

UDK: 364.65-054.7(437.1/.2)
314.742:316.73(437.1/.2)
314.742:364.44(437.1/.2)
Izvorni znanstveni rad
Primljeno: 17. 01. 2011.
Prihvaćeno: 06. 04. 2011.

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Barriers to Integration of Immigrants and Integration Policy in the Czech Republic with Focus on Stakeholders and Their Co-operation

SUMMARY

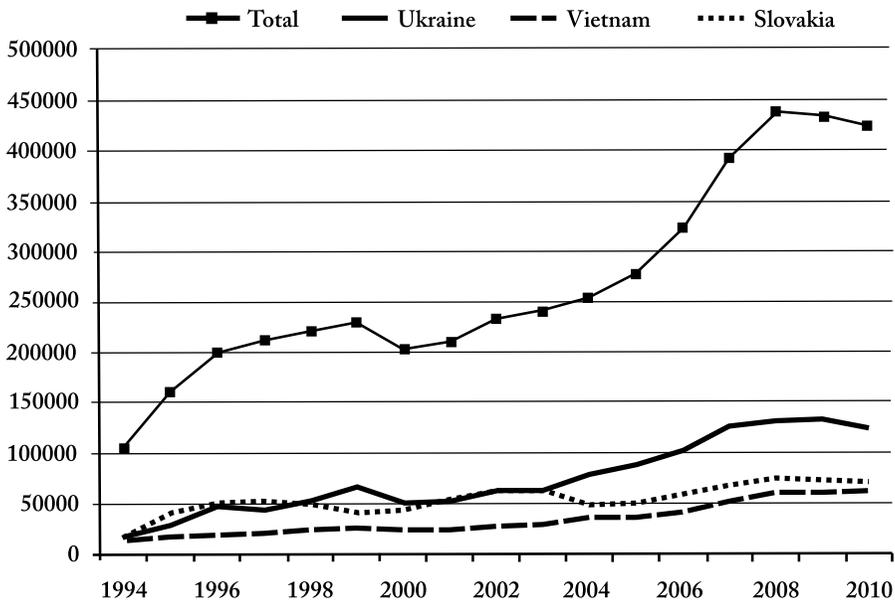
Social integration of migrants and related social work with this target group is increasingly becoming a focus of the enlarged conception of social policies in advanced economies. While immigration policy is often defined and shaped at a national level, its effects influence the lives of migrants and, consequently, also the host society, particularly at the regions and localities, where this policy is confronted with the specifics of the measures in other policy areas. Integration policies at the local level are created and implemented by a wide range of stakeholders, which places considerable demands on the mutual coordination and co-operation to achieve maximum efficiency of services provided. In the Czech Republic, coordination among different actors is still under-developed. Non-governmental organizations, which are oriented towards specific needs of foreigners, are generally considered to be the principal actors in the delivery of services to and social work with migrants. Public institutions' competences are usually limited to the exercise of specific services defined by the legislation. Yet the cooperation between actors from among representatives of government and nonprofit organizations is not based on equal partnership. Based on qualitative interviews with the key stakeholders of social integration in the Czech Republic, this study aims to provide some insight into strategies for the integration of foreigners charged with activities of local actors with special emphasis on the role of NGOs in this process. Moreover, the authors try to highlight some barriers of collaboration between the actors, and the risk of inefficient allocation of resources to support social services for migrants.

KEY WORDS: social integration, policy coordination, migration, stakeholders, social work, NGOs

1. INTRODUCTION

During the twenty years after the fall of communism in Europe, the Czech Republic has undergone a full transformation from a country of emigration through transit country to a final destination of migrant flows.¹ There are some 433,000 foreigners residing in the Czech Republic today and foreign nationals form 4.1% of its total population.² In comparison with many European countries, the proportion is still relatively low.³ However, the dynamic of migration has been very high (see Figure 1), which has resulted in growing ethnic heterogeneity and has placed considerable new requirements on maintaining the internal integrity of Czech society (compare Banting and Kymlicka, 2006).

Figure 1: *Foreigners in the Czech Republic (1994 – 2009)*



Source of data: *Czech Statistical Office, 2010*

¹ The initial version of this paper was presented at the International Conference “Migratory processes in Europe: Evolution of the Migratory Interactions between the EU, Central and Eastern European Countries” in Odessa, Ukraine, 24 – 25 September 2010.

² Data by 31.12.2009, Czech Statistical Office, [http://www.czso.cz/csu/cizinci.nsf/t/C50055F12A/\\$File/c01t01.pdf](http://www.czso.cz/csu/cizinci.nsf/t/C50055F12A/$File/c01t01.pdf)

³ According to Eurostat, 6.2% of the total EU27 countries are foreign citizens (3.9% are from outside the EU, while 2.3% are EU citizens residing outside their home country). The proportion ranges from less than 1% in Romania, Bulgaria, Poland and Slovakia to over 15% in Cyprus, Estonia and Latvia, with a specific outlier being Luxembourg, reaching 42.6% of the total population (data for 2008).

The response to the significant increase in immigrants since 1990 has been directed at migration policy in order to regulate the influx of foreigners and protect the domestic labour force; meanwhile, social integration has remained on the backbench for social policy makers in the Czech Republic,⁴ and generally beyond political and public discourse until recent years. Leading experts, Baršová and Barša, assess Czech immigration and integration policy as being “to a large extent an official matter”, which allows for a “feeling of irresponsibility towards immigration on the part of both politicians and public” (2005: 250-251). Research on local strategies of social integration has revealed that at the level of municipalities, immigrants have not been considered a specific target group for local social policies, their needs have generally been invisible to the municipal officials and the institutional structures in the area of social integration of immigrants have been underdeveloped (Rákoczyová and Trbola, 2008).

In this paper we provide insight into the overall integration strategy in the Czech Republic focusing mainly on the role of key stakeholders both from the governmental and non-governmental sphere. We argue that formulation of effective integration strategies, as well as their effective implementation, presupposes involvement and partnership of the key stakeholders of integration. Since the integration processes and their failures became most evident at the local level, mainly in the cities, involvement and co-operation of local stakeholders form the main substance of the paper.

Below, we will briefly introduce the Czech Republic as a country of immigration and present current changes in immigration. Then we will examine the network of stakeholders in the area of social integration at the various levels of public administration in the Czech Republic. In which way do these stakeholders co-operate? Are there any failures or barriers to their co-operation? How does the existing system of co-operation among the stakeholders influence the delivery of integration services to immigrants?

We base our analysis on the set of qualitative interviews with 66 representatives of different institutions and non-government organizations.

⁴ An exception was the return of countrymen (especially from countries of the former Soviet Union) in the context of organized repatriation and integration of refugees, who were already being provided integration housing during the 1990s.

