



GENDER ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF EU ACCESSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND THE LABOUR MARKET IN CEE

NATIONAL STUDY: CZECH REPUBLIC

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Also available national studies for Bulgaria, Poland and Hungary

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FOREWORD

With countries of Central and Eastern (CEE) Europe, either set to join the European Union in 2004, scheduled to join at a later date, or are still aspiring to enter the accession process, accession to the EU is a dominant theme across the region. The accession and regional integration processes offer tremendous opportunities for women to advance the gender equality agenda. At the same time, there are strong economic and social forces and trends that also threaten women's human rights.

The present four gender assessments of the impact of EU accession on women's status in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, have been undertaken under a project entitled "Gender and Economic Justice in Europe an Accession and Integration" supported by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and implemented by the KARAT Coalition and Network of East West Women/Polska. UNIFEM support for women in Central and Eastern Europe is anchored in a human rights perspective that aims to address gaps in government compliance with their obligation to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women. All CEE countries have ratified the major treaties, including CEDAW, and in the context of fulfilling EU directives, most countries have revised or adopted new national legislation, established national women's machineries, ombudsmen, or taken other measures to comply with EU standards. Yet in spite of such measures, women's human rights are far from being fully realized, including in relation to their economic rights. While some recent regional reports have highlighted improvement in women's labour market status as compared to men ¹, the CEDAW Committee's concluding comments for countries of the region point to areas of discrimination against women in employment ranging from absence of sex-disaggregated data on women living in poverty (including minority and older women), decreased women's share in the economically active population, concentration of women in low paid occupational sectors, high percentages of

¹ World Bank, Gender in Transition (2002); UNICEF's MONEE project reports

women working as unpaid family workers, especially in rural areas, strong vertical and horizontal segregation and wage differentials between women and men, and misus of 'overprotective measures'².

In the context of accession to the EU, UNIFEM saw importance in supporting gender equality activists to examine the issues and analyze the data for themselves, with a view to strengthening evidence-based advocacy for equality between women and men in labour markets in the context of accession to the EU. Whereas the aforementioned regional reports are based largely on non-disaggregated figures of activity, employment and unemployment, these four gender assessments have aimed to disaggregate some of the main labour market indicators by relevant variables such as age, region, educational level or occupation. The reports by no means take up new research per se, but by also drawing on national research and other documented examples, they shed light on some of the lesser known aspects that raise concerns over discrimination against women and violation of their human and civil rights. There are, as always, some important elements that were left out due to lack of proper data or lack of time. One of these concerns is the situation of women in rural areas; another is the situation of the working poor and women in particular. The assessments also touch only briefly upon the complex links between fertility rates and women's participation in the labour market. In this regard, it is important to note that while policy responses to address some challenges identified are more obvious, others clearly require further research and analysis.

UNIFEM is pleased that the four assessments will serve as a basis for discussion and debate at conference convened by the Karat Coalition in Warsaw on 7-9 November, 2003. This meeting presents an important opportunity for gender equality advocates from across the region to discuss the assessment findings, compare them with trends and experiences coming from other countries, and strategize on ways forward. It is hoped that this meeting will also allow for exchanges between NGO advocates, experts and

² Legislative measures to 'protect' women from work that is seen as high risk for women can sometimes respond to legitimate concerns, yet these measures are often overly broad and discriminatory in practice, inhibiting women's ability to obtain jobs by narrowing their choices or limiting their career advancement.

policy makers at national and EU level, which could generate innovative ideas and solutions in response to the challenges that women face. UNIFEM hopes that these assessments could inspire replication or adaptation in other countries. For example, in countries still in the initial stages of accession similar assessments could be useful in monitoring State compliance with EU directives on employment or advocacy for engendering of national employment plans. In countries joining the EU in 2004 such work may be useful in monitoring women's human rights in the context of government obligations to comply with the EU Employment Strategy or the Strategy to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion.

UNIFEM would like to express its appreciation to the national teams who produced the assessments for their devoted efforts - the Gender Research Foundation in Bulgaria, the Social Innovation Foundation in Hungary, and the Gender Studies, o.p.s in Czech Republic. A very special recognition is due to Karat Coalition Secretariat, who besides producing the Gender Assessment in Poland, assumed responsibility for coordinating the overall initiative, from the participatory selection of the countries and research teams, to the facilitation of inter-team communications and collaboration, compilation and production of the materials, and organization of a regional conference that would ensure effective dissemination of the knowledge generated to partners across the region and enhanced advocacy impact. UNIFEM also thanks Elizabeth Villagomez for providing the teams - not all specialized in labour market economics - with technical support and expert guidance on EU employment policy and its gender aspects.

Looking ahead UNIFEM sees importance in continued efforts to increase understanding of women's position in labour markets in the context of accession to the EU, towards better protection and realization of women's human rights. In this regard we hope to support deeper analysis of some of the issues raised in these four assessments under our regional economic programme for 2004-2007.

Osnat Lubrani



Regional Programme Director
UNIFEM Central and Eastern Europe

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chapter I describes the economic situation in the country - before and mostly after the accession process started in 1996. It shows that the low level of unemployment grew rapidly after the crisis in 1997. Despite of this, the Czech Republic remains one of the richest among the post-socialist countries. The European Commission has concluded, that the country is a functioning market economy and that the continuation of its current reform path should enable it to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union - but at the same time, the Commission stated, that reforms of social expenditures must be pursued, which is daunting for the future, because these reforms always affect disadvantaged people more - and among these many elderly or retired women and single women with children.

Within the accession process, civil society was practically not involved. Concerning at least participation on the pre-accession EU funds, the women's NGOs were very much omitted, because the funds were distributed by Czech agencies which were totally non-gender sensitive; at the same time, it became apparent, that the fulfilment of gender mainstreaming, proclaimed in all the funds, was not checked by the responsible bodies in Brussels.

The Chapter further informs on the existing National Machinery in the country and a document called "Priorities and Procedures of the Government towards Enforcement of Equal Opportunities between Men and Women" which is in fact the National Action Plan. It also describes changes of the legal framework focusing on the Amendment of the Labour Code, which entered into force on January 1st 2001 concerning equal opportunities of women and men.

It further brings an overview of the labour market situation for women, focusing on the group of women between 24-35 years of age who are mostly affected by unemployment. As for the wage gender gap, it shows, that the higher the education and post, the larger the gap; the largest difference occurred in the employee group with the highest salary - "legislators and seniors" - when women reached only 55% of men's salary in 2001. The Chapter also includes description of gender segregation within the

education system and a note on demographics and the fertility rate and closes with a gender analysis of the most important documents connected to the EU accession process in the area of labour markets - the National Action Plans for Employment and the Progress Reports.

Chapter II brings a more detailed analysis on the position of women on the labour market. It shows that Czech women spend much more time working than women from the EU countries, because only about 9% of Czech women work part time and they do not stop working even when having small children. The curve of women's economic activity practically copies the male curve except for the younger and older age groups. But the costs of it are that women postpone having children and the birth rate has dropped dramatically.

Concerning unemployment, although it has been growing since 1997 and it is still higher than the male one, the female unemployment remains relatively low comparing to other post-socialist countries. The gender wage gap in salaries is on average 26% in full time jobs, despite the fact, that Czech women have a similar or even better education and more qualification than men and have been working full time for the past 50 years. As one study found, in the private sector about two thirds of the wage gap remain unexplained.

Chapter III offers information on social services and women's employment. It describes the supports and benefits connected to motherhood and parenthood; when talking about support after the birth - whilst women are entitled to 69% of their salary during 22 weeks after the birth, the father, although he can officially take care of the child, can only access parental benefit (about EUR 85 per month).

This chapter further analyses that although there are several conditions connected to the parenthood which at the first sight look as a good measure for women/parents, they in fact turn against them: the parental leave has been prolonged to 4 years and the employer is obliged to secure her/his job position for 3 years.

Concerning child care facilities, there is no comprehensive data on the situation in the country. However, it is known that Czech Republic belongs to countries with the longest average attendance of children between 3-5 years in kindergarten (2.7 years); whilst in the year 1989/90 up to 97,4 % of children of this age attended kindergartens, in 1998/99 it was 90,6%. The situation is much

worse concerning nurseries for children who are 0-3 years old; today it would be possible to place only 5% of children from the high numbers in 1990.

The chapter also informs on the situation of single mothers (84,6% of single-parent households are those with single mothers and they belong to households which are among most dependent on the social policy of the state). Further, it comments on the situation of retired and elderly women - in 1998, 38 % of all new pensions for women were for those women who decided to take early retirement, 3 years earlier. The average amount of women's old-age pension reaches on average 82% of men's old-age pensions. One reason for this is that women make less money throughout their lives and also the fewer number of years included in the insurance plans as a result of the lower retirement age.

CHAPTER I.

GENDER, THE STATE AND EU ACCESSION

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

EU accession is (or was) a process which was complementary to the series of deep reforms of economy which followed the fall of communism in 1989. The result is complex and varies mainly regionally. Whereas few larger cities, mainly the capital Prague, have gained tremendously, some rural areas, smaller cities and regions with old heavy industries have become sources of increased pressure for women and other socially vulnerable groups. Pressure from the EU enabled a relatively speedy transformation of the economy: However, the Czech Republic, due to its position as the richest among the poor ones of Eastern Europe has mixed challenges to meet in the future. Some of the issues which are result of underdevelopment of CEE will have to be tackled (re-structuralisation of some regions, upgrading educational system), new challenges are to be faced seriously as well: the knowledge economy, the increase of competitiveness and, for example, the problem of migration, asylum seekers and immigrants. Within the re-structuralisation, major attention of the state was paid to branches like heavy industry, mining etc., which means male dominated areas; huge sums of money from the state budget were allocated in these companies. But when the female dominated textile industry suffered heavy damages, it was left to the "free market". When asking the minister of industry and trade about this situation, he replied, that heavy industry was a strategic branch for the country which the textile industry was not.

With respect to the labour market, the composition of unemployment reveals the structural shortcomings. Workers in sectors undergoing restructuring find it difficult to move to other sectors or regions with a higher growth potential since flexibility and mobility are hampered by deficiencies in re-qualification and the scarcity of affordable housing in more prosperous regions. Hence, while some regions and sectors suffer from high and even increasing unemployment, others are reporting the first signs of shortages in the skilled labour force.

Though the adjustment process has been accompanied by accelerating investment and new employment opportunities, these have not been able to compensate for the job losses. In the whole period 1993-2002, there were always more unemployed women than men; only in 1993 in the youngest group (15-24 years) were there more men.

Generally speaking, among the post-socialist countries Czech Republic remains one of the richest. Inflation has remained at relatively low levels. After peaking at 9.7% in 1998, the inflation rate dropped to a very low 1.8% in the following year. In 2001 the average per capita income in purchasing power standards amounted to 57% of the EU average. As regards the income level, there is a marked difference between the capital and the rest of the country. Prague reached 124% of the EU average in 1999 but all the other regions remained well below 75% in 1999. The economic activity rate has been at relatively high levels of around 71-72%. However, over the same period, the employment rate fell significantly from 68.5% to 65% reflecting the rise in unemployment.

Main economic trends of the Czech Republic						
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Average
Real GDP growth rate %	-0,8	-1,0	0,5	3,3	3,3	1,1
Inflation rate - annual average %	8,0	9,7	1,8	3,9	4,5	5,6
Unemployment rate - LFS definition %	4,3	5,9	8,5	8,8	8,0	7,1
General government budget balance, % of GDP	-2,7	-4,5	-3,2	-3,3	-5,5	-3,8
Current account balance, % of GDP	-6,1	-2,3	-2,8	-5,5	-4,7	-4,3
Gross foreign debt of the whole economy - debt export ratio, % of exports of goods and services	42,5	45,2	46,8	38,1	-	-
Foreign direct investment inflow - balance of payments data, % of GDP	2,5	6,6	11,6	9,8	8,7	7,8

Source: Regular Report of the European Commission, 2002.

Given these indicators, the European Commission has concluded that the Czech Republic is a functioning market economy and the continuation of its current reform path should enable the country to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union. The Commission states that improvements can be made as regards the management of public finance, in particular by addressing the high and rising mandatory and quasi-mandatory government expenditures, and reforms of social expenditure, such as pension and health care schemes, must be pursued. This is bit daunting for the future, because the reform of public finances always affects more people who are disadvantaged, which largely affects women - elderly or retired women and women with children.

2. CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT

It can be said, that civil society was not involved in the official EU accession process at all and their most important involvement came just 3 months before the referendum. In the first half of 2002, there has been a Committee for EU established within the Governmental Council for NGOs. This committee mainly tries to produce documents for NGOs on how to use the EU funds, but for entering into the pre-accession debate, e.g. for being able to put remarks into the Czech documents related to the EU funds, it was too late.

Just 7-8 months before the referendum the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that NGOs could ask for funds to take part in the campaign, but very small number of NGOs succeeded (including two women's NGOs, because according to research ordered by the Delegation of the European Commission in Prague, women were slightly less willing to vote "yes" in the referendum than men). But due to very late organisation from the side of the Ministry, the activities of NGOs were limited only to 3 months.

