

CLIP Case Study on Housing

PRAGUE

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1 Background information on the country (ca. 1 ½ pages)

1.1 *History of migration and composition of migrant populations*

From the mid-19th century until the Velvet Revolution of 1989, the territory of the current Czech Republic underwent a very specific migratory experience. During the communist era with an extremely restrictive migration policy emigration dominated by far over immigration. Furthermore, emigration was – according to the legislation of that time – for the most part illegal.

Three main periods of international migration after World War II can be distinguished:

(a) Aftermath of World War II: expulsion of Germans

Between 1945 and 1947, some 2,820,000 Germans were transferred and expelled (in three organized and unorganized waves) from Czechoslovakia to Germany. At the same time, between 80,000 and 100,000 Czech and Slovak nationals came back from abroad (mainly forced laborers).

(b) Political crisis of 1948 and 1968: the emigration of Czechs and Slovaks

The largest waves of emigration from former Czechoslovakia followed the political events of 1948 (communist *coup d'état*) and 1968 (Soviet invasion). Exact data for this period are nonexistent as most migratory movements were illegal according to the legislation of that time. When distinguishing between these two periods, illegal migration for Czechoslovakia between 1948 and 1967 accounts for some 255,000 emigrants, while about 245,000 people left the country between 1968 and 1989. It is estimated that at least three quarters of these people emigrated from the part of the country which is now the Czech Republic.

(c) The 1970s and 1980s: era of the recruitment of foreign workers

A relatively large number of foreign workers from “friendly socialist countries” had been recruited during the 1970s and 1980s on the basis of intergovernmental agreements. The temporary workers came primarily from Poland and Vietnam, Hungary, Cuba, Mongolia, Angola and North-Korea. People from Poland and Vietnam made up the majority of them with tens of thousands from each country. During the 1980s, about 60,000 foreign workers resided in the country.

It should be explicitly noted that an important migratory phenomenon – the mutual movement of people between the Czech Republic and Slovakia – did not become international migration until 1993, when the two countries separated and became independent.

Legal (regular) migrants in the Czech Republic till 2004

On 31st March 2004, 249,464 foreign nationals were officially living in the Czech Republic, of whom 82,415 were permanent residents and 167,049 held a visa for over 90 days. Permanent and long-term residents made up 2.3% of the country's total population. Most of them came from Slovakia (66,109) and the Ukraine (65,647). Big communities also were of Vietnamese (30,365), Polish (less than 17,000) and Russian (less than 13,000) origin.

Illegal (irregular) migrants

The number of illegal/irregular migrants can only be estimated and stood between 295,000 and 335,000 at the end of the year 2000. Of these people, 165,000 were estimated to be irregular migrants active on the Czech labor market, 30,000 their dependants and 100,000 to 140,000 transit migrants, whose their number is declining during recent years.

1.2 General national integration policy

Alien and Asylum Legacy Framework

The legal status of foreigners in the Czech Republic is primarily covered by the Act on Residence of Aliens (in particular as regards residence regimes), the Asylum Act and the Citizenship Act. Individual aspects of residency of foreigners in the country (e.g. employment, healthcare and social security or political rights) are the subject of various separate acts (i.e. Act on Employment, Act on Public

Health Insurance and a number of election acts). The institute of asylum did not exist under communist rule.

The Department for Refugees within the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for **asylum policy**. Decisions are in the first instance taken by the Directorate of Aliens and Border Police Services at the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic. In the event of a negative decision, an appeal has to be submitted to the Minister of the Interior. The Ministry of the Interior is supposed to receive a recommendation from committees composed of NGOs, various Ministries, the Bar Association and an academic. The unsuccessful applicant, whose appeal has been rejected by the Minister of the Interior, can, within 30 days, ask the High Court for a review of the negative decision. A motion made to the High Court has no suspensive effect, although in practice the asylum seeker is usually allowed to stay in the country with an extended visa issued with the support of UNHCR. The judicial review procedure usually takes more than a year but is not limited: all who wish can apply and will be heard.

The Act on Residence of Aliens and the Act on Asylum

In 1989, the Czech Republic's legal framework was not entirely ready to cope with migration that resulted from the opening of the borders. In the former Czechoslovakia, foreigners coming to the country were subjected to the provisions of the 1965 Act on Residence of Aliens, which had a total of only 9 sections covering visas and residency permits and requiring foreigners to notify the authorities of their place of residence in the country within 48 hours of their arrival. Foreigners from the undefined "socialist countries" enjoyed the benefit of a 30-day notification.

On 16 November 1990, **Act on Refugees** (No. 498/1990) was passed in order to transpose into the Czech legal system the provisions of the Geneva Convention which Czechoslovakia ratified only one year later.

The Act on Refugees did not count with the later increase in the number of asylum applicants, did not include provisions for the swift rejection of manifestly unfounded applications, and finally did not cover the issue of employment of asylum applicants. The Act on Residence of Aliens (No. 123/1992) introduced the now-classic typology of residency which includes short-term residency (visas for up to 6 months), long-term residency (up to 1 year) and permanent residency (no limitation, but ID cards issued for 5 years) but effectively left key decisions falling under the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior (e.g. granting permanent residency or administrative deportation) in the hands of individual public officials, contained remnants of the archaic and repressive communist provisions (e.g. requirement to apply for a permission to leave the country after termination of residency or possibility to cancel long-term residency permit if the given person lived abroad for over 6 months and failed to report it), and as regards legislation paved the way for the Czech Republic's rather liberal but chaotic migration policy during the 1990s.

A major turnaround took place in the beginning of 2000, when two new acts came into force: the **Act on Asylum** (325/1999) and the Act on Residency of Aliens (326/1999). The Czech Republic followed the example of Western Europe and became a country trying to regulate migration especially from underdeveloped countries through stricter laws, austere conditions of legal residency of foreigners who are required to have visas to enter the country (in particular the requirement to apply for visas and changes to them abroad and the

difficult transfer of asylum applicants into the regime stipulated under the Act on Residency of Aliens) and by almost driving foreigners into illegality in certain situations. Foreigners are often disadvantaged below the level acceptable in a country governed by the rule of law (certain decisions made by the police are excluded from judicial review, foreigners may be subjected to internment for up to 6 months without a court order, there is no principal legal eligibility to be granted an entry visa) and asylum applicants are prohibited from working during their first 6 months in the country so as to prevent legalization of residency through applying for asylum.

Amendments to the above acts after 2000 mainly reflected the requirements of *acquis communautaire* and the Schengen system to prepare the Czech Republic for entry into the EU on 1 May 2004. Some of the harsh measures aimed against foreigners and contained in the Act on Residency of Aliens were eliminated: the protection of families against deportation was strengthened, multipurpose visas were introduced (e.g. work and study visas), the requirement for foreigners who change jobs to automatically apply for a new work visa abroad was removed, and finally a possibility was introduced to grant permanent residency to unsuccessful asylum applicants who have lived in the Czech Republic for over 5 years.

One of the amendments gives a privileged status to EU citizens who now enjoy major advantages when compared to other foreigners. On the other hand, the Act on Asylum now contains a number of more stringent provisions: asylum applicants can no longer inspect their Ministry of Interior's file when asylum proceedings are in progress.

The integration of migrants: a new responsibility for local policy in the Czech Republic

General Remarks

The Czech Republic, unless most Western European countries, still cannot be seen as a country with a long immigration history and experience. The integration policy itself has become more visible and discussed topic mostly since a few years. The first Governmental Conception of Integration of Foreigners was approved in 2000. Since then this conception has been updated several times. The main goal is the convergence of the law status of the immigrants to the law status of Czech citizens depending on the length of their stay in the CR.

