



National Report on Youth Homelessness and Youth at Risk of Homelessness in the Czech Republic

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Objective 1

To describe the national contexts in terms of homeless populations: including ethnic, gender, non-national groups and those with different parental statuses

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Objective 2

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1 Relevant national context

1a) Demographical characteristics of the population

Population of the Czech Republic (CR) in 2007 comprised from 10 381 130 inhabitants out of which 49% are men. An average age in the CR is 40 years. The age structure of general population is as follows: 14.2% children up to 14 years old 71.2% people in productive age (15-64 years old) and people older than 65 year make for 14.6%. In the last two years the natural increase in number of inhabitants has been registered in the CR but this is mainly due to foreign immigration. (Vývoj 2008)

Number of young people in general population in the CR shows in a long-term perspective a decreasing tendency. Young people (age 16-24) make for 12% of the population, 49% of them being of female sex. In the year 1991 young people age 16-24 made for 15% of the population but gradually the percentage decreased to the current 12% bearing in mind that number of inhabitants remains almost the same. (Věkové 2008) According to long-term predictions of the Czech Statistical Office (CSO) the number of young people in the next 5 years horizon should stay the same but until 2050 it should gradually decrease to 8.5%. (Projekce 2008)

In the CZ the trend of population ageing is visible constantly. In 1991 citizens over 65 represented 12.5% of the population but in 10 years their percentage increased to 13.8% to be today at 14.6% of the populations. In the future a sharp increase in the numbers of this age group is expected, which would make the CR one of the European countries with the oldest population, at least according to the followed indicators. (Vývoj 2003:10) Based on long-term predictions of the CSO the number of the persons older than 65 should more than double by the year 2050. (Projekce 2008)

- Immigrants and ethnic minorities

According to the latest statistics (until 31 December 2008) there were 438 300 foreigners with residence permits on the Czech territory who thus made for 4.2% of the populations. The number of foreigners in 2007 was 392 000. The most frequent country of origin were citizens of Ukraine (132 000, or 30.1% of all foreigners) and Slovakia (76 000 or 17.3%); they are followed by the citizens of Vietnam (60 300 or 13.7%), Russia (27 200 or 6.2%) and Poland (21 700 or 5%). Due to the recorded foreign immigration the number of inhabitants in the CZ increased by 71 800 persons.¹

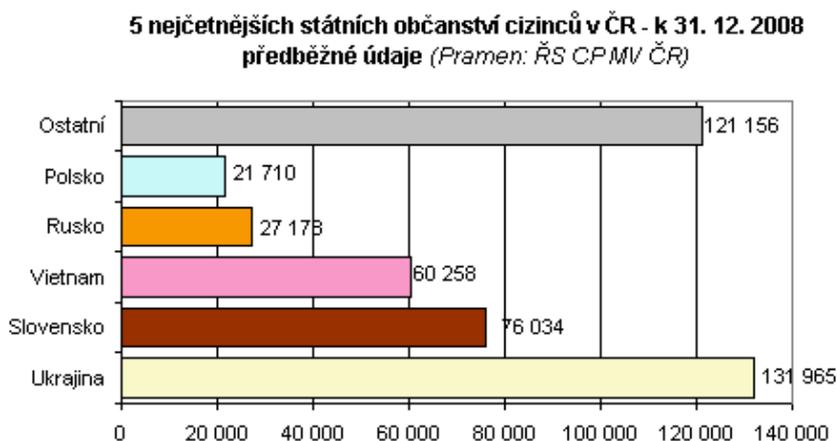
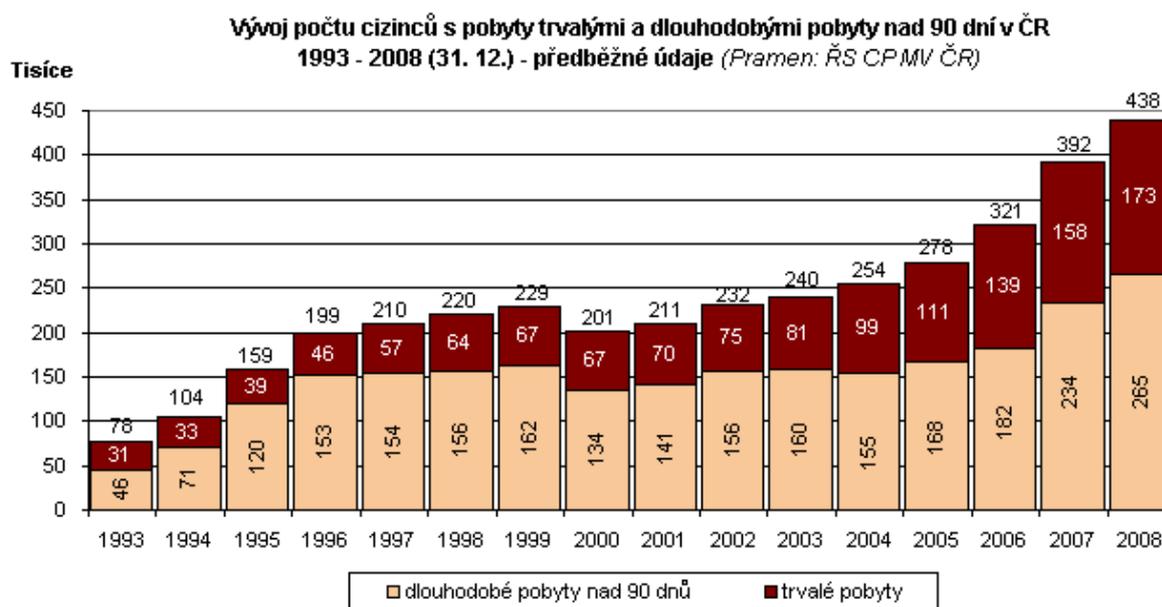
According to the data for 2007 the age structure of the foreigners is dramatically different from the age structure of the CZ inhabitants. The main difference lies in concentration of the persons in the productive age (15-64; 90% of foreigners are in this group), higher percentage of children (7.4%) compared to the percentage of the old people (2.7%). In case of gender composition we see only minor differences. Men are more equally distributed throughout the whole productive age while women are more concentrated in age 22-38. Number of men is higher in the general population of foreigners in the CZ. But some groups tend to have different characteristics than the rest of the population of foreigners. In case of the citizens of Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Russia there are more women than men while in the case of the citizens of Germany and the UK the prevalence of men was even higher. In terms of age structure the citizens of Vietnam, China, Russia and Kazakhstan have higher percentage of children

¹ <http://www.czso.cz/csu/csu.nsf/informace/coby031309.doc> (13.3.2009)

younger than 14 (> 12 %) but citizens of Bulgaria, Austria, USA and Germany have higher percentage of the persons older than 65 (> 9 %). (Vývoj 2008: 8-10)

Graph 1. Development of the increase in number of foreigners with permanent or long-term residence permit in the Czech Republic in the years 1993-2008 (up to 31.12.) – preliminary data

Graph 2. Five most frequent citizenships among the foreigners up to 31.12.2008 – preliminary data



Source: CSU² (graph 2 top down: the others, Poland, Russia, Vietnam, Slovakia, and Ukraine)

The Czech Office of Asylum and Migration policy³ accepts 11 different purposes of residence of the foreigners on the Czech territory: studying or practical work;

² http://www.czso.cz/csu/cizinci.nsf/kapitola/ciz_pocet_cizincu (14.3.2009)

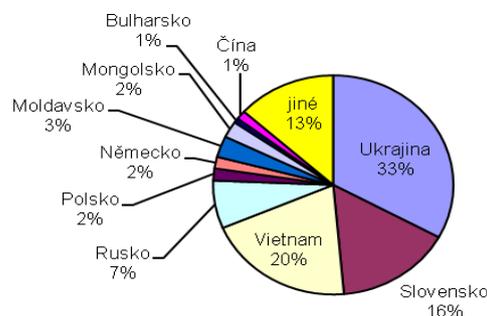
³ Ředitelství služby cizinecké a pohraniční policie, Odbor azylové a migrační politiky (MV ČR)

entrepreneurship; company member; employment; other economic activities; free right to reside (for the ethnic Czechs returning from emigration); family members and family reunion; refugees; humanitarian reasons; temporary protection; other. Most frequently the foreigners come for employment (33%) or after their family members (28%) to be followed by entrepreneurship reasons (17%). (Cizinci 2007)

Based on the data for the year 2007 the number of young people age 15-24 among foreigners with regular residence permit in the CR was 61 424 (15.6% from the whole number), out of which 43% were women. The most numerous were young people from Ukraine (33%), Vietnam (20%), Slovakia (15.6%) and Russia (7%). Number of unaccompanied minors age 15-17 was 32. (ibid.)

Graf 3. Foreigners age 15-24 with residence permit in the CR

(Ukraine 33%; Slovakia 16%; Vietnam 20%; Russia 7%; Poland 2%; Germany 2%; Moldavia 3%; Mongolia 2%; Bulgaria 1%; China 1%; Other 13%)



Source: CSU (Cizinci 2007)

Almost half of the foreigners legally residing in the CR (48%) live in Prague and Central Bohemia. The same applies to the young foreigners age 15-24. 33% of them live in Prague and 13% in the Central Bohemia. (ibid.)