Concerning the involvement of civil society, it is necessary to comment on the way that pre-accession EU funds have been distributed in relation to gender issues. Within the whole process of accession, none of the involved state institutions has dealt with women's issues, unless they really had to. It is not surprising that the key players from the Czech Republic are not gender sensitive, but what is disturbing, that even the key players from the EU apparently did not enforce gender mainstreaming although they were supposed to. It can be seen, for example, in the way how most of the EU funds have been distributed. The

fact, that it has been done mostly by Czech agencies which are not gender sensitive at all, made it difficult for Czech women's NGOs to participate.

Examples of "gender mainstreaming" or not in distributing EU funds:

I. The Organisation Gender Studies was involved in an international project on women's political education. This project was submitted within the programme Gruntwig, in the part "Adult Education". It was admitted in all the other countries which participated, only from the Czech part a letter came saying that "women and men are equal in this country and therefore political education of women is not a priority". This happened about 2-3 years ago. Women from the Gender Studies reported this in a letter to the Delegation of the European Commission in Prague. The Ambassador replied that equality of men and women was important, but nothing else had happened.

II. The Organisation proFem has been for years organising training for lawyers for domestic violence. When applying for funds for continuing of this project, it has been rejected by the Czech agency but succeeded when applied directly in Brussels.

III. One of the Czech agencies distributing EU funds since the beginning of 90's, National Training Fund, has just recently published its draft of the document "Strategy of Human Resources Development for the Czech Republic". This document does not mention anywhere in its 53 pages gender issues at all. This agency will remain working as distributor of the funds even after the accession and it remains a question, how it can become gender sensitive, if there is not any pressure from the EU.

3. WOMEN'S MACHINERY

An integral part of the Czech women's machinery is the Czech National Action Plan - a document called "Priorities and Procedures of the Government towards Enforcement of Equal Opportunities of Men and Women" (*further: "Priorities"*). They have been divided into 7 areas: 1. Enforcement of the principles of equality of men and women as a part of the government policy; 2. Legislating for Gender Equality and Raising the Level of Legal Awareness; 3. Providing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in Access to Economic Activity; 4. Equalising the Social Status of Women and Men Caring for Children and Needy Members of the Family; 5. Respecting of Women with Regard to their

Reproductive Function and Physiological Differences; 6. Suppression Violence against Women; 7. Monitoring and Assessing the Effectiveness of the Application of Equal Status for Men and Women. Each priority (e. g. each of the seven themes) consists of several measures which have to be fulfilled by all or some of the ministries. Each measure includes a deadline. But the deadlines have been often postponed from one year to another and some of the measures, which deadline says "continuously" (meaning it should be fulfilled all the time), have not being fulfilled at all.

Further, there are several bodies that may be viewed as the institutional mechanisms dealing with discrimination against women or equal opportunities. However, none of them has any power to resolve complaints of discrimination, they do not have their own budgets and women are basically not aware of their existence.

- a) On 1 February 1998, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs established a Unit for Equality between Men and Women within the Ministry (as part of the Department for Integration into the European Union) with three female employees. Their main task is to prepare every year the "Priorities" and write an every year a report about its fulfilment. At the same time, this Unit co-ordinates this agenda for all ministries.
- b) *After the social democrats won the elections in June 1998, the Commissioner of the Government of the Czech Republic for Human Rights was appointed and Governmental Council for Human Rights has been set up. The main task of the Council is to monitor the fulfilment of the Czech Republic's international commitments and the implementation of obligations arising from international conventions and treaties. One of the sections of the Council has been re-named Committee for Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.*
- c) After the elections in June 2002, a Permanent Commission on Family and Equal Opportunities in the Chamber of Deputies has been founded. Until June 2003, it has only managed to organise training seminars for its members.
- d) According to a new task in the document "Priorities", since January 1st, 2002 at each ministry one civil servant has been officially appointed for at least half-time-job as a co-ordinator of equal opportunities (gender

mainstreaming) for the particular ministries.

- e) After the pressure of women's NGOs, the Governmental Council for Equal Opportunities for Men and Women was established in October 2001. The 23-member Council is an advisory body and its decisions can be directly submitted to the government; so far, the government accepted its recommendation to publish a methodology on gender budgeting.

4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Before the EU accession process has started, women and men were equal under Czech law only according to Article 3 of the Constitution. It guarantees the equal rights of men and women as provided for in the Czech Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. Article 1 of the Charter provides that men and women hold equal rights and that these rights are inherent, inalienable, unlimited and un-appealable. **The Czech Republic is also bound to the principles of equality by the international law. Article 10 of the Constitution provides that ratified international treaties on human rights and fundamental freedoms are not only directly binding on the Czech Republic, but also superior to Czech laws.** The Czech Republic has ratified several international treaties and conventions concerning gender equality and women's rights in the labour market, including the International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the CEDAW, the European Social Charter, and Conventions of the ILO. (*Network of East-West Women and Gender Studies, o. p. s., 2001*)

In compliance with requirements for EU Accession, the Czech Labour Code, entering into force on January 1st 2001, now explicitly requires that employers treat women and men equally in their working conditions, specifically with regards to wages, vocational training and promotions, and it guarantees that employees cannot be discriminated against because of their sex, marital or family status or family obligations. Employers are prohibited from exhibiting both the open and direct as well as indirect discrimination.

Although it is unlawful for anyone to prevent a person from seeking training and work in a particular profession, engaging in business or pursuing any other type of economic activity, certain jobs are still prohibited for women, but none are forbidden for men. Generally speaking, women are prohibited from working in "inappropriate" or "harmful" environments which would damage their reproductive functions (regardless of the age or eventual

infertility). The jobs involve underground work and where carrying more than 15 kilos is necessary. There has been no research done trying to clarify how many women would like to apply for such jobs.

The Czech Ministry of Health also determines the types of work and workplaces from which pregnant and breastfeeding women and mothers (until the end of the ninth month after giving birth) are prohibited. It includes work in laboratories, companies producing chemicals, hospitals with exposure to contagious diseases, X-ray or radioactive radiation, jobs requiring lifting of heavy loads, jobs performed under ground or in extremely high or low temperature environments, with high concentration of dust or subject to very loud noises. (*Network of East-West Women and Gender Studies, o. p. s., 2001*)

Due the harmonisation of the legislation to EU directives, the definition of sexual harassment has been introduced in the Labour Code, which caused big debates in the Parliament before voting for the Code. Mostly one MP, famous sexologist and member of the conservative party ODS (Civil Democratic Party) was strongly against it, arguing that what is considered as harassment in the West is not considered so by the Czech women. At the same time, one of the Czech largest daily newspaper: "*Lidove noviny*" conducted its own research and found out, that 60% of Czech women experienced unwelcome sexual harassment in their workplace.

In the new Code, burden of proof has been introduced for cases of discrimination and sexual harassment.

Until the first half of 2003, there had not been any known court case when a woman would claim her rights and fight against discrimination. There have been about 3 publicly known cases of sexual harassment, one before the new Labour Code entered in force.

Two known cases of sexual harassment:

I. *The first case was started by a woman employed in a branch in one smaller town of one of the largest country banks (Komerční banka) who was harassed by the manager of the branch. Although the court agreed that she was right and the manager was transferred to another branch, it was her who at the end left the job, most likely because of the pressure of her colleagues, refusing to talk to journalists etc.*

II. *The latest case was taken to the court at the beginning of 2003. The harassed woman was (and still is) a tram driver employed by a big*

transport company (Dopravni podniky) providing all the public transport in the capitol Prague. She was harassed by her immediate boss. She wanted to solve the case within the company by asking the management to make her boss apologise. The management refused to solve the issue and she decided to bring the case to court. The final verdict of the court was that although the behaviour of the boss was inappropriate, it was not sexual harassment and he did not have to apologise.

5. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE LABOUR MARKET SITUATION FOR WOMEN

Employment, unemployment, economic activity:

The employment of Czech women is high in 2002, the economic activity of women older than 15 years was 51% (and 69% of men). Nine percent of women worked part-time (whilst only about 3% of men). Whilst in their own business work 10% of all employed women, the number of men is twice as high. Women working full time work five hours less than men in one week; and women working part time work 2,5 hours per week more than part time working men. (Czech Statistical Office, 2003.)

The economic activity rate of men is higher than that of women. The smallest difference (2,8 percentage points) is in the youngest age group, the largest differences between 20-34 years (in the group 25-29 years it is 30,3 points). Women return back to work again after 35 and in the age group 45-49 their economic activity rate highest (91,5% - 2,9 points less than men). Most of women end their economic activity in the age 55-59 (difference compare to men is 41,7 points). Men stop being active after they reach 60; but after 65, men are still three times more active than women. (Czech Statistical Office, 2003.)

Concerning the unemployment - according to the latest Regular Report of the European Commission, the recent level remains relatively high due to restructuring and structural mismatches on the labour market. The 1990 - 1996 period, characterised by a low unemployment level, was succeeded by one of a stagnating economy and dramatically rising unemployment; it has more than doubled, from 4.3% in 1997 to 8.8% in 2000. The unemployment rate reflects the impact of the 1997 crisis and subsequent economic restructuring which only started at a late stage in the transition process. Employment fell each year

between 1997 and 2000, amounting to a cumulative loss of employment of nearly 5% during that period. Only in 2001 was there a small rise in employment of 0.3% registered.

Unemployment rate					
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Total	4,8	6,5	8,7	8,8	8,1
Women	5,9	8,2	10,5	10,6	9,9
Men	3,9	5,0	7,3	7,3	6,8

Source: Czech Statistical Office

Generally speaking, the unemployment of women has been always larger than that of men during the 90's. But if we look at the numbers broken down by age in the table below, we see enormous differences in the age group 20-35. It is apparent, that women of this age are most affected by the discrimination, because they either have small children or the employers expect them to be mothers automatically. It has to be especially emphasised, that the social system in the Czech Republic enables women to stay at home with the child for 4 years (and for 3 years the employer is obliged to keep their job) and they take the parental benefit from the state, which is about EUR 85 per month. Considering that the minimum wage is about EUR 206,- per month, many women would like to get a job earlier, but they must not officially register at the Labour Office as looking for a job (i.e. they are not registered as unemployed) because they would lose the right to receive the benefit. Some of them have a second child, which means that they stay at home for 6-7 years altogether.

Therefore it can be assumed that the real unemployment of women of this age group is much higher and it shows that they are heavily discriminated against. Because there are not any available researches in this field, one can only assume, if there is a large discouraged worker effect (women do not think that a job is available for them) or a disincentive effect (they are pushed out by the current rules on benefits). But looking at the characteristic of Czech women's behaviour on the labour market and the fact, they do work for their whole lives just with small interruptions connected with the motherhood (see *Chapter IV*), it can be assumed, that the latter case is true (i.e. the disincentive effect).

Unemployment rate in % - average and by age group 20-34								
Age group:	20-24		25-29		30-34		Average	
Year:	women	men	women	men	women	men	women	men
1995	6,2	5,2	8,5	3,4	5,5	2,6	4,8	3,4
1996	5,6	4,9	7,7	3,3	5,7	2,2	4,7	3,3
1997	7,3	5,7	9,4	3,7	7,5	3,2	5,9	3,9
1998	10,9	7,8	11,6	5	9,8	4	8,2	5
1999	14,7	12,8	14,4	6,6	13,3	6,2	10,5	7,3
2000	13,8	14,5	13,7	6,5	13,6	6	10,6	7,3
2001	13,8	13,7	13	6,6	12,1	5,1	9,9	6,8

Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2001; web site, VII/2003.

Wage gap

The wage gap between men and women has been growing steadily since the beginning of 90's and it continues even after 1996, when the EU accession process started; the growth of the gap only stopped in 2000 but since then the situation has not improved much.

Women earn less than men regardless of the same level of education. The average wage of women in 2002 reached just 74% of men's. The smallest difference has been found by employees with secondary education with GCSE (76%), the largest by women and men with secondary education without GCSE and with university education (both 71%). (Czech Statistical Office, 2003.)

Proportion of women's average wage compared to men (in %) according to education					
Education	1996	1998	1999	2000	2001
Basic	76,3	74,6	74,7	74,3	74,9
Secondary	69,9	71,6	68,4	70,1	70,8
Secondary with GCSE	78,1	72,9	72,7	72,7	74,5
University	74,6	65,2	62,5	63,4	65,4

Source: Czech Statistical Office, web site, VII/2003.

