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## **Sozialpolitik und Arbeitsmarkt – Zur Situation in der Tschechischen Republik**

### ***Social Policy and Labour Market in the Czech Republic***

Zusammenfassung:

Brno ist die zweitgrößte Stadt der Tschechischen Republik mit einer Bevölkerung von über 370.000 Einwohnern (174.863 Männern und 195.279 Frauen). Die Altersstruktur in Brno ist charakterisiert durch einen hohen Anteil an älteren Menschen. Im Vergleich zu anderen tschechischen Städten/Regionen wird offensichtlich, daß die Bevölkerung Brnos schneller altert als in anderen Städten. Während in Brno die älteren Bürger derzeit 20.5% der städtischen Bevölkerung ausmachen, liegt der nationale Durchschnitt bei 18.4%.

Nach 1989 begann eine Veränderung der Sozialpolitik, begleitet von neuen sozialen Phänomenen, wie sozialer Ungleichheit und Arbeitslosigkeit, Instabilität im Familienleben (eine zunehmende Zahl von alleinerziehenden Eltern mit schlecht versorgten Kindern, eine hohe Scheidungsrate, ein Rückgang von Eheschließungen und mehr außerehelich geborenen Kinder) sowie die Abhängigkeit von Familien oder Personen von Sozialhilfeleistungen. Soziale Fürsorge für arme Familien mit Kindern, für ältere Menschen, Behinderte, Arbeitslose und sozial „Unangepasste“ wird geleistet - sowohl von der Stadt Brno und den 24 Stadtbezirksämtern als auch von 10 kommunalen Organisationen, die auf Grundlage der Sozialgesetzgebung Sozialfürsorge anbieten. Die Dienstleistungen für arme Familien mit minderjährigen Kindern umfassen Beratung, rechtlichen Schutz für die Kinder, finanzielle und materielle Unterstützung von Familien, deren Einkommen unterhalb der Mindesteinkommensgrenze liegt, Beratung für Problemkinder und Jugendliche, Pflegefamilien sowie ein von der Abteilung für Sozialfürsorge verwaltetes Wohnheim für alleinstehende Mütter mit Kindern. Ein bedeutender Teil der Tätigkeit auf dem Gebiet der Sozialfürsorge geschieht durch 36 NGOs, die jedes Jahr Gelder aus dem städtischen Haushalt erhalten.

Der Umwandlungsprozess von der sozialistischen Planwirtschaft zur Marktwirtschaft begann schon 1990. Dieser Prozess ist von bedeutenden Veränderungen der Arbeitsmarktstruktur begleitet worden: Arbeitsplätze verschoben sich von dem primären zum tertiären Sektor, es gab strukturelle Änderungen und nachlassende Nachfrage auf dem internen wie auch auf dem externen Markt, und Änderungen bei den Eigentumsbeziehungen, verursacht durch Privatisierung und Rückgabe. Im Vergleich mit Prag gibt es weniger ausländische Investitionen in Brno, und die Stadt muß auch mit dem sogenannten "Geschäftsstellensyndrom" zurechtkommen. Als zweitgrößte Stadt der Tschechischen Republik hat Brno jedoch den Vorteil, Sitz von Institutionen der öffentlichen Verwaltung, Bildung, der Universität, Gerichte, Gesundheits- und Sozialeinrichtungen zu sein. Obwohl, die Arbeitslosenquote in Brno vor 1996 noch unter 2% lag zeigen jüngste Zahlen eine Arbeitslosigkeit von 10% auf. Ende 2002 waren insgesamt 19.892 Menschen arbeitslos gemeldet (9.840 Frauen). Frauen sind im allgemeinen häufiger von Langzeitarbeitslosigkeit betroffen als Männer (38% Frauen im Vergleich zu 32.8% Männern). Am schwersten betroffen sind Frauen mit kleinen Kindern und Frauen über 50. Obwohl die nationale Arbeitspolitik diese Gruppe von Arbeitslosen durch Umschulungsprogramme ansprechen will, ist es nicht möglich, das Problem einfach durch aktive Arbeitspolitikprogramme zu beheben, sondern nur im Rahmen eines umfassenden Ansatzes von allen Akteuren. Die

Arbeitsämter sind für die nationale Arbeitspolitik verantwortlich. Es gibt keine Arbeitspolitik auf städtischer Ebene.