Based on census from the year 2001 (up to 1 March) 94% of the persons living in the CR declared to be of the Czech, Moravian or Silesian nationality. The most numerous national minorities are the Slovaks (3%) followed by Poles, Germans, Hungarians and Roma.⁴ Less than 12 000 persons declared as Roma officially which is 0.1% but the real number is estimated at 150 – 300 000 persons. The Roma population has very different results for the demographic indicators compared to the Czech average e.g. very low percentage of the persons older than 65, higher number of children per woman, lower level of education and economic activity. However the detailed data are not available (Národnostní 2003: 23-30)

1b) Legal definition of youth and welfare and criminal justice systems for youth

A person becomes an adult after turning 18. This is when, according to the Czech Civil Code⁵, a person becomes fully capable of taking rights and responsibilities. According to the Czech Constitution it is in this period when a person obtains right to vote and according to the Act on Family nr. 94/1963 is allowed to conclude marriage.

⁴ The census registers subjective declaration of the respondents' nationality.

⁵ Zákon č. 40/1964 Sb., občanský zákoník § 8 odst. 2)

Age of 15 is also crucial since it is the age of the end of the compulsory education and the children under 15 or over 15 but still going to school are not allowed to work. After turning 15 the young person according to the Czech Criminal Code⁶ becomes criminally responsible.

Definitions of the child and youth are scattered within various acts and laws. Act nr. 359/1999 on Social and Legal Protection of the Children according to further regulations defines a child as an under-age person. The definition comes from the Convention on the Rights of a Child, which understands as a child "every human being under 18 years of age" (article nr. 1). The Criminal Code defines youth as "children younger than fifteen and adolescents" while adolescents are defined as those "who in the period when the act was committed were already fifteen but not eighteen of age". (article nr. 2)

The most important act concerning youth namely the Act on Social and Legal Protection of the Children stems from the Convention on the Rights of the Children which was adopted in the year 1991⁷ and Bill of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms which is constitutive part of the Constitution of the Czech Republic. This document is basis for fundamental acts related to youth: Act on Social and Legal Protection of the Children and Act on Family. According to these legal acts the parents have right but also responsibility to be accountable for upbringing of their under-age children. Minors up to 18 years of age have right to live with their biological parents or close persons unless no grave reasons prevent them in it or if separation from the parents is in the interest of the child. Such a separation can be ordered by the court only.

Act on Social and Legal Protection of the Children is a fundamental act on protection of minor children. The Act defines a child to be in danger in the following situations (§6): a) the parents died or do not fulfill their paternal duties or do not implement or they abuse rights stemming from their paternal responsibilities; b) a person to whom a child was given to care does not fulfill the duties relate to it c) the children considered to be in danger are those who lead immoral or idle life by not attending school, not working, consuming alcohol and drugs, engaging in prostitution, committing crimes or if they are younger than 15 committing crimes that would be classified as criminal acts, repeatedly or systematically committing offences or in some other way endanger civil life; d) who ran away from their parents or from persons or institutions responsible for their care; e) who were victims of criminal act which endangered their lives, health, human dignity, moral development or property or in case of doubt that such acts have been committed; if such facts continue for such a period or are of such intensity that they affect children's development in a negative way or are or can be the reason for such a negative development of the children.

In the cases when a minor is in danger, there is a range of provisions in competency of bodies of social and legal protection of the children and the courts. The former are the first instance in protection of such children. Such bodies exist at several levels of the public administration (national, district but also with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs), but the key role is played by the District Offices where there are Departments of Social and Legal Protection of the Children. They provide within legal requirements social counselling, preventive measures, suggest to the court provisions for protection of the children and represent children in courts and other institutions. Public administration may delegate some of its agenda related to the child protection to the NGOs. The court decides based on suggestions of the Department about revoking or limiting parental responsibility, orders institutional care, surveillance and monitoring.

⁶ *Zákon č. 140/1961 Sb., trestní zákon*

⁷ The Czech Republic ratified the Convention on the Rights of Children in 1991 (Memo of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs nr. 104/1991 Coll., i.e. Act nr. 3/1993 Coll., the so called Reception Norm based on which the Convention became part of the Czech legal code after the separation of the Czechoslovakia).

Table 1. Children under 15 in institutional care

Year	In the care of future adoptive parents	In the care of other persons than children's parents	Institutional care	In protected compulsory care	In the care of the future foster family	Children and youth not yet institutionalized
1993	462	559	1144	287	244	74
1994	541	727	1391	9	326	85
1996	575	780	1576	5	366	68
1998	499	822	1464	9	366	104
1999	559	750	1506	16	382	155
2000	508	858	1413	26	306	68
2002	460	777	1201	8	280	47

Source: Národní zpráva o rodině 2004 (Ministerstvo 2004: 63)

The instruments for support and protection of the minors in danger are according to the law set in such a way to protect young people according to their needs and various risk situations - they can be preventive provisions, acute intervention, temporary or long-term provisions. Unfortunately in the CZ the situation of the children in danger is solved instead by preventive provisions, family support and foster care by placing minors in the institutional care.

Box 1.

Since the main risk factor in the CR was seen by the respondent to be life in institutional care, the main problem was lack or prevention policies for youth at risk: *"In the child institutions for example it is not enough to offer just a Half-way Home and nothing else, this is not a solution. It is necessary to establish systematic cooperation between offices and field workers who should visit children groups both those composed of regular school children but also at risk of homelessness. It is necessary to recognize them and start working with them. The second biggest issue is lack of social housing."*

"Currently the limit is 15 (for the criminal responsibility) but if they reduce it to 14, it will be 14 and that will lead to the situation in which adults care even less about their children than now. They will care less since they will say why should I care if I don't have to."

1c) Main national routes of youth insertion into adult life

Life trajectories of the young people in the CR after 1989 have dramatically changed. While before 1989 the average age of getting married was 20 and women became mothers most often in the age of 20-24, nowadays the young people create families when they are about 30. According to the Czech Statistical Office survey almost one third of 1.8 million youngsters in the CR up to age of 29 still live with their parents. The young people age 20 to 24 make for 345 000.

Number of inhabitants in the CR living in complete families is steadily on the decrease. Based on the 2001 census 71% of the total number of inhabitants lived in complete families while in the year 1991 it was 78% and in the year 1961 86%. In relation to the age of men and women who live in the complete families compared to 1991 in the year 2001 there is an obvious decrease of the percentage of persons living with a partner up

to the age of 60. Living together without concluding marriage becomes more and more frequent in the CR. The census from 1991 showed 84 934 of such couples (3.4% of all complete families) while in 2001 there were 125 269 of such couples (5.3% of all complete families). This applies mainly to the persons younger than 30. Percentage of men and women living in the complete families in the age up to 30 has decreased from 1991 in 2001 1.6 times. We also see increase in number of single households mainly in the case of young people. Percentage of single household in the case of persons younger than 24 increased from 1991 when it was 37% to 52.5% in 2001 of all registered households for that age group. (Ministerstvo 2004: 36-38; 42)

Number of incomplete families increased in 2001 to 576 000 compared to 434 000 in 1991. This period mainly saw the increase of number and percentage of incomplete families with children. Almost 1.5 million or 14% of the inhabitants lived in incomplete families including 488 000 children (27% of all children). In almost all cases the incomplete family adult person was a woman (83% in 1991, 85% in 2001), in case of families without children number of women is somewhat lower (1991 – 76%; 2001 – 80%). (ibid.)

The average number of children per woman (indicator of cumulative fertility) made in 2008 1.5 children per woman. Number of children born alive in 2008 increased by 4 900 from the previous year and is now at 119 600 children. Number of newborns was highest in 1993 (121 000). Currently we face increase of number of children from 1.33 in 2006 to 1.5 in 2008. Despite the increase tendency the values of cumulative fertility currently are low compared to the values before 1989 (in the eighties they were 1.94 in the seventies 2.25). (Plodnost 2003: 6) Women tend to postpone maternity for later age of their lives. The average age of women having their first child increased from 2007 to 2008 for 0.2 years and is currently at 27.3. The average age of women giving birth in general increased to 29.3. In the eighties the fertility age for women was 20-24. There were 43 500 children born not in marriage in 2008 and percentage of children born to unmarried women increased from 2007 for 1.8% and is now 36.3%. Before 1989 the percentage was significantly lower (1989 – 7.9%). (Národní zpráva o rodině : 39) The trend of postponing marriage is also visible in age of life in which more than 50% of persons are married. This age has changed for men from 30-34 to 35-39 and for women from 25-29 to 30-34. In the year 2008 the average age of the first marriage for men was 31.4 and 28.7 for women. (Věkové 2008) The divorce rate in the CR is high over a long period of time. Level of divorce reached 49.6% in 2008. It was the highest divorce rate recorded in the CR ever since the record year 2004 (49.3%).