Legal immigration is viewed by Czech authorities as a big potential for enrichment of the whole population as well as one of the pro-population measures.¹ Special attention should be paid to education and preparation of employees of the state administration who are in often contact with immigrants and foreigners. What is above all seen as important for administration workers is to stress on tolerance, empathy and respect for people from different cultural backgrounds. Ministry of Work and Social Affairs provides "multicultural" trainings for its employees.

The Czech Republic is involved in multilateral structures dealing with migration problems, evaluation of migratory movement trends, regulations for the management of migratory flows and prevention of uncontrolled migration, such as for example with committees of the Council of Europe, or the International Organization for Migration. The Czech Republic participates in the Berlin-

¹ The Czech Republic is one of the countries with the most serious problems concerning ageing and population decrease in the EU.

Budapest Group and provides information on illegal migration through the International Centre for Migration Policies Development. In order to secure the border and to facilitate border clearance, agreements have been concluded with the neighbouring countries of Germany, Austria and the Slovak Republic. Such agreements are, inter alia, a basis for the exchange of information on illegal migration.

The strategy of integrating migrants

The coordinative subject of the state conception of integration is the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs (*Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí*) in close cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture and last, but not least the Ministry of Health. **The main target group of integrative measures are the legal immigrants with long-term status, particularly those who stay for more than one year in the CR. The cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in integration matters is essential and absolutely necessary. Most of NGO's support lies in law and social consultancy, in guidance and help in dealing with state authorities, free Czech language courses, in support of cooperation between the migrant communities, etc.**

The importance of NGOs on this field also consists in the fact that the leading personalities within their structures are often immigrants/ foreigners themselves (mostly from Ex-Soviet countries, the Balkan peninsula, Slovaks) as well as in their knowledge of concrete problems and cooperation with regional and local state authorities (local governments, city councils etc.). At the present time there are several EU grant programs financing partly the NGO's activities. As examples can be given: EQUAL Program, the human sources development program, "Jednotný programový dokument" NUTS 2, the European Refugee Fund, the Program INTI and a Pilot Project on the integration of third country nationals.

One of the most important results of cooperation between the state authorities on the one hand and the NGOs on the other is **a special web page for foreigners: www.cizinci.cz** ("cizinci" means foreigners in Czech).

What is also worth mentioning is the so-called **Pilot project "Selection of Qualified Foreign Workers"**. Since January 2003, authorities have been running a programme to attract skilled foreign workers to the Czech Republic as the country's population ages and many highly-qualified Czechs go abroad to work. **The Czech Republic was the very first (and may be still the only one) ex-communist country which tries to steer its immigration policy and offers to selected qualified employees the official possibility to apply for permanent residence in a shorter period** – already after 2 or 5 years of their work and stay in the CR (currently after 5 years). Together with the project participants, their family members will also be allowed to settle down in the Czech Republic and to obtain permanent residence there. The project is open for citizens of Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Ukraine and other countries as well as for graduates of Czech universities coming from all states worldwide (except those, who studied in the CR in the context of development assistance provided to their state), who graduated in 1995 or later and graduates of Czech secondary schools from all states worldwide, who finished their studies and passed school leaving exams in 2000 or later.

Since 1992 there has been a radical shift in reproduction patterns among people in Prague and the CR as a whole – the generation of the 1970s is now in reproductive age, yet they find themselves in social conditions far different from those seen in the past. There has been a sharp decline in total female fertility rates down to 1,171 newborns per 1,000 women in Prague (year 2002). Thus, the reasons for the project are quite simple. The Czech Republic has a very low fertility rate, which is one of the lowest all over Europe. Then there is the fact of prolongation of life expectancy of the Czech population. Specialists have calculated that in the year 2030 there will be a lack of more than 420, 000 workers on the Czech labour market.

So the project “Selection of Qualified Foreign Workers” hopes to attract professional workers. The problem is, that the project itself tries to attract immigrants but cannot offer to its applicants high salaries, guarantee a job or offer a tight social net.

2 Background information on the city and its integration policy (CRS: C4) (3-4 pages)

2.1 General structural data of the city

Prague is the capital and the largest city of the Czech Republic. It is a natural centre of politics, international relations, education, culture and economy. Prague is also an important city of Central Europe. This fact has become important again especially since the beginning of the 1990’s, when barriers in relationships among states, regions and towns of Eastern Europe and the West that have arisen during the previous decades were being eliminated on the Continent. On 1st May 2004, the Accession Treaty of the Czech Republic with the European Union started to be valid and thus the Czech Republic together with other nine countries integrated in the geopolitical space of Europe, which was newly formed.

The Capital City of Prague with its population ranks ninth among the 25 EU Member States and compared to the big metropolises of the European Community it ranks fourteenth. Within the EU, the Capital City of Prague as one of the most attractive historical European cities has an extraordinary role and in 1992 namely its historical centre was added to UNESCO’s World Heritage List. All these aspects are reflected in the specific character and position of Prague as one of the regions of the CR.

Prague covers an area of 496 square kilometres which is only 0.6% of the CR’s territory. With a population of 1,165,581 (31st December 2004) it represents 11.4% of the country’s population and is more than three times bigger than Brno, the second largest city in the country.

Pursuant to the Act of the Czech National Council on the Capital City of Prague, the city is a **statutory town** what means, its status is governed by a special legislation. It is both a region and a municipality. It is administered by the bodies of the Capital City: the Assembly of the City of Prague, the Council of the City of Prague and the Prague City Hall. For execution of the state administration, Prague is from 2001 divided to **22 administration districts**, from the point of view of self-government it consists of **57 autonomous City Districts** with own elected bodies. Furthermore the city comprises **112 catastral areas**.

The city districts join together for administrative purposes and form so called self-governing districts. There were 10 of them until 1994, afterwards the city was divided into 15 of these districts. For statistical purposes, these are at the same

time units at the NUTS-4 level, being counterparts to districts (“okresy”) outside Prague. This division was also valid for the March 1, 2001 Population and Housing Census. The city districts are significantly different. There are districts with the distinct character of the urban centre, city districts of a prevalent residential area with a housing stock dating back to the 1920’s and 1930’s, districts of chiefly industrial nature, neighbourhoods of high-rise houses, and suburban areas many of which originated by gradual connection of surrounding municipalities of rural type. They differ in the level of urbanisation, population density, quality of technical infrastructure and socio-economic conditions of life of their inhabitants. As for the number of inhabitants these city districts are also very different. While population of two districts account for more than 100,000 each, 18 districts comprise less than 2,000 inhabitants each, of which four have less than 500 inhabitants each.

As a region, it accounts for a disproportionately high share of the country’s gross domestic product, with above-average incomes and a very high rating and interest on the part of entrepreneurs. But it is also the region that suffers the most in terms of environmental impact, high energy consumption and huge increases in road traffic that are often beyond the city’s ability to cope, particularly in the summer months.

From the economical point of view, the Capital City of Prague has a unique position. The region generates more than a quarter of the nationwide GDP (in 2002 it was 25.7%). In GDP per capita, the CR actually reaches about 60% of the EU Member States average, but in the case of Prague the regional GDP per capita since several years already exceeds the EU average by more than a fifth. The high level of this indicator is typical for a metropolis as Prague. It is influenced by determinants that are closely related to economic conditions in conurbations. These factors are the different economic structure in contrast with other regions, a high level of wages, but also a considerable commuting from many other regions in the CR and abroad as well as the location of the headquarters of many major economic actors in town.

Major demographic developments

The population of Prague directly corresponds to territorial changes. The gradual enlargement of the urban space caused an increasing number of inhabitants. However, the population of the City of Prague regularly increased, when calculated for the current territory also due to its own demographic development.