Obwohl das tschechische Recht den Status von Frauen und Männern als gleich anerkennt, ist das Haupthindernis zur Durchsetzung der Gleichheit im wirklichen Leben die traditionelle öffentliche Meinung, die unterschiedliche soziale Männer- und Frauenrollen favorisiert. Vertreter von Frauen-NGOs behaupten, daß Frauen auf dem tschechischen Arbeitsmarkt diskriminiert werden, nicht nur durch das 25%ige Einkommensgefälle zwischen Frauen und Männern. Frauen, die sich an Hilfsprogrammen verschiedener NGOs in Brno beteiligt haben berichteten von ihren Erfahrungen: Frauen, die gerade ihre Ausbildung beendet haben, haben Probleme, eine Stelle zu finden wegen mangelnder Arbeitserfahrung, junge Frauen werden oft nach ihren Partnern und "Familienplänen" gefragt, es wird angenommen, daß Frauen mit kleinen Kindern aufgrund von Kinderbetreuungspflichten eine Risikogruppe sind; und, obwohl ältere Frauen Arbeitserfahrung mitbringen und ihre Kinder schon groß sind, werden sie oft als weniger attraktiv angesehen. Frauen werden diskriminiert auf Grund von fortdauernden, stereotypen Rollenerwartungen, die Frauen mit der Familie und der Rolle der Mutter assoziieren.

Gleichstellungsfragen sind eine große Herausforderung nicht nur für die öffentliche Verwaltung, sondern für die ganze Gesellschaft. Auf Ministeriumsebene gibt es eine Gleichstellungsstrategie, aber ihre Durchsetzung auf regionaler und lokaler Ebene ist immer noch unzulänglich.

## I. Introduction

Brno with its population of over 370,000 people is the second largest city in the Czech Republic. It is also the centre of the South Moravian region with more than 1 million inhabitants.

Since 1989, Brno, as other cities in the Czech Republic, has undergone a period of significant demographic, economic and social changes. This dynamic development is reflected in all spheres of the residents' life, bringing about numerous new possibilities and opportunities as well as risks and uncertainties. The new socio-economic and legislative conditions, urban change in the city or the planned accession to the European Union are just some of the external factors that require some responses. The social welfares in the city also have to cope with a number of social trends and factors.

Brno is one of 13 statutory cities in the Czech Republic and is divided into 29 city districts. The Brno City Statute defines the extent of self-government and state administration in



### Age Structure of Population

	<b>Pre-productive 0- 14</b>	<b>Productive 15 - 59</b>	<b>Post-productive 60 and more</b>	<b>Total</b>
Male abs.	27 518	119 986	30 583	178 180
<i>Male %</i>	<i>15.4</i>	<i>67.3</i>	<i>17.2</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Female abs.	26 491	124 888	46 538	197 992
<i>Female %</i>	<i>13.4</i>	<i>63.1</i>	<i>23.5</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Brno total abs.	54 009	244 874	77 121	376 172
<i>Brno total %</i>	<i>14.4</i>	<i>65.1</i>	<i>20.5</i>	<i>100.0</i>
CR total abs.	1 654 869	6 687 927	1 883 783	10 230 060
<i>CR total %</i>	<i>16.2</i>	<i>65.4</i>	<i>18.4</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Source: Czech Statistical Office, Census at 1. 3. 2001

### Old Age Index

	<b>Year 2001</b>	<b>Year 2004</b>
Brno	143.2	162.0
CR	116.3	129.4

Source: Brno Social welfare Concept for 2001 - 2004, chapter Socio-Demographic Analysis

### III. Social Security System in Brno

Economic and other changes stemming from the post-November development have caused changes in the family life behaviour, instability in families (increasing numbers of divorces, incomplete families with children who are not provided for), decline in marriages and more children born outside of marriage. This social phenomenon is one of the reasons for the increasing level of social benefits and dependence of families or individuals on these benefits.