Much larger differences can be seen if we divide the wages according to age: the smallest gender differences are until the age of 30. After that, women earn only 69% of men's salary. Whilst after the age of 40 the gap closes and women reach 76% of males, after 60 the differences are largest – women earn only 66% of men's wages. The main cause is that women in the age 60-64 are already being retired and if they continue work, they usually only earn little additional money next to their pension (part-time basis). On the other hand, men in this age group still work full time when they continue after pension age. (*Czech Statistical Office, 2003.*)

Concerning the categories of employment according to education and occupational status: the higher the education and post, the larger the gender wage gap. In the employee group with the highest salary "legislators and senior" have women reached only 55% (!) of men's salary in 2001. (*Czech Statistical Office, 2002.*)

A note on Education

Gender segregation can be seen already at secondary schools: more girls are enrolled in secondary technical schools, grammar schools and mainly higher professional schools; more boys are so in secondary vocational schools and special schools, mainly those connected to institutions for young criminals. Girls as university students are slightly more among those who leave after bachelor degree; only one third of women are among PhD students.

Pupils, students and graduates in the school year 2002/2003		
	% of women	% of men
Nursery schools	48	52
Special schools	39	61
Primary schools	49	51
Secondary Vocational	35	65
Secondary technical and grammar schools	58	42
Higher professional	67	33
University	48	52
Graduates higher professional	73	27
Graduates university bachelor degree	57	43
Graduates university master degree	51	49
Graduates university PhD degree	34	66

Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2003.

When looking at the share of females among pupils on the 1st and 2nd level of education and among students on the 3rd educational level in the EU member and candidate countries, the Czech Republic has apparently very bad results: the number of women in 3rd level students per 1000 population is 17,1 (among the member states, the lowest number is in Germany 22,9 and highest in Finland 43; among the accession countries, just Cyprus with 14,1 is behind the Czech Republic). (*Czech Statistical Office, 2001.*)

A note on Demographics and Fertility rate

Concerning the general demographics, number of women in the population prevails every year there are 2-3% more women than men. The highest number of population in the country was reached in 1990 (10 362 740, out of it 5 326 254 women). Since the mid-1990s (from 1994), the Czech Republic has been showing a steady decline of its populace. If the trend is extrapolated, the current population of 10.3 million could well drop below 10 million around 2015. The current depopulation trend is indicative of an outlook characterised by a permanent natural decrease and demographic ageing of the population. The positive balance of foreign migration is not sufficient to make up for the natural losses. **The age structure, so far more or less stable, has started changing at the expense of the < 15 years age bracket the share of which dropped from 20.0% to 17.9% between 1992 and 1997, and is estimated to be as low as 14.4% in 2020. The 60+ years age bracket share is maintained at 18.0%, but is expected to rise to 27.0% by 2020.** (*Cermakova, 2000b.*)

Natural population in the Czech Republic - changes per 1,000 inhabitants					
Years	Live births	Deaths	Marriages	Divorces	Natural increment
1945-49	21,3	13,5	9,9	1,13	7,8
1950-54	19,6	11,0	8,9	1,16	8,6
1960-64	14,4	10,3	8,0	1,45	4,1
1970-74	17,0	12,5	9,6	2,38	4,5
1980	14,9	13,1	7,6	2,64	1,8
1985	13,1	12,7	7,8	2,95	0,4
1990	12,6	12,5	8,8	3,09	0,1
1992	11,8	11,7	7,2	2,77	0,1
1994	10,3	11,4	5,7	2,99	-1,1

1996	8,8	10,9	5,2	3,21	-2,1
1997	8,8	10,9	5,6	3,15	-2,1
<i>Source: Cermakova, 2000b.</i>					

A very negative development during the transition concerned the fertility rate. It has been dropping dramatically in the nineties: the lowest level was in 1999 at 1,13. With this number the Czech Republic remains on the lowest level not only among EU member states, but as well among the accession countries: the lowest fertility rate among member states was in 2000 in Italy (1,23) and in Latvia (1,24). It is important to note that Spain, with the highest age at first birth and one of the lowest fertility rates in the world throughout the 80's and 90's also had the highest unemployment rate in general and of women in particular of all EU member states.

Total fertility rate in members EU and candidates EU					
	1990	1995	1998	1999	2000
Members EU					
Austria	1,45	1,40	1,34	1,32	1,34
Belgium	1,62	1,55	1,59	1,61	1,66
Germany	1,45	1,25	1,36	1,36	1,36
Denmark	1,67	1,80	1,72	1,73	1,77
Spain	1,36	1,18	1,16	1,20	1,24
Finland	1,78	1,81	1,70	1,74	1,73
France	1,78	1,71	1,76	1,79	1,89
Greece	1,39	1,32	1,29	1,28	1,29
Ireland	2,11	1,84	1,93	1,88	1,89
Italy	1,33	1,20	1,20	1,23	1,23
Luxembourg	1,60	1,69	1,68	1,73	1,79
Netherlands	1,62	1,53	1,63	1,65	1,72
Portugal	1,57	1,40	1,46	1,49	1,52
Sweden	2,13	1,73	1,50	1,50	1,54
United Kingdom	1,83	1,71	1,71	1,68	1,65

	1990	1995	1998	1999	2000
Candidates EU					
Bulgaria	1,82	1,23	1,11	1,23	1,26
Cyprus 2,42	2,13	1,92	1,83	1,83	-
Czech Republic	1,90	1,28	1,16	1,13	1,14
Estonia 2,04	1,32	1,21	1,24	1,39	-
Hungary	1,87	1,57	1,33	1,29	1,32
Latvia 2,01	1,26	1,10	1,18	1,24	-
Lithuania	2,02	1,49	1,36	1,35	1,27
Malta 2,05	1,83	1,81	1,72	1,67	-
Poland 2,05	1,62	1,44	1,37	1,34	-
Romania	1,84	1,34	1,32	1,30	1,31
Slovenia	1,46	1,29	1,23	1,21	1,26
Slovak Republic	2,09	1,52	1,38	1,33	1,29
<i>Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2001.</i>					

The fertility rate in the Czech Republic has had two peaks after the World War II: the largest numbers of children were born in the fifties (the highest fertility rate ever was in the year 1950 2,8) and after that it culminated in the seventies (in 1974 it was 2,4). It can be assumed that the high fertility rate in the seventies was partly due to the fact that after the Russian army and following "normalisation" came (which meant that the communist regime started to be toughened again), many people lost interest and sense in their jobs and for women one of the solutions was to have children, and partly, because the regime introduced several pro-fertility measures. (*Gender Studies, o. p. s., informal interview.*) According to Wolchik, "the pro-natalist policy measures adopted in the early 70's were based largely on the work of the specialists centred in the State Population Commission and reflected both positive incentives and negative sanctions to encourage population growth. The new measures were decidedly pro-natalist. In the interest of increasing population growth, both paid and unpaid maternity leaves were lengthened, and a variety of measures, including increased children's allowances, low interest loans for young families, increased priority in obtaining apartments for young couples who had children, and state subsidies for many of the items, such as children's clothing and equipment needed for young children, were adopted to decrease the expenses of childbearing for young couples." (*Wolchik, 2000.*)

In the 90's, the Czech Republic has experienced dynamic changes of demographic behaviour patterns, which some experts view as an accelerated process of the second demographic transition, while others regard them as phenomena accompanying negative consequences of the transformation of the political and economic systems in the 1990s. The current population trend is determined mainly by a reduced fertility rate, especially with respect to women falling into the youngest age group. In this age bracket, a new model of reproduction behaviour pattern is gradually being established, which is characterised by a postponement of first marriages and child-births until a later age. On the other hand, older generations of women have mostly fulfilled their maternal plans in accordance with the existing reproduction model. There emerges a vacuum of a sort, which is manifested by a reduced number of child-births. This brings about some concerns regarding future population development trends.

The reduced fertility rate is connected with a decline of the marriage rate in the 90's, although the latest available data (and also preliminary data for 1998) indicates that it has stabilised. However, sociological surveys have failed to confirm any major changes in the attitude towards marriage, which has always been, is, and will probably continue to be the most preferred form of a partnership union and environment for giving birth to and, raising of children for Czech society. A generally accepted cause of the drop in the fertility rate is a postponement of marriages and child-births until a later age, and the widespread use of contraception in recent years. However, there also are the well-known social changes, such as a higher level of education and employment, individualisation, broader opportunities of self-realisation etc. (*Cermakova, 2000b.*)

Birth rate indicators			
Year	Total fertility	Total completed pregnancies	Percentage of live births outside wedlock
1950	1,96	-	6,3
1961	1,91	3,50	4,6
1970	1,83	3,21	5,4
1980	1,86	3,23	5,6
1990	1,86	3,67	8,6
1992	1,72	3,25	10,7

1994	1,44	2,37	14,5
1996	1,18	2,12 (1995)	16,9
<i>Source: Cermakova, 2000b.</i>			

Positive developments can be seen in the number of induced abortions: it culminated at the end of eighties and beginning of nineties. The highest level was reached in 1988 with 1,8, when it was almost the same as the fertility rate; the lowest level was in 2002 with 0.6. At the same time, the number of women using contraception increased in the nineties about 3 times. The age of women giving birth to their first child has been increasing: level of fertility rate in 1993 culminated to the age of 22 years, in 1997 it was 24 years and in 2001, the highest so far, first child average age was 26. The Czech Republic has reached almost the same level as the EU member states, in other words, the level of those with the lowest age. At the same time, the age of the highest level abortion rate increased: in 1993 the largest number was by women 25 years old, whilst in 1997 and 2001 it was in the age of 27. (*Czech Statistical Office, 2003.*)

Average age of females at birth of first child - Members EU and candidates EU					
	1990	1995	1998	1999	2000
Members EU					
Austria	25,0	25,6	26,1	26,3	26,3
Belgium	26,4	-	-	-	-
Germany	26,6	27,5	27,9	28,0	-
Denmark	26,4	27,4	-	-	-
Spain	26,8	28,4	28,9	29,0	-
Finland	26,5	27,2	27,4	27,4	27,4
France	27,0	28,1	28,5	28,7	-
Greece	25,5	26,6	27,2	27,3	-
Ireland	26,6	27,3	27,6	27,6	27,8
Italy	26,9	28,0	-	-	-
Luxembourg	-	27,4	27,9	28,3	28,4
Netherlands	27,6	28,4	28,7	28,7	28,6
Portugal	24,9	25,8	26,2	26,4	26,4
Sweden	26,3	27,2	27,8	27,9	27,9

	1990	1995	1998	1999	2000
United Kingdom	27,3	28,3	28,8	28,9	29,1
Candidates EU					
Bulgaria	22,2	22,4	22,9	23,0	23,5
Cyprus	24,7	25,5	25,7	25,8	26,2
Czech Republic	22,5	23,3	24,4	24,6	24,9
Estonia	22,9	23,0	23,6	23,8	24,0
Hungary	23,1	23,8	24,5	24,8	25,1
Latvia	23,0	23,3	24,0	24,2	24,4
Lithuania	23,2	23,1	23,6	23,7	23,8
Malta	-	-	-	-	-
Poland	23,3	23,8	24,2	24,4	24,5
Romania	22,6	23,0	23,4	23,5	23,6
Slovenia	23,7	24,9	25,8	26,1	26,5
Slovak Republic	22,6	23,0	23,6	23,8	24,2
<i>Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2001.</i>					

6. NATIONAL ACTION PLANS FOR EMPLOYMENT AND PROGRESS REPORTS

Generally speaking, the documents related to the EU accession either do not refer to gender issues at all or they do so very superficially.

Concerning the Regular Reports from the European Commission - it can be said, that these reports deal with gender issues just minimally. They mainly tackle issues connected to the amendment of the Labour Code but they practically never criticise the real enforcement of equal opportunities in the country. The latest from 2002 refers to equal opportunities most of all. Following areas have been mentioned:

A. Issues connected to the amendment of the Labour Code - the Report states, that:

- the wage gap in 2000 was of 3.1% worse than in 1999 (*but it does not say that no measures have been proposed so far to reduce the gap*);

- the changes of the Code concerning discrimination have gone largely unnoticed and recommends pro-active enforcement and awareness campaigns (*but it does not mention that anything like such a campaign has been planned*);
- particular effort was made in the area of employment policy and as regards to equal treatment for women and men a high level of alignment has been achieved (*but it does not say what concretely has been done - so far, nothing like that is known to women's NGOs and nothing like that was described in the report of fulfilment of the "Priorities" - see bellow*).
- the administrative capacity should be further strengthened and that strengthening of relevant institutional structures, in particular labour inspectorates is on-going (*but in fact, nothing has been done concerning these inspectorates and equal opportunities so far except some vague training for some of the officers on this issue*).

B. Other relevant issues - the Report informs, that:

- the Council for *Equal Opportunities* started its work on 1 January 2002 and it describes its formal structure (*but it does not refer at all to null results of its one year activities*);
- number of women in the 200-member Chamber of Deputies after the latest election in June 2002 slightly increased from 16 to 17% (*but it does not mention the reason for this - see bellow*).

The Report neither refers to the most important (and only one) governmental document "Priorities" (see *Chapter III.*), nor it evaluates the real fulfilment of this document, although such evaluation by the Commission would be extremely needed. The report also does not at all mention domestic violence or political participation of women.