It is a traditional characteristic of the **population situation** in Prague that there is an increased share of the population in productive age and a relatively low share of children. Related to this is also the tendency of natural population development. Each year Prague reports higher numbers of deaths than births and thus the population decreases as a result of natural population development. **Already since 1979, any increases in Prague’s population have been related solely to net migration.** Net migration was always so high in Prague that it compensated population losses due to natural population changes. In 1994, Prague recorded for the first time a total annual decrement of population; the net migration was so low that it did not cover all the time increasing population loss due to natural change. Since that year, Prague’s population has been decreasing every year. The unfavourable population situation of the entire CR due to age structure of the population is reflected there again with bigger intensity and a new

migration tendency comes on top of that consisting in an outflow of Prague inhabitants to the outskirts of the city (suburbanisation).

When Prague as such is judged in its historical context, its population grew very noticeably. From the end of the 18th century to the beginning of 21st century population of Prague grew almost eight times on the territory that belonged to Prague at that time; the amount of 1 million was exceeded in the 1961 census. Looking at the results of periodic censuses that were carried out regularly every ten years (with the exception of the Second World War), one can see that Prague's population increased 4.5 times from the first census (1869) to 1991 Census in which the biggest number of inhabitants was counted (all that calculated for the same territory). The natural increase in population, regularly monitored by demographic statistics, was negative only during World War I and the economic depression in the 1930s; nevertheless since 1957 until now this has also been the case (with the exception of the 1973–79 baby boom years). From 1991 to 2001 Census Prague's population decreased for the very first time of censuses taking place. According to the 2001 Population and Housing Census, the number of inhabitants was even lower than the number in 1980, namely 1,169,106 persons. During the last three years, Prague's population has been yearly slightly increasing again. The increments result from migration, namely persons in productive age, who move to Prague especially due to ample opportunity to find a job on the labour market.

The Středočeský Region, for example, has changed from the source to target of migration. From 1998 to 2001, population was even decreasing due to migration. **From 2002, the net migration of Prague was positive again; this turn was caused, however, especially by the fact that also foreigners with long-term residence were included in the total population since the 2001 Population and Housing Census. Considerable mobility of foreign nationals moving for work leads to high gross migration in Prague.** Most migrants did not come from other Czech districts but were citizens with any foreign nationality. Resulting from the migration of people coming to Prague for work is thus both an increase in the number of foreign nationals in Prague's population and also a shift in the population structure.

All the time an increasing share of population in productive age and a traditionally high share of the oldest age cohorts results also in the fact that the average age was increasing in Prague and was the very highest among all regions of the CR. Also some shifts in distribution of inhabitants of the three main age groups (0–14, 15–59, and 60+) are to a certain extent related to the situation on the Prague labour market. Permanently increasing is the share of inhabitants in the age of 15–59, who find their job in Prague. On the contrary, share of children under 15 is decreasing as well as number of inhabitants over 65. Older inhabitants were more often moving out of Prague to villages during the last years to find cheaper and healthier living. Living in Prague's surroundings becomes attractive also for young families with children.

What is a clearly positive feature of the demographic developments of the last decades is the **rising life expectancy**. Prague's inhabitants enjoy the highest life expectancy when compared to all other regions of the CR. In the average of the years 2003–2004, life expectancy for females in Prague was 79.6 and for males 74.1 years (national average was 79.0 and 72.6, respectively). High values of life expectancy in Prague are attributed to better availability of medical care, but also to some favourable tendencies in the regimen even despite worse parameters of

the environment. Also infant mortality is very low in Prague (3.1 per 1,000 versus 3.7 nationwide in 2004).

The 1993–2000 period was characterized by a decline in the number of permanent residents. The negative population growth was further aggravated by declining migration, which in the years following 1998 turned into a net migration outflow – the region of Central Bohemia has itself become the target, instead the source of migration. It was as late as 2002 that the inflow of migrants moderately surpassed the outflow, with the major reason being the inclusion of long term-staying foreigners in the statistics. **Between the last two censuses the number of foreigners with long-term or permanent residents' status rose pointing to more ethnic diversity as often seen in the cities of Western Europe.**

Geographical structure of the metropolis

The city center

Prague is the seat of the top-level legislative, administrative and political bodies of the country – the parliament, government, and president of the Czech Republic and the most important social, cultural and educational institutions reside here.

Centuries of construction gave rise to an exceptional integrated architectural complex, unique in the world as regards to its size and the concentration of cultural heritage. Different architectural styles mingle and intertwine here, and their symbiosis creates the city's unique atmosphere. The most valuable part of the city's centre was declared the Prague Heritage Reserve in 1981, which was included in UNESCO's world cultural heritage list in 1992.

The western districts

These districts are situated on the left side of the *Vltava* (Moldau) river. Nowadays, the central part of Praha 5, *Smíchov*, is gradually being changed. In the place of the older development and former factory halls, several shopping and administration centres were built, which changed the character of this part of Prague that became an important continuation of the city centre on the left bank of the Vltava river. One of the complexes is called *Zlatý anděl* ("Golden Angel"), after the house "*U zlatého anděla*", which used to stand in this place. The author of the project is the world-known architect Jean Nouvel. There are offices, shops and restaurants.

Another complex is called *Anděl City*. To its visitors it offers offices, flats, shops, restaurants, but also a cinema with several projection halls and a bowling alley. The shopping and cultural centre *Carrefour-Nový Smíchov* was built in a place of former wagon factory. Apart from the hypermarket, there are shops, restaurants and a multi-cinema.

The Metropolitan District of Prague

It covers more than 40 km² and its about 100,000 inhabitants make it one of the largest cities of the Czech Republic. As a part of Prague itself, this part of the city, called Prague 6, makes up one-tenth of the city's total area and population. The western district spans the area from the edge of the historical centre to the periphery and includes all types of construction, including typical villages, blocks of flat buildings and advanced concrete pre-fabricated housing. Large green

areas, natural parks and territorial elements make this area very highly demanded for living, working and diplomatic and economic representative offices.

A major part of the central neighborhood of Prague 6-Dejvice is a university complex that helps build and form the character of the district. Thanks to the Ruzyně International Airport, Prague 6 is considered not only the gateway to Prague, but also to the Czech Republic. Fortifications, part of the Prague historical reservation, can also be found in the district, as can architectural treasures, such as the Loos villa, the *Brevnov* cloister, and the *Hvezda* (Star) summer chateau. Prague 6 is often characterized as the “green” or “diplomatic” or “university” district. High quality architecture from the turn of the 20th century, with comfortable city streets, alleys of trees and quaint squares is characteristic for Prague 6.

General labour market situation

Prague ranks among the economical most important and highly developed regions within the entire EU. This position of Prague is given by its long-term historical development and also its geographical location contributes to that. Recently, a very fast transformation in a wide range of socio-economic areas has taken place in Prague. The City has very rapidly recovered its prestige; it is permanently an attractive territory for investors especially from among foreign economic entities, for which it is a question of good reputation to acquire residencies on Prague’s territory. What has substantially improved is the quality of connection of Prague to European and worldwide communication network. There is a stable and manifold labour market and potential of labour force with qualification that is above the average. Quality background of educational, scientific and research institutions plays an important role, too.

Prague’s position as a centre offering a large number of job opportunities and a low level of unemployment has manifested itself, among other things, in two aspects of demographic development. Firstly, there has been a growing number of foreign nationals moving into Prague permanently or long-term, mainly because of the labour market opportunities. Secondly, the Prague region is in a league of its own in terms of economic output, creating almost a quarter of the country’s entire GDP, and this involves considerable commuting of Czech citizens, too.