The high prices of new flats, insufficient housing development and the lack of small affordable flats have an influence on the changes in reproduction behaviour (reducing birth rate, number of marriages).

The aim of the social security system is to assist persons who are in difficult situations and need expert help in order to recover. There are activities trying to compensate the inadequate consequences of inequality in people's abilities and possibilities as well as the differences in their success on the labour market.

Social aid is provided in the form of social benefits and/or social welfares to citizens whose needs are not provided for with their work income, pension or sickness-benefits and citizens who need to overcome some difficult situations resulting from their health condition or age.

The state is the guarantor of social security benefits, subsidising them from the state budget. Social benefits (financial or material) are administered by the social welfare departments of the Brno City Magistrate and 24 city district offices. State social support benefits designated mostly for families with children who are not provided for form an integrated system.

Under the Brno City Statute, social welfares are provided by the Social welfare Department of the Brno City Magistrate, 6 social welfare centres under city district offices, 10 municipal contributory organisations (4 old people's homes, 5 residential care homes, Social welfare Centre) and 36 NGOs to which the city distributes annually funds from its budget. Social welfares are funded from several resources: the state (specific state subsidy per one bed in municipal establishments), the city from its budget and the clients (amounts to be paid are subject to legislation).\*) The extent of activities is defined by legislation.

Social welfares focus on the following target groups: families with children, disabled people, seniors, people requiring special assistance and socially unadapted individuals.

Families with children in social need who are not provided for and pregnant women collect social security benefits. This agenda is in the responsibility of the family and childcare

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\*) Social security benefits and services include: financial benefits, material benefits, education and advisory services, social and legal protection of children, institutional social care, social work, catering, cultural and recreational activities, benefits for the severely disabled, interest-free loans.

section of the Brno City Magistrate, family service unit. This department, among other things, provides advisory and educational services to pregnant women and families with children in difficult social situations who are not provided for. Further, it decides about placing lonely women in homes for mothers with children, placing children in foster care facilities and placements in temporary shelters.

The increasing unemployment rate and prolonging unemployment periods bring various social consequences. They include the increasing number of social benefit recipients and the marginisation of persons not qualified for the labour market. Unemployment benefits are low in the Czech Republic – the maximum is 50% of the previous income and they are paid only for 6 months. After the labour office ceases to provide the unemployment benefits or if their amount is not sufficient, the unemployed apply to the social departments of local authorities to compensate their income with social benefits. Over ¾ of social security benefit recipients are unemployed (followed by unemployed single mothers, disability pension recipients, employees whose employers do not pay their salaries and the “working poor” where the woman collects the parent benefit and the household depends on one income only). Another typical feature is the large number of women who are the majority of beneficiaries. The high number of single mothers as well as the fact that women are usually the applicants on behalf of their families explains this. Most often these are households consisting of a mother with one or two children. The average monthly benefit is around CZK 3,750. There are a considerably high number of single mothers with young children who can seldom find salaries motivating enough compared to the level of social benefits. Moreover, in this case their employment must enable them to look after their children.

#### **IV. Labour Market and Unemployment**

The impact of political and macroeconomic changes after 1989 has been affecting the structure of city economy. The most significant changes on the Brno labour market over the past ten years are have been changes in branch structure, decline in industrial production, declining importance of local companies in the national context, low competitiveness, problems in sales, transfer of manpower to the tertiary sphere (increase in jobs by about 30%) and changes in ownership (restitution, privatisation). The labour market is remarkably segmented, namely by region (areas most affected by structural changes and unemployment

are North Moravia and North Bohemia), by profession (unqualified persons are affected) and individual features of job seekers such as the health condition (disabled job seekers are affected) or age (graduates from all schools without experience and oldest employees are affected).