Because the gender issues mentioned in the Regular Reports are mostly connected to the labour market, the question remains, how far are gender issues reported about in the most important documents connected to the labour market - the National Action Plans of Employment and National Plan of Employment for the Czech Republic (CR)?

Eva Kalivodova in her analysis found, that within Pillar IV (strengthening of equal opportunities policies for women and men combating labour market discrimination), the **National Plan of Employment for the CR from 1999** speaks of: "Strengthening of all legal and institutional tools and mechanisms and combating all forms of labour market discrimination."

Further, within concrete measures, it speaks about introducing effective procedures to penalise discriminating employers and strengthening efficiency of State inspections. But so far, until mid 2003, this has not been done and the Labour offices are even not able to report, how many discriminatory cases discovered by them concerned sex discrimination. The only measure in the whole National Plan of Employment for the CR which is devoted to a problem of inequality between sexes as such is No 4.4 stating that it is necessary "to work towards reducing and/or removing the gap in wage levels between men and women. The gap amounts to approximately 25 per cent. Part of the gap is due to discrimination against women. Recent statistical inquiries tell us that wage differentials have continually widened." But, again, any concrete measure to solve this problem has not been even proposed so far, not talking about introduction.

The National Action Plans of Employment 2001 and 2002 include a comparison of the 22 EU priority directives of its current policy of employment with the measures of the Czech Action Plan. The comparison shows that the formulations of Czech measures are not only far from the gendered language of the EU priorities, but, more importantly, quite far from the gendered considerations of the EU priorities. The Plan from 2002 just copies some general formulations from the document *Priorities and Procedures towards Enforcement of Equality between Men and Women*.

Joint Assessment of the Employment Policy Priorities of the Czech Republic 2000 and 2002 use the expression equal only when it repeats the definitions of the fourth pillar of the EU employment national plans and reporting about differences in numbers of men and women employed in particular sectors of economy.

Very similar findings can be applied for other documents: ***Progress report on the implementation of the conclusions of the Joint Assessment of Employment Policy of the Czech Republic 2001*** and ***Joint Comments to the Progress Report on the Joint Assessment of the Employment Policy Priorities of the Czech Republic 2002***. (Kalivodova, 2003.)

CHAPTER II.**WOMEN'S ACCESS TO
EMPLOYMENT AND EQUAL PAY****1. BRIEF HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF GENDER ROLES**

In this section we provide a synthetic overview of the role that women have played in the labour market since the end of World War II. According to Cermakova: "Female employment in the Czech Republic has been very stable over the last fifty years and continues to be high. It has always fluctuated between 35-46%, according to the ability of women to gradually obtain higher education and qualifications (*see below*) since the end of the war and it can be said, that the development of female work force went without any major changes. (Cermakova, 2000a.)

A. After World War II: More than 1/3 of women worked in 1948, but mostly as agricultural workers and industrial workers performing heavy manual work.

B. 50's: Women entered into low qualified jobs in industry and agriculture; the official picture of working woman from this period was a worker in industry or agriculture, e. g. a tractor driver.

C. 60's: Women entered on larger scale into administration and services; the official picture changed to a woman, who works for lower wage, but in more comfortable environment, without heavy manual job, and was able to increase her social status.

D. 70's: Generation of women with secondary and university education entered the labour market; those women managed to take over positions according to their higher qualification. The number of marriages when both of the people have university education increased.

E. 80's: The share of employed women on the labour market culminates - it was 46,2% in 1985 and some resorts were feminised: education (1989 - 71%), healthcare (1989 - 80%), finances (1989 - 77%), trade (1989 - 72%), public administration (1989 - 60%). Women penetrated in university positions and first experiences with two-careers-marriages occurred.

F. 90's: Women entered into private business: according to Czech Statistical Yearbook from 1999, the share of women (from the total number of economically active women) who claim they are in a position of employer or self-employed is 8,7%; from the total number of men and women in these positions, women create 28%. At the same time, women gained first experiences with unemployment (in average 39% of women) and they did not penetrate the high status positions in economics and politics (4,1%). Women became oriented towards income as a condition to keep the living standard of their own or the whole family.

All these trends changed the quality of the female labour force - whilst at the beginning, the manual worker dominated (in 1948), today the Czech working woman prevails in the tertiary sphere and services and is present in a various number of professions." (*Cermakova, 2000a.*)

There is one phenomenon connected to the period of communism and the change after 1989, which is necessary to be mentioned: the communists introduced low level of salaries, so that two incomes were necessary for a family to survive on, which strongly supported women's employment (*further, they created a network of child care facilities - see Chapter V*). At the same time, during 50's and beginning of 60's, the official picture of working woman was presented elsewhere and became an integral part of the communist ideology. Because of this, the high employment of women has been considered as something artificial, unnatural and therefore wrong. This feeling dominated among many decision makers at the beginning of 90's; therefore they assumed that most women with children of pre-school age will stay in the household, after the communists stopped "forcing" them to work - but it did not happen. This feeling apparently was behind a legal change, when in 1995 the parental leave (that time called "further maternal leave") was prolonged from 3 to 4 years, whilst the obligation of the employer to secure a job position for 3 years for a parent remained unchanged (*see Chapter V*).

But even if the regime before 1989 supported women's employment, it was only due to the need to cover several deficits: the female labour force either entered to those places where the male work force was missing, or where it was necessary to gain a second income for the family or combination of both (*Cermakova, 2000a.*) But the career of women, creation of equal opportunities and cancelling of gender stereotypes and segregated work as well as public debate on these issues was almost never supported (there was nobody who would start such debate, since all the numerous women's organisations were

dismissed after communists took over the power in 1948, and only one official - Czechoslovakian Women's Union - was created), which meant, that a typical socialist woman not only worked full time in the job, but at the same time worked "full time" in the household. According to Cermakova, "this secondary position on the labour market has been retained by women in the market economy throughout the nineties. The accompanying feature has been also the reproduction of some stereotypical features, which differentiate the Czech female labour force from economically active female populations in European countries." (Cermakova, 2000b.)

Structural differences that distinguish "female labour force" in developed countries from Czech working women:

I. Educational level of working women in developed countries is higher than that in the Czech Republic. The ratio of the EU : the CR = 20-35% women with education on the tertiary level to 9.9 %.

II. High level of time investment in work most women work full time (92%), shift work, work overtime, or have part-time jobs. This feature ranks Czech women first in the number of hours spent at work).

III. Penetration of women into "male sectors" and a strong dominance in tertiary spheres therefore, there are now sectors where women outnumber men - education, healthcare, social services, trade and banking. Only a few professions remained closed to women.

Source: Cermakova, 2000b.

2. LABOUR MARKET ANALYSIS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

There are several features typical in the current Czech female labour force:

- I.** Long-term, multigenerational employment of women with a clear tendency to improve educational levels, qualifications, professional structures and general work status;
- II.** The same applies to status in employment in all the sectors of the

national economy;

- III. Women working full-time (i.e., 42.5 hours per week) predominate (i.e., more than 90%);
- IV. 3 % of women have another job in addition to their main employment;
- V. The traditional model of a woman in a household is marginal (a maximum of 1% of women in the economically active age);
- VI. The average number of hours spent at work per year is the highest compared to OECD countries. (According to a new ILO study published by *The Economist*, 11th September 1999, in 1996 more than 80% of Czech women worked more than 40 hours per week. This compares with 60% of women in the USA, 20% in Germany and 10% in the Netherlands.) (*Cermakova, 2000b.*)

The Czech labour market is visibly segregated according to gender. Women dominate the non-manual jobs without management or director personnel, and the most unskilled worker categories. According to wage and payment categorisation, women dominate the lower levels and men increasingly occupy the highest levels. Although Cermakova in 2000 wrote, that "stereotypes and women's priorities only represent one indicator causing such segregation and that the lack of legislation preventing discrimination in the labour market has a major influence on this phenomenon" (*Cermakova, 2000b.*), the situation apparently has not changed after the new Labour Code entered into force on January 1st, 2001. This shows that hopes connected with the changes of EU accession were not fulfilled – it became clear, that just change of law has not been sufficient, that a real enforcement is needed.

The lower wages received by women further support this segregation; men are discouraged from entering "typically female" professions because of the low wages and at the same time women have few opportunities to enter the leading positions. The character of economic and social environment applies to all educational categories of working women. According to research, Czech women have declared a great interest in paid employment, just as men have. But it must be noted that there are especially certain categories of women in the Czech Republic who are discriminated against in the labour market: women with small children, women close to the retirement age (over 50 years) and women with only primary education represent the most vulnerable groups. Women with the greatest chances are women with a university degree, young women in certain professions and also women with a university degree who

work in professions with higher levels of feminisation: doctors, judges, teachers and social workers. (Cermakova, 2000b.)

A general comparison of the situation in 1989 and the situation ten years later is surprisingly similar. A weak dynamic of changes throughout the nineties concerning the female population hides contradictions of the social position of women in a transitory society. A stagnating position is generally, in view of the risks defining the position of Czech women on the labour market, considered to be a success. As Cermakova notes, sociological surveys that have monitored the female perspective in the nineties, however, point to "the costs of circumstances" under which women have retained their positions. The most important trade-offs include:

- Postponement of having a family;
- Drop in the birth rate, postponement of the birth of a child (children);
- Increased time investment in work;
- High level of overtime work;
- Focus on a growth in wages and career.

(Cermakova, 2000b.)

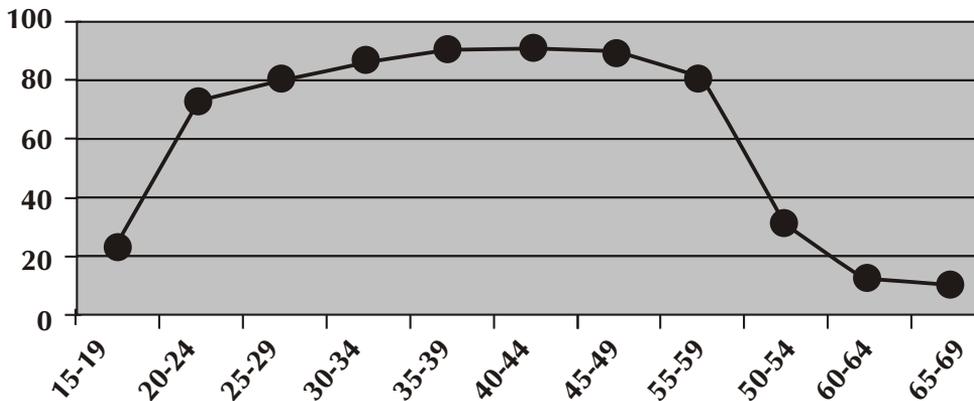
2.2 PARTICIPATION AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

According to Cermakova, "the participation rate says much more about the female employment than any other indicator for the respective country. We can find 3 basic models of the participation rate:

1. The largest number among working women is created by young single women until 20-25 years of age. After they marry and have children, they leave the labour market and never return.
2. The second model (in the shape of the letter "U") presents interrupted economic activity. Single women enter the labour market and they stop working between 25-40 years of age, when they take care of children. After the children grow up, they return to the labour market.
3. The model in the shape of the "converted U" - which is the case of the Czech Republic - shows, that women combine work and family and they do not stop

working even if their children are small. In this model, the female activity reaches the male one. It shows that both male and female economic activity is common for the society." (Cermakova, 2000a.) This type of curve is shown on the graph below.

Participation rete of women in the Czech Rep. in 1998 by age

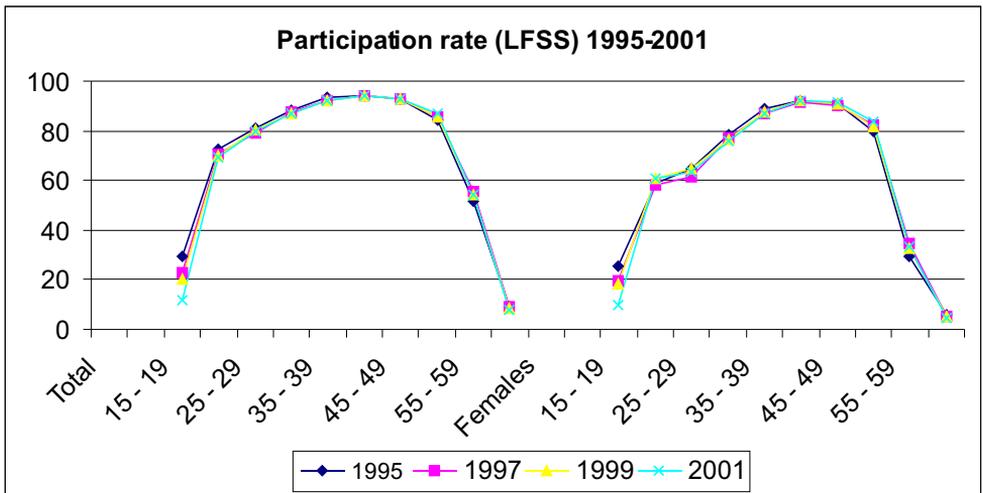


Source: Cermakova, 2000a.