As for **performance of economy**, the Capital City of Prague has a unique position within the Czech Republic. The Region permanently generates about a quarter of nationwide GDP (in 2003 it was 25.7%). GDP per capita in 2003 (with the CR = 100) was 225.4 in Prague. At the same time, it highly exceeds averages for the entire EU, namely even when grossed up to the EU 15 (in 2003 it was by 50.4%); for today’s EU 25 the GDP per capita in 2003 was higher by 63.8% in Prague. High level of this indicator is typical for metropolises; it is influenced by many factors: high level of wages, location and registration of headquarters of economic entities in town, concentration of central bodies of public and private sector. Prague is a place, in which the number of job positions exceeds the population by 60% and related to that is also the influence of commute to work as well as for services. Also other economic indicators prove that Prague is a centre of economy not only for its surroundings, but also for the entire country.

The **urban economic structure** differs from those of the other Czech regions. Not only are wages and salaries higher, but there is also a large commuter workforce, with the Prague labour market dominating in the Central Bohemia region. Furthermore, the head offices of many Czech companies are located in

Prague. Prague is by far the most important regional labour market in the Czech Republic. A characteristic feature of development hitherto has been the Prague labour market's ability to meet demands thanks to its highly attractive locality.

Basic structural reconstruction was reflected in changes of industrial structure of Prague economy. Characteristic features of the development of Prague economic basis are strengthening of the sphere of services and decrease of share of production industries. Tertiary industries represent now in Prague more than 80% of value added (in 2003 it was 83.8%). Also employment rate in this sphere is much higher in Prague than in the CR in total. In 2001, 72% of all employed in Prague worked in services and in 2004 it was already 84%. The biggest share is in transport and public administration.

According to the Company Register data of 31st Dec 2001, in Prague were 384,000 subjects in total, including 257,000 (71%) private entrepreneurs, 74,000 (19%) trade companies and 17,000 (4%) foreign subjects. Nevertheless, Prague is still home to a wide range of industrial activities – both light and heavy industries (engines, trucks, trams), chemical industry (tyres, dyes, pharmaceuticals), electrical engineering, printing industry and film production, food industry with several breweries. Restoration of extensive derelict industrial areas (brownfields), such as the one in the *Smíchov* downtown (new shopping mall, formerly production of trams) or *Vysočany* (new sports arena) is though rare – the main impetus for new construction sites remain motorways or underground stations. Large urban zones owned by the Czech Railways are yet to be properly utilised.

On the contrary, the share of the **industrial sector** in creation of value added and Prague's employment is much lower than national average. Especially employment rate in industry is lower in Prague and the problem with restructuring of industry had to be solved. Industry as a branch does not have such an important position in Prague as in other regions of the CR; however, namely **manufacturing** remained even there to be a rather powerful branch as for economy and its importance is increasing in Prague, too. Number of enterprises in manufacturing is permanently increasing. Wages in industry were growing during the last five years more markedly than wages in Prague's enterprises in total, namely in the manufacturing. The biggest increase was recorded in production of office machinery and computers, in which wages increased almost by 80% year-on-year. As for production of radio, TV and communication equipment – the average wage in 2004 there was at the same level as in financial intermediation (CZK 38,000), in which wages are permanently the highest.

In **construction**, an improvement of most parameters was observable in recent years. A rather dynamic growth of the volume of construction work has been recorded together with a slight increase in the number of employees and wages. Building permits are issued for more important constructions as for volume and also the share of building permits for residential buildings increased. What has also increased is the number of big construction enterprises. On the territory of Prague, 341 construction enterprises were active in 2004 (it applies to enterprises having their seat in the Region). Construction work according to delivery contracts of those enterprises in 2004 exceeded 100 billion CZK (in current prices); in comparison to the year 2000 the volume of works increased by a half. Housing construction is higher in volume only in the *Středočeský* Region that is in this sense closely related to Prague.

An important branch for Prague's economy is **tourism**. Its economic force can be evaluated by gross value added in 'hotels and restaurants'. The share of gross

value added in the branch in 2002 was 3.1% of the total gross value added of the City. Though the amount might be seen as small, it is 34.4% of the total gross value added in that branch in the entire Czech Republic. Tourism starts to develop again very dynamically after the terrorist attacks in 2001 (in the USA) and the floods in 2002. Prague is the most often target of tourists from abroad as well as domestic business trips and it is an important centre of congress tourism.

Directly related to the performance of economy is the situation on the **labour market**. Prague is the biggest regional labour market in the Czech Republic. Characteristic features of the development so far are high attractiveness of jobs on the Prague labour market on one hand and the ability of the market to meet great demand on the other hand. This is explainable by considerable mobility of inner resources as well as rapidly enlarging resources of foreign workers. Registered number of employees of companies having their seat on the territory of Prague represents 28% of the national employment. Prague work force has distinctively higher qualification in comparison with other regions. More than a quarter of all employed are persons with university education and their number has been regularly increasing during the last years. Also average wages in Prague reach much higher values than in other regions.

Another characteristic feature of Prague labour market is also under-average **unemployment** rate. Prague labour market thanks to the wide scope of professions was able to absorb almost all labour force released in the transformation process as well as newcomers. During the last years, the development of unemployment rate in Prague has been analogous to the national average; however, in total it is around its half-value. Even though according to the Czech Statistical Office, the unemployment rate in Prague was growing in recent years, reaching a maximum of 3.6% in September 2003, when the national levels of unemployment peaked, similar to the national average. Preliminary results for the first quarter 2005 confirm the increase in overall employment where the average number of employed (seasonally adjusted) increased relative to the 4th quarter of 2004 by about 5.3 thousand people. The general measure of unemployment according to the ILO (in the 15+ year old age group) reached, according to the selected research, 8.4% in the 1st quarter 2005. Compared to the period January to March 2004 it decreased by 0.3 percentage points. The difference in the methods of research accounts for the difference between the level of general unemployment (ILO) and the measure of registered unemployment (MPSV). The quarterly level of registered unemployed MPSV according to the method used until July 2004 reached 10.5% and in comparison with the first quarter 2004, fell by 0.2 percentage points. The level of registered unemployed MPSV according to the new method based on the quantification of the number of reachable candidates for employment reached 9.6% in the first quarter.

The number of job vacancies declined during the last decade, but a substantial number of vacant jobs are not advertised by the Labour Office (Job Centres). Employers are mostly advertising for workers in the following professions: building workers, labourers and unskilled workers in the construction industry, teachers, protective services and security guards, domestic helpers and cleaners, metalworkers, special education teaching professionals, qualified processors and makers of food products, catering workers and workers in allied trades, drivers, machine operators for the manufacture of synthetic rubber and plastic products, scientists and specialists, technicians in the physical sciences and allied fields, shop salespeople and demonstrators.

The range of professions in terms of vacancies advertised by the employers shows only insignificant month-to-month variations during the year. The taking-on of employees who are citizens of the Slovak Republic or foreign nationals is helping to reduce the gap between supply and demand on the labour market. The differences between Prague and the Czech Republic in terms of vacancies in the first three major groups of occupations – legislators, senior officials and managers; science, business and specialist professionals; technicians, health and teaching professionals – underline the specific role of the capital. But the running of the city also demands workers in other professions who are in short supply in the Prague area and whose **jobs must largely be filled by migrant labour from other parts of the Czech Republic and from abroad, e.g. in the construction industry, retailing and healthcare.** The foreign nationals holding work permits in Prague come from more than one hundred countries of the world.²

2.2 History of municipal migration and composition of migrant populations

It is an important fact that more than 1/3 of all foreigners who stay legally in the Czech Republic are living in Prague. At the beginning of 1993, the year when the Czech Republic was established, about 50,000 foreign nationals lived in the country, of whom about 30,000 possessed permanent residence permits and 20,000 long-term residence permits. There are no reliable estimations concerning the numbers of irregular migrants in the CR in general and in Prague.

The number of foreign nationals residing in the Czech Republic on the basis of a visa for longer than 90 days dramatically decreased during 2000 and then it raised again. A similar development could be observed during 2004 probably as a result of changes in legislation after the accession of the country to the EU, when in the second half of 2004 the number of foreigners in possession of a long-term residence permit declined.