2. IMMIGRANTS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

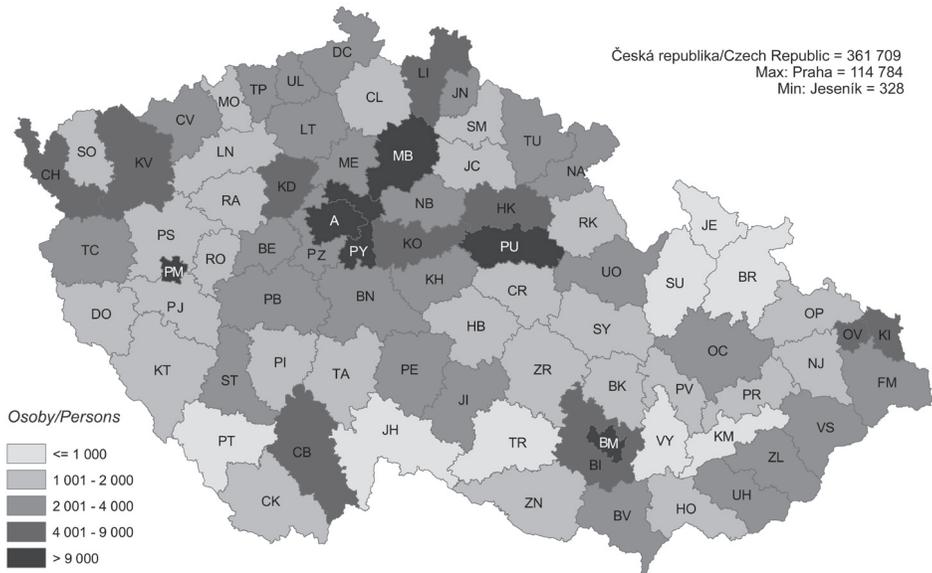
Unlike in many other immigration countries, the majority of foreigners migrating to the Czech Republic are of an ethnically and culturally similar background. This is true for migrants from the two most significant source countries, Slovakia and Ukraine, which in total represent nearly half (47.5%) of the foreigners, and of Europeans in general.⁵ People from remarkably distant countries of origin – Asia, Africa and Latin America – are much less numerous. Among them, migrants from Vietnam represent the most significant group (14% of the total number of immigrants).

Migration to the Czech Republic is predominantly of an economic nature. Apart from various factors on the part of migrants, increased immigration was strongly influenced by the growing Czech economy and related development on the labour market with a booming demand for a cheap and flexible labour force in the 2004–2007 period. Employers preferred employees from Ukraine and Slovakia for manual positions, while in filling administrative or managerial posts; they favoured migrants from Slovakia and “old” members of the EU. This confirms the strong tendency to dualize foreign employment in the Czech Republic: while people coming from highly developed countries occupy high-quality jobs in the so-called primary market, for the rest, practically the only available jobs are those that Czech workers have no interest in (Pořízková, 2008; Rákoczyová et al., 2007). A number of such “jobs for foreigners” arose in locations that had focused on developing industrial zones aimed at simple assembly work. In these areas (Pilsen, Pardubice, Mlada Boleslav), there has been a particularly high concentration of foreigners in unskilled occupations, especially from Ukraine, Vietnam, and Mongolia (but also from Slovakia). These regions have become new centres of concentration of immigrants, next to the traditional destinations of migrants such as Prague⁶, Brno and certain border regions (see Figure 2).

⁵ In 2008, European immigrants accounted for more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total number of immigrants in the Czech Republic (33 % were from the EU-member states and 44 % from outside the EU) (Rákoczyová and Trbola, 2009).

⁶ About one-third of all immigrants in the Czech Republic have been residing in Prague.

Figure 2: Total number of working foreigners in the Czech Republic: 31 December 2008



Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2010

In 2008, a peak year of foreign employment in the Czech Republic, the number of legal foreign workers exceeded 360,000 (i.e. 6% of the total labour force). The majority of them (72%) worked as dependent employees, while the rest were self-employed entrepreneurs. They mostly frequented jobs in the secondary labour market characterized by low quality and high pressure from employers for time flexibility⁷: half of the foreigners employed in the Czech Republic performed assistant and unskilled labour, or operated machines and equipment; another quarter worked as craftsmen, manufacturers and repairmen.⁸ Only about 16% of foreigners worked as managers or in highly professional positions in research and development, health care, education or engineering. Administrative positions have been the least frequented by migrants in the Czech Republic.

In addition, a new phenomenon on the Czech labour market, agency work, has become more widespread among foreign migrants, namely among newcomers from

⁷ As supported in the RILSA study (Rákoczyová et al., 2007), foreign manual workers are exposed to a much higher degree of job insecurity, have very limited access to further education and work training, and have a higher risk of injuries. Working overtime or on weekends and holidays is common. Moreover, indirect indicators suggest that these workers occupy jobs with low wage pay (Rákoczyová, 2007; Pořízková, 2008).

⁸ See the data as at 31.12.2008 on the ČSÚ website, <http://www.czso.cz/csu/cizinci.nsf/tab/93005CA6C1> (breakdown by KZAM) and <http://www.czso.cz/csu/cizinci.nsf/tab/93005BC3B3>.

Asia (Vietnam, Mongolia). Apart from the low quality of their employment, these migrants (and often also their families, which remained in the home country) were typically highly indebted as they had to cover not only transportation costs, but also various fees for “paper services”. Several studies (see e.g. Krebs and Pechová, 2008; Hofirek and Nekorjak, 2009; Rákoczyová, Trbola, 2009) show the disadvantaged positions of Asian - mainly Vietnamese - agency workers, including illegal practices in areas such as labour law.

The jobs on the secondary labour market were also expected to be the first victims of the economic crisis in the Czech Republic and laid-off migrants were supposed to start to return home. This was supported by newly implemented policies (such as a programme of returns in which migrants were offered a subsidy if they decided to return) as well as by making existing immigration regulations more restrictive (such as the temporary suspension of visa procedures for selected countries, or more thorough examination of work permit applications). The development during 2009 showed that these expectations were only half met – the crisis did indeed negatively influence the employment of foreign workers, but generally they did not decide to return to their countries of origin. As evidenced in Table 1, there was a remarkable decrease of foreign employees in the lowest positions, while at the same time their number on the opposite side of the hierarchy slightly increased. The most remarkable decrease was experienced in the employment of Ukrainians and Vietnamese; foreign agency work practically disappeared.

