

CIP EQUAL Bulletin

May 2007

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Current situation in the Czech Republic

At the beginning of May 2007, 54 Development Partnerships took part in the Action 2 and 3 of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL (CIP EQUAL). At this point projects are being developed and tested new procedures in practice. Dissemination and enforcement of best outputs into the relevant policies and practices relating to labour market and social integration are in progress. Some projects announce completion of project activities already this year. However a majority of projects will end their activities in 2008.

At present the evaluation of new applications submitted within the additional call for Action 3 is in progress, and both the current and newly established Development Partnerships may have applied for financial resources for the dissemination and mainstreaming activities.

Further meetings and intensive work are carried out at the level of national thematic networks. The national thematic networks present a useful platform for discussions among project representatives and experts in relevant fields.

Additional call for Action 3

On 28 February 2007 an additional call for Action 3 was announced. Within this call the amount of CZK 119,039,238 is available for allocation. The call is specified not only for the current Development Partnerships taking part in Actions 2 and 3, but also for newly established partnerships. The applicants requesting financial resources within the additional call may obtain financial support for dissemination and mainstreaming activities, such as evaluation of innovative solutions and tools for combating discrimination in the labour market, comparison of achieved results with the results of current approaches applied in the Czech Republic or in other EU Member States, dissemination of innovations between other relevant institutions or promotion and transfer of outcomes and good experience.



On 28 February 2007 an additional call for action 3 was announced. Within this call the amount of CZK 119,039,238 is available for allocation.

On 19 March the Managing Authority and the National Support Structure organized a seminar focused on the additional call, where those interested in additional funds were also informed about the way how to fill in the electronic form of the application for support or the method of application forms evaluation. The deadline for application submission was 30 March 2007 by 5.p.m. At present evaluation of 41 application forms submitted within this additional call is in progress. The results of this evaluation will be known at the turn of May and June, when the letters on the evaluation results shall be delivered to the applicants. More information on the additional call may be also found on the site www.equalcr.cz.

Second phase of on-going evaluation of CIP EQUAL

The second phase of on-going evaluation of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL was carried out in the period from May to December 2006. This phase of evaluation was performed by Euro Service Group s.r.o., Auditcom s.r.o. and Internuncia o.p.s. During the evaluation the evaluators focused on the following areas – results and impacts of the first round of Community Initiative EQUAL, implementation and monitoring system for Actions 2 and 3 of CIP EQUAL, evaluation of individual principles of CIP EQUAL or for example on dissemination of good experience from the projects outcomes and their practical implementation.

Within this evaluation phase a seminar “Innovative products of the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL” was held on 30 November 2006. Its aim was to present and identify examples of good practice of projects carried out in the first round of the Community Initiative EQUAL in the Czech Republic. Representatives of projects, which were implemented in the first round were also invited to this seminar and they assessed the seminar as a good opportunity for sharing experience from implementation of their projects and for obtaining information about the Programme's second round.

With respect to enforcement of principles of the Community Initiative EQUAL into programmes implemented within the new programming period 2007 – 2013, on 7 February 2007 a dissemination seminar was organized for members of the working group for preparation of the Operational Programme Human Resources and Employment. On the partnership principle basis representatives of different departments, social partners and representatives of local governments took part in this group. Representatives of the European Commission also attended this seminar. Following presentations the participants had a possibility to discuss the issue



of transferring the Community Initiative EQUAL principles into new programmes. The final report on the second phase of on-going evaluation of CIP EQUAL is available at www.equalcr.cz.

Summary of events

Overview of organized events

Annual conference of national thematic networks, 24 November 2006

An annual conference of national thematic networks (NTN) under the name "Examples of successful drawing of funds and co-operation of projects co-funded from the European Social Fund" took place on 24 November 2006. The conference was attended by more than 180 representatives of Development Partnerships, NTN experts, public institutions and mass media, including several foreign guests.

The opening speech was delivered by Blanka Elfmarková, the Director General of section for European Union and international relations of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Pavel Pinkava, the representative of the European Commission. In the next part the representatives of individual NTNs presented mainstreaming strategies set out in order to promote and disseminate projects outcomes. Barbara Orthodoxou from the British National Support Structure CIP EQUAL and Will Thompson from the British CIP EQUAL Managing Authority addressed the conference. The overall response was very positive. The participants praised, in particular presentations of nine projects, which were running the whole day in the foyer of the conference room. Participation of foreign guests and their presentations were also positively assessed.

Evaluation seminar, 23 - 25 November 2006

An international EQUAL evaluation study learning under the aegis of the European Commission in partnership with the Managing Authority of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL in the Czech Republic took place in Prague from 23 to 25 November 2006. In total 56 participants attended the seminar.

