

CZECH FAMILY LAW

IX.

FOSTER CARE

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SOURCES

- AF (§§ 45a - 45d), Children Act, Civil Procedure Code
- CONVENTIONS
 - *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Council of Europe)*
 - *Convention on the Right of the Child (UN)*
 - Council of Europe Committee of Ministers: *Recommendation No. R (87)6*

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EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Art. 8 *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*

Case Kutzner versus Germany - violation of Art. 8

background to the case:

- 2 children attended special schools for children with special needs
- parents had learning difficulties and attended special schools and „low intellectual capacity to bring up their children properly“
- social worker wrote a very negative report on them ▶
- the court a) withdrew parental rights (*Sorgerecht*)
 - b) placed the children with separate, unidentified professional foster parents (*professionelle Inkognito Pflege*)
 - c) deprived *de facto* parental visiting rights - 6 months!
 - d) restricted parental visiting rights - 1 hour a month with the presence of 8 representatives from social services

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61. “Although the essential object of Article 8 is to protect the individual against arbitrary action by the public authorities, there may in addition be *positive obligations* inherent in an *effective “respect” for family life*. Thus, where the existence of a family tie has been established, the State must in principle act in a manner calculated to enable that *tie to be developed* and take measures that will enable parent and child to be reunited (see, among other authorities: *Eriksson*, cited above, pp. 26-27, § 71; *Margareta and Roger Andersson*, cited above, p. 30, § 91; *Olsson v. Sweden (no. 2)*, judgment of 27 November 1992, Series A no. 250, pp. 35-36, § 90; *Ignaccolo-Zenide*, cited above, § 94; and *Gnahoré*, cited above, § 51).“

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76. “The Court further reiterates that a care order should in principle be regarded as a *temporary measure*, to be discontinued as soon as circumstances permit, and that any measures implementing temporary care should be consistent with the ultimate aim of reuniting the natural parents and the child (*Olsson (no. 1)*, cited above, pp. 36-37, § 81). The *positive duty* to take measures to *facilitate family reunification* as soon as reasonably feasible will begin to weigh on the responsible authorities with progressively increasing force as from the commencement of the period of care, subject always to its being *balanced* against the duty to consider the best interests of the child (*K. and T. v. Finland*, cited above, § 178).

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CONDITIONS FOR FOSTER CARE

- A) NON FUNCTIONING NATURAL FAMILY
- B) CONSENT BY PARENTS - not required by law (!?)
- C) CONSENT BY THE CHILD
- E) THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD
- F) THE EXISTENCE OF PROSPECTIVE FOSTER PARENTS
- G) MATCHING BY THE STATE
- H) PRE-FOSTER CARE - not obligatory
- CH) (THE MOTION AND) THE COURT DECISION

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TYPOLOGY OF FOSTER CARE

- § 45a- 45d AF
 - INDIVIDUAL
 - COMMON ONLY BY SPOUSES
 - S.O.S. VILLAGES
 - „PROFESSIONAL“ - for very short period

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PARENTS

- they cannot or do not want to live with the child because of reasons:
 - objective or subjective
 - temporary, short or longlasting

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THE CHILD

- is not adoptable
- the court proceedings on adoptability is „on“
- is adoptable, but not „attractive for adoption“
 - older or has a lot of siblings
- there is „a change“ to come-back to family of origin



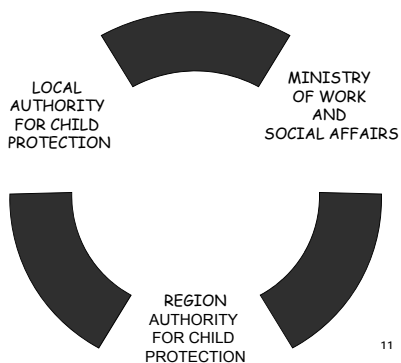
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FUTURE FOSTER PARENTS

- AF: 45a
 - high moral quality
 - full capacity to legal acts
 - if couple, only husband and wife spouse of foster parent, one of spouses, one person
 - *close relatives - possible*
 - good health conditions
 - Children Act: motivations and preparation

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MATCHING PROCESS BY THE STATE



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PRE-FOSTER CARE

- § 45b AF
 - AIM: contact/family ties?
 - facultative
 - not longer then 3 months (§ 45b/2 in fine)
 - is paid - see Act No. 117/1995 Coll., On state social support
 - decision: state authority or court or parents (de facto)

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COURT PROCEEDINGS

- EX OFFO OR ON THE MOTION OF PROSPECTIVE FOSTER PARENTS
- see § 176 ff Civil procedure code
- parties:
 - parents
 - child
 - future foster parents, or one of a couple and his/her spouse
- personal presence and hearing
- the consent by parents is not required by law!
- court decision: constitutive

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CONSEQUENCES OF FOSTER CARE

§ 45c AF

- STATUS TIES TO FAMILY OF ORIGIN ARE NOT LIMITED, VISITING RIGHTS, MAINTENANCE, HEREDITARY LAW etc.
- ONLY *PERSONAL CARE* OF THE CHILD IS UP TO FOSTER PARENTS



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RELATIONSHIP PARENTS AND CHILD

- status parent and child is not changed
- ties to family of origin are not changed either
- parent has parental responsibility
 - parent is legal representative
 - parent manages child's property
 - parent brings up the child (mainly decision making in important matters) - *no personal care*
 - parent has visiting rights
- parent pays maintenance duty to the state

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RELATIONSHIP FOSTER PARENTS AND CHILD

■ § 45c AF

(1) The foster parent must care of the child personally. If the child was put into fostering of only one spouse, the provision of § 33 shall apply analogously.

(2) In the course of care of the child, the foster parent *exercises adequately rights and duties of parents*. The foster parent has no maintenance duty vis-à-vis the child and may *represent the child* and manage his or her affairs *only in usual cases*. If the foster parent is of the opinion that a decision of the child's legal representative is not in accordance with the child's interests, the foster parent may demand that *the court decide*.

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FINANCING BY THE STATE

- Act No. 117/1995 Coll., On state social support
 - allowance for coverage of needs of the child
 - reward (fee) for foster parents
 - contribution for buying a car (more than 4 children)
 - contribution at „child's arrival“



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maintenance duty of parents:

■ § 45d

(1) The claim to maintenance determined by a court's decision for a child entitled to a contribution for coverage of needs according to a special act^{7a}) *shall pass to the state*. If the maintenance exceeds the amount of the contribution mentioned in the first sentence, the child is entitled to the difference between the maintenance and the contribution; this difference shall be paid to the foster parent.

(2) The court shall order that parents, eventually other individuals bound to provide the child with maintenance should pay this maintenance to the relevant authority that pays the foster parent or the major child contribution for coverage of needs of the child according to a special act.

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Cancelling and extinction

- 45a/3 AF: The fostering may be canceled by a decision of the court. The court may cancel the fostering care only for important reasons; the court shall always cancel the fostering if the foster parent asks for it.
- MATURITY OF THE CHILD