*Table 1: Foreign Employment in the Czech Republic during 2009**

	2008		2009		Change 2009/2008	Relative change 2009/2008
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	284 551	100	230 709	100	- 53 842	- 18.9
1 Legislators, senior officials and managers	7 084	2.5	7 639	3.3	555	7.8
2 Professionals	19 452	6.8	20 893	9.1	1441	7.4
3 Technicians and associate Professional	19 478	6.8	19 772	8.6	294	1.5
4 Clerks	8 534	3.0	8 778	3.8	244	2.9

	2008		2009		Change 2009/2008	Relative change 2009/2008
	N	%	N	%	N	%
5 Service workers and shop and market sales workers	13 483	4.7	14 624	6.3	1141	8.5
6 Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	2 593	0.9	2 429	1.1	- 164	- 6.3
7 Craft and related trades workers	68 775	24.2	48 601	21.1	- 20 174	- 29.3
8 Plant and machine operators and assemblers	49 738	17.5	34 906	15.1	- 14 832	- 29.8
9 Elementary occupations	94 905	33.4	72 885	31.6	- 22 020	- 23.2
10 Military staff	509	0.2	182	0.1	- 327	- 64.2

** Data as at 31.12.2008 and 31.12.2009; source: Czech Statistical Office, 2010. The data do not include the self-employed.*

As mentioned, this decrease in the number of jobs occupied by foreigners was not accompanied by an equivalent reduction of foreigners residing in the Czech Republic. During 2009, the population of foreigners shrank only by some 5 000 people. Most of the returnees were citizens of neighbouring EU countries (Germany, Slovakia, Poland and Austria); of the third countries there was a significant outflow of citizens of Mongolia.⁹ In total, the number of immigrants from EU countries decreased by almost 9 000 and, at the same time, the number of migrants from third countries increased by almost 4 000 people. While some of the workers that had been made redundant started their own businesses, the issue of the further economic activity of the others is not quite clear. A part of them must have undoubtedly found themselves in very vulnerable positions and difficult life situations.

This development indicates that many foreign workers, and especially those from more distant and/or less economically advanced states, are not willing to re-

⁹ According to the Foreign Police, about 90% of the 2200 returnees within the state program were from Mongolia, http://www.rozhlas.cz/zpravy/spolecnost/_zprava/670517. The barriers for return of Mongolians were lower than for other third-country low-skilled workers, namely those from Vietnam, since they became significantly less indebted in relation to their migration.

turn to their home countries after losing their jobs in the Czech Republic. Their return might be difficult, for example, due to heavy debts and generally unfulfilled expectations related to working abroad. In addition, their labour market prospects in their home country may be gloomy, too. Instead of return migration, immigrants showed a tendency to seek new jobs within the Czech Republic, e.g., by moving from the new industrial zones to the traditional destinations (Prague, Brno) with more dynamic local labour markets. Thus, what is supposedly temporary work migration ends up turning into long-term or even permanent migration. It has been acknowledged by EU countries that work migration is potentially permanent immigration (Baršová and Barša, 2005: 156). Together with other types of migration (e.g. family reunification), settled migrants are forming an ever larger category.

3. INTEGRATION OF FOREIGNERS – THE NEED FOR A CONSOLIDATED APPROACH

It has generally been accepted that the integration of immigrants, i.e. “their inclusion and acceptance into the core institutions, relationships and positions of a host society” (Bosswick and Heckmann, 2006: 11), is a two-way process, which implies changes on the part of both immigrants and host societies. From a different perspective, the social integration of immigrants might be perceived in terms of their social functioning or, in the words of Carlton (1984, in Musil and Navrátil, 2002: 277), as their “ability to conduct tasks of everyday life and to get involved into the relation to other people in a way, which is satisfactory for themselves as well as for the others and which corresponds to the needs of organised community” (Carlton, 1984, in Musil and Navrátil, 2002). Social functioning, or social integration, then results from a unique combination of (a) social expectations and requirements towards immigrants, (b) the abilities of the migrants to understand and respond to these requirements, and (c) the assistance provided to an immigrant by the social surroundings.

Integration policies represent a set of measures that aim to promote the processes of successful social integration of immigrants. As such, they constitute formal obligations for migrants and, at the same time, shape institutionalized assistance for their fulfilment.¹⁰ Current immigration policies in European countries focus on the integration of immigrants into the majority society, which is based on individual key areas (including language and liberal-democratic principles), while respecting the differences of immigrants in the area of cultural and religious identity (Baršová and Barša, 2005: 164). Integration policies have traditionally been in the jurisdic-

¹⁰ These exist along with the informal expectations and assistance of the immigrants’ social surroundings (i.e. by neighbours, employers or work colleagues).

tion of individual states, which have formulated an overall approach (including legislation) towards immigrants and their integration. As indicated by these authors elsewhere (2005: 147), in recent years there has been an increase in the political will to adopt integration not only as a national theme, but also as a pan-European one. At the same time, the needs of immigrants, as well as the impact of the failure of their integration, are most significantly expressed at the local level – especially in cities. The presence of immigrants with specific integration needs and the need to address particular problems have led local governments to develop integration strategies, which are often more realistic, more flexible and more prudent than the official national policies (Schierup, Hansen and Castles, 2006).¹¹ Currently, a number of competencies in the area of integration of immigrants in Western Europe have been passed on to local governments (Alexander, 2007).

In view of the complexity of the integration process, it is necessary that integration policy has a multi-dimensional character and that the number of stakeholders on various levels of governance, from the EU level to the municipal one, get involved. In addition to that, mutual co-operation and coordination of the stakeholders is necessary in order to achieve efficient delivery of integration measures and promote successful integration. At the local level, integration strategy is formulated and implemented by a number of stakeholders. Apart from municipal governments, there are also non-governmental organisations (NGOs), employers and their associations, labour unions, social firms, state institutions (e.g. labour offices), universities, schools and other educational institutions, associations of immigrants, sports clubs, church and religious organisations, etc. These potential stakeholders may influence integration processes not only directly, by integration- or immigrant-targeted measures, but also by their overall approach and programmes oriented towards other groups (e.g. the elderly, socially disadvantaged, disabled, children, etc.), which also implicitly include immigrants. Undoubtedly, the integration of immigrants is also influenced in the case that the stakeholders ignore immigrants and their needs.

The role and importance of various stakeholders may differ substantially in individual localities and, in addition, they are active in different dimensions of social integration of immigrants. The demands for mutual coordination and co-operation are therefore considerable. However, communication among individual stakeholders is often suppressed due to the fragmentation of this political area, staff work-overload, and limited resources, or due to financial mechanisms (*From Immigration to Integration*, 2006). In order to achieve efficient coordination and co-operation, it

¹¹ For example, in Germany during the 1980s and 1990s, organizations providing social services and the municipality at local levels created a *de facto* integration policy reform and integration process (a “bottom up” process), while the federal government completely lacked a coherent vision of integration policy (Borkert et al., 2007).

is important to create an institutionalised platform, a partnership, which allows for the exchange of information and learning processes. However, co-operation at the local level is not a sufficient pre-condition for the successful solution of local integration challenges. It is equally important that local partnerships co-operate with competent representatives of higher levels of public administration, in particular that they communicate with central government (policy-makers) and assure sufficient financial resources for the implementation of integration activities. Successful integration policy therefore involves simultaneous horizontal co-operation (among stakeholders at the same level of public administration) and vertical co-operation (among various levels of public administration).

