
The Roma Integration Policy Concept

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1. General Starting Points

1.1. The Government of the Czech Republic approaches Roma affairs from three aspects – human rights, national identity (ethnicity), and the wider socio-cultural perspective. These approaches do not contradict, but complement, each other. Reducing the Roma problem to any one of these would represent undesirable distortion. Such balanced concept, which takes into account all three aspects, is also reflected in the structure of the advisory bodies of the government.

1.2. The first of these perspectives is based on the need to ensure that all citizens of the Czech Republic, i.e. including the Roma, have the opportunity of exercising, fully and without discrimination, all their individual rights guaranteed to them under the Constitution, the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, international human rights conventions that are binding for the Czech Republic and also by the law of the European Union. The human rights aspect of Roma issues is dealt with by the Council of the Government of the Czech Republic for Human Rights¹ as the government's advisory body monitoring the internal observance of passed and ratified human rights agreements, preparing reports on the implementation of the obligations arising from these agreements (in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic), and recommending conceptual steps to the government or its individual members on how to reinforce the protection of human rights. Of the individual committees of the Council for Human Rights, the human rights issues of the Roma are mainly dealt with by the Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Other committees of the Human Rights Council (e.g. the Committee for Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights) also handle Roma affairs, albeit to a lesser extent. At the same time, the human rights aspect of the perception of and approach to the resolution of Roma affairs takes regard of multiple discrimination of Roma women, i.e. as women and due to their ethnic origin. Compliance with international obligations regarding women's equality is taken care of by the Government Council for Equal Opportunities of Men and Women.

1.3. The second, national/ethnic perspective is based on the specific rights of national/ethnic minorities (including collective rights) as defined in Chapter III of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms and in the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities. These specific rights are explicitly regulated by Act No. 273/2001 Coll. on the Rights of Members of National Minorities and on an Amendment to Related Legislation (hereinafter referred as Minority Act, amended by Act No. 320/2002 Coll.). In Section 2(1) of this Act, the term “national minority” is defined by subjective traits (“they manifest their will to be deemed a national minority for the purpose of...”) and objective characteristics (“a community of citizens of the Czech Republic... who differ from other citizens, usually by their common ethnic origin, language, culture, and traditions”). Individual rights guaranteed by the law and the above-mentioned Framework Convention are also closely connected with culture, language, and a self-perceived collective identity (the right to education in the language of a national minority, the right to use this language in official relations and before the courts, the right to disseminate and receive information in this language, the right to preserve and develop the culture of the national minority, etc.). The Czech Republic acknowledges the Roma as a national minority; they are represented in the Government

¹ Hereinafter referred to as Council for Human Rights (set up under Government Resolution No. 809 of 9 December 1998)

Council for National Minorities,² the government's advisory body for the affairs of national minorities, and as such can “strive to preserve and develop their independence, language, and culture”, as stipulated by Section 2(1) of the above-mentioned Act. In this respect, the same rights apply to the Roma as to any other national minority residing in the Czech Republic. At the same time, however, it is important to take into account in a sensitive and adequate manner, while supporting the efforts of the Roma minorities to preserve and develop its culture and language, the fact that, unlike the culture of other national minorities, e.g. the Polish, German or Slovak minority, the Roma culture cannot rely on the support that is being provided naturally in all other cases by institutions in mother countries.

1.4. The third aspect, the socio-cultural perspective, is based on the wider concept of the “Roma community” contained in the reasoned statement accompanying Government Resolution No. 686 of 29 October 1997 on the Report on the Situation of the Roma Community in the Czech Republic and on the Current Situation within the Roma Community. This aspect is the focus of work by a third government advisory body, the Council of the Government of the Czech Republic for Roma Community Affairs.³ The terms “Roma community” and “Roma national minority” do not overlap completely. The defining trait of a member of the Roma national minority is his active wish to be considered a member of this minority, and to develop the language and culture of the national minority with others. Thus, members of the Roma minority are defined subjectively. On the contrary, the term “member of the Roma community” is rather an objective term. According to the Roma Integration Policy Concept of 2004, “a member of the Roma community is *de facto* anyone whom the majority identifies as a member of this socially and ethnically defined group”. This definition was criticised as too general and vague. However, as regards the formulation of supporting measures of social and economic integration of the Roma, we have to admit, in practice, that objective socio-cultural characteristics of a “member of the Roma community” also include citizens who do not declare Roma identity in a census or in another manner, and express no active will to develop their own language and culture. Instead, their awareness of “being different” tends to be determined by their position in society, i.e. by the fact that they are rejected and marginalized by the mainstream society. Because of their oppressive social situation, many Roma avoid the issue of their affiliation to a national minority; government policy, on the other hand, must address the plight of this category of socially marginalized Roma, and generally focuses on social matters (employment, social welfare, and housing) rather than on specifically national minority concerns (the development of culture and language, national minority education). If the Roma Integration Policy Concept and the public policy abandons the term “member of the Roma community”, they will have to replace it inevitably by another term, enabling them to meaningfully interpret and take into account international documents, e.g. those of the Council of Europe, and documents of the European Union relating to the status of the Roma. Such term corresponds to the fact that persons of other than Roma origin who have integrated into and live permanently within the Roma environment become members of the Roma community. Indeed, it would be more to apply the plural, i.e. “Roma communities”, in the meaning of a sub-ethnic or local community. *In this respect, the government welcomes views of the Roma or of experts on Roma culture or*

² The Council was established in accordance with Section 6(3) of Act No. 273/2001 Coll. on the Rights of Members of National Minorities and on an Amendment to Related Legislation.

³ The new statute of the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs was approved under Government Resolution No. 100 of 28 January 2004 (previously the Inter-Ministerial Commission for Roma Community Affairs).

problems of Roma communities, which will contribute, as objective comments, to the specification of these terms.

1.5. Successful integration in other spheres of life of the society also requires ensuring a better social and economic status of members of the Roma community and an adequate distribution of these positions within the mainstream society. The goal behind the adoption of the *National Action Plan on Social Inclusion for the Years 2004 – 2006*⁴ by the government is the mitigation of social exclusion, which represents an extremely bad economic and social situation, affecting adversely overall ability of excluded persons to participate in the life of the society as a whole. Due to overall adverse impacts of social exclusion, combating social exclusion is an urgent priority of the government policy. During the implementation of these objectives, the government focuses to the maximum possible extent on **support to the activation** of members of Roma communities, **in contrast with passive acceptance** of help.⁵

1.6. Despite the basic division of the approach to Roma affairs into human rights, minority and socio-cultural policies, quite understandably there are some areas where at least two of these perspectives blend into one another. For example, in issues of education or employment, solutions to social problems combine with the general protection of human rights, especially protection against discrimination. The very concept of the government's integration policy combines two requirements: overcoming social exclusion and attempting to preserve the Roma cultural identity. The government believes that integrating members of Roma communities into Czech society and preventing their further social exclusion is an urgent task that must be reflected in government policy.

1.7. Integrating Roma into Czech society must not mean the loss of Roma identity, culture, and language. Here, integration means the full incorporation of the Roma into society while preserving most of the cultural features and differences they want to preserve. It is possible for a national minority to integrate fully into a multicultural society while preserving its cultural heritage. Therefore, the government's key stance in its policy toward members of the Roma communities is to respect Romany identity and the related traditions and culture.

1.8. The Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms forbids all forms of pressure, direct and indirect, aimed at assimilation of a minority, and at the loss of its culture and language. In this respect, integration should be differentiated from assimilation and from the full cultural conformity of Roma to the mainstream society. Any individual may opt for assimilation, but this choice must be made freely; assimilation must be neither prevented nor forced. Although the path of assimilation can lead to full-bodied citizenship, the government is convinced that if assimilation were to become a solution for all Roma, society as a whole would suffer a cultural loss. Any *en masse* assimilation of Roma would necessarily give rise to the suspicion that it has been caused by majority society's unwillingness or inability to accept the Roma as long as they maintain their cultural identity.

1.9. Such concept of Roma integration is fully compatible with the process of emancipation of the Roma as a national minority, i.e. discovering and reinforcing one's own cultural identity, which is now being developed among the Roma. The government is convinced that the more Roma feel themselves to be Roma, the freer and more responsible citizens they will become. Government measures will ensure that Roma attempts at emancipation are not obstructed in

⁴ Resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic No. 730 of 21 June 2004.

⁵ The Roma Integration Policy Concept and the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion are not parallel but complementary documents. The Roma Integration Policy Concept transfers social inclusion procedures set forth in the National Action Plan into specific measures focused on a special target group.

society. Ultimately, emancipation can only arise from a free decision of the Roma, not from government policy.

1.10. In an effort to improve the status of the Roma, the government has adopted a Policy Concept aimed at redressing the injustice connected with centuries of discrimination and damage caused before 1989 by the policy of forced assimilation. At the same time, the government is prepared to draw on all positive experiences acquired in the past. The government intends to continue with the removal of obstacles existing both on the side of the mainstream society and the Roma themselves, which hinder the efforts of the Roma aimed at social and cultural advancement.

1.11. The primary goal of the Roma Integration Policy Concept is to improve the status of the Roma in all spheres of life of the society, in which there exist unjustified and unacceptable differences between the mainstream society and the Roma that are detrimental to the Roma, and to achieve peaceful co-existence of members of Roma communities with the rest of society. The Concept has set six priorities, which reflect at the same time the gender mainstreaming principle:

- a) removal of external obstacles preventing the integration of members of Roma communities into society, i.e. mainly the removal of all forms of discrimination of individuals and whole groups based on race, skin colour, national identity, language, or membership of a certain people or ethnic group;**
- b) assistance in removing internal obstacles preventing the inclusion of members of Roma communities into society, i.e. mainly in removing handicaps related to education and skills;**
- c) social elevation of members of the Roma communities should be considered as a priority in the near future, which requires especially intensive attention, i.e. primarily a reduction in unemployment, an improvement in their housing situation, and subsequently an improvement of their state of health, prevention of social exclusion in Roma communities and removal of consequences of such exclusion;**
- d) halting the rise and spreading of excluded Roma enclaves, the so-called ghettoisation;**
- e) ensuring the development of Roma culture and the Roma language;**
- f) creation of a tolerant environment free of prejudice, where membership in a group based on race, skin colour, national identity, language, or being a member of a certain nation is not a reason for an individual to be judged and treated differently;**
- g) ensuring safety of members of the Roma community.**

1.12. In connection with the entry of the Czech Republic into EU, the government has undertaken to make use of all new and available means helping social inclusion of members of Roma communities. In this respect, all of the government activities shall comply with the *Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion*, which was signed on 18 December 2003 in Brussels by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic and the EU Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, and with the *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion*, which was adopted by the Government Resolution No. 730 of 21 July 2004. The government will support the introduction of such mechanisms that will guarantee the use of EU structural funds (particularly of the European Social Fund of Regional Development) in support of programmes focused on social inclusion of members of Roma communities,

including their use in the preparation of research and assessment studies evaluating the current situation of Roma communities in the Czech Republic and the impact of programmes financed from EU structural funds on members of Roma communities.

