will make it possible to focus better on their practical implementation. The whole package of those proposals was discussed by the European Council at its spring meeting in Brussels late in this March and then also confirmed by the Council of Ministers on 2nd June and by the European Council on 20th June 2003 at the summit in Thessaloniki. The so-called new generation of Main Employment Directions will fully apply to the Czech Republic, which will prepare accordingly its National Action Plan of Employment for 2005. In the autumn of 2004, the plan will be officially submitted to the Commission and the Czech Republic will become fully involved in the so-called open method of coordination, which is applied to the EES.

Considering the situation in the labour market and the Czech Republic's accession to the European Union, it is evident that intermediate objectives and a long-term concept of the National Employment Policy will have to be prepared, which policy will:

- Respect the principles and objectives of the European Employment Strategy as formulated in the new generation of the Main Employment Directions and the objectives of the Lisbon Process;

- Lay down the national idea of the material and time achievement of the objectives under the Lisbon Process in connection with the situation and needs of the Czech labour market until 2010;
- Lay down the government objectives for the solution of unemployment during its tenure as an intermediate objective.

After the concept is approved by the government, its intermediate and long-term objectives expressed as tasks of ministries and other actors in the labour market should be reflected in conceptual materials, such as the Public Budget Reform or the Intermediate Forecast of the State Budget, so as to create realistic conditions for achieving the objectives.

To implement those difficult tasks, specific responsibilities will have to be set up for the management of the entire process of designing and implementing the national policy of employment, preferably on the top government level. The taken steps will then make it possible to prepare good and principal measures for the National Action Plan of Employment for the respective year so that it can fulfil its mission of the basic tool for decreasing unemployment and increasing employment.

That is why the National Action Plan of Employment for 2003 is of a limited character, lacking the measures which would make it possible to solve unemployment into the required extent. The plan is, however, expected to be supplemented during the year by other measures, which will arise from the government's response to the situation in the labour market or which will be taken by the government based on the decision of the Council or Commission for the candidate countries in the field of employment.

The links between CIP EQUAL thematic fields and the National Action Plan of Employment for 2003, as amended, are given in the table below. The table matches selected NAPE 2003 measures with the CIP EQUAL thematic fields, which should be supported during the shortened programming period 2004-2006 in the Czech Republic with the aim to develop innovative tools suitable for the solution of the issues mentioned under selected NAPE 2003 measures.

In addition to the direct links, which are shown in the table below, the fulfilment of certain NAPE 2003 measures will be considerably supported by the implementation of CIP EQUAL in the Czech Republic also through the mediation of the general application of CI EQUAL basic principles within all implemented DPs (the principle of partnership, the involvement of representatives of target groups in the solution of given issues, the gender mainstreaming, etc.).

Links Between CIP EQUAL Thematic Fields and Measures of the National Action Plan of Employment 2003	
Selected Measure of NAPE 2003	CIP EQUAL Thematic Fields
<i>PILLAR 1: EMPLOYABILITY</i>	
<i>Guideline 1:</i> <i>Develop preventive measures and measures increasing the employment so as to prevent the long-term unemployment</i> NAPE 2003 Measure 1.3: MoLSA in collaboration	Thematic Field 1 - Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or

<p>with Labour Offices will continue two pilot programmes aimed at job-seekers facing long-term unemployment - the “First Opportunity” programme for young job-seekers under 25 unemployed for less than 6 months, and the “New Start” programme for job-seekers aged over 25 unemployed for less than 12 months.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 1.4:</u> MoLSA in collaboration with Labour Offices will expand the activities preventing the unemployment and activating job seekers. Expanded will be programmes for the long-term unemployed, which will identify and assess their opportunities and abilities to find job.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 1.5:</u> MoLSA will collaborate with Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry for Regional Development, Ministry of Finance, the social partners, regional authorities and agencies to devise accompanying welfare programmes, which are part of government policy for restructuring and privatisation of selected sectors. The adopted accompanying welfare programmes will be aimed at preventing unemployment, using pro-active measures, so that as many of those made redundant as possible can return to work.</p>	<p>re-integrated into a labour market</p> <p>Thematic Field 4 - Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs</p>
<p>Guideline 2: <i>Review, if necessary, the system of taxes and fees so as to provide for the support in job seeking or increase employment for the unemployed or non-active persons; increase the involvement of the unemployed and non-active persons included in the active measures so as to re-integrate them in the labour market; support the measures for the unemployed and non-active persons so as to increase their qualification or provide them with new skills, above all, in the field of information and communication technologies.</i></p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 2.1:</u> MoLSA in collaboration with Labour Offices will place greater stress on an individual approach to unemployed people with the aim to motivate them to find work. Pilot projects started in 2002 will be continued under which Labour Offices will offer unemployed people an agreement on an individual action plan.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 2.2:</u> MoLSA will expand the application of the module of computer literacy in re-qualification programmes for job seekers implemented through Labour Offices. MoLSA in collaboration with the Ministry of Informatics will discuss the potential implementation of the module</p>	<p>Thematic Field 1 - Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market</p> <p>Thematic Field 4 - Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs</p> <p>Thematic Field 6 - Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies</p>

<p>of computer literacy and information technologies within the project “National Programme of Computer Literacy” to be coordinated by the Ministry of Informatics.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 2.3:</u> MoLSA will ensure that Labour Offices increase the allocations for re-qualification courses (within the total budget for the active employment policy) and provide for a higher number of job seekers included in re-qualification courses in the total number of job seekers under the active employment policy.</p>	
<p>Guideline 3: <i>Prepare a policy of active ageing with the aim of expanding opportunities and stimulating the older workers to be economically active as long as possible.</i></p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 3.1:</u> MoLSA will increase the proportion of older unemployed persons in active labour market measures. They will be selected on an individual basis with regard to their preceding work experience, qualification and personal preconditions.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 3.2:</u> In talks on sector restructuring, specifically on the accompanying welfare programmes, MoLSA will try to persuade the other ministries and social partners to adopt measures, which would favour the retention of older employees. The measures will include re-qualification activities for those employees starting new jobs and preferably their retention (incl. re-qualification courses, if need be) so as to allow them to retire under the terms stipulated by law.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 3.3:</u> Under the Phare programme, special training courses on changing orientation will be developed and introduced for the needs of older workers.</p>	<p>Thematic Field 1 - Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market</p> <p>Thematic Field 4 - Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs</p>
<p>Guideline 4: <i>Improve the quality of schools including the consolidation of career consultancy within the context of both initial and lifelong learning; modernise and make efficient the apprentice systems and training courses for employees; support the development of combined training centres so as to provide young people with basic skills adequate to the labour market; increase the literacy and reduce the number of young people leaving prematurely schools; provide for the better access to lifelong learning for the adults.</i></p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 4.1:</u> MoEYS will prepare a</p>	<p>Thematic Field 5 - Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market</p> <p>Thematic Field 6 - Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and</p>

<p>survey and evaluation study on lifelong learning, which should characterise the options of alternative ways of education and identify related problems, in connection with the document prepared by NIVE “Transforming Apprenticeship and Study Branches Into Lifelong Learning”.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 4.6:</u> MoEYS in collaboration with NIVE will prepare a draft system of education branches, reducing considerably the existing number of branches. The proposed system for the integrated system of type positions and labour market requirements will be used as a basis. The aim is to contribute to both national and foreign transparency of the education system and rendered qualifications.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 4.7:</u> MoEYS will ensure that NIVE continues the SHIFT project, the main objective of which is to adapt the contents of education to the current social and economic requirements, thus improving the quality of education in schools.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 4.8:</u> MoEYS will ensure that NIVE continues the REGION project, the main objective of which is to develop lifelong learning in the region of Moravia-Silesia and create conditions for generally available education leading to the learning and restoration of skills, which are needed for finding job in the changing labour market.</p>	<p>other new technologies</p>
<p>Guideline 5: <i>Improve the availability of electronic learning for all.</i></p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 5.1:</u> Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in collaboration with regional authorities will continue training teachers in information technologies and fulfilling e-Learning, above all, integrate efficiently information and communication technologies in education systems, offer opportunities for in-service teachers and trainers training in IT and, commencing from 2004, accelerate the equipment of training centres in schools.</p>	<p>Thematic Field 5 - Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market</p>
<p>Guideline 6: <i>Develop the abilities of the employment services to respond to the supply and demand in the labour market; establish the policy of preventing the lack of the qualified labour force; support professional and geographic mobility; improve the labour market functioning by improving the databases of jobs and education offers, which databases should be</i></p>	<p>Thematic Field 1 - Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market</p>

<p><i>interconnected on an European level, using modern IT and experience as already available on the European level.</i></p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 6.2:</u> MoLSA in collaboration with NTF National Observatory will continue developing the methodology and model of the network for the permanent forecasting of labour market qualification needs.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 6.3:</u> MoLSA will reflect in the legislation and management practice the experience and knowledge gained in connection with the implementation of the pilot project Active Selection of Qualified Foreign Workers.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 6.4:</u> MoLSA will add to training modules for Labour Office employees the issues of internal business environment (economy, organisation, marketing, human resources, etc.).</p>	
<p><i>Guideline 7:</i></p> <p><i>Identify and combat all forms of discrimination in the access to the labour market and education and training; develop efficient preventive measures of the proactive attitude to the support to risky or otherwise disadvantaged groups and individuals in their integration in the labour market; adopt suitable measures for the needs of disabled persons, ethnical minorities and immigrants with respect to their integration in the labour market.</i></p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 7.1:</u> MoLSA in collaboration with Labour Offices will systematically identify and analyse groups most threatened by discrimination, for the purpose of increasing their involvement in activation programme measures. Continued will be the inclusion into all programmes of the active employment policy of the job-seekers most threatened in the labour market by means of the more intensive use of consultancy and knowledge of communication with those groups in keeping with the tasks of the “National Action Plan of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion” and the government “Concept of the Romany Integration”.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 7.2:</u> MoLSA will propose a new tool to support the establishment of new jobs within the active employment policy in the regions most hit by unemployment (with the unemployment rate in excess of 14%), for the employers who sign agreements with the Labour Office and undertake to create at least ten new jobs.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 7.4:</u> MoLSA will project in the legislation and management practice the</p>	<p>Thematic Field 1 - Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market</p> <p>Thematic Field 2 - Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market</p> <p>Thematic Field 3 - Improve Conditions and Tools for the Development of Self-employment Activities of Persons from Disadvantaged Groups</p> <p>Thematic Field 4 - Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs</p> <p>Thematic Field 5 - Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection</p>

<p>experience acquired from the implementation of the Concept for Integrating Foreigners in the Czech Republic.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 7.5:</u> MoLSA and Labour Offices appointed to coordinate the state policy of employment in the region will prepare workshops (contact days) within the Year of Disabled Citizens so as to inform the public about the employment of disabled citizens and the way of fulfilment of the duty to employ those persons.</p>	<p>with the labour market</p> <p>Thematic Field 6 - Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies</p> <p>Thematic Field 7 - Reconciling family and professional life, developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services</p> <p>Thematic Field 8 - Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation</p> <p>Thematic Field 9 - Assisting asylum seekers in their integration</p>
<p>PILLAR II: ENTREPRENEURSHIP</p>	
<p>Guideline 8: Support the entrepreneurship throughout the community and in curriculum by laying down a clear, stable and foreseeable system of rules and regulations.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 8.2:</u> MIT will continue the programmes of support to small and medium-sized enterprises, i.e. the implementation of business projects by starting entrepreneurs (including persons released during the process of economic restructuring who start up their own business), the implementation of projects supporting firms in the initial stages of their operations and the implementation of projects supporting a further development of SMEs. More intensive support will be given also to business plans implemented in structurally affected regions, economically weak regions and regions hit by floods in August 2002.</p>	<p>Thematic Field 3 - Improve Conditions and Tools for the Development of Self-employment Activities of Persons from Disadvantaged Groups</p>
<p>Guideline 9: Support self-employment activities – review self-employment conditions so as to eliminate obstacles for setting up in business; support education to self-employment; combat unofficial employment.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 9.1:</u> Ministry for Regional</p>	<p>Thematic Field 1 - Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market</p>

<p>Development in collaboration with MoLSA, Ministry of Industry and Trade and Labour Offices will continue arranging regional employers' agencies, which render counselling for employees dismissed as part of mass redundancies. The aim of the programme of employers' agencies is to render to dismissed persons immediate individual services, which will enable them to cope psychically with the stress, familiarise with the situation in the labour market, acquire new skills in re-qualification courses and improve their chances to find new job, help them in looking for job or setting up in the business of their own.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 9.2:</u> Through the mediation of the Czech-Moravian Guaranty and Development Bank, MIT will render support to SMEs within the programmes GUARANTY, CREDIT, START, MARKET, CO-OPERATION, VILLAGE, REGENERATION and SPECIAL; through the mediation of the Agency for the Development of Business within the programme CONSULTANCY; through the mediation of the Support Design Centre within the programme DESIGN; and through the mediation of the Czech Trade support within the programme MARKETING.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 9.3:</u> MI, MoLSA and Ministry of Industry and Trade, through the mediation of an interdepartmental working team, will propose specific measures to detect and punish illegal employment and act as a deterrent on a regional level.</p>	<p>Thematic Field 3 - Improve Conditions and Tools for the Development of Self-employment Activities of Persons from Disadvantaged Groups</p>
<p>Guideline 10: <i>Providing for the positive environment for firms with innovative approaches. Above all, the sector of services offers a great potential. Develop conditions, which make it possible to fully use the potential of employees so as to create more and better jobs.</i></p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 10.3:</u> Within the State Programme of Support to Tourism, MRD will subsidise municipalities and entrepreneurs with the objective to support new or stabilise existing jobs in the spas, sports and recreational infrastructure; promote the Czech Republic as a tourist destination and build the accompanying tourist infrastructure in urban conservation areas and zones.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 10.4:</u> MoLSA in collaboration with MIT will prepare an amendment to the Government Regulation No. 103/2002 pertaining to investment incentives with the objective to increase</p>	<p>Thematic Field 1 - Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market</p> <p>Thematic Field 6 - Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies</p>

<p>the motivation of investors to allocate their investments in the regions suffering most from unemployment.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 10.5:</u> MoLSA and MIT will offer to investors in the regions hit most who simultaneously use investment incentives under the so-called Memorandums and under Act No. 72/2000 on investment incentives, complements to their agreements in which investors should undertake to create new jobs for Czech citizens without further expenditures.</p>	
<p>Guideline 11: <i>Support local and regional authorities in the development of the employment strategy with the aim to fully use the opportunities offered by created jobs on the local level and enhance the co-operation with all involved parties including representatives of the community; promote measures aimed at the development of the social economy capacity in the field of job creation; enhance the role of Employment Services in the identification of local opportunities of employment and in the improvement of the functioning of local labour markets.</i></p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 11.1:</u> MoLSA, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the social partners will work with regional authorities with the aim of ensuring that human resources are part of regional development strategies.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 11.2:</u> MRD will implement the programme supporting regional development so as to help to create new jobs and infrastructure for the development of entrepreneurship in the structurally affected and economically weak regions.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 11.3:</u> MoLSA, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and Ministry for Regional Development, in collaboration with regional authorities, will support training and development programmes for regional authorities, the social partners, Labour Offices and other regional parties, aimed at managing human resources development under regional plans. The objective is to improve regional competitiveness through human resources development, participation, partnership and collaboration at regional, inter-regional and cross-border level, in the field of human resources development, employment and labour market development.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 11.5:</u> MIT and MoLSA will</p>	<p>Thematic Field 3 - Improve Conditions and Tools for the Development of Self-employment Activities of Persons from Disadvantaged Groups</p> <p>Thematic Field 4 - Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs</p>

<p>examine the possibility of creating a specific tool for 2004 supporting the consolidation of self-administered local and regional social firms and co-operatives participating in the employment of persons at risk of social exclusion.</p>	
<p>Guideline 12: Review the impact of taxes on employment and modify the tax system so as to reduce gradually the financial pressure on labour and the cost of non-profit activities. <u>NAPE 2003 Measure 12.1:</u> The Ministry of Finance, in collaboration with other ministries and the social partners, will, within the reform of public budgets, continue working on revising the tax system, with one of the objectives to reduce the taxation of labour.</p>	<p>Thematic Field 1 - Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market</p> <p>Thematic Field 3 - Improve Conditions and Tools for the Development of Self-employment Activities of Persons from Disadvantaged Groups</p> <p>Thematic Field 4 - Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs</p>
PILLAR 3: ADAPTABILITY	
<p>Guideline 13: Support agreements on the modernisation of labour organisation including flexible work measures so as to increase competitiveness of firms, achieve the needed balance between flexibility and security and improve the quality of jobs. <u>NAPE 2003 Measure 13.1:</u> MoLSA will prepare motions to amend the legislation in labour law, amend the regulation of the sickness insurance and amend the social welfare system and system of unemployment benefits.</p>	<p>Thematic Field 1 - Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market</p>
<p>Guideline 14: Review the existing regulation system so as to provide for the contribution of stimuli reducing obstacles to employment, implementing modernised organisation of labour and helping the labour market adaptation to economic structural changes; review the integration in the state legislation of more flexible types of contracts, provide for adequate security and</p>	<p>Thematic Field 1 - Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market</p> <p>Thematic Field 7 - Reconciling</p>

<p>higher employment positions for persons employed under such new, flexible contracts; improve the level of health protection and safety of labour.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 14.1:</u> MoLSA will reflect in the amended Labour Code the results of the examination of the use of labour organisation forms, the use of working hours and labour relations during the period from the effective date of the amended Labour Code (1.1.2001), including opinions on employers and employees' representatives.</p>	<p>family and professional life, developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services</p>
<p>Guideline 15: Social partners on all corresponding levels are invited to make agreements on lifelong learning to facilitate the adaptability and innovation, above all, in the field of information and communication technologies.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 15.1:</u> MIT will continue increasing the competitiveness of the industry by means of implementing support programmes under the Sectoral Operational Programme "Industry", which include the support to new technologies including re-qualification courses for employees and the access to information and communication technologies.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 15.2:</u> Ministry of Industry and Trade will continue implementing life-long training programmes, using accredited institutions, and will partly cover the costs.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 15.3:</u> The Office of the Vice-Premier for Research and Development, Human Rights and Human Resources at the Government Office, in collaboration with representatives of MoLSA, MoEYS, MIT, MRD and employers and employees' unions represented in the Council of Economic and Social Agreement, will initiate the designing of specific measures to create an effective motivating environment for employers, with the aim of giving employers greater motivation to provide further staff training.</p>	<p>Thematic Field 5 - Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market</p> <p>Thematic Field 6 - Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies</p>
PILLAR IV: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	
<p>Guideline 16: Taking non-discrimination measures to support the process of the guideline implementation within all four EES pillars.</p> <p><u>NAPE 2003 Measure 16.1:</u> MoEYS will continue training courses for careers advisors at schools in equal opportunities for women and men, who will</p>	<p>Thematic Field 5 - Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection</p>

<p>apply them in their advisory work. <u>NAPE 2003 Measure 16.2:</u> MoLSA in collaboration with the ministries concerned will introduce measures for each guideline to monitor gender equality. Under the implementation of the guidelines, specific measures will be introduced as required to ensure greater equality between women and men. That is particularly important for implementing active measures on the labour market, helping job seekers to rejoin the labour market, starting self-employment, creating jobs in the services sector, and using the greater flexibility of working models in practice.</p>	<p>with the labour market</p> <p>Thematic Field 7 - Reconciling family and professional life, developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services</p> <p>Thematic Field 8 - Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation</p>
<p>Guideline 17: <i>Reduce the difference between unemployment of women and men through the mediation of the active support to increase employment of women; take measures to achieve balanced representation of women and men in all sectors and types of employment and eliminate differences in remuneration.</i> <u>NAPE 2003 Measure 17.1:</u> In controlling compliance with the prohibition on discrimination in terms of equality between the genders, Labour Offices will examine compliance with the principle of equal pay for equal work, and the equal value for equal work, and compliance with the provisions on increased protection for pregnant and breast-feeding women. <u>NAPE 2003 Measure 17.2:</u> MoLSA, as the coordinator of government policy for gender equality, will respond to proposals for measures on the basis of a study of differences in the salaries for women and men, undertaken by the Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs, and will test the model procedure proposed for determining the degree of discrimination.</p>	<p>Thematic Field 8 - Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation</p>
<p>Guideline 18: <i>Support the policy providing for breaks in career, parental leave, part-time work, more flexible working hours suiting both the needs of employers and the needs of employees; provide for adequate and top-quality care for children and other dependants.</i> <u>NAPE 2003 Measure 18.1:</u> MoLSA, in collaboration with Labour Offices, will continue introducing a broader range of motivation and consultancy activities for people returning to the labour market, consisting in the provision of information, advice, short courses and training to gain new orientations,</p>	<p>Thematic Field 1 - Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market</p> <p>Thematic Field 6 - Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and</p>

<p>and in the use of information technologies. <u>NAPE 2003 Measure 18.2:</u> Within their statutory powers, MoLSA, MoEYS, MH and MRD will support the establishing and operation of facilities to care for children and family members with special needs, especially where they supplement or replace care provided by employed citizens.</p>	<p>other new technologies Thematic Field 7 - Reconciling family and professional life, developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services</p>
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The aforementioned links between CIP EQUAL thematic fields and selected measures of NAPE 2003 should be understood in such a way that the support rendered to CIP EQUAL thematic fields will result in new, innovative tools for the issues, which are included in NAPE, as well as mainstream forms of assistance from the ESF. Therefore, CIP EQUAL can be realistically expected to have in its final effect even more links to the Czech National Policy of Employment pertaining to the period when tools developed within CIP EQUAL are available.

Important role in the achievement of CIP EQUAL global objective will be played not only by the work programmes implemented by Development Partnerships during Action 2, but also by those implemented under Action 3, which is the responsibility of the programme Managing Authority.

3.3.3. CONTEXT OF NATIONAL STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

The prohibition of discrimination in employment is regulated by paragraph 1 of the Employment Act (1/1991), as amended, as follows: *“No citizen shall be deprived of his/her right to employment on grounds of his/her race, colour of his/her skin, sex, sexual orientation, language, belief and religion, political or other persuasion, membership or activities in political parties or political movements, trade unions and other associations, national, ethnical or social origin, property, family, health, age, marital and family status or duties to family. Any action discriminating not directly, but in its effects, as well as any action instigating to discrimination is prohibited. The cases as listed in this Act or special regulations and cases where reasons consist in the nature of employment to be conducted by a person, which reasons are necessary for such employment, shall not be considered as discrimination.”*

The Community Initiative Programme EQUAL is part of the strategy of human resources development in the shortened programming period 2004-2006 in the Czech Republic. That is why CIP EQUAL is based on the context of national strategies and policies in the field of employment, social integration, education and human resources development, which form the basis for the complex strategy for the policy of human resources development as laid down in HRD Policy Frame of Reference in the Czech Republic.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY

The active employment policy is based on two principal regulations – Employment Act (1/1991), as amended, and Employment and Powers of Authorities in Employment Act (ČNR Act No. 9/1991). Through the mediation of its Employment Services Administration, MoLSA formulates regulations and methodical instructions for Labour Offices, especially those pertaining to the active employment policy.

The active employment policy helps job seekers in finding job or enhancing their employability. The state active policy of employment includes re-qualification courses, organisation of vocational practice for secondary school and university graduates, qualification programmes for young employees, the consolidation and operation of jobs in protected workshops and at protected workplaces for disabled persons, publicly beneficial works and the consolidation of socially purposeful employment opportunities. The socially purposeful employment opportunities are created both by employers or job seekers themselves as self-employment.

The Employment Act provides also for the assistance to employers in re-qualification courses for their own employees, in particular where mass redundancy is imminent.

The active employment policy also includes a broad mixture of advisory and information services focusing mainly on employment, career selection and changing and further profession education.

The National Action Plan of Employment 2003, which was approved by the Czech Government Resolution No. 545 on 4 June 2003, stipulates that this year's key problems of the labour market still include the high rate of long-term unemployment and unemployment of young people. That is why MoLSA and Labour Offices will focus on those groups that are at risk of long-term unemployment. Supported will be, above all, preventive measures for young people at risk of long-term unemployment by means of enhancing the targeted character of the active employment policy measures. It is also essential to continue motivating people to get and maintain job so that they are better off when they work rather than when they are on the welfare.

Since the long-term unemployed include in particular the persons disadvantaged in the labour market, the active employment policy helps also persons from those disadvantaged groups in finding job or enhancing their employability.

The Czech Republic has also prepared the National Programme of Combating Ageing and the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL complies with that programme, too.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION

To support the policy of social integration, works on the modernisation of social services started. The modernisation consists especially in the community planning, i.e. increasing the capacity of municipalities to identify local disadvantaged groups, using all local sources and designing the most efficient ways of assistance to such groups in collaboration with representatives of the community and groups at risk. The philosophy and direction of the modernisation of social services are formulated in the consultation document entitled the White Book in Social Services, which was acknowledged in the spring of 2003 by the Czech Government. The other major field includes the implementation of service quality standards, which were prepared by MoLSA in collaboration with service providers and clients. The aim of the standards is to ensure that services focus on the requirements, objectives, skills and individual needs of clients. To that end, the standards will fulfil their function – to contribute to the social integration of groups at risk.

As regards national minorities, the initiation role is played by the Czech Government Council for National Minorities, which prepares, amongst other, the annual Report on the Situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic. The issues are dealt with also by the Czech Government Council for the Issues of the Romany Community. The “Concept of the Government Policy towards the Romany community members helping their integration in the society” was adopted in 2000, being updated on an annual basis. In the field of assistance to disabled persons, the National Plan of Levelling up Opportunities for Disabled Persons was prepared by the Government Committee for the Disabled and adopted in 1998.

In compliance with the Employment Act, the disabled persons are paid special attention. The measures according to the Act include the consultancy and assistance in their re-integration in the labour market, the advantage for employers employing disabled persons, protected workplaces, rendering loans, grants and subsidies to employers. New tools to that effect should be implemented. Such tools would exceed those of individual ministry policies and require the interconnection with the systems of education, active employment policy and social services.

The Czech Republic has been joining the EU strategy in social inclusion already in the pre-accession stage. Works on the preparation of the Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion started in 2002. The Joint Memorandum on Social Integration, as a basic document for the concept of the National Action Plan of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, will be completed by the end of 2003.

INTEGRATION OF FOREIGNERS

The national strategy of integration of foreigners in the Czech Republic is based on the Concept of Integration of Foreigners as regulated by the Government Resolution No. 689/1999 on the Principles of the Concept of Integration of Foreigners in the Czech Republic and on the Preparation and Implementation of the Concept and by related Government Resolutions No. 1315/1999, No. 1266/2000, No. 136/2001 and No. 55/2003.

The Concept of Integration of Foreigners is a complex system strategy for the achievement of the position of foreigners staying in the Czech Republic for more than one year as similar as possible to the position of Czech citizens. Almost all ministries, the social partners, local administration and non-government and non-profit organisations are involved in the implementation of the Concept.

DEVELOPMENT OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Two crucial documents dealing with the development of education in the Czech Republic were prepared by MoEYS and subsequently adopted by the government in 2000-2002: the National Programme of Education Development in the Czech Republic (White Paper) and the Long-term Plan of Education and Educational System Development in the Czech Republic (Long-term Plan). The White Paper formulates based on a thorough analysis of the situation strategic lines of the educational policy and main measures for its implementation until 2005 and the Long-term Plan defines specific measures including financial estimates of their implementation.

Both the White Paper and the Long-term Plan identify the principal strategies and priorities, which are crucial for the development of education in the Czech Republic in the years to come. The strategies and underlying measures form basic assumptions for the Policy Frame of Reference.

The Long-term Intent identifies the development priorities as follows:

- Reform and modernisation of the objectives and contents of education;
- Reform of the secondary education completion;
- Care for the quality, monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of education;
- Development of the integrated diagnostic, information and counselling system in the field of education;
- Optimisation of the educational offering and institutional structure of regional schools;
- Improvement of work conditions for school teachers and school management workers;
- Establishment of public non-university colleges and development of further forms of tertiary education;
- Development of further education as part of lifelong learning.

In addition to development priorities, which cover a broader mixture of problems, the Long-term Plan proposes measures to support partial, though important themes, such as the support to follow-up studies the capacity of which is not sufficient to satisfy the demand.

The main directions of the development of further education in the Czech Republic are defined by the White Paper as three key measures:

- Consolidation of the legislation framework for the development of further education;
- Preparation and implementation of a system of financial and non-financial incentives to further education;
- Implementation of mechanisms of the system development of further education.

As regards the access to education by disadvantaged groups, there are two principal legal standards in the Czech Republic. The anti-discrimination access to education is provided for in the Czech Republic by the Chart of Fundamental Rights and Liberties (Constitutional Act No. 2/1993 as amended by the Constitutional Act No. 162/1998 and School Act) (the Bill on pre-school, basic, secondary, higher professional and other education and on amendments to certain acts was forwarded to external comments on 13 June 2003). The current wording of the Bill is posted on MoEYS web site.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEN AND WOMEN

In 1998, the Czech Government appointed the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to coordinate the national policy pertaining to the policy of equality of women and men (Czech Government Resolution No. 6 of 7 January 1998) and adopted the first Priorities and Procedures in the Promotion of Equality Between Women and Men (Czech Government Resolution No. 236 of 8 April 1998), which are reviewed and updated on an annual basis. In compliance with Government Resolution No. 456 of 9

May 2001, each ministry shall develop from 1 January 2002 its own Priorities and Procedures in the Promotion of Equality Between Women and Men.

