

# Report on the Quick Scan of Policy and Research documents on empowerment and participation of older citizens in Czech Republic

European Project: "From Isolation to Inclusion: Promoting Innovation in Re-Integrating Older Citizens into Community Life"

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## 1. Policy documents under review

The following national policy documents were reviewed:

- National Programme of Preparation for Ageing for 2003 – 2007
- National Action Plan on Social Inclusion for 2004 – 2006
- Health for all in the 21st century – A long-term Programme for Improving the Health of the Population of the Czech Republic (HEALTH 21)

## 2. Research documents under review

The following research reports published by the Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs (RILSA)<sup>1</sup> of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic from 2000 to 2005 were reviewed:

- VIDOVIČOVÁ, Lucie. Age discrimination – ageism: an introduction to the theory and incidence of discrimination approaches in selected areas with emphasis on labour market. Prague, RILSA - Research Centre Brno 2005. 54 p.
- MOŽNÝ, Ivo et al. Intergenerational Solidarity. A research report from an international comparison research “The Value of Children and Intergenerational Solidarity.” Prague, RILSA - Research Centre Brno 2004. 138 p.
- VOHRALÍKOVÁ, Lenka - RABUŠIC, Ladislav. The Czech elderly yesterday, today and tomorrow. Prague, RILSA - Research Centre Brno 2004. 90 p.
- MUSIL, Libor – HUBÍKOVÁ, Olga – KUBALČÍKOVÁ, Kateřina. The Standards of Quality and the Culture of Social Services. What tensions may arise between the policy of social services and the culture of work with clients in Social Care Service with respect to the quality of social services? A case study final report. Prague, RILSA - Research Centre Brno 2003. 74 p.
- VIDOVIČOVÁ, Lucie – RABUŠIC, Ladislav. Elderly and social policy measures in the field of ageing – public opinion view. The empirical study report. Prague, RILSA 2003. 67 p., bibl., annex
- VESELÁ, Jitka. Social services provided for seniors in households. Prague, RILSA 2003. 50 p., tabs.
- HUBÍKOVÁ, Olga – KUBLAČÍKOVÁ, Kateřina. Quality-standards and the culture of personal social services: the case study of a home-care service. Brno, RILSA 2002. 58 p.
- KOTÝNKOVÁ, Magdalena - ČERVENKOVÁ, Anna. Integration of the elderly in a social structure of a current society. Prague, RILSA 2001. 31 p.
- ČERVENKOVÁ, Anna - KOTÝNKOVÁ, Magdalena. Social protection of low-income households of old age pensioners. Prague, RILSA 2000. 63 p.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.rilsa.cz/>

### **3. Empowerment and participation of older citizens in policy documents**

#### National Programme of Preparation for Ageing for 2003 – 2007

The Government of the Czech Republic approved the Programme in May 15, 2002 by its resolution no. 485. The Programme consists of ten sections and covers many areas, including anti-discrimination and protection of human rights, employment of older workers, material welfare, pension reform and social security, health care and healthy lifestyle, social services and social inclusion, education and training, housing, transport, research, design and other issues. The Government in above mentioned resolution asked presidents of regions and mayors of the biggest statutory cities to develop regional and local plans of preparation for ageing and to support local activities in this area. The NGOs working with and for older people were involved in the preparation of the Programme.

The Programme emphasizes positive image of ageing, life course perspective on ageing, healthy ageing and well-being in old age. It says that it is crucial to ensure equal rights and opportunities for personal development in all age groups and in all aspects of life, regardless of gender or race, and to enhance the status of older persons and the significance of the ageing process. Older persons, through their activities and attitudes, should also contribute to changing society's perceptions of ageing and old age. It says, "it is necessary to give older persons sufficient opportunity to participate in the life and development of society. Older persons must however themselves learn to make use of all the opportunities society offers to improve their status, for safe ageing, and for full and equal participation. To give people a feeling of well-being and reinforce positive attitudes in society to old age and older persons, it is essential that older persons are involved in social, economic, cultural and voluntary activities, and take a responsible approach to their own lives, and take an interest in the development of society."

The Programme emphasizes the importance of adequate, affordable and equitable social services for minimalisation of the risk of social exclusion and institutionalisation. It says that the greater need for social care and social services must lead to the development of social schemes, which reflect the diversity of the social situations facing older persons, and sets the goal to "establish a system of comprehensive social services, affecting all areas of life and respecting older persons rights and individual needs, allowing them to remain in their natural home environment for as long as possible or for their entire lives, supporting their independence and dignity in that phase of life and simultaneously assisting families caring for dependent older persons". The Programme inter alia proposes transformation of residential facilities for older persons into polyfunctional centres and ensuring the provision of social services in line with quality standards for social services etc.