1.13. The government adopted its *Concept of Government Policy Concerning Members of the Roma Community, Aiding Their Integration into Society* (hereinafter referred to as “Policy Concept”), which contains these priorities, under Government Resolution No. 599 of 14 June 2000, its first updated version under Government Resolution No. 87 of 23 January 2002, its second updated version under Resolution No. 243 of 12 March 2003 and its third updated version under no. 607 of 16 June 2004. The fourth update, which has been submitted for approval as of 28 February 2005, reflects the developments that have occurred since the approval of the third updated version of the Policy Concept, i.e. namely the approval of the material intent of the Act on Subsistence Minimum and Material Destitution, the approval of the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion and of the National Action Plan of Employment, adoption of the National Action Plan relating to The Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 of a new Education Act. The submitted Roma Integration Policy Concept (2005) does not change the general starting points or priorities that were set by the government in previous policy concepts, but strives to further specify and update such concepts and searches new ways for their implementation. This Policy Concept is a medium-term concept, with a three-year time limit, but may be amended earlier by the government if required.⁶ The new version of the Roma Integration Policy Concept has been elaborated with the participation of a team of independent experts from the academic community and non-profit organizations. Conclusions of their work have been incorporated in the text of the submitted Policy Concept.

2. Institutional organization and funding of the Roma integration on the central and local levels

2.1. The fundamental prerequisite of successful implementation of the Roma Integration Policy Concept is the cooperation and involvement of central and local authorities and the civil society. A partnership based on mutual support should be established among stakeholders. Mechanisms and general conditions formed at the government level will enable the representatives of local government, non-governmental non-profit organizations and citizens to implement the integration policy in practice.

Central level

2.2. The two government advisory bodies mentioned above - the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs and the Government Council for National Minorities - make a significant contribution to the integration of members of Roma communities. There are also special expert bodies at individual ministries. Parts of such institutional backup on the local level are Roma advisors and assistants at district authorities and Roma coordinators at regional authorities. In the broader sense of the word, institutional backup also involves Roma

⁶ Prior annual updates of the Roma Integration Policy Concept had their merits at the time when the government was forming its basic attitudes and checked their validity. However, it appears now that annual updating of the Policy Concept is not necessary and has its pitfalls, particularly as regards the addressees of its recommendations, who may find it difficult to grasp frequent partial changes of the Policy Concept.

professionals employed by the state or local government. For instance, central state administration authorities employ a total of 7 employees who are at least partly responsible for Roma affairs. Their work has its importance for the incorporation of specific problems of the Roma into broader concepts and policies in the relevant areas, e.g. employment, housing, education and others. If we borrow a term that is generally used in the field of equality of women and men, we can say that the task of these employees is to support “mainstreaming” of policies of equal opportunities for the Roma. Such policies may become effective only by linking mainstreaming with measures focused on specific groups. It is desirable to think about methods that would help these officials fulfil their tasks as best and as effectively as possible. One of these methods is the provision of support to their education in Roma affairs; another one is the creation of a certain informal network designated, for instance, for sharing of information.

2.3. The Council of the Government of the Czech Republic for Roma Community Affairs, as an advisory body to the government, has been playing a significant role in the institutional aspect of integration of Roma communities. At the same time, it is the sole central inter-departmental authority whose aim is to unify activities of individual ministries directed at the integration of Roma communities. Being an advisory body of the government, the Council of the Government of the Czech Republic for Roma Community Affairs cannot supervise the performance of tasks entrusted to regional authorities and to municipal authorities with extended competencies, or draw any conclusions from their failure to fulfil such tasks. The necessity of institutional enhancement of the Roma integration is also confirmed by the *Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion*⁷ and the *National Action Plan on Social Inclusion*⁸. A potential solution that was formerly considered in this respect was the establishment of an agency – a contributory organization or a public benefit company.⁹ Later on, it was suggested to establish an organizational component of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs or an organizational unit of the Government Office. However, no consensus was reached in this respect, particularly due to one of the government's priorities, which is the prevention of further growth of the state apparatus. Therefore, it is necessary to continue to seek in the next period other institutional backup for prevention of social exclusion, to establish at the central level (but not inevitably within the state administration) a structure that would motivate local government authorities, through the supply of adequate services and resources, in their implementation of integration measures. A partial step in this direction could be the support of non-state non-profit organizations, which participate in the allocation of finances from EU funds, like Nadace pro rozvoj občanské společnosti (Civil Society Development Foundation) or the National Training Fund. (See also clause 5.7 below).

⁷ The Memorandum notes that it is necessary to establish, “in order to promote the integration of Roma people into society, an agency the objective of which will be to implement integration programmes for members of the Roma community and to prevent social exclusion in Roma communities, including removing its impact with support of EU structural funds.”

⁸ The National Action Plan on Social Inclusion notes that “The Government Council for Roma Community Affairs ... in its capacity as advisory body to the Government ... is not and most likely cannot be equipped (with the authority impact, tools and personnel) to become a partner to local government authorities that are expected to promote integration through the supply of adequate services and resources.”

⁹ See *Analysis of Possibilities of Intensification and Increased Efficiency of Work for the Sake of Prevention of Social Exclusion in Roma Communities and Elimination of its Consequences by Means of an Appointed Agency*. (The government took note of this analysis by Resolution No. 1113 of 13 November 2002).

Subsidising policy of the state in the field of integration of Roma communities

2.4. The government spends every year considerable funds on the integration of Roma communities¹⁰. However, field work feedback indicates that not all of these amounts are appropriately targeted and have not provided until now a systemic solution for integration of socially excluded Roma communities. The evaluation of certain programmes indicates that such low effectiveness is caused, among others, by the fact that the government gives priority in specific measures to integration efforts based on an ethnic viewpoint over socially based inclusive interventions.¹¹ Substantial funds are spent inappropriately on short-term *ad hoc* activities. Another problem of the distribution of government funds in the form of subsidies for the purpose of social inclusion of Roma communities is the lack of coordination among ministries, which results in scattering of these funds. At the same time, there is *de facto* no authority that would effectively coordinate the policy of the ministries and create priorities of the subsidy policies applied by the government in this sphere for every calendar year. *To increase the effectiveness of the implementation of the Roma Integration Policy Concept, it is necessary to re-assess the current financial support system and to propose such framework that will permit the implementation of long-term measures proposed in the Concept at the local level and in cooperation with all relevant partners.*

2.5. The current implementing structure of the use of financial means provided by the European structural funds does not fully match the actual needs of socially excluded Roma communities. The mechanism of drawing of this financial support is not clearly organized and too complicated for applicants. Four support options that are currently available differ as to their content and administrative aspects. The most extensive opportunities in the Czech Republic are provided by the Joint Regional Operating Programme (JROP), whose Measure 3.2 allows financing of direct services provided to target groups in specific regions. This kind of support is provided to “soft investments”, i.e. not to the infrastructure in this area. The human resources development infrastructure is ensured by JROP Measure 3.1. Another opportunity is offered by the Operating Programme of Human Resources Development, Measure 2.1, which extends support to projects designated for Roma communities, but only on the so-called national level (projects going beyond the NUTS II region). Another possibility to obtain support is the Single Programming Document for Objective 3: Capital City of Prague, which ensures support of this target group in the Prague region. The final possibility of support is the “Global Grant”, i.e. Measure 2.3, which is designated, by its nature, to provide support to education and capacities of social service providers in regions and to the provision of these services in projects which do not meet the minimum required financial limit for projects set in other support options. In addition to the foregoing, it is

¹⁰ According to the information provided by the Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic, individual ministries spend over CZK 100,000 for programmes of subsidies focused on the integration of Roma communities. However, this figure does not include all funds spent by the state on the integration of Roma communities, but only those spent within the subsidizing procedures. Details see *Report on the State of Roma Communities*, Prague, Council of the Government of the Czech Republic for Roma Community Affairs, 2005.

¹¹ Ivana Šimiková, Pavel Navrátil, Jiří Winkler: *Hodnocení programů zaměřených na snižování rizika sociálního vyloučení romské komunity (Evaluation of the Programmes Focused on the Reduction of Social Exclusion of Roma Community)*, Prague, VÚPSV (Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs) – Research Centre Brno, 2003, p. 53.

possible to use the EQUAL Initiative.¹² Each of these variants has a different administration and implementation system and does not guarantee as a whole the transparency of provision of such funds for Roma integration purposes. Due to the fact that the implementation structures fulfil wider social objectives than the support of the integration of Roma communities, it is impossible to demand that their formation be subordinated solely to this aspect. Therefore, the truly realistic measures appear to be the activities that support provision of information to potential applicants for financial assistance from these funds about existing possibilities of support from European Funds and programmes and about the application procedure and use of these funds¹³. This task is especially urgent because the new financial period of the European Union, which will begin in 2007, will bring about adjustments and changes in the structure of individual funds and programmes and in the possibilities of using these funds.

Roma regional coordinators and Roma advisors

2.6. The post of regional Roma coordinator was established under Act No. 129/2000 Coll. on Regions (the Regional Establishment) The process of appointment of regional coordinators of Roma advisors was completed and the coordinators were indeed appointed in all regions in 2002 and 2003. Experience gained until now has shown the importance of appointment of regional coordinators of Roma advisors, which represent a reliable link and an important system element which makes it possible to link integration activities on the central and regional level. *The posts of coordinators should be strengthened and further systemized in future.* The central state administration authorities and local government authorities should make use of coordinators in the resolution of problems related to the integration of Roma communities, and above all in the elaboration of conceptual materials. The importance of activities performed by the coordinators will be further enhanced by the establishment of their further education system, unified methodological guidance and appropriate placement at the regional authorities. Last but not least, it is necessary to set high criteria for selection of coordinators. Good results at the regional level can be achieved namely by effective cooperation among members of the Council of the Government of the Czech Republic for Roma Community Affairs, the coordinators and the employees of the office the Council of the Government of the Czech Republic for Roma Community Affairs.

Even though the post of regional Roma coordinator has gained, during the short time of its existence, a relatively significant importance, some problems are still at issue. First of all, their work placement at the regional offices is not the same (some of them work at the department of social affairs and health care, other at the culture and heritage department, department of security and minority issues, department of prevention or humanitarian issues, and some of them are even directly subordinated to the regional commissioner's office), and this issue is fully within the competence of the director of the relevant regional authority. Most coordinators are perceived by their employers as social workers or Roma advisors. The tasks of a regional coordinator should include, in particular, coordination and provision of

¹² Community initiatives are special programmes established by the European Union to resolve specific problems affecting the entire EU territory, which supplement other programmes. Within the framework of the EQUAL Initiative, EU supported in 2000-2004 a total of 45 projects concerning also the Roma (throughout EU).