4. VERTICAL CO-OPERATION OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

There are three levels of governance in the Czech Republic: national, regional and local (municipal). The power structure is de-centralized and regional and local governments are independent self-governing authorities, which exercise state administration in a range delegated to them.

The social integration of foreigners as a socio-political agenda has been developing mainly at the level of state government. Initially, major attention at this level has been paid to the integration of refugees and, already during the 1990s, a state programme for the integration of asylum holders, which aims at supporting refugees in finding housing and learning the Czech language, was declared. Since 2000, an integration policy at the national level has been formulated in the *Concept of Immigrant Integration*, which targets all immigrants from third countries (i.e. from outside the EU), except for asylum seekers and refugees. This document focuses mainly on the areas of proficiency in the Czech language, the economic self-sufficiency of immigrants, orientation of foreigners in society, and relations of foreigners to the members of the majority. It stipulates tasks for individual ministries, which are annually reviewed and up-dated. Until 2004, the Ministry of the Interior coordinated the integration policy at the national level, which integrated migration and integration policies under the jurisdiction of one central body. On the other hand, subordination to the Ministry of the Interior might have suppressed the social dimension of the integration process. In 2004, the role of co-ordinator was ascribed to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA); however, it went back into the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior already in 2008. The reason for the shift is not quite clear, but it occurred during a period of increased immigration as well as a boosted expectation of new problems related to immigration. Of-

officially, the change in coordination was to interlink more closely integration policy and immigration policy.

From its inception, the *Concept of Immigrant Integration* has acknowledged the importance of the involvement of partners at the lower level of governance. Already the “Principles of the Concept of Immigrant Integration”,¹² which preceded the formulation of *The Concept*, have declared that it was being implemented by “relevant government departments, state authorities and in co-operation with self-governments, non-governmental organisations and immigrant associations” (Principle 10), and that the role of self-governments in the area of social integration of foreigners was indispensable and would be financially and organisationally supported by the central government (Principle 11). At the early stage of the development of the agenda for the social integration of immigrants, the government stimulated networking at the local level. Following an appeal of the central government to form an “advisory body on the integration of immigrants” in the four largest cities in the Czech Republic (Prague, Brno, Plzeň and Ostrava), the agenda was brought to the local level in these localities in the form of regular meetings of key stakeholders, which predominantly functioned as a platform for the exchange of information on immigrants.

However, efficient co-operation among different levels of public governance has turned out to be difficult to achieve in the system of de-centralized governance. The relatively active approach of the central government invited representatives of the regions and municipalities (or, more precisely, representatives of the Union of Regions and Associations of Cities and Towns) to the Commission of the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs for the Integration of Foreigners and also organised seminars and meetings, both mainly serving as an exchange of information. The relations among the central coordinator and the regional/local representatives in general remained on a formal basis and did not lead to the development of efficient vertical co-operation. At the lower levels of governance, regional and local, the agenda of social integration was often sidelined. This was reflected by the fragmentation of responsibilities within regional/local governments and the tendency to associate the integration of immigrants (or assistance to immigrants) to other agendas (e.g. the integration of the Roma population, or social assistance in general) (see Rákoczyová and Trbola, 2008; *Zpráva...*, 2008), which were often perceived as more urgent and therefore receiving priority. In addition to that, representatives of municipalities sometimes showed a lack of guidance and support from the central government; *The Concept* was not well-known and its influence on the municipalities was very low. The findings of Rákoczyová and Trbola (2008) showed that in the situation of

¹² Government Decree no. 689 of July 7th, 1999.

a non-identified integration problem in their locality, municipalities were willing to participate in the initiatives that were financially and methodologically supported by central government (e.g. the state integration program for asylum holders).

The situation changed in many places in relation to the economic downturn and its consequences for the population of foreign workers, which the representatives of lower levels of governance (as well as representatives of central government) identified as a potential source of social problems. In localities with a large number of (laid-off) foreign workers in manual positions and consequently increased social tensions, so-called emergency programmes were carried out in co-operation between local governments and the Ministry of the Interior. In addition to that, the Ministry of the Interior has initiated the establishment of Regional Integration Centres. This was done in the form of distribution and administration of resources from the European Fund for Integration of Third Country Nationals on the project basis. Entities interested in running such a project of the Regional Integration Centre had to secure 25% of the financing. Hence, the project was to run in one-year periods, which implied an annual project cycle and great insecurity as to the sustainability of this centre. Under these conditions, ten regional centres were established during 2009 and 2010. Regional government became a coordinator of the centre only in one region and a well-established NGO in another. The remaining eight centres were coordinated by Refugee Facilities Administration (RFA), which is a body of the Ministry of the Interior. In this way, the Regional Integration Centres lead to a strengthened position of the state in the delivery of integration services, but not necessarily to increased vertical co-operation of stakeholders. In addition, first experiences show that the RFA has a lower potential to increase horizontal co-operation at the regional and local levels compared to regional government.

Apart from co-operation with governments at the lower level, vertical co-operation involves mutual links between governments (national, regional and local) with NGOs, which have long-term experience in the delivery of services to immigrants in the Czech Republic. Here we will focus on the direct relations between central government and NGOs. Several representatives of well-established NGOs, whom we interviewed in 2009 and 2010, reported that they had been invited to participate in various commissions on the integration of foreigners, or related issues, established by certain ministries. However, they assessed their own influence in these commissions as being very low (“one word in the minutes of the meetings”) and, at the same time, expressed a lack of faith in the function of the commissions:

“I have no illusions that the ministry really wants to solve anything in this way [through the work of commissions]. I think that, at least partly, it serves as an alibi – as a way of giving a bone to make those who bark shut up.”

Central government was also directly involved in several pilot projects, which involved NGOs active in the area of social integration of immigrants. The role of the ministry was rather supervisory and was not perceived as co-operation between equal partners. Similarly, the relations between NGOs and central government are perceived as unequal due to their position in the allocation of financial resources – while NGOs are typically in the role of applicant, the state (central government) has decisive and administrative power.

In general, stakeholders at all levels of governance were activated during the last few years in regard to the integration of immigrants; however, their vertical cooperation and coordination is still largely underdeveloped.