As far as educational structure in the CR is concerned within the last 7 years it shows the trend of the increase of number of people with university degree and increase of number of people with elementary education. It is typical for the CR that majority of people of 15 years of age and older completed their education on the secondary school level. This type of education was reached by almost 70% of the population in 2007 among everyone who was 15 or older while 19.1% had no education and 11% university degree education. Number of people without education or with elementary education in productive and post-productive age is constantly on the decrease. It decreased from 24.1% in 2000 to 19.1% in 2007. (Analýza 2008) The most frequent case in the Czech population is secondary school without graduation (apprenticeship, crafts) although their number in the population of 15 years and older decreased for 0.6% to 36.7% in 2007. On the other hand the number of people with the higher type of education significantly increased since the percentage of those who completed secondary education or apprenticeship with graduation increased for 11% from 2000. However, the highest increase rate was obvious in the increase of the university degree education from 239 600 to 974 800

which is almost one third and are valid both for men and women. It is characteristic for the male population to have higher rate of apprenticeship education (in 2008 43.8% of all male older than 15 with education) and lower rate of elementary education (12.6%) while with female population we see the rate of elementary education to form almost one fourth of all women over 15 (24%) but significantly more women have completed secondary school with graduation (36.3% compared to the male rate which is 29.9%). Rate of people with university degree is higher with men (12.6%) than with women (9.6%) but this is due to differences in education in middle and older age. The difference is decreasing rapidly since the number of females with university degree increased for 44% in 2000. Rate of youth age 20-24 with complete at least secondary education (those who completed secondary schools, apprenticeship schools or those graduating from the university) was the highest in the CR of all Member States of the EU. According to the Eurostat statistical indicators the rate of women studying on the university level reached 52.6% in 2005. (Analýza 2008) The rate of those who drop out of school was in 2003 according to Laeken 7 indicators was 6% for the age group 18-24 (5.2% for men and 6.8% for women). The average period of attending school for 2002 was estimated at 16.4 years (EU15 average is 17.3). (Ministerstvo 2006:50)

- the employment prospects for youth

Within international context the so-called harmonized general unemployment rate of the persons 15-74 years of age in the CR during 2000-2007 with the exception of the year 2000 was under the EU 25 (and EU 27 from 2004-2007) average, even under EU 15 average. The unemployment rate in 2007 in the CR was 5.3%, which makes the country being the one with one of the lowest unemployment rates in the EU 27. (Analýza 2008)

As far as employment rate among young people is concerned, we still see the effect of lengthening the period in which the young people prepare for their future vocation. Number of the employed persons from 15-24 years of age dropped from 13% of the whole number of employed in 2000 to 8% in 2007. Rate of inactive people age 15-29 balances around 30% of the whole group of the economically inactive inhabitants. (ibid.)

The unemployment rate of the young people up to 24 years in the context of numbers of those registered at the Job Offices in the CR in constantly on the decrease from 26.2% to 15.5% in the year 2007. In the year 2004 according to regional statistics (NUTS 2) the unemployment rate of the young people age 16-24 was the highest in the Moravian-Silesian district (33%), Northwest (28%) and Central Moravia (27%) while it was the lowest in Prague (10%)⁸.

Young persons mainly graduating from the schools and youth after completing elementary school have problems with finding employment since they lack practical skills. They participate in general unemployment with 9% (average value for 2004). The groups most at risk when coming to job market are: youth without education, with incomplete or not finished elementary education and practical school where there is not only lack of practice but also qualification. (Ministerstvo 2006:48)

Table 2. Percentage of unemployed persons age 15-24 in general economically active population of the same age group

		1998	2000	2002	2004	2005
CZ in the age group	All	12,8	17,8	16,9	21,1	19,2
	Female	14,4	17,0	17,2	19,4	19,1

⁸ http://www.czso.cz/csu/redakce.nsf/i/regiony_eupr (14.3.2009)

15 - 24	Male	11,5	18,5	16,6	22,3	19,3
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Source: MPSV (Ministerstvo 2006)

In the age group of 15-24 those particularly in danger of social exclusion are Roma. Currently it is estimated that only 26% of the economically active Roma population has never been unemployed, 35% face recurring unemployment and up to 39% are repeatedly and long-term unemployed. What is characteristic for the Roma unemployment is its durability. 75% of all unemployed Roma are unemployed long-term out of which 30% are unemployed for more than 4 years. The Roma unemployment is higher in some areas (Most, Northern Moravia, Northern Bohemia). The reasons for marginal position of the Roma on the job market should be seen mainly in low or insufficient qualification, in concentration of Roma in industry cities where in the past unqualified working force for manual work was required and in discrimination of Roma on the job market. (Ministerstvo 2006:48)

- housing prospects for youth

"The housing resources in the CR show tendencies of gradual improvement as well as the quality of housing. According to 2001 census the housing resources in the CR comprised 3 828 000 permanently occupied flats (i.e. 374 flats for every 1 000 persons). Structure of the housing resources is similar to elsewhere in the EU Member States: 47% are property of those who live in them, 17% are collective property of housing associations and 29% are flats for rent owned mainly by municipalities." (Lux et al. 2003:74)

The main problem related to housing in the CR is lack of appropriate and at the same time financially affordable flats i.e. low frequency of the housing availability. The other problem is unequal geographical spread of the flats in relation to job offers and general negligence of housing resources. The existence of price and legal deformations mainly in the sphere of flats for rent and poor equipment of financially affordable flats in particular at attractive locations represent the main obstacle for the functioning flat market. The next problem lies in ambiguity of the role of the existing municipal housing resources, in particular when it comes to its social purposes. The social housing de facto does not exist in the CR when it comes to support for social housing construction. (ibid.) The construction of municipal flats aiming at households with limited income per person or those who are disadvantaged for health, social and other reasons has started in 2003 only. (Ministerstvo 2005:9) The development of mortgage credits together with favorable interest rates influences affordability of property housing. (Příjmy 2007) But in 200 almost 37% of households saw expenses related to housing as big financial burden, 50% of households saw them as acceptable and less than 9% saw them as irrelevant compared to their income. (Národní zpráva 2006:51) The research The Social Situation of Households from 2001 found out that 43% of the households in which the representative is 18-25 years old thought that financial expenses related to housing are big, 43% considered them bearable and only 7.5% found them to be irrelevant. (Lux et al. 2003:143) One of the groups which is temporarily disadvantaged in the access to housing for material reasons (lack of financial means for the first independent housing, difficulties in acquiring jobs) are young people particularly young people leaving state care institutions and beginning independent life without necessary financial or family background. Other groups include national and ethnic minorities particularly Roma, immigrants, refugees and homeless. (Lux et al. 2003:135) Municipalities do not provide social services for some groups (mainly Roma) in order to strengthen their capability to keep their housing. Therefore sometimes the municipalities expel such groups and support spatial segregation, which leads to certain social pathological phenomena. (Ministerstvo 2006:51)

The Conception of Housing Policy which was adopted by the Czech government in April 2005 counts with development of instruments to secure available housing for especially disadvantaged groups in the given area. Currently there are two types of instruments

with such aim: flats for rent for the persons with limited income and assisted housing for the persons who are in danger of social exclusion for the reasons other than financial. (Ministerstvo 2005:9)

Box 2.

Employment is generally not seen as a highly problematic issue in terms of job offers at least in Prague. But the main issue is quality of jobs, ability to keep the job and qualifications young homeless people generally lack. The problem with housing is seen as a major one: *"I think that issue of housing in general is highly problematic and relates to the whole society but even more for the socially vulnerable and also for the young people. One of the factors influencing ending up in the street is lack of adequate housing especially in Prague, which is very expensive. But the issue of employment in this region (Prague) is not such a big problem, maybe in some other parts of the Republic. In Prague the employment is high and I think a young person can find work if s/he wants to. But there is a problem with qualification and lower salaries therefore we return to the housing problem."*

"As far as Prague is concerned, despite the economic crisis, the job prospects are rather high. We manage to mediate jobs for people with elementary education, Roma and with criminal record and they don't work for the minimum wage but it is up to them for how long they are able to keep the jobs."

"The problem with housing is more complicated. The worst thing is that they (the homeless) with their financial possibilities can afford only hostels. But we all know what these hostels look like, people drink there the drugs are also around...There are no continuous services such as housing training."

2 Youth at risk of homelessness and social exclusion

2a) Amount of young people at risk

Table 3. Institutional Care in the Competency of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Physical Education in the years 1993-2003

Year	Number of institutions	Institutional care in total				Institutional care for the children in total		Institutional care for the children of the special family type		Institutional care for the children of the special boarding type	
		total	boys	girls	Complete orphans	institution	clients	institution	clients	institution	clients
1993	162	5839	3578	2261	63	105	3384	42	1267	63	2117
1997	209	7184	4367	2817	71	119	4118	34	939	85	3179
1998	181	6689	4056	2633	72	117	4143	39	1141	78	3002
1999	185	6901	4165	2736	74	119	4297	43	1361	76	2936
2000	191	7333	4462	2871	88	127	4624	45	1381	82	3243
2001	193	7222	4376	2846	81	129	4634	49	1576	80	3058
2002	196	7270	4349	2921	71	131	4594	53	1673	78	2921
2003	199	7250	4341	2909	65	134	4612	58	1811	76	2801
Increase	37	1411	763	648	2	29	1228	16	544	13	684

Source: <http://www.helcom.cz/view.php?cisloclanku=2004022608> (retrieved 7 April 2009)

The system of the institutional care, which was perceived by our respondents as the most significant risk factor for the youth homelessness, works in the following way in vast majority of cases:

1. phase: the child is taken from the family because it's healthy and prosperous development is not secured in it, sometimes it even jeopardize its life.
2. phase: at first the child is placed in a diagnostic facility and then in one of the facilities for long-term residency; in neither of the phases there is work with the family (no intensive, interdisciplinary support and therapy)
3. phase – although the family conditions did not change the child goes back to the family, to the environment, which is dangerous and often with criminal background. (Kovařík, Bubleová 2003)

Proportion of children up to 15 years of age committing crimes stagnated to 2.1% in 2007 (which is 0.4% less than in 2006) and the same goes for youth 15-18 where it is 4.9%. The criminal acts they committed were simple thefts but in case of youth the number of violent crimes increased – such as robberies, assault and batter and murders (2 murders). In case of violent crimes a mild decrease was detected for this category but it is accompanied with a high level of brutality. Also new crimes appear when children record physical assaults and then present them on the Internet. The significant proportion of children and youth who commit crimes comes from facilities for institutional and compulsory care. Also crimes related to drugs, tobacco and alcohol are on the rise. 2 949 youth were convicted and they mostly got parole sentences or alternative punishments but 247 were convicted to prison. (Zpráva 2008:14)