¹³ The office of the Council of the CR Government for Roma Community Affairs plays here a priceless coordinating role among representatives of the civil society, of cities and municipalities and the relevant central institutions.

guidance, provision of consultations to the regional authority, guidance of advisors, informative activities and organization of seminars. The tasks of the coordinators also include systematic application of gender mainstreaming methods and principles and paying attention to the needs of Roma women, who are exposed to double discrimination. The best solution of this issue seems to be the placement of coordinators within the agenda of the regional commissioner's office. The placement in such central department would enable the coordinators to apply to the fullest extent the necessary inter-departmental and inter-disciplinary approach and such unified placement in all regions would also contribute to better communication among them at the national level. The work performed by the coordinators becomes more and more extensive and having an assistant would contribute to the optimisation of their performance. Regional coordinators do not currently have any unified guidance provided by a central state authority and the stabilization of their posts requires such guidance.

2.7. Termination of activities of district authorities on 31 December 2002 caused redeployment of most of the Roma advisors and assistants to municipalities with extended competencies. At present, the tasks of Roma advisors at municipalities with extended competencies have been merged with other, often unrelated tasks. In other cases, Roma integration issues have been entrusted to an existing employee of the local authority, who often performs several other tasks. A number of Roma advisors have been dismissed and a number of them have left after performing, for a short time, such accumulated tasks. Available information indicates that a number of local authorities have entrusted these tasks to selected employees only formally or even failed to appoint an employee who would be responsible for such tasks. It can be said that a significant part of consistent network of Roma advisors, which covered the whole territory of the country, has been scattered. Due to the fact that the establishment of a post of Roma advisor and assistant is not prescribed by the law, it cannot be imposed upon local authorities to employ such workers. Under Government Resolution No. 607 of 16 June 2004, the deputy prime minister for research and development, human rights and human resources was assigned the task of preparing, with regard to these issues, a draft amendment to the relevant provisions of Act No. 273/2001 Coll. on Rights of Members of National Minorities.¹⁴ However, it appears to be rather difficult, from the legislative viewpoint, to define objective circumstances under which the post of the coordinator should be established. It is impossible to apply a mechanical approach and to order the establishment of such post where it would not be useful, e.g. because there is no significant Roma community or any specific problems at the relevant location. Despite the foregoing, we have to consider provision of guidance at the central level, which would ensure that these employees perform their tasks in a unified and professional manner.

Local level

2.8. The term “integration of members of Roma communities” became part of the law of the Czech Republic in 2002. This change occurred in the context of the reform of the public service and affects the work of the local authorities, i.e. Act No. 128/2000 Coll. on

¹⁴ Clause IV.5(d) of the Government Resolution No. 607 of 16 June 2004 orders the elaboration of a draft amendment, “which would modify, in a more detailed manner, the competencies of the regional authorities and municipal authorities with extended competencies with regard to the integration of members of Roma communities into the society, including provision of guidance to the exercise of state administration in this field.”

Municipalities (Municipal Establishment), as amended, and Act No. 131/2000 Coll. on the Capital City of Prague, as amended. This was represented by the following amendment of the Minority Act (No. 273/2001 Coll.) by Act No. 320/2002 Coll.:

“Section 7 In its executive district the Regional Authority administers and coordinates the performance of tasks in the section of the state policy helping the integration of members of Roma communities into society.

Section 8 In its executive district the Municipal Authority of a municipality with extended competencies performs tasks helping the exercise of rights of members of Roma communities and integration of the Roma community into society.”

2.9. Applicable laws affecting the process of integration of members of Roma communities into the society are not fully adequate, because they do not include specific definitions of integration tasks, i.e. particularly the specific measures of which the integration should consist. Experience has demonstrated that defining appropriate measures in the Roma Integration Policy Concept is not sufficient for the implementation of these measures. According to the Constitution, municipalities and regions with their independent competencies cannot be bound by government resolutions. As regards their delegated competencies, they are bound by such resolutions, but can move only within the limits of laws regulating the specific scope of state administration delegated to municipalities and regions. By its Roma Integration Policy Concept, the government proposes measures that may be applied by the municipalities and regions during the implementation of the above laws.

2.10. It should be the aim of the government policy to assist the municipalities in the implementation of the above provisions of the Minority Act and to motivate the municipalities to implement preventive measures. Such objectives may be met by the establishment of an appropriate authority, which would become a conceptual, coordinating, executive and monitoring centre in the issues of integration of the Roma community, or by increasing competencies of the existing ministries or of the office of the Council of the Czech Republic for Roma Community Affairs. A significant motivating tool is the co-financing of specific activities of municipalities in the given area. At present, the government has no subsidizing programme that would support comprehensive activities performed by municipalities with regard to integration of Roma communities or comprehensive activities performed by municipalities with regard to social inclusion. A resolution may be found in the creation of local development programmes, which will include a medium-term plan of prevention of social exclusion of Roma communities at the local level, using all available and applicable measures offered by the state and proposals of involvement of all relevant institutions, non-profit organizations and target groups in the implementation of such programme. *The state should participate in the creation of such programmes not only by guidance, i.e. by an active counselling in the creation of such programmes, but also financially.*

2.11. Representatives and employees of local authorities have little information about the content of the government Concept and most of them are not too interested in it. Therefore, the government must promote dissemination of information about the Roma Integration Policy Concept and about its activities in the field of integration of Roma communities at the regional and local level. *In this respect, it could be useful to establish more intensive cooperation with the Union of Cities and Municipalities and with the Association of Regions in the organization of public awareness and educational events and training.*

2.12. A serious pitfall encountered during the creation of the Roma Integration Policy Concept and the monitoring of its implementation is the difficult measuring of its effectiveness, i.e. the degree of achieved integration. Therefore, the government supports the

elaboration of a system of monitoring and control of introduction of evaluation mechanisms, which will check the effectiveness of applied conceptual solutions.

3. Anti-discriminatory measures

3.1. The government believes that the effort aimed at elimination of racial discrimination in all areas of life is an essential element in its attempts to build up the rule of law of a democratic society based on systematic respect for human rights.

3.2. Members of Roma communities reproach the Czech society particularly the discrimination relating to their economic and social rights. Government documents and long-term experience of non-governmental organizations indicate that the Roma face discrimination quite frequently, particularly in searching for new job or housing, but also in business establishments providing services or goods to the public. Discrimination of a specific individual may become a serious obstacle in his obtaining a stable housing and finding adequate employment, particularly if it is accompanied by other adverse factors, like incomplete education and poverty (e.g. in the form of “origin from a place of ill repute”). Discriminatory practices contribute indisputably to social decline of Roma families suffering from subsistence problems and deepen fatalistic attitudes of individuals, who become convinced that they cannot change their bad situation by their own efforts. On the other hand, even well-situated and educated members of middle classes become victims to discrimination. In the last two years, the non-governmental sector has initiated about twenty lawsuits for discrimination of the Roma in housing, access to jobs and services. The public response to these cases indicated how little has changed in the last ten years in the aversion of the Czech society against the Roma minority.

3.3. A key factor in every proposed resolution is the question whether there are reasons to elaborate measures aiming at suppression of racial discrimination against the Roma as a specific group. An alternative to such measure is to include the efforts for elimination of racial discrimination of the Roma in measures focused on a more widely outlined target group, which would also include other groups of the population exposed to racial discrimination, e.g. immigrants from ethnically or culturally different groups. The term “racial” used in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination applies to any discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin, or national identity. Discrimination against Roma is therefore clearly racial discrimination, as confirmed by a decision of the Supreme Court of the Czech Republic.

3.4. The objective set by the government in this area is to influence public opinion to become aware that racial discrimination is a problem and to knowingly reject it. Therefore, the government will continue its funding of the Campaign against Racism, whose aim is to promote ideas of tolerance and understanding of difference and diversity. The aim of the campaign is to support mutual knowledge of different cultures living in the common state. The work with the mainstream society must include balanced information about the Roma community and its members, which will be presented in the media, and support of a positive image of the Roma ethnic group together with the emphasis on its positive contribution to the whole society.

3.5. It is expected that the institutional safeguards of protection against racial discrimination will be newly set by an anti-discriminatory act, which was reviewed by the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic in April 2005 as release no. 866 and 867, and which will expand the powers of the Public Protector of Rights. It is essential that these institutional safeguards shall provide protection against discrimination through help to

victims, conflict resolution by mediation and public awareness. Prosecution of discrimination will remain under the competencies of specialized inspection authorities and courts. The competencies of the Public Protector of Rights, as a body involved in the protection against discrimination, should also include independent research. It may be expected that this competency will contribute to a significant extent to better knowledge of the reality of discrimination faced by the Roma, and to the creation of mechanisms of its identification and effective prevention.

3.6. Another contribution to combating discrimination in 2005 and 2006 will be a national educational campaign, co-financed out of the funds of the Community Action Programme to combat discrimination, which is one of the community programmes of the European Union. Based on the authorization of the government, this campaign will be carried out in by Národní vzdělávací fond, o. p. s. (National Training Fund) and will be focused on training of judges and public servants about anti-discriminatory policies of the EU.

4. Affirmative Action

4.1. Beside ongoing efforts to eliminate racial discrimination, i.e. to ensure equal treatment, it is also necessary to develop affirmative action¹⁵ aimed at persons who are in a deprived situation for various social or historically conditioned reasons; this definition is not limited to members of the Roma community. Not even thorough protection against discrimination (itself a long-term process) is enough to eliminate long-term deprivation formed over generations. The social decline of the Roma communities can only be halted with affirmative action, pursuing the integration of Roma communities and the acquisition of economic self-sufficiency among its members as its prime objective. In this sense, the specific approach must be combined with efforts to adapt general measures and sources to specific conditions and needs of the Roma. The aim of affirmative action also gives rise to suitable means, primarily activities leading to an increase in the level of education and professional qualifications. These are spheres with disadvantages that can be objectively described and which are particularly suitable for application of affirmative action for their equalization. Such action, if effective, fulfils at the same time two very important tasks – equalizing disadvantages and thus preventing future discrimination and having a potential positive influence over the public opinion.

4.2. The government is not adopting quotas in its affirmative action, determining numbers of Roma in certain jobs or among candidates accepted for study courses, but has taken up the method of targeted assistance enabling these persons to overcome the deprivation they suffer and come up to the demands required of them. The Government approaches affirmative action from the perspective of achieving the goals associated with it by 2020.