The Czech Government decided by its Resolution No. 1033 of 10 October 2001 to establish the Government Council for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men as a consulting body for the Czech Government. The Council main activities include consensual motions and recommendations for the solution of the cross-sectional, all-community problem – the consolidation and promotion of equal opportunities for women and men. The Council includes 23 members from ministries, social partners, the community and the professional public. With the aim of interconnection between the national policy and regional policies, district commissioners and a deputy of the Union of Czech Municipalities are represented as permanent guests in the Council.

STATE INFORMATION POLICY

The primary aim of the State Information Policy is to build up and develop the information society so as to create conditions in particular for the improvement of the quality of life for all, make the central and local administration more efficient and improve the support to the development of business.

The State Information policy includes the principle of reducing proactively the adverse impacts of IT development on persons with lower education and on economically and socially weaker persons including the disabled persons. That means education for the information society should be customised to the needs of all groups differing in age, sex, religious belief, culture, ethnical origin, social position, physical and mental abilities, etc. Equal opportunities in the access to the conditions, which are required in the information society include, amongst other, the adequate protection of the individual or group and affordability of training means and ICT equipment. Therefore, the principle of equal opportunities should spread across the measures, support and education in the implementation of the strategy.

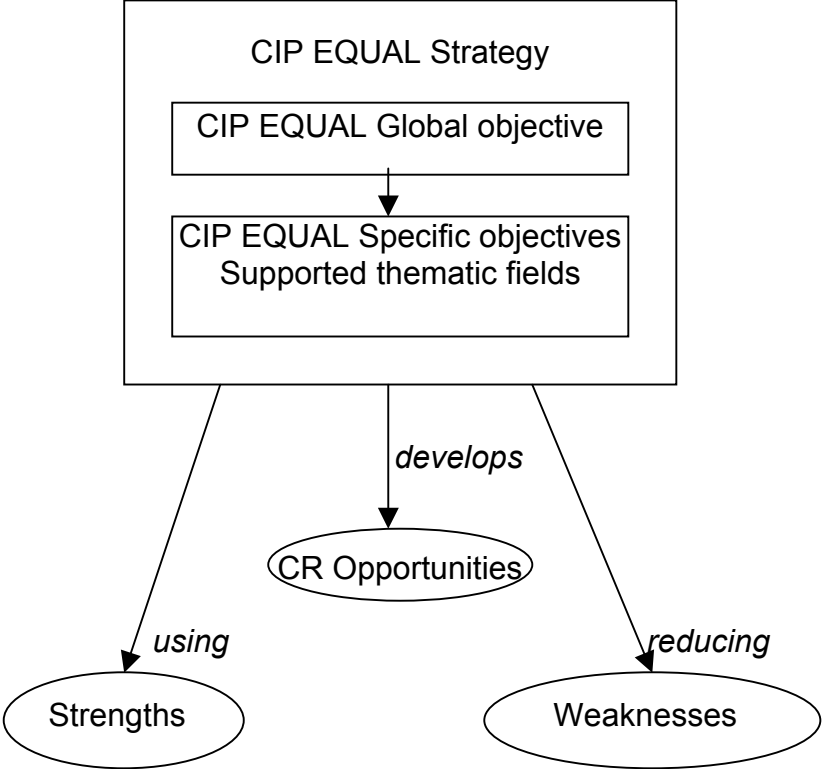
With the idea of more efficient fulfilling of information society the Ministry of Informatics was created 1 January 2003.

Commencing from 2001, a section of MoEYS was appointed to implement the State Information Policy in education. The policy is implemented according to the action plan of the State Information Policy as specified by Government Resolution No. 244 of 14 March 2001. The State Information Policy in education deals with the fulfilment of objectives in information literacy, providing for educational software and information sources, the establishment of the education portal and infrastructure building, the development of the methodology for the use and operation of information and communication technologies.

3.3.4. LINKS BETWEEN THE THEMATIC FIELDS OF COMUNITY INITIATIVE PROGRAMME EQUAL AND THE SWOT ANALISES CONCLUSIONS

The strategy of EQUAL Community Initiative Programme is based on the support of all nine thematic fields of EQUAL. The strategy was also defined with the aim to more develop opportunities of the Czech Republic stressed in the SWOT analyses of the labour market from the standpoint of discrimination and inequalities (see 2.4.). The EQUAL Community Initiative Programme will develop indicated opportunities making

use of existing strengths and reducing existing weaknesses of the CR. Links between the SWOT analyses conclusions and the CIP strategy are mentioned at the following diagram:



There are presented opportunities and thematic fields which will develop them in the framework of CIP EQUAL in the following chart:

Opportunity of the CR in connection with discrimination and inequities in the labour market	Thematic field developing relevant opportunity
<i>Opportunities, which will be developed by all thematic fields</i>	
Create a complex institutional system (in compliance with the principle of partnership) responding quickly to the requirements of the labour market	
Higher involvement of SMEs in the system solving problems of groups disadvantaged in the labour market	
Supplement financial sources with funds from the European Union	
Increase the labour market flexibility	
Social dialogue and enhancing civil society.	
<i>Opportunities, which will be developed by certain thematic fields</i>	
Create a complex concept and system of lifelong learning including also a system of re-qualification and define competencies of each subject	Thematic field 5

Create a system of training for people working in pedagogic-psychological counselling and those working with disadvantaged persons	Thematic field 5
Enhance the development of the third sector and the use of the third sector to support disadvantaged groups in the labour market	Thematic field 4
Enhance prevention in the active employment policy	Thematic fields 1, 2, 5
Adapt the system of secondary schools to the conditions in the labour market	Thematic field 5
Create conditions for persons from disadvantaged groups to set up in businesses of their own	Thematic field 3
Develop a multicultural society	Thematic fields 1, 2 and 9

The CIP EQUAL does not have an ambitions to create completely new systems or concepts as they are described among the opportunities of the Czech Republic, the CIP EQUAL will “only” develop and test new approaches to make the existing systems or systems under preparation more effective.

3.3.5 LINKS BETWEEN THE THEMATIC FIELDS OF THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE PROGRAMME EQUAL AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF JIM AND JAP

The first step on the way to implement the European Employment Strategy in the Czech Republic was the “**Joint Assessment Paper**“ signed by the representatives of the Czech Republic and the European Commission on 11 May 2000. The Joint Assessment Paper of the Czech Republic was the first JAP signed by both the European Commission and the Candidate Country.

This document presents a set of employment and labour market objectives necessary to advance the Czech labour market transformation, to make progress in adapting the labour market so as to be able to implement the European Employment Strategy and to prepare it for accession to the European Union. Therefore in 2000 JAP has identified the following priority areas:

- Maintaining adequate wage development in line with productivity growth and co-ordinating the tax and social benefit systems to provide greater incentives for people to work and for businesses to create jobs; reviewing the pension system with respect to employment;
- Encourage occupational and geographical mobility;
- Modernising, in partnership with the social partners, the vocational education and training in order to make this system more transparent and adequate to meet the labour market needs; and, more generally, adapt the vocational education and training to the demands of the economy and a knowledge-based society;
- Reinforcing the public employment services and supporting the employment policy shift towards prevention of unemployment and activation of the unemployed;

- Reinforcing the institutional structures needed to implement the ESF aid.

And as agreed between the Czech Republic and the European Commission, the development achieved in the identified priority areas would be regularly monitored. The First Regular Review of the JAP priorities was sent to the European Commission in June 2001 and The Second Regular Review of the JAP priorities was sent to the European Commission in May 2002.

But as in accordance with scope of the ESF interventions⁵¹ the CIP EQUAL of the Czech Republic will predominantly support activities complementary to the European Employment Strategy measures (as defined in the National Action Plans) and JAP priorities are currently in the Czech Republic further supported within the National Action Plan for Employment 2003, the detailed links between the NAPE (and therefore also between the JAP) and CIP EQUAL Thematic Fields have been already provided in section 3. 3.2.

Priorities concerning social inclusion and equal opportunities are not a subject of the JAP. These priorities are included in **the Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM)** – EU and Czech government strategic document, which assesses social situation, identifies main problems and tasks for future policy of the Czech Republic.

During the JIM preparation, various activities whose scope is also relevant as for the ESF interventions and therefore which can be financially supported within the ESF forms of assistance were identified. Additionally, in the Objective 3 Policy Frame of Reference⁵² has also been defined as the priority for all the ESF intervention within the shorten programming period 2004-2006 in the Czech republic the reduction of the number of people at risk of social exclusion. Therefore various key challenges identified during the JIM preparation will be also supported within the CIP EQUAL thematic fields. The details of links between the CIP EQUAL thematic fields and various key challenges identified in JIM are given in the following table.

Links between CIP EQUAL Thematic Fields and various key challenges of Joint Inclusion Memorandum	
Key challenges of JIM	CIP EQUAL Thematic Fields
Creation and development of “inclusive” labour market in relation with national economic policy, employment and employability support, continuing structural changes	Thematic field 1 - Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market Thematic field 2 - Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market Thematic field 4 - Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the

⁵¹ As specified in Council Regulation (EC) No. 1784/1999 on ESF.

⁵² Objective 3 Policy Frame of Reference is defined in Art. 9 of the Council Regulation (ES) No. 1260/1999 and in the Czech Republic has been prepared already during the preparation of OP HRD and SPD Objective 3. In the Czech Republic, this framework document covering scope of all the ESF interventions for the shorten programming period 2004-2006 has been titled “The HRD Policy Frame of Reference” and the details concerning its contents are to be found in section 3.3.1. of CIP EQUAL.

	<p>community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs</p> <p>Thematic field 6 - Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies</p> <p>Thematic field 9 - Assisting asylum seekers in their integration</p>
Elimination of inequalities in the access to education	<p>Thematic field 2 - Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market</p> <p>Thematic field 5 - Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market</p> <p>Thematic field 9 - Assisting asylum seekers in their integration</p>
Consolidation of family solidarity, protection of children rights and prevention from socially pathologic phenomena	<p>Thematic field 4 - Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs</p> <p>Thematic field 6 - Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies</p> <p>Thematic field 7 - Reconciling family and professional life, developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services</p> <p>Thematic field 8 - Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation</p>
Ensuring of equal access to high-standard social and health services for all	<p>Thematic field 6 - Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies</p>

3.4. COMPATIBILITY OF CIP EQUAL WITH COMMUNITY POLICIES

Fully in line with Article 12 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Managing Authority is responsible for the implementation of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL in keeping with the rule stipulating that all activities to be financed from EU Structural Funds should fully comply with Community policies pertaining to the rules for economic competition (state aid), award of public contracts, protection and improvement of the environment, and promotion of equal opportunities between women and men.

This subchapter of CIP EQUAL describes how the Managing Authority will provide for the compatibility of the programme with EU policies during CI EQUAL second round.

3.4.1. COMPLIANCE WITH STATE AID LEGISLATION

General framework

Within the EQUAL Initiative, activities are carried out by Development Partnerships (DP) which are consortia, or legal entities consisting of several partners that might also include private undertakings, or by the individual partners of a DP. In the framework of the Structural Funds, the Development partnerships are final beneficiaries in the meaning of Regulation 1260/1999.

Article 87 of the EC Treaty prohibits any aid granted by a Member State or through State resources in any form whatsoever which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favouring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods. The EC Treaty, however, allows exceptions to the ban on State aid where the proposed aid schemes may have a beneficial impact in overall Union terms.

Therefore, pursuant to Articles 12, 17.1 and 19.2 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999, the Managing Authority will hold the overall responsibility for ensuring the compliance of all operations financed under this EQUAL CIP with the provisions of the Treaty as regards State aid.

By and large, grants awarded to undertakings under EQUAL do not constitute any State aid within the meaning of Art. 87.1 of the Treaty, because most of them involve only smaller amounts (and therefore will fall under the "de-minimis" rule⁵³). Where they constitute State aid, as they are intended to facilitate access to work, or reducing risky employment situations for disadvantaged people, they would mostly fall under the block exemption for aid to SMEs⁵⁴, Employment aid⁵⁵ or training aid⁵⁶.

⁵³ Commission Regulation (EC) No. 69/2001 of 12 January 2001 on the application of the Articles 87 and 88 EC Treaty on "de-minimis"-State aid

⁵⁴ Commission Regulation (EC) No.70/2001 of 12 January 2001 on the application of the Articles 87 and 88 EC Treaty on State subsidies to small and medium-sized enterprises and as amended by the Commission Regulation (EC) No 364/2004 of 25 February 2004

⁵⁵ Commission Regulation (EC) 2204/2002 of 5 December 2002 on the application of Articles 87 and 88 of the EC Treaty to State aid for employment

⁵⁶ Commission Regulation (EC) No. 68/2001 of 12 January 2001 on the application of the Articles 87 and 88 of the EC Treaty on training aid as amended by the Commission Regulation (EC) No 363/2004 of 25 February 2004

Responsibilities

Compliance with Community policies will be checked on five levels:

1. All undertakings participating financially in EQUAL keep track of all respective public funding they have received, and of its respective justification. They are therefore aware of checking compliance with the "de-minimis" rule, if needed.
2. For each Development Partnership, the body in charge of administering the public funds, will identify if undertakings are intended to receive financial support under EQUAL, collect the relevant information from them, make a first check of compliance with State aid rules (block exemptions) and include a justification for the envisaged grant(s) in any financial proposal made to the Managing Authority.
3. The Managing Authority, as required under Article 34(1)(g) of Council Regulation No. 1260/1999, will ensure that grants to Development Partnerships are only issued if
 - A) all relevant information needed for a compliance check has been submitted by the Development Partnership as part of its proposals for funding, or for any modification of the grant under EQUAL;
 - B) the conditions under which the grant is awarded to an undertaking qualify for the block exemptions for employment aid, aid to SMEs, or training aid, or if they comply with the provisions of the "de-minimis"-rule, or if the grant has been formally approved under the Interim Mechanism laid down in Annex IV.3 of the Accession Treaty where applicable or by the Commission as laid down in Article 88 EC and Regulation 659/1999, and
 - C) in case the "de minimis" rule needs to be applied, the individual undertaking has been informed, before issuing the grant letter, that the support is of a "de minimis" nature and, if the firm has verified and confirmed that all other "de minimis" aid received by them will remain within the threshold and where the Managing Authority has checked that this will not raise the total amount of *de minimis* aid received during the relevant period of three years to above the threshold set out in the *de minimis* threshold or where a central register has been set up, it has been verified that the threshold has not been exceeded.
4. The Managing Authority will, as part of its monitoring system, collect all information as regards grants to enterprises for checking compliance with the "de-minimis" rule and the block exemptions. In case the latter cannot be applied, i.e. if individual grants represent aid in accordance with Art. 87(1) the EC, such funding will need to be notified as State aid and submitted to the European Commission for approval.
5. The Managing Authority will, in addition, establish a formal consultation mechanism with the Office for the Protection of Economic Competition which is the designated national authority for State aid control, and which has established the adequate mechanisms for control of the cumulation of State aid.

Funding under EQUAL granted to undertakings not covered by an exemption regulation or Commission approval is illegal and subject to the consequences set out in the procedural regulation for State aid, and its part-financing would be treated as an irregularity within the meaning of Articles 38 and 39 of Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999.

Consequently, the Commission will not accept requests for interim and final payments under Article 32 of the Regulation for measures being part-financed with new or altered aid, as defined in the procedural regulation for State aid, granted under aid schemes or in individual cases, until such aid has been notified to and formally approved by the Commission.

Relevant State Aid rules

The following rules are the most relevant rules for checking compliance with State aid legislation.

The table below summarises the main provisions only; details have been specified in the actual legal documents referred to above.

Block exemption	Company characteristics	Scope and EQUAL specific activities exempted	Maximum aid intensity for EQUAL the Czech Republic exempted	Maximum amount of aid exempted	Further conditions for exemption
"De minimis" rule	All companies, but does not apply to the transport sector and the production, processing or marketing of certain agricultural and fisheries products	no restrictions	100%	€ 100,000 over a rolling 3-year period	No need for notification to the Commission. The Czech Republic has to set up a register of de minimis aid, or to inform companies of and check whether an additional aid does not raise the total amount above the ceiling.
Training aid	All companies	training activities which favour firms by reducing costs of training of their employees for acquiring new skills. Costs covered: trainers' personnel costs, travel costs or trainers and trainees, other current expense (material, supplies, etc.), depreciation of tools and equipment used exclusively for mentioned training, guidance and counselling and trainees' personnel costs	Specific training: 30% for Prague and 35% for the rest of the country ⁵⁷ Further increases for: SME : 10% Disadvantaged workers:10% General training: 55% for Prague and 60% for the rest of the country. ⁵⁸ Further increases for: SME : 20% Disadvantaged workers:10%	€ 1,000,000	Commission needs to be informed within 20 working days
Aid for employment	All companies	Creation of jobs, recruitment of disadvantaged or disabled people, employing disabled people (additional costs only).	Job creation: Regional aid ceiling Recruitment of disadvantaged	€ 15,000,000 over 3 years for a single enterprise	Commission needs to be informed within 20 working days.

⁵⁷ 25% + 5% (Art. 87 (3) (c) regional increase) and 25% + 10% (Art. 87 (3) (a) regional increase)

⁵⁸ 50% + 5% (Art. 87 (3) (c) regional increase) and 50% + 10% (Art. 87 (3) (a) regional increase)

		<p>Disadvantaged people include young persons below 25 or within 2 years from completing full-time education, migrant workers, members of ethnic minorities, long-term unemployed, unskilled and under-educated, elderly, women absent from working life or ex-prisoners.</p> <p>For conditions include net increase in no of jobs, maximum duration of aid</p>	<p>people: 50%</p> <p>Recruitment of disabled people: 60%</p> <p>Aid for additional costs of employing disabled people: 100%</p>		<p>Other types of job related support are not exempted (aid for job sharing, aid for other types of disadvantaged workers, ...)</p>
<p>The aid for small and medium-sized enterprises</p>	<p>SMEs with less than 250 employees</p>	<p>Tangible (land, buildings, plant/machinery) and intangible investment (expenditure entailed by technology transfer) and soft aid in SMEs. The costs of services provided by outside consultants and the costs of the first participation of an enterprise in a fair or exhibition are also eligible.</p>	<p>Services by outside consultants and participation in fairs: up to 50%</p> <p>Investment:</p> <p>Regional aid ceiling + 10% for Prague</p> <p>Maximum aid intensity: for Prague: 30%</p> <p>Regional aid ceiling + 15% for the rest of the country</p> <p>Maximum aid intensity: 75% for the rest of the country</p>		<p>Commission needs to be informed within 20 working days</p>

State Aid Table

This EQUAL CIP provides public funding for 20 measures (as each thematic field is divided into two separate measures and TA is divided into two measures as well). To the extent that undertaking participate in a Development Partnership, the Managing Authority will ensure that any grant to such an undertaking will comply with the rules State in the following table

Measure description	Block exemptions			Other cases	
	Aid for employment	Aid for training	Small and medium -sized enterprises	De minimis rule	Ad hoc notification
1. Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market which must be open to all	Aid for employment	Aid for training	Small and medium -sized enterprises	De minimis rule	Ad hoc notification
2. Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market	Aid for employment	Aid for training	Small and medium -sized enterprises	De minimis rule	Ad hoc notification
3. Opening up the business creation process to all by providing the tools required for setting up in business and for the identification and exploitation of new possibilities for creating employment in urban and rural areas	Aid for employment	Aid for training	Small and medium -sized enterprises	De minimis rule	Ad hoc notification
4. Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs	Aid for employment	Aid for training	Small and medium -sized enterprises	De minimis rule	Ad hoc notification
5. Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market	Aid for employment	Aid for training	Small and medium -sized enterprises	De minimis rule	Ad hoc notification
6. Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies	Aid for employment	Aid for training	Small and medium -sized enterprises	De minimis rule	Ad hoc notification
7. Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the re-integration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services	Aid for employment	Aid for training	Small and medium -sized enterprises	De minimis rule	Ad hoc notification
8. Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation	Aid for employment	Aid for training	Small and medium -sized enterprises	De minimis rule	Ad hoc notification
9. Supporting the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers.	Aid for employment	Aid for training	Small and medium -sized enterprises	De minimis rule	Ad hoc notification

In conformity with its duties under Article 34(1)(g) of Council Regulation No 1260/1999, the Managing Authority will keep the above State aid table up-to-date and will inform the Commission of any modification of the table.

3.4.2. PUBLIC CONTRACTS

Process of award of public contracts in the framework of CIP EQUAL will be fully in compliance with European Council Directive 92/50 and Act No. 40/2004 on award of public contracts.

All contractors for projects to be co-financed from the ESF will be selected according to the rules on award of public contracts. Respective public contracts (exceeding the set up limit) for which a contribution from the ESF is requested will be published in the Official Journal of the European Communities.

3.4.3. PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The projects co-financed from ESF will take into account the sustainable development principles and objectives and fully comply with both Czech and EU environmental legislation.

Since the programme of human resources development is not expected to make considerable impact on the environment, it was decided that CIP EQUAL does not need a Strategic Assessment of Environmental Impacts.

3.4.4. PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN

The text below defines the gender mainstreaming strategy of CIP EQUAL for the Czech Republic, which is formulated in keeping with Article 12 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 and with paragraphs 14, 60 and 61 of Commission Communication COM(2000)853. In compliance with requirements of the above mentioned Article of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 and above mentioned paragraphs of Commission Communication COM(2000)853 the equal opportunities between women and men will be supported by means of this gender mainstreaming strategy throughout realization of the whole CIP EQUAL.

Gender mainstreaming is a tool which will be applied in the Czech Republic EQUAL Programme to achieve equality between women and men which goes beyond promoting equality through the implementation of specific measures to help women. Gender mainstreaming mobilises all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality by actively and openly taking into account, at the planning stage, their possible effects on the respective situation of men and women (gender perspective). This means systematically examining measures and policies and taking into account such possible effects when defining and implementing them (COM (96)67final: Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities).

The Czech Republic EQUAL Programme supports both specific measures to improve women's access to and participation in the labour market, as well as gender impact assessment in order to take into account, within all measures, equal opportunities for women and men as part of the mainstreaming approach.

The Managing Authority will take steps to ensure that gender perspective and promotion of equal opportunities will be taken into consideration when planning, selecting, implementing and evaluating the DPs, as well as when the good practices will be mainstreamed. National expertise on gender mainstreaming will provide guidance for example to DPs, the selection committee, Managing Authority, NSS and

evaluators when implementing gender mainstreaming. DPs will be advised to take gender perspective into account in their work plans. In the selection process, DPs contributing to gender equality will be given priority under all themes. Gender balance will be sought in the composition of the Monitoring committee, and other supporting structures to EQUAL. Indicators used to evaluate the impact of the interventions will be split by gender. When mainstreaming the results, special attention will be paid to good practices promoting gender equality.

The gender mainstreaming strategy of CIP EQUAL in the Czech Republic will be used as a tool for the preparedness of DPs for the provision of equal opportunities of women and men already in the stage of DP preparation. The fulfilment of the principle will be assessed during the selection of DPs for Action 1 and during the review of the National and Transnational Co-operation Agreements before Action 2 and also during the subsequent implementation of both individual DPs and the entire programme.

The principle of equal opportunities for women and men will be monitored and fulfilled during all stages of CIP EQUAL preparation and implementation, both in the programming and implementation stages and in the monitoring and evaluation stages.

That means the principle will be included in CIP EQUAL in all stages of the programme and project cycle. On the level of individual DPs under CI EQUAL second round in the Czech Republic, the principle of equal opportunities for women and men will be not only part of DPs implemented within the measures laid down by Priority Four (Equal Opportunities for Women and Men), but also part of all other DPs implemented within the other programme priorities and measures.

Equal Opportunities for Men and Women

The principle of equal opportunities for women and men will be promoted in DPs financed under CIP EQUAL in the form of eliminating barriers in the access to DP activities for women and men and monitoring the impact of DP activities as regards equal opportunities.

The principle of equal opportunities for women and men means combating any discrimination whatsoever and disadvantage based on sex. Equal opportunities of women and men are stressed because it is usually difficult for the woman to overcome obstacles as arising from her traditional position in the society and also because the woman, if being member of another disadvantaged group (e.g. she is disabled), suffers from double disadvantage.

The principle of equal opportunities for women and men can be monitored in particular as the rate of economic activity, the rate of unemployment and long-term unemployment, the opportunity to work full/part time or under other flexible schemes. The principle can also be assessed by remuneration and conditions in employment, by the rate of self-employment, by the access to transport, care and other services, sharing of unpaid household works and care for family.

Fulfilling the Principle of Equal Opportunities on the Level of DPs

Fulfilling the principle of equal opportunities for women and men on the level of DPs means to take into account the principle in all DP stages, i.e. before the DP implementation (e.g. in the form of an audit of the own organisation), during the DP preparation (e.g. in the form of an ex-ante analysis, applying the principle of partnership, providing for training courses for workers) and during the DP implementation (e.g. in the form of supporting minority groups, promoting the awareness of equal opportunities for women and men).

Fulfilling the Principle of Equal Opportunities on the Level of the Managing Authority

Within the preparation of the programming document for CI EQUAL second round, the Managing Authority provided for collaboration with the national coordinator for the issue of equal opportunities for women and men in the Czech Republic, i.e. with the Department of Equal Opportunities for Men and Women at MoLSA. In CI EQUAL first round, the representative of that department is also member of the Monitoring Committee established for CI EQUAL first round in the Czech Republic.

The Community Initiative Programme EQUAL was prepared using the method of gender mainstreaming. Wherever possible, the data in the analytical section of CIP EQUAL are given separately for women and men. In collaboration of the programme authors with the national coordinator for the issue of equal opportunities for women and men in the Czech Republic, the principle was respected throughout the preparation of CIP EQUAL.

In compliance with Article 35(1)(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the principle of equal opportunities for women and men will be taken into account also in the establishment of CIP EQUAL Monitoring Committee.

As mentioned above, the Managing Authority will assess the inclusion of the principle of equal opportunities for women and men in draft DPs for Action 1, as well as in the National and Transnational Co-operation Agreements, which will be reviewed before Action 2. The assessment of the inclusion of the principle of equal opportunities for women and men before Action 1 and Action 2 will be described in detail in the Manual for applicants.

The Managing Authority will assess the inclusion of the principle of equal opportunities for women and men during the implementation of the DPs and the entire programme by means of the regular monitoring of implemented DPs. Whenever possible, the indicators set up for the regular monitoring of CI EQUAL second round implementation will provide for separate monitoring of data by women and men. The option of separate monitoring indicators for women and men is already included in the pilot version of MSSF, which is being tested under CI EQUAL first round in the Czech Republic.

In compliance with Article 42(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Managing Authority will prepare by 31 December 2005 a final evaluation of CIP EQUAL including an assessment of the fulfilment of the principle of equal opportunities for women and men on the programme level.

Furthermore, the Managing Authority will enhance within its information activities the awareness of the significance of the policy of equal opportunities for women and men and the awareness of CIP EQUAL contribution to the fulfilment of that Community horizontal policy.

4. Implementing the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL

4.1. PRINCIPLES OF THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE EQUAL

Building on lessons learned under the Community Initiatives ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT, which had been laid down by the European Commission for the programming period 1994-1999, the Community Initiative EQUAL will be based in compliance with paragraphs 14-30 of Commission Communication COM(2000)853, on six basic principles.

Principles of the Community Initiative EQUAL
Thematic approach
Partnership approach
Empowerment
Transnational co-operation
Innovation
Mainstreaming

The six basic principles are defined below.

In compliance with Article 12 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, and paragraphs 14, 60 and 61 of Commission Communication COM(2000)853, the CIP EQUAL will be implemented also with regard to the principle of gender mainstreaming as described in the document section pertaining to the programme strategy. Thus gender mainstreaming is in case of Czech CIP EQUAL considered to be one of the fundamental principles of the whole Programme through which equal opportunities between women and men will be mainstreamed across all supported thematic fields.

4.1.1. THEMATIC APPROACH

Based on their own social and economic analyses, Member States will select for their CIPs EQUAL the thematic fields, which they consider as most useful for them.

Having conducted a social and economic analysis of the CIP EQUAL to identify needs and building on lessons learned under the first round of CI EQUAL, all nine thematic fields as mentioned above were chosen for the funding in the second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL in the Czech Republic.

A survey of nine thematic fields supported in the second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL in the Czech Republic is given below.

Survey of Nine Thematic Fields for the Czech Republic for the Second Round of the Community Initiative EQUAL
PRIORITY I: EMPLOYABILITY: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market• Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market
PRIORITY II: ENTREPRENEURSHIP: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improving conditions and tools required for developing business by persons from disadvantaged groups• Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services

of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs
<p>PRIORITY III: ADAPTABILITY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market • Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies
<p>PRIORITY IV: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconciling family and professional life, developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services • Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation
<p>SEPARATE THEME:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting asylum seekers in their integration

In the second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL, DPs focusing on nine thematic fields of the CIP EQUAL can be established in the Czech Republic.