The first day of the seminar was held in the form of a joint session, where the results and experience from evaluation of the Community Initiative Programmes EQUAL in different EU Member States were presented. Upcoming transnational project of the Czech EQUAL Managing Authority "EQUAL evaluation Community of Inquiry and Practice" (EQUAL eCIP) was also introduced at the beginning of the seminar. The second phase of EQUAL eCIP was officially launched at the seminar and the participants were invited to join the EQUAL eCIP.



The annual conference of national thematic networks was attended by more than 180 representatives of DPs and experts.

An international EQUAL evaluation study seminar under the aegis of the European Commission was held in Prague

The activity of the EQUAL eCIP will be carried out within the established online forum of the European Social Fund in the Czech Republic, which was also introduced at the seminar opening. On the second day the participants were separated into three working groups: evaluators, coordinators of ESF evaluations and representatives of CIP EQUAL Managing Authorities. On the third and the last day of the seminar the results from working groups were presented by individual presenters. The seminar outcomes, including all presentations are available at the online forum of the European Social Fund in the Czech Republic (ESF forum) at the site <http://forum.esfcr.cz>. The European Commission also published an article about the seminar and its outcomes at its official sites <http://ec.europa.eu>.

Within the second phase of CIP EQUAL evaluation an external evaluator organized at the assignment of CIP EQUAL Managing Authority a seminar on self-assessment of development partnerships

Seminar “Implementation of principles of the Community Initiative EQUAL at the level of Development Partnerships in the period 2006 – 2008”

The seminar focused on implementation of basic principles of CIP EQUAL was held on 26 February 2007. The seminar followed the final report on the second phase of on-going evaluation of CIP EQUAL, which included a recommendation of how to further improve implementation of basic principles of CIP EQUAL in the direction of the Managing Authority, National Support Structure and Development Partnerships. All presentations from this seminar are available at www.equalcr.cz.

Seminar “Self-assessment of projects within CIP EQUAL”

Within the second phase of CIP EQUAL on-going evaluation the external evaluator of CIP EQUAL organized at the assignment of CIP EQUAL Managing Authority a seminar on self-assessment of development partnerships. With regards to contents the seminar followed also the on-line evaluation platform for consultancy provided to development partnerships in questions of self-assessment and the platform was also established by the evaluator.

The seminar took place in Ostrava on 27 March 2007 and it was organized in the form of a popular workshop. The seminar received a very positive response from projects representatives. Following completion of the second phase of CIP EQUAL evaluation the platform for self-assessment of development partnerships was removed to the [ESF forum](#) sites where it is possible to continually participate in the discussion and forward suggestions and queries to this issue.

Seminar “Gender Mainstreaming”

A seminar to a cross-sectional theme CIP EQUAL gender mainstreaming, which received special attention within implementation of CIP EQUAL, was

held on the 2 May 2007. Representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and experts dealing with this issue within individual Development Partnerships spoke at this seminar. The seminar participants had the opportunity to discuss the relevant points at issue.

Overview of planned events

- Seminar on validation of good practice will be held on 29 May 2007.
- Seminar concerning completion of projects is under preparation and it should take place in the third quarter of 2007.



Projects under the magnifying glass

This time we bring in the column Projects under the magnifying glass a brief view of two Development Partnerships, which focus on the disadvantaged groups in the labour market defined by age. The first one is the project "Support of lifelong learning and equal opportunities in the labour market for people over 50 years of age", which focuses on assertion of seniors in the labour market. The second project is "Your future", which vice versa turned its attention to persons between 15 to 25 years of age.

Project: Support of lifelong learning and equal opportunities in the labour market for working people over 50 years of age

Beneficiary: EXPERTIS PRAHA, spol. s r.o.

Budget: CZK 10,051,600

The project focuses on support of people assertion in the labour market for persons over 50 years of age in the Central Bohemia region. The Development Partnership "Third career" includes in addition to Expertis Praha six partners, such as Škoda Auto, STEM Agency or the Economic University in Prague. A survey of the situation in companies was carried out during the project and also personal and professional requirements of the target group were mapped. At present a review of two methodologies set out on the basis of the survey results is in progress. The first methodology includes a manual for employers and HR managers and focuses on utilizing in the best way the potential of employees over 50 years of age. The second document is a manual specified for employees and its objective is strengthening of their motivation in the first place.

Website: <http://www.expertis.cz>

Contact: Kateřina Dobiášová, katerina.dobiasova@expertis.cz,
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Project: Your future

Beneficiary: Vyšší odborná škola DAKOL and Střední škola DAKOL, o.p.s.