The female economical active population in the Czech Republic has following characteristics:

1. The share of employed women in the age group 15-19 is still high in comparison with some European Countries and proves that many girls, who could have been studying, actually work. The lack of places at universities is the reason for employment in this age group. Less than 3% of women are married.
2. In the age group 20-24, a very high economic activity starts, which is high in the whole Europe. This activity has a continual course and culminates in the age group of 40-44, when 92% of women are employed. In the group 50-54 years of age it slightly drops to 80%.
3. A sharp decrease starts after 55 years - only 30% of women work in the age group 55-59 and 12% in the group 60+ years. So sharply the economic activity in the Western Europe does not drop - e. g. in Denmark, in the group 54-59 work 70% of women and between 60-64 years it is 30%.

4. In spite of the above mentioned differences, the female economic activity curve runs accordingly to the trends in Western Europe, but at the higher levels of activity, mainly in the group 25-49.



Concerning reasons for economic inactivity in 2001, women presented 63% out of all inactive people older than 1564% in 1995). The reasons of the inactivity of women in 2001 are reflected in the table below. As the table shows, the prevailing reason of inactivity is when women leave for retirement either because of age or due to disability. On the second place, there is taking care of the family; following reason is attending schools and studying (altogether 13,7%).

Reasons for economic inactivity of women (LFSS) in % in 2001	
Economically inactive persons aged 15 +	%
Females total	100
Old age and disabled pensioners	63,3
Attending primary school	1,7
Attending a trade school	2,4
Studying at secondary school	9,6

Studying at university	4,6
Taking care of family	15,6
Health grounds	1,13
Willing to work but not believing to find a job	0,16
Not willing or not being in need to work	0,12
Laid off	0,005
Not being able to start working within 14 days	0,6
Other reasons	0,6
Not identified	0,005
<i>Source: Czech Statistical Office, website, VII/2003.</i>	

2.3 EMPLOYMENT

Looking at a deeper analysis of the female employment, there are several characteristics specific for Czech women within Europe. According to Cermakova, the important connections are:

- The curve of female employment according to age almost copies the male curve (the differences start after 54 years of age), but of course there are differences which prove that "if two people do the same it is not the same", because the position of men and women on the labour market is not equal.
- The high employment rate means a low fertility rate at the same time and a very small number of women staying at home with a child longer than 3-4 years.
- Women's working activity does not differ according to their level of education: it does not count, that women with university education are career oriented and less educated women stay at home.
- The number of children in the family plays relatively unimportant role in the decision if the woman stays at home or not; in the Czech situation, the more children, the more likely the woman works.
- Most of Czech women work for they whole lives, starting at 18, with just a small interruption connected to maternity leave.

- The sum of worked hours by Czech economically active woman is much higher than the sum of hours worked by women from other European countries. The reason for this are: full time jobs, minimum of unpaid leaves, overtime work, work in second job, less states holiday and less holiday according to the Labour Code.

(*Cermakova, 2000a.*)

Tucek (2000) further compares the real division of woman's obligations within the family cycle in the European context. He writes: "After the wedding, before the birth of the first child, most of the women (about 70%) work full time and about 20% stay in the household. The exceptions are the Eastern part of Germany and the Czech Republic, where about 90% of women work full time and in the household stay 6 - 10%. Part time jobs are in these countries exceptional. After the child is born and during its pre-school age, 60 - 70% of women from the Western Europe stay at home, whilst in the post-communist countries 50 - 60% of women work full time. The rest stay at home or work part time.

The same differences between these two groups can be seen when the youngest child goes to school. In the Western Europe, 50% of women still remain at home and 30 - 40% work part time, whilst in the post-communist countries 70% of women (average) work full time. In Poland, 24% of women remain in the household, in the Czech Republic 15%, in Hungary 26% and in the Eastern Germany 8%.

After the children leave home, 75 - 90% of women work full time. In Poland and in Hungary, 20% of women remain in the household and in Germany 13% of women work part time. In the Western Europe the situation differ: about 50% of women stay in the household. Among those women who return to the job, about half are part time workers."(*Tucek, 2000.*)

2.4 UNEMPLOYMENT

At the beginning of the nineties, the female economically active population went through many fears and anxieties of unemployment. According to a survey from 1991, 70 % of women regardless of age or professional status expressed these fears. The level of unemployment was very low, though,

between 1990 and 1997, unemployment levels were due to various reasons. The most frequently stated are:

- I. Incomplete restructuring of industry, and
- II. Political fears of social conflict.

Female unemployment started growing in 1997 when it exceeded 5% in June. At the end of 1998, it reached even 10.7% in 1999, and had not practically fallen according to the latest data from mid 2000.



We can see two trends in the data contained in the tables: female unemployment has always been higher than male, yet during the monitored period it was lower than in other reformed countries of the Central European region, consisting of Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, in addition to the Czech Republic, where unemployment exceeded 10%. It is also lower than the average female unemployment rate in the EU, where it also exceeds 10%. If we look at the analysis of the development of female unemployment in the given period, arguments made at the beginning of the nineties require adjustment, which concern, for example, the following facts:

- 1) The fears of mass female unemployment as a result of pushing women into the household have not come true.
- 2) The level of dependence of social development on economic growth and generally low unemployment was not appreciated enough.

Unemployment rate: by age group (LFSS) in %					
	sex	1995	1997	1999	2001
15-19	F	14,4	20,3	35	43,2
	M	12,1	13,8	29,4	32,9
20-24	F	6,2	7,3	14,7	13,8
	M	5,2	5,7	12,8	13,7
25-29	F	8,5	9,4	14,4	13
	M	3,4	3,7	6,6	6,6
30-34	F	5,5	7,5	13,3	12,1
	M	2,6	3,2	6,2	5,1
35-39	F	3,8	4,8	9,6	9,7
	M	3	3,5	5,2	5,6
40-44	F	3,4	4,3	7,7	7,6
	M	2,5	3,2	5,8	5,2
45-49	F	2,9	4	7,5	6,4
	M	2	2,8	5,7	5,2
50-54	F	2,4	3,5	6,6	7,5
	M	1,9	2,6	5,6	5,2
55-59	F	3,9	3,6	4,5	5,2
	M	1,8	2,5	4,7	4,5
60+	F	3,7	5,4	6,9	7,1
	M	4,5	4,3	4,3	3,7

Source: Czech Statistical Office, web site, VII/2003.

On the contrary, between 1997 and 1998, we were seeing the fulfilment of theoretical presuppositions about greater risks to female labour, growth of unemployment, sacking of women, growth of discrimination when hiring female graduates etc. Many risks pertaining to the female population multiply whether it is a combination of an elementary education with greater age in a socially problematic county or in combination with one or more of these indexes with work in a region where operation employing almost entirely women is closed down. Certain sectors accumulating women may experience an important economic drop in the future, for example, some services, trade or processing industry, as well as other segments of the labour market.

The risk of unemployment is generally always higher for women than for men, and in a period of economic stagnation or recession it increases. This is true about the end of the nineties in the Czech Republic. Statistical tables do not show the risks for "mothers with young children" or "new female medical school graduates". It is necessary to take into account the signals of consulting and advisory companies. These often underscore the discriminatory practices of Czech and foreign companies, which prefer men in managerial and leading positions. It is difficult to capture the unemployment of female managers when discrimination is well-masked. If certain work positions are reserved for men, women accept positions that are left to them. Unemployment, like employment, is segregated. (*Cermakova, 2000b.*)

The development of female unemployment in the EU fluctuates around the ratio of 3:1 compared to the unemployment of men. The situation in the Czech Republic is not as bad yet. In view of the fact that in recent years (1999 2000), the absorption of internal labour markets both in the state and in the private sector is limited, we can expect that a new social problem will appear in the Czech Republic the increase of the number of unemployed women with top qualifications.

Unemployment rate: by educational attainment (LFSS)							
Education:	Sex	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Basic and without education	F	9,9	12,1	15	19,8	20,1	20,7
	M	13,1	15,4	17,5	22,6	25,4	23
Trade school	F	4,8	6,1	8,9	11,5	12	11,2
	M	3,1	3,6	4,6	7,5	7,3	7
Secondary vocational	F	4,4	6,1	8,9	11,7	13,4	14,4
	M	2,4	2,9	4,5	7,1	7	5,2
Trade school with GCE	F	3,5	5,4	9,6	14,5	9,3	13,9
	M	1,8	2,2	5,2	7	7	6,2
Secondary vocational with GCE	F	3	4,2	6,2	7,7	7,5	6,7
	M	1,7	2,2	3,1	4,5	4,3	3,6
Secondary general with GCE	F	3,4	4,8	7,9	9,8	10	9,1
	M	3	5,3	5,1	8	6,9	5,5
University	F	1,4	2,2	2,9	3,9	3,7	2,9
	M	0,9	1,2	1,8	2,4	2,2	2,2

Source: Czech Statistical Office, web site, VII/2003.

If there is an economic recession, employers always start selecting from a reservoir of potential workforce or the unemployed. The aspects of selection are formed according to subjective estimates of the stability of labour force, abilities, potential self-investment and, last but not least, gender stereotypes about the differences between male and female labour force. Unemployment in this social climate affects various categories of women, for example:

- I. Women with young children (according to this stereotype, men do not have small children),
- II. Female university graduates (male university graduates cannot have a child, but stereotypically, without concrete reasons, the same is expected with regard to any young woman)
- III. Women with elementary education (only here "the paradox of gender equality" works – men of this category record high unemployment as well).

In the context of the National Employment Plan it is important to note that those with less education will find it increasingly more difficult to find work. Access to active policy measures such as training, especially in skills related to the new economy as well as to decent salaries will be the only way to ensure that this group, both men and women, do not fall into a situation of social exclusion. Furthermore, the rapid rise in unemployment, as the table shows, in a very short span of time, is most likely indicative of the difficulties that this group is already facing and the lack of measures to address this problem.

2.5 FEMALE LABOUR AND AGE

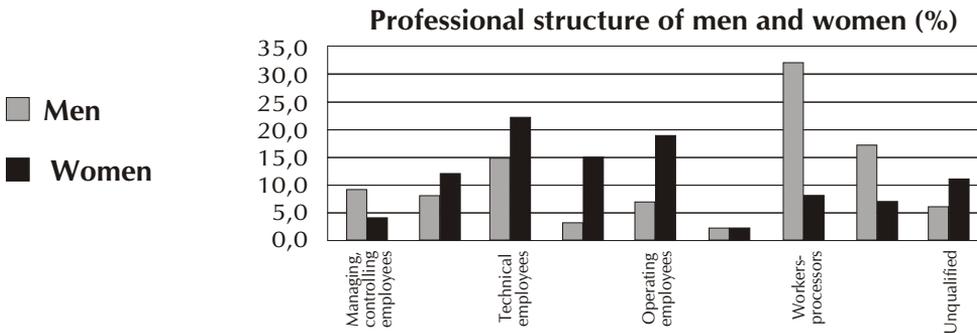
The number of working women in the age group of 15-19 years is still high compared to some European countries and bears witness to the fact that girls who could be studying are in fact working. The limited number of students accepted to universities, caused by their limited physical capacity and lack of resources (the universities depend on the State budget and students pay no fees) leads to the high level of activity (mostly unemployment) among this age group. Moreover, not even 3% of women in this age group are married. The age group between 20-24 shows an unbelievably high economic activity curve even when considered within the whole of Europe, which has a continual course. It culminates in the age group of 40-44 years, when 92% of women are employed

and it falls only slightly in the age group of 50-54 (80 % of women in this age group are employed). A dramatic fall occurs after 55 years of age (30 % of working women in the age group of 55-59 years). Only 12% of women over 60 years work. Despite the above-mentioned differences, the female employment curve by age, especially between 25-49, corresponds to trends in Western Europe; or, to be precise, women in many Western countries would consider it ideal. Parameters of economic activity by gender are still being evaluated in Western Europe. The economic activity of women in Western Europe does not fall that dramatically. For example, in Denmark 70% of women in the age group of 54-59 work, and in the age group of 60-64 years, 30 % of women.

The level of economic activity of women is comparable to the economic activity of men and does not significantly differ from male patterns.

2.6 DIVISION OF LABOUR AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

The existing position of women in the labour market is determined by many factors. Some are of a structural nature, in particular that the labour market is segregated into female and male professions. An allocation by gender into individual job categories is also very pronounced. Men dominate in the categories of "management" or "craft". Women predominate among "specialised employees" but also in the category of "technical employees". A high percentage of women is also found in the category of unqualified labour force according to the data from 1999 in the table below, it was 10 percent, which was double that of men!



Source: Cermakova, 2000b.

If we compare the division with other European countries, the Czech Republic has a large share of women practically in all branches. The share of women in finances is high, i.e. on the level of other countries, and concerning the share in services Czech Republic belongs with Sweden to the top percentages engaged in services.