5. HORIZONTAL CO-OPERATION OF STAKEHOLDERS ON A LOCAL LEVEL

As pointed out in her study, which dealt with a local approach to integration in five countries of Western Europe, Froy states that “It is clear that if immigrants are not effectively integrated into local communities, it can lead to disaffection and social unrest. Therefore, local authorities play an important role in the local integration of immigrants, especially into employment, the provisions in relation to housing, schools and access to social assistance can have a significant impact on the well-being of immigrants and consequently the local society” (Froy, 2006: 34).

In addition to vertical integration coordination aimed at the effective co-operation of actors at different levels of governance, the debate about the main local actors relating to this issue is finally being addressed even in the Czech Republic. The challenge to local politicians to be directly involved in reflecting on the needs of immigrants is primarily to formulate specific strategies and actions based on specific local characteristics, the specific needs of immigrants and natural conditions for their integration. At the local level, different stakeholders of the social integration of immigrants play a potentially important role. They dispose of information and competencies available to identify adequately the specific needs of clients. Some of them are also involved in the delivery of integration services. Thus, the scope of these services and their effects to some extent depend on the chosen approach of local governments in addressing this issue. In some regions of the Czech Republic (CR), local strategies to promote the integration of immigrants are also being implemented, and various stakeholders are participating in them within their varying degrees of power. Due to the de-centralization of the government in the CR and failing vertical coordination (see above), local support for the integration process of immigrants depends on the political will of those who hold power locally.

5.1 Local actors, strategies and the integration of immigrants

Below, we focus on the activities of key stakeholders, while observing how their activities support social services to immigrants. We do so knowing that, in addition to the following actors of social integration, there is a variety of other institutions that partly participate in the process of integration in localities where they are able to use its strategy to support this process.

Municipal Offices

Extensive previous research (Rákoczyová and Trbola, 2008; Pořízková, Rákoczyová and Trbola, 2009) has shown a low level of activity of local governments in promoting the integration of foreigners in the CR. At the municipal level, there was virtually no institutional structure for integrating foreigners. Cities still do not perceive them as a target group for their actions, and their access to this population group is generally limited to state administration and crisis intervention. Only some of the larger cities have adopted some measures in the form of emergent programmes to improve the living conditions of immigrants in their jurisdiction. Within the scope of the activities of the municipal offices, there are practically no specific bodies (departments) or work positions (coordinating officers, competent part-time staff) focusing on the integration of foreigners. Immigrants as a target group are usually not defined in the community plan of social services in most towns. The potential needs of immigrants tend to be more sustained and sometimes even partially satisfied by the social departments of these offices. The immigrants, however, are treated identically to the representatives of mainstream society, provided they meet the right to benefits under the social security system. Since the characteristics of this population group are not being taken into account, there are some individuals who are being excluded from the social assistance system. The underdevelopment of municipal institutional security of immigrant integration is also characterized by insufficient collateral and other social services such as legal consultancy, crisis intervention, social orientation consultancy and housing policy integration. Municipal authorities in the field of security services rely mainly on government institutions (to ensure the structural integration of services and its consequences), a non-profit organization (the wider coverage of services in all dimensions of integration) and informal networks of immigrants (in particular, assistance among members of minorities and help with social contacts within the host society). With some exceptions, services in the majority of municipalities for integration support consist only in providing information and mediation with other actors, typically NGOs.

Regional Offices

Other major institutions in the field of immigrant integration at the local level are the regional offices that are responsible for managing wider territorial units – the regions. Unfortunately, the above-mentioned studies point to a general lack of a comprehensive approach to integrating immigrants in most regions. Nevertheless, regional authorities can play a similar role in integrating immigrants as city authorities, but in a wider spatial area. Although the regional authorities have been partly active for several years in the integration of immigrants (in areas such as education and grant programs), their potential for the horizontal coordination of activities to support this process is still being felt today, as the first indicators are emerging in the strategic co-operation to promote integration in the regions and localities. Besides the central coordinating role of regional authorities in the integration process, the service of this institution in the field of immigrant integration could consist primarily of periodic monitoring of the life situations in the region, including the design of measures that satisfy their needs. Currently, however, there is only one region¹³ in the CR where there is a comprehensive regional strategy for integrating immigrants. These target groups are included in a partial way in several conceptual and strategic documents of these institutions; however, complex issues of social services for this population group are yet to be solved. A sufficient degree of communication and co-operation (e.g. through the division of competencies) of the regional authorities with the city authorities could play a key role in both horizontal co-operation (coordination) and vertical co-operation.

Labour Offices

In their activities to promote the integration of foreigners, labour offices are limited by legislation and are able to act only within the confines of legislation in relation to the client. The authority's work in the field of foreign employment is now mainly focused on its regulation, thus regulating the entry of foreign workers into the labour market in accordance with the needs of this market. The integrating function of employment offices (i.e. activities that are aimed at increasing the employment of foreigners and their integration into the labour market) is not clearly defined and currently is more residual (Pořízková, 2011). Immigrants who meet the conditions for registration in the register of the unemployed¹⁴ are eligible for par-

¹³ South Moravian region where the South-Moravian Regional Authority introduced “Program cílené a dlouhodobé podpory integrace cizinců třetích zemí na území Jihomoravského kraje 2011 – 2015” (“The targeted long-term support and integration of foreign nationals of third countries in the South Moravian Region 2011 – 2015”) as a strategic document focusing on integration of migrants in the region of South Moravia.

¹⁴ According to the Employment Act, becoming the client of a labour office is permitted only to foreigners with permanent residence, EU / EEA citizens and refugees.

ticipation in active employment policy, especially in obtaining retraining courses, Czech language courses and so on. However, the specificities and different needs of the group of immigrants are not taken into account within these programs (with the exception of Czech language courses). The conditions for the completion of these courses are identical to those for Czech clients. The role of employment agencies (labour offices) in relation to other actors in social integration remains informative, consisting in their participation as partners in some projects (especially common for NGOs). Since they are government authorities, it is clear that the determination of the scope of their activities in the sphere of integration belongs in the hands of central government (i.e. the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs).

Employers

Employers play one of the key roles in the integration of foreigners into local companies. The working conditions that an employer creates for foreign employees often affect the nature of their future integration with the majority into other areas of life. Based on our findings, supporting administrative services are provided mainly for migrant workers in the primary labour market. These workers are supplied with basic information by their employers for orientation in Czech society. Through their participation in discussions with government representatives, key employers have the opportunity with their positions of influence to intervene in the actions of local policies on the integration of foreigners in their place of residence. Employers with a large proportion of foreign workers are able to alter their staff and programmes to support education in Czech language courses, social orientation and, for appropriate ethnic groups with significantly different cultural habits, rules and standards in the social life of the majority. However, information is provided in a completely different way to foreigners working in the peripheral positions of the secondary labour market. As pointed out by Pořízková and Rákoczyová in their study (2010), information for these workers is often selective, in order to preserve dependencies and manipulability. Although the direct supply of social services is limited by the employers, encouraging immigrants in aspects of life outside of the workplace may create favourable conditions for their social integration. The question remains: how strong is the motivation for the employer's profitability at the expense of the quality of working conditions and his willingness to cooperate with other actors in the social integration of immigrants in the region?

