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## **Chancengleichheit für Frauen und Männer in der Tschechischen Republik**

### ***Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Czech Republic***

Zusammenfassung:

Im Januar 1998 wurde das Ministerium für Arbeit und Soziales beauftragt, die Frauenpolitik der Regierung zu koordinieren. Seit April 1998 gibt es einen jährlichen Aktionsplan für die Gleichstellung der Geschlechter. Im Januar 2002 wurden alle Ministerien angewiesen, in ihrem Zuständigkeitsbereich ebenfalls Gleichstellungsprogramme aufzustellen und Gleichstellungsstellen einzurichten. Die tschechische Gesetzgebung wurde in bezug auf Chancengleichheit dem *acquis communautaire* der Europäischen Union angepaßt.

Der Anteil der Frauen im Parlament liegt derzeit bei 17 Prozent. Die Erwerbsbeteiligung von Frauen ist traditionell sehr hoch, weil die tschechischen Familien auf ein doppeltes Einkommen angewiesen sind. Deshalb ist auch der Anteil der Teilzeit arbeitenden Frauen mit 7 Prozent sehr niedrig. Dennoch gibt es eine Lohndifferenz zwischen den Einkommen von Frauen und Männern von 25 Prozent. Die Regierung unterstützt Maßnahmen zur Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf. Als besonders wichtig wird die Bewußtseinsbildung für die Gleichberechtigung von Frauen und Männern im öffentlichen wie im familiären Leben betrachtet. Nachdem die gesetzlichen Rahmenbedingungen geschaffen wurden, kommt es nun darauf an, den Gleichheitsgrundsatz in der Praxis umzusetzen. Der EU-Beitritt öffnet die Türen zu allen Gemeinschaftsprogrammen für Chancengleichheit, wobei die Tschechische Republik bereits heute an EQUAL und PHARE und demnächst am 5. Rahmenprogramm für Chancengleichheit teilnimmt.

I would like to express my pleasure over the fact that I have the opportunity to present at this session information on the situation in the area of equal opportunities for men and women in the Czech Republic. With regard to the fact that the most striking gender inequalities are traditionally to be found in labour-related and social spheres, in January 1998, the Government authorised the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to co-ordinate Government policy towards women. The small Gender equality unit was established at the Ministry. In April 1998, the Government approved the national action plan on gender equality, resolving that the implementation, evaluation and updating thereof be reviewed on a regular annual basis. The national action plan was the most recently updated in May 2002. (English version is available: [www.mpsv.cz](http://www.mpsv.cz)) The Government Human Rights Council was established in 1998 with

advisory and initiative-presenting status. One of the working committees of the Council is the Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In the interest of gender mainstreaming implementation in all spheres of practical national policies, in May 2001, the Government instructed all ministries to develop from January 2002 their own Sectorial Gender Equality Action Plans and to set up at each Ministry gender focal points. Another positive step is the establishment of the Government Council for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men in October 2001. This Council has an advisory role to the Government and is a platform for designing conceptual equal opportunities policy. Membership of the Council is made up of high level decision makers (deputy-ministers), social partners, non-governmental organisations and experts. With regard to women's status in political life, changes after the general elections of June 2002 represent a positive signal in the Czech society. Out of 200 newly elected deputies in the Parliament, women account for 34 mandates (17%) that is more than in the preceding period. The newly elected Chamber of Deputies resolved to establish a Standing Family & Equal Opportunities Commission in July 2002. All these new created bodies are at the beginning of their work and they try to find the most effective way for their work. With respect to the undertaking to harmonise the Czech legal system with the legislation of the European Union, the gender equality principle has been introduced into a number of laws and regulations. The Czech legislation is now in concordance with the *acquis communautaire*.

And what about the real situation? In the Czech Republic, there has been for decades a traditionally high employment rate among women. But the gender equality principle in access to executive positions is being implemented fairly slowly, resulting in low representation of women at decision-making level. The pay gap in the Czech Republic is the same as in the EU (25%). Living standard of a Czech family is based on the earnings of both husband and wife, and so there are very few women who stay at home or take up a partial job. Part time work is less frequent than in the European Union - 7 % in the Czech Republic, 17% in the EU. The high employment rate of women results in disproportionately doubled loads placed upon women, who

are required to cope with both their job and their family. The Czech Government supports measures focused on achieving reconciliation of family and working life. The point is not only the well-established network of childcare and senior-care facilities, the development of services and the support of flexible work forms. What is particularly important is promoting changes in public opinion towards more active involvement of men in family life. We have a lot to do for the achievement of a high level of gender equality. Positive changes associated with gender equality are especially apparent in younger generation. The main obstacle hindering the progress of equal treatment principle can be termed as a still prevailing low level of public awareness related to gender equality. We firmly believe that the prerequisite of fulfilling the aims of Government policy in this area is the involvement of general public, including non-governmental organisations and social partners. Both education and awareness campaigns represent the first stage in the effective application of tools and methods of eliminating the gender-based discrimination.

By comparing the situation in gender equality in the Czech Republic and the European Union we can say that there are not many differences. But let me underline, the fact that the situation is very similar does not mean that everything is OK. It is neither OK in the Czech Republic nor in the European Union. It means only that we have the same problems to solve. But in the European Union many of the tools, mechanisms and instruments for promoting gender equality are much more developed and they function. The legal framework has been built in the Czech Republic and the priority is to implement the equality principle in practice. The accession to the European Union will open us the door to the Community programmes focused on gender equality. The European Union helps us to implement gender equality. Now we are involved in the Community initiative EQUAL, we have a twinning project in the field of strengthening the institutional backing of equal opportunities policy within the framework of PHARE 2001 Programme. The Czech Republic is going to enter (in a few weeks) in the EU programme Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality (2001-2005). The activities which are available for candidate countries are limited but after accession of the Czech

Grenzen überwinden. Der EU-Erweiterungsprozess und Visionen für Europa aus frauenpolitischer  
Sicht

"Overcoming Boundaries: The Process of EU-Enlargement and Visions of  
Europe from a Gender Political Perspective"

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

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Republic to the European Union there will be many possibilities how to promote gender equality in practice. We appreciate very much good practises and opportunity for exchange of experience. The most important factor is that with the influence of the European Union the general atmosphere in society will be much more favourable for gender equality.