The number of foreign nationals having a Czech permanent residence permit was continuously grown since the establishment of the independent Czech Republic. After the Czech Republic's accession to the European Union it was this category which reported a substantial year-to-year growth, which made the year 2004 quite different from previous ones. On 31st December 2004 the Directorate of the Alien and Border Police Service of the Czech Police registered 254,294 foreign nationals (+13,873 persons, i.e. +5.8%) holding Czech residence permits in the Czech Republic. Of this number about 61% were men. The countries of origin of foreigners holding a residence permit in the Czech Republic remained stable for several years. The largest group were citizens of Slovakia, followed by Ukrainians. However, these two nationalities exchanged their positions, since the number of Slovaks who resided in the Czech Republic temporarily for the purpose of employment or business undertaking under international agreement decreased considerably. Citizens of Ukraine were the largest group (78,263

² Data sources: Statistics published on Job Centre website and the Work, Wages and Social Relations website (PMSV); Monthly report on the situation on the Prague labour market, working material of the Labour Office (Job Centre) of Prague; Report on the labour market situation – Analysis of the situation on and development of the labour market in Prague for 2004; <http://europa.eu.int/eures/main.jsp?catId=2752&Imi=Y&acro=Imi&lang=en&recordLang=en&parentId=&countryId=CZ®ionId=CZ0&nuts2Code=CZ01&nuts3Code=CZ010&mode=shortages> EUREST-European Job Mobility Portal.

persons, +15,981, +25.7%) in possession of residence permits. Their number increased both in the categories of permanent and long-term residence, where the increase was even more substantial. These numbers are the highest since the founding of the Czech Republic.

Prague is nowadays becoming a more and more multicultural metropolis. As an example the district *Liboc* in Prague 6, not far from the Airport may be taken. This area was formerly a mere Czech neighborhood with a small Slovak community. Now a next-door hotel Radegast was turned to a long-term accommodation facility for students from ex-Soviet republics (mostly from Kazakhstan). A short time ago there a Vietnamese grocery shop opened in the very same street and a small tobacco/general merchandise shop operated by a young Arab man is working at the nearest tram stop for longer than one year. There is also an increasing number of Slovaks as well as a Polish family in the street (that has approximately 200 inhabitants). This example on a small spatial scale mirrors the changes in the population structure which are now typical for Prague as a whole.

The number of foreign residents already exceeds the number of 100,000, which make up almost 10% of Prague's population. In comparison with Vienna, Berlin or Amsterdam this is still a modest number, but in comparison with the other former communist cities Prague ranks at the head.

The **biggest minorities** in Prague are the **Slovaks** (approximately 50,000, some estimations go up to 100,000, but it is important to stress out, that Slovaks due to our history are not yet seen as "real" foreigners). Another large and still growing minority are the **Ukrainians** mostly used as a cheap labor force in the construction segment in supermarkets and so on. They are slowly moving into the middle class. The official number of Ukrainians in Prague is approximately 20,000, but the real number of all legal and illegal Ukrainians is much higher. Another big group are the **Russians**. Almost none of them is manually working. They are businessmen or traders, doing business in Russia and living in Prague. **Vietnamese** and **Chinese** (approximately 10,000 in Prague) are further important groups, most of them operating small shops and restaurants. There are more than 100 Chinese restaurants in Prague and they have already become an integral part of Prague restaurant scene. In fact Chinese restaurants are the cheapest places where to go. Further groups are the **Poles**, people from the Balkan peninsula (**Serbs, Croats, Macedonians and Bulgarians** – mostly operating Italian restaurants and working as shop assistants in the tourist shops in the historic city center).

There are also important numbers of businessmen, diplomats, journalists, entrepreneurs from Western Europe (**Germans, French, Italians, Austrians, Japanese, Dutch**, etc). These migration flows from **Western Europe, the United States and Canada** to east central Europe have received little attention so far. But numbers are considerable and in the context of globalisation it seems appropriate to conceptualise communities of Westerners in terms of transnational social spaces. The Americans in Prague belong to three main groups: enterprise managers, lifestyle migrants and entrepreneurs in small and medium-sized enterprises. All are engaged in a variety of different processes of community-building, often with clear trends towards a new transnationalism. Yet, the individual attempt to live in two societies is limited by the marked boundaries of the communities and by the degree of social exclusion which they experience from the majority population. The young English speaking lifestyle migrants (mostly Americans) came to Prague in the early 1990ies and were attracted by

the charm and spirit of Prague as a “new Paris for the new lost generation” with cheap prices, interesting culture, great architectural monuments and still very close to good old Western Europe. They are mostly English teachers, restaurant and clubs owners, journalists, artists, writers and other intellectuals. Their number is about 10,000.

Also two traditional minorities must be listed: old-Prague **Germans** and **Jews**. Both communities consisting of a few thousand members only. The number of Jews registered by the authorities of Prague Jewish Community is actually 1,600.

When describing the minorities in Prague an interesting ethnical group are the **Roma and Sinti**. Only some 500 to 600 survived the Holocaust in Czech lands (western part of Czechoslovakia). Later on a considerable migration flow started from very poor parts of eastern Slovakia to the places where the German minority was expelled from: mostly Sudeten areas as well as big industrial centres in non-Sudeten parts of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. Now the estimated number of Roma in the CR is about 250,000, in Slovakia their number is even 400,000. Prague was also one of the important destinations for Slovak Roma migrants. Nowadays the Roma community in Prague numbers approximately 20,000 people. Roma are often being accused of petty street crime, prostitution and abusing the social system. Czech society is often blamed from racism or xenophobia. Even though, the situation has improved a bit in recent years, it is still partly true as well. What is really outstanding is their musical potential. There are more than 100 professional Roma music bands in the CR and their number is still growing.³

The status quo of immigration 2005

The number of **long-term or permanently residing foreigners** in the CR according to the Alien and Border Police exceeded in 2005 the amount of 280,000. About 40% of these foreigners have permanent residence in the CR. Among foreigners in total there are 40% of women (almost 50% share of women is among foreigners with permanent residence; among others women make only 35%). The number of permanent residents is gradually increasing since the beginning of 1990's. The development of long-term stays fluctuates depending mainly on legislative changes. The decrease in the number of long-term staying foreigners between 31st Dec 1999 and 2000 can be explained by the adoption of the Act No. 326/1999 Sb. on the Residence of Foreigners.

As already stated before **migrants in general are concentrated in Prague and the Central Bohemian Region; further, a rather huge amount of them are staying in bigger towns and industrial areas**. Differences exist also by citizenship. **Citizens of countries neighboring the CR are concentrated, in general, near to the borders of the CR with the relevant country**. Citizens of the Ukraine are mainly settled in Prague, the Central Bohemian Region and the Southern Moravian Region (Brno city), citizens of Vietnam are settled usually near to the Czech-German borders and citizens of Russian Federation can mostly be found in Prague, the Central Bohemian Region and the Karlovy Vary Region (The City of Carlsbad).

³ Data Sources: 2004 Status Report on Migration in the Czech Republic, <http://www.mvcr.cz/dokument/2005/migrace04/zpravaen.pdf>; Czech Statistical Office http://www.czso.cz/ciz/cizinci.nsf/i/pocet_cizincu_v_cr.

Analyzing the **migration flows on the level of Czech administrative districts**, one recognizes the following general trends. The Prague urban region (with absolute dominance of Prague) has a positive migration balance with districts containing the largest Czech cities. On the other hand, Prague loses people with its own hinterland and also with more remote small towns in neighbouring districts of Central Bohemia and country districts around Brno and Plsen. This short-distance migration (tangential migration) has increasing importance and its internal structure is quite complicated as suburban zone is not homogenous but consisting of small towns, developing and peripheral villages. Only small part of migrants comes from more remote areas of CR. The share of international migration cannot be accurately analyzed due to statistical deficiency. High proportions of „foreigners“ within the suburban zone are Czech re-emigrants, while most of Western Europeans rather concentrate in the inner city. The autonomous locality of Americans in *Malá Šárka* on the north-western edge of the city is a rare exception.