The lowest number of women is in construction (11,4%), but this still places the CR in one of the largest shares for women in Europe. The employment of women in agriculture reaches the level in Germany and Austria, but is much lower in most of the other states. A similar situation is found in the mining industry in the Czech Republic, 1/5 of all employees are women, which is a rarity in the whole world. Further, the almost 1/3 share of women in the production of electricity, water and gas can not be found in any other of the EU countries. **The structure of women's employment in the Czech Republic brings a unique picture. There is no other country in Europe with such a massive penetration of women in "male" branches, apart from some other post-communist countries (Slovakia, Hungary and Poland).** (*Cermakova, 2000a.*)

3. WAGES

According to the latest CEDAW report, "inequality persists in the remuneration and segregation of women as a result of the employment of women in positions of lower pay or requiring lower qualifications". There are also lower wages in female-dominated spheres. Several sectors are disregarded or stigmatised because of their feminisation. There is a large difference between male and female wages in the Czech Republic

The average female wage is 26% (2002) lower than the average male wage (in full-time jobs) despite the fact that, in general, Czech women have a similar or better education and more qualifications than men. In fact, women dominate the middle-skilled labour force. They earn comparatively more in sectors in which they are worse represented. The wage difference differs depending on individual jobs, however it is very low for example in the case of primary teachers. According to the Sociological Institute, neither the principle of equal pay for equal work nor the principle of equal remuneration for men and women has been established yet in the Czech Republic. This aspect is not sufficiently

monitored since the indicator "price of labour" that allows for the qualified comparison of various professions has not yet been introduced.

There has been practically only one deeper analysis done on the gender wage gap in the Czech Republic, by Stepan Jurajda from CERGE-EI. In this paper, large matched employer-employee data sets from the Czech Republic and Slovakia are used to provide such detailed gender wage gap decomposition.

The results, based on 1998 data, suggest that various forms of employment segregation are related to over one third of the overall pay difference between genders in both countries. In the non-public sector, however, almost two thirds of the total gap remains attributable to the individual's sex, suggesting much of the gap is due to violations of the equal pay policy. A substantial part of the gender pay gap is attributable to differences in educational attainment of men and women in the public sector, where hiring and promotion practices should be particularly easy to affect.

As Jurajda finds, the evidence on gender segregation implies that even though wages are typically lower in the public sectors, which employ over three times as many women as men, this imbalance is not the primary cause of the overall gender pay gap. Segregation of women into low-paying occupations, firms and job cells appears responsible for over one third of the total wage gap. Furthermore, in the non-public sectors, about two thirds of the total wage gap appears to be due to gender differences in wages that remain after accounting for most forms of workplace segregation as well as for other explanatory variables.

However, the estimated, pure (unexplained) wage effect of the individual's sex is likely to be affected by the lack of information in the Czech and Slovak data on the actual length of labour market experience and the number of children. Jurajda also finds that in the Czech and Slovak Republics, it is not occupational segregation that is to blame for most of the gender wage gap, but rather within-occupation within-establishment phenomena. This implies a different strategy for reducing the gender pay gap. Attention should not be paid primarily to differences in remuneration across occupations (comparable worth policies), but rather to potential within-establishment pay discrimination, especially violations of the equal pay clause." (*Jurajda, 2001.*)

Average gross monthly earnings of employees: by ISCO-88 major group					
Occupation	Women's salary - in % of men's income				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Total	75,7	72	73,2	73,3	74,4
1 Legislators, senior	58,1	54	52,6	54,2	55
2 Professionals	72,7	68,6	66,8	68,3	70,8
3 Technicians and associate professionals	73,6	71,3	72,1	70,4	71,5
4 Clerks	81,7	80,4	78,3	78	78,9
5 Service workers and shop and market sales worker	59,3	70,6	74,3	74,5	74,5
6 Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	82,7	83,5	83,6	84,7	85,6
7 Craft and related trades workers	70,3	67,7	68,8	69,2	68,3
8 Plant and machine operators and assemblers	72,6	71,4	72,5	74,9	74,7
9 Elementary occupations	77,1	75,9	76,0	77,5	78,4

Source: Czech Statistical Office, web site, VII/2003.

Except for Jurajda's article, other researchers and institutions (e. g. the Sociological Institute and the MLSA) insist, that in the Czech Republic, it is not possible to show, under the given level of the investigation of the wage differentiation, to what degree the discrimination of women is to blame for the difference in average salaries and to what extent it may be explained by different professional and sector structure of female and male labour forces. Most authors believe that discrimination is likely but that it is difficult to prove. Generally comparable criteria and evaluation indexes, which are used around the world, have not been introduced in the Czech Republic (e.g., methodical instruments to ensure the same wage for work of same value). (Cermakova, 2000b.)

As Cermakova further states, "the growth dynamics of average monthly salaries of men between 1984-1997 show a fall after 1989 by approximately 6% to the benefit of women but has retained 135% of average women's wage. In 1997, we even recorded a percentage increase to 136.2%. The ratio of "women/men"

that year amounted to 73.4%. The salary of a female university graduate with scientific education is 173% of the average women's wage and 299% compared to the average wage of a woman with incomplete elementary education. When compared to men's salaries, however, all educational categories lose relatively most women with vocational training, women without education, and surprisingly also female university graduates, who on average get 68% of a salary of male university graduates.

An important factor is the comparison of the weight of education in the differentiation of salaries of men and women. It has been found that the weight of education in the differentiation of salaries of men has increased while in the case of women it has fallen. While individual explanations function independently in the case of men and therefore can multiply each other, women's wages are defined more strongly by the individual factors. That means that in the case of women it is not possible to replace a handicap (e.g., as concerns the age) with an advantage (e.g., education). It also means that there is a greater discrepancy between men with higher education and women with higher education because these women achieve the lowest average salary effect compared to lower educational categories. If this trend were to be confirmed, it would lead to paradoxical conclusions: if women reach university education, their discrimination (or gender inequality) is greater because men with comparable characteristics get both higher and the highest salaries.

Directly related to salaries is the low number of women in management, not only in top positions but also on intermediary and lower levels. The number of women with the highest social status (out of 100% of working women) has continued at 4.1% throughout the nineties while the same index for men (the portion of men with the highest social status out of 100% of working men) is 8.9%. This inequality is even more pronounced if we take into account the number of all employees in the top category (lawmakers, directors and managers). The ratio between men and women is 74 to 26." (*Cermakova, 2000b.*)

Although one expected that foreign companies from the "West" would be the ones promoting gender equality, the opposite is true: at the beginning of the nineties, they observed equal opportunity rules in their countries of origin. However, in the current situation it is typical to deny women managerial positions and to offer them lower salaries as compared to men.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Concerning the EU structures:

- Real enforcement and monitoring of gender mainstreaming and gender audit has to be done regularly by the respective EU bodies, mainly concerning:
 - activities of the public administration;
 - distribution of the EU funds.

Use lobbying of women's NGOs from CEE for this enforcement.

- Consider making other areas of equality of men and women obligatory for all member state (e. g. women in decision making processes, family policies including social services).

B. Concerning women on the labour market and the role of the State (i.e. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs):

Write a proposal of Equal Opportunities Law which would enable introduction of positive measures for women mostly in the decision making positions within the state administration.

Improve training of the labour inspectors concerning equal opportunities legislation.

Monitor check-ups of non-discriminatory behaviour of the employers carried out by the State Labour Offices (*belongs under Ministry MLSA*); report every year to the on the number of cases of discrimination including the issue of equal pay that have been reported and what the impacts were (level of the fine or other sanctions).

Allocate funds for a public awareness campaign and legal advisory centres so women can start discriminatory cases; do this in co-operation with NGOs.

Allocate funds for detailed researches on discrimination of women on the labour market including mapping of the gender wage gap.

Report to the government every year on the number of training and re-qualification programs for women that have been introduced by the State Labour Offices, and on number of women (compare with number of men) who took part in re-qualification courses in information technologies.

Provide vocational and training programs for women after and on maternity/parental leave; ensure that mothers are really able to attend them

Compare the male and female average wage (all factors) at all levels of the

public administration; analyse differences and take measures to eliminate those; draw media attention to the results and measures and serve as an example for the private sphere.

CHAPTER III.**SOCIAL SERVICES
AND WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT****1. INTRODUCTION**

As the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (*further: MLSA*) declares on its web page, in the Czech Republic, generally speaking, social services cover a range of assistance to people in unfavourable social conditions ranging from urgent crisis advice, temporary care in shelter homes and dormitories to services for people who need medium term intensive assistance in day care centres and protected workshops up to long term help provided through care services, personal assistance and protected living and homes.

Over the last ten years, major changes occurred in the provision of social services, but the fast development has occurred without having been coordinated and regulated by law. As the Ministry further states, "the current system completely lacks a consistent set of tools to implement social policies of municipalities and regions. Individual regions are not fit to meet the requirements (neither in terms of the types of social services nor in terms of capacity) and differ considerably in their ability to meet demand. A continuing and a very unfortunate feature of the current system is the fact that the financing of governmental and non-governmental entities providing social services is separated and providers do not have equal access to funding. The quality of the provided services is not adequately checked and the effectiveness of the spending is not controlled at all." (*MLSA, website, VII/2003.*)

The MLSA itself admits, that there are no comprehensive data on social services. The collection of quantitative data is performed only in respect to those facilities that are embedded in the existing legislation, but data on services provided by non-governmental non-profit organisations are not being systematically collected. Overall expenditures on the existing social services cannot therefore be documented. The absence of uniform methodology allowing for the

elaboration of a survey showing the scope of social services provided and the cost of their provision was one of the reasons behind the launch of the social service reform. The same lack of data applies for childcare facilities. The Czech Republic has had to report already twice on the fulfilment of the European Social Chart. In both cases, the MLSA asked women's NGOs to send their data on childcare facilities in the whole country - but none of the NGOs so far have done any research of this kind, so this kind of information remains unknown.

According to the MLSA annual reports on social care facilities, in 1999 there were in total 929 facilities providing social care services with the capacity of 71.977 places. It included 329 old people's homes with the capacity of 35.182 places, 152 pensions for old age pensioners with the capacity of 12.600 places, 70 social care institutes for adults with the capacity of 6.102 places, 3 institutes for chronic alcoholics and drug addicts with the capacity of 136 places, 5 institutes for chronic psychotic and psychopathic patients with the capacity of 505 places, 185 social care institutes for young people with 12.468 places, 35 special facilities for foster care with the capacity of 333 places, 33 homes for mothers with children with the capacity of 628, 55 asylum homes with the capacity of 1.759 places, 22 charity homes for nuns with the capacity of 1.441°places and 4 other facilities with the capacity of 823 places. The "other" facilities include multi-purpose facilities offering services for the elderly and physically or mentally handicapped citizens (care service, eateries, short term respite etc.). The following providers participated in the provision of social care services in 1999 as per the above source: state providers 47.5 %, municipalities and cities 35.4 %, churches 10.4 %, other non-governmental non-profit organisations and physical persons 6.7 %.

The overall expenditure on the above types of social care services amounted to 10.143.733.364 CZK, including CZK 4.992.172.265 for old age pensioners homes, 582.598.715 CZK on homes-pensions for old age pensioners, CZK 1.121.749.118 for social care institutes for adults, 2.828.766.865 for social care institutes for young people, CZK 22.656.771 for institutes for alcoholics and drug addicts, CZK 81.114.638 on institutes for psychotic and psychopathic patients and CZK 31.638.836 on special foster care facilities; CZK 48.759.993 on homes for mothers with children, CZK 109.710.391 on shelter homes, CZK 190.850.796 on charity homes for nuns and CZK 91.231.695 on other facilities.

Source: MLSA, website, VII/2003.

As Cermakova writes, "the social policy reform in the nineties was based on the principle of liberalisation and democratisation. Its main pillars were the employment policy, family policy, and pension and social security policy. The requirement of high social efficiency marginalised and implicitly enforced the existing gender inequalities. The social security policy is based on a double-income household, which explains the maintenance of high employment of women in the CR. A group of benefits related to maternity and parenthood is to improve the situation of families with dependent children. These benefits involve a financial support for expecting mothers, childbirth allowance, the contribution for parents and the child benefit. At present, women are forced to work out how to combine motherhood and not to lose their position on the labour market. Sometimes, they opt for not collecting the full maternity leave, but only for the period when their job is guaranteed by law. In this respect, the legislation does not treat men and women in the same manner." (Cermakova, 2000b.)

Cermakova further points, that "the duality of women's roles in the family and work sphere has been preserved. In the survey Rodina (Family)1994, 55.4% men and 51.4% of women agreed with the statement that "*the man should earn money and the woman should take care of the household*". Two years later, there was a greater gap between female and male respondents (men 59.3; women 48.8).