The development in small and medium-sized businesses is a positive trend. Owing to further privatisation (banks and some large corporations), upgrade and general increase in production efficiency there will be a persisting pressure on the labour market and increasing unemployment rates. As the Czech households will continue to be under financial pressure, the high participation of women on the labour market will persist. Public services as a whole will be pushed toward cost cutting as a result of public expenditure restrictions and thus it will not be easy to create new jobs (for example in social work and social welfares where we have deficits). The situation can gradually improve, along with the economic growth.

Compared to Prague, there is a lower inflow of foreign investment in Brno and the city also tackles the "branch office syndrome". Employment in industries has reduced remarkably, on the other hand the state kept its important share in employment in the city. Thanks to the presence of public administration bodies (offices, courts, police), education, health services and social security, the share of state in employment will continue to be high in the city. In general, the manpower in this branch is stable and relatively little vulnerable to unemployment.

### Development in Unemployment in Brno

Until 1996 the unemployment rate had not exceeded 2%. In 1999 it reached 8%. In December 2002 the unemployment rate according to statistics achieved 10.0%. This is due to the closing operation of Flextronics and related redundancies as well as the reduced number of seasonal jobs in construction and, partially, in retail and the closing of some small and medium-sized businesses. The present unemployment rate is 10.0%. The number of registered job seekers at the Brno City Labour Office at the end of 2002 was 19,892 (of which 9,840 were women). Numbers of unemployed women are higher than men in almost all age groups with the exception of those aged under 25. The greatest disproportion between genders is found in secondary school graduates. Of the total number of 3,645

registered job seekers 2,200 were women. The average period of registration at the Labour Office is 481 days while for women it is 508 days. The Labour Office was offering 1,200 jobs at the end of last year demanding all types of skills.

### Numbers of Unemployed in Brno in Years 1998 - 2002

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Average unemployment rate in %	5.96	8.05	8.25	8.24	9.31

Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Brno City Labour Office

### Development in Unemployment in Brno in the Years 2000 - 2002 by month

	Year 2000	Year 2001	Year 2002
January	8.3	8.2	9.0
February	8.4	8.2	9.0
March	8.4	8.0	9.0
April	8.3	7.9	9.0
May	8.2	7.8	9.0
June	8.2	7.9	9.2
July	8.5	8.4	9.7
August	8.5	8.5	9.9
September	8.3	8.4	8.5
October	8.1	8.5	9.7
November	7.9	8.5	9.8
December	7.9	8.6	10.0

Source: Brno City Labour Office

### Structure of Job Seekers by Gender and Age as at 30. 6. 2001

Age Group	Total		Male		Female	
	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%

Dokumentation der Konferenz / Documentation of the conference  
(21. - 23. Februar 2003)

under 19	1 134	7.1	632	8.2	502	6.1
20 - 24 years	3 332	20.9	1 964	25.4	1 368	16.6
25 - 29 years	2 316	14.5	1 065	13.8	1 251	15.2
30 - 35 years	1 719	10.8	663	8.6	1 056	12.8
35 - 39 years	1 638	10.3	629	8.1	1 009	12.3
40 - 44 years	1 518	9.5	609	7.9	909	11.0
45 - 49 years	1 844	11.6	832	10.8	1 012	12.3
50 - 54 years	1 697	10.6	727	9.4	970	11.8
55 - 59 years	704	4.4	561	7.3	143	1.7
60 and more	49	0.3	36	0.5	13	0.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>15 951</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>7 718</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>8 233</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Brno City Labour Office

The table above indicates that most unemployed are aged 20 – 24 but women are not so strongly represented (16.6%) as men (25.4%) in this age group.

At 30.6.2001, 7,718 men and 8,233 women were registered in the city. The share of women is 51.6% of the total number of unemployed, which is close to the value for the Czech Republic (51.8%). Among the long-term unemployed (over 12 months) there are approximately 32.8% of the unemployed men and 38% of the unemployed women. Available information suggests that the share of women increases with the increasing time of unemployment. The proportions among those unemployed for 6 to 12 months are not much different.