4.3. Affirmative action aimed at overcoming the historic deprivation of some groups is expressly permitted by the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

¹⁵ The term “affirmative action” is broader than, for instance, the term “positive action” known from the USA. This term includes both narrower targeted support measures, like the support programme for Roma secondary school pupils, where the affiliation to the Roma community is a key sign, and broader education and social programmes, e.g. the Policy of Early Care for Children from Socio-culturally Disadvantaging Environment, which support social integration or aim at preventing social exclusion. In certain areas, e.g. in housing, social benefits and care, it is more appropriate to speak about social measures. The term “affirmative action” indicates equalization of chances and opportunities at the fictitious “start line” rather than mitigation of impacts of disadvantage. An affirmative action that has the nature of a relative advantage provided to members of a certain group should not be applied longer than necessary for the implementation of its objectives.

Racial Discrimination and by the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities. The diction of these regulations indicates that these measures should not be considered discrimination - not even “positive discrimination”. Thus, the government systematically designates these measures as affirmative action, not as positive discrimination.

4.4. For the practical use of affirmative action and implementation of any programmes focused on the integration of Roma communities, it is necessary to have available relevant long-term information and data about the number of members of Roma communities and their situation. The material submitted to the Government on 20 October 2003¹⁶ proposed to use the data and information that has already been made available by internal statistics of the ministries and by the census in combination with long-term sociological research. Eliciting of these data is often refused by faulty references to Article 3(2) and Article 10(3) of Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, which tend to confuse the individual level (freedom of choice of national/ethnic identity, protection of individual data) with the collective level of non-individualized data-processing in statistics. Solving this problem, which is more of methodological than of legal nature, would help removing one of the obstacles which hampers the implementation of equalizing action in a number of spheres. However, the clarification of these problems must also be sought on the basis of discussion about these questions in the European Union. The European Commission intensively tries at present, in connection with the implementation of the “anti-discriminatory directives”, to define the possibilities of collection of data concerning the monitoring of the status of racial, ethnic and other minorities in the society.¹⁷

5. Social exclusion in Roma communities

5.1. Social exclusion is a process by which some individuals are ousted to the margin of the society and are prevented from participating fully in the life of the society as a result of poverty or lack of basic skills and lifelong learning opportunities or due to discrimination. This separates from work, income and chances of education and also from networks and activities of the society. Such individuals have little access to power and decision-making authorities and often feel helpless and unable to control decisions that affect their daily life.¹⁸

¹⁶ “Report on Proposed Process of Identification of Statistical Representation of Members of Roma Communities at Schools and in Registers of Employment Offices and Other Institutions.” Prague, Czech Statistical Office, 2003.

¹⁷ An important step in this direction was *European Conference on Data to Promote Equality* held in Helsinki on 9-10 December 2004, organized within the scope of the Community Action Programme to combat discrimination. One of the reasons for organizing this conference was the existence of wide gaps between individual countries of the European Union; what is considered in one country as an ordinary and favourable measure, is perceived in another country as a breach of fundamental constitutional principles. Based on an assignment of the European Commission, two specialized studies have been prepared on the existing practices applied by EU countries during collection of statistical data relating to discrimination and on possibilities of further joint process within the EU. The analysis prepared by Niklas Reuter, Timo Makkonen and Olli Oosi (2004) under the name *Study on data collection to measure the extent and impact of discrimination in Europe* notes, among others, that out of the 13 member countries of the “European fifteen” that were surveyed (except for Spain and Italy), the sole country that identifies or records “race or ethnicity” in census or population registers is the UK. In addition to the foregoing, Ireland registers membership in the “traveller” community.

¹⁸ Council of European Union. *Joint Report by the Commission and the Council on social inclusion*. Brussels, 5 March 2004, 7101/04 p.8.

5.2. As indicated by the most recent large-scale surveys focusing on the social and economic situation of members of the Roma community¹⁹, standard factors determining the risk of social exclusion within this community are very strong and include, in particular:

- families with more children;
- long-term unemployment, affecting most often both parents and their economically active children;
- dependence on the social system and poverty;
- indebtedness;
- rent, expensive and poor quality housing together with unprotected rental relations.

5.3. The high representation of disadvantaging factors probably refers to the adverse effect of ethnicity as a determinant of social exclusion. Overlapping of social and ethnic exclusion is, in its consequences, not only a serious social problem, but also a political problem. For reasons connected with preservation of justice, solidarity and also effectiveness of protection of all members of the society, members of the Roma community cannot be classified, as an ethnic group, whether functioning objectively (in the sense of an independent functioning culture shared by all its members), construed subjectively (in the sense of active perception of ethnic identity), or construed from outside (in the sense of ascribing certain attributes by the mainstream society), as a special category of social policy. ***Thus, ethnic affiliation cannot be considered, in all its meanings described above, as a decisive factor, but must be viewed as a risk factor.***

5.4. By the adoption of the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion for the Years 2004 – 2006, the social policy has set as its goal mitigating social exclusion. Special attention is paid in this document, among others, to the Roma community as one of the specific groups exposed to social exclusion. The social inclusion strategy, adopted by the government within the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion, is based on the conclusions adopted by the European Council in Lisbon, which initiated the start of the “Lisbon process” aiming at the implementation of comprehensive economic and social reforms in the EU in the years 2000 – 2010, which are carried out in the spirit of sustainable development.

5.5. One of the six fundamental tasks set by the European Union in connection with the availability of the primary services offered by the state is the increased integration of individual political areas and coordination of the implementation of programmes and plans with approaches on the regional and local levels. Emphasis is also put on the integration of the national, regional and local levels for the purpose of effective implementation of individual policies. At the Nice Summit (December 2000), member states of the EU committed themselves to take measures leading to the achievement of four aims:

- to facilitate employment participation and access to sources, rights, goods and services for

¹⁹ Výzkum interetnických vztahů (Survey of Inter-ethnic Relations), carried out in 2000 by the Faculty of Social Sciences of Masaryk University in Brno as part of a Phare project on a sample of 947 respondents. Results of the survey were published in the book Navrátil, Pavel et al. (2003): Romové v české společnosti (The Roma in the Czech Society). Prague: Portál. The report on the survey is also available at www.clovekvtsni.cz, www.fss.muni.cz.

An international comparative survey “Human Development of Roma Community in Central and Eastern Europe”, carried out in the Czech Republic at the end of 2001 and the beginning of 2002, using a sample of 1000 respondents, under the auspices of the International Labour Organization and United Nations Development Programme, and coordinated in the Czech Republic by Prof. Tomáš Sirovátka of the Faculty of Social Sciences of Masaryk university in Brno. The report on the survey see www.undp.sk.

all people;

- to prevent the risks of social exclusion;
- to help the most endangered population groups;
- to mobilize all parties participating on the battle against poverty and social exclusion.

5.6. Because it must take into the account the socio-cultural differences from the mainstream society, stemming from a different historic development, integrated provision of services in the sphere of social exclusion of Roma communities is an intrinsically specific activity. “The limited success of existing measures focused on the elimination and prevention of social exclusion, or else on the integration of Roma communities, is caused predominantly by the fact that each of those who carry out the measures – i.e., in particular the ministries – handles only partial problems. Ministries implement the Roma Integration Policy Concept in the narrow sector defined by the Competences Act, if at all. However, problems connected with social exclusion are difficult, complex and interconnected. Most members of Roma communities cannot break the vicious circle of the limited access to adequate housing, education and employment possibilities.”²⁰

5.7. The intensifying social exclusion of members of Roma communities and simultaneous fragmentation of the network of Roma advisors call for the urgent creation of an instrument of implementation of state policy which would cooperate with local and regional elected authorities. It appears practicable that either an existing body would be authorized, or a new body established to mediate direct social intervention in locations with occurrence of social exclusion, to prevent such exclusion and remove its consequences. Such authorized or new body would prepare an offer of services for local authorities and Roma communities in the sphere of their activity. In the sphere of housing, these services would be connected with the municipality's enrolment in the Programme of Building of Supported Flats which has been developed by the Ministry for Regional Development, social field work and provision of assistance in access to education and employment. The authorized body will be able to draw resources from the budget item Prevention of Social Exclusion in Roma Communities and Elimination of its Consequences, which is located in the General Treasury Management chapter of the state budget, or from the programme financed out of these funds.²¹

6. Education

6.1. The basic objective of the government activities is the resolution of issues relating to education of the Roma by strategic variants corresponding with their specific needs, giving priority to standard educational possibilities and institutions, with individual or group educational programmes used in necessary cases.

6.2. In terms of educating the Roma, the aim of equalizing action is to achieve a principal change in the present situation, where a high number of Roma children only reach the lowest possible level of education. A comprehensive approach to Roma children before their school attendance should be guaranteed by the implementation of the Policy of Early Care for Children from a Socio-culturally Disadvantaging Environment. If they are to overcome their socio-cultural handicap, these children need a preparatory programme and targeted assistance.

²⁰ “Analysis of Social Exclusion”, p. XX.

²¹ Funding of this programme is provided in 2005 in the form of subsidies; however, other form can be considered, which would suit best the nature and purpose of provided funds (e.g. a public tender).

The best form is the preparation of these children for the school enrolment in nursery schools within a group of children from the mainstream society and from the minority. In order to overcome their socio-cultural handicap, these children need to attend the nursery school the whole three years, i.e. from three years of age. This must not be hindered by the social situation of the family, which should be persuaded about the benefits of this measure by social field workers, Roma advisors or teacher's assistants. This persuasion may be further enhanced by a facultative social benefit to cover cost of the nursery school for children from socio-culturally disadvantaging environment, the provision of which will be conditional on proper attendance of these children at the nursery school. In the case of failure to enrol a Roma child in the nursery school for the whole three years, it is necessary to use the well-tested form of the preparatory programme - preparatory classes for children from a socio-culturally disadvantaging environment (hereinafter referred to as "preparatory classes"). The teachers teaching in these classes must be experienced pedagogues. Preparatory classes will be opened at basic and nursery schools.

6.3. Another form of targeted assistance is the use of teacher's assistants²² (formerly known as "Roma teaching assistants" or "tutors - teacher's assistants"), who themselves tend to be members of the Roma community. These assistants work at all types of schools and school facilities. Acting in accordance teacher's instructions, a teacher's assistant helps pupils settle in and facilitates communications between the teacher and the pupils, their parents and, where necessary, the whole Roma community. Teacher's assistants work at nursery schools, preparatory classes, basic schools, specialized and special schools, at vocational education centres and institutional and protective care facilities with a higher percentage of pupils from socio-culturally disadvantaging environment and at all places where poor results of Roma children indicate the need for such assistance.

6.4. Instruments that can be used in secondary and tertiary education are e.g. scholarships, which help students overcome social handicaps.