The thematic approach is further supported by the National Thematic Groups (described in the sub-chapter 4.2.3.).

4.1.2. PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

Mutual co-operation of partners within individual DPs is a key principle of the Community Initiative EQUAL. The project implementation by means of so-called Development Partnerships (DPs) is based on the lessons learned under previous Community Initiatives ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT, which showed that the partnership approach could contribute to significantly better outcomes as compared to projects implemented by single organisations only. Also the existing experience from the first round of the EQUAL Initiative shows that the most visible success of the first round is partnership.

Regarding to a good understanding and easier manipulation with the common European database ECDB and regarding to the fulfilment of the sound management of the SF resources, the respective DPs will be developed under one thematic field only. The chosen thematic field will be already defined in the application forms. But as a very strong relation among the DPs submitted under another themes is possible, in a reasonable case, it would be allowed to establish the transnational co-operation not only with the DP working under the same thematic field.

Each DP will integrate partner organisations, which are crucial for a given theme. Partner organisations may include, for example, local and regional public authorities, public employment service, non-profit organisations, educational institutions, businesses (in particular small and medium-sized enterprises) and social partners. Each partner organisation working under one of the DPs can, in a reasonable case, co-operate also under another DP. From here, in a reasonable case, one DP can submit and realise under the second round of CI EQUAL more than one application form providing the sound management rules will be fulfilled and all the costs emerged in such projects will be strictly separated.

The partnership principle makes it possible to co-operate with others on the solution of horizontal problems. Based on the experience gained from the first round of the EQUAL Initiative, it is easier to co-operate with about 8-10 partner organisation within a DP, because the higher number of partners involved in a DP makes it more difficult to manage the DP activities.

Within the DPs established during the first round of EQUAL Initiative in the Czech Republic co-operate for example NGOs with trade unions, educational institutions, labour offices and regional authorities. Recommended composition of the DPs for the second round are to be found in the Programming Complement.

The DPs for the second round of EQUAL in the Czech Republic will be Final Beneficiaries according to Article 9(I) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999.

Another dimension of the partnership principle within the EQUAL Initiative means the co-operation between all the relevant public and regional bodies. During the preparation of the CIP EQUAL, the active co-operation of various ministries (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Ministry for Regional Development, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Internal Affairs etc.), regional authorities and social partners has been used. This co-operation will be further stressed and developed during the implementation of the CIP EQUAL as the relevant bodies will be involved in the Monitoring Committee and their experts will be involved in the National Thematic Groups.

4.1.3. EMPOWERMENT

To gain as best as possible results of individual DPs supported within the second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL, all partner organisations will be allowed to fully participate in all DP stages in the decision-making as regards specific DPs.

The principle of empowerment is in close connection with partnership principle as good partnership "...necessitates the involvement of wide range of actors; where those involved in the implementation of activities should also take part in decision making; on the basis of a commonly agreed (and written) work programme; which includes partners from other Member States."⁵⁹ It is necessary to follow the principle of empowerment in order to ensure that innovations are implemented in suitable way. The fulfilment of this principle will be watched throughout the implementation of the EQUAL Initiative in the Czech Republic both at the level of the individual DPs and the whole CIP EQUAL.

Taken measures within individual DPs, providing for the full participation in the decision-making of all involved partner organisations, as well as representatives of groups which are most at risk of inequalities and discrimination in the labour market, will be assessed along with application forms as proposed for Action 1 and re-assessed during the confirmation of a given DP selection for Action 2.

Involving representatives of groups that are most at risk of inequalities and discrimination in the labour market is a good opportunity for their social inclusion. The principle enables the persons who are discriminated and disadvantaged in the labour

⁵⁹ Commission Communication COM(2003)840

market and usually have limited participation in decision-making processes to participate proactively in the development and implementation of individual DP work programmes dealing with issues, which are experienced directly by them. On the other hand, direct experience with disadvantage or discrimination in the labour market of persons involved in this way into the work programme development and implementation is a great contribution for achieving DP goals.

4.1.4. TRANSNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Applying the principle of transnational co-operation by individual DPs in the Community Initiative EQUAL is based also on the experience gained under the implementation of preceding Community Initiatives EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT. The assessment of results of these Community Initiatives shows that transnational co-operation is an important dimension which can help finding an innovative solution of given issues.

The activities through which transnational co-operation may be developed can be distinguished according to the objectives and the content of co-operation between the DPs, key partners, DP co-ordinators, or participants in individual activities. A common classification identifies five models of transnational cooperation, which can be described in the following manner:

- Exchange of information and experience – getting to know each other's ideas, strategies, and activities;
- Parallel development of innovative approaches – experimentation under differing frame conditions;
- Import, export or adoption of new approaches – adaptation of approaches tested elsewhere to one's own situation;
- Joint product or system development – division of tasks with a common objective;
- Organised learning – exchange of trainees, trainers, key actors, and others.

The benefits of the transnational co-operation principal can be as follows:

- Better insight into the nature and forms of discrimination, inequality, and from here also of the causes of labour market exclusion;
- Designing and improvement of own strategies and actions in the light of experience in other Member States;
- Access and participation in European networks and associations, and building up contracts in other member States so as the possibilities for future co-operation.

The transnational co-operation principle is therefore a real added value for the implementation of the DPs. Within the Community Initiative EQUAL, the transnational co-operation among DPs from different European countries is made possible also through the laid down common themes for the Community Initiative EQUAL in all EU countries.

At the level of individual DPs, the principle of transnational co-operation in this Community Initiative is provided for through Transnational Co-operation Agreements, which are entered into by Development Partnerships from individual EU Member or non Member States.

Each Development Partnership must identify at least one partner from another Member State. Such co-operation within the Community Initiative EQUAL may also extend to partners in non Member States supported under Phare, TACIS, MEDA, CARDS, etc. In such a case, however, the partner from a non Member State must be able to demonstrate its capacity to cover its own costs incurred in the DP work programme implementation.

At the level of the entire Community Initiative EQUAL, the principle of transnational co-operation is provided for through European thematic networking (see below) and joint actions organised by the Commission in collaboration with individual EU Member States.

More guidance how to fulfil the transnational co-operation principle is to be found in the "Guide on transnationality" elaborated by the European Commission.

4.1.5. INNOVATION

The Community Initiative EQUAL supports innovative approaches to the issue of inequalities and discrimination in the labour market. Innovation can be in the form of a brand new approach to a given issue or a new application of existing methods and procedures.

The experience which emerged from the evaluation of the preceding Community Initiatives ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT shows that the principle of innovation is usually achieved in individual DPs through the mediation of one of the following approaches:

- process oriented innovations will cover the development of new methods, tools or approaches as well as the improvement of existing methods;
- goal-oriented innovations will centre around the formulation of new objectives and innovation could include approaches to identify new and promising qualifications and the opening up of new areas of employment for the labour market;
- context-oriented innovations relate to political and institutional structures. Context-oriented innovations will be concerned with system development in connection with the labour market.

The innovative approaches of the DPs supported by the CIP EQUAL may be completely new approaches, or the transfer of elements from elsewhere, which increase the effectiveness of policy delivery.

Being based on the innovation principle, the Community Initiative EQUAL supports all kind of innovative DPs operating in the field of the promoting new ways of combating discrimination and inequalities at the labour market. And therefore it provides a great opportunity to fund the innovative ideas of all the interested bodies, including various public bodies, private enterprises and NGOs. It is also possible (regarding the partnership principle) to further support development of existing co-operation of various organisations trying to find out new tools to support disadvantaged groups at the labour market.

And as the innovative approaches has been already supported (e.g. in the first round of the EQUAL Initiative) the National Support Structure will check whether there are

no duplicities between already work programmes of already supported DPs and the work programmes of DPs established within the second round of EQUAL Initiative.

The innovations developed during the implementation of the second round of the EQUAL Initiative in the Czech Republic will be evaluated within programme evaluations described in the following chapter and within the on-going self-evaluation of DPs activities. Every DP will have to provide regular on-going self-evaluation reports where the developed innovative tools and approaches and fulfilling of all the EQUAL principles will have to be described. These individual on-going self-evaluation reports will be the basis for the programme evaluation reports and analyses.

4.1.6. MAINSTREAMING

Mainstreaming i.e. the integration and incorporation of new ideas and approaches into policy and practice, is challenging. To assist in this process, Community Initiative EQUAL provides structures and tools, but ultimately it is up to each Development Partnership, each Member State and the European Commission to provide evidence for effective, efficient and relevant alternatives in the delivery of inclusive labour market policies that are transferable across Member States and applicable on a larger scale. These activities should not be limited to dissemination of results, which is only one step in the process of mainstreaming.

Community Initiative EQUAL contributes to effective policy making by finding out, on the ground, what works and what does not, and making sure that all key stakeholders can learn from it. The results are summarised and made public, and are used to enrich the policy peer reviews set up in the context of the European Employment Strategy, the Social Inclusion Process, evaluation activities at Union level, and the dissemination and exchange activities of the Community Programmes under Articles 13 (fight against discrimination) and 137 (in favour of social inclusion) of the Treaty.

It is incumbent on Development Partnerships to participate in mainstreaming activities as part of their work programme. On top of this, given the complexities involved, there is additional funding available in EQUAL for mainstreaming activities. This additional funding can be used for:

a) Mainstreaming the innovations of Community Initiative EQUAL (so called *action 3*)⁶⁰ – either from the first round or the second. Applications may be submitted to Managing Authorities by Development Partnerships acting either singly or in groups or by ad hoc consortia of Development Partnership partners, multipliers and experts. Activities at national or European level may include

- Presenting and promoting the evidence for good practice;
- Validation of the innovation;
- Benchmarking innovation against existing approaches nationally and in other Member States;
- Dissemination of the innovation to additional actors concerned with the discrimination tackled;

⁶⁰ More information concerning the action 3 is given in section 4.2.3.

- Demonstration and transfer of good practice including mentoring.

b) Managing Authorities will also fund additional mainstreaming activities (within *action 3*) such as preparation of Guides, good practices or other tools by Development Partnerships as part of the collaboration within European thematic groups.

It is important that policy makers, in particular those in charge of preparing the national actions plans for the European Employment Strategy and the Social Inclusion Process, as well as those involved in Objective 1, 2 and 3 Structural Fund Programmes, receive input from Community Initiative EQUAL, and participate in the mainstreaming activities. Therefore MA will provide regularly (at least annually) information of the CIP EQUAL implementation to all Monitoring Committees established for the ESF forms of assistance.

In order to obtain the maximum impact from EQUAL, results must be analysed, benchmarked and disseminated in order to have an impact both within Member States and across the Union. As with any experiment in a laboratory, the effects of an experiment must be related to a wider (economic, political, cultural, organisational) context to be sustainable. The results of EQUAL must become part of the systematic approach to other policies and programmes, which are carried out on a local, regional, national and European level.

This kind of a co-ordinated spreading of a good experience and promoting of an influence at the national or regional level is being considered the mainstreaming in a narrow sense. But just this co-ordinated spreading of a good experience and promotion of an influence at the national or regional policy cannot ensure the fulfilment of the main objective of the Community Initiative EQUAL, because it is also necessary to ensure (even before the real beginning of the DP implementation) that the outputs of the DPs will really be useful in the national or regional policy. And this is the reason why we consider the mainstreaming principle in case of the Community Initiative EQUAL Programme in a broader sense because in this case the mainstreaming principle is also considered as the way how the CIP EQUAL is being prepared and the way how the application forms and consequently the DP Agreements and Transnational Co-operation Agreements are being assessed.

The CIP EQUAL preparation was based on a co-operation with the representatives of the main public and regional bodies. These representatives have actively developed the scope of this form of assistance in such a way to ensure that the supported thematic fields will really fit the needs of the Czech Republic. In the application forms assessment the co-operation with experts at the respective areas is planned. Their participation is also planned for the national thematic groups preparation. The tutorial system was used already in the first round of the CI EQUAL in the Czech Republic during the Action 1. Every DP co-operated during all the Action 1 with two experts at the relevant area (one of them was a representative of the relevant department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs). For the needs of the second round of the CI EQUAL it is necessary to slightly modify this system as the total allocation of the program is considerably higher and therefore significantly more application forms are being expected (the assessment procedure will be described in more details in the Programme Complement). This broader mainstreaming should ensure that the new

methods and tools for the fight against discrimination and inequalities at the labour market will be really useful in the regional and national policies.

The Managing Authority assisted by the National Support Structure will draft an overall mainstreaming strategy, submit it to the Monitoring Committee for approval, implement it and monitor its activities and achievements.

4.2. ACTIONS UNDER THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE EQUAL

For all supported thematic fields in the second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL in the Czech Republic, three actions outlined below should be used as a basis.

Therefore in compliance with the Commission recommendation in the second round of the CI EQUAL each measure of 9 thematic fields will be implemented in three actions:

- Setting up Development Partnerships and transnational co-operation (referred as Action 1);
- Implementing the workplan of individual DPs (Action 2);
- Thematic networking, dissemination of good practice and making an impact on national policy (Action 3).

The implementation of Thematic networking, dissemination of good practice and making an impact on national policy will follow up in the Czech Republic the implementation of Setting up Development Partnerships and transnational co-operation. Thematic networking, dissemination of good practice and making an impact on national policy will be started as soon as first outcomes of this Community Initiative are available.

4.2.1. SETTING UP DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS AND TRANS-NATIONAL CO-OPERATION (ACTION 1)

The objective is to facilitate the creation and the consolidation of durable, effective Development Partnerships (DPs) and to establish transnational co-operation with DPs from other EU Member States or additionally also with DPs from non-Member States.

Based on the experience gained from the first round of the EQUAL Initiative and the European mid-term evaluation, in the second round of EQUAL “the transnationality window” will be introduced as a common period of time opened at the same time for all participating Member and non-Member States in order to support of establishment of transnational co-operation. During this time the DPs can conclude the Transnational Co-operation Agreements (TCAs). The transnationality window will be opened on 1st January 2005 and there is no strict deadline for concluding this first phase of the CIP EQUAL implementation.

In order to ensure that all the DPs selected for the second round of EQUAL Initiative (both in the Czech Republic and other EU Member States) will have the equal chance to find transnational partners, MA will ensure that all the DPs selected for the second round of EQUAL Initiative in the Czech Republic will have been selected (and the details about them will have been introduced into the ECDB) before the transnationality window will be opened.

In compliance with the current common timetable for the implementation of Community Initiative EQUAL second round, the call for proposals for the Czech Republic will be published in July 2004. The call for proposals for the second round of EQUAL Initiative will be given by the Managing Authority on its web site and in the form of ads in dailies. Additionally, the launching event in form of a nation-wide conference is under consideration.

Selection

Within the second round of Community Initiative EQUAL in the Czech Republic, there will be a single selection procedure for funding. Action 1 will provide DPs with time and resources for consolidation of their DP, further development of their work programmes and conclusion of the Development Partnership Agreement, which has to include a Transnational Co-operation Agreement. These are the deliveries for the first milestone, which will be assessed. If the deliveries meet the requirements, the Managing Authority will approve Development Partnership Agreement and Transnational Co-operation Agreement and then confirm funding for implementation of work programmes of individual DPs.

The assessment criteria for submitted applications will include also the quality of proposals for performance of individual CI EQUAL principles during the DP work programme implementation.

The assessment criteria for selection will cover the following aspects.

Assessment Criteria for the application forms submitted within the second round of EQUAL Initiative
➤ Innovation
➤ Partnership
➤ Transnational Partnership
➤ Potential for dissemination and transfer to relevant stakeholders and to policy and practice
➤ Empowerment
➤ Gender perspective
➤ Demonstration of policy need and relevance
➤ The application form is submitted jointly by several partner organisations;
➤ The application form describes the expected division of tasks between partner organisations
➤ The application forms includes other proposed partners to be involved in DP during the implementation of the first phase of CIP EQUAL implementation (Action 1), including expectation of their tasks;
➤ The application form includes the arrangements for ensuring that all the relevant partners (including small organisations) can be involved during the life of the DP;
➤ The application form includes the arrangements for handling the financial and administrative responsibilities by individual partner organisations;
➤ The application form addresses a selected thematic field for the Community Initiative EQUAL second round;
➤ The application form includes a DP rationale and a diagnosis of the problem to be addressed;
➤ The application form assess the relevance of the solution of the problem to be tested;
➤ The application form explains how the results could be disseminated and transferred to policy and practise;
➤ The application form includes an explanation of how the needs of the potential beneficiary groups will be taken into account;
➤ The application form includes a description of DP objectives;

➤ The application form includes a detailed work programme for the first phase of the CIP EQUAL implementation (Action 1), including budget;
➤ The application form includes expected work programme to be implemented in Action 2 a 3, including budgets;
➤ The application form includes an expectation of the planned transnational co-operation activities;
➤ The application form includes statements of all involved partners by which they assign free of charge upon request of the Managing Authority their copyrights to all of the DP outputs to the Managing Authority.
➤ The commitment of the DP to assign public access to the results and outputs (products, instruments, methods etc.) obtained and upon request of the Managing Authority all of the DP results and outputs.

Guidance for applying these criteria during the assessment of application forms will be prepared by the Managing Authority and approved by the Monitoring Committee. An explanation of assessment criteria will also be included in the Handbook for applicants, which will be prepared for the Community Initiative EQUAL second round.

In order to ensure transparent appraisals and selection of the DPs applications for the second round of EQUAL Initiative, MA will ensure that all the applicants will have the opportunity to complain against the result of their application form appraisal within an appeal procedure.

As the detailed description of appraisal, selection and appeal procedures for the second round of EQUAL Initiative in the Czech Republic will be included in the Programme Complement.

The Managing Authority will ensure that applicants will be informed in writing about their application forms selection or non-selection for the Community Initiative EQUAL second round in the Czech Republic.

First Milestone

Once officially informed about their selection, expenses of individual DPs become eligible. Funding will require individual DPs to achieve “milestones” in the operation of their work programmes.

At the end of the Action 1, DPs whose application forms were selected must submit to the Managing Authority Development Partnership Agreement (DPA) and Transnational Co-operation Agreement (TCA). Submission of well prepared DPA and TCA by individual DP is to be referred to as the initial milestone.

The draft of Development Partnership Agreement within Community Initiative EQUAL second round in the Czech Republic documents the consensus of the partners and presents their common strategy in a structured, concise and coherent way, and identifies the main factors for success of the DP. Therefore it should contain:

Mandatory Components of the Development Partnership Agreement
➤ An identification of involved partner organisations;
➤ A diagnosis and an assessment of the specific problems in relation to labour market exclusion, discrimination and inequality, to be tackled;

➤ A stakeholder analysis; identifying and discussing the interest and expectations of people, groups, or organisations that may influence or be influenced by the solution to be developed and tested, and a description of the roles of relevant stakeholders in the work of the DPs;
➤ Objectives and the strategy to attain them by the DP during Actions 2 and 3;
➤ Reflection of the learning from previous relevant action in the territory/sector;
➤ A description of the assumptions, risks and flexibility requirements;
➤ A detailed work programme for Actions 2 accompanied by a realistic budget;
➤ A clear identification of the role of each partner, including the arrangements for steering and managing the Development Partnership and administering the financial support (preferably using a commonly agreed system);
➤ A description of taken measures to guarantee all partners' involvement for the DP life;
➤ A description of taken measures to guarantee the full involvement in DP work programme implementation also of minor partners within DP;
➤ A description of taken measures to guarantee that needs of groups at risk of discrimination and inequalities in the labour market are taken into account;
➤ A description of a mechanism for on-going assessment of achieved results including the presentation of data and information on the DP and the analysis of DP results, including the description of verifiable indicators which demonstrate how the objectives, outputs and results will be measured and assessed;
➤ The commitment of the DP to collaborate on activities implemented under Action 3 both at the national and European levels;
➤ A description of taken measures for implementing a gender mainstreaming approach;
➤ An expression of the capacity and willingness to learn from others;
➤ The commitment of the DP to assign public access to the results and outputs (products, instruments, methods etc.) obtained and upon request of the Managing Authority all of the DP results and outputs.

Within Community Initiative EQUAL second round in the Czech Republic, the mandatory components of the Transnational Co-operation Agreement will be as follows:

Components of the Transnational Co-operation Agreement
➤ An identification of partners, which should include at least one DP selected for the second round of EQUAL Initiative in another EU Member State;
➤ A specification of common interests and the added value of the transnational activities;
➤ A common work programme of DPs involved in transnational co-operation accompanied by a realistic budget;
➤ An identification of the role of each DP involved in transnational co-operation including the methods of decision making and organisation arrangements the co-operation and implementing the common work programme;
➤ A description of taken measures for monitoring and assessment of joint activities.

The Managing Authority will prepare the complete list of mandatory components of Development Partnership Agreement and Transnational Co-operation Agreement before transnational window is opened.

The TCA must be presented on the basis of the common format described in the Guide on Transnationality and must be entered into the common database "EQUAL transnational co-operation internet module (ETCIM)". The paper version of the database entry should be annexed to the draft DPA.

The Managing Authority will provide sufficient support to enable DPs to conclude their draft DPAs as quickly as possible. However, failure to submit a draft DPA will lead to de-selection, after which expenditure of the DP will no longer be eligible.

The Managing Authority will assess the presented Development Partnership Agreement and Transnational Co-operation Agreement after their receipts from the DP and normally within 8 weeks, provided that the agreements include all required particulars, confirm to each DP that its working programme can be implemented under Action 2 and will confirm the multi annual budget available to implement the work programme.

When assessing DP applications for Action 1 and confirming their selection for Action 2, the Managing Authority will provide for the entering of required data in the common European database (ECDB). A list of data to be entered in ECDB and updated on a regular basis forms Annex No. 4 to CIP EQUAL.

Development Partnerships will be required to specify milestones in their work programmes. The achievement of milestones will be monitored and assessed by the National Support Structure, to be validated by the Managing Authority. Failure to meet milestones in extreme case may lead where there is a financial consequence to the non-performance of activities, to termination of a contract by the Czech Managing Authority. These reviews will be conducted regularly by the NSS, at least at 12 months intervals.

4.2.2. IMPLEMENTING THE WORK PROGRAMME OF THE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP (ACTION 2)

Those DPs that meet the requirements of the first milestone, i.e. submission of their Development Partnership Agreement and Transnational Co-operation Agreement to MA in the required quality will be confirmed for Implementing Actions 2.

In compliance with the current joint implementation timetable for Community Initiative EQUAL second round, Action 2 will be started in the Czech Republic as soon as the DPAs and TCAs will be confirmed by the Managing Authority.

Individual DPs can implement its work programme under Action 2 during a period of up to three years.

The Managing Authority may propose a further grant for the continuation of successful DPs. In such a case, the Managing Authority and a given DP may agree to extend the period of DP implementation over the period stipulated beforehand. The decision on an additional grant and subsequent extension of individual DP implementation is to be approved by the Monitoring Committee.

4.2.3. THEMATIC NETWORKING, DISSEMINATION OF GOOD PRACTICE AND MAKING AN IMPACT ON NATIONAL POLICY (ACTION 3)

Action 3 focuses on thematic networking, dissemination of good practice and making an impact on national or regional policy and finally transferring the best results and experience to policy at the European level. With the aim to achieve as best as possible results, the participation in Action 3 activities is mandatory for all DPs.

Responsible for Action 3 is the Managing Authority, which will provide also for the involvement of social partners and representatives of relevant national or regional bodies in individual activities under Action 3.

Thematic networks facilitate mainstreaming at both the horizontal level and the vertical level, i.e. the dissemination of good practice between individual DPs and between DPs and representatives of relevant national or regional bodies.

Thematic networks established for the Community Initiative EQUAL first round would be used with modifications (if necessary) also for the second round. Representatives of professional organizations, social partners, universities, public administration, regional authorities, individual DPs and independent experts form a basis for thematic networks for the first round.

In the first round of the EQUAL Initiative has been established by MA four National Thematic Groups operating within six working groups:

1. NTG employability
 - Working group for the integration of people with disabilities
 - Working group for integration of young people
 - Working group for multiculturalism
2. NTG entrepreneurship
 - Working group for the entrepreneurship
3. NTG adaptability
 - Working group for adaptability
4. NTG equal opportunities between men and women
 - Working group for equal opportunities between men and women.

With support of the technical assistance of the first round, the Internet discussion platform for the National Thematic Groups has been introduced.

The objectives of thematic networking include the identification of main factors leading to inequality and discrimination in the labour market, the identification of the best experiences and practice achieved by DPs and on-going monitoring and analysing of the work of the DPs within thematic fields selected to be supported in Community Initiative EQUAL second round. In addition, the objectives include the on-going monitoring and assessment of the impact of individual DPs on different groups subject to discrimination and inequalities in connection with the labour market and enforcement of so called cross-sectional themes (tested themes applicable for DPs acting under different thematic fields). Thematic networks will analyse the experience and factors leading to good practice in the work of DPs.

The process of mainstreaming proper, which is the subject-matter of Action 3, can be described by two stages. In stage one, i.e. the stage of validation and dissemination, which is effected at the level of DP management, the key actors include individual organisations involved in DPs. This stage of mainstreaming, deals, above all, with analysing, assessing and generalising of DP outputs and making them available. The next stage is so-called transfer, in which the main actors include policy makers, social partners, representatives of professional associations, etc. The second stage deals, above all, with making available the good practice and proven innovative procedures for the other DPs involved in Community Initiative EQUAL second round (so-called horizontal mainstreaming) and policy makers on the local, regional and national policies with the aim to reflect them in both national and European strategic documents and, if necessary, also in the Czech legislation (so-called vertical mainstreaming).

The tools used to achieve the aforementioned objectives of the mainstreaming process will include, in addition to those providing for thematic networking, also, for example, the organisation of conferences, discussion forums, briefings, controlled discussions and related promotional activities through the mediation of printed matters and information materials. Action 3-related promotional activities will focus both on the aforementioned key actors of individual mainstreaming stages and on the public and will be implemented in line with the Mainstreaming Strategy of CIP EQUAL.

In the framework of Action 3 of the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL in the CR, the Mainstreaming strategy, which forms a basic framework for the mainstreaming process and its mechanism, was developed. The Mainstreaming strategy is being further developed by National Thematic Groups as it reflects the progress and achievement made by DPs. Modification of the Mainstreaming strategy will be used for the second round and it will be updated on a regular basis. After the Monitoring Committee approves the Mainstreaming strategy for the second round of CI EQUAL in the Czech Republic, it will form Annex of the Programme Complement.

In order to enhance mainstreaming of innovations (within Action 3), and upon receipt of a proposal from DPs acting either singly or in groups, or ad hoc consortia of DPs, multipliers and experts, MA may fund additional activities for assessing, presenting and promoting the evidence for good practice at national or European level including validation of innovation, benchmarking innovation against existing approaches nationally and in other EU Member States, dissemination of the innovation to additional actors concerned with the discrimination tackled, demonstration and transfer of good practice including mentoring and integration of experience and lesson learnt from outside the second round of EQUAL Initiative.

Action 3 will start in the Czech Republic together with Action 2 after Action 1 is completed.

4.3. MANAGING THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE EQUAL

According to Article 9(e)(ii) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL is defined as a separate form of assistance to be funded from Structural Funds. That is why CIP EQUAL has its own implementation structure, which was set up in line with Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 and Commission Regulation (EC) No. 438/2001.

4.3.1. MANAGING AUTHORITY

In compliance with Article 9(l) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs was appointed to be the Managing Authority for CIP EQUAL. The Managing Authority appointment arises from the Ministry's competences as defined in paragraph 9 of Act No. 2/1969 Coll. and from the Czech Government Resolution No. 678 of 9 July 2003.

In compliance with national and EU legal framework, the Managing Authority is fully responsible for correct and efficient management of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL.

The Minister of Labour and Social Affairs appointed within the Ministry organisation structure the Department for ESF Management to perform all duties of the Managing Authority.

As stipulated by Article 34 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Managing Authority will be responsible in particular for:

- Gathering statistical information on technical and financial implementation of CIP EQUAL in compliance with the monitoring and evaluation requirements of the programme, and for forwarding this data to the Commission (in accordance with arrangements agreed, using the information systems designed for this purpose)⁶¹;
- Drawing up and, after obtaining the approval of the Monitoring Committee, submitting to the Commission the annual implementation reports;
- Drawing up and, after obtaining the approval of the Monitoring Committee, submitting to the Commission the final implementation report;
- Timely action in response to the recommendations made by the Commission after their review of the annual report;
- Implementing a unified, separate accounting system for the use of entities involved in management and implementation of the assistance;
- Ensuring the correctness of operations financed under the assistance, particularly by implementing internal controls in keeping with the principles of sound financial management and acting in response to any requests for corrective measures raised by the Commission or by national authorities in charge of control of the Structural Funds assistance management;
- Ensuring compliance with the Community policies in particular in the following areas: competition, public procurement, environmental protection and improvement, combating inequality between women and men;

⁶¹ To monitor the implementation of CIP EQUAL, the Monitoring System of Structural Funds will be used, which is already used to monitor the implementation of Community Initiative EQUAL first round in the Czech Republic.