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

Non-profit organizations play a pivotal role in the process of the social integration of immigrants, as their importance lies primarily in the delivery of services to

this population group. It is the non-profit organizations that provide practical support for the integration of immigrants into the local community. Currently, there are 47 organizations and their branches operating in these fields in the Czech Republic. However, the territorial scope of these organizations is unbalanced because their activities are especially developed in larger cities and their surroundings. The distribution of services to some groups of immigrants in remote areas is therefore inadequate. In order to compensate partially for this lack, there exist several trans-regional projects (such as learning the language, social and legal consultancy) whose design covers most parts of the immigrant population, which otherwise could not benefit from the regular services of non-profit organizations. The NGOs are generally more oriented to the comprehensive identification of client needs and their satisfaction (consultancy, crisis intervention, learning the language, dealing with agendas, social orientation courses) than other actors of social integration, whose powers are usually limited by legislation. NGOs are often more flexible in identifying these needs: within the individual work with clients they are able to reflect on their specifics, different capabilities and capacities, their social capital and other factors influencing integration. In the fields of social integration into the local societies, NGOs have been providing a range of services with a significant integration-supporting effect, of which we are presenting the following key services:

1. Consultancy

- consultancy on social and legal affairs, social orientation counselling, labour market consultancy, psychological counselling, assistance with paperwork, assistance with negotiations with public institutions, patient care, field work
- basic type of service, “minimum work” with clients with significant integration-supporting effect

2. Individual work plans with the client

- an effective form of co-operation based on monitoring clients and their evolution with the use of the service - the importance of determining the effect of the service and its benefits for the client
- important for activating the client in the real environment

3. Promoting education in the labour market and retraining courses

- *indirect* - to strengthen the skills of immigrants through interactive methods (Czech language lessons focusing on vocabulary related to the labour market, developing computer skills, courses focused on the labour market, courses in communication skills and motivation courses, retraining courses, soft skills, job search methods, career counselling, etc.)

- *direct* - assistance in negotiations with the employer, the employment office, personnel in agencies, active searching and contacting employers, job clubs - need for synergy with other actors of social integration, especially with employment agencies and local employers, particularly mutual co-operation in joint projects
- integration-supporting service especially strong in labour force participation as one of the prerequisites for successful integration

4. Language learning

- matching the language level of the client – offer of courses (for a nominal fee) as a stand alone service or in co-operation with other actors of social integration, offer of preparatory courses for the mandatory language exam for applicants for permanent residence
- primary prerequisite for successful integration - a tool to gain additional skills, bridge to understanding
- integration-supporting effect focusing on strengthening social capital in immigrants

5. Housing support, assistance in providing housing

- *indirect* - counselling, exploring the possibilities of assistance in dealing with integration apartments (only for refugees), financial and practical assistance for reconstruction, equipping, moving
- *direct* - the provision of housing (shelter project, etc.) in limited cases
- time-limited services (e.g. one year of housing) as motivation for immigrants to activate their own personal capital

6. Support of recreational and multicultural activities

- offer of community services in multicultural groups and low thresholds - multicultural exercises for women, clubs for mothers with children, multicultural cafes, sports events, lectures, seminars, workshops, trips around the Czech Republic - the possibility of participating with the resident population in the work of multicultural groups
- the integration-supporting effect of the interactive methods applied to these activities lies primarily in the mutual sharing of experiences, networking, transmission of information, mutual assistance and so on

7. Charity and humanitarian activities

- organizing collections supporting the life of immigrant groups and

immigrant life support in residential institutions, humanitarian clothing stores, financial assistance

- short-term effect of this integration-supporting services addresses the current situation

8. Promoting enlightenment, civil rights and lobbying

- demonstration events (of an informative character targeting the majority population), information campaigns (a form of demonstration events more focused on interaction with the majority population, happenings, debates, exhibitions), research and publications (publishing and analyzing the activity of promoting certain issues connected with the lives of immigrants) and lobbying (direct action in the legislative component of social integration)
- integration-supporting effect of this service is reflected mainly in the majority population

9. Other activities focused on the majority population

- *co-operation with schools* - enlightenment within educational programmes in schools, multicultural education curriculum in schools, lecture series on the issue of integration for students and methodological workshops for teachers, interactive games, students participation in the projects of NGOs, professional experience for students, volunteer work of students
- *promoting education and information targeted at the public* - education of individuals, workers of public institutions, other non-profit sector workers, workers in the media, etc. through lectures, discussion clubs, workshops, exhibitions, organization of cultural events, public presentations of traditions and cultures of different ethnic groups, multicultural evenings, etc.
- integration-supporting effect especially in the activation of the majority society to participate in the problems of immigrants

10. Activities of expatriate associations

- a special group of NGOs – association of representatives of national minorities and mutual support in all areas of life in the new community (maintaining the mother tongue, traditions, information sharing and experience sharing)
- integration-supporting in promoting awareness of their values toward the majority population

Although NGOs are recognized as key actors in delivering services to promote the social integration of immigrants on a local level, it is essential for their effective functioning to include communication, co-operation and consistency in the actions of other actors (public sector institutions, local employers, other non-profit organizations). In particular, the exchange of information between these organizations and employment agencies, foreign police, and other non-profit organizations is considered to be essential. Mutual co-operation between these actors is primarily to inform clients of potential service offers, but may also take the form of joint projects such as co-operation in education, information and work with clients. Non-profit organizations often collaborate with public institutions in specific projects aimed at promoting specific areas of integration. Public institutions act in these projects as providers of methodology and legislative support for NGO activities, and the co-operation is mainly based on providing information and consultation.

The position of non-profit sector organizations, among other actors of integration of immigrants with regard to the specifics of their mission, is however weakened. The rules of partnership between institutions are based primarily on the competence of each of them, whereas the chances for non-profit sector organizations to have equal access in negotiations are low. Given that the activities of the volunteer sector are primarily dependent on subsidies taken from government budgets and grant procedures administered by the government, the basis of the communication between these bodies is limited to their roles of project sponsor or donor versus recipient of financial aid and service provider. Representatives of NGOs often describe their position among the other players as depreciated and at a low level of social prestige.