Numbers of unaccompanied minors in the asylum procedure are on decrease. In 2004 there were 95 of such persons, which is 49% of the number from 2003. Cca 37% of the total number were from China and cca 16% from Vietnam. 47% were 17 years old, 32% 16 years old; 25% were girls and 75% boys. They are placed into a specialized facility for the children of foreigners in Prague and Příbram. (Nezletilí bez doprovodu 2005)
As far as the tortured and abused children are concerned, their numbers developed as follows:

Table 4. Tortured and abused children

Year	Physical torture	Psychological torture	Sexual abuse	Total
1994	244	55	261	560
1996	575	173	558	1 306
1998	641	192	593	1 426
1999	662	224	638	1 524
2000	530	213	614	1 357
2002	527	171	537	1 235

Source: Národní zpráva o rodině 2004 (Ministerstvo 2004:86)

Significant are the number of persons convicted of selected crimes related to child abuse:

Table 5. Number of convicted for the selected crimes from 1998-2002

Type of crime	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Bigamy	0	2	1	0	3
Child abandon	7	10	12	6	10
Neglecting compulsory care	5502	6207	5894	5380	6296
Torture of the dependant person	95	78	75	83	102
Kidnapping	10	6	8	3	5
Trafficking in children	0	0	0	0	1
Endangering the moral development	394	394	397	419	551
Selling alcohol to youngsters	6	14	18	23	32
Infanticide by mother	1	2	4	4	4

Illegal abortion	0	0	1	1	0
Sexual abuse	414	419	333	313	365
Incest	0	4	3	3	3

Source: ibid. 2004:104

Remark: Data show only cases processed before the courts, which ended up with conviction of the accused persons. But in some cases it is obvious that data are much lower than the range of crimes committed, which do not get to the court (the gap is the biggest in case of selling alcohol to youngsters).

2b) Characteristics

The most significant risk factor are various types of institutional care, which may be related to inability of the parents to provide care but also only to their poverty. In the latter case the CR was criticized for not applying policies for family support and instead of that chose breaking the families. This factor is related then to dysfunctional families, poverty, lack of adequate family housing, lack of social housing etc. Criminal records of the youth are then complicating their job integration since in the CR it is often required to present clean criminal record even for manual and not demanding jobs. School exclusion is less significant since child care facilities are usually connected to some sort of educational institution where the problem is that children attend schools they did not choose but are available within the institutions.

Most of the young homeless have basic or apprenticeship education. They have limited access to some benefits such as unemployment benefits for the reasons already mentioned. However if they have valid documents, they may access the social benefit system. There is increasing factor of debts, which often make it very difficult for reinsertion because even if they find a job, penalties on the debts make it impossible to pay from their salaries or their benefits might be taken by liquidators.

Box 3.

"We have contact with prison or mental institution from which our clients contact us. In the CR nobody counts with the fact that such a person was convicted twice. When our clients do something while on the run from a children care institution and nobody tells them that it's a crime, then when they turn 18, they go to prison. Once we had 3 boys in such situation. When they returned from prison we thought what to do with them. So we went with them to the hospital hoping they could do the simplest and most basic help. But they wanted a clean criminal record. Two boys gave up after looking for job for half a year. The third one was very upset he couldn't work since he was trained to be a butcher but didn't complete his training. So I suggested he could watch over a garbage site. The first thing they asked for was a clean criminal record. This is why we can't find a job for him not even temporarily. His record will not be clean for another 5 years so such a boy is blocked for 5 years, they didn't even want to give him a job of peeling potatoes in the restaurant above us. That's mostly why these young people are in the street, because of the criminal record nobody would employ them. Maximum they can hope for is temporary job for half a day or a day. But how can you build on it? He wanted something permanent to pay the rent because housing is the biggest problem."

"I would tick b.(disintegration of the family, conflict in the family), d (poverty in the family), and f (institutional care). In case of poverty in the family the problems are with alcohol, gambling etc., which are transmitted (to the children)...We could say all points from your list play role but family disintegration is a major risk factor with our clients...Families are usually not biological i.e. they have step-mother or step-father or just one parent. E.g. the client finds out he was adopted when he turns 16. It usually ends up so that he "monkeys around" and when he turns 18 he runs away. Death in the family is rare, poverty is frequent. Abuse or violence is also rare. Institutional care, that is regular and so is criminal record."

2c) Policies for young people at risk

The prevention policies for youth are in the competency of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Physical Education (MSMT) which implements policies on the vertical level through a network of coordinators and those who teach methodology of prevention on the level of districts and municipalities (from the Ministry, from the pedagogical-psychological counseling centers and at schools). On the horizontal level the Ministry cooperates with other Ministries (such as health, interior, labor and social affairs and defense) but also with Governmental Counsel for Coordination of Combat against Drugs and Board for the Crime Prevention and nongovernmental organizations.

The activities are focused mainly on: violence and bullying, absence from school, crime, delinquency, vandalism and other forms of violent behavior, xenophobia, racism, intolerance and anti-Semitism, drug abuse (including alcohol, tobacco, anabolic, medical drugs, etc.) netolism (virtual drugs) and gambling, sport fans violence, commercial sexual child abuse, syndrome of abused and tortured children, sects and pathological religious cults.

The SWAT analysis of the MSMT from 2004 showed the following weak sides of the policy: prevention exists only at schools, after school it is hard to control students; there is lack of cooperation with parents; prevention happens only at schools not in families; lack of education and knowledge of pedagogical workers; lack of efficiency standards; lack of media policy in relation to prevention and lack of appropriate legislation. (MSMT 2004)

2d) Public opinion and media

The issue of youth homelessness is far from a major issue in public opinion and media. It would be fair to say that it's invisible. But no data are available on this section to the knowledge of this research team. It tends to become interesting for media if it involves violence or prostitution but homelessness is seen predominantly as adult persons (40 and over) issue.

3 Youth Homelessness

3a) Czech definition of young homeless

There is no official definition of homelessness in the Czech Republic (CR) therefore there is no definition of the young homeless persons. Young people become adults after turning 18. Until then housing and care are provided by the state institutions to the young persons without family or adequate background. If a young person who grew up in the institutional care continues to study even after s/he turned 18, s/he can stay in the institution even after s/he turned 18. Therefore solving the situation of the young people up to 18 years of age with potential to become homeless is the state responsibility. Before 1989 the term homeless was not in use in the CR and openly homeless people didn't exist. At the time everyone had to be employed and belong somewhere or else they would face criminal charges for so-called parasitism. But the hidden homelessness existed and "it was mostly related to the persons who couldn't live with their families and did not make their own families, the persons who were in the institutional care and the persons who were divorced". (Průdková, T.; Novotný, P. 2008: 9) However such people mostly live in factory hostels.

The problem of the homelessness in the CR started to appear in the nineties of the previous century as one of the negative consequences of the overall transformation of

the society. One of the main problems was and remained the absence of the official and generally accepted definition of the concept of the homeless and homelessness. The term homeless in the Czech legal terminology is used for a person without a citizenship.

Homelessness issues become the part of the political agenda only with the CR accession to the European Union. (Barták 2004:44) In the National Report on Strategies of the Social Protection and Social Inclusion for the years 2006-2008 (NAPSI) the homelessness is described as "a multilayered problem, the expression of extreme poverty and social exclusion from the society." (NAPSI 2006:76) The report also describes as homeless those persons "without any roof over their heads and finding temporary shelter in various charity organizations". (ibid.)

The Act on Social Services valid from 2006 uses for the homeless two notions: the persons without shelter and the persons in unfavorable social situation related to the housing loss. However there are no further definitions of the concepts.

Aspirations for the definition stem from academic circles and non-governmental organizations dealing with the issue of homelessness. The currently adopted definition is the one by FEANTSA. One of the goals of the project Strategy of Social Inclusion of the Homeless, at which providers of social services for the homeless participated was to create definition and typology of homelessness in accordance with the European project ETHOS. The result is typology of 13 categories of the homeless, which is harmonized with the ETHOS typology.⁹ The generic definition 6.3 on Children's Institutions was supplemented within this typology and those included:

"6.3.1 Persons due to be released from children's institutions

There are people leaving educational institutions for institutional upbringing or compulsory care or for preventative educational care:

- children's home
- children's home with a school
- penitentiary
- diagnostic institution

6.3.2 People due to be released from foster care

There are people who, after coming of age, leave

- special institutions for foster care
- individual foster care" (Hradecky 2007:39)

3b) Amount and profile

There are no comprehensive statistical data on numbers of the homeless in the CR. The Czech Statistical Office (CSO) as governmental body which carries out periodical census of people, households and flats has, due to absence of a national definition and typology, data only for certain categories of the homeless according to the ETHOS typology. Number of the homeless from the ETHOS operational categories 1-4 is unknown to the CSO, here we can rely only on researches or estimates of the NGOs dealing with issues of the people without home. Some data from operational category 5 (about people in accommodation for immigrants) and 8 (number of people living in insecure accommodation) are available. But the CSO has detailed and precise data on persons i.e. households whose accommodation falls into the ETHOS 2006 conceptual category of inadequate accommodation. Those are categories 11, 12 and 13. (Hradecky 2006b 18-22) In the mobile home not intended as place of usual residence (category 11.1)

⁹ Hradecký, Ilja et. al. 2007. *DEFINICE A TYPOLOGIE BEZDOMOVSTVÍ. Zpráva o realizaci aktivity č. 1 projektu Strategie sociální inkluze bezdomovců v ČR.* Praha: Naděje (p. 32 – 33)

according to census from 2001¹⁰ there were 222 persons, there were 44 836 persons living in a dwelling defined as unfit for habitation by national legislation (12.1) and 12 519 persons lived in recreational facilities or weekend houses. Total number of young persons age 15-24 in such categories was 9 018 which is 0.6% of the whole population of persons in this age group in 2001. 7 537 or 84% of them lived in the dwellings defined as unfit for habitation, 1 413 (15.7%) lived in recreational facilities and 32 (0.3%) lived in mobile homes.