After joining the EU citizens from Romania and Bulgaria are now able to work freely in the Czech Republic. A change to the labour code introduced a “system of guarantees”. If the Czech Republic closed its doors to Romanian and Bulgarian workers it would weaken its negotiating position regarding the rights of its own citizens to work freely everywhere in the EU. But the Czech Republic reserved the right to change its position in the future. That could happen if most other EU states chose to keep out workers from the two new members.⁴

2.3 *Municipal integration policy*

Prague in comparison to many Western European cities cannot be seen as a metropolis with a long history of international immigration. As in the whole Czech Republic the integration policy itself has become a more discussed topic mostly since a few years. Municipal integration policy is actually oriented towards national law and there are only very few measures of a municipal integration policy. Thus, **legal immigration is viewed by municipal authorities as a considerable potential for the enrichment of the population and the labour market**. Special attention is paid to the education and preparation of employees of the administration who are in a frequent contact with immigrants. As **tolerance and respect against people from different cultural backgrounds is promoted** “multicultural” training for employees is emphasized.

2.4 *Inter-city cooperation*

No information could be gathered.

3 Housing situation of the city (CRS: C2) (8- 10 pages)

3.1 *Housing stock and housing market in general*

Socialism was the era of large housing estates, which considerably changed previous patterns of suburban development from classical suburbanisation to development of New Towns of panel houses. Although the trend of population de-

⁴ See Willoughby 2006.

concentration from inner city and development of suburban zone had the same quantitative characteristics (using plus and minus in population changes of core and periphery), character of residential areas, motivations of migrants and social structure of migration were completely different from western style suburbanisation. The development beyond the city limits was restricted only to quite a few communities, which were established as centres. It was allowed to invest money for building infrastructure or housing only in these communities. The rest of the small communities became a depressed kind of inner periphery with recreation and agriculture function, with high losses of people, aged and less educated population.

During the 1990s Prague experienced far-reaching changes including the upgrading of its building stock and infrastructure. The city had to cope with devastating floods in 2002, never seen on such a scale before. The extent, diversity and the preserved state of its cultural heritage led to placing Prague on the UNESCO cultural heritage list. Overall, as the totalitarian regime collapsed, Prague took its righteous place among the great cities of Europe.

The post-Communist transformation in the Czech Republic has strongly modified the Czech housing market, especially in Prague and primarily due to the privatisation and restitution processes. It is undeniable that there is a decrease in the availability of low-rent housing in the Czech Republic, but in the Czech Republic the drop is due to the specific processes of economic transformation rather than the absence of social protections regarding housing (although these have become relatively weak since the liberalisation of rents).

Since the fall of the communist regime, the changes and transformations affecting housing policy and construction have been one of the most significant outcomes of neo-liberal “shock therapy” style planning. The almost total withdrawal of the state from the housing market during the early years of the transition, and the complex processes of property restitution led to a wide variety of changes within this particular sector of the urban space economy. Firstly, the termination of state-financed housing construction, combined with a marked decrease in real wages has led to a **massive decrease in new built housing**. For example, until 1990 in the Czech Republic, an average of 55,000 to 60,000 new apartments were built. After the fall of communism, this figure fell to 10,899 in 1991, 8,429 in 1992 and as low as 7,454 in 1993. Construction in Prague achieves by far the biggest share of total value of works in CR (35% in 2001), mainly in new projects but compared to the past, the construction of dwellings has dramatically declined (e.g. there were 3,210 new dwellings completed in Prague in 2001). On the contrary, the construction of office and retail space has expanded. The rapid emergence of differential land-values following Western norms, meant that many centrally located residential buildings have been converted to commercial functions such as offices or retail spaces. This is partly due to the importance of location to business enterprises, but also partly due to the newly restituted properties being rented out, or indeed sold by their new owners, for higher profits to commercial and retail buyers than let out as residential premises. Needless to say many of the most desirable properties are sold to multi-national companies via internationally renowned real estate companies.

Despite a change in the apparatus of distribution, the Czech government decided to leave in place rent regulations for both state owned social housing and private properties rented by Czech nationals. The rationale behind this was to offset some of the economic and social shocks that an immediate cessation of

rent regulation would be thought to cause. Regulation however does not extend to non-Czech nationals living in the Czech Republic. This raises some potentially vital questions relating to social justice, and the current situation of almost certain de-regulation of rents in the next 5 years serves to complicate this picture further and has the potential of re-igniting rivalries between landlords and tenants as rental prices rise in line with the non-regulated housing stock.

As an economic capital with a low rate of unemployment, Prague attracts a great number of people looking for work and success; often, these new migrants face serious difficulties. They do not know the city well and inevitably do not have the acquaintances who might make the transition easier. Their migration is an adventure and a risk. Facing the impossibility of finding a flat and the difficulty of getting regular work, they sometimes get to the experience of **homelessness** all too quickly. There are no official numbers of the proportion of migrants among homeless people available.

Post-socialist suburbanisation

The change of political regime has brought significant changes in economy and society, which started to be gradually observable also in the spatial context. Economic restitutions of formerly private houses and agricultural land situated in urban and suburban areas were important preconditions of new urban development. This led directly to establishing of new functional land use of inner city and to partial changing from residential to commercial uses of buildings, but due to rent regulation also to stabilisation or occasionally trapping of original residents inside restituted property. Restitution wasn't in progress in prefabricated housing estates built during socialist era, but instead privatisation became an important stabilisation factor of these areas. Apartments here retain relatively expensive and that is way they are inaccessible for population with low economic and social status. Restitution of land, on the other hand, was the key accelerator of suburban development in communities surrounding big cities.

The process of new suburbanisation started in the beginning of 1990s. However, more intensive migration from core to suburban zone was observable from 1995. Forms of suburban development differ significantly from place to place and vary from greater and rather autonomous new settlements to individual projects of separate family houses. New construction is located either on empty lots within existing settlement or as new satellite villages more distant from former settlement. Distinctive aspect of suburban development in Prague urban region is realisation of small projects consisting of 20-50 family houses or quite widespread realisation of individually built houses. These individual projects are realised either on single lot or as a part of larger developed area but using own project and independent of other builders.

3.2 *Housing situation of residents with migration background*

In Prague no specific empirical data about the housing situation of immigrants is available but logically the housing standard varies according to the financial resources and the length of stay of the migrants. Thus, the housing situation of elite migrants from the U.S. and Western Europe often lies above the average Czech standards whereas Ukrainian and Asian migrants often have to live in overcrowded sub-standard stock. A special problem which has to be solved in the long run is the deprived housing situation of the Roma minority.

3.3 Segregation: Spatial concentration of residents with migration background

Socio-spatial segregation was weak during the communist era compared to western cities. During the transformation process the patterns of segregation changed but segregation in Prague is still more socio-spatial than an ethnic segregation. As no information about ethnic segregation patterns was given by the city no detailed analysis was possible.

3.4 Accessibility of the housing market system for migrants and minorities

For legal migrants all kind of flats are accessible if one is able to afford it and is accepted as a tenant by the house-owner. In case of the Roma minority there is still a heavy impact of discrimination which hinders them to integrate in the regular housing market.

4 Institutional setting and relevant actors (CRS: C3) (2-3 pages)

Actually there are only a few actors involved in measures for integrating migrants in the housing market. Labour migrants get some informations about housing topics by local NGOs. The Ministry of Work and Social Affairs has established a *State integration program* to help asylum seekers to solve their problems with access to the housing market.