- Drawing up and implementing of a communication strategy⁶² for CIP EQUAL (including public information actions) in compliance with Article 46 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999;
- Adjusting the Programme Complement at the request of the Monitoring Committee or on its own initiative;
- Submitting the Programme Complement or its adjustments to the Monitoring Committee for approval;
- Setting up a sound system for monitoring forwarding this data in accordance with arrangements agreed between the Member State and the Commission;
- Submitting the Programme Complement or its adjustments to the Commission within one month from approving by the Monitoring Committee.

In compliance with the Methodology of Financial Flows and Control⁶³, the Managing Authority is also responsible for:

- Drawing up the programming documentation for the second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL and discussing the documentation with the Commission;
- Ensuring compliance of the documentation with the requirements of EU legislation as regards incurred expenditures, made payments, rendered work and audits of each operation;
- Archiving all documents related to the programme for three years from the programme completion;
- Entering data in MSSF;
- Ensures programme co-financing from national public resources;
- Concludes Contracts with DPs;
- Applying for payments from the ESF with the Payment Unit in compliance with the procedures as laid down by the Paying Authority;
- Submitting estimated expenditures for the current and subsequent years to the Paying Authority at each certification through the mediation of the Payment Unit;
- Conducting public administrative financial control of the DPs;
- Making financial corrections in case the Managing Authority or any audit body finds out that the obligations as arising from legal framework were breached. The proposed corrections should be consulted with the Paying Authority and reported to the Monitoring Committee;
- On a monthly basis informs Payment Unit about irregularities occurring in the course of programme implementation;
- Keeps central records of irregularities and provides, on a monthly basis, the Paying Authority with a statement of amounts to be refunded to the PA by Final Beneficiaries;
- Timely action in response to the recommendations made by the Paying Authority, which arise from the review of the annual implementation report.

Furthermore, the Managing Authority is responsible for:

- Establishing a Monitoring Committee in compliance with Article 35;
- Establishing a secretariat for CIP EQUAL Monitoring Committee;

⁶² The details concerning the communication strategy and planned information campaign about the CIP EQUAL are to be found in the Programme Complement.

⁶³ For information about the Methodology of Financial Flows and Control see the chapter on the Paying Authority.

- Drafting the statute and rules of procedure of the Monitoring Committee;
- Providing for free access to and use of individual outputs from the DPs implemented within Community Initiative EQUAL second round both in the Czech Republic and in the European Union;
- Ensuring the complementarity between EQUAL Initiative and mainstream forms of the ESF assistance, in order to assert that there is not double financing;
- Planning and administering the European Community Initiative EQUAL Technical Assistance measures and, in this context, define the objectives of the National Support Structure, approve its annual work plan and supervise the quality and final delivery of its work;
- Planning and monitoring the on-going evaluation.

As the Managing Authority is the body responsible for drafting the CIP EQUAL (in keeping with the partnership principle as defined in the Art. 8 of the Council Regulation No. 1260/1999), in duly justified cases, the MA will also draft all the necessary proposals for adjustments of the CIP EQUAL and (after having them approved by the Monitoring Committee) to submit them to and negotiate them with the European Commission representatives.

4.3.2. PAYING AUTHORITY

In compliance with Article 9(o) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Czech Government appointed by its Resolution No. 102/2002 the Ministry of Finance to be the Paying Authority for the implementation of assistance under SF and CF.

The Minister of Finance appointed the department of the National Fund to be the Paying Authority.

Based on the Czech Government Resolution No. 822 of 28 August 2002 and related Resolutions No. 9 of 8 January 2003 and No. 678 of 9 July 2003, the Ministry of Finance prepared the Methodology of Financial Flows and Control of the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund, which defines the mandatory framework for structures under which SF and CF can be used in the Czech Republic.

As stipulated by Articles 32 and 39 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 and in compliance with the Methodology of Financial Flows and Control of SF and CF, the Paying Authority is responsible, above all, for the following activities:

- Managing funds granted by the Commission to CIP EQUAL on an account maintained with the Czech National Bank;
- Drawing up and submitting to the Commission application for advance payment after CIP EQUAL is approved by the Commission;
- Drawing up and submitting to the Commission requests for interim payments and payment of the final balance based on statements of expenditures presented by Managing Authority through the mediation of Payment Unit;
- Receiving payments from the Commission;
- Ensures that FB receives the EU contribution without undue delay, however, not later than 60 days following the meeting of all conditions;
- Making payments from the ESF from the Paying Authority account to the Payment Unit accounts;

- Certifying a declaration of expenditure effected in compliance with Article 9 of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 438/2001 and drawing up a certificate of expenditures effected to be sent to the Commission along with the applications for an interim payment or payment of the final balance;
- Refunding to the Commission all expenditures wrongly made, including interest, unless it has been decided, in compliance with EU rules, to re-allocate them under the CIP EQUAL;
- Returning unused funds to the Commission;
- Based on the assessment of Managing Authority, the Paying Authority complies and submits (by 30 April) to the Commission updated forecast regarding requests of payment (expenditure outlook) for the given and following years;
- Using a special account, paying from the state budget the resulting exchange losses;
- Keeping double-entry accountancy on all operations effected during the implementation of CIP EQUAL including exchange rate differences;
- Upon a written request of the Commission, presenting in ten working days to the Commission copies of required accounting records.

In compliance with the Methodology of Financial Flows and Control of SF and CF, the Paying Authority may delegate some of its paying functions to intermediate bodies, in particular to Payment Units of individual forms of assistance from the SF or CF. The extent and conditions of such delegated paying functions will be stipulated upon agreement between the Paying Authority and individual Payment Units. The paying functions delegated by the Paying Authority to Payment Unit cannot be sub-delegated by Payment Units to other bodies.

In line with the article 9/1 of Council Regulation No. 438/2001 the person / department certifying the statements of interim and final expenditures will be independent of any services that approve claims. This function will be separated from initiation / authorisation of a transaction, safeguarding of the funds, execution and accounting of the transaction.

4.3.3. PAYMENT UNIT

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs was appointed to be the Payment Unit for CIP EQUAL. The Minister selected the Department of Organisation and Administration to be the Payment Unit for the CIP EQUAL.

The Payment Unit is responsible for fulfilling the delegated functions within the payments mechanism.

Upon agreement made with the Paying Authority, the Payment Unit will perform in particular the following activities:

- Receiving applications for payment to Final Beneficiaries from the Managing Authority;
- Conducting ex-ante review of applications prior to payment remittance, including in particular formal review of applications for payment, review of compliance of applications with the financial plan and review of required document submitted by the Managing Authority;

- Following the approval of applications for payment, asks the Paying Authority to transfer means from the ESF;
- Following the receipt of means for PA, transfers the means to Final Beneficiaries within 5 working days;
- Informing the Managing Authority about all transfers of means to Final Beneficiaries;
- Carrying out double-entry bookkeeping on all operations regarding the administration of ESF;
- Co-operation with PA in the process of certification of expenditure effected;
- Sending to PA monthly summary statements of payments made to Final Beneficiaries;
- Producing monthly reports on ineligibly and wrongly paid amounts and presents them to the Financial Control Department of the Ministry of Finance and to the Paying Authority.

4.3.4. FINAL BENEFICIARY

Individual Development Partnerships will be the Final Beneficiaries according to Article 9(l) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999.

In keeping with the identification of individual Development Partnerships as Final Beneficiaries, the Final Beneficiary in CI EQUAL is, according to Article 9(l) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, defined as a body responsible for commissioning operations.

Each Development Partnership, which is a Final Beneficiary as mentioned above, will be working on one thematic field only, integrating partner organisations, which are crucial for a given theme. Partner organisations may include, for example, central, local and regional public authorities, public employment service, non-profit organisations, educational institutions, businesses and social partners, etc.

When applying for funds under CI EQUAL, each Development Partnership must ensure that the DP includes also an organisation able to manage, account of and be responsible for the utilisation of public financial funds. The distribution of responsibilities for administrative management and financial management between individual partners in a DP will be described both in the application for the second round of the EQUAL Initiative and in Development Partnership Agreement, which is necessary for the subsequent implementation of the DP work programme. The MA will provide guidance on the tasks and obligations of these bodies.

Detailed financial flows concerning payments for the DPs are currently under preparation of PU and MA. After their finalisation and auditing, they will be annexed to the Programming Complement.

All DPs implementing their work programme for Action 2 and 3 must forward on a regular basis (in the intervals stipulated by the Managing Authority) to the Managing Authority the information to be entered in ECDB. ECDB contains the information on all DPs financed under CIP EQUAL. The information on DPs are made available to all DPs from individual EU Member States, to experts involved in Action 3 and other interested persons from the professional and general public. A survey of data entered and regularly updated in ECDB forms Annex No. 4 to CIP EQUAL.

4.3.5. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical assistance will be provided in the Czech Republic both to the Managing Authority and to the Development Partnerships for the purposes of due implementation of CIP EQUAL. Ensuring technical assistance will be a separate priority of CIP EQUAL.

Technical assistance for the programme is described in Chapter 3, part 3.2.10.

4.3.6. FINANCIAL FLOWS⁶⁴

After the selection of the DPs for the second round of EQUAL Initiative and after the approval of the list of the selected DPs, the Managing Authority will issue a grant letter to the Development Partnerships, in which the successful applicants will be informed about their selection and about the start of the eligibility period for their activities. The eligibility period will start on the date when the grant letter will be signed by the MA representative.

Afterwards, the MA will issue and conclude the contract with one of the DP partners, acting on behalf of itself and on the other DP partners (as a consortium leader). Based on this contract, the DPs will receive the advance payments from the MA.

All DPs will have appointed an organisation⁶⁵, which will administer the public funds. MA will provide guidance and detailed description of the tasks of such an organisation. This organisation will aggregate all expenditures and verify their eligibility. It will submit statements of expenditure and payment claims to the NSS on a regular basis as specified in the contract.

Accordingly to Art 9 of Reg. 438/2001 the PA will also initiate the transfer of payments to the DPs via the State Treasury promptly and in full. The European Commission will check payment claim and pay corresponding ESF contribution to the State Treasury. The Czech Government will provide the means required for co-financing and makes it available to the State Treasury. The State Treasury will transfer requested amounts to the DPs.

The financial flows will be described in more detail in the document according to Art. 5 of Regulation 438/2001 of 2 March 2001, and in the Programming Complement

⁶⁴ As the detailed financial flows are currently under development, it is possible that in light of the current discussions held between the MA, PA and PU, the final financial flows concerning the payment to the DPs will be slightly modified.

⁶⁵ If this organisation is not one of the DP partners, DP will have to select it by applying the public procurement rules.

4.4. MONITORING THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE PROGRAMME EQUAL

Proper, timely and efficient monitoring of the programme is the responsibility of the Managing Authority.

In keeping with the Commission requirements for monitoring indicators, the CIP EQUAL monitoring indicators were prepared for the regular monitoring of the programme. The indicators are listed in Annex No. 5. Individual target values are quantified also in Annex No. 5.

The Monitoring System of Structural Funds (MSSF) will be used to collect reliable financial and statistical data and information on the implementation of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL. MSSF will also be used to monitor the other forms of assistance from Structural Funds.

The modified version of MSSF, focusing on the monitoring of pre-accession forms of assistance, is used already to monitor the implementation of Community Initiative EQUAL first round in the Czech Republic.

MSSF will be used within Community Initiative EQUAL second round in the Czech Republic to:

- Provide for collection of technical and financial data about the implementation of individual DPs;
- Follow the monitoring indicators at the level of measures, priorities and the entire programme;
- Put the monitoring results together for the purpose of evaluation of the ESF assistance in each stage of implementation;
- Provide for communication between the Managing and Paying Authorities and Payment Units.

For the purpose of EQUAL the MSSF may be need to be adapted to cover further indicators and to include the requirements agreed between Member States for sharing monitoring data (ECDB) for more details see section 4.8.1 and Annex 4.

In compliance with the Methodology of Financial Flows and Control of the SF and CF, the functionality of MSSF is the responsibility of the Community Support Framework Managing Authority, which is, according to the Government Resolution No. 102 of 23 January 2003, the Ministry of Regional Development.

For the DPs implementation monitoring also the common European database ECDB will be used. The Managing Authority is responsible for the on-time data concerning the DPs implementation. (The required data concerning the DPs for the database ECDB are to be found in the Annex 4).

Based on the information, data and interim implementation reports, the Managing Authority will elaborate reports for the Monitoring Committee, Community Support Framework Managing Authority (stipulated as an overall co-ordinator of all the structural operations in CR), Paying Authority, control authorities and the Commission.

Implementation information and data will be provided by the Managing Authority to the partner organisations and regional authorities. These pieces of information and data will also serve as a basis for the evaluation of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL (as referred in chapter 4.5.).

CIP EQUAL Monitoring Committee was established as the top body to monitor the implementation of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL.

4.4.1. MONITORING COMMITTEE

According to Article 35(1)(3) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Managing Authority is responsible for establishing the Monitoring Committee of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL within three months of the approval of CIP EQUAL by the Commission.

In keeping with Article 8(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Monitoring Committee will be built on the partnership principle. The Managing Authority will ensure that the Monitoring Committee is made up of representatives of key stakeholders as partner ministries (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Ministry for Regional Development, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Internal Affairs etc.), social partners, NGOs and people directly experiencing the main forms of discrimination and inequalities in the labour market. A detailed list of member organisations will be included in the Programme Complement.

The number of Monitoring Committee members and its competence will be defined in the Statutes and Rules of Procedure, which will be a part of the Programme Complement.

According to Article 35(1)(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 equal participation of women and men shall be ensured in appointing representatives to the Monitoring Committee. Therefore the membership of the EQUAL MC shall comply with the gender equality and equal gender representation principle.

Monitoring Committee members are appointed by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs according to proposals made by the above bodies and social partners. The Monitoring Committee will be chaired by a senior Managing Authority staff member appointed by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs.

Representative of the European Commission will attend Monitoring Committee meetings as an observer.

Other persons, where needed, could be also invited by the Managing Authority to join Monitoring Committee meetings.

As stipulated by Article 35 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 and by the Methodology of financial flows and control of the SF and CF, the activities of the Monitoring Committee include:

- Approving the Monitoring Committee Statute and Rules of Procedure;
- Approving the Programme Complement;

- Proposing adjustments of the Programme Complement during the programme implementation;
- Approving any adjusted version of the Programme Complement or Community Initiative Programme EQUAL;
- Approving the criteria for selecting the operations financed under each measure within CIP;
- Periodical reviewing progress made towards achieving the specific objectives of the assistance;
- Considering the efficiency of spent public funds (ESF and national funds) during CIP EQUAL implementation;
- Considering and approving the annual and final implementation reports before they are forwarded to the Commission;
- Considering and approving any proposal to amend the contents of the Commission decisions on the contributions from the ESF;
- Proposing to the Managing Authority amendments to or reviews of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL;
- Approving the communication strategy and reviewing its progress;
- Approving the mainstreaming strategy and reviewing its progress;
- Approving the framework annual work plan of the NSS and reviewing its progress;
- Considering and approving the proposed responses of the Managing Authority to recommendations made by the Commission or other bodies that are authorised to control the management of assistance from SF.

In case that any adjustment of the CIP EQUAL is needed, the Monitoring Committee will also approve these adjustments before the MA will submit them to the European Commission representatives.

The Department for ESF Management, which is appointed by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs to be the Managing Authority for all three forms of assistance provided by the ESF being prepared in the Czech Republic (HRD OP, SPD Objective 3 and CIP EQUAL), will provide for forwarding the information on the progress and results of CIP EQUAL implementation to all partner organisations involved in the monitoring of the other two forms of assistance provided by the ESF.

4.4.2. ANNUAL AND FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORTS

In compliance with Article 37 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Managing Authority of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL ensures that annual implementation reports and the final implementation report are produced.

Annual implementation reports and the final implementation report should include all information required in Article 37(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999.

In compliance with Article 37(1)(1) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Managing Authority should submit the annual implementation reports to the Commission always by 30 June of the current year. Before submitting to the Commission, the implementation reports should, however, be considered and approved by the Monitoring Committee.

In compliance with Article 37(1)(4) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Commission will review the annual implementation reports as submitted by the Managing Authority and – if any shortages are identified – the Commission will inform the Managing Authority about the shortages within two months from receiving the annual implementation report. If the Commission does not send in two months to the Managing Authority any notice pertaining to the annual implementation report, the annual implementation report will be considered as accepted by the Commission.

In compliance with Article 37(1)(1) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Managing Authority will submit the final implementation report to the Commission within six months after the final date of eligibility of expenditure.

In compliance with Article 37(1)(4) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Commission will review the final implementation report as submitted by the Managing Authority and – if any shortages are identified – the Commission will inform the Managing Authority about the shortages within five months from receiving the final implementation report. If the Commission does not send in five months to the Managing Authority any notice pertaining to the final implementation report, the final implementation report will be considered as accepted by the Commission.

Should the European Commission – after having reviewed the annual implementation report – recommend to make changes to improve the efficiency of assistance monitoring or management, the Managing Authority will take action accordingly after it has discussed the Commission recommendations and proposals for improvement with the Monitoring Committee.

4.5. EVALUATION OF THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE PROGRAMME EQUAL

In line with Article 40 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, each form of assistance is to be the subject of evaluation. The evaluation is designed to appraise the assistance impact on supported priorities and on the objectives of economic social cohesion as stipulated in Article 158 of the Treaty.

In case of CIP EQUAL, the evaluation of both programme and DP activities is crucial for the reaching the main aim, which is to promote new means of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in connection with the labour market. Only the regular evaluation could ensure the sound evidence about the new and more effective means of solving the existing problems at the labour market. That is why MA will draw special attention to the evaluation activities of the programme and to support the self-evaluation activities of individual DPs.

As stipulated in Article 41 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Managing Authority provided for elaboration of the independent ex-ante evaluation of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL and, to assess the effectiveness of implementation of CIP EQUAL, the final and ex-post evaluations will be carried out in compliance with Articles 42-43. The Managing Authority will render to the Commission required assistance in the ex-post evaluation of the Community Initiative EQUAL second round at the European level. At the initiative of the Managing Authority the on-going evaluation concerning both the first and the second round of

the CI EQUAL will be ensured. The outputs of the on-going evaluation will serve as a basis for the ex-post evaluation and also for the ex-ante evaluation of the programmes prepared under the next programming period.

At the level of the Managing Authority there will be a worker responsible that the evaluations are provided in a correct way and in time. This worker will be also responsible for the overall co-ordination of the evaluator teams. For the purpose of the designation of the evaluation teams the transparent way in accordance with the national and European rules will be used.

The results of the evaluations will be made available to the public, which is the responsibility of the Managing Authority.

The Managing Authority will collect the data and will follow the monitoring indicators and their development over time to ensure that the evaluation can be carried out in the most effective manner.

Independent evaluators working together with the Managing Authority and Monitoring Committee will carry out all evaluations.

4.5.1. EX-ANTE EVALUATION

The purpose of an ex-ante evaluation is to contribute own inputs, critical comments and recommendations for the improvement of the programming documents during the preparation of programming documents for the Community Initiative EQUAL second round.

The Managing Authority selected the body to carry out the ex-ante evaluation of the programming documentation for Community Initiative EQUAL second round upon invitations sent to multiple potential applicants. Invited were all organisations in the Czech Republic with prior relevant experience with ex-ante evaluations of other Czech programming documents for the period 2004-6. For the purpose of the harmonisation of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL preparation and the ex-ante evaluation preparation, the information concerning the ex-ante evaluation preparation were submitted to all the organisations participating in the tendering process on 14th April 2003. This approach ensured that the outputs of the ex-ante evaluation could have had a strong impact on the scope and way of the CIP EQUAL preparation.

Having assessed the received applications, the Managing Authority selected the Centre for Regional and Administrative Sciences at the Prague Economic University to prepare the ex-ante evaluation of the programming documents for Community Initiative EQUAL second round.

The CIP EQUAL preparation started in May 2003 and the first draft of the socio-economic analyses was already submitted to the evaluation team at the end of May 2003. The Managing Authority representatives submitted to the evaluation team not only all the parts of the CIP EQUAL draft, but also all the methodical papers, including working timetables, minutes of the Working group meeting, summaries of all the comments and recommendations of all the bodies co-operating on the CIP EQUAL preparation and the proposals of the way how the comments and

recommendations will be reflected in the CIP EQUAL. The further co-operation between the programming and the evaluation teams was based on the number of operative meetings.

The ex-ante evaluation of the programming documents for Community Initiative EQUAL second round forms Annex No. 8 to the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL.

4.5.2. MID-TERM EVALUATION

Since Article 42(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 stipulates that the mid-term evaluations of each form of assistance are to be forwarded to the Commission by the Member State by 31 December 2003 and since the Czech Republic is due to access the European Union on 1 May 2004, no mid-term evaluation of CIP EQUAL in the Czech Republic will be prepared.

But regarding to the fact that the Czech Republic is being participating already in the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL, the Managing Authority will ensure during 2004-2005 on-going evaluations which will be focused on both first and second rounds of CI EQUAL implementation and which will provide the basis for the CIP EQUAL ex-post evaluation and ex-ante evaluation of the programmes prepared under the next programming period.

On the other hand, the experience and recommendations from the EU wide mid-term evaluation will be reflected also in the Czech second round of EQUAL (including e.g. the transnationality window – see part 4.2.1. Action 1)).

4.5.3. FINAL EVALUATION

The final evaluation, which is defined in Article 42(4), will focus on the evaluation of the programme performance against the pre-set objectives, the efficiency of spent funds under the programme and adequacy of taken measures to monitor and implement the programme.

The basic objective of the final evaluation is to formulate conclusions and recommendations for the following programming period. At the same time, the final evaluation results will be an information basis for the ex-post evaluation.

The final evaluation will be the responsibility of the Managing Authority in collaboration with the Commission. According to Article 42(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, an independent evaluator will prepare the final evaluation.

In line with Article 42(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Managing Authority will make sure that the final evaluation will be considered by the Monitoring Committee and then forwarded by 31 December 2005 to the Commission.

4.5.4. EX-POST EVALUATION AND EX-POST EVALUATION AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL

In line with Article 43(1) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the ex-post evaluation, drawing on the results of previous evaluations, will assess the use of funds, efficiency and effectiveness of the assistance and the impact of the assistance on economic and social cohesion. Successes and failures of the assistance

implementation will be evaluated. The ex-post evaluation will also assess the achieved objectives and expected results of the assistance and the degree of their sustainability.

In case of the Community Initiative EQUAL the success of the DP is defined not only as the fulfilment of the DP objectives (it means development and promotion of the innovative methods and way of combating the discrimination or inequalities at the labour market) but also as the verification or clear knowledge why a certain method or way of combating the discrimination or inequalities in the conditions of the Czech Republic does not work. But in such a case, it is crucial to have a clear understanding of the reasons why the tested method or way of combating discrimination or inequalities does not work.

As stipulated in Article 43(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Commission, in collaboration with the Member State and the Managing Authority, carries out the ex-post evaluation. The evaluation is conducted by independent evaluators and has to be completed within three years of the end of the programming period.

The purpose of the ex-post evaluation is to assess results and impacts of the programme on the European Employment Strategy and other Community programmes.

The ex-post evaluation at the European level is the responsibility of the European Commission.

4.5.5. ON-GOING EVALUATION

As already mentioned in chapter 4.5. beside above mentioned evaluations required in Articles 41 – 43 Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 the ongoing evaluation will be provided on initiative of the Managing Authority during implementation of the second round. The ongoing evaluation will be aimed to the evaluation of both the first and the second round of Community Initiative EQUAL in the CR and it will provide background materials for ex-post evaluation and for ex-ante evaluation of programmes, which will be prepared for the next programming period. The Managing Authority made decision to introduce the ongoing evaluation with regard to limited experience in evaluation of programmes in the Czech Republic and also with regard to the fact that the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL being implemented in the Czech Republic is not evaluated in enough systematic way.

In the framework of this on-going evaluation other evaluation studies will be prepared on initiative of the Managing Authority in the period 2006 – 2008, each at 31 December. In sum at least another four evaluation studies (in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008) will be prepared. This indicative schedule was set down in relation to the terms of finalizing the final evaluation and the ex-post evaluation, which were fixed by Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 at the end of 2005 and at the end of 2009. The evaluation studies carried out in the framework of ongoing evaluation thus will be complementary to the studies carried out in compliance with requirements of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 and will serve as background materials for preparation of the CIP EQUAL ex-post evaluation as well as for ex-ante evaluation of programmes prepared for the next programming period.

The on-going evaluation will also further develop the necessary monitoring indicators of the programme, which make it easier to assess the fulfilling and achievement of each DP targets. All the DPs will have to provide regularly an independent self-evaluation, which will be prepared within the Action 3. The evaluation of the Czech Republic EQUAL CIP needs to reflect the experimental approach of this Community Initiative and therefore covers not only the classical evaluation dimensions such as relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, utility and sustainability, but also focuses on the processes, support structures and policy delivery systems.

In order to effectively extract the good practice generated and tested under the CIP EQUAL and mainstream it, it is essential to maintain an evaluation function in all actions of the CIP EQUAL, and an observatory function to integrate experience and evidence generated elsewhere.

The Czech Republic will therefore

- Request that all DPs develop a methodology and apply appropriate mechanisms for on-going self-evaluation of their activities and achievements, including a description of verifiable indicators which demonstrate how the objectives, outputs and results will be measured and assessed, as well as the corresponding methodology and mechanisms for monitoring and assessment of joint activities in the transnational co-operation;
- Carry out an independent on-going evaluation at CIP EQUAL level, beyond the formal requirements of the Regulation, with a focus on identifying factors contributing to the success (or failure) of innovation, the mainstreaming of results, and sustainability.

With the Community Initiative EQUAL, the Czech Republic has entered new ground in terms of governance, policy issues and policy development. An on-going evaluation will facilitate learning processes amongst all national stakeholders involved, and contribute to capacity building within the public sector. In an innovative, transnational programme like the CIP EQUAL it is important to make use of the shorten programming period 2004-2006 to build and develop capacity to carry out evaluation of the programmes and to draw lessons for the next programming period.

The Managing Authority will therefore design and carry out an on-going evaluation for the whole period of the CIP EQUAL implementation, focussing on the lessons learnt for capacity building, networking, gender mainstreaming, inclusion of minorities, and transnational cooperation.

In defining the terms of reference for the on-going evaluation, the Managing Authority will apply the Guidelines for monitoring and evaluating EQUAL⁶⁶, synchronise delivery dates, follow a common methodological approach, and focus on common issues in order to exploit synergies between national and EU evaluations.

⁶⁶ "Guidelines for systems of monitoring and evaluation for the Human Resources Initiative EQUAL in the period 2000 – 2006". DG Employment and Social affairs, July 2000; Updated version of key issues for the mid-term evaluation of EQUAL CIP in the Member States, DG Employment and Social Affairs 03/09/2001,

The on-going evaluation will look both at the policy side, notably the impact of the programme on the labour market context, its policies and practices and the effectiveness of the implementation mechanism in the Czech Republic. The results from the Development Partnerships evaluation are an important source of information for evaluation.

The first step of the on-going evaluation will focus on management systems, programme implementation dynamics, monitoring systems, selection procedures and implementation of *Action 1*. A report on these is foreseen by the end of 2005.

The Czech Republic evaluation system for EQUAL will ensure that the results from the CIP EQUAL will be developed to ensure a continuous feed-back to programme implementation and as a vehicle to contribute to the validation experiences and results from the DPs, and to their transfer to the relevant stakeholders and decision-makers.

The on-going evaluation will be trusted to independent external experts. These will be selected in compliance with national and EU rules for public procurement. The Managing Authority will issue the call for tender for the on-going evaluation at national level immediately after the adoption of the CIP by the European Commission and the adoption of the Programming Complement by the Monitoring Committee. At the same time, i.e. immediately after the adoption of the CIP EQUAL by the European Commission and the adoption of the Programming Complement by the Monitoring Committee, MA will also issue the call for tender for the preparation of an overall evaluation strategy for CIP EQUAL which will cover thematic focus, milestones, reporting dates of all the individual evaluations, and the interfaces and linkages between the evaluation activities carried out at the CIP EQUAL level, EU level and the level of DPs. The external experts will be also entitled to further develop the monitoring indicators for CIP EQUAL both in term of additional quantitative ones and additional specification of already listed qualitative ones.

The Managing Authority will also be responsible for collecting of data from DPs for actions 1, 2 and 3, and will make these data available to the evaluators.

The Managing Authority will establish an Evaluation Steering Group to monitor the evaluation process and results at national level. This Steering Group will be composed of representatives of the Managing Authority and the key stakeholders/ members of the Monitoring Committee, and will also include leading national labour market and social inclusion experts. The European Commission will also participate in this Steering Group in the spirit of partnership. The mandate of this Steering Group will be described in the Programming Complement, as well as the interfaces and linkages between evaluation activities at the level of DPs, and of the EU.