6.5. Fundamental changes are desirable particularly in pre-school education at nursery schools, which are currently attended by insufficient number of Roma children. The consequence of this low pre-school turnout is that a high percentage of children are starting their compulsory education unprepared, which has a negative impact on how successful they are at school. Section 123 of Act No. 561/2004 Coll. on Pre-school, Basic, Secondary, Tertiary Professional and Other Education (the Education Act) introduces free attendance in the final year of nursery schools before children are due to start primary school. It is, however, desirable that all Roma children attend the nursery school since the age of three, i.e. for the whole three years.

6.6. Although the number of preparatory classes and assistants is relatively high²³, the actual need is higher. Preparatory classes have not yet been opened and teacher's assistant posts have not been established at many places where the schools are attended by a considerable number of pupils from socio-culturally disadvantaging environment.

²² The first "Roma teaching assistants" were introduced by the non-governmental organizations *Nová škola* ("New School") and *Společenství Romů na Moravě* ("Association of Roma in Moravia"). Between 1 September 1997 and 30 June 2000, the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports gave the introduction of tutors - teacher's assistants and the creation of preparatory classes a trial run. Since the experiment was adjudged to be successful, these classes and positions have been set up on the basis of Methodical Guideline of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports No. 25484/200-22.

²³ As of 31 December 2004, there were 126 of these classes with a total of 1779 pupils. A total of 332 tutors-teacher's assistants work in 2003 at school facilities – particularly in the first classes of basic and special schools and 52 others started working at schools in the following year.

6.8. The numbers of teacher's assistants who have completed secondary or higher education or are interested in such education have been growing. This desirable interest has been supported since the academic year of 2003/2004 by the establishment of the relevant programme at the pedagogic and social college in Most – study branch 75-31-J/001, which will enable these young people to achieve higher pedagogic education by distance studies.

6.9. The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports is no longer the founder of schools in the absolute majority of cases and therefore can no longer apply direct methods of controlling them. However, the state cannot leave the implementation of equalizing action in education up to the founders alone, as it remains responsible for the fulfilment of obligations arising from international agreements on human rights²⁴. The Ministry has a number of indirect motivating instruments at its disposal. The mediation of motivating information plays a significant role in the increase in the number of schools drawing on the possibility of appointing a teacher's assistant and setting up a preparatory grade. The Ministry can also help disseminate information on practical experience in the use of equalizing action through the range of education offered by teaching centres and the Institute of Teaching and Psychological Consulting. In this respect, Government Resolution No. 1145 of 7 November 2001 assigned to the Minister of Education, Youth, and Sports the task of intensifying the support and promotion of establishing preparatory classes and the position of tutor - teacher's assistant with the aim of expanding these forms of equalizing action systematically in places where Roma pupils display educational problems and where preparatory classes and the position of tutor - teacher's assistant have not yet been set up.

6.10. Support to the education of Roma pupils is resolved systematically in the new Education Act, which no longer separates basic and special schools, but sets such conditions of basic education that make it possible to provide to all pupils education and support matching their specific educational needs. The Decree on Education of Children, Pupils and Students with Special Educational Needs and Exceptionally Gifted Children, Pupils and Students (No. 73/2005 Coll.) has already designated basic schools for pupils with specific learning disorders, basic schools for pupils with specific behavioural disorders, basic practical schools and special basic schools, which educate children from socio-culturally disadvantaging environment in accordance with individual educational plans, making it possible to reduce the number of pupils in the class as well as to increase financial funding, and to use teacher's assistant. The equalization of opportunities will be also supported by the transformation of the basic school and enhancement of its ability to keep within the educational mainstream also children from socio-culturally handicapping environment. The route to this goal leads through differentiated and individualized approach to children at basic schools, particularly by taking care of this task of the school both during pre-graduate training and in further education of teachers.

6.11. Beside general multicultural education (see 6), special teacher training should include the compulsory minimum of knowledge of the Roma community, the Roma language and culture, and specifics of communication with Roma parents. These topics will be also included in post-graduate training of teachers. Teachers and future teachers should be instructed about the way that gives rise to stereotypes and prejudice and how to remove them by experience. Working with prejudice should be mastered by training.

²⁴ The unsatisfactory state of Roma education concerns the obligations arising from the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights, and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and tends to be criticized by the relevant committees.

6.12. Teachers of Roma children must cooperate with the parents of these children, with whom they should review in advance all matters relating to their children (school meals, stay at the after-school facility or school club, health of the child, trips, holiday camps, etc.), and should emphasise to them the importance of regular school attendance and homework. The relation of the parents to school should be as best as possible; they should go there to consult matters relating to their children, and the school should be open to them at all times.

6.13. Roma children and adults should be offered a possibility to cultivate the Roma language in free language classes, which would acquaint children and anyone interested with the traditional Roma culture, literature and history. Textbooks, including teaching manuals for teachers, will be prepared for these classes, and the teachers in these classes could be the graduates of Romani at the Faculty of Philosophy, Charles University in Prague, or teachers whose mother tongue is Romani.

6.14. Equalizing action in Roma education does not include the creation of a separate Roma education system, like the system of the Polish national minority; the Roma themselves are generally not clamouring for the establishment of this national education system. It should be borne in mind, however, that there are schools with a majority of pupils from a different socio-cultural environment (inaccurately called “community schools”), which are mainly attended by Roma children, either because they live in their catchment area or because of the approach of the mainstream society²⁵. Government policy has no intention of artificially increasing the number of these schools, which could be viewed as supporting segregating tendencies. The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports must try to ensure that, in cases where educational segregation has in fact occurred, these schools can provide Roma children with adequate education and aid their integration into society. With this in mind, the government set the Minister of Education, Youth, and Sports²⁶ the task of drawing up a project of schools with a full-day programme, where attendance of the non-teaching part is voluntary. Beside school education and providing space and opportunity for out-of-school activities of children (the full-day programme), these schools will also provide education to adults (cultivation of the Roma language and knowledge of the Roma history, traditions and culture, completion of basic education, courses according to interest or as needed and, if possible, also requalification courses in cooperation with the labour offices) and social counselling to Roma families. Funds for these above-standard activities will be allocated to the schools out of grants based on submitted projects.

6.15. To establish good relations between Roma and other pupils, all pupils must be led to tolerance and multicultural education, which must be reflected in all subjects of education programmes even at schools where there are no Roma pupils.

6.16. The success rate of Roma pupils at school also depends to a considerable extent on their preparation at home and support by their parents. Some parents have to be persuaded to assist or at least not to hinder their children in their homework. The best persuasion method is to make it possible to parent to participate in the work of the school. The school must be open to parents, who must have an opportunity to check at any time the results of their child and how their child is treated there. It is necessary to prepare such possibilities for parents at school (attendance of courses, school plays, sports contests, exhibitions, etc.) that they find their way to school and like to go there.

²⁵ Examples of these schools can be found in Chanov (Most), Přeblice (Ústí nad Labem), Ostrava-Přívov, and other places.

²⁶ Section II. 1(b) of Government Resolution No. 1145 of 7 November 2001.

6.17. Overcoming educational handicaps also involves educating adults who, as a result of their socio-cultural deprivation in the past, only attended special school or left the basic school earlier than in the ninth grade, which meant any further education was closed to them. For these adults, courses have been created to add to their basic education, but these will have to be promoted more actively; it would also be advisable to orient these courses more towards skills that can be applied on the labour market.

6.18. Many Roma children and juveniles are placed in institutional and protective care facilities. It is desirable that these children grow, if possible, in adoptive families or foster care or at least in family-type facilities. During holidays, these children will be allowed to visit their original families or families who are interested in this kind of help to children, or to participate in camps, courses, summer schools, where they will have opportunities to be in contact with children from Roma and non-Roma families

6.19. Another priority is the need to enable socially handicapped students, including Roma students, to gain secondary, tertiary and university education. The Programme of Support of Roma secondary and tertiary professional school students has a clearly equalizing (affirmative) nature. The aim of this programme is to use financial support (payment of tutoring fees at private schools, travelling expenses, meals, school and protective aids) to enable Roma pupils at secondary schools to continue or begin studies that they would otherwise have to forsake for social reasons.²⁷ A programme that would fulfil a similar task will be introduced also for university students²⁸. Funding will be allocated to these programmes during the preparation of the draft state budget for the relevant year and will not exceed approved medium-term funding limits.

6.21. Other nationwide programmes of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports are implemented in accordance with Government Regulation No. 98/2002 Coll. determining the conditions and method of provision of state budget subsidies for activities of members of national minorities and in support of the integration of Roma community members.

7. Integration on the labour market

7.1. The government understands finding jobs for the Roma on the labour market as the basic prerequisite for their social inclusion, and is aware of the fact that the integration of the Roma on the labour market requires a comprehensive approach, focused on the improvement of capabilities of members of the Roma community to function in the circumstances of the changing Czech labour market and on making it possible to promote the right of access of these citizens to the labour market and to institutions that facilitate finding jobs on this market. The problem of marginalization of a large number of the Roma community members on the labour market is closely related to the accumulation of deficits and limitations relating to level of education, professional skills, worse health condition and motivation for work as employees for earnings that do not significantly exceed compulsory social benefits. Moreover, the access to jobs is significantly affected by discrimination based on ethnicity due to deep-rooted bias in the Czech society. Roma women are further exposed to traditional gender

²⁷ Around 900 applications were accepted in 2000, the number of accepted applications grew to 1531 in 2001, to 2500 in 2002 and to 2577 for each semi-annual term of 2003.

²⁸ Information about support of studies of Roma students was submitted to the government on 3 November 2004 under ref. no. 1424/04.

discrimination in access to economic activity (with respect to hiring, remuneration and subsequent work promotion), which further deepens their worse situation.

7.2. Unemployment of the Roma in the Czech Republic is a large-scale and dominant social problem. The specific unemployment rate of Roma community members is estimated at 45 to 50 percent. A characteristic feature of unemployment of the Roma is its long term. About 75 percent of unemployed Roma fall into the long-term unemployment category. A relatively large part of them have been unemployed for several years. With the passage of time, they lose their remaining work skills and their material and social deprivation deepens, which enhances the culture of poverty. A specific problem, which is also a factor of deepening social exclusion of the Roma who have been unemployed for a long time is the rise of localities with high concentration of this group of the population.

7.3. The high unemployment rate of the Roma population is also caused by absence of motivation, when the work for wages that are not much higher than mandatory social benefits is not overly attractive. Without a change in the proportion of minimum wage and income provided by the social security system, the final effect of all other measures will be disputable and limited. The problem is not the amount of the minimum wage, but insufficiently motivating conditions for social income, which do not make the social income dependent on some activities or participation in an activation measure.