5.2 Functional model of horizontal co-operation in the field of immigrant integration

For the development of local integration measures, a fairly broad concept of immigrant social integration is important. This involves the political will to act in this area and a relatively good ability to carry out coordination work horizontally (among actors) and represent an integration platform vertically, in relation to the central level. Based on the following models, we are trying briefly to clarify the individual links of a functional model of horizontal co-operation between the local actors of social integration:

Vertical coordination of activities in support of immigrant integration lies in the communication between the government and various levels of regional and local policy. Individual measures of integration policy in accordance with an effective strategy for promoting the integration of immigrants should be discussed at all le-

vels of government, which is consistent with the efficient allocation of financial resources that takes into account the real shape of immigrant needs in different regions and localities. Horizontal co-operation engages regional and local authorities as actors representing regional and local interests in interactions with a government level and, at the same time, coordinating the work of other local actors of social integration. However, it is important that it takes place in the context of co-operation, possibly in divided competencies. Key players provide the mutual flow of information between levels. Marginally, they can play the role of messengers of services for target groups. Other actors of social integration at the local level adopt the role of key partners of these institutions and through mutual discussion about the situation in localities (regions) directly affect the creation and implementation of measures to support this process. In addition, they play an important role in the delivery of services. Under these pre-conditions, local actors are able to create a platform to promote local interest in the field of immigrant integration and the efficient allocation of financial resources to services for this target population.

5.3 Barriers of social integration in the field of horizontal co-operation

In the horizontal co-operation of actors in the field of social integration of immigrants, some failures exist in communication and collaboration among those whose strategies and priorities in this area can be mutually different. The imbalance of opinions and, consequently, the lack of co-operation of local actors often lead to barriers to effective implementation of local strategies to support this process. The most important of these include mainly the lack of political will on the part of some key actors, the absence of key specific measures and instruments defined on a common basis, the resulting inconsistencies in the identification of indicators of effective distribution of services to support the integration process and especially the lack of clarity of strategic practices in the conduct of local actors across public administration within the vertical line. These barriers in turn influence the state of mutual horizontal coordination and co-operation of local actors in the field of local integration of immigrants.

In reality, it is evident that effective strategies to integrate immigrants are absent in most localities and only general policy that is focused on the defined categories of the majority population is mostly applied to this target group. Any specific measures, taking into account the specific needs of foreigners, are not defined and there is no consistency in the supportive measures of integration between different actors and agendas. Incoherence of thought and inability to coordinate activities often appear not only at the vertical level, but also in co-operation between local actors. This situation ultimately leads to the inefficient allocation of resources in providing

services to promote the social integration of immigrants. Tight coordination of activities in implementing specific measures, in essence, is absent, or the foundations of future platforms of actors are developed with delays. Support of the integration of foreigners in local territories is provided especially by NGOs with the assistance of other public sector institutions. However, the contribution of these institutions in the distribution of services to support integration is minimal, often being only at the information level.

The recent strengthening of competencies of regional institutions in monitoring, strategic planning and decision-making mechanisms in the development of measures to support integration directly where it arises appears as an effective approach to developing local strategies for the integration of immigrants. At some regional levels, the first functioning platforms of the actors of social integration of immigrants are emerging. In the scope of coordinated strategies, they are starting to perform the role of a strong partner for negotiations with the government. At the same time, these platforms also create an umbrella body that coordinates the activities of all regional actors of immigrant integration and thereby contribute to the development of services for this target group. The model of the regional centre provides an example of the promotion of the integration of foreigners.¹⁵ Likewise, some newly introduced integrative centres in selected regions working in co-operation with regional NGOs and other local actors also contribute to the identification of a more targeted set of needs for local immigrants, thereby promoting the more efficient current configuration of services that satisfy those needs.

The general problem of the horizontal co-operation of local actors in promoting the integration process of immigrants, however, remains in the lack of indicators for effective service delivery. Representatives of volunteer sector organizations reflect inadequate interconnection with governmental needs (reflected in integration policy) and the real needs of target groups; there is also a general reluctance of central authorities to assess the real impact of measures to promote the integration of immigrants. This situation leads mainly to promoting the various interests of local public institutions and the inability to adopt uniform indicators of preferences and quality of services implemented. The offer of services by NGOs is then dependent on decisions that are not discussed in the platform of all stakeholders. Those monitored are only the effects that can be checked by the indicators set by the

¹⁵ In the scope of the activities of the South Moravian Regional Authority, the Regional Centre for the Integration of Immigrants was recently established in Brno. With the centre's activities aimed at this target group, this has been the first practical step toward the future development of strategic planning and development of the region, whereby the needs of the target population are already being reflected in the law. Simultaneously, the activities of the centre are developed in accordance with the platform of actors involved in the social integration of this region, consisting of NGOs, the regional authority, municipality, school representatives and trade unions; see www.cizincijmk.cz.

contracting authority (public institutions). However, those are largely used for the administrative control of the financial processes within an organization; therefore, they do not reflect the real effect of the satisfaction of needs through the services offered. Indicators measuring the effect of services should be based on identifying real needs based on mutual dialogue between government and NGOs. In reality, however, there is poor orientation of lower public officials and authorities in the integration of immigrants and an apparent indifference to take up a strategic position on this issue. This follows the findings of the “Evaluation of the Concept of Promoting the Development of the Non-profit Sector,”¹⁶ which reflects the low level of factual content contributed during the selection of projects. This is at the expense of the formal aspects of the project and more emphasis being put on financial and administrative control. Thus, the rigorous controls are implemented at the expense of more content and project outputs. According to these findings, moreover, in grant programs there is no system of evaluating the benefits of the activities of the non-governmental organizations; this is finally reflected in the inability lawfully to assess the contribution of these organizations in practice.

Another key barrier in delivering services to immigrants is the method of funding non-profit sector organizations, especially in regard to their dependence on project funding. Again, it is possible to identify the random nature of the endowment policy at the state level and the real funding activities promoting the integration of foreigners at the local level. The interests of these different levels of government in the integration of immigrants often come into conflict. This random nature is also highlighted in the reflection of the general stereotype favouring some organizations and their services at the expense of others, without measuring the effectiveness of these services within the various organizations that are applying for financial subsidy. Governmental subsidy policy significantly determines the type, scope and focus of projects. Thus, the financial operation of the organization to some extent determines the particular choice of a target group for the activities announced in the parameters of grant management, while the real needs identified in the locality often are not taken into account. In practice, there are then situations whereby foreigners who have an objective need for a service are excluded from the scope of the project, because they do not belong to the target group as it is formally defined.