Persons with low or no qualification, graduates, especially from secondary schools, elderly, Roma ethnic and disabled persons are groups vulnerable to marginisation on the labour market. The number of long-term unemployed is also growing, especially among low-skilled, juveniles and women after maternity leave. The employment of women taking care of young children is a persisting problem. It is difficult for such job seekers to take jobs in shift operations or with working hours starting from 6 a.m. Besides, employers are often disinterested in these women, as they fear their frequent absence from work. Increased

attention has been paid to this group as part of an active employment policy and a number of women have been successfully employed but the core of the problem cannot be addressed only with the state employment policy means.

According to the Czech Statistical Office data and research carried out in this sphere, the unemployment among women has been higher than that among men. However, women show sufficient determination to become independent and grasp an opportunity, which is a good precondition for the penetration of women into the business sphere. A woman who can manage a household and achieves good results in her profession is considered as successful. A man is considered as successful only through his achievements at work and his ability to support the family. The experience of unemployed women who co-operate with the NGOs in Brno can be summarised in the following statement: women after graduation are difficult to employ because they have no experience. Young women are asked questions about their partner and their "family planning" and their potential motherhood. Women with young children are risky for the employers due to their frequent absence from work. Older women who have lost their jobs are experienced and their children are independent but it is also difficult for them to find jobs, as for many positions they are not sufficiently young and "good looking". Many women feel discriminated against in their access to employment even if they meet the demands on skills and other formal conditions. They are discriminated against compared with men of the same age, experience and education. They are discriminated against on the basis of stereotyped role expectations associating women with family and motherhood. For a man's social self-confidence it is easier to accept a woman who is successful at work and not such a good homemaker than it is for a woman to accept a man who manages the household well but is obviously a failure at work. To a great extent therefore the man is the main source of the social status of the woman and the whole family.

These role expectations are changing or at least developing. Even though various researches still confirm that women are usually associated with motherhood, the family and home are no longer women's only fields of activities. Almost all Czech women had to be employed in the past. After the revolution, in spite of expectations, there has not been any voluntary mass escape of women into households because working and earning remained important for them. In fashion magazines and other media determining the lifestyle, contemporary women are presented as successful managers, journalists, doctors,

businesswomen, that means women successfully working on their careers. They make lots of money and enjoy a high social status.

Even though not every woman wishes and is able to get close to this model, there are an increasing number of those who have such ambitions. More women study at universities, go abroad for training and try to occupy managing and responsible positions. They are increasingly successful in the competition with men at work. In many ways women are discriminated against in their access to leading, attractive and socially highly appraised jobs.

The problem of women's discrimination on the labour market is usually perceived as the difference in salaries. Formally, women have an equal position on the labour market. A number of researches and studies made on equal remuneration agree that in reality women get only 75% of what men get. This situation, however, is very difficult to prove because employers keep the salaries of their staff to themselves. The real inequality is often related to the labour market segregation into "typical" jobs for women and men. Typical examples of women's professions are jobs in education or health services where the salaries are lower than the average in spite of the demands of highly skilled labour.

The equal opportunity issue on the labour market does not only involve remuneration. A number of researches have been devoted to women on the labour market; two research projects have been implemented in Brno last year:

- "Barriers in launching businesses and self-promotion of women in the Czech Republic compared to the European Union" (implemented by Faculty of Social Studies of the Masaryk University and the Faculty of Business Administration of the Technical University in Brno). The research objective was to survey the situation of women in the Czech Republic, obtain the opinions of women and men on their positions in society and expectations for personal and professional lives. The research is part of the general debate on the position and situation of women in Czech society.
- "Equal opportunities for women and men in selected Czech companies 2000 - 2001" (implemented by Gender Centre of the Faculty of Social Studies of the Masaryk University).

The Brno City Labour Office enforces the state employment policy and the city of Brno has not its own consistent concept for the local labour market. The city has been aware of this shortcoming and for this reason the problem of labour market and employment in Brno became part of the "Concept for the Development in Social Aid in Brno for 2001 – 2004". The document stems from sociological studies prepared by experts from the Faculty of Social Studies of the Masaryk University on the basis of which it proposes a set of recommendations and priorities for the city. The chapter on "Labour Market, Unemployed and Socially Weak in Brno" analyses the situation on the labour market. Based on recommendations of the Concept the city budget supports mainly NGOs offering education programmes and advisory services for the unemployed or creating new jobs.