7.4. It can be said that, as opposed to other groups of the population, the Roma have been only a little affected by the general employment policy of the Government. A high percentage of the Roma face significant difficulties in gaining access to the labour market, which is a substantive reason to introduce targeted and specialized measures designated for Roma communities. The principle of such measures is to offer to everyone a chance of access to the labour market, i.e. to equalize the handicap before going to the market, not afterwards.

7.5. Government activities must be thus aimed at substantial increase of employability of the Roma on the open labour market and reduction of long-term unemployment indicators. This can be achieved in the long run by increasing the education level of the Roma, particularly by increasing the share of Roma secondary and university graduates. With regard to significant factual handicap on the labour market, massive measures, corresponding to the needs of the Roma, have to be taken in the sphere of active employment policy, which would be linked with other public policies (education, housing, social services). A higher level of employability and stable employment of the Roma can be achieved by better linking of measures addressed to Roma job seekers.

7.6. The government is aware that young people in Roma communities lack in their surroundings sufficient number of models of work culture and work habits, which would stimulate them in job search. Informal and short-term work activities are closer to the Roma tradition. The government will support the increase of motivation toward permanent employment particularly of young unemployed Roma in the age category up to 30 years of age through their preparation and activation on the labour market. Beside standard tools of active employment policy, it is necessary to support the implementation of new measures like identification and selection of candidates by social field workers working in the Roma community, enhancement of communication abilities and computer literacy basics among young people, increasing the knowledge of languages, attendance at programme of assisted preparation for employment or a possibility to assume institutional guarantee and support in job search.

7.7. It will be useful for the government to pay attention to support and development of small business among the Roma. Independent economic activities of the Roma correspond with the cultural tradition of some social strata in this group. The development of independent small

business activities is hindered by difficult adaptation of start-up businessmen to the legislative and administrative framework of business activities in the Czech Republic. At the same time, there are considerable opportunities for independently gainfully employed persons in socially excluded and poor city districts. Therefore, it is necessary for the government to create such tools of support of small business activities among the Roma (e.g. through business incubators) that will simplify the rise and existence of small and medium-sized Roma businesses.

7.8. The complexity of finding jobs for the Roma workforce at the labour market requires comprehensive solution. Such interconnected approach can be built through the provision of support to local programmes of cooperation between employment and career promotion consultants in employment services (labour offices, specialized non-state non-profit organizations) and persons involved in broad social work programmes (individual, group, community, field).

7.9. Social workers operating in Roma communities can contribute to the solution of the problem of unemployment and to finding a place on the labour market by several ways. First of all, their services are necessary for overcoming consequences of employment, particularly long-term. As regards the enhancement of the comprehensive nature of labour market interventions, social workers also play a very important role because they can effectively help the unemployed join the labour market by counselling, assistance and support in the creation of family, social and educational prerequisites for finding a job on the labour market. A prerequisite for such comprehensive approach to the integration of the Roma workforce at the labour market is the financial support provided by the state to non-profit organizations, which provide such social services. The current capacity for provision of assistance in supported employment of the Roma is very small.

7.10. Another key government-supported measure that will make it possible to establish such cooperation is a change of the organization of work at labour offices. These offices have lacked until now sufficient number of specialized counsellors, who would have the power and capacity to coordinate joint measures with cooperating organizations. Work with people suffering from long-term unemployment, who usually live in socially excluded localities, requires at all times a chain of interlinked activities, in which the social work and labour market oriented counselling create prerequisites for increasing the effectiveness and effects of applied measures. Such activities include social work in localities, which applies the empowerment strategy, the related individual counselling provided as part of public employment services, job preparation including goal-oriented professional counselling, training of social skills, work training and experience. A special form of these activities in the creation of “work reservoirs”, containing supported employment programmes for Roma workforce with the use of subsidized jobs and other benefits (preferential tax treatment) for employers. Finally, the last related activity is the career management and work supervision.

7.11. It is desirable that the government-supported measures listed above pay systematic attention to specific needs arising from the status of Roma women. Particularly social workers providing employability counselling and other bodies contributing to the implementation of the employment strategy must keep in mind measures necessary to reduce the differences between men and women on the labour market, which result from the requirements of elimination of gender discrimination.

8. Housing

8.1. Housing is negatively affected by incomplete transformation, which results in system shortages, e.g. the existence of two types of rent, obsolete regulation of lease relationships and insufficient definition of the role of municipalities in this respect. Beside these problems, housing conditions of many members of Roma communities are affected by a number of other negative impacts and processes, which affect mostly or solely these communities, like discrimination, their ousting outside the cadastral area of the municipality, elements of segregation or even ghettoisation and rise of slums.

8.2. Beside these outside impacts, it is also necessary to consider specifics arising from the Roma ethnicity – e.g. the number of family members, more intensive family cohesion and respect of the traditional culture, which leads to accommodating other family members in overcrowded flats, as well as habits surviving from the years before 1989, for instance frequent reliance on outside help by the state, municipality, etc.

8.3. General systemic shortcomings can have, in some respects, a worse impact on members of the Roma community. For instance, the protection provided by the Civil Code is not balanced and gives preference to tenants over lessors, which results ironically in ousting many members of Roma communities from rental housing. (Lessors are afraid in advance that it would be hard for them to terminate the lease with problematic tenants.) Due to insufficient definition of the role of municipalities in housing, as stipulated in the Municipalities Act, it is difficult to clearly determine the tasks of municipalities in the housing sphere and to evaluate at the same time whether their activities in this area are or are not sufficient and correct. A number of regions do not make sufficient use of their supervisory powers over the municipalities in housing, and point to the fact that this area has been taken away from their control. Even this factor naturally affects more those who are more dependent on the assistance of municipalities in acquiring or maintaining housing.

8.4. Also the absence of a global concept and system of provision of “social housing” at the national level²⁹ has a great impact on a significant number of members of Roma communities, because many of them are among the socially most vulnerable groups of the population. The contents of the term “social housing” are not defined at present; it has not been determined who is entitled to such type of housing and under which circumstances, who is the provider. There are no clear links to the housing policy of the state and municipalities. This principal defect is not overly successfully compensated by some programmes of construction of flats for the socially deprived³⁰. Such programmes represent only partial solution of the issues and their implementation also fully depends on an active approach of municipalities, the vast majority of which applies for subsidies for projects that do not affect the Roma communities in any way whatsoever.

²⁹ Despite the difference of forms of social housing abroad, we may generally define the term “social housing”. E.g., M. Harloe includes two types of measures under the broader term of social measures in housing (i.e. social housing): 1) public (state) support of market forms of housing (provisions of support to acquisition of owner housing, support to possibilities of participation in the market, i.e. private rental housing) and 2) social rental housing. The social rental housing has three characteristic features: 1. It is provided by owners for a price that is not set with a view of profit. These owners are usually legally restricted to provision of non-profit housing or their profit is limited. 2. Social housing is allocated administratively in accordance with a certain idea of “need”, although it need not be allocated to those who are objectively in the worst situation. The ability to pay rent is important but is not usually the determining parameter for allocation of a flat. 3. The quantity and quality and the conditions of provision of this housing type are to a much greater extent and more closely affected by political decision, rather than by market forces.

Harloe, M. (1995). *The People's home. Social rented housing in Europe and in America*. Oxford: Blackwell.

³⁰ Programme of Construction of Supported Flats, Programme for Support of Construction of Rental Flats for Low-income Persons.

8.5. Despite the above system defects, the approach to solution of housing issues of the social deprived depends primarily on every municipality. The housing policy applied by a number of municipalities toward Roma community members may be called, at least, shortsighted and insensitive. Municipalities frequently prefer repressive procedures bringing immediate effects, irrespective that such methods lead to even deeper social decline and despair of people towards which such measures are applied. Thus, the municipalities resign on their social role, e.g. on the provision of municipal flats to socially destitute families, and give priority to their economic role, e.g. by giving preference to lucrative leases of municipal flats by the so-called envelope method.

8.6. Due to their social situation, the majority of the Roma have no access to owner housing and uses therefore rental housing. However, their access to this form of housing is limited, which is due to their social situation, under which they cannot afford to pay market rent, and to discrimination used against them in respect of access to housing. The Roma are discriminated in their search for housing, both by private landlords and by municipalities, which frequently set up conditions for allocation of municipal flats that exclude to a great extent particularly members of the Roma community from access to municipal housing (a condition for acceptance of an application for a municipal flat is, for instance, the clean criminal record of the applicant and in some case of all future adult users of the flats; the applicant must not be unemployed for a long time or a person who has lived in the flat with a defaulting tenant). By the continuing process of residential segregation, many Roma are often ousted to boarding houses at the outskirts of cities with low or no access to services. Proving racial discrimination in such cases is very difficult, because those affected are often families that re characterized, beside ethnic difference, by various social problems, or families that disturb civil coexistence. Ousting of the Roma gives rise to contemporary ghettos and slums, concentrating the socially most vulnerable strata of the population, which causes hygienic, and safety risks and leads to the development of pathological social phenomena in these areas. Future resolution of these problems will require much higher costs than any current active and preventive approach to social exclusion. Thus, municipalities only postpone the resolution of problems or transfer them to the state.

8.7. Duties of municipalities with respect to housing are not clearly defined and the municipalities thus have a relatively extensive range of options to apply. In practice, it is possible to find municipalities that apply a **socially sensitive approach** and resolve housing problems of members of Roma communities so as to prevent their further social decline, e.g. use various legal means to prevent arrears of rent, or use payment schedules to cover these arrears, use social field work, etc. However, this approach cannot be designated as a common standard of conduct of local authorities toward members of Roma communities. Many more municipalities do not use the available tools for prevention of loss of housing; on the contrary, they apply a policy that leads to ousting high-risk groups of tenants from rental housing, or outside the cadastral area of the municipality. Thus, some municipalities make use of lack of legal knowledge of the tenants to effect certain changes in the legal status of the occupation of the flat or to lessen the protection against eviction (e.g. by changing lease contracts to sublease or accommodation contracts, changing of lease contract concluded for an unlimited period of time to leases for a limited period of time). It has to be noted, however, that such absence of knowledge of law on the side of the tenant is abused not only by municipalities by also by other owners of residential housing.

8.8. To improve or do away with housing problems that haunt large numbers of members of Roma communities, it is necessary to strive to stop negative tendencies leading to social exclusion of many members of Roma communities or further deepening such exclusion. This aim can be achieved by more intensive use of social work with the family, which would

analyse the social situation of the family. With the use of appropriate tools and methods of social work, the social field work is focused on the removal of undesirable factors – various social problems, e.g. arrears of rent, disturbing civil coexistence etc. It is also necessary to use available tools to prevent or eliminate existing arrears of rent or payments for services provided in connection with housing.