Even the provisioning strategies of local public institutions to support the non-profit organizations are based primarily on government preferences in this area. Deciding on financial support to organizations creates an atmosphere of rivalry among them, which is ultimately reflected in the creation of services that are less important in satisfying the needs of target groups in the locality. Financial barriers to the acti-

¹⁶ Documents of the Government Council for NGOs in 2008; see www.vlada.cz

vities of the volunteer sector, combined with poorly set up communication between NGOs and other actors of social integration, but also among the NGOs themselves, create an unhealthy competitive environment in the activities of these organizations. The lack of mutual information resulting from the need to be as close to the financial resources as possible in order to operate their own activities often leads to offering a range of services that are currently supported by attractive endowment funds. In this context, there is duplication of certain activities in numerous organizations, but, contrastingly, a complete lack of another activity that is a desired type of service as identified in the localities. The activities of NGOs in promoting the integration of immigrants are often based on the dictates of government subsidy policy and local policies.

CONCLUSION

For a long time, the development of integration policy has lagged behind the reality of the growing number of immigrants residing in the Czech Republic. Policy-makers at the national level have focused on migration policy (i.e. regulation of migration flows) and those at the local level have not acknowledged their responsibility in the area of immigrant integration. Only quite recently has the situation changed as the advent of the economic crisis has raised interest in the living conditions of immigrants in the Czech Republic, and the issue of integration has become part of public and policy discourse. The governments, including local ones, have recognised that there are potential social problems related to the precarious situation of laid-off foreign workers. This has stimulated activity at all levels of public governance with new measures being implemented. However, the co-operation and coordination of integration activities, both vertically and horizontally, still face numerous barriers and inconsistencies. The change of the central coordinator from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to the Ministry of the Interior has, to a certain extent, stressed the potentially problematic aspects of migration (such as criminality, irregular work, remaining in the country, etc.) and increased stress on the temporality of migration, which is evident in some of the newly produced documents. The central government's attempt to develop a regional network of integration services has assumed the form of new state activity in the regions (via one of the Ministry's bodies) rather than intensified co-operation with regional governments.

At the local level, NGOs are the most important stakeholder in the area of integration services, but their activities are influenced by a number of barriers. The most evident problem in connection with this is the co-operation of the local integration actors, where the NGOs perform a specific role. As their activities are characterized as non-profit, they face the problem of communicating with other local partners

within the process of social integration of immigrants on the local level. Although they are more flexible in identifying real needs of target groups of immigrants, the governmental and local authorities' preferences often differ from the real demands reflected by the NGOs. Because the strategies of migrant integration on the regional and local level are still under-developed in the CR, it is difficult for the non-profit sector to influence the creation and realization of the measures to promote the integration of foreigners into the local communities.

It is in the interest of both the host society and the immigrants to develop efficient integration policy in the Czech Republic. Even though there have been many positive developments in this area during the last decade, there is still room for increased co-operation among all the relevant stakeholders (including the immigrants themselves) in order to create a more fruitful situation.

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Prepreke u integraciji imigranata i integracijskoj politici u Češkoj Republici s fokusom na dionike i njihovu suradnju

SAŽETAK

Društvena integracija imigranata i društveni rad s tom ciljanom grupom sve su više u žarištu proširene koncepcije socijalnih politika u naprednim ekonomijama. Dok se imigracijska politika često definira i oblikuje na nacionalnoj razini, njezini efekti utječu na živote imigranata i posljedično na društvo primitka, osobito u krajevima i mjestima gdje je ta politika u suprotnosti sa specifičnostima mjera u drugim područjima politike. Integracijske politike na lokalnoj razini kreira i provodi cijeli niz dionika, što stavlja poprilične zahtjeve pred uzajamno usklađivanje i suradnju kako bi se postigla maksimalna efikasnost predviđenih službi. U Češkoj Republici usklađeni rad različitih aktera još uvijek nije dovoljno razvijen. Nevladine organizacije koje su usmjerene prema specifičnim potrebama stranaca općenito se smatraju glavnim akterima u pružanju usluga migrantima i društvenom radu s njima. Nadležnosti javnih institucija obično su ograničene na pružanje specifičnih usluga definiranih zakonodavstvom. Ipak, suradnja među akterima, predstavnicima vladinih i neprofitnih organizacija, ne temelji se na ravnopravnom partnerstvu. Cilj je ovog istraživanja pružiti na temelju kvalitativnih intervjua s ključnim dionicima društvene integracije u Češkoj Republici uvid u strategije za integraciju stranaca, aktivnosti za koje su zaduženi lokalni akteri, s posebnim naglaskom na ulogu nevladinih organizacija (NGO-a) u tim procesima. Osim toga autori nastoje istaknuti neke prepreke u suradnji među akterima kao i rizik neučinkovite raspodjele sredstava za podupiranje socijalnih službi za migrante.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: društvena integracija, koordinacija politika, migracije, dionici, socijalni rad, nevladine organizacije

Роберт ТРБОЛА, Мирослава РАКОЦИОВА

Барьеры в интеграции иммигрантов и интеграционной политике в Чешской Республике, с акцентом на участвующие стороны и их сотрудничество

РЕЗЮМЕ

Социальная интеграция иммигрантов и социальная работа с данной целевой группой все чаще находятся в центре внимания расширенной концепции социальной политики в странах с развитой экономикой. В то время как миграционная политика часто определяется и формируется на национальном уровне, ее влияние сказывается на жизни иммигрантов и, следовательно, на принимающее общество, особенно в районах и местах, где эта политика не согласуется с особенностями мер в других областях политики. Интеграционную политику на местном уровне разрабатывает и проводит целый круг участвующих сторон, что создает серьезные требования для взаимной координации и сотрудничества ради достижения максимальной эффективности соответствующих служб. В Чешской Республике совместная работа различных субъектов до сих пор еще

недостаточно развита. Неправительственные организации, которые направлены на конкретные потребности иностранцев, обычно считаются главными субъектами как в предоставлении услуг для иммигрантов, так и в социальной работе с ними. Компетенция государственных учреждений, как правило, ограничивается предоставлением конкретных услуг, установленных законодательством. Тем не менее, сотрудничество между субъектами, представителями государственных и некоммерческих организаций, не основывается на равноправном партнерстве. Основываясь на метод интервью с ключевыми участниками социальной интеграции в Чешской Республике, данное исследование ставит перед собой задачу изучить стратегии интеграции иностранцев, ответственность за которые несут местные субъекты, с особым акцентом на роль неправительственных организаций (NGO) в этих процессах. Кроме того, авторы стремятся указать на некоторые барьеры, на пути к сотрудничеству между участвующими сторонами, и на риск неэффективного распределения ресурсов для поддержки иммиграционных социальных служб.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: социальная интеграция, координация политики, миграции, участвующие стороны, социальная работа, неправительственные организации