It is possible to get an idea about number of the homeless people from the ETHOS operational categories 1-4 (Roofless, Overnight Shelter, Homeless Hostel, Temporary Accommodation, Women's Shelter) from researches and estimates of the NGOs. The other source are data the NGOs included into their grant applications to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the European Structural Funds (administered by the Ministry). (Hradecký 2006b) The first estimates about the homeless population after 1989 are from 1996 and they were estimated at 35 000 persons. (Hradecký 1996) In the year 2004 field census of the visible homeless population on the territory of Prague was carried out and the result was 3 096 persons. (Hradecký et al 2004) Two years later a similar census was carried out in Brno regarding the visible homeless and those from FEANTSA category described as living in "irregular conditions". The total number was estimated at 1 179 homeless persons. (Petřík et al. 2006) Within the first census the following values were indicated: total of 3 096 persons, out of which 2 662 men (85.99%) and 434 women (14.01%). From the total number the category of persons under 25 years was 14.2% (337 men, 102 women, in total 439 persons).

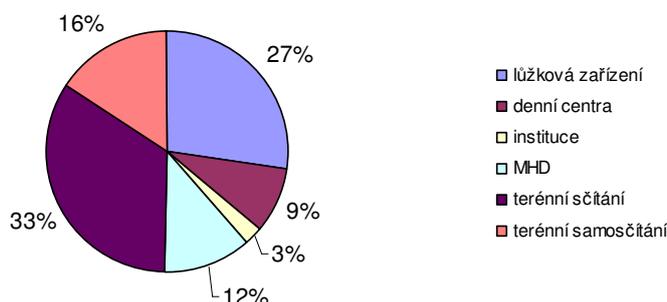
An idea about the structure of the homeless in Prague in 2006 can be obtained from the research of the clients of the temporary winter crisis center for the homeless. Its capacity was 160 persons but 230 people looked for a place to sleep there, which points to the lack of the housing capacities for the homeless. The structure of the clients was diverse consisting of the people who were just released from prisons, young people from the institutional care, people who moved to the capital to look for work and encountered the social problems. Among the clients there were 10% of women who were usually partners of the men who slept in the center. Single women were rare. On 29 January 2006 from 8PM-9PM the statistical research was carried out in the tents within the center. In that period there were 227 persons there, out of which 206 men and 21 women. 33% were from Prague, 48% from other parts of the CR, 19% were other nationalities (Slovakia, Lithuania, and Ukraine). Majority of the homeless were in the productive age, but 2% were 18-20 while 7% were 21-25 years old, which is 9% or 20 persons. (Hradecký 2006)

Graph 4. Young Homeless in Prague in 2004

Top down: dormitory facilities 27%; day center 9%; institutions 3%; public transport 12%; field research 33%, field self-research 16%

¹⁰ [http://www.czso.cz/csu/2004edicniplan.nsf/t/2700296886/\\$File/4.pdf](http://www.czso.cz/csu/2004edicniplan.nsf/t/2700296886/$File/4.pdf) (19.3.2009)

Mladí bezdomovci v Praze 2004



Source: Sčítání bezdomovců Praha 2004, Závěrečná zpráva (Hradecký 2004)

During the census of the homeless in Prague in 2004 it was found out that a certain group of the homeless is even for the experts in the social work with the homeless population practically unreachable. Such persons live in the extreme exclusion at the places very difficult to reach or hidden e.g. in sewer lines, at warm-water pipes, air shafts, underground corridors, etc. Members of such communities usually do not look for help nor do they accept it and there is no further information about them. According to the homeless people, who participated in the census, number of such persons can be estimated to up to a hundred. The census also showed that only 37% of all homeless slept in the accommodation provided for them and thus used the capacities of such places 100%, which means that the rest 63% couldn't have used it even if they had interest in it.

The available housing capacities are mainly directed at the clients simultaneously participating in some of the re-socializing and integration programs. In the housing network there is a very limited capacity for the families with children or couples and the worst case is with single women. Percentage of women looking for appropriate accommodation and younger than 25 is 23%; which is more than in the case of men where it is 13%. The total percentage of people younger than 25 represents 14%. According to the social workers from the organizations dealing with the homeless most often such persons have low education, limited or non-existent family support, often they tend to be mentally and physically weakened with low capability of creating relations with other people. Their limited social skills handicap them mostly when it comes to job seeking. Number of those with some kind of mental illness diagnosis is on the rise.

Based on 3-months field research in one the Prague districts with a high frequency of the homeless people it is possible to get a limited idea on typology of the young homeless people. There are two basic groups of such people: the squatters and the drug-users.

The former group consists of those who want to lead an independent free life style. For them it's about living in the group of peers or those like-minded and expressing alternative values or searching for the meaning of life. They are mostly 20-30 years old and living in vacant houses which they keep in more or less good basic conditions. But since they violate property rights, they are often exposed to the repressive measures which only isolate them further and enforce their distrust in the society of majority and gradual loss of respect for the basic social rules. When evicted by force, they tend to

move to another similar place where they live until the next eviction. They tend to abuse alcohol and mainly soft drugs. They tend to have disrupted family relations but not completely broken so their social fall is not so deep. They even tend to work occasionally on temporary jobs in construction or cleaning services. They usually beg for money for alcohol needs. They don't reject help but they don't look for it either. If they do, they usually use hygienic services or medical help. (Naděje o.s. 2005:3)

The latter group consists of persons who faced a deep social fall due to drug abuse and are younger than 25 (cca 30 persons). They tend to have broken family relations and they usually live in abandoned and remote places to which they usually feel no emotional bond. They tend to earn money for living by doing temporary jobs but more often by petty thefts or collecting items they can later sell for the drug dose. Their interest in social services is limited exclusively to satisfying basic needs (food, hygiene) but in limited scope. Their personal motivation is focused mainly on obtaining drugs. (Naděje o.s. 2005: 4)

3c) Legislation: services offered to young people of different ages

The responsibility for child care for those under 18 lies with their parents, if they are unable to perform, then the state takes over within legal limits set by the Act on Family and the Act on Social and Legal Child Protection. Based on this legislation there is a system of bodies, which deal in youth at risk. One of such bodies is the Body for Social and Legal Child Protection at municipality offices. Their agenda consists of field social work, social and legal counseling and social and legal protection of the children. They are supposed to actively look for children whose parents or other persons responsible for them do not fulfill duties given by the laws or are dangerous for the children's upbringing. They work with such persons and try to help them remove causes and consequences of the problems. They also deal with the foster care agenda. "The relevant acts burden the social workers with so many tasks and they are so under-staffed that they can manage only basic administrative minimum. They can't do the systematic family therapy. Putting children from problematic families into the institutional care is almost the only measure they can use in the case of the children in serious danger." (Matoušek 2005: 270)

The other such body is the Curator for the Youth who deals with agenda of the children with problematic behavior such as among others children running away from home. Also s/he deals with children or youth released from the institutional or compulsory care in order to help them to be admitted to schools or jobs. S/he cooperates with schools, job offices, employers etc. "But in this case also the service is significantly understaffed, one curator deals with several hundred cases, therefore s/he doesn't have time to focus on an individual child in the scope its needs." (ibid.) Currently there are 20 000 children under 18 who live in institutional care of various nature such as diagnostic and educational institutions for the children who have compulsory protective care.

Social and legal protection of the underage foreigners is provided for the underage foreigners with permanent residence permit in the CR or who have authorized residency in the CR no less than 90 days or applied for asylum therefore have right to stay permanently or reside with a parent who applied for temporary protection or received such protection. But the same protection is provided to any foreign child found on the Czech territory with or without right to reside or stay.¹¹

¹¹ <http://www.moap.cz/socialne-pravni-ochrana-deti/> (19.3.2009)

After reaching 18 the young people can start using social services for the persons in inadequate social situation related to the loss of housing according to the Act nr. 108/2006 Col. on Social Services. The services are classified as group of services related to social prevention and are provided in the following social facilities: easy-access daily centers, night hostels, asylum homes and half-way homes the last being mostly provided for people younger than 26 for all categories of them. In such places according to the legal provisions the following services are provided: housing, mediation of the social contacts, therapy, help with rights implementation and personal issues.

3d) Policies: support and prevention

Homelessness has become part of the public policy agenda in the CR in relation to EU accession preparations in 2004. Until 2000 the problems related to the homelessness were ignored. (Barták 2004:43) "However currently in our country prevention of homelessness still doesn't exist." (Průdková 2008:63) Within specific problems related to the homelessness it is possible just to identify existence or lack of existence of the elements of prevention and support stemming from policies of individual ministries.

- Health

The basic act for health care legislation in the CR is the Act nr. 20/1996 Col. on Health Care of the People and the Act nr. 48/1997 Col on Public Health Insurance. According to this Act all persons with permanent residency in the CR are insured and not only them. Health insurance begins with the day of birth and terminates with the day of death. Health insurance for the children and youth up to 18 years is paid by the state as well as for those above 18 who study up to 26 years for the students. If young people above 18 don't work, don't study and are not registered with the Job Office, they are obliged to pay for the health insurance by themselves. "The problem lies in the fact that many homeless do not pay the insurance but still remain insured and have legal rights of those insured. However the regular practice is that insurance companies refuse to pay to the doctors for the persons who have debts towards them. As a consequence a lot of health facilities are reluctant to treat such persons." (Hradecký 2006:15) "While working on a health awareness program among the homeless population, which was carried out by a group of NGOs, acute and chronic diseases were detected. The experience of the homeless people with unwillingness of some doctors to treat them was alarming. In the whole territory of the CR there is a single health facility focused specifically on this group of inhabitants and it is based in Prague." (ibid.)