8.9. The government must also strive to prevent the rise of ghettos and to resolve of problems of existing ghettos. To achieve this objective, it is necessary not only to define the content of the term “social housing” but also to determine who and under which conditions is entitled to social housing, to regulate this in a legislation, including links to the housing policy of the state and municipalities. It is necessary to support educational activities about segregation and ghettoisation processes, their consequences, etc., which will be designated for employees of regional and municipal authorities, with the aim of influencing their approach to the care for housing of socially deprived persons.

8.10. The government must strive to enhance and ensure systematic application of supervisory powers of regions over independent competencies of municipalities (e.g. control of rules of allocation of flats or manner of acceptance and review of housing applications).

8.11. In this respect, it is necessary to adopt new laws about social services and material deprivation, which could provide to municipalities, among others, also effective tools to prevent loss of housing.

9. Social care

9.1. Within the scope of the social system, the government creates tools for active search for individuals and families threatened by social exclusion. Only if effective tools of monitoring social exclusion, particularly in its most extreme forms, are created, it will be very likely that such tools will capture also the majority of socially excluded members of the Roma community. While creating such tools, it is necessary to keep in mind the fact that the extreme forms of social exclusion stay hidden, due to their nature, until they surface in the form of pathological social phenomena or in forms that are dangerous for the society, when it is very complicated to effectively resolve them. Such forms of social exclusion occur increasingly among members of the Roma community and in localities where they are concentrated.

9.2. Beside the labour market and housing, which are dealt with in other chapters of this Concept, another relevant aspect of reducing risk of social exclusion in Roma communities affected by extreme forms of such exclusion is, in particular, the system of state social support and social care. Reducing social exclusion in these localities requires increased effectiveness of the existing forms and development of new forms of social work and social care.

9.3. Social work is a necessary complementary activity to the system of provision of social benefits, because it activates clients and supervises at the same time impartial approach to payment of these benefits by their providers and their subsequent use by clients. Objective assessment of the social situation of a household places high demands on the social field work, professional approach and impartiality of the relevant social worker. If the current social care system, the integral part of which is also social work, is unable to cover such field due to lack of capacities, it is necessary to increase its staffing.

9.4. Due to segregating policies applied by cities and municipalities, many members of the Roma community are concentrated and segregated in certain localities, suffering from a large

number of problems. Social isolation from the mainstream society and concentration of individuals and families with the lowest social status (uneducated, suffering from long-term unemployment and the poorest) leads to the rise of a socially homogenous community in these localities and to the creation of an independent social system with alternative life strategies, which are manifested in various forms, including pathological social behaviour – loss of social habits and skills leads to the rise of peculiar barter system (pawning, usury), grey economy, black market, crime, etc. This system represents an objective response to abnormality and extreme exclusion and permits the establishment of short-term alternative strategies, which provisionally improve the social situation of these communities but deepen their social exclusion in the long run and lock them in a vicious circle.

9.5. “Socially excluded localities/communities”, defined by concentration of individuals and families with excessive occurrence of various forms of problems and handicaps leading to social exclusion (e.g. the concurrence of long-term unemployment, insufficient income, low qualifications, social deprivation, existence of dependent children and problematic housing conditions and housing quality), should become a focus of specific instruments of social assistance, which can resolve the problem of social exclusion in these localities. **This requires specific tools – forms of social work and methods of provision of social services and benefits.** Such tools include, for instance:

- social field work, community work and counselling;
- linking individual forms of social benefits and their provision to various occurrences in the life of clients to ensure that they fulfil the intended purpose – i.e. dignified subsistence (covering of costs of food, daily consumables and basic household furnishings), housing stability (payment of rent and housing-related services, or setting payment schedules in the case of large arrears of payments for services and utilities). These forms may be similar to the established institute of third-party recipient, which should be applied systematically and under clearly set rules (i.e. in the case of every client who meets certain conditions, like repeated problems with payment of rent and services related to housing) and should not be at the same de-motivating in job search.

Some of these special-purpose forms and methods linked by their common purposes have already been introduced in the social system, but have not been applied everywhere under the same conditions.

9.6. The system of provision of social benefits plays an important role in ensuring necessary subsistence to individuals (families); however, it is not the irreplaceable and sufficient solution for many of these individuals and families. Social field work as a part of social assistance plays an increasing role in the process of mitigation of social exclusion. This element of social assistance is currently weakened in socially excluded localities, mostly due to limited capacities of social workers. A transitory, but a very important role is played by the government programme “**Social Field Work in Excluded Communities**”. This programme is deemed to be a national programme of equalising procedures in social care. It is led by the efforts to change social policy, consisting in transfer of emphasis from provision of social benefits to social assistance, emphasising direct work with clients in socially excluded Roma communities. The purpose of the work of a social field worker is to analyse the social situation of families living in these localities and to contribute, by appropriate means and with the use of methods of social work, to the removal of undesirable factors hindering their integration into society. The government should further promote effective implementation of this programme. Therefore, it is necessary:

- to specifically and accurately define and unify the objectives of social field work;

- to unify guidelines and to support the quality of guidance of social field workers, including supervision and evaluation
- to spread the network of social field workers to localities with objective need of social field work, where such work has not been performed yet
- to increase the number of social field workers in localities where they operate but where their capacity is not sufficient to cover objective needs
- to prevent loss of posts of social field workers at places where they have already been established
- to support and ensure continuous education of social field workers
- to ensure that the social field work is carried out by professionals
- to increase competencies of social field workers.

10. Health care

10.1. One of the priorities in health care policy is represented by the efforts to reduce social differences in health. This priority can be found among the first objectives of the WHO programme *Health for the 21st century*. The basic barriers in the improvement of the health condition of the Roma population include mutual links of social and health problems and risky way of life. One of the possibilities to help resolve these problems is the establishment of the post of health care assistant, who will provide, in close cooperation with social field workers, healthcare guidance to members of the Roma community regarding prevention of diseases and particularly the support of healthy lifestyle and regime. This post has been checked under a pilot project in Ostrava since 2003, where it has proved to be effective.

10.2. The Ministry of Health has prepared a material that may serve as a primary source of information for the establishment of the post of health care assistant at non-state non-governmental organization and for the work of such assistant. The method of appointment of a health care assistance can be modified in future with regard to gradually acquired experience in this respect.

11. Security aspects of Roma integration

11.1. As a result of increased occurrence of criminogenic factors, socially excluded Roma communities struggle with various crime phenomena:

- crime affecting the Roma community from outside, particularly racially motivated crime. Risk of crime with extremist context threatens all Roma irrespective of their social status;
- crime and other risky phenomena existing inside socially excluded Roma communities, usury, pimping, prostitution, drug distribution and use, etc. A number of these phenomena represents a problem for the whole society; however, some of them, e.g. usury, represent specified problems of socially excluded communities and stay often unresolved due to social segregation;
- individual crime coming from inside these communities, which often results from the occurrence of the above pathological social phenomena in these communities.

11.2. Ensuring safety of the Roma is one of the priorities of the government of the Czech

Republic in the field of Roma integration. It is the task of authorized institutions to continuously analyse the security situation of Roma communities, to assess risks and adopt measures for their effective elimination. In ensuring safety of the Roma, the Czech Republic strives to provide active support to conflict-free and tolerant multicultural coexistence. The Czech Republic is bound to implement such procedure under conventions of world organizations, legal documents and directives.³¹

11.3. The Ministry of the Interior and the Police of the Czech Republic play an active role in ensuring safety of the Roma. The Police of the Czech Republic puts an emphasis on systematic detection and prosecution of manifestations of xenophobia, racism and extremism. Activities of the Police of the Czech Republic focusing on the combat of extremist crime are regulated by the Binding Instruction of the Police President No. 100/2002.

11.4. Pursuant to Section 12 of Act No. 83/1990 Coll. on Assembly of Citizens, as amended, civic association declaring racial hatred may be dissolved. This process was applied in 2000 against the neo-Nazi group *Národní aliance* (“National Alliance”) and in 2002 against the civil association *Republikánská mládež* (Republican Youth). The stance of the Police of the Czech Republic against collective addresses by the ultra-right skinhead movement has also showed a marked improvement. Activities of the Police of the Czech Republic are regularly described in the Report on the Issue of Extremism in the Czech Republic, and since 2004 also by the Information on the Issue of Extremism in the Czech Republic, which a consensual output of state administration authorities and is available to the public on the website of the Ministry of the Interior. The Inter-ministerial Commission for Combating Extremism, Racism and Xenophobia, which is an advisory body of the Minister of Interior, was set up under Government Resolution No. 903 of 12 September 2001 concerning the Report on the Issue of Extremism in the Czech Republic in 2000.

11.5. To ensure a more effective resolution of risk phenomena inside Roma communities, the government of the Czech Republic supports systematic approach of the Police of the Czech Republic in relation to the Roma and programmes and activities focused on prevention of crime and elimination of pathological social phenomena at the local level. These activities are based on fundamental conceptual and programming documents of the government, i.e. *Crime Prevention Strategy for the Years 2004 – 2007* (hereinafter the “*Prevention Strategy*”) and the *National Strategy for Work of the Police of the Czech Republic in Relation to National and Ethnic Minorities* (hereinafter the “*National Strategy*”).

11.6. A certain shift in the approach of the Police of the Czech Republic to minorities is represented by **the appointment of liaison officers for minorities**, which have been working since February 2005 at all regional police authorities. The tasks of these liaison officers include mainly provision of assistance to members of national minorities in the resolution of specific problems relating to the life of the minorities, which have been entrusted by the law to the Police of the Czech Republic, and cooperation with representatives of local government, state administration and non-governmental organizations. These officers are also responsible for the implementation of the Action Plan of their regional authorities of the

³¹ This includes, in particular, the Action Programme of the U.N. World Conference Against Racism for 2002, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (U.N. 1965), Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities (Council of Europe, 1995) and the related Act No. 273/2001 Coll. on Rights of Members of National Minorities and on the Amendment to Certain Laws, Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment of persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, Chapter III of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of Freedoms (Rights of National Minorities), etc.

Police of the Czech Republic in relation to minorities, in the formulation of which they play a principal role.

11.7. As regards the Roma, the Ministry of the Interior and the Police of the Czech Republic support namely local crime prevention programmes, the Partnership programme, introduction of the mechanism of assistant of the Police of the Czech Republic and other projects focusing on the above goals. The Ministry of the Interior and the Police of the Czech Republic intend to create conditions for expansion of these activities into other regions. Great emphasis will be put on further development of communication and cooperation with those members of Roma communities who will demonstrate active interest in participation in these programmes and projects.

11.8. In relation to violence against Roma women, represented by widespread domestic violence and trafficking in women, these preventive measures include programmes of combating domestic violence in Roma communities and availability of information to victims of domestic violence and trafficking in Roma communities. Another important elements of these measures is represented by guidelines for law enforcement authorities regarding treatment of these victims and victims of women trafficking.

