

# SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC<sup>1</sup>

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## IN INTRODUCTION

The work on this program document lasted for almost three years and dozens of specialists representing different institutions, scientific disciplines and schools of thought took part in it. All of them shared a unifying conviction that the current social and political practice was suffering considerably from the absence of a guideline of a long-range orientation. We suppose that this document may serve as a minimum common program basis for the makers and the executors of social policy of the Czech State in the period to come. So we submit it discussion, critical consideration and maybe adoption by the whole political and administrative representation of the Czech Republic regardless of this or that party affiliation, the Ministry of the Government, the level of State administration or membership in any association. We believe that the document will become a starting point for long-range conceptual efforts aimed at the future Czech social policy being able to cope with the changing demands of the time and, also, the expectations of the citizens.

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared following the discussions regarding the creation of the Czech social doctrine arranged by the SOCIOKLUB- The Association for the support of development of the theory and practice of social policy; the Association was backed up in these efforts by the Committee for health care and social policy in the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. The discussions were held between 1998 and 2001. The team of the authors included doc. Ing Miroslav Hiršl, CSc., doc. Ing Vojtěch Krebs, CSc., doc. PhDr. Pavel Machonin, DrSc., prof. PhDr. Martin Potůček (expert „ guarantor“ of the work), doc. PhDr. Tomáš Sirovátka, CSc., prof. JUDr. Igor Tomeš, CSc., Ing. Petr Víšek, PhDr. Josef Zeman, CSc., doc. Ing. Jana Žižková, CSc.. The final wording reflects the result of the public discussion held from October 2000 to April 2001 during which written comments were submitted by the following specialists: MUDr. Milena Černá, PhDr. Jindřich Fibich, CSc., RNDr. Milan Kučera, CSc., prof. PhDr. Jiří Musil, CSc., doc. PhDr. Libor Musil, CSc., doc. PhDr. Igor Pleskot, CSc., Ing. Ondřej Schneider, prof. ThDr. Jakub S. Trojan, doc. PhDr. Radim Valenčík, CSc. The working version of the background document was presented for public discussion by the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic PhDr. Vladimír Špidla.

## **POINTS OF DEPARTURE**

The Czech social doctrine proceeds from the values determined by their deep roots in the European cultural and intellectual space. Elementary demands are put on the doctrine in terms of safeguards of the fundamental human and social rights. The doctrine also incorporates some new accents and ambitions reflecting the hitherto development of the social reform and the changing social realities in our country and elsewhere.

The Czech Republic is subject ever more urgently to confrontation with some adverse development trends such as : the society is ageing (mainly because the birth rate is falling while ever more people live to a higher age), the rise of unemployment is growing and differentiating, the number of divorces and single parents is increasing, the family is failing in its functions ever more often. In view of the said trends and also because of the growing risks of unemployment and income inequalities the problem of poverty and social exclusion is emerging. The current social policy focuses on eliminating the above risks and has undoubtedly achieved a number of positive results in this regard. However, there is a drawback in this policy consisting in the fact that the policy relies predominantly on redistribution and is directed mainly at removing the negative impacts of the said risks. In consequence, it has not been an adequately active and dynamic element in the development of the society. For this reason, many people fall into a trap of dependence on social security benefits with some even abusing such benefits while others lacking an effective support on part of the society. More efficient strategies will have to be in place in future.

The social doctrine represents a basic guideline for building such social policy that will provide safeguards for the fundamental inalienable human and civil rights and, at the same time, will be a socially integrating element as well as an element that will bring activity and dynamism into the social development and lead it in the desired direction. The social policy forms a framework through which the State makes it possible for the citizens to feel useful and valuable for the society, enhances the long-range prosperity of the society and asserts the solidarity, stability and legitimacy of the social order strengthening thus the coherence of the society. These aims are interwoven: the care for the development of human potential constitutes the basic strategy from which the said aims evolve. Social policy is an investment in people and so also an investment in the social and economic development of the society. The perspective of such social policy is a perspective of long-range prosperity based above all on social investments in the human potential. Such perspective should outweigh the point of view of a short-term profit calling for immediate savings in the area of inputs in improving the quality of the human potential.