- Employment – Unemployment support

"State policy in the field of employment consists of securing right to work but also unemployment and re-training support. The unemployment support can be claimed only a person who is registered with the Job Office and worked at least 12 months during the last three years or was otherwise productive and is not retired. The homeless often do not meet the condition of duration of work in last three years. They usually do occasional work without a job contract, they usually reside in a place different from their fictional address, some come back from prisons, therefore they can usually not claim the unemployment support." (ibid. :15) But Job Offices offer jobs to the homeless as well as some NGOs sometimes in cooperation with the Job Offices.

- Housing and Right to Housing

Neither the Czech Constitution nor the specific law explicitly guarantee right to housing, therefore it is up to benevolence of the concrete people in public administration mainly on municipality level. The housing policy is in the competence of municipalities. The state can influence their policy only by offering state subsidies for housing of the specific target groups. "Social housing remains a taboo in many cities and municipalities or it is degraded to inadequate housing (not defined by law). Only a few cities then add to this type of housing social services provided by the NGOs:" (ibid. :17)

As already mentioned what is specific for the CR is high number of the children growing up in the institutions. In such child care institutions there are currently cca 20 000 children younger than 18. Annually more than a thousand has to leave, however there is no complex consecutive help. "There is no systematic protection from the homelessness, all the solutions are ad hoc. Besides the half-way homes there are hostels, social flats in cooperation with municipalities and a form of protected housing within children institutions. In such institutions there are 44 underage mothers and 18 underage pregnant girls. In such cases we don't find systematic protection either – ad hoc solutions are besides on the already mentioned asylum homes for mothers with children." (ibid. :14)

Within the long-term Conception of the Housing Policy (2005) which was created by the Ministry of Regional Development there are two groups specified who can claim special support:

- "Young people whose housing situation is aggravated by the career start up or family creation
- Persons with special needs in the field of housing due to their age, health situation, etc. or whose possibility to secure housing is aggravated by deteriorating social circumstances of their hitherto life. Such persons may use affordable, so-called supported housing whose construction will be further supported through state subsidies under condition the adequate social services are also provided." (Ministerstvo 205:15)

Among supporting instruments in the field of housing for the young people without family background we find especially support for construction of the so-called supported housing:

- protected flats (are intended for the persons with lower self-sufficiency for health or age reasons)
- half-way flats (are intended for the persons who have lower abilities to include themselves into life of the mainstream society)
- preliminary flats (are intended for the persons who due to the consequences of unfavorable life circumstance have no access to housing but who are able to pay the rent) (ibid. :27)

- Family Support

Through the state social support the state contributes to the children and families for covering their life expenses and other basic personal needs and provides also support in some other social situations. Depending on the income the following can be provided: child benefits, social benefits, housing benefits. "In terms of social exclusion prevention social activation services for the families are important, which consist of field work at problematic locations. Very frequent clients of such services are Roma families or those who have rent debts in inadequate housing conditions. Sometimes such services can be coupled with easy-access facilities for children and youth. In such facilities the employees prepare motivation programs for education, school preparation, homework, or motivation for acquiring qualification. They also prepare leisure time activities such as music, dance, sports, environmental protection, etc." (Hradecký 2006: 8-9)

Box 4.

Majority of the homeless population in the CR, according to the respondents, is 40 year of age and more. The estimates for the youth homeless is less than 15% of the homeless population and majority of them are male, with no or low qualification, with drug-abuse history, Czech citizenship, from the institutional care or broken families, more majority members than Roma, (none of the organizations interviewed has ethnic or religious statistics though). In case of Roma it is necessary to take into account they are often reluctant to declare themselves as Roma due to the social stigma.

"It is necessary to abolish children institutions in the CR. There are countries in which they have only one or two. In the CR there is no adequate substitutional family care and potential of foster care is unused. Indeed it is a phrase that all the problems begin in childhood but if nursing homes did not do so much evil on the kids, which then solve it all their lives, we would never have such an influx of badly integrated and socialized clients...But some things are getting better, there are already institutions with family care type where they at least learn some basic things how to take care of themselves and are not shocked when they see bread which is not sliced."

"In our case we have mostly clients with debts, unemployment problems and criminal record. We are one of the few asylum homes which take also people with criminal records."

3e) Reinsertion services

Box 5.

The case studies proved to be of limited use in our interviews for two reasons: in case of children and youth up to 18 who are yet not legally adult nothing but emergency care can be provided. The only further procedure is to refer them to the state organs. However it is interesting that some respondents said this could be avoided by not checking their documents: *"17 is our average age of the clients. During summer it's 15. We are not allowed to report the younger ones since the Ministry of Interior would revoke our license to work. We should take those younger than 15 by the hand and take them to the Police, but we can't do it because then you kill the field social work which is based on trust. But it's hard to establish age when a client has no documents with him/herself. The others say he is 14 and he claims he is 18. So how old is he? There are other institutions which should care for such people, that's the basic problem."*

The other reason was that the basic issue was if older than 18 have documents or not. If they don't, the most important issue becomes to obtain them. If they do, the organizations quoted help they could provide regularly.

Social protection is regulated by a range of laws and other legal provisions. For the persons in danger of the social exclusion and for social services provision in general the most important are the Act on Social Services nr. 108/2006 Col., Act on Life and Life Wage Minimum nr. 110/2006 Col. and Act on Help in Material Emergency nr. 111/2006 Col. The other important act is the Act on State Social Support nr. 117/1995 Col., which enables persons depending on their income to claim housing benefits. This is especially important in relation to the social exclusion and homelessness. For a person to claim this benefit s/he must own or rent a flat in which s/he is permanently registered and whose housing expenses represent more than 30% of the family income (this also applies to those living in a room within facilities for permanent housing according to the Civil Code).

The Act on Life and Life Wage Minimum defines life minimum as minimal limit of financial income of persons intended for securing nourishment and other basic personal needs and the life wage minimum as minimal limit of financial income necessary for securing nourishment and other personal needs on the level of survival but none of the definitions include housing expenses (other laws regulate this issue). The life minimum in 2007 was

3126 CZK (cca 107 EUR) and the life wage minimum was 2020 CZK (cca 70 EUR) per month for individuals.

The housing expenses are evaluated independently from other life expenses. In some cases a household can claim housing contribution (which is different from the above-mentioned housing benefits) but only in the case that the claimant lives in the flat. The flat is defined by the Act nr. 110/2006 Col. and persons living in hostels, in rented flats, mobile homes or other spaces not fit for living can't claim such contribution.

The Act on Social Services names 33 types of concrete services for various target groups. All of them can be classified in one of the three groups of services: social counseling (2 types), social care services (14 types) and social prevention services (17 types). Apart from this, the Act also defines 13 basic activities in social services provision and each type of the service is defined by their combination. The services for the homeless are classified by the law among the social prevention services and they are: easy-access daily centers, dormitories, asylum homes and half-way homes. The clients must be 18. Other services for other target groups can also be used by the homeless persons such as counseling centers, services for the persons with health disabilities, for the drug or alcohol addicts, etc. An important service for the work with the homeless is mainly the service of the field programs, which defines streetwork, which is crucial for addressing persons who don't look for the social services and sleep outdoors.

Municipalities and districts are responsible for social services accessibility while respecting the subsidiary principle. This means that it is always up to the local politicians' decision which social services they will financially support.

4 Services for the young homeless: including methodologies

4a) Who provides services

Most services are provided by the non-governmental and non-profit organizations (including charities) (NGOs) which are funded predominantly by the government from the Czech state budget or from the European funds, which are often administrated through the Czech governmental institutions. It is possible to say that this fact makes the service providers utterly dependant on governmental policy and funding guidelines.

However one of the biggest organizations in the field of homelessness, which is Naděje, a Christian faith based association of citizens quotes as its sponsors individual donors, business companies and public funding.¹² Another of the important organizations in the field, the Salvation Army, in its Annual Report¹³ quotes the sponsors for individual projects and they are mostly Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Prague Magistrate, individual Prague districts, The Brno Magistrate, the local government, European Social Fund, local Job Offices, etc. Some donations were made by individuals or business subjects but in both cases the financial foundations come predominantly from the governmental sources. In case of another NGO, which describes itself as "the first preventive and humanitarian program for commercially abused children and youth, victims of trafficking in human beings, who are forgotten in the CR" it shows a very rich scale of subjects other than governmental supporting them in various, not only financial, ways (including foundations, individuals, celebrities, politicians, prominent public figures and commercial subject who provide support in delivering goods or services, etc.)¹⁴. The

¹² <http://www.nadeje.cz/index.php?q=node/55> (retrieved 11 April 2009)

¹³ http://www.armadaspasy.cz/soubory/VZ_AS_CZ_2007.pdf (retrieved 11 April 2009)

¹⁴ <http://www.sance.info/index.php?go=spolupracujeme> (retrieved 11 April 2009)

central government is the most relevant in terms of financing followed by local governments and other governmental bodies and in some cases religious organizations.

The most prominent funding comes from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and European Social Fund but some prevention activities such as leisure time centers or activities are financed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Physical Education. The reinsertion policies, being complex and requiring inter-ministerial cooperation are often co-funded by more than one of the above mentioned subjects.

4b) Services in relation to Needs

- Needs in relation to a housing

The housing problem is seen as the biggest obstacle for reinsertion processes. There are many problems related to it: first, there are two types of housing, one is temporary, usually of dormitory type, where clients can spend a night and leave in the morning. This is the most common service offered by the NGOs. The contact with the client tends to be more anonymous and related to basic needs satisfaction such as food, hygiene or clothing provision.