11.9. The fundamental prerequisite of successful implementation of preventive measures relating to national and ethnic minorities is thorough combating of all forms of discrimination in the police work. The Ministry of the Interior and the Police of the Czech Republic will intensify recruitment of members of minorities to the Police of the Czech Republic, using all appropriate means of advertising of its employment policy toward members of minority groups and will introduce a system of control of behaviour of police officers within the scope of basic professional training with regard to any xenophobic or racist manifestations. It is necessary that the Inspection of the Ministry of the Interior thoroughly investigates and combats illegal conduct of members of the police corps toward the Roma.

11.10. A key part of efforts to prevent playing down crime is the training of the relevant employees, particularly police officers. Persons preparing for work of police officers undergo such training; however, the process of human rights and multicultural education requires further attention. Training must be connected with allocation of sufficient financial funds for its organization. It is necessary to strive for future involvement of independent experts, representatives of the academic community and of the civic society into the process of education of police officers. This clause applies not only to the education against racism and for tolerance but also to human rights in general.

11.11. A positive step is the cooperation between the Council of the Government of the Czech Republic for Roma Community Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior in the establishments of posts of police assistants from the Roma minority, as defined in the National Strategy of Police Work in Relation to National and Ethnic Minorities in the Czech Republic. Police assistants from among Roma communities are to enhance mutual trust between the Police of the Czech Republic and the Roma community³². The Ministry of the Interior plans to expand this project to other high-risk localities with significant representation of the Roma population

³² A pilot project of combating usury in the Roma community in Ostrava was carried out in 2003. Two Roma female police assistants employed in the public benefit company *Vzájemné soužití* participated to a substantial extent in police work relating to combating usury and helped victims of usury in the Roma community. The second project of this type was launched in 2004 in Cheb, where two social field workers employed by the Municipal Authority have devoted one half of their work tasks to cooperation with the police.

or with socially excluded communities. The post of the police assistant will be used as a complement to the mechanism of liaison officers for minority issues.

11.12. Evaluation mechanisms of effectiveness of these measures will include sociological surveys focusing on the relation between the Police of the Czech Republic and national and ethnic minorities, regular evaluating reports on the progress in implementation of programming documents (*Prevention Strategy, National Strategy*) and regularly submitted *Information on Issues of Extremism in the Czech Republic*.³³

12. Support for the Development of the Roma Language and Culture and of Scientific Research

12.1. Appropriate specialized attention must be paid to the Roma language and Roma culture. The primary task in the development of Roma culture is research and support of the active development of culture and language. Under the influence of ongoing language and cultural assimilation, especially among the young generation of Roma, there is a real risk that cultural traditions, folk literature, and the language itself will die away. It is recommended that grants continue to be awarded for projects to collect folk literature in order to maintain and actively develop Roma culture and language. There is still interest in organizing regional and nationwide events to support and promote Roma language and culture, involving music, literature, and drama.

12.2. The leading expert centre researching Roma culture and language is the Department of Roma Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague. It is the only place in the Czech Republic preparing experts in Roma studies within the scope of a full Master of Arts programme. Given current and prospective requirements for fully educated experts, the number of these specialists is entirely inadequate. So far the subject has only been made available three times, in 1991, 1996 and 2002; in 2003 it was opened for the first time in the bachelor programme as well. Roma Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, is only a sub-department of the Institute of Indian Studies, and is faced with entirely inadequate funding, classrooms, and offices. Operating costs are covered out of various grants³⁴. The Programme of Roma Education of Palacký University in Olomouc with its significant educational and editing work contributes to the understanding of the Roma history and culture. A unique institution in the world, which documents the history and spiritual culture of the Roma – the Museum of Romani Culture – exists in Brno. Beside field research and building of collections, it also operates as a centre of multicultural education, publishes scientific literature about Roma studies and organizes Romani language classes for the public.

12.3. . In accordance with *Government Regulation No. 98/2002 Coll. on Determination of Conditions and Form of Grants from the Central Government Budget for the Activities of*

³³ The developments in the fight against extremism were described since 1998 in periodical government reports (named Reports on the Issue of Extremism in the Czech Republic), which provided detailed information about the Czech extremist scene, crime with extremist context and activities of the entire state administration in this area for the previous year. Since 2004, these reports have been replaced by Information on the Issue of Extremism in the Czech Republic, which is a separate annex to the Report on the Situation in Public Order and Internal Security.

³⁴ Between 2000 and 2002 also from the Roma Integration Project Support account under the General Treasury Administration chapter of the central government budget, the use of which was recommended by the Government Council (Inter-Ministerial Commission) for Roma Community Affairs.

Members of National Minorities and for the Support of Integration of Members of Roma Communities, the Ministry of Culture became in 2002 the provider of state grants for the activity of editorial boards of Roma minority periodicals.

12.4. Ethnographic (traditions, folklore) research and linguistic research (including dialectology studies) are an integral part of the development of Roma culture and language. An extremely important factor of qualified creation of a Roma integration policy is a research in a broader context, i.e. cultural, anthropological, and social research into the dynamism of the internal developments of Roma communities and their integration with majority society. The priorities of this research include relations and experiences of the Roma with the attitude of the majority the recognition of mechanisms of social exclusion, development of social work methods, demographic developments and social mobility. Therefore, the government and the relevant state administration authorities should seek effective forms of support and funding of such research by other academic establishments (in addition to those referred to above), including universities, research and specialised establishments and also by qualified non-state non-profit organizations and other bodies.³⁵

13. Conclusions

13.1. This Roma Integration Policy Concept does not change the principal starting points of the current approach of the government. It offers an update of priorities and specific procedures and new solutions. This update also emphasises those approved priorities where, unlike other priorities, no breakthrough in the form of improvement of social level of members of Roma communities, particularly reduction of their unemployment, improvement of their housing conditions and subsequent state of health, prevention of social exclusion in Roma communities and elimination of its consequences, has been achieved. The emphasis on such urgent need does not represent a return to assimilation policies, as this emphasis on integration in the social and economic sphere has been sometimes incorrectly interpreted. On the contrary, the Concept underlines respect to Roma culture also by a new suggestion to expressly designate as the government approach also the steps that are already implemented in practice, i.e. taking into account the fact that, unlike the culture of other national minorities, the Roma national minority cannot rely in its efforts to preserve and develop its own language and culture on the existence of institutions in mother countries. An example of such approach is the support that has been provided in the past years to the Museum of Roma Culture in Brno as an institution that plays a principal role in the preservation of the cultural heritage of the Roma, and not only those living in the Czech Republic. Another significant example is the support of the Roma festival Khamoro.

13.2. This Policy Concept is open to universal discussion. As mentioned above, it has been prepared for three years with a possibility of an earlier update, if necessary. The Chairman of the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs shall submit every year to the government, the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs and the general public a

³⁵ The institutions that have significantly contributed to this research in the past years include the Faculty of Social Sciences, Masaryk University, Brno, Faculty of Humanities of the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Ethnographic Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs – Brno Centre, and also non-state bodies, e.g. Člověk v tísni, o. p. s. (People in Distress) Counselling Centre for Citizenship, Civil and Human Rights, the Prague office of the International Organization for Migration, and the association Socioklub. This researched received substantial support from certain ministries, like the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior.

Report on the State of Roma Communities in the Czech Republic and Information on the Implementation of the Roma Integration Policy Concept and Implementing Resolutions. These documents will indicate any need for an earlier update of the Concept.

13.3. The Policy Concept emphasises the need to continue and develop existing and undoubtedly successful programmes, which are appreciated also abroad, in particular the Support of Roma Secondary School Pupils and Field Social Work in Excluded Roma Communities. The recently launched process of drawing up multicultural teaching programmes for all types of school is sure to continue as well. The more systematic and more widespread creation of preparatory classes and positions of teaching assistants at schools with Roma pupils remains an on-going requirement.

13.4. Other programmes at the national level are being implemented by the government departments in charge (the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports; the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; the Ministry of Culture) in accordance with Government's Regulation No. 98/2002 Coll. on Determination of Conditions and Form of Grant from the Central Government Budget for the Activities of Members of National Minorities and for the Support of Integration of Members of Roma Communities. Other implemented programmes include programmes that are not specifically focused on the Roma community but provide a space for the resolution of its issues (e.g. the Programme of Supported Housing).

13.5. By adopting the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion for the years 2004 – 2006, the government aims at mitigation of social exclusion in Roma communities. Due to the fact that ongoing social exclusion processes have not been effectively influenced until now, this priority should be paid maximum attention in the coming years and maximum efforts should be focused on this issue. With respect to the implementation of this goal, the government puts an emphasis on the maximum support of activities of members of Roma communities themselves, as opposed to passive acceptance of help.

13.6. The creation of an instrument of state policy for cooperation with regional and local authorities appears to be a particularly crucial task for the forthcoming period. The aim of such an instrument would be the solution of individual aspects of social exclusion – from social care as such up to housing, employment and education problems – flexibly and simultaneously, i.e. crossing the boundaries of departmental competencies. This task is becoming increasingly urgent in connection with the reform of public administration and entry of the Czech Republic into EU; however, no feasible and effective solution has been suggested to date.

13.7. In connection with the possibility to draw financial means from the European Structural Funds and from other funds and programmes of the European Union for social inclusion of Roma communities, it appears necessary to make a global assessment of subsidizing policy of the state in this field and of the absorption capacity of Czech non-state non-profit organizations operating in this segment, on the basis of which it will be possible to adopt such measures that will increase the effect of means spent from the state budget and the European funds. In this respect, it is possible to make use of formerly completed partial studies. It is also desirable to intensify and increase the effect of dissemination of information to potential applicants who implement programmes relating to the integration of the Roma communities about the possibilities of use of these means, which will become especially urgent due to the modification of some of EU funds and programmes, effective from 2007.

13.8. More attention should be also paid in the forthcoming period to the needs of Roma women, who face handicaps resulting from traditional inequality of men and women and from their ethnic origin. Special regard must be paid to the exercise of social rights of this group with a particular attention to rights of access to education and vocation, to their sexual and

reproduction rights and also in relation to violence against this group, particularly domestic violence and trafficking in female members of this group.

13.9. Another indisputably important aspect is the performance of long-term sociological surveys relating to Roma issues and the development of research on Roma issues in all relevant spheres of social life. It is desirable to establish closer links and cooperation between research on the one side and creation of policies and practical measures on the other side. Some ministries have been trying to apply this trend with respect to the Roma and in other areas. Guidance in this respect can be also found in the European Union, where the preparation and implementation of various policies, e.g. in the anti-discriminatory sphere is always accompanied by independent surveys mapping the possibilities of implementation of policies and assessing subsequently their implementation.