The fundamental aim of social policy consists in creating equal opportunities and conditions fit for human life. The assertion of equal opportunities assumes an equal access to education, an equal access to health care on an adequately good quality level, an equal access to jobs, an equal access to housing and, finally, a general guarantee of a sufficient minimum income for cases of the defined social situations.

While asserting equal opportunities, particular attention, special regards and measures should be addressed to the citizens handicapped by their condition of health, age, obligation to care for children or other dependent persons, their belonging to ethnic minorities. The people so handicapped shall not happen to get to the periphery of working and other social activities. Extension of equal opportunities in all areas, above all as it concerns education and access to

the labor market is the best form of the fight against poverty and social exclusion, a way of how to put to an end the creation of a closed “deprivation cycle” and dependence on benefits that some members of the society are unable to escape from later. The equal opportunities have as their essential precondition the guarantee of equal rights: anti-discrimination laws shall be adopted for all areas of social life and relate to all groups that are exposed to discrimination in fact.

While encouraging equal opportunities, it is important that the human potential of every member of society is on the rise: in the first place such things are most important as to have a healthy and well-educated young generation growing, to become step-by-step a “society of education and health”. From this point of view it is necessary that the investments by the society in education and health care as related to the Gross National Product rather go up, though of course the proper and effective use of the investments shall be assured too. The extent of assistance to young families raising children should also increase.

## **I. PURPOSE AND BASIC FUNCTIONS OF THE CZECH SOCIAL DOCTRINE**

The Czech social doctrine continues the long tradition of social thought and political practice in our country and elsewhere in Europe and the world. The doctrine orientates the approaches and actions of the State and other social actors and, also, the expectations and actions of the citizens. Its ideas may be found in the Constitution and the laws of the Czech Republic as well as in the international conventions and pacts that the Czech Republic ratified. The efforts to express the doctrine explicitly and to further develop it are meant to make the doctrine plain to all those that take part or will take part in making decisions on the shape and implementation of the Czech social policy in the years and decades to come.

The Czech social doctrine is in full accord with the demands put on the Czech Republic in the process of the country’s admission to the European Union. The doctrine identifies the objectives of and defines the approach to the treatment of social issues in the Czech Republic in a broader context and a long-range perspective. Its intention is to make it easier for the citizens to understand concrete political measures, to enable the citizens to check on the harmony between the words and the actions of politicians in social area. The doctrine was worked out also because it was intended to form a basis for the broadest possible social consent pertaining to all the significant social issues and the ways of how these should be handled. As its part also is an effort to maintain acceptable relations in the positions of different social layers in the interest of humanizing the lives of individuals, families and assuring economic and cultural prosperity of the society as a whole. At the same time, the doctrine also is one of the significant inputs in a broader society-wide debate about the visions and the desired objectives of the Czech State. In addition, the social doctrine represents such a set, theoretically substantiated, of the fundamental values and principles corresponding to the demands of the time that should serve as a basis for the practical activities carried by the State bodies, bodies of self-government, regions and municipalities, by participating institutions and citizens when implementing social policy. The doctrine shall be supported by a consent of the decisive political forces, shall reflect the general principles of social policy of the new Czech State and shall be conceived so as to stimulate and to facilitate search for the best possible alternatives of solving the specific social issues.

The basic functions of the Czech social doctrine are as follows:

- **Orientation function**

This is a paramount function for identifying the main social issues, setting forth the desired objectives of social policy, especially the ways of how it should be implemented. Wherever an agreement<sup>5</sup> has been reached, it also includes an identification of the necessary transformation of institutions and the tools of social policy.

- **Function of building up and maintaining a national consensus**

This function in the area of social policy represents an explicit formulation of the social contract between the decisive social and political actors contributing thus to the strengthening of the national identity. The contract embodied in the text of the Czech social doctrine plays, at the same time, the role of a safeguard in relation to the citizens that the State will not give up its obligations to them wherever the social doctrine assumes the engagement of the State in the long run. Moreover, the doctrine will also be used to inform the citizens in greater depth about what they can expect of the social policy of the State.

- **Stabilization function**

This function proceeds from the doctrine's focus on the conceptual solution of the social and political issues based on the identification of the main social, economic, demographic and global development trends. This is meant to reduce the risk of sudden shifts resulting from either the fast changes of Governments or the opportunist political steps rather than decisions motivated by merits.