## V. Example Projects and Activities

### ▪ Brno City Labour Office

Labour offices are state administration bodies responsible for implementing the state employment policy. The Labour Office in Brno presently offers some 1,000 vacant jobs to more than 19,000 registered job seekers. The officers suppose that this situation where new jobs are not created and numbers of job seekers grow cannot be sustained for a long time. The result of the low number of vacant jobs is the prolonging period of registration at the Labour Office and psychological problems of those job seekers who wish to work. Another consequence of the high demand and low offer is the fact that people are often willing to accept jobs requiring skills lower than their own.

The Labour Office supplies information that women are registered longer than men but are more inclined to tackle their situation. Mainly the number of job seekers who attend re-qualification training courses documents this. 2/3 of them are women. The Labour Office offers re-qualification training courses to all groups of job seekers, while special attention is paid to mothers with children, women aged over 50 and people with light disabilities. Women after maternity leave are frequently little familiar with computers. This is why the Labour Office offers these women training courses on computers, basics of accounting and business administration. However, there has been a problem when trying to place these women on the labour market and the Labour Office staff often witnessed that women turned down some jobs due to low salary or impossibility to work half-time, i.e. 4 hours a day.

Women aged over 50 are often handicapped on the labour market due to their insufficient language skills. The Labour Office offers these women broader re-qualification training courses where besides the computer they can master the basics of accounting and business administration. The problem for these women is that employers often do not want them due to their age. This is why the Labour Office is trying to create publicly beneficial jobs where the Labour Office pays the employer for the salary and social and health insurance contributions. Secondary graduates prevail in this age group.

As regards re-qualification, women are mostly interested to work in services (chiroprapist, cosmetician, waitress and bar tender). The Labour Office, when offering re-qualification programmes, must monitor the demand for these jobs and the chance of the re-qualified woman to succeed.

▪ "Unemployed Volunteering" Project

The Ratolest civic association has implemented the project since 2001. It is designed for unemployed women and men without age limitations who are registered at a labour office or collect social benefits from a social security office. The goal of the project is to enable job seekers to gain experience through volunteering some 10 – 20 hours a week so that they still have a chance to look for a job and co-operate with the labour office. By volunteering the job seeker keeps or builds working habits and does not lose the daily rhythm. The project takes place in co-operation with the Brno City Labour Office that informs its clients about this option and helps to choose suitable adepts.

The project co-ordinator informs that women are more interested in the project. Clients can enrol in the project after filling a form with some personal data and the area where they wish to volunteer. On the basis of the client's requirements the civic association workers chose the best organisation for the volunteer work. The majority is interested in work with children.

The programme also makes it possible to visit the volunteer centre and work in supporting clubs. The greatest problem is to make clients speak about their unemployment. Men often feel stigmatised by their unemployment and women frequently say that they decided to stay at home with children.

Low self esteem is often the problem of women after maternity leave and those aged over 50. Thanks to contacts with other unemployed people they can motivate and mentally support each other. Many times they face isolation and feel useless, unable to achieve anything in their lives. In the volunteer work project these people can discover and develop their own skills and abilities. Besides, the organisation where they volunteer issues a

certificate and references stating the job description, which can help in seeking a permanent job.

- Establishing the "Women's Information Centre"

Presently the project is in the stage of preparation. Three organisations dealing with the equality of men and women and their positions in the society participate in its implementation. The main motive of the project is to liase and co-ordinate activities of NGOs, the academic community and state institutions dealing with gender studies and feminine issues both in theory (research, lectures) and in practice in the form of assisting women in difficult situations. For the general public it would serve as an information centre, library and guidance on equal opportunities for women and men, women's rights, feminism, non-profit sector, etc. Those who are interested in these topics could attend lectures, ask for expert consultations and organisations. Individuals could use information about programmes and projects and activities of individual NGOs. The information centre is to become a place for the meeting of women from Brno and its region.