The other type is a more permanent type of collective housing where the clients live and get also other types of support such as legal, social, psychological and practical help. In such places not only individuals but also the young mothers with children or the whole families can be accommodated usually up to one year. However the latter type is less frequent. The aim of this service is to make clients independent by providing necessary shelter and helping them to find jobs and their own housing.

A more general type of problem lies in the lack of social housing for young people who, since they tend to be less educated, can expect worse paid jobs and can hardly afford commercial rents. Considering high proportion of those who had to leave institutional care when they turned 18 in general young homeless population, there is also lack of training or protected housing where they would get a chance to learn how to manage a household. The same applies to young people coming back from prisons sometimes after institutional care or life in dysfunctional families. Some of the NGOs offer such a type of housing.

Most service providers in this field offer some kind of training such as computer skills development. They also provide help with re-training courses financed by the state or, in case of interest of the client, also possibility to finish high-school or apprenticeship school. In terms of job provision, some have special contact to job agencies that are trained to deal with their clients in a sensitive way and look for jobs appropriate or available for them.

Because of the institutional care related problems and also because of often dysfunctional family background life skills training services are related to managing basic duties of everyday life such as obtaining documents, paying bills, applying for social benefits, etc. As mentioned before within some training housing projects, the clients are taught how to manage a household. The institutional care tends to develop dependency pattern with young homeless people, which is reinforced partly by the system of care provided by the NGOs. Some clients spend entire day walking from one NGO to another at the time when they offer food or clothing. Some key-workers complained that the current system in which a client can use the same service but within various organizations reinforces the dependency in managing everyday life and even that it might be beneficial for some NGOs to keep the clients dependant.

Lack of financial, human and social capital is a general feature for all the young homeless according to the key workers. They live in poverty, often unable to find a job (criminal record + lack of qualification), they tend to be poorly educated or not educated at all and they have a weak or non-existent family background. The only people who make their social network are usually peers in the similar situation. The combination of dependency system with a poor social capital and lack of trust in the regular way of dealing with problems often makes it impossible to dramatically change the course of their lives.

Box 6.

„We provide accommodation only to those who wish to do something with themselves. People should never get anything for free, because when they do, we make them into social parasites. Majority of organizations (dealing with the homeless) does exactly that, the people then get used to the services and expect to get it even when they are 55. They made social parasites out of them. We charge shower 10CZK (cca. 30 cents), laundry and drying also. We can give them job through agencies or in our own workshop.“

„I'll give you an example, which I know from my own experience and the clients confirm it. At 9 in the morning breakfast is served at Národní třída (center of Prague) for example. At 10 next to Prague Central Station breakfast is served again. The clients eat twice for free. Then they go from one organization to another where they get dinners. The same thing is with suppers. How can you then work with such clients when one client told another a week ago that he is stupid because he works in our workshop when he can eat for free?“

“Family is absolutely crucial, the relations. Poor family is not an obstacle if parents play their roles and love their children. But as soon as parents have so many problems themselves that they neglect or torture children, then the children are taken away from the parents and have to grow up in such horrible places – in the institutions. This then has serious and irreversible consequences.“

“When we take someone from a very bad family, our success rate is very high. They developed personality structures within the family, it is just necessary to bridge the period so that the kids are safe, finish school, get used to therapy, deal with the issues psychologically and then they live. The success rates are enormous. In case of the kids from institutions it is not the case. The luckier of them had a bad family, but grew up in a normal environment. The longer they are in the institutions, the success rate is lower. For example I don't remember a Roma baby who grew up in the institution to have ever been integrated... Some smaller researches were carried out about how many adult homeless persons have in their personal histories life outside the family and the percentage was high. Life in the institution changes personality and to build it again is a hard work.“

“The most important is a total lack of background, which plays its role when they (the clients) look for jobs. People usually look for jobs and housing through their social networks. People around jobless people are also jobless people and in the street they all have drug abuse problems. They have no contacts to help them look for job or housing.“

- Needs in relation to physical and mental health

Most NGOs provide some degree of medical help. In some cases they also provide testing to some diseases such as AIDS and hepatitis. There is however only one medical doctor in the area of Prague and the whole CR who specializes in providing care to the homeless in general. He is based in one of the organizations dealing with the homeless. There is also a nurse in another organization. The biggest problem lies in the fact that not all medical facilities accept the homeless although they are obliged to provide emergency help to everyone. The NGOs therefore try to mediate the contact in such cases. The absurdness of some situation related to medical help is well visible from the comment of one of our key-workers' respondents: *“A man, a gambler, rejected by his family, therefore homeless. He rides on the trams every night. He had a heart surgery for*

1 500 000 CZK (cca 60 000EUR) then he was released from hospital and went back to trams... The fact that the state packs a million and a half crowns into a man and then doesn't care what happens with his further development including the fact that his treatment is diminished in the trams looks totally absurd to me." Lots of homeless people have varicose ulcer but this applies more to older homeless persons, the main issue with the younger is drug abuse. The problem is that most NGOs either reject the homeless in the state of acute intoxication or require de-toxication before entering one of their programs. In both case they are capable of advising the young homeless where to turn to (to organizations specialized in dealing with drug addicts).

Problems with mental health are seen in young homeless population mainly in relation to drug and alcohol abuse and gambling addiction. But also there is a general problem of people in the street with mental health problem who are not treated because they are not dangerous for their environment. Such people tend to live in extreme social exclusion even within the homeless community. In the case of younger homeless people, it is frequent that they have learning disabilities. The services provided to them in relation to mental health problems are scarce.

Services related to mediation with family or wider social network exist and are offered but only if clients show interest in it. Sometimes the influence of the family is seen as detrimental even causing the problem itself. But some organizations try to include families into psycho- or socio-therapy provided it is in the interest of the client. In some cases family reunion is seen as trigger of relapse into the homeless style of living.

In the case of offending and criminal records, the organizations try to find agencies which would trust their clients with the criminal record but in some cases they have their own workshops (such as wattle workshops where the clients produce objects for commercial use or making pencils, coloring mugs and candles, making bracelets. In this case each object carries the name of the person who made it. The goal of the project is to train the young homeless people to work and then offer them to job agencies connected to the NGO).

4c) Service methodologies

The prevention methodologies are not very developed in the work with clients. As mentioned before, prevention policy for youth is in competency of the Ministry of Education. In case of NGOs, the activities and services related to this field are focused mostly on organizing leisure time for youth in the areas defined as problematic. Such services comprise of providing space for the youth to gather, to use computers and Internet, to provide cultural content (films, theater pieces) and sometimes to help with school homework or material taught at schools.

Accommodation can be of two types: one is temporary, usually just for one night with corresponding services of hygiene, food and basic medical help. Such clients in some organizations are not even registered except by numbers. In case of more permanent type of accommodation, the clients receive not only accommodation to up to a year but also complex legal, social and psychological help. Such a type of accommodation includes also typically sharing living space with others but also a degree of privacy (separate rooms with joint kitchen and/or bathroom). The so-called training or protected accommodation can sometimes be in the form of an individual flat in which clients learn how to manage household. Most clients use just the first type of accommodation which is very low in capacity in the area of Prague (especially in winter) but if a client is seen as

motivated and with potential, s/he or sometimes mothers with children or the whole families can be accommodated in various types of protected accommodation facilities.

Reinsertion methodologies are focused mainly on regulating documents, claiming benefits where necessary or possible but especially to finding job and keeping it. In case of the debt history of the clients, when there is a risk of losing the substantial part of salary on paying debts, NGOs help in making a so-called debt payment calendar. It allows clients to pay the debt gradually, thus leaving them space to invest money into paying rent and buying food.

Box 7.

"The law or rather regulation directs standards in dealing with a potential client who is interested in obtaining a service and the method it directs is individual planning. It works in such a way that a person, who needs our service and satisfies criteria for its provision, gets his/her key worker. She maps his/her situation and based on what the person says, concludes a sort of contract, which is consensus between the demand of the person and supply of the organization. Then out of this we create a concrete goal. The contracts are typologized and they include housing, job, health condition, financial help, social contact with institutions and social environment, legal counselling, representation before institutions, etc. The debts are also included. We have no form or questionnaire."

"We invite them to our office and analyze their situation through conversation. We have forms, but we use them rarely, usually it's conversation, consulting...We make records out of the conversation based on methodology of conducting an interview with a social worker...The first contact should show what a client needs, what s/he wants and some kind of agreement what we can offer and if that's what s/he needs. If not, we try to direct him/her to some other NGOs or state sector."

"The idea that you can gather all information in one interview is very naïve. The interview has a certain structure, we want a person to describe his/her situation, what s/he needs, what s/he strives for. We discover their strong sides sometimes even for half a year. This type of discovering lasts for months and includes intensive work. I can't imagine any of our clients to open him/herself in one interview. These people are very confused when they turn to us. When someone comes from the institutional care, where he lived all his life, it's as if he came from another planet. They often think they are good in something and it doesn't correspond with reality. We try to get their situation from them but they often come in such state that it is impossible. What they describe, what they tell us they miss and what they want from us – we take it all with reserve. Our clients are not good in self-reflection."

"A form is the worst way for our clients, together with in-depth analysis and taking photos. That's when anonymity disappears and such a child never comes back again. Everything is on voluntary basis, based on feeling of safety and prevention of hopelessness, which means no forms. I take a record but not in front of the client. If they need something the clients submit their request and then I have receipt for myself and my sponsor to whom the shoes went...If somebody orders something and doesn't come for it, I put it in the basket where others can take it from. The rules of the game are clear to all. The only questionnaire they have to fulfill is when they take the HIV tests, where we ask about their ethnic origin, reasons for sexual work in the street, if they do it voluntarily, if they have contact with men only or also with women or both...But we do it in a form of game within the testing. If they are tested for hepatitis, we ask them about their contacts, where they have it, if they practice safe sex (with or without a condom). Then we transfer the data to the State Health Institute."