- **Function of social mobilization**

The functions represents creating conditions for taking greater responsibility by the citizens in the process of forming their own life and the lives of their nearest and on the basis of a credible outlook for what they can and what they shall not expect of the State in future. The objective is to gain for the citizens a larger space for their more engaged approach to their own lives, for a choice of their own. Mobilizing people, naturally, imparts dynamism to the role of the human potential increasing thus its input in the development and the prosperity of the society as a whole.

- **Function of a guarantee to maintain a permanent orientation at alleviating social injustice**

The functions concerns outlining clearly the intentions of the key social and political players as to in what direction and to what extent it will be necessary to cope with the changes in the social structure of the Czech society and how to deal in this regard with the tendencies and manifestations of social injustice and/or how to do away with the most painful consequences of such injustice.

## **II. STARTING VALUES OF THE CZECH SOCIAL DOCTRINE**

### **Humanism**

Respect for man as a unique human being is a fundamental value giving rise to social policy of any modern democratic society. Man is the creator of resources for a sound social policy whose purpose and aim is to assure for the man life worthy and as satisfactory as possible. A part of the humanistic concept of social policy is the understanding of the significance of including the individual in the life of families and other social groups whose active role in sustaining a worthy life of their members is an essential prerequisite for the assertion of the basic values and principles of social policy.

### **Freedom and responsibility**

Social policy aims at every man being able to assert his right as a citizen to free development of his personality and his free decisions. At the same time, it strives for every man acting in a responsible way. It concerns the responsibility of those that can work and care of others vis-à-vis those that cannot work or are unable to do without assistance on part of the others. It also concerns the responsibility of the recipients of such assistance to prevent this assistance rendered from misuse or abuse. The freedom of an individual is restricted by the freedom of other individuals. The assertion of the man's rights presupposes, at the same time, full respect for his own responsibility and duties arising from the democratically adopted laws. Education of the young generation in families and in the system of schooling shall be directed at this generation's readiness to take fully the rights, responsibilities and duties onto themselves.

### **Equality**

One of the basic values in a modern democratic society lies in the equality of all people as to their dignity, liberty and rights and also their responsibilities and duties, regardless of their sex, age, race, nationality, religious or political beliefs, health, economic and social status of individuals, families and households in the society. In view of the fact that the conditions under which they live, their qualifications and skills, abilities and performances differ from one another, the social policy can hardly have as its aim the full equality in the quality of their life. For this reason, a modern society strives above all for attaining the equality of opportunities for all. To this end, social policy creates conditions for an equal access by all to education, health care, work, social security, civil and personal assertion.

### **Solidarity**

One of the fundamental ways of forming the equality in terms of dignity, liberty and rights consists in providing room for natural human solidarity and civil unanimity, unfolding from such solidarity, with those groups that are in some way handicapped socially by the conditions of their life and so are exposed to threats of decline, poverty and perhaps even social exclusion. That is why both the State and the civic society strive for creating worthy conditions for the life of pensioners, families with children, the ill and disabled, unemployed, persons not knowing the language and non-adapted to the prevailing culture and way of life, as well as for the minorities and marginal groups handicapped otherwise, all this to the extent considered adequate by the majority of citizens. Assuring a worthy life for the families with children means attaining such economic and social conditions that allow the families having and raising children without a threat of poverty and that, on the opposite, enable a harmonious development of the family.

### **Social justice**

The State and the civic society can go a long way towards achieving such conditions that do not allow the existing social inequalities to surpass acceptable limits and to be perceived by the society as acceptable and useful. It will be so if the economic and moral rewards for work are in accord, to the degree possible, with the qualifications (in terms of education and experience) and the real performance of the economically engaged persons both in the State budget-based sphere and the public sector and in the open markets of labor, goods, services and capital. Increasing social prestige and rewards for the household work and also the voluntary work useful for the public and the society is an urgent task. It will, at the same time, require restraints on the undeserved incomes coming from the gray and the black economies, an adequate regulation of the unjustified inequalities in the form of tax policy as established on the basis of democratic laws and, also, the application of the efficient tools of social security. A part of the just social policy also is the creation of safeguards for each individual and his family meant to allow all people to make use of the results of their honest work including the results of self-employment and business activities. The social policy conceived in this way may contribute to social coherence and assertion of social reconciliation.