4.6. CONTROL

4.6.1. FINANCIAL CONTROL

Financial control forms a part of the financial management system designed for public funds administration.

According to paragraph 7 of Act No. 320/2001 Coll., on Financial Control, the Ministry of Finance is the body responsible for methodical management and co-ordination of the financial control system in SF and CF.

The system of financial control over the utilisation of funds granted from ESF is regulated by the Methodology of financial flows and control of the SF and CF..

4.6.2. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS

PA, PU, MA and NSS shall, in compliance with Act No. 320/2001 Coll., on Financial Control in Public Administration, and Council Regulation No. 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002, on Financial Regulation Applying to the Common Budget of the European Communities, introduce and maintain sufficient management and control systems ensuring proper financial management.

As regards transparency of individual measures within the internal control system, the following basic requirements are laid down:

- Existence of manuals at all management levels which outline, in writing, detailed work procedures to be used in each activity. The manuals must be prepared and updated using the so-called managed documentation. In the Czech Republic, the manuals will be submitted to PA for information;
- In the process of approving individual documents and payment remittance, the double-signature (co-signer) system must be consistently observed;
- Accurate, timely and reliable double-entry bookkeeping related to DPs financed from the SF and CF;
- Clear position defining, consistent separation of the endorsing, paying and accounting functions;
- Employee substitution for all positions;
- Safe exploitation of information systems;
- Consistent prevention of potential conflicts of interest.

Various forms of audit, including those conducted by internal audit departments established under respective bodies, should examine on a regular basis the functionality of management and control systems. Should any irregularities be found, they shall be centrally collected and evaluated by the Attorney's General Office prior to sending summary information to OLAF.

4.6.3. CONTROL ACTIVITIES EXECUTED BY THE MANAGING AUTHORITY

The Managing Authority is the body, which is finally responsible for the correct material use of funds provided in compliance with the European Communities rules; specifically according to paragraph 8 of Act No. 320/2001 Coll., on financial control, the Managing Authority is responsible also for the execution of financial controls and observing the rules of the internal audit system at all management levels.

The following overview on the control system for EQUAL will be described in more details in the documentation to be submitted to the Commission according to Art. 5 of the Regulation 438/2001.

Preliminary, interim and subsequent checks consist of physical and financial control of individual DPs either at the place of DP implementation or at the bodies required to keep all original versions of technical procedures and payment documents.

The Managing Authority is responsible for the following:

- Reviewing of applications for reimbursement of incurred expenditures submitted by Final Beneficiaries;
- Execution of checks on the physical implementation of DPs (pursuant to Article 4 of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 438/2001 and Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1386/2002) in order to verify whether the co-financed products and services have been delivered and the claimed expenditures have been effected in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Contract on Financing;
- Issuing of certificates on work rendered;
- Presentation to the PU of applications for payment together with copies of invoices and a certificate on work rendered;
- Meeting of the conditions stipulated in Article 7 of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 438/2001 which lay down that the management and control system is to provide, at all the levels, an adequate tool for audit in the area of financial flows and control (so-called "audit trail");
- Co-operating with the Paying Authority when fulfilling the information duties of the Member State in line with Articles 5, 6, 8 and 13 of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 438/2001;
- Forward any change made in written procedures to the Paying Authority for information.

4.6.4. SAMPLE CHECKS ON OPERATIONS AND DPs

As stipulated by Articles 10-14 of Council Regulation No. 438/2001, on-site sample checks on operations and DPs (hereinafter referred to as sample checks) is the obligation of each EU Member State drawing from Structural Funds.

Sample checks form a specific form of controlling, which is strictly separated from the other controls required in the administration of money received from EC funds.

According to Commission Regulation (EC) No. 438/2001 and in keeping with Act No. 320/2001 Coll., the departments appointed to conduct checks are strictly separated in their functions and organisation from managing structures and may neither be involved in the fund management, nor be responsible for the administrative process related to the DP implementation.

Sample checks under CIP EQUAL will be conducted by the Department of Internal Audit and Control of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which is separated in its organisation from the Managing Authority and Payment Unit bodies. The Department of Internal Audit and Control is managed directly by the minister and so there is no way how to influence its work or control findings (the same model is used for all forms of ESF assistance in the Czech Republic).

And as the Department for Internal Audit and Control is a part of the MoLSA, the 5% control sample checks will be generally paid by the Czech national resources only, but in case that the additional controls and audits should be provided (because of insufficient experience or capacity of MoLSA staff), the additional independent controls and audits could be arranged with the TA budget money.

According to Article 10(2) of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 438/2001, sample checks preceding the winding-up of the assistance (i.e. the end of the programming period) must cover at least 5 per cent of the total eligible costs of the programme.

4.6.5. CONTROL EXECUTED BY THE SUPREME AUDIT OFFICE

The Supreme Audit Office shall be entitled to carry out independent control activity at any time pursuant to the relevant provisions of Act No. 166/19932 Coll., on Supreme Audit Office.

4.6.6. CONTROL ACTIVITIES EXECUTED BY EUROPEAN COMMISSION BODIES AND THE COURT OF AUDITORS

In line with Article 38(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Commission is entitled to carry out on-site checks, following an at least one day notice, including random checks on operations financed by the Structural Funds and on management and control systems. The Commission may also ask a Member State to carry out an on-site check to verify the accuracy of one or more transactions; representatives of the Commission may take part in the above-mentioned checks. In the course of the check, employees of the institution subject to inspection are required to render the necessary help.

Separate and independent checks are within the competence of the Court of Auditors.

4.6.7. WINDING-UP DECLARATION

The winding-up declaration is a prerequisite for submitting the final balance payment request to the European Commission.

The winding-up declaration will be made out at the end of the programming period by the Division of Financial Controls in Public Administration at the Ministry of Finance. In keeping with Article 15 of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 438/2001, the appointed control department at the Ministry of Finance is independent both on the Managing Authority and on the Paying Authority responsible for expenditure certification.

The appointed control body at the Ministry of Finance organizes its own controlling activities and conducts all audits to achieve an adequate guaranty that the expenditure statement being audited is correct and respective operations legal.

The winding-up declaration should be prepared according to detailed methodological guidelines published by the Ministry of Finance using the indicative sample, which forms Annex III to Commission Regulation (EC) No. 438/2001.

The winding-up declaration should include a report with all relevant data on which the winding-up declaration is based, including a summary of all findings of audits

conducted by the Czech and EU control bodies, which are available to the Division of Financial Controls in Public Administration at the Ministry of Finance.

4.7. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

In accordance with Article 46 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Managing Authority will be responsible for implementing the Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1159/2000 on information and publicity measures to be carried out by the Member States concerning assistance from the Structural Funds.

MA will be responsible for ensuring that publicity is given to CIP EQUAL and particularly for informing:

- a) all potential Final Beneficiaries - the economic and social partners, bodies promoting equality between women and men, relevant non-governmental organisations - about the opportunities afforded by the assistance;
- b) the general public about the role played by the Community in the assistance implemented through the European Social Fund in general and CIP EQUAL in particular and its results.

MA working in conjunction with the partners will prepare a Communications Action Plan to be described in detail in the Programme Complement.

4.8. SHARING OF MONITORING DATA

4.8.1 SHARING OF DATA AT AN EUROPEAN LEVEL

The Czech Republic will share specific monitoring data by participating in the common electronic system of data collection set up by the Commission for the specific management of the EQUAL Initiative called: "EQUAL Common Database" (ECDB). The objective of this database is to facilitate the transnational co-operation of the DPs, to stimulate thematic co-operation between key actors at European level and to indicate results and achievements.

Based on agreements between the Commission and the Member States, specific fields were identified. Set out in Annex 4, they constitute the exhaustive⁶⁷ list of the common quantitative data to be transmitted at the European level. In addition to monitoring data shared at European level, the DPs are required to transmit further monitoring data needed for programme management at the national level, as stipulated by the Managing Authority. The set of data shared at EQUAL level is summarised in the Annex 4.

The Managing Authority will make the necessary provisions in order that the open fields (text fields) are translated at least into English (in addition to the Czech language).

The Managing Authority will collect the physical data from the Development Partnerships on the basis of the Czech methods of data collection. It will transfer the

⁶⁷ Except financial information included in the "Vademecum for the Plans and Programming documents of the Structural Funds" which will be collected by the SFC database.

data concerning the Development Partnerships as well as those collected at the level of the programme to the ECDB on the basis of the technical protocols defined by the Commission. These data will be updated continuously by the Managing Authority and will be transferred to the Commission at least once per week.

The Managing Authority will transmit the data relating to the CIP annual report at least once a year and at the latest on 30 June following the reference year.

The Commission, by means of suitable IT system, will make available on the Internet the information⁶⁸ transmitted by the Member States.

⁶⁸ On the basis of decisions taken in a concerted way, access to certain fields could be restricted.

5. Community Initiative Programme EQUAL Financing

5.1. FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

The financial framework for CIP EQUAL has been designed on the basis of Articles 28 and 29 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999.

The financial framework builds on the Copenhagen agreements, which stipulate the allocation of financial funds to structural operations. The allocations are expressed in current prices⁶⁹ and financial plans are prepared in EUR.

In keeping with Article 21(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 laying down the principle of mono-fund financing for Community Initiatives, the CIP EQUAL will be financed from the European Social Fund only.

The total financial framework is divided to allocations for individual years. Expressed in percentage, the allocation to each priority is given below:

Allocation to Priority (%)	%
Priority No. 1 Employability	23
Priority No. 2 Entrepreneurship	28
Priority No. 3 Adaptability	26
Priority No. 4 Equal opportunities	10
Priority No. 5 Asylum seekers	5
Priority No. 6 Technical assistance	8
TOTAL ALLOCATIONS	100

The allocation of funds among the priorities was based on motions of members and other representatives involved in the work of the Working Group for the Preparation of Programming Documents for the Utilisation of Assistance Under Structural Funds. The division of the financial resources among the priorities was also based on the number of various types of disadvantaged groups whose support corresponds to the relevant thematic fields and that it is why there is allocated relatively less resources for the thematic fields with a narrower focus (thematic fields 2, 7, 8 and 9) than for the thematic fields with a broader focus as for the number of disadvantaged groups of people. Another reason why the division of the resources was proposed like this was that for some types of disadvantageous groups there are possibilities to submit the DPs dealing with them also under another thematic fields. The agreed draft allocation among the priorities was also consulted with ex-ante evaluators.

With respect to the fact that the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL is a national wide programme and that the Czech Republic covers both regions of Objective 1 and Objective 3, pursuant to Article 28 and 29 it is not easy to set up the co-financing ratio of ESF contribution for this programme. Therefore at the level of

⁶⁹ Allocations for 2004-2004 given in current prices are based on DG REGIO Letter Ref. 210144 of 30 April 2003, which was received from the Czech Republic Mission at the EC.

the DPs the co-financing rate of the national and European resources will be defined in accordance with the Act. 29 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999.

Thus individual DPs operating only in the regions covered by Objective 1 will be financed from the ESF resources at the rate of 75% and from the resources of the CR at the rate of 25%, whereas individual DPs operating only in the area covered by Objective 3 will be financed from the ESF resources at the rate of 50% and from the resources of the CR at the rate of 50%.

Although the Objective 3 covers region with about 1 million inhabitants and the Objective 1 covers regions with about 9 million inhabitants, the Czech CIP EQUAL will provide approximately 94,5 % of its ESF allocation to the Objective 1 regions and approximately 5,5 % of its ESF allocation to the Objective 3 region regarding the fact that Objective 1 regions are lagging behind and therefore its inhabitants are more threatened by various forms of discrimination and inequalities in the labour market. Additionally also the organisations from the Objective 3 region will be allowed to participate in the DP activities in the Objective 1 regions (e.g. the self-evaluation of the DP activities operating in the Objective 1 regions could be provided by research organisation or university from Prague). Keeping this recommendation it will be possible to co-operate within the same Development Partnership with both the organisations from the Objective 1 and Objective 3 regions.

For this kind of trans-objective co-operation there are several possibilities how to find out how the respective partner organisation will be financed:

- In case that the activities of the DP are being developed and targeted only to one of the Objective regions (either to the Objective 1 regions or to the Objective 3 region), all the partner organisation co-operating within the same DP will be co-financed with the intervention rate usually used in the region where the activities of the DP are developed (Objective 1 region or Objective 3 region) regardless the place where the partner organisations are coming from;
- The co-operation between organisations working in the Objective 1 and 3 regions will be possible in form of co-operation of two DPs; one of them set up and working in the Objective 1 regions and the second one in the Objective 3 region (in this case each DP will be co-financed according to the intervention rate corresponding to the region where they are developing their activities).

Applying one of those approaches will make it possible to develop the co-operation with all types of organisations (wherever they are coming from) and make it possible to realise EQUAL programme as a real nation-wide programme.

At the level of the whole programme the co-financing rate of the national and European resources will be defined by the average rate of 27% Czech national resources and 73% ESF resources (based on the average of intervention rates for Objective 1 and Objective 3 regions and the programme allocation in both Objectives), as explained above. The Technical Assistance intervention rate will therefore correspond to the overall average rate: 73% ESF and 27% Czech resources. More detailed information about allocation of funds among the individual areas under individual priorities and measures is set in the indicative financial plan, which is included in Chapter 4.1. of the Programme Complement. The financial plan, presented in the Programme Complement, therefore consists of 4 measures for each

of the Priorities 1 – 4 and 2 measures for Priority 5 and additional 2 measures for Priority 6.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will provide co-financing from national public sources from its budget. The Managing Authority will ensure all the necessary national resources in the state budget for the overall implementation of the CIP EQUAL.

The ESF contribution will be calculated on bases of total national public expenditure. But as regards to the definition of the Final Beneficiaries (which are DPs), if there will be - according to the staid aid rules - a need for using also the private resources, the rate of the required private resources will be defined for every DP individually. The private resources, if any are used in the programme, will not be considered as a part of Czech national co-financing of the CIP EQUAL. The same approach will be applied in case that some income will be gained during the realisation of the DPs (even neither private co-financing nor the estimated income are not included in the financial plans).

The expenses under CIP EQUAL will be eligible for the shortened programming period 2004 – 2006 commencing from 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2008⁷⁰. Eligible expenses within ESF will be specified in the Manual for applicants.

The overall cash flows, both from national and European sources, are given in Chapter No. 4 Implementing the CIP EQUAL.

5.2. EXCHANGE RATES DIFFERANCES

Financial plans are prepared in EUR. Currently, the exchange rate of 31/1 CZK/EUR is used for conversion of funds to the national currency, i.e. CZK. The exchange rate is used, for example, for the quantification of claimed co-financing in the preparation of requests for the state budget for 2004 and intermediate forecasts for 2005 and 2006.

The funds transferred from the Commission to the Czech Republic during 2004-2006 will be kept in EUR on the Paying Authority account.

Payments to Final Beneficiaries will be made from the Payment Unit account. The account will be in CZK. Funds will be converted at the level of the Paying Authority, using the exchange rate of the Czech National Bank for purchased foreign exchange. In reports to the Commission, the Paying Authority will use in each payment the Commission administrative rate of exchange as in force in the month in which the payment is recorded in the Paying Authority books. In case a foreign exchange loss is incurred, the Paying Authority will make a payment from its respective account to the Payment Unit respective account amounting to the Commission rate of exchange. The Paying Authority will set off the arising difference by making a payment to the Payment Unit account from a special account of the Ministry of Finance, which is designed to cover foreign exchange differences. In the event of a

⁷⁰ Eligibility of expenses from 1 January 2004 is still to be specified by the European Commission. During the negotiations on the Community Support Framework, the Czech Republic asked the Commission to prepare a summary criteria and conditions in writing for activities to be co-financed from the SF and CF from 1 January 2004.

foreign exchange profit, the Paying Authority will make a payment from its account to the Payment Unit account amounting to the Czech National Bank rate of exchange. The arising difference will be transferred from the Paying Authority account to the account designed to cover foreign exchange differences.

5.3. COMPATABILITY WITH RULES ON PUBLIC AID

The content of Community Initiative EQUAL second round in the Czech Republic is set in compliance with rules on public aid as defined in Chapter 3.4.1 of this Community Initiative Programme EQUAL.

5.4. EVALUATION OF ADDITIONALITY

Article 11 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 requires that additionality be evaluated to demonstrate that European funds will not be used to replace national public sources.

The main aim of CI EQUAL is to promote new means of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in connection with the labour market. Because of the initiative orientation, stressing the principle of innovation, the actual spending of funds for the issue in the past periods cannot be demonstrated.

In order to achieve the maximum effectiveness of activities, CIP EQUAL may fund actions normally eligible also under other Structural Funds than the European Social Fund is.

5.5. FINANCIAL PLANS FOR 2004 – 2006 (IN EUR)

Priority/ Year	Total Expenditures	Public							Private	Income
		Total Public Expenditures	ESF	National Public Contribution						
				Total	Central	Regional	Local	Other		
Priority 1	10 113 992	10 113 992	7 383 213	2 730 779	2 730 779	0	0	0	0	0
2004	2 400 242	2 400 242	1 752 176	648 066	648 066	0	0	0	0	0
2005	3 370 774	3 370 774	2 460 665	910 109	910 109	0	0	0	0	0
2006	4 342 976	4 342 976	3 170 372	1 172 604	1 172 604	0	0	0	0	0
Priority 2	12 312 686	12 312 686	8 988 260	3 324 426	3 324 426	0	0	0	0	0
2004	2 922 034	2 922 034	2 133 084	788 950	788 950	0	0	0	0	0
2005	4 103 550	4 103 550	2 995 592	1 107 958	1 107 958	0	0	0	0	0
2006	5 287 102	5 287 102	3 859 584	1 427 518	1 427 518	0	0	0	0	0
Priority 3	11 433 210	11 433 210	8 346 243	3 086 967	3 086 967	0	0	0	0	0
2004	2 713 317	2 713 317	1 980 721	732 596	732 596	0	0	0	0	0
2005	3 810 441	3 810 441	2 781 622	1 028 819	1 028 819	0	0	0	0	0
2006	4 909 452	4 909 452	3 583 900	1 325 552	1 325 552	0	0	0	0	0
Priority 4	4 397 388	4 397 388	3 210 092	1 187 296	1 187 296	0	0	0	0	0
2004	1 043 584	1 043 584	761 816	281 768	281 768	0	0	0	0	0
2005	1 465 554	1 465 554	1 069 854	395 700	395 700	0	0	0	0	0
2006	1 888 250	1 888 250	1 378 422	509 828	509 828	0	0	0	0	0
Priority 5	2 198 694	2 198 694	1 605 046	593 648	593 648	0	0	0	0	0
2004	521 792	521 792	380 908	140 884	140 884	0	0	0	0	0
2005	732 777	732 777	534 927	197 850	197 850	0	0	0	0	0
2006	944 125	944 125	689 211	254 914	254 914	0	0	0	0	0
Priority 6	3 517 910	3 517 910	2 568 075	949 835	949 835	0	0	0	0	0
2004	834 866	834 866	609 453	225 413	225 413	0	0	0	0	0
2005	1 172 443	1 172 443	855 883	316 560	316 560	0	0	0	0	0
2006	1 510 601	1 510 601	1 102 739	407 862	407 862	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	43 973 880	43 973 880	32 100 929	11 872 951	11 872 951	0	0	0	0	0

* The amount of private resources, if these are necessary according to the public aid rules, will be defined individually for every project.

6. Conclusion of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL

6.1. DESCRIPTION OF CIP EQUAL PREPARATION

The preparations for the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL started in the Czech Republic after the Managing Authority representatives received from the Commission at the meeting of the Heads of Missions on 25 March 2003 in Brussels the updated version of the joint schedule for the preparation and implementation of the second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL.

Since the organisation unit within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which is the Managing Authority for HRD OP and SPD Objective 3, was appointed to be the Managing Authority also for CIP EQUAL, it was decided to invite all partners who had participated in preparations for SPD Objective 3 and HRD OP to take part also in the preparations for CIP EQUAL so as to achieve as highest as possible complementarity of CIP EQUAL and mainstreaming forms of assistance under ESF.

Therefore, the Working Group for the preparation of programming documents for the use of Structural Funds was also appointed to prepare the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL. The Working Group had been already established by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs within preparations for HRD OP and SPD Objective 3. The principle of partnership was fully respected in the establishment of the group. The Working Group is headed by MoLSA representative and, in addition to representatives of regions and partner ministries, the meetings of the group are attended also by the social partners and NGO representatives in the position of experts. The partner ministries for the preparations of the dossier for the shortened programming period 2004-2006 include, in addition to the representatives of relevant MoLSA sections, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Health. The social partners are represented in the Working Group by two largest trade union organisations in the Czech Republic, the Czech-Moravian Chamber of Trade Unions and the Association of Trade Unions, and by representatives of employers, the Union of Industry and Trade. Represented on the regional level in the Working Group are all NUTS II regions. Through cooperation of all partners involved in the HRD OP and SPD Objective 3 preparation and CIP EQUAL preparation the synergy effect was produced, thank to which it was possible to design the strategy of the CIP EQUAL fully complementary to the mentioned mainstream forms of assistance from the ESF and thank to which it was even possible to prepare the CIP EQUAL in very short terms set by Commission.

All data and materials related to the preparation of the programming documents for the second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL are forwarded for review to all representatives of organisations and regions.

So as to take into account the lessons learnt during the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL in the Czech Republic, the unit performing the function of the PAO for the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL was appointed to be the Managing Authority for CIP EQUAL and the representative of the NGO, which had been the implementation agency for the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL, was invited to co-operate with the Working Group.

With the aim to provide for as broad as possible consultation process, including consultations with the organisations dealing with the main types of discrimination and inequalities in the labour market (e.g. by means of close co-operation with the national coordinator for the issues of equal opportunities of women and men in the Czech Republic), the members and other representatives being invited to meetings of the Working Group were asked at the first meeting at which the preparations for CIP EQUAL started to ensure further and broader consultations within their respective regional or factual spheres of competence. Representatives of central administration authorities, for example, consulted as necessary CIP EQUAL inputs also with other relevant units within their offices or organisations with which they generally collaborate in their usual work.

In addition to representatives of institutions in the Working Group, the preparations for CIP EQUAL included also other experts who deal with the agenda of the programme. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports was represented in the preparations of the document also by experts in special education and institutional education, in universities, Department of European integration and international relations, Unit of lifelong learning, as well as workers of the National Institute of Vocation Education. The representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs included also workers of the Labour Market Department, Professional Education and Career Counselling Unit and Job Mediation Unit. The co-operation with the various public bodies and other interested organisations (including NGOs) will be further developed during the implementation of the CIP EQUAL as their representatives will be invited to participate the Monitoring Committee sessions.

In addition to co-operation with the Working Group, the programme was consulted at several workshops and meetings with representatives of the organisations dealing with the issues of discrimination and inequalities in the labour market. On 26 June 2003, for example, the Managing Authority held in the City Library of Prague a workshop on the prepared forms of assistance under ESF and introduced also the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL. The workshop was attended by representatives of the Czech central administration, representatives of the regional administration (Regional Offices) and representatives of non-profit organisations. The Managing Authority representative met on 29 July 2003 with Labour Office workers who deal with ESF issues, introduced the programme and invited all parties to forward their motions and recommendations.

The Community Initiative Programme EQUAL was also subject to comments within a broader internal procedure involving all partners cooperating in the preparation of CIP EQUAL and all relevant MoLSA units.

Motions and recommendations of involved partners were always taken into account provided that their integration into CIP EQUAL did not contradict the regulations according to which the programming document was prepared.

Furthermore the CIP EQUAL was subject to comments within an external procedure involving also representatives of the central administration authorities that do not directly work with the given agenda. However, they had opportunity to influence the contents of the national programme.

The individual working versions of the CIP EQUAL were also presented to the public at MoLSA websites.

Annexes to the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL

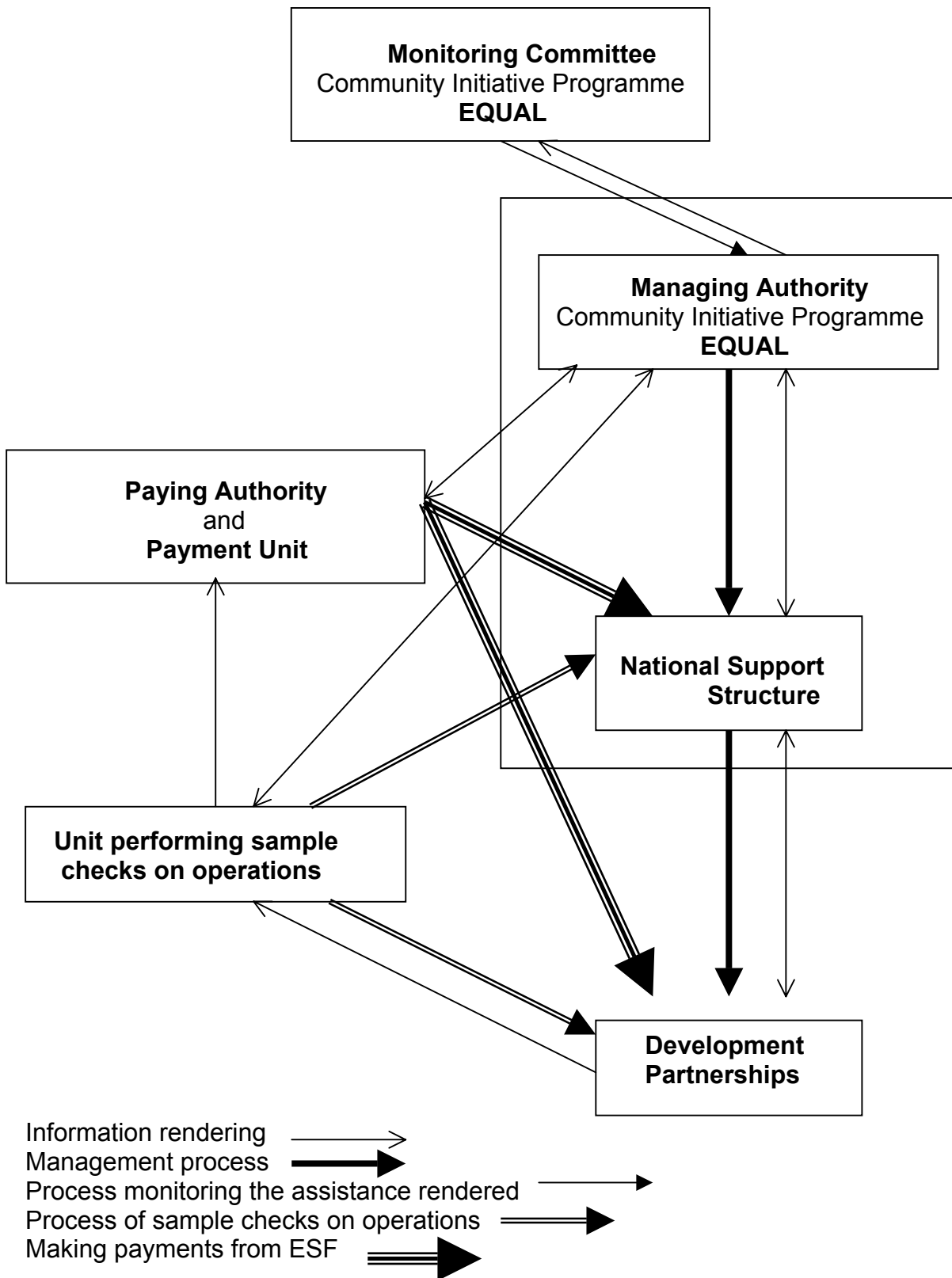
ANNEX NO. 1**Indicative Schedule for the Preparation and Implementation of the Community Initiative EQUAL Second Round**

The table below shows an indicative schedule of the preparation and implementation of the second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL, which was given to the Czech Republic's representatives by the Commission on 1 July 2003.

Activity	Deadline
<i>Programming</i>	
The Managing Authority submitted CIP EQUAL preliminary version to the Commission	15 September 2003
The Managing Authority submitted draft of CIP EQUAL to the Commission	30 September 2003
The Managing Authority submitted draft of CIP EQUAL Programme Complement to the Commission	31 October 2003
The Managing Authority and the Commission negotiate submitted CIP EQUAL	November 2003 –April 2004
The Managing Authority submits to the Commission the final version of CIP EQUAL and Programme Complement	April 2004
<i>Implementation of Action 1 and Action 2-3</i>	
The information campaign about the CIP EQUAL	May – September 2004
The second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL is launched	July 2004
Deadline for submission of application forms	30 th September 2004
Applications are selected	November – December 2004
Grant letters sent (eligibility period starts)	November - December 2004
Trans-nationality window is opened	1 st January 2005
Implementing individual DPs starts	as soon as the DPs are ready
Implementing individual DPs ends	August 2007 – August 2008

ANNEX NO. 2

Diagram of CIP EQUAL Implementation in the Czech Republic



ANNEX NO. 3

First Round of the Community Initiative EQUAL in the Czech Republic

The first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL in the Czech Republic is implemented through Phare project No. 2002/000-282.08.02 within the National Programme Phare 2002.