5 Discourse, concepts and policy concerning housing

5.1 Visions, concepts and policy of administration and Local Council on the issue of access to affordable and decent housing, segregation and integration of migrants

Discussions about the housing integration of immigrants are a very recent phenomenon in Prague and the CR as a whole, thus, visions and concrete concepts on the issue of access to affordable and decent housing are now slowly developing.

5.2 Public discourse on housing, segregation and integration of migrants

There is much more public discourse about labour market integration of immigrants than about housing integration. Many Czech citizens are afraid of the negative consequences of labour immigration as many migrants are working for lower salaries than native people. Housing and segregation are actually no topics of a public discourse

6 Interventions on housing and integration: measures and projects (CRS: B) (ca. 10 pages)

Actually there are only a few measures for integrating migrants on the housing market. **Asylum seekers** are accommodated in **refugee centres**. The Ministry of the Interior provides four refugee centres for standard asylum seekers and nine residence centres for persons with refugee status. Asylum seekers receive free food, accommodation, basic health and mental health care and pocket money. Primary school education is free for the children of asylum seekers. Recognized refugees can benefit, for a maximum period of one year, from accommodation in an integration centre run by the Refugee Department. As soon as they find houses accepted into the housing programme, they can be integrated into Czech communities with the assistance of the local authorities. The Ministry of Work and Social Affairs has established a **State Integration Program** to help **asylum seekers** to solve their problems with access to the housing market. This program is dedicated to those immigrants whose asylum application has already been approved. The project started in 1994 and also the pre-1994 group is entitled to benefit from the housing programme. There are three different variants of housing integration at the present time:⁵

- Regional as well as local municipalities offer free, vacant apartments to the asylum seekers.
- The asylum seekers search by themselves for a vacant apartment (or some do it with support of NGOs) and the government provides funding to an NGO to assist in finding housing, providing counselling, orientation and other help to newly recognized refugees or it pays a financial contribution directly to the owner of the chosen apartment.
- The asylum seekers can also choose a flat from an offer of newly built municipal rent apartments. There is a special new law for governmental housing projects which requires that one out of every twenty newly built apartments has to be rent to asylum seekers.

The State Integration Program covers only a modest number of migrant housing. From 1994 to the end of September 1997, for example 98 families comprising 302 persons had found accommodation under this programme. Since 1994 343 apartments were provided this way. The total number of asylum seekers involved was 899 and the Governmental expenses on this project has reached 110 millions CZK (approximately 4 million EUR).

An important institution in the context of integration of immigrants is the **Counseling Center for Integration**. This Center is supporting migrants with two projects:

⁵ Data source: <http://www.mvcr.cz/azyl/integrace.html>.

(1) Social counseling for foreigners⁶

This project started 1999 and was commissioned by the Know-How Fund, the Ministry of Interior and the Ústí nad Labem Municipality. This project aims at facilitating the integration of foreigners with long-term residency permits living in the Czech Republic. Counseling centers located in Prague, Brno and Ústí nad Labem offer their clients specialized social assistance. Clients learn about the Czech Republic's social security system, their rights and obligations and come with their individual problems with accommodation or work training. Social counselors help clients to fill out forms, write applications, accompany them to meetings with the authorities or represent them during such meetings. Psychosocial assistance is available when required. The project involved cooperation with the relevant government bodies and publishing activities (results of the project and proposals to reform and improve integration of foreigners in the Czech Republic). These activities are part of a long-term program of the Counseling Center of Integration.

(2) Social counseling for refugees⁷

The project was running 1998–2003 and commissioned by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic. The project's objective is to facilitate integration of people who were granted a refugee status and live in the Czech Republic. Counseling centers located in Prague, Brno and Ústí nad Labem provide specialized help to clients-refugees in need. Clients learn about the Czech Republic's social security system and their rights and obligations. Counselors help them solve personal problems, from accommodation to work training. Counselors also help clients fill out forms and write applications and accompany them to meetings with the authorities. Psychosocial assistance is available when required. The project also involves cooperation with various authorities and publishing (project results as well as proposals of reforms to improve the system of refugees' integration). These activities are part of a long-term program of the Counseling Center of Integration.

Not a project per se but also important in the field of housing integration was the **“Cooperation in facilitating integration of eligible individuals”⁸** (1998/1999/2001) which was commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior and organized by the Counseling Center for Integration. This initiative was a joint effort undertaken with the Ministry of Interior as a part of the State Integration Program in the area of housing for refugees.

For supporting legal migrants in finding decent accommodation the Counseling Center for Integration has edited the **informative brochure “Housing in the Czech Republic: a guidebook”** (2002)⁹. This guidebook was commissioned by the Ministry for Regional Development and the Commission of the Minister of

⁶ See http://www.migrationonline.cz/project_f.shtml?x=193457.

⁷ Compare http://www.migrationonline.cz/project_f.shtml?x=193425.

⁸ See http://www.migrationonline.cz/project_f.shtml?x=193466.

⁹ The entire brochure is available for download at www.p-p-i.cz in 6 language versions (Czech, English, French, Russian, Ukrainian and Vietnamese).

Interior for integration of foreigners. It shall help immigrants to gain a better understanding and a foothold on the Czech housing market.

The informative brochure entitled “**Living in the Czech Republic**” has been designed for foreigners living in the Czech Republic. It contains an overview of legal regulations governing the area of housing, possibilities of finding accommodation, information about renting, rental agreements and subleasing as well as model examples of solving a number of housing-related problems.

Organizations assisting migrants

In Prague the following organizations are involved in supporting migrants with information and help:

Consortium of Refugee Assisting Organisations in the Czech Republic

Marc Ittelson, Coordinator

Vladislavová 10

110 00 Praha 1

Telephone: (+420 2) 24 94 66 35

Email:

www.refugees.ecn.cz, www.uprchlici.ecn.cz

Czech Helsinki Committee-Counselling Centre for Refugees (ČHV-PPU)

Anna Grušová, Director

Senovážná 2

110 00 Praha 1

Telephone: (+420 2) 2422-4379

Tel/Fax: (+420 2) 2224-1295

Email: refug@helsincz.anet.cz

www.helcom.cz

Organization for Aid to Refugees (OPU)

Pavel Tychtl, Director

Veletržní 24

170 05 Praha 7

Telephone: (+420 2) 3337-1287, 2057-0484, 20-397-377

Fax: (+420 2) 20-397-297

Email: opu@ecn.cz

www.azyl.cz

Society for Citizens Assisting Emigrants (SOZE)

Christian Popescu, Chairman

Mostecká 16

614 00 Brno

Telephone: (+420 5) 4521-3643

Fax: (+420 5) 4521-3746

Email: sozes@mbox.vol.cz

Counselling Centre for Integration (PPI)

Alena Kubíčková, Director

Senovážná 2

110 00 Praha 1

Telephone: (+420 2) 2421-3426
Telephone/Fax: (+420 2) 2421-3426
Email: ppi@ini.cz
www.p-p-i.cz

The Counselling Centre for Citizenship, Civil and Human Rights¹⁰

It is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation, registered as a citizens' assembly. The Centre is monitoring

- the compliance of the Czech domestic laws with ratified international treaties on human rights and freedoms;
- the creation of conditions for the co-operation between a non-governmental sector and state institutions, with a special regard to human rights in the Czech republic;
- legislative activities of governmental institutions with regard to the obligations arising from international conventions on human rights

In its activities, the Centre especially

- measures for protection from discrimination,
- monitors and analyses problems of persons endangered with *homelessness*,
- monitors and analysis protection of civil and human rights in institution in that personal freedom is restricted (prisons, psychiatric institutions, foster homes) and advocates for legislative establishment of outside control,
- implements programs focused on integration of foreigners including legal aid in problems with citizenship and legalisation of residence.