### **Social policy as a source of economic affluence and cultural development**

The social policy following the above set of values is demanding in terms of financial funds that shall be coming from the State budget and the budgets of individual regions and municipalities as well as from the resources of the civic society. So it has to respect the existing economic situation and its outlooks and shall be conceived as the one resting on the principle of the reasonable sufficiency of resources.

At the same time, however, the said rational and mobilizing notion of social policy turns the social investments into a significant source of the long-range economic prosperity and cultural contributions that are the main source for the dynamic development of a modern market economy, a democratic State and civic society.

The system of social services and investments in man is a base for the existence of an important branch of economy providing new jobs. Their development also brings additional economic effects.

The widespread feeling of the elementary social security and the existence of social reconciliation based on social bargaining is a significant social and political factor of stability whose presence stimulates economic activities. The principle of equal opportunities enables to mobilize the existing human potentials such as the people's talents, knowledge, qualifications and abilities in all walks of human activities that would otherwise not be used. The application of such recruitment of workers and their remuneration that rests on their qualifications and outputs including their success in the market represents still another important stimulating incentive in a modern society.

### **III. HUMAN AND SOCIAL RIGHTS – A BACKBONE OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE**

The Czech social doctrine proceeds from the civil rights as declared in the Charter of fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. The inalienable human rights include such rights as right to life, to human dignity, to equal treatment without any discrimination and right to

freedom. The rights formulated in such a general way are a kind of a social minimum of any social doctrine.

The inalienable social rights are the backbone of the social doctrine. Their definition unfolds from the international conventions that have been ratified by the Czech Republic, in particular The Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, The General Declaration of Human Rights, The European Social Charter and the key conventions of the International Labor Organization. They involve the following rights:

### **Right to work**

In a democratic society the right to work means a possibility to freely choose the employment in the satisfactory working conditions for adequate remuneration, the right to get a job within the possibilities of the society or such a pecuniary benefit when unemployed that would ensure the citizen an adequate and humanely dignified living standard while enabling and stimulating the citizen's attempts to work again.

The right to work is a means meant to ensure every citizen a share in the national income proportionate to the citizen's abilities and physical fitness and, at the same time, a full assertion of one's own personality; it is one of the basic tools for the social emancipation of man.

The right to work is meaningful in the conditions of market economy too as it represents a natural legal ground for drawing unemployment benefit; the unemployment is unavoidable in an economically highly developed society as it arises from the development of national economy, the need for structural reconstruction, the high social division of labor, the natural turnover of young people or older workers who look for better positions or more appropriate jobs. The right to work should be protected by efficient measures in the labor market with voluntary self-help activities developed in its support, otherwise the right to work may turn into a passport to unemployment benefits. Right to education and to a proper preparation for job shall be considered a necessary part of the full implementation of the right to work.

The right to work shall be exercised in the framework of programs for the active employment policy inclusive of technical and professional schooling and training and providing funds for the attainment of full and productive employment under such conditions that would ensure the individual political and economic liberties.

### **Right to satisfactory working conditions**

Every employee (worker) has the right to fair and satisfactory working conditions. No kind of discrimination shall be allowed in this area. Pursuant to the wording of the International Pact of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of Man (Article 7) the employee (worker) has especially the right to:

- Remuneration which is extended as minimum payment to all employees;
- Fair wage/salary and the same remuneration for the work of the same value without any differentiation while especially women are guaranteed at least the same working conditions as men and the same remuneration for the same work;
- Decent life for the citizen and his (her) family;
- Safe and healthy working conditions;

- Equal opportunity for all to attain promotion at work to a higher level while no other criteria but the ability, experience, knowledge and the length of employment shall be applied;
- Rest, convalescence and reasonable work schedule and organization of working time, vacation and pay for the days of public (recognized by State) holidays as provided by law.

The citizen has the right to have his (her) fundamental social rights establishing his (her) social security clearly defined by the State, to being able to pursue social progress in a free political atmosphere and, through collective bargaining, to strive for better life and working conditions.

### **Right to reasonable subsistence level**

Every citizen has the right to such standard of living that would ensure him (her) and his (her) family good health and basic conditions for life including especially meals, clothes, appropriate housing, health care and medical assistance and, also, social services and social benefits as necessary.