This, however, does not change the fact that more than half of the population agreed with the statement. The paradox of embedded gender roles only confirms that more than 80% of respondents also, regardless of their family status, agreed that both partners should contribute to the family budget. This confirms the fact that in the Czech Republic two-income families are prevalent. Although the income of women often does not reach that of men, its social value is appreciated. This situation led to such an arrangement of income in the society that the family is able to reach the usual material standard only with two incomes and the absence or a drastic decrease of one of them can jeopardise the family's basic needs. Typically, a two-income family has to deal with this situation during motherhood. It does not mean that at this time the woman remains completely without any income, but her income decreases drastically while the expenses related to the birth of a child increase. Young families therefore postpone the birth of the first child by several years and make it contingent on the accumulation of a certain amount of material security. It has

been confirmed that the total net income in employee's families is permanently lower than that of childless employees (in 1997 by CZK 4,195 = 140 EUR per month per member of a household) and even lower compared to the household of pensioners (in 1997 by CZK 221 = 7,40 EUR)." (Cermakova, 2000b.)

2. STATE SUPPORT AND BENEFITS CONNECTED WITH MOTHERHOOD AND PARENTHOOD

2.1 FINANCIAL HELP IN MOTHERHOOD

Women are entitled to this support for maximum 28 weeks, starting 6-8 weeks before the expected date of the birth; if she still works at this time before birth, she loses the support for those weeks entirely. In any case, after giving birth her entitlement goes into effect only for 22 weeks. This support is paid from the sickness insurance and, equals its amount i.e., 69% of the daily basis of assessment, with an upper limit (see *the table below*). It is contingent on the accumulation of at least 270 days of sickness insurance during the two years prior to the birth of the child.

According to Cermakova, "Czech society strongly holds to the opinion that the state should help working parents and compensate for the loss of one income due to childcare, but one can hardly talk about compensation for salary under these conditions. Because this contribution is defined as insurance and not as social support, various mothers receive "various compensation" for equal work, i.e., childcare. Young mothers with low starting salaries are put at a disadvantage. Yet this also applies to women with above-average incomes because this contribution has a daily maximum limit." (Cermakova, 2000b.) As of the amounts in 2002 and 2003: whilst the maximum daily limit for the financial help in motherhood (i.e. for the sickness insurance) has been CZK 419 = EUR 14, the average daily salary of woman amounted to about net CZK 508 = EUR 17.

Financial support for expecting mothers		
	Until 01/01/1994	After 01/01/ 2002
% of the daily basis of assessment	90	69
The highest amount (CZK/EUR) per calendar day (basis of assessment)	150/5	419/14
<i>Source: Cermakova, 2000b; Aperio, 2003.</i>		

Although according to the new Labour Code fathers are allowed to take care of the child immediately after the birth, they are not entitled for this support (unless the mother dies or is not able to take care of the child) and receive the parental benefit (*about 85 EUR per month* - see 2.2). This means that fathers are heavily discriminated by the law. It has been explained by one officer from the Ministry, that the fact, that this support comes from the sickness insurance shows, that it is connected to the biological side of giving birth, which has nothing to do with the father. But it is known, that the fact, that the maternity benefit is paid from sickness insurance only due to the reason that nobody was able to find a better place within the social care system for it.

2.2 PARENTAL LEAVE AND PARENTAL BENEFIT

After maternity support finishes, parental leave starts and one parent is entitled to receive a parental benefit from the state. The parental benefit is derived from so called "living minimum", which has been introduced in the system in 1991. According to its legal definition, it is a "minimum level of income, under which the material destitute starts. The living minimum defines the amount of necessary financial sources for household for temporary securing of basic living needs of their members on a very modest level. It plays a crucial role in the social security system. The living minimum is the officially recognised poverty line, determined by central bodies. The amount of the minimum is used as a criterion for protecting citizens against material and social deprivation and it is used as an index in programs focused on battling poverty. The parental benefit amounts the living minimum for one grown up person multiplied by a coefficient 1,1, which at present is 2.552 CZK = 85 EUR.

Living minimum, as of 1. 10. 2001, in CZK/EUR	
Sum for alimentation and other basic personal needs	
Child up to 6 years	1,690/56
6 to 10 years	1,890/63
10 to 15 years	2,230/74
15 to 26 years (without sustenance, i.e. studying)	2,450/82
Other citizens	2,320/77
Sum for necessary expenses for a household	
Household with 1 person	1,780/59
with 2 persons	2,320/77
3 or 4 persons	2,880/96
5 or more persons	3,230/108
<i>Source: MLSA, website, VII/2003</i>	

According to its legal definition, the parental benefit is "a sum covering personal needs of a parent properly taking day-long care of at least one child up to 4 years of age (up to 7 years of age if the child is long-term disabled)" i.e. it is meant to enable the parent of doing so. Only one parent is entitled to the benefit, regardless of the income of the family and regardless if it is mother or father, and it is necessary to send a written request to the social security department at the respective municipality.

There are several conditions to be met for the entitlement:

The contribution belongs to a parent if the child attends a care facility no more than 5 days per calendar month.

If a parent is on sick leave during the whole month, i.e. receives sickness insurance, she/he loses the benefit (unless the insurance is lower - in that case, the parent receives such amount which makes the whole monthly sum as high as the benefit).

If a parent is hospitalised for more than 3 months due to health reasons, she/he loses the entitlement to the contribution (and receives sickness insurance).

If the child is long-term disabled, the entitlement is fulfilled if it visits a healing rehabilitation facility for maximum of 4 hours per day.

The parent can receive this benefit until 4 years of a child's age (it has been prolonged from 3 to 4 years in 1995); the employer is obliged according to the law to secure a work position for such parent for 3 years after starting parental leave. This can be viewed as a legislation supporting parents (i.e. mostly women) on the labour market, but in fact this turns against them because of following reasons:

From the employer point of view, because 3 years is a very long time and even if the parent decides to return to the labour market before the parental leave ends, she or he can change the decision at any time before this 4 years period ends and return to the leave, which supports the employers fears that such employee is unstable (although there is no research how far this fear is justified or not);

From the employee point of view, such working place can not be really secured either due to an unstable business environment in which many new companies shut down and many older companies rationalise or cancel individual branches, plants and work positions, or due to the common practise, when employer claims the job position of the parent has been cancelled due to re-organisational reasons and offers to the person another job in the company, which is e. g. bellow the education of this person, so she or he is indirectly forced to leave.

*Journalist Lenka T., 34, 2 children, wanted to return back to work immediately after the support for expecting mothers ended, i.e. after 22nd week of giving birth. Although she remained, the employer in time according to the law, tried everything possible not to take her back, pretending he reorganised the work place, etc. At the end, she had to show a strong commitment fighting for her rights and she hired a lawyer. At this point, the employer realised that she was serious and that he did not behave according to the law and paid her a compensation before she left the job. This is a very common story, but most of the women do not fight for themselves.
Source: informal interview, Gender Studies Centre*

Concerning the combination of an income from paid employment and the payment of the parental benefit - it is possible, if the income does not exceed CZK 3,480 = EUR 116. If the income exceeds this amount of whatever small

money, the parent loses the whole benefit for the particular month. E. g. if the parent earns one month CZK 100 = EUR 3 more, it loses the whole benefit of EUR 83. This condition makes paid employment practically impossible because in order to observe the limit of the low wage, it is possible to work only a few hours per week, which is not suitable for most employers and there is a great lack of such jobs on the labour market. Whilst only 10% of mothers aged 25-29 with children younger than 2 years work part time in the Czech Republic, it is 30% in Netherlands. (*Patek Lidovych novin - magazine insert of daily newspaper, 2003.*) In the election period 1998 - 2002, the governing Czech Social Democratic Party proposed cancelling of this limit of the income: during the debate in the Parliament, several of the "right-wing" parties members spoke strongly and emotionally against, stating, that Czech mothers would become very bad mothers because they would concentrate on making money and not on taking care of the child/children. The proposal did not come through.

Sociologist Ida K., 30, 2 children, works part time for the university in Pilsen. Today the university as an employer is aware of the fact that her salary must not exceed the given amount, but at the beginning of her employment, the university e. g. paid her extra remuneration in one month instead of spreading it into several months, so she lost the entitlement to the benefit immediately. "At the beginning, they miscalculated my salary several times and I lost the whole benefit only because of some hundred crowns. It is nonsense, if I write once an article for a newspaper for CZK 3,000 = EUR 100, I must not do anything for money until the end of that month".
Source: *Patek Lidovych novin magazine insert of daily newspaper, 2003*

Concerning number of men who use the opportunity and stay on the parental leave - although it has been steadily increasing (from 0,55% in the first quarter of 1998 to 0,72 in the first quarter of 2000), it still remains below 1%. As Marikova compares, "the experiences from Sweden show that it takes time before men start to use the opportunity to stay at home with their children. Whilst in 1974 were on the parental leave only 3% of fathers, in 1994 it was already one half. ... But despite this, even in Sweden 91% of the whole time with children at home is spent by the mothers. ... Studies from other European countries (e. g. France) show that men do not want to stay at home with the child because it means big financial losses for them (craftsmen, businessmen, highly paid employees); the second group is created by men who can not afford "absence" because they are

very busy (and they would have to do their work later anyway); further, those men who's position in the job is not very secured and they fear sanctions from their employer, are disqualified." (Marikova, 2003.) As Cermakova comments on the situation in the Czech Republic, "fathers are deterred from taking advantage of parental leave due to the fact that men have higher salaries than women, which is a determining factor in the context of the insufficient economic security of most young families. Although it might seem that this is the most important fact, it is not.

Based on interviews with young female doctors' it has become apparent that women continue to take leave, work part-time, limit their work etc. - even if the family would have a higher income if the man took parental leave. The experience of these women living in two-career families reflects the gender contract in the current Czech society, which prescribes women and men specific roles and obligations. In compliance with this gender contract, employers pay lower salaries to women and generally invest less into their professional growth with the expectation of lower investment returns. Some of the reasons given for not hiring women, such as the expectation of women's greater work fluctuation, have been repeatedly shown to be prejudiced." (Cermakova, 2000b.)

Cermakova further states, that "the prolongation of the parental leave in 1995 to 4 years has been officially interpreted as a measure women desire. These women, however, do not include female university graduates who spend 2 years or less at home with one child in view of the fear of losing the achieved position, qualification, skills and knowledge, according to a field in which they work. These women do not include women with lower education either, as became clear in interviews with unemployed mothers. According to their statements, many of them stay on the prolonged parental leave primarily because they cannot find a job, so the real level of hidden unemployment in the group of women on parental leave is difficult to estimate. Looking for a job is all the more difficult for these women because they cannot take adequate advantage of the services of childcare facilities. If they do not want to lose the right to paid parental leave, they must provide day-long childcare. If the contribution for parents is an important income (i.e., an income they cannot risk in the event that they fail to find a job), they have to accept only five days per month during which they may leave their child in the care of another individual or a childcare facility." (Cermakova, 2000b.) There is no doubt that such legislation works strongly against active mothers and supports passivity of women on the parental leave.

2.3 OTHER ALLOWANCES FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Childbirth allowance: Until October 1, 1995, this used to be a one-time only sickness insurance contribution and was called "support upon the birth of a child." As of October 1, 1995, this contribution was inserted into the state social support system (Act No. 117/1995) and is now called a "childbirth allowance". The purpose it serves has not changed. It is to contribute to a partial coverage of costs arising in connection with the birth of a child. In the nineties, it has increases several times as a result of the growing prices of things required for new born children. The contribution is a one-time only payment to the mother who gave birth to the child, to the father if the mother died, or an individual who takes care of the child up to one year of age. The contribution seems significant, but the amount for 1 child equals basically the average price of a pram in the Czech Republic. (*Cermakova, 2000b.*)

Childbirth fee (CZK/EUR)			
As of:	1 child	2 children	3 children
Oct 1, 1996	5,640/188	14,100/470	38,070/1,269
July 1, 1997	5,920/197	14,800/493	39,960/1,332
April 1, 1998	6,240/208	15,600/520	42,120/1,404
April 1, 2000	6,400/213	16,000/533	43,200/1,440
April 1, 2002	8,450/282	20,280/676	50,700/1,690
<i>Source: Cermakova, 2000b; Aperio, 2003</i>			

Child benefit: This is another contribution designed to help families with children. Until 1995, it was a universal contribution and was called Child benefit. Since 1996, it has been a state social support system contribution and is targeted based on income-testing. (*Cermakova, 2000b.*) There has been a great discussion of this concept in the Czech Republic; because it basically discriminates against families above the level of the claim, which means a majority of families, the social democrats wants to pay them to each child regardless on the family income, which has been strongly opposed by the "right-wing" parties. The sum is derived from the living minimum and exists in 3 amounts - depending if the income is 1,1, 1,8 or 3 times the living minimum (*below in the table: "LM"*) for the whole family.

Looking at the amounts, there are not big at all - e. g. the sum for one child up to 6 years old equals the amount of nappies for about one week for babies or one pair of new shoes for a walking child.