Budget: CZK 32,033,153

The project "Your future" aims at assisting young unemployed people with

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Low qualification between 15 and 25 years of age in their return to education and the labour market. It offers to the unemployed interested people a possibility of enhancing their qualification in one of the educational programmes such as a needlewoman, welder, driver, painter, surface finish of interiors, assembler of dry structures, running a household, trained nurse, but also qualification in gastronomic services, business, work with PC and verbal and written communication. The programme participants will be also able to gain new work experience within special professional experience in cooperation with local employers.

Already 11 persons with drug addiction experience found work in Café Therapy, the social enterprise of Fokus Praha, the project beneficiary.

Integration Centres in Karviná, Havířov and Most were established in the project and operate as information and consultancy centres. University and college students work in the Integration Centres under the logo "Young to young" and they are prepared to provide advice not only in the selection of the educational programme established within the project, but also in the orientation on the labour market. Students working in Integration Centres comprise a secondary target group and gain their experience, which shall facilitate their start of the career.

Website: <http://www.rpbudoucnost.cz>

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Information on other projects together with contacts is disclosed on www.equalcr.cz, where the current version of individual projects description is available.

Interesting projects outcomes

- ☑ 2 publications on the topic of equal opportunities of men and women were published – Study of costs and gains of equal opportunities of women and men: good or bad investment ? and Equal opportunities as a social responsibility of companies.
- ☑ Within the project Competencies for the labour market 24 three-day trainings for development of 8 competencies have taken place so far.
- ☑ Already 11 persons with drug addiction experience found work in Café Therapy, the social enterprise of Fokus Praha, the project beneficiary.
- ☑ In January 2007 5 contact points Benefit, which will serve within the South Bohemia region as advisory and information points for starting entrepreneurs, launched their activities.

News from the European Union

Database of EQUAL products

"The database of EQUAL products" was launched at the European Commission sites. It concerns a database of products developed on the basis of cooperation of international partnerships. More than a hundred products included in the database at present, were mainly selected by the Managing Authorities of individual countries. The database can be searched by thematic groups such as lifelong learning, social enterprises or integration of women in the labour market. Publisher products are of various types – ranging from training programmes, interactive sites references up to essays. The database compilers efforts in establishing an active bank of good practices at the European level are manifested by the fact that the database will be continually supplemented by new projects outcomes. The web link for the DB is http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/products/index_en.cfm.

About Czech National Thematic Networks in the European Newsletter

The article in the latest, fourth issue of the European Newsletter noted the annual Czech NTN conference, which took place in the premises of PwC in Prague on 24 November 2006 and provided the national thematic networks with space for presentation of EQUAL innovative products. The conference with international participation met favourable response. The authors also mention that "the fair" of projects, where almost ten Development Partnerships presented their projects in the foyer of the conference rooms won the highest recognition.

Further to the successful project presentation the European Newsletter brings closer view of other 4 Czech projects, backed up by the following Development Partnerships: "Competencies for Labour Market" (beneficiary RPIC-VIP, s.r.o.), "For a full life" (beneficiary Free Art Records, s.r.o.), "Group for Social Firm Development" (beneficiary Fokus Praha, o.s.) and "Coalition Chance" (beneficiary Sdružení pro probaci a mediaci v justici). Publication of this article in the European Newsletter in the section "Member State Focus" presents a good promotion not only for the above projects, but also for all entities taking part in CIP EQUAL in the Czech Republic. More information may be found in the [article itself](#).



The European Newsletter also presented the on-line sign language translation centre for the deaf.

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People over 50 and their participation in the labour market

In 2001 the European Union Member States undertook to increase by 2010 the percentage of older people's participation in the labour market from 40% to 50%. According to Vladimír Špidla, the European Commissioner for employment, social affairs and equal opportunities, the Member States are approaching this objective more slowly than expected. This is happening even in spite of the fact that successful reforms were carried out in 16 states and e.g. Finland, Hungary and Lithuania achieved improvement of approximately ten percent. Participation of older people in the labour market is also in the centre of interest of CIP EQUAL. An International conference Competence 50+ is planned in Goteborg from 18 to 20 July 2007 and should be attended by around 500 representatives from Development Partnerships and policy makers.

(Borrowed from the European Newsletter)

Since the beginning of this year a new act on social services has been in force. On its basis persons dependent on assistance of another person are provided, on a monthly basis, with the so-called care allowance.

Information from NTN

Since the beginning of the year the national thematic networks have been active in fulfilling the established thematic mainstreaming strategies. In NTN meetings inspirational approaches from individual projects are confronted with recommendations and opinions of participating experts.