5 Issues for the European social model and values

The issues for the European social model and values from the Czech perspective are:

- necessary significant reduction of children growing up in institutional care and corresponding help to families in order to avoid need for such state intervention
- expansion of social, protected and training housing for those who try to reinsert themselves into regular life
- open possibility for reduction of the period for criminal record deletion in shortened period for young homeless people
- creation of and cooperation with job offices and agencies specialized for young homeless persons. Training of state employees most likely to come in contact with them
- training of media workers to become sensitive to the needs of this target group
- enforce prevention and early-stage detection of homelessness threat

In the following box, some ideas for improvement of the youth homelessness treatment from the key-workers' interviews will be presented.

Box 8.

"I think that field social work should be taken into account more. Young people don't come to us because they have a feeling that this is a state office and that social workers will yell at them. That's why we need field preparation. The social field work should be expanded and I don't think it should include only basic counselling. The service together with therapy should start already in the streets because some youngster would never come here, so we need therapeutical work directly in the streets...Field social work has great future and is of great use for the young homeless."

"I think there are two levels of this problem, one is related to young minors the other to young adults. In the former case it is about social policy and the social system of the state. The system is fiddly. It's a system of anonymous huge child care institutions, since we also see in our work that people coming from such institutions find themselves often in the street and they are absolutely unprepared for regular life. They have no social contacts, no social habits...In the latter case I think that in essence the social system works but there should exist specialized services and facilities focused on this target group – here I have in mind asylum homes, half-way homes, various programs for them to finish their education, to acquire some qualification."

"I think it is crucial to observe groups, which are not so visible and we don't talk about them. We work with such groups but we name them differently than the homeless and then they are not part of the homeless discourse, which means they don't get the services. The streetwork is focused on one subculture and omits others such as sex workers in the streets. Therefore you don't find them in the National Plan for Social Inclusion. We forget migrants and migrants without documents. They should receive at least counselling."

"We need to focus more on potentially vulnerable persons, which means family environment. A lot of such family are registered with the Offices of the Social and Legal Protection. Children grow up in such families and if the family is not functional they leave home when they are 18, sometimes even earlier and then they just hang out. It is necessary to underpin that somehow and work with them. In the child institutions for example it is not enough to offer those leaving them just a Half-way Home and nothing more, this is not a solution. It is necessary to work systematically in the field, in the streets. The streetworkers, the social workers should meet with children groups and try to find those at risk. The other big problem is housing, I think we have a huge lack of social flats."

"The improvement could lie in smaller facilities with individual approach. In case of the older homeless they already have some life experience and they need support once in two weeks, once a week. In case of young homeless we need intensive work, intensive contact with social workers. The Salvation Army is too big for that, they should be in smaller facilities, in smaller

groups...Sometimes they are in the same space with those who were convicted and then we have "the prison effect", they get to know things they didn't know about...We should also respect those who want to change their place of living. It's a pity that one is entitled to the social help only if s/he returns to the place where s/he came from. For example the Prague Half-way Home can accept only people from Prague but those who left their place of permanent living must have had a reason to do so. They would love to start a new life but it is not possible."

"Our goal is for them to stay in the street as short as possible, we have to act quickly...to get them out of the street as soon as possible. We can do this only if such people have some place in the city to gather but the state decided not to tolerate places where the homeless people gather in 1997 and 1998. The effect was that the numbers of drug addicts and infected children increased...The bar at the Central Station where young prostitutes gathered and which served also as a place for prevention, was closed by the authorities and therefore they criminalized everyone and pushed them into drug addiction even more... None of the Prague municipalities wants to provide a street or a square where the young homeless can be...The politicians do what is the most pleasant for the voters, which means the voters should not see it. But that puts voters also into danger because of the spread of diseases...The system is set in a totally wrong way, it should prevent one client from using six, seven organizations' services at the same time. If the system didn't let them, the clients wouldn't do it. The Prague Magistrate published a book recently called "At Home in Prague without Home", the clients call it "Instructions how to be Idle in Prague" since what you find in the book are names of organization, their opening hours, services they provide so the clients do nothing else but follow instruction and visit organizations in Prague...So my clients keep repeating "Why should I try if I have this possibility?". That's why the organizations should connect their networks, each client should have his/her card and s/he should belong to one organization. The name on the card would be a nickname and the client would feel safe. His/her organization would take care of him/her...But the problem is that organizations are financed by the number of clients - this is how the system works here. That's why there are clashes between organizations." The respondent also mentioned that their goal is to turn the clients into tax payers and that keeping them dependant in some organizations is seen in such organizations as a matter of survival because of the system that allocates money according to the number of clients.

"The absolutely crucial thing is to change the social policy so that children don't grow up in the institutions. If this happened we would not need to exist, it would be empty here. The developed countries abolished such institutions 30 years ago, these "containers" for the children. In essence we have to save the problem produced by the society itself. It is different with adults, people can fall out because of addictions, divorces, poverty and some instruments are there to help them. But we provide care to people whom the state wrecked, because it couldn't take care of them in any other way but by putting them into the institutions."

"I see homelessness as externality of economic development, market economy, a new trend. One of the trends is a social welfare state reduction...Deinstitutionalization of mental health facilities brought increase in mentally ill people in the streets. One of our clients wanted to burn himself in a psychiatric hospital but they didn't want to admit him anyway because they told him he was faking...We need to change the system of social services financing...We also need prevention because the communist state trained people to be dependant...The state calls all the time for people to behave responsibly, behave responsibly or else it is your problem if you become homeless. At the same time we are under constant attack of advertising push us to behave irresponsibly...And then what happens with those young people who do not resist this pressure? What about the poor ones who told me they didn't want to play (the gambling machines) but before they reach our facility they come across 50 places loaded with the gambling machines? That's a serious addiction, a person starts shaking physically at the sound of them...In such cases the state should not behave democratically but paternalistically...Our biggest problem, of majority of social worker and employees is desperation, sheer desperation that we have no possibility to help those people...When someone is released from prison, he lost his family, where do you find him? In the street. The criminal record means that he is absolutely unemployable...Therefore he is punished for thse second time. He wants to work but he can't. What is he supposed to do? Start stealing again and the society will pay again for his prison sentence...The other group are people released from hospitals...They are not dangerous to themselves or others but they are chronically

ill. Therefore the person is released but he is released to what if he doesn't have a family or they don't care? Where is he? In the street...The medical emergency called us to tell us they have a homeless and they will ship him to us. When they hear a word homeless, we have to take care of him...We need facilities with a special regime for those who are addicted to gambling or drugs."

List of organizations – expert interviews

Institution	Person/Position	Type	Service	Target group
Projekt Šance o.s.	Male Around 40s Coordinator of the civic association; key-worker; streetworker	NGO Praha	Day centre: food, cloths, medical treatment; streetwork; legal counselling; training; job seeking support; housing support;	children commercially exploited and victims of trafficking in humans
Ježek&Čížek o.s.	Male Around 30s Head of the civic association; key-worker	NGO Praha	Day centre: food, cloths, key-working – action plan, counselling in legal issues and social support; streetwork; theater therapy; training; job seeking support; supported employment; Partnerships for other services	Homeless (from 18 years old) Men/Women Rough sleepers and roofless
Naděje o.s.	Male Around 50s psychologist	NGO Czech Republic/ Praha	Day centre: food, cloths, counselling to the area of legal issues and social support; Temporary and transition housing; Job seeking support; medical treatment; therapy Special day centre for youth: basic needs, counselling in legal issues and social support Partnerships for other services	Homeless (from 18 years old) Men/Women Rough sleepers and roofless; special program for homeless youth (19-26years)
	Female Around 30 Social worker, key-worker			
	Male Around 30 Social worker			
	Male Around 50 Head of the day centre			
	Male Around 40 Day centre support			
Úřad městské části Praha 1	Male Around 40s	Municipality Praha	Advisement and Counselling in several areas (housing, law, social support, social security); therapy; training; job seeking support	Persons in danger of social exclusion; young adults leaving institutional care
Arcidiecézní charita Praha – Azylový dům sv. Terezie	Male Around 40s	NGO Czech Republic/ Praha	Day centre: food, cloths, counselling in the area of legal issues and social support; Temporary and transition housing; Close cooperation with other organizations of Arcidiecézní charita for other services	Homeless (from 18 years old) Men/Women Rough sleepers; special program for immigrants
	Female Around 30s Social worker, key-worker			
La Strada	Female Around 30s Assistant manager, key-worker	Member of the international network NGO Praha	Advisement and Counselling in several areas (housing, law, social support, social security); transition housing; job seeking support; preventive programs	Victims of trafficking in human beings and abuse (from 18 years of age and preventive programs for girls 15-18 years old)
Společnou cestou – azylový dům pro matky s dětmi	Female Around 30s Social worker, key-worker	NGO Praha	Temporary housing; counselling in the area of legal issues and social support; support programs for families with children; training; job seeking support	Mothers with children; families
Občanské sdružení DOM	Female Around 40s Head of the civic association; key-worker	NGO Praha	counselling in the area of legal issues and social support; transition housing; job seeking support; training	Young adults leaving institutional care or dysfunctional families (18-26 years old)
Armáda spásy	Female Around 30	Member of the international network NGO Czech Republic/ Praha	Day centre: food, cloths, counselling in the area of legal issues and social support; temporary and transition housing; job seeking support	Homeless (from 18 years old) men Rough sleepers

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