Responsible for Phare project No. 2002/000-282.08.02 is the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The Deputy Minister performs the function of the PAO for the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL in the Czech Republic. The activities of the implementation agency for the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL are carried out by National Support Structure EQUAL, which is a separate unit within the National Training Fund. The duties of the Payment Unit for the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL are fully performed by MoLSA own departments.

MoLSA also provides for national co-financing of the programme. The total expenditures on Actions 1-4 in the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL are CZK 244 million⁷¹.

Seven of nine thematic fields were selected in the Czech Republic for the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL.

Survey of Seven Thematic Fields Selected for the First Round of the Community Initiative EQUAL in the Czech Republic
PRIORITY I: EMPLOYABILITY: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated• Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market
PRIORITY II: ENTREPRENEURSHIP: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening up the business creation process to all by providing the tools required for setting up in business and for the identification and exploitation of new possibilities for creating employment in urban and rural areas• Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs
PRIORITY III: ADAPTABILITY: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market• Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies
PRIORITY IV: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the re-integration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services

⁷¹ The total funds (including 50% Czech co-financing) allocated to the implementation of Phare project No. 2002/000-282.08.02 are EUR 8 million (with the exchange rate CZK 30 / EUR 1, i.e. CZK 240 million); the allocation includes, however, only the funds needed for the implementation of Action 2, Action 3 and Action 4. Action 1 was implemented using MoLSA own sources (CZK 4 million were spent on Action 1).

The invitation to submit applications for Action 1 within the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL was published on 2 November 2001.

The activities within the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL, which could form the basis of DPs, were specified as separate “measures” defined within each selected thematic field.

A survey of 76 applications submitted for selection in Action 1 within the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL, classified by priorities, thematic fields and measures		
PRIORITY EMPLOYABILITY		
Theme A: Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated		31
Measure 1.1	Create a system of prevention and assistance capturing all youth leaving prematurely the school system	6
Measure 1.2	Re-activation, innovative procedures and support to the placement for the long-term unemployed, low-qualified and marginalized groups	10
Measure 1.3	Support the integration of the disabled persons into the open labour market	8
Measure 1.4	Complex counselling, education and assisted placement in employment specialised in the Romany minority members	7
Theme B: Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market		5
Measure 2.1	Support the multi-cultural environment and education in the Czech society	5
PRIORITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP		
Theme C: Opening up the business creation process to all by providing the tools required for setting up in business and for the identification and exploitation of new possibilities for creating employment in urban and rural areas		11
Measure 3.1	Training courses and counselling for starting entrepreneurs and the self-employed	11
Theme D: Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs		6
Measure 4.1	Systemic development and diversification of services rendered by the third sector	6
PRIORITY ADAPTABILITY		
Theme E: Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market		11

Measure 5.1	Systemic and innovative development of lifelong learning for the integration of groups disadvantaged in the labour market	4
Measure 5.2	Regional centres of adult education	6
Measure 5.3	"Job Rotation" and job sharing	1
Theme F: Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies		6
Measure 6.1	Development of small and medium-sized enterprises by their networking and linking to large corporations	4
Measure 6.2	Integration programmes for redundant workers in restructured large corporations	2
PRIORITY EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES		
Theme G: Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the re-integration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services		6
Measure 7.1	Support the introduction of flexible working hours and modern employment methods – which can be used mainly by women	2
Measure 7.2	Develop the care services and other local services, which make it possible to reconcile family and professional life – using the work of the unemployed	2
Measure 7.3	Re-integrate persons, in particular women, returning to the labour market and make accessible information technologies	2

Upon the evaluation of submitted 76 applications, twenty DPs were selected to be implemented as Action 1 within the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL

A survey of 20 proposals for DPs selected for Action 1 within the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL, classified by priorities, thematic fields and measures		
PRIORITY EMPLOYABILITY		
Theme A: Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated		8
Measure 1.1	Create a system of prevention and assistance capturing all youth leaving prematurely the school system	1
Measure 1.2	Re-activation, innovative procedures and support to the placement for the long-term unemployed, low-qualified and marginalized groups	3
Measure 1.3	Support the integration of the disabled persons into the open labour market	2
Measure 1.4	Complex counselling, education and assisted placement in employment specialised in the Romany minority	2

	members	
Theme B: Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market		1
Measure 2.1	Support the multi-cultural environment and education in the Czech society	1
PRIORITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP		
Theme C: Opening up the business creation process to all by providing the tools required for setting up in business and for the identification and exploitation of new possibilities for creating employment in urban and rural areas		2
Measure 3.1	Training courses and counselling for starting entrepreneurs and the self-employed	2
Theme D: Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs		2
Measure 4.1	Systemic development and diversification of services rendered by the third sector	2
PRIORITY ADAPTABILITY		
Theme E: Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market		4
Measure 5.1	Systemic and innovative development of lifelong learning for the integration of groups disadvantaged in the labour market	1
Measure 5.2	Regional centres of adult education	2
Measure 5.3	"Job Rotation" and job sharing	1
Theme F: Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies		2
Measure 6.2	Integration programmes for redundant workers in restructured large corporations	2
PRIORITY EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES		
Theme G: Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the re-integration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services		1
Measure 7.1	Support the introduction of flexible working hours and modern employment methods – which can be used mainly by women	1

Action 1 was implemented in the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL in January through late June 2002.

Czech Development Partnerships established during Action 1 co-operation with partners from eleven Member States. Most transnational partners come from Germany (7), from the Netherlands and Austria (5 from either country), from the United Kingdom and France (4 from either country).

Starts of Action 2 differed in Development Partnerships depending on the date when the grant contract was signed (October-November 2002). The duration of Action 2 for Development Partnerships should be 28 up to 30 months. The average grant for the Czech Development Partnership for Action 2 is EUR 665,000.

A survey and brief description of ten DPs that have been implemented in the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL under Action 2 is given below:

A survey and brief description of ten DPs implemented in the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL under Action 2	
PRIORITY EMPLOYABILITY	5
Theme A; Measure 1.2	<p><i>DP: Compass – A programme supporting the activation of one’s own skills for job seekers without secondary education who have difficulty in being integrated into a labour market</i></p> <p><u>Proposed by:</u> Regionální rozvojová agentura Ústeckého kraje, a. s. (Regional Development Agency)</p> <p><u>Brief description of the DP:</u> The aim of the DP is to improve employability of low-qualified persons (in particular the youth, including the Romany) using a methodology coordinating several forms of vocational education (e.g. a form of adult education in two-year apprentice branches) and active employment policy (e.g. re-qualification), which would lead to acquiring a generally acknowledged certificate. The Development Partnership joins experienced organisations of different types, which is a good prerequisite for achieving the set up targets. The DP idea can be applied in other Czech regions, too.</p>
Theme A; Measure 1.2	<p><i>DP: Preparing a methodology for employing hardly employable groups, in particular disabled persons, in an environment-friendly operation – waste separation</i></p> <p><u>Proposed by:</u> Charity Opava</p> <p><u>Brief description of the DP:</u> The DP intends to improve the situation of the long-term unemployed, in particular the disabled, by enhancing their chances to find job in a sheltered workshop. The disadvantaged persons would disassemble, sort and liquidate in an environment-friendly way specific waste (e.g. refrigerators, TV sets, computers). The Development Partnership proposes to create within the DP new jobs in the mentioned operation and test the methodology. The methodology can be used into a broader extent. In addition to the aspect of support to employment, the DP also features a positive environmental aspect.</p>

Theme A; Measure 1.3	<p>DP: <i>Supported Employment – expanded methodology, national and European co-operation</i></p> <p><u>Proposed by:</u> Občanské sdružení RYTMUS (civic association)</p> <p><u>Brief description of the DP:</u> The DP comes with the idea of methodically supported jobs for the disabled. The DP follows up the previous experience of the proponents and even intends to use the existing foreign experience. The DP is based on a strong interconnection of the Development Partnership in achieving the target. The DP features a very good theoretical introduction. Related objectives, effects, methods and procedures indicate that the proponents know the issue very well. Target groups are broad; the proponents offer a specific vision, innovative procedures and a way to implement the DP outputs on a national level.</p>
Theme A; Measure 1.3	<p>DP: <i>Integrated counselling for disadvantaged persons in the labour market in the context of national and European co-operation</i></p> <p><u>Proposed by:</u> Pedagogic Faculty, Masaryk’s University, Brno</p> <p><u>Brief description of the DP:</u> The DP responds to the need of creating an integrated counselling programme for the disabled groups of children and adult persons. The support to completion of primary education, the correct selection of further school, the support to completion of secondary education and the placement in the labour market play an important role in the target group’s integration into the society. That is a set of medical, pedagogic and social activities, which would form a complex, interconnected system. The formation of such a system is preconditioned by strong co-operation of all partners supported by foreign experience.</p>
Theme B; Measure 2.1	<p>DP: <i>VARIANTS – Intercultural education</i></p> <p><u>Proposed by:</u> Člověk v tísní – spol. při ČT, o. p. s. (NGO)</p> <p><u>Brief description of the DP:</u> The DP strives to change the social climate of intolerance and mistrust in different social and cultural groups, support trends to create an open and tolerant society and contribute to the more consistent application of the principle of equality of both individuals and groups. Furthermore, the DP intends to create educational programmes for all levels of education, enhance the majority’s knowledge of minorities and implement the outputs of Phare 99 DP Variants – the support to improving relations between the majority and minorities in the Czech Republic.</p>
<p>PRIORITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP 2</p>	
Theme C; Measure 3.1	<p>DP: <i>CePo – Road to business</i></p> <p><u>Proposed by:</u> Trexima, spol. s. r. o.</p> <p><u>Brief description of the DP:</u> The DP focuses on the creation of an information system offering information about conditions for granting the business license. System terminals – information kiosks would be installed in Labour Offices and the system would be available to all job seekers in the Czech Republic. The DP fulfils in this way the intention of EQUAL to help the primarily endangered groups in the labour market through the mediation of the access to self-employment.</p>

Theme C; Measure 3.1	<p>DP: <i>Education and Counselling for starting entrepreneurs through the network of “Start-business-centres”</i></p> <p><u>Proposed by:</u> Kazuist, spol. s r. o.</p> <p><u>Brief description of the DP:</u> The DP deals with the development of activities to support starting entrepreneurs, in particular by using the existing consultancy networks, firms and capacities, which would be certified as “start-business-centres”. The aim of the DP is to create a network of implementation centres, activate the business potential inside discriminated groups and promote the process of self-employment. The DP intends to use progressive educational methods and programmes for starting entrepreneurs, facilitate the access of discriminated groups to the relevant information and reduce the risk related to setting up in business.</p>
PRIORITY ADAPTABILITY	
Theme E; Measure 5.3	<p>DP: <i>Flexible workplace</i></p> <p><u>Proposed by:</u> DHV CR, spol. s r. o.</p> <p><u>Brief description of the DP:</u> The DP strives to promote “job rotation” in the conditions of the Czech Republic and contribute in this way to enhancing employment of persons working flexible hours and increasing education for employed workers. The DP both identifies the barriers preventing the broader use in the Czech Republic of the method mentioned above, and develops a methodology for the utilisation of “job rotation”. The proposed Development Partnership joins experienced organisations including the social partners on the national level.</p>
Theme F; Measure 6.2	<p>DP: <i>Integration programme for workers made redundant in the restructured steel-making industry</i></p> <p><u>Proposed by:</u> RPIC – ViP, s. r. o.</p> <p><u>Brief description of the DP:</u> The DP is based on the further prospect of workers being made redundant due to the restructuring of the steel-making industry in the region of Moravia-Silesia, which affects a broad mix of employees and influences the behaviour of employers and regional representatives fearing the social impact and adverse accompanying effects. In addition to Labour Offices, the problem of redundant workers is tackled also by the so-called Regional Employment Agency, which coordinates its activities with metallurgic companies and their specialised units, so-called company employment agencies, so as to offer services to redundant workers and their potential new or old-new employers. The whole programme consists of two basic parts, the operational one, i.e. rendering individual services to redundant workers, and the development one, which identifies, prepares and implements new tools and integration programmes including the transfer of foreign experience because the developed European countries had faced the same problems ten years ago. In contrast to our situation, however, theirs was a process prepared for a long time and well organized in co-operation with unions of employers, trade unions, central and regional representatives. Within the programme EQUAL, the proponents submit the second part for implementation.</p>

PRIORITY EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	1
Theme G; Measure 7.1	<p><i>DP: Conditions for reconciling professional life and family – the partnership in the family</i></p> <p><i>Proposed by: Český svaz žen (Czech Union of Women)</i></p> <p><i>Brief description of the DP:</i> The DP leitmotif is the theme under Priority 4 - Equal Opportunities, stressing in particular the reconciling of professional life and family. The proponents intend to help various groups of disadvantaged women looking for job. The forms of the proposed assistance are variable – the support to business activities, completing the methodology of education, the optimisation of available means. The scope of involved institutions, procedures for solution, ways and methods of work on the DP are complex, assuming a multiplication effect. The DP output will be an idea on the all-society impact (women, trade unions, employers, the public), the use of prepared methodologies and innovations for their active utilisation in creating the employment policy.</p>

For more information on DPs, please contact MoLSA ESF Assistance Management or the implementation agency, the NTF.

Lessons learned and related recommendations according to the up-to-date partial evaluation of the Community Initiative EQUAL first round are given below:

- in connection with promoting Community Initiative EQUAL and involvement of organizations in DP preparation it is crucial to cover the whole territory of the CR by information campaign and it is necessary to supply all stakeholders with information about the EQUAL Initiative,
- in connection with the preparation of application forms it is necessary to provide a guidance for potential development partnerships focused on the measures of the CIP EQUAL and on the strategic documents published by relevant ministries,
- when preparing application forms it is important to use to the limit DP outcomes achieved and experiences gained from DPs financed under other programmes so that the application forms will not be duplicate,
- in connection with the DP implementation itself it is necessary to strongly support and promote the principle of correct partnership cooperation.

Since the implementation of DPs is in the initial stage, the results from the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL in the Czech Republic cannot be fully evaluated. The first round will, however, be evaluated by the Managing Authority.

ANNEX NO. 4
Data on EQUAL Projects Entered in ECDB

Data shared through the Equal common database (ECDB)

A. General information (ongoing information)

FIELDS	Type of data / Items...
A1.	Id Codes
	European = Country + national ID <i>Each DP receives a unique code at European level. It is made up of a maximum of 4 letters identifying the Member State and x characters as decided by the Member State.</i>
A2.	Status of the application
	<i>Indicate the status of the application in MS</i> Multiple choice <input type="checkbox"/> in selection process <input type="checkbox"/> selected <input type="checkbox"/> transnational cooperation completed <input type="checkbox"/> DP ended

B. Set up of the Development partnership (action 1 - ongoing information)

B1.	Dates	<input type="checkbox"/> Application date : date field <input type="checkbox"/> Selection date : date field
B2.	Title of the DP National language	Text field – max 80 characters <i>Simple & short</i>
B3.	Title of the DP International characters	Text field – max 80 characters <i>Latin alphabet without accented letters...</i>
B4.	Applicant partners	<i>For each Item, click in the list of the members</i> Concerns DP initiators <input type="checkbox"/> Partner 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Partner 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Partner ...n
B5.	DP managing organisation	One choice in the table of the partners <i>Concerns the partner who has administrative and financial responsibility within the DP. If the DP has its own legal constitution, that structure will be identified in the list of partners.</i> <i>Click in the list of the members</i>
B6.	Other responsibilities	<i>For each item, click in the list of the members</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Design of the DP strategy and planning <input type="checkbox"/> Co-ordination of experimental activities <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, data collection <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Coordination of Transnational partnership
B7.	EQUAL Theme – Measure	Max 1 choice

		<input type="checkbox"/> Employability - Access to the labour market <input type="checkbox"/> Employability - Combating racism <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurship - Business creation <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurship - Social economy <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptability - Life long learning <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptability - Information technology <input type="checkbox"/> Equal opportunities – Reconciling family and professional life <input type="checkbox"/> Equal opportunities - Reducing gender gaps <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum seekers
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B9.	Geographical/sectoral	Max 1 choice <i>Size of the geographical area linked with a Nuts table</i>
	If geographical	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural area <input type="checkbox"/> Urban area <input type="checkbox"/> Other geographical
	If sectoral	Max 1 choice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic sector : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Services • <input type="checkbox"/> Specific discrimination and inequality problems

B10.	DP status	Max 1 choice
	Legal form	<input type="checkbox"/> Association without legal form <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit making organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Consortium <input type="checkbox"/>

B10b	Pre-existing partnership	Max 1 choice
		<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes ≤ 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> Yes > 2 years
		Text field : explanation of the pre-existing partnership

B11.	DP linguistic skills	4 Scroll down menus
		1° Choice : es/cs/da/de/et/el/en/fr/it/lv/lt/hu/mt/nl/pl/pt/sk/sl/fi/sv 2° Choice : es/cs/da/de/et/el/en/fr/it/lv/lt/hu/mt/nl/pl/pt/sk/sl/fi/sv 3° Choice : es/cs/da/de/et/el/en/fr/it/lv/lt/hu/mt/nl/pl/pt/sk/sl/fi/sv 4° Choice : es/cs/da/de/et/el/en/fr/it/lv/lt/hu/mt/nl/pl/pt/sk/sl/fi/sv

B12.	DP background in CI	Max 1 choice
		<input type="checkbox"/> One partner involved in ADAPT/EMPLOYMENT/EQUAL 1 st Round <input type="checkbox"/> Two and more partners involved in A/E/E <input type="checkbox"/> Nobody involved in A/E/E

B13.	Rationale for the DP	Rationale for the partnership, assessment of the relevance of the problem addressed, of the solution to be tested. Text field:.
		Text field: Translation in English and optionally in other(s) language(s) (provided by DP or Member state).

B14.	Objectives of the DP	Response to the rationale; objectives of the partnership Text field :
		Text field: Translation in English and optionally in other(s) language(s) (provided by DP or Member state).

B15.	Nature of the experimental activities	Multiple choice.										
		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> <td style="width: 12.5%; text-align: center;">+</td> <td style="width: 12.5%; text-align: center;">++</td> <td style="width: 12.5%; text-align: center;">++</td> <td style="width: 12.5%; text-align: center;">++</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to persons</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">+</td> <td style="text-align: center;">++</td> </tr> </table>		+	++	++	++	<input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to persons			+	++
	+	++	++	++								
<input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to persons			+	++								

	<input type="checkbox"/> Guidance and counselling <input type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/> Training on work place <input type="checkbox"/> Work placement <input type="checkbox"/> Job rotation and job sharing <input type="checkbox"/> employment aids (+ for self-employment) <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated measures (pathway to integration) <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to structure and systems and accompanying measures <input type="checkbox"/> Employment creation and support <input type="checkbox"/> Training of teachers, trainers and staff <input type="checkbox"/> Improvement of employment services – Recruitment structures <input type="checkbox"/> Conception for training programmes - certification <input type="checkbox"/> Anticipation of technical changes <input type="checkbox"/> Work organisation, improvement of access to work place <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance and social services <input type="checkbox"/> Awareness raising, information, publicity <input type="checkbox"/> Studies and analysis of discrimination features				

B16.	Innovation	Multiple choice				
			+	++	++	++
		<input type="checkbox"/> Process-oriented <input type="checkbox"/> Goal-oriented <input type="checkbox"/> Context oriented				
		Text field				

B17.	Discriminated groups and fields of discrimination	Multiple choice in each section	<i>In percentage</i>			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to persons	M	F		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> Employed <input type="checkbox"/> Others (without status, social beneficiaries...)			100	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Migrants, ethnic minorities, ... <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum seekers <input type="checkbox"/> Population not migrant and not asylum seeker			100	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Physical Impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Illness <input type="checkbox"/> Population not suffering from a disability			100	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Substance abusers <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless <input type="checkbox"/> (Ex-)prisoners <input type="checkbox"/> Specific discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Without specific discrimination			100	
		<input type="checkbox"/> < 25 year <input type="checkbox"/> 25 – 50 year <input type="checkbox"/> > 50 year			100	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to structure and systems and accompanying measures	+	+	+	+

		<input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum <input type="checkbox"/> Disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Gender discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Low qualification <input type="checkbox"/> Racial discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Religion <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Support to entrepreneurship <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment				
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B18.	Empowerment	
	1° National partners	Text field: Text field: optionally, translation in English
	2° Participants - Stakeholders	Multiple choice <input type="checkbox"/> Promoting individual empowerment <input type="checkbox"/> Developing collective responsibility and capacity for action <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in the DP design <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in running and evaluating activities <input type="checkbox"/> Changing attitudes and behaviour of key actors Text field: Text field: optionally, translation in English

B19.	ESF budget	Max. one choice
		Total budget for the duration of the DP (ESF + national) <input type="checkbox"/> < 250 000 € <input type="checkbox"/> 250 000 – 500 000 € <input type="checkbox"/> 500 000 – 1 000 000 € <input type="checkbox"/> 1 000 000 – 1 500 000 € <input type="checkbox"/> 1 500 000 – 2 000 000 € <input type="checkbox"/> 2 000 000 – 5 000 000 € <input type="checkbox"/> > 5 000 000 €
		% of total budget for transnational activities

B21.	Transnational co-operation intended or searched	Multiple choice	+	+	+	+
				+	+	+
		- Exchange of information and experiences - Parallel development of innovative approaches - Import, export or adoption of new approaches - Joint development - Exchange of trainees/trainers/staff				
		Text field				
		Text field: Translation in English and optionally in other(s) language(s) (provided by DP or Member state).				

B22.	Transnational co-operation – Preferences	Multiple choice
		<input type="checkbox"/> BEfr <input type="checkbox"/> BEnl <input type="checkbox"/> CZ <input type="checkbox"/> DK <input type="checkbox"/> DE <input type="checkbox"/> EE <input type="checkbox"/> EL <input type="checkbox"/> ES <input type="checkbox"/> FR <input type="checkbox"/> IE <input type="checkbox"/> IT <input type="checkbox"/> CY <input type="checkbox"/> LV <input type="checkbox"/> LT <input type="checkbox"/> LU <input type="checkbox"/> HU <input type="checkbox"/> MT <input type="checkbox"/> NL <input type="checkbox"/> AT <input type="checkbox"/> PL <input type="checkbox"/> PT <input type="checkbox"/> SI <input type="checkbox"/> SK <input type="checkbox"/> FI <input type="checkbox"/> SE <input type="checkbox"/> UKgb <input type="checkbox"/> UKni <input type="checkbox"/> no preferences

B23.	Last update	<input type="checkbox"/> Date field
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C. Members of the DP (ongoing information)

C1.	Name	Text field
C2.	Acronym	(not compulsory) Text field
C3.	Address	Text field <i>link with postcode (nuts) and country</i>
C4.	Tel	Text field
C5.	Fax	Text field

C6.	Email	Text field
C7.	Web site	Text field

C8.	Type of organisation	Max one choice
		<input type="checkbox"/> Public authority (national, regional, local) <input type="checkbox"/> Enterprise <input type="checkbox"/> Employers' organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Trade Union <input type="checkbox"/> Financial institution <input type="checkbox"/> Chamber of commerce/industry/crafts <input type="checkbox"/> Organisation providing support and guidance for disadvantaged groups <input type="checkbox"/> Employment services <input type="checkbox"/> Social economy enterprise <input type="checkbox"/> Social services <input type="checkbox"/> Education / training organisation <input type="checkbox"/> University / Research organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Consortium created for managing the DP <input type="checkbox"/> Other

C8b	Type of organisation	Description who the national partners are, what they do, their clients, the aim of the partner organisations, methodologies used etc... (not compulsory)
		Text field
		Text field: Translation in English and optionally in other(s) language(s) (provided by DP or Member state).

C9.	Legal status	Max one choice
		<input type="checkbox"/> Public organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit private organisation (including NGO...) <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-public organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Union, Confederation... <input type="checkbox"/> Co-operative <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Without legal status

C10.	Contact person	Responsibility	Name	Email	Tel

C11.	Size of the organisation	Max one choice	<i>Permanent staff</i>
		<input type="checkbox"/> staff < 10 <input type="checkbox"/> staff 10 – 50 <input type="checkbox"/> staff 50 – 250 <input type="checkbox"/> > 250	

C12.	Date of joining DP	Date field
C13.	Date of leaving DP	Date field

C14.	Last update on the DP's member	Date field
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D. Implementation of the work programme (transnational cooperation completed) (action2 - ongoing information)

D1.	Dates	<input type="checkbox"/> Date of transnational cooperation completed
D2.	Title of the DP	
D3.	Title of the DP (international)	
D4.	Partners involved	<i>For each Item, click in the list of the members</i>

		DP members <input type="checkbox"/> Partner 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Partner 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Partner ...n
D5.	DP managing organisation	
D6.	Other responsibilities	See B
D7.	EQUAL Theme – Measure	See B
D8.	Sub-themes	See B
D9.	Geographical/sectoral	See B
D10.	DP status	See B
D11.	DP linguistic skills	See B
D12.	DP's background in CI	See B
D13.	Rationale for the DP	See B
D14.	Objectives of the DP	See B
D15.	Nature of the experimental activities to be implemented	See B
D16.	Innovation	See B
D17.	Discriminated groups and fields of discrimination	See B
D18.	Empowerment	See B
D19.	Budget	See B

D25.	DP Agreement	Text field : Summary of the DP agreement and, optionally, DP agreement in annexe.
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D25 A	Transnational partners	Multiple choice
		<i>Click in the list of the Development partnerships (cf. Id Code)</i>
		<input type="checkbox"/> Transnational partner 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Transnational partner 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Transnational partner ...n

G. Other information for monitoring at DP level (annually consolidated information)

G1.	Discriminated groups and fields of discrimination	Total number of beneficiaries during the year in "person * year" equivalent (1 day=7 hours, 1 week = 5 days, 1 month = 4 weeks, 1 year = 12 month)		
		Multiple choice in each section		
		<i>In percentage</i>		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to persons	M	F
		<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> Employed <input type="checkbox"/> Others (without status, social beneficiaries...)		
		100		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Migrants, ethnic minorities, ... <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum seekers <input type="checkbox"/> Population not migrant and not asylum seeker			
		100		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical Impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Illness <input type="checkbox"/> Population not suffering from a disability			
		100		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Substance abusers <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless <input type="checkbox"/> (Ex-)prisoners <input type="checkbox"/> Other discriminated (religion, sexual orientation) <input type="checkbox"/> Without such specific discriminations			

			100			
		<input type="checkbox"/> < 25 year <input type="checkbox"/> 25 – 50 year <input type="checkbox"/> > 50 year				
			100			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to structure and systems and accompanying measures	+	+	+	+
	<input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum <input type="checkbox"/> Disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Gender discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Low qualification <input type="checkbox"/> Racial discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Religion <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Support to entrepreneurship <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment					

G2.	Expenditures	Evaluation by the DP of the total amount (ESF and national) spent during the year (rounded 1 000 €):
		Alphanumeric field

G3.	Breakdown of expenditures by experimental activities		<i>Percentage</i>
		I. National activities	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance and counselling <input type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/> Training on work place <input type="checkbox"/> Work placement <input type="checkbox"/> Job rotation and job sharing <input type="checkbox"/> employment aids (+ for self-employment) <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated measures (pathway to integration) <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to structure and systems and accompanying measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Employment creation and support <input type="checkbox"/> Training of teachers, trainers and staff <input type="checkbox"/> Improvement of employment services – Recruitment structures <input type="checkbox"/> Conception for training programmes - certification <input type="checkbox"/> Anticipation of technical changes <input type="checkbox"/> Work organisation, improvement of access to work place <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance and social services <input type="checkbox"/> Awareness raising, information, publicity <input type="checkbox"/> Studies and analysis of discrimination features 	
		II. Transnational activities	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Exchange of information and experiences <input type="checkbox"/> Parallel development of innovative approaches <input type="checkbox"/> Import, export or adoption of new approaches <input type="checkbox"/> Joint development <input type="checkbox"/> Exchange of trainees/trainers/staff	
		Total	100 %

G5.	National and transnational work	Text field
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G6.	National and European level networking	Text field
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ANNEX NO. 5
Survey of CIP EQUAL Monitoring Indicators

Having taken into account the set up specific objectives, the contents and focus of thematic fields, the ex-ante evaluators who prepared the draft monitoring indicators including respective quantifications made the following conclusions:

1. Quantitative indicators can be set up for part of the thematic fields only. That is due mainly to two basic causes:
 - a. Activities in certain thematic fields feature mainly the qualitative effect, which cannot be effectively quantified, e.g. change in the way of thinking, change in the positions of women and men in the society, improved relation to asylum seekers.
 - b. Because of the expected innovative character of submitted projects, it would not be good to limit the proponents' intentions by preset indicators.

2. The evaluators recommend to use for the thematic fields, which should be quantified, the indicator of the number of participants only. The reason why that only indicator is to be used is again the attempt at minimally limiting potential proponents in the preparation of their projects.