Child benefit as of April 1st, 2000 (CZK/EUR, monthly)			
Age of the child	up to 1,1 of LM	up to 1,8 of LM	up to 3,0 of LM
up to 6 yrs	541/18	474/16	237/8
6 to 10 yrs	605/20	530/18	265/9
10 to 15 yrs	714/24	625/21	313/11
15 to 26 yrs (without sustenance, i.e. studying)	784/26	686/23	343/12
<i>Source: Aperio, 2003.</i>			

4. TAX BENEFIT SYSTEM

There are only two possible tax deductions existing for families with children:

1. One of the parents can lower the basis for her/his tax of CZK 23,520 = EUR 784 per year. The impact on the final amount of taxes depend on the income - it varies from almost no impact in case of very low salaries to maximum impact of about CZK 7,000 = EUR 233 in case of the highest levels of income.
2. If one of the parents stays at home and has no income (i.e. receives the financial help in motherhood or parental benefit), the working parent can deduct a certain amount from his/her tax basis; but this amount is even smaller than the one for the child.

This shows, that this kind of system helps much more people with higher income and thus it can not be viewed as a measure supporting families with children.

5. INSTITUTIONS PROVIDING CHILDCARE

Although the tradition of pre-school facilities in the Czech Republic is strong, over the last few years their numbers have been dropping. To a certain extent, the trend can be attributed to the falling birth rate and women's unemployment. The recent weak years, as far as the birth rate is concerned, will not meet the capacities and facilities that are economically non-profitable will be forced to increase prices. The growth of fees may lead to the diminished affordability of kindergartens for low-income families. Compared to Western Europe, though, this form of aid is still fairly accessible and frequently used in the Czech Republic.

The network of nurseries (0-3 years), kindergartens (3-5 years) and children's short-term wards presents another form of aid to employed women with children. For school-age children there is a system of schooling facilities. In addition to day-long care, these facilities also provide boarding, and active leisure time activities. According to Cermakova, "as for childcare for pre-school age in kindergartens, the Czech Republic belongs to countries with the longest average attendance (2.7 years). The share of registered children of the pre-school age group is also high. In recent years, the number of all types of pre-school children facilities decreased; still, 91% of children between 3 and 5 years of age attend kindergartens. The decrease in the number of kindergartens was caused primarily by the low birth rate. The market environment has brought about a greater quality of services in those kindergartens that continue to operate. There are now more of a luxury and expensive kindergartens offering classes with fewer children, continued vacation operation, rehabilitation exercises in a swimming pool and other above-standard services. The state should subsidise kindergartens according to 70% of women. Only 3% of women think that kindergartens should be fully paid by mothers." (Cermakova, 2000b.)

Number of children attending kindergartens in the Czech Republic					
	1989/90	1991/92	1992/93	1997/98	1998/99
% of children's population (3-5 yrs)	97,4	83,2	84,9	88,7	90,6
Absolute numbers	395 164	323 270	325 735	307508	302 856

Number of children attending kindergartens in the Czech Republic					
1989/90	1991/92	1992/93	1997/98	1998/99	Index 1998/99
7328	6972	6827	6152	6028	86%

Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2001; Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, website VI/2003.

As Cermakova notes, "while the paternalistic, socialist state promoted institutional childcare and financed the construction of new childcare facilities required for children born during the Czechoslovak baby-boom (in the politically pro-family seventies as part of its emancipation project), today their numbers are shrinking, especially due to a lower birth rate. The greatest reduction has been recorded in the number of nurseries. According to the Institute of Healthcare Information and Statistics, it would be possible to place only 5% of children of the total number of children who could have attended nurseries in 1990! As can be seen from the table above, the drop in the number of kindergartens has been smaller." (Cermakova, 2000b.) But many of nowadays kindergartens do take smaller children and in fact they replace the nurseries - but it is impossible to get information how many do this because it fully depend on the individual facility.

As Cermakova further states, "reductions in the number of nurseries are also a consequence of their unpopularity following the high sickness rate of children placed in them during the socialist era. It is notable that nurseries are criticised mostly by those generations of women who took advantage of them. Women between 15 and 24 years of age, on the contrary, believe that the state is obligated to ensure that there are enough nurseries for children up to 3 years of age." (Cermakova, 2000b.)

Mirka H. is 55 years old and has been working as a kindergarten teacher for the past 30 years. The facility is in a village with about 2,000 inhabitants, serving for other smaller villages around. The region used to be famous for its textile industry which employed many women but suffered heavy losses after 1989. She says that the number of children has been declining rapidly within past years, because women lost their jobs so they stay home and receive the parental benefit because they can not find a job - and therefore they do not

use the kindergarten.

If parents need to place a child below 3 years there, they are able to take it. (take what?)

Source: informal interview, Gender Studies Centre

Cermakova also points out, that "some extremely busy women, female politicians and managers of companies started to hire nannies at the beginning of the nineties to take care of their children. This practice was practically impossible during socialism because of the labour-law relationships. Even today, though, this practice is not widespread either because of financial unaffordability (e.g., a female medical doctor would basically pay her entire monthly salary to a nanny) or simply because it is not common here." (Cermakova, 2000b.)

Concerning the possibility of getting help from the grandparents, Cermakova finds out, that "in the Czech Republic, approximately 28% of women with small children receive occasional aid from their mothers. In view of the small migration of the population, a young family usually lives in close proximity to the parents of one of the partners. In the future, however, we may be seeing a reduction of this form of aid. With the growing age of first-time mothers, the age and risk of sickness of grandparents will grow as well. Moreover, grandparents will, while they can, seek employment to cover their living expenses even after they have retired." (Cermakova, 2000b.)

6. SINGLE MOTHERS

According to Radimska, "At present, there are 3 categories of households with a very low living standard which extremely depend on the social policy of the state in the Czech Republic: pensioners, young families with children and families with one parent or incomplete families. The last category includes families with a single father (15,4%) and families with a single mother (84,6%). Between 1991 and 2001 there was a largest increase ever concerning the number of incomplete families and at present, almost 27% of dependent children live in an incomplete family." (Radimska, 2003.)

As Cermakova writes, "single mothers often depend on state social support and child support received from fathers. Single mothers' salaries on the labour

market are not great, first as a result of their sex and secondly as a result of the need to care for children. These women are also hit the most by unemployment and poverty. In 1996, the portion of poor incomplete families in the total number of all households under the poverty line amounted to 38.5%. While not even 3% of complete families are below the poverty line, more than 8% among incomplete families are. Although single mothers are socially accepted without problems, their situation is critical from an economic point of view. The social support system and other legislation concerning, for example, claims to paid parental leave provides these women with a safety net rather than a real chance to obtain an average living standard and economic independence." (*Cermakova, 2000b.*)

As Cermakova further notes, "both women and men in the Czech Republic believe in the myth of the naturalness of motherhood. The woman's role as mother and caretaker for a family is considered biological, not socially determined. At the same time, it is not a problem in Czech society for a woman to remain single. According to a survey from 1997 only 5% of women and 8% of men oppose women bringing up children alone. A total of 80% of women and 70% of men do not look down on a woman who wants to have a child as a single parent and rejects a permanent relationship with a man." (*Cermakova, 2000b.*)

7. THE EFFECTS OF MOTHERHOOD ON A RETIRED WOMAN

As Cermakova states, "the situation of retired women is influenced by economic and demographic factors. Women are put at disadvantage as a result of lower average salaries and a calculation of the old-age pension based on their longer life expectancy. Due to these and other reasons, women's old-age pension is lower, which brings problems especially to women in one-member households, the number of which is growing.

Although women now work longer hours while also raising small children, increasing numbers of women at younger ages cease working after the children leave home. According to the opinion of an absolute majority of men and women, however, women should be economically active in this time period, and according to 85% of them, women should be employed full-time. This disparity can be explained simply by the growing unemployment rate, which especially affects women of pre-retirement age. According to some unemployment offices, this group includes forty-year old women, often due to the low retirement age.

Since 1996, the retirement age has been growing each year by 2 months for men and 4 months for women so that as of January 1, 2007, the retirement age for men will be 62 years of age and 57 to 61 years of age for women, depending on the number of children reared. This manner of differentiated attribution of pension depending on sex and number of children damages the labour market prospects especially of mothers. The right to retire, which arises for them at a lower age, decreases their hiring opportunities.

Unemployment in pre-retirement age is therefore sometimes solved through premature retirement. Although this situation enables the unemployed, on the one hand, to avoid likely decreases in assessment and calculation of the old-age pension, it also leads to a permanent decrease of the old-age pension in the case of premature retirement by 3 years. From the state's point of view, this situation is unfeasible in the long run, because it leads to a higher number of people collecting old-age pension. The portion of women who collect premature retirement pension has been increasing and is regularly higher than that of men. In 1998, almost 26,000 new old-age pensions premature by 3 years were granted to women,, which equals approximately 38% of all pensions granted women. The average amount of women's old-age pension reaches on average 82% of men's old-age pensions. One reason for this is that women make less money throughout their lives and also the fewer number of years included in the insurance plans as a result of the lower retirement age.

The situation of retired women is financially bad, especially if they do not have the right to an old-age pension as a result of their life-long childcare and collect only a pension for widows or if they are not entitled to a pension for widow, e.g., because of a divorce. Nonetheless, it must be said that not even the combined old-age pension and pension for widows reach the average of men's old-age pension (not including pension for widowers). In view of the fact that women live approximately 7 years longer than men and living costs per person in a one-person household of a pensioner increase compared to the costs of two-member household (80% of one-member households of pensioners are households of women), elderly women get into very bad financial situations. The old-age pension composes most of their income and it is not customary for children to provide financial aid. According to the responses of Czech women, only 7% of children living separately help their parents." (*Cermakova, 2000b.*)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The sharp drop in fertility rate is a big problem for the State and it is necessary to propose solutions in this field. As can be seen from the examples from EU countries - the worse the position of women, (especially for mothers or "assumed" mothers) on the labour market, the smaller is the fertility rate. Therefore, following solutions are being proposed:

Organise a proper research which would map following areas:

How many mothers stay at home for the whole parental leave - how many stay at home for 3 and how many for 4 years? How many of them have second child and stay at home for 6-7 years and why?

How many mothers would prefer to return to a job earlier and if they want to return, what are the main obstacles?

What is the structure of education of mothers with different needs connected to the length of the parental leave?

How many mothers/fathers who enter a job before the parental leave ends return again back from the job to the leave, which the law enables?

Organise a public campaign that fathers should take care of their children, as it happened e. g. in Sweden.

Reorganise the tax benefit system, so that parents with children can have major tax deductions and so that these deductions are supportive for low income families. Make the deductions larger with every other child.

Concerning the Financial help in motherhood - make the conditions equal for mothers and fathers, i.e. make this kind of help equally available for fathers.

Concerning the parental benefit, changes accordingly to the following situations:

If the parental benefit is to remain so small, cancel the humiliating conditions (limit of the income and limit of days for which the child is allowed to be left in a childcare facility).

If there is a possibility to change the parental benefit - make it variable, so women can choose according to their needs (the same conditions can not be satisfactory for women with basic and university education). One of the solutions could be to give a sum for every mother/father and let them choose if they spend it in 3 or less years;. Other possibility is to give parents a regular monthly supplement for childcare for working parents.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the impact of the EU accession on women and the labour market provided in this Gender Assessment clearly demonstrates, that there is a need for monitoring and gender audit of the EU processes. The EU negotiations brought important changes in the national labour legislation (the new Labour Code entered into force on January 1st 2001), but these changes did not prevent the discrimination on the labour market; until the first half of 2003, there has ´t been any known court case when a woman (or man) would fight against her (his) discrimination (and concerning sexual harassment, there have been two cases brought to the court, one before the amendment and the second at the beginning of 2003). Women are either not aware of the new legal possibilities or they do not have sources for using them. **It is necessary to allocate funds from the State Budget in possible combination with EU funds for a public awareness campaign and legal advisory centres so women can start discriminatory cases.**

Although the Czech Republic has produced its National Action Plan called "Priorities and Procedures of the Government towards Enforcement of Equal Opportunities between Men and Women" in 1998, the real enforcement of measures improving the situation of women on the labour market still has not been done. **It is necessary to allocate funds for detailed researches on discrimination of women on the labour market including mapping of the gender wage gap. First of all, the comparison of male and female average wage should be done at all levels of the public administration. At the same time, the training of labour inspectors concerning equal opportunities legislation has to be organised, as well as training and re-qualification courses programs for women (especially for women after and on maternity/parental leave). All the measures need to have clear deadlines and be monitored.**

The position of women on the labour market is closely connected to the conditions, which the society creates for mothers/parents with children. First of all, **because there is lack of available data in this field, a proper research needs to be done which would map the situation of mothers/fathers and their needs and obstacles for re-conciliation of family and professional life. Further, it is necessary to provide such conditions for parents that the parental leave can be**

used by fathers much more often than today.

The Gender Assessments show clearly, that the position of women in Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria on the labour market is very different from the position of women in the EU member states. Therefore this Gender Assesment Project should contribute to the understanding of the specifics of women in the new member states and lead to creation of better targeted gender equality policies within the EU.

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