The Multicultural Center Prague¹¹

The Multicultural Center Prague is a non-profit organization interested in issues related to the coexistence of different cultures in the Czech Republic and abroad. The mission of this Center is to prove that multicultural coexistence is possible and universally enriching. Since its birth in 1999, the Center has been attaining its goals through public debates, a variety of educational, cultural and public informational activities, research, publications and the establishment of links between individuals and organizations with similar aims in the Czech Republic and abroad. Specifically, the Center:

- Informs specialists as well as the wider public about interethnic coexistence in the Czech Republic and other parts of the world;
- Creates a forum where communication, learning and research can take place regarding the great variety of European and non-European cultures and identities;

¹⁰ See <http://www.poradna-prava.cz/english.htm>.

¹¹ See <http://www.mkc.cz>.

- Works on developing the intercultural skills of individuals and institutions in the Czech Republic;
- Strives to influence individuals as well as institutions to lay the conditions for a working plural society in the Czech Republic;
- Initiates public discussion on trends in migration; the formation of cultural and ethnic identities; cultural plurality, education and state policy; attitudes towards difference; nationhood and nationalism.

The Consortium of Refugee Assisting Organisations in the CR

Initiated in September 2000, the Consortium of Refugee Assisting Organisations in the Czech Republic is a project designed to coordinate the efforts of the organisations dedicated to assisting asylum seekers and recognized refugees in the Czech Republic. It is funded through a grant from the European Commission's European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights.

The Consortium's member organisations are the Czech Helsinki Committee-Counselling Centre for Refugees (CHV-PPU), the Organization for Aid to Refugees (OPU), the Society of Citizens Assisting Emigrants (SOZE), and the Counselling Centre for Integration (PPI). The Consortium also works closely with Catholic Charity organizations (e.g. Caritas). All of the member organisations have a long and close relationship with the regional office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as well as with the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE).

The work of the four member organisations covers all aspects of the asylum process. Beginning with the applicant's entry into the asylum system, legal and social services are provided throughout their stay in the Czech Republic. These services are provided to the clients free of charge, in the refugee camps and in the Prague and Brno based head offices. Should a client receive recognized refugee status, services are provided through community integration centers located in various parts of the country, so that the individual may integrate into Czech society quickly and with as few problems as possible.

The long-term goals of the Consortium are intended to create a unified, consistent and efficient system for the provision of refugee related services. It is hoped that the activities of the project will improve the level of services, enhance the member organisations' ability to respond in time of crisis and to improve the attitude and perceptions of the media and general public. Overall, it is the hope of the project organizers that the Consortium will help to create a more dynamic and comprehensive system for assisting asylum seekers and recognized refugees in the Czech Republic.

General Consortium activities

The activities of the Consortium member organisations are manifold and range from the provision of legal, social and psychological counseling to the teaching of vocational skills and the Czech language.

Specific activities

“AZYL” Magazine

“AZYL”, or “Asylum” in English, is a bi-monthly newsletter intended to disseminate information on the refugee situation in the Czech Republic, as well as abroad, for both asylum seekers and recognized refugees. It is targeted at a wide audience including staff and supporters of NGOs, municipal and state government officials, the diplomatic community, the voluntary sector and the media. The magazine is in both Czech and English.

Each issue starts with a “witness”-section where the views of an individual directly connected with the refugee world are expressed. Other articles examine current policy trends and attitudes. It is the intention of the editorial staff to publish one article per issue that focuses on the wider European and international aspects of this subject. The content of the current, as well as back issues, of AZYL magazine can be read on its website. A search mechanism is also available.

National Seminars

The Consortium organizes a national seminar annually. The purpose of these meetings is to allow for the exchange of experience among refugee assisting service providers throughout the Czech Republic. A goal of the seminar is to provide an opportunity for the staff of member organizations to meet with other NGO and government workers for networking, as well as to become more familiar with the resources and specific expertise available within each organisation.

Training Sessions

The Consortium conducts training and informational sessions for the staff of its member organisations. These range from meetings with government personnel to “country of origin”-presentations to discussions on immigration and asylum law in an expanding European Union. For these sessions, experts in the particular focus of study are brought in to conduct the sessions.

Regularly Scheduled Meetings of Legal and Social/Psychological Staff

As the goals of the Consortium are intended to create a unified, consistent and efficient system for the provision of refugee related services, regularly scheduled meetings are held among staff members. Bringing together the lawyers or social workers from each of the member organisations enables them to share their opinions and views on both general topics and specific cases. In doing so, it is intended to reduce the amount of overlap that currently exists.

7 Highlights and Failures: Learning for CLIP (ca. 3 pages)

Prague is an economically booming city in Central Europe which continues to experience a boom in services and construction and creating jobs that cannot be filled by the domestic labour market. Therefore, in Prague the number of foreigners increased dramatically in recent years and will continue to increase in the future. Now, more than one third of all foreigners who stay legally in the Czech Republic are living in Prague. Besides the western migrant flow consisting of North Americans and

Western Europeans working in foreign and international corporations or being students central European and Asian workers tend to occupy unskilled or semiskilled positions. As an economic capital with a low rate of unemployment, Prague attracts a great number of people looking for work and success. The Czech Republic also needs those migrants to supplement its rapidly declining population and working force.

Legal immigration is viewed by Czech authorities as a big potential for the enrichment of the whole population as well as one of pro-population measures. Now, special attention is paid to a culturally sensitive education and preparation of employees of the state administration who are often in contact with immigrants and foreigners. Thus, the Czech Ministry of Work and Social Affairs provides “multicultural” trainings for its employees.

Since the fall of the communist regime, the changes and transformations affecting housing policy and construction have been one of the most significant outcomes of neo-liberal ‘shock therapy’ style planning. The almost total withdrawal of the state from the housing market during the early years of the transition, and the complex processes of property restitution has led to a wide variety of changes within housing economy, for example the termination of state-financed housing construction, combined with a marked decrease in real wages which has led to a massive decrease in the construction of new housing stock.

The main target group of integrative measures are the legal immigrants with long-term status, particularly those who stay for more than one year in the CR. The cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in integration matters is essential and absolutely necessary. Most of NGO’s support lies in law and social consultancy, in guidance and help in dealing with state authorities. Housing integration is no special task of the NGOs helping immigrants

Actually housing integration of migrants seems to be no serious problem and has no important quantitative dimensions. Discussions about housing integration of immigrants are still a rare and a very recent phenomenon so visions and concrete concepts on the issue of access to affordable and decent housing are now in a state of slowly developing.

For supporting legal migrants in finding decent accommodation the Counseling Center for Integration has edited the informative brochure “Housing in the Czech Republic: a guidebook” (2002). This guidebook was commissioned by the Ministry for Regional Development and the Commission of the Minister of Interior for integration of foreigners. It shall help immigrants to gain a better understanding and a foothold on the Czech housing market.

The brochure entitled “Living in the Czech Republic” has been designed for foreigners living in the Czech Republic. It contains an overview of legal regulations governing the area of housing, possibilities of finding accommodation, information about renting, rental agreements and subleasing as well as model examples of solving a number of housing-related problems.

Besides these brochures the *State Integration Program* to help asylum seekers tries to solve the problems with access to the housing market. This program is dedicated exclusively to those immigrants whose asylum application has already been approved. This Program is a very helpful initiative but covers only a modest number of migrants.

With the rising numbers of long-term or permanently residing immigrants housing integration will also in Prague gain increasing importance. Legal immigration is viewed by Czech authorities as a big potential for the local labour market and for population growth. This will also make necessary measures on the housing market.

As a first step the State Integration Program which is now dedicated to asylum seekers only should be extended to other groups of migrants too. Overall, this Program could be the basis to create a more dynamic and comprehensive system for assisting asylum seekers, recognized refugees and labour migrants not in Prague alone but in the Czech Republic.

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