In November 2005 the Czech Government approved the first report on the implementation of the Programme. The gaps in the implementation and key areas where action is needed were identified. In order to improve the implementation of the Programme, the cooperation of all partners, and to further develop an ageing policy in the Czech Republic the Government in March 2006 established the Council for Senior Citizens and Ageing Population. The Council consists of representatives of the Government, NGOs, health insurance companies and other social partners. At its first meeting the Council set up four working groups, which should focus on priority issues related to ageing population: the Working Group on Employment, Life-long Learning and Social Security, the Working Group on Health Policy and Social Policy, the Working Group on Awareness Raising and Anti-discrimination, and The Working Group on Housing and Residential Social Services.

## National Action Plan on Social Inclusion of the Czech Republic for 2004 – 2006 (NAPSI)

NAPSI puts emphasis on integration of various disadvantaged groups into the labour market in the context of Lisbon agenda. It includes analysis and measures to promote access of people at risk of social exclusion to health care, social services, housing, transport, legal services, and information technology. An employment is seen as a key measure in tackling poverty and social exclusion. Opportunities for life-long learning and attaining computer literacy are related to employability and inclusion in labour market. NAPSI recognises the need for adaptation the social protection and health care systems to ensure a better response to social changes, in particular to population ageing. Older people are one of the main target groups of the Plan and representatives of older people (NGOs) were consulted during the preparation of the Plan.

At risk of social exclusion, according to the Plan, are older people living alone, older people with low income, older people with reduced ability for self-support because of illness or advanced age, and older people with disabilities. Older women are also identified as being at risk of poverty and exclusion, “especially lone women with a single source of income from old age or widow’s pension, who in comparison with more recently retired people, have lower pensions, in most cases they were unable to accumulate enough savings and equipment of their households is obsolete. Under the previous regime they could not make provision for any additional source of income other than statutory pension.” Nevertheless older people are not considered as risk group in access to some of the analysed services (health care, education, ICT) and the most vulnerable groups of older people are not included among the groups that are most at risk of poverty and social exclusion. In relation to family solidarity a problem of care for children is discussed, but the issue of care for relatives generally (younger or older) is not appropriately addressed.

In the area of social and health services an emphasis is placed on support of living in natural environment, on integrated community care and reduction of growing numbers of dependent older people, and on promotion of an active way of life. Social services are seen as key instrument in integration of vulnerable groups into society and labour market. Participation of older people in developing and planning of social services is guaranteed by community planning. Community planning is based on mutual co-operation between local and regional authorities and users and providers of social services. Community planning is aimed at promotion of partnership in development of regional and local social policies, and especially social services.

## HEALTH 21 - Health for all in the 21st century – A long-term Programme for Improving the Health of the Population of the Czech Republic

HEALTH 21 is the national version of WHO programme „Health for all in the 21st century“. One of the 21 targets set out in the Programme is „Healthy ageing“ (target 5): “By the year 2020, people over 65 years should have the opportunity of enjoying their full health potential and playing an active social role“. Two more specific targets were also set out in this part of the Programme, which are as follows: “There should be an increase of at least 20% in life expectancy and in disability-free life expectancy at age 65 years” and “Increasing by at least 50% the proportion of people over 80 years of age who enjoy a level of health in a home environment that permits them to maintain autonomy, self-esteem, and their place in society”.

The Programme places emphasis on health-related quality of life, health potential in old age, and functional ability (the disability aspect). The Programme identifies as major health risks in old age Alzheimer’s disease, osteoporosis, and sensor’s disorders, which also have significant impact on mobility, independence and social participation and inclusion. Ac-

According to the programme there is lack of the valid data (esp. national and regional level), of subjective assessment, central evaluation of censuses and other statistical materials. Within the Programme various NGOs receive financial support for activities aimed at the elderly and are also involved in implementation of the programme as one of key partners.

#### **4. Empowerment and participation of older citizens in research documents**

Research documents deal with various issues, inter alia demographic development, intergenerational solidarity, age discrimination and ageism, involvement of older people in policy making, housing conditions of older people, their level of income, structure of their spending, pension system, its reform and impact on income situation of pensioners, social and health services, their scope and quality, availability of social work and social care, attitudes towards process of ageing of Czech society, perception of the elderly people within the society, public preferences in the field of social care etc.

Generally, there is not much attention in research documents given to the issue of empowerment of older people and their broader involvement in community life or in development of local, regional or national policies.

#### **5. Conclusions: The situation of empowerment and participation of older citizens in Czech Republic**

There are signs that public administration is becoming more sensitive to the views of older people and users of public services. The council of seniors were established in some regions as advisory bodies to the regional authority or directly to the president of the region. NGOs play important role in making voices and views of older people heard. Some of them are more and more involved in policy-making and research activities of various subjects. Regional administrations and local municipalities more often use the method of community planning in the area of social services and other areas. Consultations with the public are an integral part of the community planning.