PRIORITY/THEMATIC FIELD	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	FURTHER IMPACTS
I. PRIORITY: IMPROVING EMPLOYABILITY:			
Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated	Increase involvement in the labour market of persons from disadvantaged groups	2500	Qualitative
Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market	Improve the co-existence between the majority society and minorities		Qualitative
II. PRIORITY: DEVELOPING BUSINESS:			
Opening up the business creation process to all by providing the tools required for setting up in business for disadvantaged groups	Develop self-employment activities of persons from disadvantaged groups	1000	Qualitative
Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a	Increase the capacity of the third sector		Qualitative

focus on improving the quality of jobs			
III. PRIORITY: SUPPORTING ADAPTABILITY			
Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market	Develop all elements of the lifelong learning system focused on disadvantaged groups		Qualitative
Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies	Enhance the usage of information technologies to structural changes	5000	Qualitative
IV. PRIORITY: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN:			
Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the re-integration of women and men who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services	Develop all elements of the system providing for smooth harmonisation of family and working life		Qualitative
Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation	Enhance the principle of equality between women and men in the labour market		Qualitative
SEPARATE THEME			
Assisting asylum seekers in their integration	Facilitate the asylum seekers' access to the labour market in the Czech Republic	750	Qualitative

ANNEX NO. 6

Links between measures of Community Initiative Programme EQUAL and mainstream forms of assistance from ESF, EAGGF and ERDF and between ERF activities

CIP EQUAL	SPD Objective 2	SPD Objective 3
Priority 1 Employability	<i>Priority 1 - Revitalisation and development of the city environment</i>	<i>Priority 1 Active Employment Policy</i>
Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market	1.1 Transport systems supporting the transformation of the city environment 1.3 Public infrastructure improving the quality of life mainly in housing estates	1.1 Develop the active employment policy and enhance its targeting
Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market		<i>Priority 2 Social Integration and Equal Opportunities</i> 2.1 Integration of Specific Population Groups at Risk of Social Exclusion
Priority 2 Entrepreneurship	<i>Priority 2 Building up the future prosperity of the selected area</i>	<i>Priority 2 Social Integration and Equal Opportunities</i>
Improve conditions and tools for the development of business run by persons from disadvantaged groups	2.2 Support for small and medium-sized enterprises; a favourable business environment	2.1 Integration of Specific Population Groups at Risk of Social Exclusion
Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs		2.3 Global grant – Strengthening the Capacity of Social Services Providers
Priority 3 Adaptability		<i>Priority 3 Development of Lifelong Learning</i>
Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market		3.1 Develop initial education as a basis for lifelong learning, with regard to the needs of the labour market and knowledge-based economy 3.2 Develop further education and training
		<i>Priority 4 Adaptability and entrepreneurship</i>
		4.2 Co-operation of research and development institutions with business sphere, supporting innovation
Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change	<i>Priority 2 Building up the future prosperity of the selected area</i>	<i>Priority 4 Adaptability and entrepreneurship</i>

structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies		4.1 Improve adaptability of employers and employees to the changing economic and technological environment and thus enhance their competitiveness
	2.1 Improving the quality of partnership between the public and private sectors, non-profit sector, science and research	4.2 Co-operation of research and development institutions with business sphere, supporting innovation
	2.3 Development of strategic services in support of the information society in Prague	
Priority 4 Equal opportunities		<i>Priority 2 Social Integration and Equal Opportunities</i>
Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the re-integration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services		2.2 Reconcile family and work life
Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation		
Priority 5 Assisting asylum seekers in their integration into the labour market		

CIP EQUAL	OP HRD	JROP	OP Industry and Enterprise	OP Infrastructure	OP Rural Development and Multifunctional Agriculture
Priority 1 Employability	<i>Priority 1 Active Employment Policy</i>	<i>Priority 3 Human Recourses Development in Regions</i>		<i>Priority 1 Modernization and Development of Transport Infrastructure of Nation-wide Importance</i>	<i>Priority II. Rural Development, Fisheries and Vocational Training</i>
Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market	1.1 Strengthening the Active Employment Policy for Job Seekers and Job Applicants	3.1 Infrastructure for HRD in regions		1.1 Modernization of Lines of Nation-wide Importance and of Important Railway Junctions	Measure 2.1 Promoting the adaptation and development of rural areas 2.1.5 Sub-measure Diversification of agricultural activities and activities close to agriculture
	1.2 Public Employment Services Modernisation	3.2 Support to the social integration in regions		1.2. Construction and Modernization of Class I Roads	
Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market	<i>Priority 2 Social Integration and Equal Opportunities</i>				
	2.1 Integration of Specific Population Groups at Risk of Social Exclusion				
Priority 2 Entrepreneurship	<i>Priority 2 Social Integration and Equal Opportunities</i>	<i>Priority 1 Regional support of entrepreneurship</i>	<i>Priority 2 Development of Enterprise Competitiveness</i>	<i>Priority 1 Modernization and Development of Transport Infrastructure of Nation-wide Importance</i>	<i>Priority I. Support to Agriculture, Processing of Agricultural Products and to Forestry</i>

Improve conditions and tools for the development of business run by persons from disadvantaged groups	2.1 Integration of Specific Population Groups at Risk of Social Exclusion	1.1 Support of business activities in selected regions	2.1 Establishing and development of small and medium-sized enterprises	1.1 Modernization of Lines of Nation-wide Importance and of Important Railway Junctions 1.2. Construction and Modernization of Class I Roads	Measure 1.1. - Investments in agricultural holdings Sub-measure 1.1.1 Investment in agricultural holdings and young setting-up farmers
Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs	2.3 Enhancing the Capacity of Social Services Providers	3.1 Infrastructure for HRD in regions			
Priority 3 Adaptability	<i>Priority 3 Lifelong Learning Development</i>	<i>Priority 3 Human Recourses Development in Regions</i>	<i>Priority 1 Business Environment Development</i>		<i>Priority II. Rural Development, Fisheries and Vocational Training</i>
Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market	3.1 Enhancing the Quality of Education at Schools and School Facilities and Developing Support Systems for Education 3.2 Promoting Tertiary Education, Research and Development 3.3 Further Vocational Training Development	3.1 Infrastructure for HRD in regions	1.3 Infrastructure for the development of human resources in the industry and business services		Measure 2.2 Vocational training
Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information	<i>Priority 4 Adaptability and Entrepreneurship</i>	<i>Priority 2 Regional development of the infrastructure</i>	1.1. Infrastructure for industrial research, development and		Measure 2.1 Promoting the adaptation and development of rural

technology and other new technologies	4.1 Increasing Adaptability of Employers and Employees to Economic and Technological Changes, Promoting Competitiveness	2.2 Development of information and communication technologies in regions	innovation		areas <i>Sub-measure 2.1.4. Rural development (LEADER+ type sub-measure)</i>
	4.2 Specific Training	<i>Priority 3 Human Recourses Development in Regions</i>			
		3.1 Infrastructure for HRD in regions			
Priority 4 Equal opportunities	<i>Priority 2 Social Integration and Equal Opportunities</i>				
Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the re-integration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services	2.2 Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Labour Market				
Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation	2.2 Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Labour Market				
Priority 5 Assisting asylum seekers in their integration into the labour market					

Examples of complementarity between CIP EQUAL, HRD OP, JROP, OP Industry and Enterprise and SPD Objective 3, SPD Objective 2, OP Infrastructure and OP Rural Development and Multifunctional Agriculture

The complementarity between CIP EQUAL and other forms of SF assistance is described in more detailed way first in order to clarify the substance of links presented in the table above and second to stress the fact that CIP EQUAL has the close relationship with OP HRD, OP Industry and Enterprise, JROP and SPD Objective 3. On the other hand the difference between EQUAL

Community Initiative Programme and relevant mainstream forms of assistance is stressed in the main objectives of these programmes and that is why different types of activities will be supported within these programmes. EQUAL Community Initiative is a laboratory for development and testing new approaches to be subsequently supported within the mainstream forms of assistance during the next programming period.

Two examples further explaining the complementarity between CIP EQUAL, HRD OP, JROP, OP Industry and Enterprise and JPD Objective 3 are described below and illustrate both how the activities financed under different programmes differ in scope and how the supported activities of CIP EQUAL are connected to the scope of mainstream programmes.

As presented in the table above, there are several areas supported by all the above-mentioned programmes. One of these cases is the Thematic field No. 3 (Improve conditions and tools for the development of business run by persons from disadvantaged groups) under the Priority 2 of the CIP EQUAL, whose activities are complementary to the measures of analysed mainstream programmes. EQUAL programme will support under this thematic field e.g. development of tools enabling more intensive and systematic preparation of the most disadvantaged persons to start out in business. And as a result of development of these tools could be e.g. new counselling services (while the existing ones are to be supported nowadays under measure 2.1. of OP HRD), new types of services for the disadvantaged groups (while existing services of this type are to be supported under SPD Objective 3 measure 2.1.), new ways how to provide support services to SMEs run by disadvantaged people (currently supported under JROP Measure 1.1) or innovative approaches how to effectively support the disadvantaged group starting out in business with financial resources (see the OP Industry and Enterprise Measure 2.1).

Another example is represented by Thematic field No.5 “Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market” under Priority 3 of CIP EQUAL. Its activity “Developing innovative approaches which through their methodology, content and time possibilities would suit disadvantaged groups better” is in the same way as the above mentioned example complementary to the activity of HRD OP Measure 3.3 “Setting up a further vocational training system”, to the activity of SPD Objective 3 Measure 3.2 “Expanding further education and training offer in consistency with labour market needs”, to the activity of JROP Measure 3.1 “Development of equipment of training centres connected with lifelong learning” and finally to the activity of the OP Industry and Enterprise Measure 1.3 “Develop new regional training centres which will be used by firms in the region.”

CIP EQUAL is complementary also to other main SF actions. For example OP Rural Development and Multifunctional Agriculture supports diversification of agriculture activities by its sub-measure 2.1.5, which enables creation of new job opportunities for long-term unemployed or low qualified people living in rural areas. SPD Objective 2 offers support to SMEs in Prague as defined in

objective of Measure 2.2, which is in line with objectives of the CIP EQUAL Measure 2.2. SPD Objective 2 as well as OP Infrastructure will modernize and develop transport infrastructure and thus it will increase flexibility on the labour market by increasing the accessibility to job places especially for disadvantaged groups.

MA will ensure sufficient pieces of information about the implementation of the CIP EQUAL to all the interested bodies involved not only in the implementation of the CIP EQUAL, but also in the implementation of the before analysed mainstream forms of assistance.

CIP EQUAL and ERF

Besides the above-analysed mainstream forms of SF assistance, the CIP EQUAL will be also co-ordinated during its implementation with the activities of the European Refugee Fund (ERF). The ERF was established by Council Decision No 596/2000 of 28 September 2000. The duration of the ERF was limited for a period from the 1 January 2000 to the 31 December 2004 but is envisaged that its activities will continue further. The Czech Republic will participate in its activities and in case that the CR joins the EU the CR will use its financial recourses on the same conditions as current Member States. The CR has not participated on ERF activities in the past years. The Czech Republic will receive 808.360 EUR from the ERF in 2004. The assistance from the ERF is provided through co-financing. The contribution of the Fund is a maximum 75% of the total eligible cost relating to the national implementation programmes. The aim of the ERF is to help Member States receive refugees. The following groups are targeted by the European Refugee Fund:

1. Any third-country nationals or stateless persons having the status defined by the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 relating to the Status of Refugees and permitted to reside as refugees in one of the Member States.
2. Any third-country nationals or stateless persons enjoying a form of international protection granted by a Member State in accordance with its national legislation or practice.
3. Any third-country nationals or stateless persons who have applied for one of the forms of protection described in points 1 and 2.
4. Third-country nationals or stateless persons benefiting from temporary protection arrangements in a Member State.
5. Persons whose right to temporary protection is being examined in a Member State.

The Fund supports mainly national implementation programmes. The support of the national programmes is targeted at actions related to:

- a. conditions for reception;
- b. integration of persons whose stay in the Member State is of a lasting and/or stable nature;

c. repatriation, provided that the persons concerned have not acquired a new nationality and have not left the territory of the Member State.

The project proposals are allowed to be submitted only by a public administration (national, regional or local), educational and research institutions, training centres, social partners, government agencies and international organisations. It is possible to submit project proposals individually or as a partnership. Only non-profitable projects will be allowed.

The authority responsible for implementing actions supported by the ERF in the Czech Republic is the Ministry of Interior, Asylum and Migration Policy Department. It sent to the Commission a request for co-financing for the Czech implementation programme for 2004, which is under consideration of the European Commission. The Ministry of Interior was a partner of MoLSA during completing the CIP EQUAL and further cooperation is expected throughout the implementation and monitoring of this programme.

ANNEX No 7

Glossary

Actions 1 - 3	Different phases or activities of the EQUAL implementation. Action 1 is a phase for consolidation of DPs and conclusion of the TCAs. Action 2 is a phase for implementation of DP work programme and Action 3 for mainstreaming of results of DP work programme and TCP work programme.
ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT (Community Initiatives)	The ESF Human Resources Initiatives that funded more than 10 000 projects between 1994 and 1999 and preceded EQUAL. The ADAPT Community Initiative aimed to transform the way in which companies, the organisations which support them, and workers themselves, respond to economic and technological change. The EMPLOYMENT Community Initiative has targeted groups of people who faced difficulties in accessing labour market. It had four strands: NOW for equality of opportunities between women and men; HORIZON for people with disabilities; INTEGRA for socially excluded people; YOUTHSTART for young people.
Associated Partners	Non-EQUAL partners within a Transnational cooperation partnership (TCP), who are either involved in similar projects in a non-EU country funded by the Phare, Tacis, Meda programmes or, exceptionally, partners from a Member State which are not funded by EQUAL but which bring a specific added value to the transnational partnership.
CIP EQUAL	Community Initiative Programme is a document submitted by the Czech Republic and approved by European Commission which sets down how the Initiative is implemented.
Development partnership agreement (DPA)	Formalisation of the common strategy (context, objectives, work programme, etc.) which is adopted by all national partners within a DP. The agreement is established at the end of setting up DPs and trans-national co-operation (Action 1)..
Development partnership (DP)	Operational entity of the EQUAL Initiative. The DP (geographical or sectoral) gathers several public, semi-public or private organisations, called national <i>partners</i> , with a view to implement experimental activities on the basis of a common project linked to a thematic field of EQUAL. The partners participate at the decision making process on an equal footing. One of the partners ensures the administrative and financial co-ordination.
Dissemination	Structured ways to raise awareness of other players, in the outcomes and lessons learnt.
ECDB (EQUAL Common Database)	European database containing information on all EQUAL DPs (rationale, objectives, activities etc.), their national and transnational partners (contact addresses etc.) which can be consulted via the Web. The ECDB data is supplied both by the national databases and the other ETCIM module.
Empowerment	<i>In the field of</i> social inclusion: process of mobilising resources and developing skills with a view to partake actively in one's own future. <i>In EQUAL</i> this notion applies to all actors of the DP by encouraging a balanced share of the power and participation between all. Empowerment is one of the key principles of EQUAL.

ESF	The European Social Fund (ESF) is one of the four structural Funds. It is the financial instrument of the European Union to invest in human resources. It transfers substantial sums to the Member States through several programmes to support the creation of more and better jobs.
ETCIM (EQUAL Transnational Co-operation Internet Module)	Web based information regarding the transnational cooperation partnerships (TCP) and the transnational cooperation agreements (TCA). The access is restricted to the DPs concerned and to the managing authorities.
European employment strategy (EES)	Common European response to employment problems that spurs member States to co-ordinate their policies relating to the objectives and guidelines of the Strategy. In the new EES of 2003 the priorities contained in the original four pillars (employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities between women and men) were maintained and new ones were added (e.g. combating illegal work). This strategy involves the annual adoption of guidelines and the preparation of National Employment Action Plans (NAP Employment) for each Member State.
Final beneficiaries	Term by which the regulations referring to the structural funds define the public or private entities and enterprises that are responsible for implementation of the operations. In the case of EQUAL it is the DPs. Not to be mistaken with those benefiting from the actions often referred to as ultimate beneficiaries.
Gender mainstreaming	Systematic approach to address the conditions, priorities and needs of men and women in all policies and practice in order to promote activities based on equality between women and men.
Horizontal mainstreaming	Transferring lessons learnt to similar organisations. The transfer can be specific (e.g. a particular tool) or broad (e.g. contributing to a change of practice).
Indicators	The targets a programme elects to use to judge its performance.
Innovation	EQUAL is a laboratory to explore and test innovative approaches regarding employment, training policies and aims, methods and systems of implementation. Innovation is relative (what is innovative in a specific context or territory might not be in another). Investing in innovation will be particularly justified when it is possible to replicate and impact on the existing systems (mainstreaming). Innovation is one of the key principles of EQUAL
Job desegregation	Policy and practice to counter the concentration of men and women in certain types and levels of jobs. Horizontal segregation relates to certain types of work or professions being dominated by one sex. Vertical segregation refers to (usually) women being unable to access management / senior positions.
Mainstreaming	A process which enables activities to impact on policy and practice. This process includes identifying lessons, clarifying the innovative element and approach that produced the results, their dissemination, validation and transfer. More specifically, mainstreaming also defines the phase of transfer and the way in which other actors take account of the results approaches and key elements elaborated by one or

	more DPs. Mainstreaming can be horizontal or vertical. Mainstreaming is one of the key principles of EQUAL.
Managing Authority (MA)	Public or private authority or body designated by the Member State to manage the CIP EQUAL. MA for CIP EQUAL in the CR is the MoLSA, Department for Management of ESF Assistance.
Measure	Sub-category within a priority enabling activities to be financed. These are mainly the thematic fields.
Monitoring Committee	Committee managing the implementation of the CIP. It is established by the Member State and made up of a range of key players.
Networking	Collective work that brings together DPs as well as other key actors. It contributes to the identification and validation of outcomes and good practices with a view to dissemination and mainstreaming.
Priority	One of the priorities of the strategy adopted in a CIP to which objectives and financial resources are assigned. These are the four pillars of the EES, asylum seekers and technical assistance.
Programme Complement	A document describing in detail the strategy of implementation of the CIP EQUAL. It contains a definition of individual measures, a general description of thematic fields and also more detailed information about the implementation layout (including assessment of project proposals), financing and publicity of the second round of the CIP EQUAL in the CR. It is sent to the Commission for information.
Social economy	The term 'social economy' stands mainly for organisations (co-operatives, associations, foundations etc) that are oriented toward principles of the market economy while pursuing social aims (combat exclusion etc.).
Social inclusion (Strategic co-operation on)	Process launched at the Lisbon European Council in 2000 to strengthen the fight against poverty and exclusion. Through this each Member State sets out its <i>National Action Plan</i> defining priorities and objectives to enhance social inclusion (NAP inclusion).
Technical assistance	It refers to the resources available for supporting the implementation of the CIP (support for the DP, setting up of networks and transnational co-operation etc).
Thematic approach	The EQUAL national programmes are centred around nine thematic fields. The aim of this approach is to explore new ways of tackling problems that are common to different types of discrimination and inequality, rather than focusing on specific target groups.
Transnational co-operation agreement (TCA)	Formalisation of the Transnational co-operation Partnership (TCP), established at the end of Action 1 between several DPs from different Member States and, possibly, associated partners. It describes the transnational work programme, the indicative budget, the role of each transnational partner etc.
Transnational co-operation partnership (TCP)	Grouping of at least two DPs from different Member States to develop joint transnational activities such as: training, studies, products, methods, exchange of trainees or trainers etc.
Transnational co-operation	Source of inspiration and of policy innovation. Transnational co-operation relates to individual DPs that are requested to set up a

	transnational co-operation partnership as well as to collective work through thematic networks at European level. It relates also to sharing of good practice between Member States and key partners such as the social partners and the European Commission. Transnational co-operation is one of the key principles of EQUAL.
Vertical mainstreaming	Transfer of lessons learnt and integration of all or part of results into policy and practice at the local, regional, national and European level.

**EX- ANTE EVALUATION
OF THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE PROGRAMME
EQUAL**

Prepared by:

The Centre of Regional and Administration Sciences
University of Economics, Prague

Prague
September 2003

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1) INTRODUCTION

The ex-ante evaluation of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL has been prepared in line with the Commission requirements for preparing programming documents. Above all, in line with Commission Communication COM(2000)853 of 14 April 2000.

In compliance with the Communication, the evaluators focused in the evaluation, amongst other, on the following:

- Find out whether or not the present programming document includes the basic elements as required by paragraphs 61-62 of the aforementioned Commission Communication;
- Find out whether or not the strategy of the programming document implementation is adequate and cohesive;
- Identify and cover the links between the present programming document and other activities in relevant fields, which are implemented at the national level;
- Assess how far the lessons learnt during the implementation of earlier projects and programmes were taken into account in the preparation of the programming document;
- Assess the feasibility of the proposed structure of implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- Evaluate potential effects and impacts of the programme implementation.

When preparing the ex-ante evaluation, the team of evaluators used as a basis also the following Community regulations and Commission guidelines:

- Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds, and above all Article 41 of the Regulation, which specifies the purpose, coverage and contents of the ex-ante evaluation, and Article

18(2) of the Regulation, which specifies the contents of programming documents;

- Commission Regulation (EC) No. 438/2001 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 as regards the management and control systems for assistance granted under the Structural Funds;
- MEANS Collection, Volume 1, Evaluating socio-economic programmes: Evaluation design and management, EC 1999;
- MEANS Collection, Volume 2, Evaluating socio-economic programmes: Selection a use of indicators for monitoring and evaluation, EC 1999;
- MEANS Collection, Volume 3, Evaluating socio-economic programmes: Principal evaluation techniques and tools, EC 1999;
- MEANS Collection, Volume 4, Evaluating socio-economic programmes: Technical solution for evaluation within a partnership framework, EC 1999;
- MEANS Collection, Volume 5, Evaluating socio-economic programmes: Transversal evaluation of impacts on the environment, employment and other intervention priorities, EC 1999;
- MEANS Collection, Volume 6, Evaluating socio-economic programmes: Glossary of 300 concepts and technical terms, EC 1999.

The ex-ante evaluation has been prepared by a team of evaluators from the Centre of Regional and Administration Sciences at the University of Economics, Prague. The composition of the team of evaluators was as follows:

Head of the team of evaluators: Doc. RNDr. René Wokoun, CSc.

Members of the team of evaluators: Ing. Zdeněk Lukáš, Ph.D.
RNDr. Jana Kouřilová
PhDr. Jaroslava Kadeřábková, CSc.
JUDr. Miloš Matula, CSc.

Ing. Zuzana Trhlínová

As regards the preparation of the programming document, the evaluators can state that the authors of CIP EQUAL had closely collaborated during the preparation of the programming document with the members of the team of evaluators. Vast majority of comments and recommendations given by evaluators were accepted by CIP EQUAL authors and integrated directly in the text of the programming document. That is why the following text of the ex-ante evaluation proper includes only a few comments, namely those, which were not accepted by the CIP EQUAL authors. In general, however, the evaluators consider the authors' approach to mutual collaboration as very good.

2) VERIFYING COMPLIANCE BETWEEN THE CIP EQUAL AND COMMISSION COMMUNICATION

As indicated in the Introduction, the initial step taken by the evaluators when preparing the evaluation was to verify whether the present programming document includes the elements as stipulated in paragraphs 61 and 62 of Commission Communication COM(2000)853. Given below are all elements including comments by evaluators as regards how far the elements were integrated in the programming document:

- A description of the current situation as regards discrimination and inequality in the labour market and as regards asylum seekers in relation to the chosen themes.

The issues are covered in Chapter 2 of the present programming document. Chapter 2 (Analysis of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL) can be considered as an analytical basis for the entire programming document, which has been prepared on a very good level. The initial section of the chapter includes a general description of the situation in the labour market in the Czech Republic. The general description is followed by an analysis of the position of each disadvantaged group in the labour market.

The team of evaluators highly appreciates that each analysis pertaining to a group of disadvantaged people in the labour market has been prepared in territorial terms down to the level of former districts, i.e. NUTS IV. Because of significant regional differences within the Czech Republic, the evaluators consider that section of undertaken analysis as important. The evaluators also recommend that results of the regional analysis be taken into account during the implementation of programme EQUAL.

The fragmented database is a factor slightly reducing the informative value of certain prepared analyses. Updated data characterising the position of a given group in the labour market were not available for all disadvantaged groups. There was also a problem consisting in the existence of different data lines because they had been

collected and processed by multiple institutions. Besides, it should be noted that certain disadvantaged groups-related data are not available at all. In spite of that, the undertaken analyses can be in general assessed as adequately informative and the level of their preparation as complying with the current possibilities and situation in the Czech Republic.

In the context of the aforementioned facts, the evaluators believe it is desirable to improve certain sections of statistical surveys in the future. Coordination between the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Czech Statistical Office during the data collection and analysing should be closer.

The analysis (Chapter 2) is supplemented with a description of the disadvantaged persons' relation to the contents of EQUAL pillars and with a SWOT analysis of the situation in the labour market in the Czech Republic as regards discrimination and inequalities. The evaluators can state that all elements of the SWOT analysis adequately characterise the situation in the labour market in the Czech Republic.

- An evaluation of the expected impact, including on the social and economic situation at local or sectoral level and the situation in terms of equality between women and men, in accordance with Article 41(2) of Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999.

The programming document includes a list of indicators and expected impacts of the programme implementation by pillars in the form of tables. The aim of EQUAL is to finance the projects, which would contribute to finding new ways of combating discrimination and inequalities in the labour market. Prevailing in most cases of the evaluation of project impacts is the qualitative way of assessment, which is due to the intention not to limit in advance potential applicants in their plans by setting up a relative narrow group of quantitative indicators. Another important consideration is that certain activities feature mainly qualitative effects, which in fact cannot be quantified (change in the way of thinking or the improved relation to asylum seekers).

The socio-economic situation in the Czech Republic is currently characterised mainly by slightly, though constantly growing unemployment (unemployment in September

2003 was 10.5%), which accounted in absolute terms for over 500,000 unemployed persons. Simultaneously, increasing continually are certain phenomena associated with unemployment, such as the growing numbers of the long-term unemployed or the growing numbers of persons from other disadvantaged groups in total unemployment. According to the evaluators' opinion, the year-to-year reduction of funds for the active employment policy in the Czech Republic may be one of the causes of that development.

As regards the development of basic macroeconomic indicators, it can be stated that GDP and industrial production keep slightly increasing (the expected growth of GDP in 2003 is 2.5%); in terms of inflation, Czech economy features deflation for more than six months, that is why the year-to-year increase in the price level is minimal. Real wages grow; their growth, however, exceeds that of labour productivity, which might pose in the nearest future further pressures on higher unemployment.

The considerably growing deficit of the state budget and the very high ratio of so-called mandatory expenditures in the deficit is an issue. The existence of the deficit and the Czech Government's attempts at reducing it result, amongst other, in budget savings limiting the manoeuvring space for the Government also as regards active interventions in the field of the labour market.

The evaluators believe that further worsening of the situation in the labour market can be expected, mainly in relation to the disadvantaged groups of people, unless a more considerable revival of economy occurs next year. The implementation of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL in the period to come should help to slow down the increase of the aforementioned negative phenomena in the labour market and to improve in general the situation.

It should also be taken into account, however, that any activities undertaken in relation to disadvantaged groups are activities, which are not always easy to implement and which are not always successful. Besides, in certain cases those activities feature such impacts that are not evidently positive immediately, but only after a certain time delay.

The lack of any long-term experience with the implementation of programmes and measures under the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL is a specific issue of the Czech Republic, and probably of other future EU Member States; that is why the relation between implementors of activities and target groups has not yet fully developed. The relation should be strengthened and improved in the future. The impacts of the implementation of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL in the years 2004-2006 in the Czech Republic can be expected to include also such improvement and strengthening of the relation.

Considering the volume of funds for the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL, considering the orientation of EQUAL activities and considering the minimal experience so far with the implementation of similar programmes (ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT) in the Czech Republic, it is very difficult to quantify impacts of the programme implementation.

Having taken into account the lessons learnt during the preparation of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL in the existing Member States (The United Kingdom, the Netherlands), the evaluators proposed that the system of CIP EQUAL monitoring indicators be based mainly on qualitative indicators, with quantitative indicators being limited. The authors of the programming document accepted that attitude. Further reasons for choosing the approach and a detailed survey of monitoring indicators by pillars are listed in Annex No. 5 to the programming document.

According to the evaluators' opinion, the gender issue is adequately covered in the programming document. The issue of equality between women and men is topical also in the Czech labour market; it should be stated, however, that its significance is not the same in all priorities because the position of men in the labour market is in certain cases worse than that of women. Again, the preparation of a regional market analysis within Chapter 2 of the present programming document seems to be a very good idea.

- A description of the strategy for the implementation of CIP EQUAL, including an explanation of the selection of priorities.

The strategy of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL is described in Chapter Three of the present document. EQUAL focuses in the Czech Republic on nine thematic fields, which complies with the announced thematic fields within EQUAL pillars. Funds were allocated to pillars upon consultations at all relevant levels, taking into account also the contents of conducted analyses within the programming document.

The evaluators can state that the implementation of all nine thematic fields is adequate to the real existence of problems covered by individual priorities in the Czech Republic. The evaluators believe the number of thematic fields should not be reduced.