All information relating to the NTN work, e.g. national mainstreaming strategy and mainstreaming strategies of particular NTN, invitations, programmes and minutes of the meetings or other events are available at <http://www.equalcr.cz> in the section Thematic Networks. All this information and other relating information is also available at online ESF forum (<https://forum.esfcr.cz>), where it is possible to join the running discussion.

European Social Fund Forum

A discussion forum was established on the web site <http://forum.esfcr.cz/> at the initiative of the section for aid management from the European Social Fund and its objective is strengthening of mutual awareness within the implementation structures and authorities of the European Social Fund in the Czech Republic. This forum brings e.g. possibility of direct communication with administrators of ESF implementation authorities in the Czech Republic through the system mail, and in the thematic discussion clubs it is possible to contribute to key implementation documents and rules, etc. On the forum sites clubs to individual NTN were established with the discussion to mainstreaming strategies, to future NTN events or NTN joint proposals (participation of remunerated experts, NTN coordination).

Social Services Act

A whole set of projects carried out within CIP EQUAL pays attention to social services. Due to this reason an article relating to the Social Services Act, effective as of 1 January 2007, has been included into this Bulletin number.

What the new Social Services Act brought?

A new Social Services Act has been in force since the beginning of this year. On its basis a person dependent on the assistance of another person is provided, on a monthly basis, with a social allowance specified for securing care for the person himself/herself and self-sufficiency – the so-called care allowance. This care allowance is settled by the municipal authority of the municipality with extended powers (the so-called municipality III) according to the permanent stay status of the person in need of the care.



Care allowance without submitting an application

Persons who draw increased pensions due to disability and children with a (status of) long-term severe disability requiring extra care are entitled to the care allowance without submitting an application.

In January 2007 municipal authorities of municipalities with extended powers sent to entitled persons notification of the entitlement to the care allowance, where people were invited to specify the manner in which they wanted the allowance to be delivered and the way they would use it.

Care allowance on the basis of an application

As of 1 January 2007 all other persons have been entitled to the care allowance on a basis of an application. Municipal authorities of municipalities with extended powers shall commence proceedings on care allowance. Part of the proceedings represents a social investigation in the place, where the applicant lives and assessment of the health condition of the applicant. Municipal authorities shall decide on the allowance entitlement usually within the period of 90 days following submission of the application and in the case of a positive decision the allowance shall be settled retrospectively as of the calendar month in which it was submitted.

How the claims of care persons are addressed?

Claims of the care persons following from the system of pension and health insurance are maintained, if these persons take care of a person who is at least in the second degree of dependency on assistance of another

person. A certificate of the care provided shall be issued on request by the relevant municipal authority of municipality with extended powers.

Where do you obtain further information?

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs issued a Brief guide to the Social services Act. The publication aims at facilitating orientation in the system of social services which went through a number of major changes due to adoption of a new Social Services Act. It is available to interested persons at municipal authorities of municipalities with extended powers and at regional authorities. Detailed information on the new Social Services Act is also available at the site <http://www.mpsv.cz> (in the part Social Services) or the staff of social services providers shall provide the information.

Borrowed from "Práce a sociální politika (Work and social policy)", newspaper of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic, volume 3, number 12, 11. 12. 2006.

*The Ministry of Labour
and Social Affairs issued
a Brief guide to the
Social Services Act.*

Contractual principle in provision of social services

The provision of social services as stipulated in the Social Services Act, is newly based on the contractual principle. Negotiating the type of the service and the scope of services provided according to individual needs of persons in an agreement, including specific conditions of the service provision, represents a significant step towards exercising own free will of persons, to whom the services shall be provided.

"Somebody shall not decide" about people and their needs, but people themselves will be participants in negotiating the terms and conditions of the services provided. At the same time the agreement enables the user to enforce the agreed scope of services and binds the provider to provide the service in a manner, which is secure and professional for the user.

The agreement on provision of services shall be concluded in writing, except for cases, when it is impossible (e.g. telephone emergency assistance) or the written form would be counter-productive for purposeful provision of the service (e.g. low threshold facilities for children and the young). It generally holds that the provider is obliged to conclude services agreement with the interested person. The agreement is of a private nature and it is governed by the relevant provisions of the civil code.

Social services are provided by basic activities stipulated in the act. The system gives to providers more accurate specification of the scope of services provided, and at the same time it provides the users of social services with selection of such a provider, who offers them the most suitable social services. Possible combination of various types of services

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services and also combination of services with assistance and support on the part of the family or other persons presents an important principle.

It is up to every person to select himself/herself or with the help of a close person, advisory centre or the services provider the most suitable service for himself/herself, which will help him/her to support own activity leading to addressing an unfavourable situation.

*Borrowed from "Práce a sociální politika", newspaper of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic,
volume 4, number 1, 11. 1. 2007.*