- A description of the relationship between the strategy of the programming document implementation and the National Action Plan of Employment.

A description of the relationship between CIP EQUAL and NAPE 2003 is given in detail in Chapter Three of the present programming document. With its priorities EQUAL follows up 18 main directions of the National Action Plan of Employment 2003.

At least one priority is always used to fulfil one main direction. All EQUAL thematic fields relate to NAPE 2003 main direction No. 7.

That main direction pertains to the identification of and combating all forms of discrimination in the access to the labour market and to the education and training; furthermore, it covers the development of efficient preventive measures within the active approach to the support to risky or otherwise disadvantaged groups and individuals in the labour market, the adoption of suitable measures for disabled persons, ethnic minorities and immigrants in terms of their integration in the labour market.

The evaluators consider the description of the relationship between the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL and the National Action Plan of Employment 2003 as adequate.

- A synthesis of the lessons learnt from ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT.

Because the Czech Republic is not yet a Member State in the European Union, no lessons learnt from ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT can be evaluated.

The analysis of the gained experience and results, which is included in the programming document, is based on the programmes that had been implemented to date in the Czech Republic: PALMIF, SWIF, CI EQUAL first round, which is implemented within Phare 2002 (see Annex No. 3 for details).

- A summary of arrangements to ensure complementarity between EQUAL and other implemented activities;

A detailed description of the relationship between EQUAL and European and national strategic documents and Community policies is given in Chapter 3.3.

The evaluators consider the proposed contents of CIP EQUAL as consistent with the other activities being implemented. The assumed fulfilment of the present programming document adequately supplements or follows up those activities.

- A summary description of the measures serving towards provision of the compliance with Article 87 of the Treaty.

Compatibility of EQUAL activities with Community policies in the field of state aid and award of public contracts is covered in Chapters 3.4.1 and 3.4.2.

The evaluators believe those sections are prepared in an adequate way in compliance with stipulated requirements providing that respective legal standards – both national and EU ones – are observed.

- An indication of whether and to what extent the actions proposed under each priority will contain activities normally eligible under the ERDF, EAGGF or FIFG.

The programming document indicates that expenditures within EQUAL priorities will correspond in their character to the thematic fields under the European Social Fund.

The text of the present Community Initiative Programme EQUAL does not indicate any overlapping with activities normally eligible under the ERDF, EAGGF or FIFG, which is also due to the shortened programming period for the implementation of EQUAL.

- A description of the arrangements for technical assistance expected to be required to implement the CIP EQUAL.

Technical assistance is one of six CIP EQUAL priorities. It is described in detail in Chapter 3.2.10. The global objective of technical assistance is to provide for the proper implementation of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL, which is also reflected in the implementation of three measures under that priority. The evaluators agree also with allocations to measures under the priority Technical Assistance.

The expected extent of technical assistance both in terms of implementation and in terms of monitoring and evaluation can be considered as adequate.

- An indicative financing plan.

The financing plan is covered in Chapter Five of the programming document. The plan was prepared in accordance with Articles 28 and 29 of Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999; it was also based on decisions of the Copenhagen Summit on allocations to structural operations. Allocations are made in percentage of the total amount to priorities. When allocating funds, opinions of all involved parties and the contents of the programming document analysis were taken into account. The evaluators agree with percentage allocations to individual priorities.

Co-financing from national and European sources is set up as 27% to be financed by the Czech Republic and 73% by the EU. The evaluators do not believe the level of co-financing set up in this way is realistic for all projects. Therefore, the evaluators recommend that co-financing from national and European sources be set up as follows: 50% by the Czech Republic and 50% by the European Union.

Detailed characteristics of cash flows both at the national and transnational levels are included in Chapter 4 of the programming document.

- A description of the actions and methods planned to implement the gender mainstreaming approach effectively.

The issue of equal opportunities for men and women is described in Chapter 2 of the programming document. In general, the gender mainstreaming approach is covered in the present programming document within a broader context, i.e. not only as equal opportunities for men and women, but for all persons in the labour market.

The Czech Republic has been implementing a national action plan for promoting equal opportunities for men and women entitled “Government Priorities and Procedures in Promoting Equal Opportunities for Men and Women”, which was adopted in 1998 and is updated on an annual basis. The contents of the programming document EQUAL comply with that plan.

- An account of the process of programming,

The programming document was prepared with assistance of many parties, including those with a specific interest in the main areas. Amongst other, participating in the preparation of programming documents was the working group for the use of Structural Funds. The working group had already participated in the preparation of the HRD OP and SPD Objective 3. The working group included in addition to ministry representatives also representatives of the regions, social partners and non-profit sector. The two largest Czech trade unions were also represented in the working group.

The evaluators can state that their collaboration with the programming document authors was very intensive during the document preparation and the authors integrated most evaluators' comments and recommendations into the present programming document.

- Provisions for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The evaluators believe the stipulated measures pertaining to implementation, monitoring and evaluation comply with respective provisions of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 and Commission Communication COM(2000)853.

- A description of the mechanism for calls for proposals.

Proposals for projects under Action 1 will be submitted in the Czech Republic in compliance with the stipulated current schedule of implementation upon a call, which is planned for the second half of 2004. Implemented under Action 2 will be only the projects selected under Action 1. A detailed description of selection procedures will be included in the Programme Complement.

- Types of contracts.

In accordance with Commission Communication COM(2000)853, the Managing Authority will provide for evaluation of National and Transnational Co-operation Agreements.

- National mechanisms to facilitate mainstreaming at both the horizontal and vertical levels.

Responsible for mainstreaming at the national level is the Managing Authority, which will provide through so-called Action 3 for coordinated dissemination of good practice and impact on the national and/or regional policy. Participation in activities under Action 3 will be mandatory for all Development Partnerships. That will provide for as best as possible results of Action 3. Action 3 will be supported through Action 4.

Mainstreaming will be conducted in two stages. Stage One will include mainly an analysis and generalisation of project outputs, which will be then made available. Made available to the other Development Partnerships involved in CI EQUAL Round Two (so-called horizontal mainstreaming) and to the local, regional and national policy-makers will be within Stage Two mainly the good practice and well-proven innovative procedures to be reflected in both national and European strategic documents and, if need be, also in the Czech legislation (so-called vertical mainstreaming).

- Arrangements to ensure that Monitoring Committee membership provides for the involvement of the social partners.

The Managing Authority will ensure that the social partners, NGOs and persons having direct experience with main forms of discrimination and inequalities in the labour market be represented in CIP EQUAL Monitoring Committee.

- The type and amount of data for on-going monitoring and assessment.

The structure and amount of data for on-going monitoring and assessment will be described in detail by the authors in the Programme Complement to the CIP EQUAL. The evaluators do not object to that way.

- A description of the significance and contents of the mid-term evaluation within the programming document.

Because of the short period of time for the programme implementation, the mid-term evaluation will not be required and, consequently, it will not be prepared.

3) LESSONS LEARNT DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EARLIER PROGRAMMES

The issues related to the implementation of earlier programmes and their results are discussed in an extensive section in Chapter 2. The authors of the programming document divided the subject by EQUAL pillars, discussing one by one the programmes supporting Employability (Pillar 1), the programmes supporting Entrepreneurship (Pillar 2), the programmes supporting Adaptability of Firms and Employees (Pillar 3) and, finally, the programmes dealing with Equal Opportunities for Men and Women in the Labour Market (Pillar 4).

Described within Pillar One (programmes supporting Employability) are implemented programmes divided into four groups. The first group includes the programmes supporting integration of low-qualified persons. The programmes focus mainly on the completion of education, motivation courses, individual plans of personal development, re-qualifications, placement in socially purposeful employment opportunities or setting up in self-employment.

As mentioned objectively by the authors of the present programming document, the success and efficiency of all aforementioned programmes can be assessed into a limited extent only because of non-existence of sufficient relevant data pertaining to the aforementioned programmes. Besides, the evaluators must state that there is no complex and sophisticated system for assessing impacts of the active employment policy and its tools in the Czech Republic.

The statement applies into a considerable extent also to the implementation of programmes and projects financed from EU funds, such as PALMIF or Phare projects. From that point of view, the on-going monitoring reports are not sufficient and the numbers of ex-post evaluations are low, which naturally adversely affects the overall informative value of those evaluations as regards the active employment policy as a whole.

Therefore, the evaluators believe the aforementioned limits should be taken into account when assessing the quality of the analysis of earlier programmes and measures implemented within the Czech Republic and accept that Chapter 2.3 of the present programming document is mainly a description of certain pieces of experience rather than an analysis of impacts and effects of programme and measures implemented to date.

That is also the reason for the evaluators' recommendation to create a complex system of programme and measure evaluation not only within EQUAL, but also within other programmes to be implemented according to programming documents for the use of EU funds or Czech Republic funds.

The aforementioned comments and recommendations apply not only to all further programmes to be implemented under Pillar 1, but also to the programmes to be implemented under the other three pillars.

The evaluators state that specific programmes and measures as described within all four pillars do not deviate in their character from programmes and measures implemented in the Member States; as already mentioned, however, the evaluators can neither assess, judging from the given description, the efficiency of described programmes so as to decide whether or not the lessons learnt during the implementation of those programmes are relevant also for the implementation of EQUAL, nor propose rejection of certain programmes and measures.

Nevertheless, based on their own experience from the implementation of programmes and measures in the Czech Republic, the evaluators believe the scope of the existing programmes and measures as regards the future implementation of the CIP EQUAL should be maintained.

4) PROGRAMME ADEQUACY AND COHESION

This part of the evaluation briefly summarises the main issues of the labour market in the Czech Republic and indicates the main directions of solving them at the national level (National Action Plan of Employment 2003), as well as the ways how EQUAL intends to contribute to that solution.

The evaluators believe the brief introduction will contribute to a better assessment of the general cohesion of the programming document.

Disadvantaged groups in the labour market:

A) The Long-term Unemployed

- Concentration of multiple types of disadvantage (low qualification, age, etc.);
- Negative impact of the existing functioning of the social system;
- Underdeveloped regional and local partnerships;
- Unsuitable structure of qualification and re-qualification programmes.

National Action Plan of Employment 2003

- Improving the information system on vacancies;
- Pilot projects for the long-term unemployed;
- Activities in unemployment prevention, activation of job seekers, special counselling for the long-term unemployed;
- Enhancing the strategic and operational planning, co-operation with regional authorities and social partners in solving employment issues in the regions;
- Increasing funds for re-qualification courses, adapting re-qualification courses to labour market requirements including improvement of computer literacy;
- Developing the system of lifelong learning;
- Supporting the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and reducing the administration and tax burdens for SMEs.

EQUAL

- Individualised counselling;
- Developing specialised activities.

B) Older Persons

- Difficult re-integration in the labour market;
- Lower level of education;
- Qualification in non-prospective professions.

National Action Plan of Employment 2003

- Improving the information system on vacancies;
- Developing individual counselling;
- Re-qualification courses focused on change of professional orientation of older persons;
- Increasing the numbers of older persons included in the active employment policy programmes;
- Developing the system of lifelong learning;
- Supporting the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and reducing the administration and tax burdens for SMEs;
- Preferring the maintenance of older persons in the labour market;
- Supporting the introduction of new forms of organisation of work.

EQUAL

- Preventing the loss of employment;
- Supporting the creation of part-time jobs;
- Eliminating age-based discrimination in the labour market.

C) School Leavers

- Absence of vocational practice;
- Risk of maternal leave;
- Slow responses of the educational system.

National Action Plan of Employment 2003

- Improving the information system on vacancies;
- Developing individual counselling;
- Developing the system of lifelong learning and changing the educational branches;
- Improving the quality of education in line with the current socio-economic conditions so as to prevent the lack of qualified labour force;
- Developing computer literacy;
- Supporting the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and reducing the administration and tax burdens for SMEs.

EQUAL

- Supporting the development of key competence acquiring;
- Career guidance during the studies;
- Improving information and employment services.

D) Low-qualified persons

- Poor professional orientation;
- Low motivation;
- Low employability.

National Action Plan of Employment 2003

- Improving the information system on vacancies;
- Developing individual counselling;
- Motivation and special re-qualification programmes including the basics of work with computer;
- Developing the system of lifelong learning and changing the educational branches;
- Modifying the system of welfare benefits and unemployment benefits;

- Supporting the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and reducing the administration and tax burdens for SMEs.

EQUAL

- Counselling, motivation and educational services;
- Supporting changes within the educational system.

E) Disabled Persons

- Cumulation of disadvantage factors;
- Low interest of employers;
- Underdeveloped infrastructure.

National Action Plan of Employment 2003

- Improving the information system on vacancies;
- Developing individual counselling;
- Special re-qualification programmes including the basics of work with computer;
- Developing the system of lifelong learning and changing the educational branches;
- Modifying the system of welfare benefits and unemployment benefits;
- Supporting the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and reducing the administration and tax burdens for SMEs;
- Supporting the introduction of new forms of organisation of work;
- Improving the public awareness of the opportunities to employ disabled persons and on the way of performing the obligation to employ those persons.

EQUAL

- Developing social services focused on the support to the integration of disabled persons in the labour market;
- Developing sheltered workshops;

- Creating specific qualifications.

F) Romany Minority

- Low qualification;
- Low motivation to work;
- Problems in the relationship between the majority society and the Romany minority.

National Action Plan of Employment 2003

- Improving the information system on vacancies;
- Developing individual counselling;
- Motivation and re-qualification programmes including the basics of work with computer;
- Developing the system of lifelong learning and changing the educational branches;
- Modifying the system of welfare benefits and unemployment benefits;
- Supporting the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and reducing the administration and tax burdens for SMEs;
- Improving the communication with the Romany, implementing the Government “Concept of the Romany Integration”.

EQUAL

- Creating community centres;
- Higher involvement of Romany or pro-Romany associations;
- Enhancing social work in Romany communities.

G) Other Marginalized Groups (the homeless persons, persons in prison and ex-prisoners, drug- and alcohol-addicts, asylum seekers)

National Action Plan of Employment 2003

- Motivation, re-socialisation and re-qualification courses;
- Improving the information system on vacancies;
- Developing individual counselling;
- Implementing national strategies and concepts for those marginalized groups.

EQUAL

- The homeless
 - Complex counselling services
- Persons in prison and ex-prisoners
 - Enhance the position of probation officers
- Drug- and alcohol-addicts
 - Developing preventive measures
- Asylum seekers

The Community Initiative Programme EQUAL focuses on the groups of persons disadvantaged in the labour market, following up in its activities as described within the programme those of national plans and concepts, above all of the National Action Plan of Employment 2003, which is based on the National and European Strategies of Employment, and on the Operational Programme for the Human Resources Development.

Supporting the development of lifelong learning is important in principle for all groups. The system of lifelong learning should respond in a flexible way to the socio-economic conditions, acting preventively against unemployment, especially long-term unemployment. It is, however, essential that the Czech society as a whole

understands the significance of education and adopts the idea of the need of lifelong learning.

For the group of the long-term unemployed EQUAL supports the national programmes in the field of individual counselling for those persons. The development of specialised activities focused on motivation, activation and special re-qualification programmes is a very important aspect for that group.

EQUAL also enhances the activities for older persons, namely in the field of preventing loss of employment and supporting changes in the organisation – especially by means of introducing part-time jobs. Because of the general ageing of the Czech population, combating age discrimination in the labour market is a very important field, too.

For school leavers EQUAL supports the activities associated with further education, with individual career guidance during studies as prevention of unemployment and with the improved access to the information on the situation in the labour market.

For the problematic group of low-qualified persons EQUAL includes motivation and re-qualification courses, counselling services and support to changes in the educational system so as to prevent unemployment and the lack of qualified labour force.

Disabled persons also form a disadvantaged group in the labour market. EQUAL enhances plans for those persons at the national level by supporting sheltered workshops, creating specific qualifications and developing social services in which disabled persons could be directly integrated or which would help disabled persons in their integration in the labour market.

EQUAL focuses also on the activities for the Romany minority since the Romany belong to disadvantaged groups in the labour market. Following up national programmes, EQUAL will support the establishment of community centres, the integration of Romany and pro-Romany associations in solving problems of that group in the labour market and enhancing social work in Romany communities. All those activities should help remove barriers between the Romany community and the majority society not only in the labour market.

As regards the other marginalized groups, such as the homeless, persons in prison and ex-prisoners, drug- and alcohol-addicts and asylum seekers, EQUAL also enhances the possibilities of national plans and concepts by supporting the activities in the development of preventive measures, counselling services and social services.

Since most persons disadvantaged in the labour market usually cumulate multiple disadvantage factors (e.g. an older, low-qualified long-term unemployed woman, a low-qualified Romany, etc.), the activities supported under EQUAL for different groups of disadvantaged persons cannot be strictly differentiated. Envisaged can be synergic effects in the implementation of EQUAL projects, which should enhance the programme efficiency.

5) ASSESSMENT OF THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The implementation of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL as proposed by the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will be monitored using the Monitoring System of Structural Funds. In compliance with respective Council directives and decisions of respective Czech authorities, the Managing Authority will be responsible for proper monitoring of the programme. As stipulated by respective regulations, the CIP EQUAL Monitoring Committee will be the top body established to monitor the programme fulfilment. The Monitoring Committee will be created on the partnership principle and the programme Managing Authority will provide for adequate representation of the social partners, NGOs and other parties having direct experience with main forms of discrimination and inequalities in the labour market.

In compliance with respective regulations, the preparation of the annual reports and the final report on the programme implementation will be the responsibility of the Managing Authority. The reports approved by the Monitoring Committee will be forwarded to the Commission.

In compliance with Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL is subject to evaluation by independent evaluators. The ex-ante evaluation is conducted in accordance with respective regulations and co-ordinated with the Managing Authority. Because of the short period of time for the programme implementation, no mid-term evaluation will be prepared. Therefore, the final evaluation to be prepared by the Managing Authority and the ex-post evaluation to be prepared by independent evaluators will require special care.

The evaluators can state that the framework for monitoring and evaluation has been set up in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 and Commission Communication COM(2000)853.

6) IMPLEMENTATION

The concept of the CIP EQUAL implementation as presented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is based on the principles of the Community Initiative EQUAL, which are stipulated by Commission Communication COM(2000)853, i.e.:

- 1) Thematic approach,
- 2) Partnership,
- 3) Empowerment;
- 4) Transnational co-operation;
- 5) Innovation,
- 6) Mainstreaming.

Envisaged also is the fulfilment of gender mainstreaming, which complies with respective provisions of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 and Commission Communication COM(2000)853.

Ad 1) The thematic approach selected for the implementation of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL as proposed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs exactly reflects the required links to four pillars of the European Employment Strategy and to eight common thematic fields defined within the strategy plus a separate thematic field focused on assistance to the asylum seekers in their integration in the labour market. All nine thematic fields announced in the Czech Republic are set up as priorities within the second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL.

Ad 2) The key principle of the Community Initiative EQUAL, i.e. the principle of partnership, is adequately covered in the CIP EQUAL as proposed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Projects will be implemented through the mediation of so-called Development Partnerships and each Development Partnership will deal only with one thematic field. The Development Partnerships will include key partner organisations in terms of a given issue.

Ad 3) The principle of empowerment is based on the idea that all organisations involved in Development Partnerships will be able to fully participate in the decision-

making process and the projects proposed by those Development Partnerships will thus include also the representatives of the groups most at risk of discrimination and inequalities in the labour market.

Ad 4) Transnational co-operation as a principle is adequately covered in the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL as proposed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Ad 5) The principle of innovation will be based in the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL as proposed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs on the declared approaches, which comply with lessons learnt during the implementation of ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT in the existing Member States.

Ad 6) The need of easy availability of the gained experience and results will be provided for through the mediation of coordinated dissemination of good practice and the Managing Authority will be responsible for impacting national and regional policies through a separate measure, the so-called Action 3. Mainstreaming will comply with the respective Commission Communication.

In accordance with Commission Communication COM(2000)853 and referring to the recommendations given by the Commission and to the agreement made between the Commission and the existing Member States, four actions were chosen to be financed under EQUAL, with technical assistance being a separate priority. The expected implementation and time sequence of Actions 1 through 4 comply with the Commission requirements. It will be necessary within Action 1 that the Managing Authority provide in time for the preparation, approving and publishing of the criteria for the assessment of applications for projects. Similarly, the Managing Authority will have to provide for the timely information for the applicants about selected and rejected projects under Action 1.

As regards Action 2, the Managing Authority will have to check the stipulated terms of implementation of approved projects and propose, if necessary, that additional funds be allocated to continue successful projects and prolong their implementation.

Action 3 will not be implemented before Action 1 is completed. Responsible for its fulfilment will be the Managing Authority. Action 4, i.e. the technical support to the

implementation, will be in progress throughout the implementation of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL as proposed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

In accordance with the respective provision of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has been appointed to be the Managing Authority for the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL. The Minister has appointed the Department for ESF Management to fulfil all responsibilities of the Managing Authority. The Community Initiative Programme EQUAL as proposed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs stipulates respective tasks to be performed by the Managing Authority.

Upon the respective Government resolution, the Ministry of Finance has been selected to be the Paying Authority for the implementation of assistance from the Structural Funds. The Minister decided that the National Fund Department would be the Paying Authority. The Organisation and Administration Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has been appointed to be the Payment Unit for the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL. In accordance with respective communications and directives, Development Partnerships will be the Final Beneficiaries. The Development Partnerships are defined as the entities responsible for the project implementation. The draft Community Initiative Programme EQUAL as proposed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs includes the typical examples of envisaged programme organisations, which will be crucial as regards the selected issues to be solved. The scheme included in the programming document should indicate in a better way the involvement of individual institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

To enhance the general clearness of this section of the ex-ante evaluation of the Community Initiative programme EQUAL in the Czech Republic, the evaluators decided to present conclusions in two tables. Table 1 includes conclusions proper pertaining to the present programming document and Table 2 deals with the recommendations relating to modifications of the programming document and to the implementation of EQUAL.

Overall Evaluation:

THE EVALUATORS CONSIDER THE PRESENT COMMUNITY INITIATIVE PROGRAMME EQUAL AS COMPLYING WITH THE STIPULATED REQUIREMENTS AND ELIGIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION.

ANNEX NO. 9
COMPLEMENT TO THE EX-ANTE EVALUATION OF THE CIP EQUAL

Description of Co-operation between Ex-ante Evaluators and the Programming Team in the preparation of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL

Following the decision on the provider of the Ex-ante Evaluation, members of the Evaluation Team engaged themselves immediately in the work on the programming document in compliance with the general principles and rules set for preparation of programming documents.

The Evaluation Team consisted of the staff of The Center for Regional and Administrative Sciences of the University of Economics, Prague that have a wide range of experience in preparation and evaluation of programming documents at the national level as well as experience with ex-ante evaluation of programming documents for part of the programming period 2004-2006 in the EU.

Following the agreement with the Programming Team, the evaluators decided to form three basic branches of mutual co-operation when preparing the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL:

- A. Processing the draft version of Ex-ante Evaluation and of other modifications, extensions or proposals on the first draft handed in over the time;
- B. Organization of regular meetings between the Evaluation and Programming Team members;
- C. Individual e-mail and telephone exchange between the members of the Evaluation Team and Programming Team members for the individual parts of the programming document.

Ad A)

Within this form of mutual co-operation, the evaluators had presented the draft version of Ex-ante Evaluation of all the basic parts of the programming document to the Programming Team in the course of June and July. They had also presented their own proposals for modifications of the programming document text.

Specifically, this concerned **1)** The ex-ante evaluation of the analysis chapter (that was handed over on 6th June 2003, evaluating the analysis chapter of CIP EQUAL that was handed over to the Evaluation Team on 27th May 2003) in the overall volume of 16 pages. The evaluators had divided this first draft of the Ex-ante Evaluation of the analysis chapter, among other things, into two main parts devoted to A) socio-economic analysis and to B) analysis of the existing outcomes and experience.

In the part devoted to the socio-economic analysis, the evaluators have made, apart from specific comments on the individual passages of the handed over chapter, especially the following recommendations:

- The submitted version of the socio-economic analysis is too thematically diffused and consequently also too general. The authors should try to focus more on the selected issues and these, if possible, analyze in detail (especially with regional focus in this case).
- The partnership principle should also be reflected in the socio-economic analysis, to which analyses with regional focus should also contribute.
- The current conclusion of the Evaluation Team on the submitted socio-economic analysis states that given the current level of its elaboration one can expect difficulties with its links to the priorities and measures of the programming document under preparation.
- The Programming Team will need to submit a proposal of the SWOT analysis to the evaluators so that an overall assessment of the socio-economic analysis within the context of the whole programming document can be made.

The evaluators made no significant comments on the submitted analysis of the existing outcomes and experience in this first draft of the Ex-ante evaluation of the analysis chapter, just mentioned that some specific comments would be consulted with the Programming Team directly at meetings.

Further, it concerned **2)** the proposal of the SWOT analysis of the programming document made by the members of the Evaluation Team and sent on 19th June 2003.

On 18th July 2003, **3)** the proposal for text modification of Chapter 3 – Strategy of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL, including the proposal for definition of the specific objectives, was handed by the evaluators to the Programming Team.

Also on 18th July 2003, the evaluators own proposal **4)** of the basic structure of indicators for the document being prepared and **5)** the evaluation opinion on the allocations of funds was handed to the Programming Team.

On 13th August 2003, the evaluators sent to the Programming Team **6)** the Position of Ex-ante Evaluators on the Comments Submitted within the Consultation Process.

Review of the acceptance of evaluators' comments and recommendations by the Programming Team:

Ad 1) The evaluators state that the Programming Team accepted all their important comments related to the socio-economic analysis in the final version of the programming document, that is mainly the following:

- Regionalized assessment of the individual problems;
- Re-adjusted the structure of the internal content of the socio-economic analysis, which has made it more transparent and, according to the Evaluation Team members, also more in line with the individual priorities and measures.

The Evaluators also mention that some of their comments with regard to the depth of the analyses carried out were not possible to implement, following the agreement

with the Programming Team, due to the lack of the necessary data that is also in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs CR. This involved for instance the Roma Minority issues.

Ad 2) The Programming Team incorporated the proposal of the SWOT analysis into the programming document with the specific modifications that had come out of the discussions with the interested partners and were accepted by the evaluators.

Ad 3) The proposed modifications (redefinition of individual passages, extending of some passages, definition of specific objectives) were predominantly accepted and incorporated into the final version of the programming document.

Ad 4) The basic version of indicators proposed by the Evaluation Team has been accepted by the Programming Team without additional modification.

Ad 5) In their position, the evaluators supported the proposed allocation of funds so there was no need to make further modification by the Programming Team.

Ad 6) The recommendation of the evaluators was to accept most of the comments received within the framework of the consultation process, with the exception of Unit 702 MoLSA where the evaluators recommended to review the extent to which the comments can be accepted. The evaluators pointed out that it is not possible to make CIP EQUAL a gender mainstreaming study as it deals with the issue in a broader sense; that is with equal opportunities in general.

Ad B)

Within this form of co-operation, six meetings have taken place between the Evaluation and Programming Teams:

- 1) 13th June 2003
- 2) 19th June 2003
- 3) 11th July 2003

4) 17th July 2003

5) 13th August 2003

6) 15th August 2003

Ad 1) At this meeting, the Programming Team members indicated to the evaluators to what extent they accept their comments on the analysis part of the programming document and in what way individual comments would be incorporated.

Ad 2) The subject of the meeting was a discussion on the content of the SWOT analysis that had been presented by the Evaluation Team. What came out of the discussion was that the Programming Team would submit the SWOT analysis for discussion at the Working Group.

Ad 3) The meeting was divided into two main parts, the first being devoted to the discussion regarding the forms of incorporating the Evaluation Team comments on the analysis chapter into the programming document. The second part of the meeting was focused on the final clarification of the form of the SWOT analysis; that is including the incorporation of comments that came out of the discussion within the Working Group.

Ad 4) There were three areas of issues discussed at the meeting. Firstly, the final shape of the modified analysis chapter was discussed. Secondly, it was agreed that the evaluators receive Chapter 3 for further assessment, including the proposal for the division of allocated funds according to individual priorities. Thirdly, – following the discussion between the Programming Team and evaluators – it was agreed that the evaluators submit a proposal of the basic structure of indicators.

Ad 5) At the beginning of the meeting, the evaluators and Programming Team went back to the conclusions of the previous meeting (17th July 2003), discussing the question of the basic structure of indicators. This was followed by the discussion regarding the outcomes of the external consultation procedure, while the individual comments were handed over in writing to the evaluators, who promised to present their position on these comments to the Programming Team as soon as possible.

Ad 6) Initiated by the Programming Team, this was a meeting with those participating in the consultation process, attended also by representatives of the Evaluation Team. There were no further changes to the content of the programming document coming out of this meeting.

Ad C)

In the course of the work on the Ex-ante Evaluation of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL, a regular email and telephone exchange had been sustained, which especially helped to solve individual specific problems, to avoid misunderstanding, to find common standpoints and, above all, to create conditions for a successful course of the meetings.

The final version of Ex-ante Evaluation was handed over to the Programming Team on 15th September 2003.