Everybody has the right to protection against material deprivation and social exclusion. The State guarantees the minimum pay that should allow decent living. The amount of the minimum pay shall be subject to discussion with social partners (trade unions and unions of employers). The citizens retain this right even when they lose their sources of earnings in consequence of the circumstances occurring independently of their will such as unemployment, illness (disablement), age (children the elderly) and a loss of a breadwinner. This right is reflected in the regulations concerning the subsistence level.

### **Right to health**

Health is the basic determinant of the standard of living. So the citizen has the right to the attainable level of physical and mental health and it is assumed that he (she) cares for his (her) life himself (herself) too. In the interest of the full assertion of this right the State takes measures meant to achieve especially such developments as

- Improvement in the quality of pre-natal care in order to reduce innate defects of the newly born babies and the occurrence of spontaneous abortions of women enabling thus optimum healthy evolution of children;
- Universal improvement of the state of health of inhabitants through medical prevention and cure of infectious diseases, heart and blood circulation disorders, tumors, injuries, professional diseases and other illnesses that lead to lower quality and length of life;
- Improvement of all sides in the external life conditions and the sanitary conditions of work;
- Sustaining good life environment and restricting of its negative impacts on the health of people and the sources of good-quality foods.

### **Right to family**

In the spirit of its obligations arising from the International Pact of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of Man (Article 8) the State ensures:



- The conditions necessary for joining in matrimony and birth of babies especially through enabling the married to get starting housing and, later, financially reachable flats;
- The broadest possible protection of and assistance to the family as a natural basic unit of society, especially when the family is responsible for the care for the minors and their upbringing;
- A special protection of mothers during an appropriate period of time before and after giving birth to a baby including the paid maternity leave (and/or inclusive of social security benefits) and, also, at the time of their return to work;
- The protection of and assistance to all children and young people against exploitation, premature employment, threats to morals and health hazards.

### **Right to social security**

The right to social security ranks among the great achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The State shall implement the social security so as to ensure that the economic, social and cultural rights safeguard dignity and a free development of the personality of man. This right is dealt with in detail in the conventions of the International Labor Organization, especially in the conventions on social security and equal treatment.

Special conventions were worked out for the individual branches of social security such as the conventions on health care and health insurance, old-age, disablement and probate insurance (security), on accident insurance and compensation, on unemployment insurance and on the maternity and family benefits.

### **Right to free association**

The right to free association also embodies the right to collective bargaining and to petition and other related rights. The International Labor Organization regulated the said right in detail in conventions pertaining to individual parts that were ratified by the Czech Republic. Pursuant to these conventions everybody has the right to association in order to defend his interests. Association in trade unions is not subject to any approvals on part of the State and the registration is only of record-keeping significance.

### **Right to education**

Education is becoming an indispensable element in the cultivation of personality of the individual and the citizen and, also, a fundamental precondition for his (her) appearance in the labor market. There is a majority of jobs already now that require high qualifications and the share of such jobs continues to rise. The demands on the qualification as such are also changing rapidly. So, the importance of a life-long education is going to grow along with the ever increasing dynamism of the labor market. For this reason, the right to education assumes that every citizen will get such education and training that will correspond to his (her) dispositions and abilities.

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Ensuring the above rights which represents the basic content of the social doctrine of the Czech Republic is a part of our constitutional regime. Particular, specific political programs

may differ as to the extent of these rights and the degree to which this or that right is embodied in this or that program but none of these programs can deny the substance.

#### **IV. PRIORITIES OF THE CZECH SOCIAL DOCTRINE**

##### **1. Work and the development of human potential**

Providing support for the development of human potential, utilizing and protecting that potential constitute the basic priority of the Czech social doctrine. In the environment of the economically highly developed market economies, the human potential, with its quality going up, is the most important source of the dynamic economic growth, democratic development of the political system and the society and, also, of sustaining social coherence in the Czech Republic. It is just the human potential that will decide above all as to what extent we will succeed in coping with the risks in the development of the modern society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (such risks as unemployment, threats to the family and its functions and social exclusion) and in improving the quality of life.

Social policy is a sum of measures meant to develop and to cultivate the human potential. It creates equal opportunities for one's assertion in society bolstering in this way individual talents of the individuals and, also, mutual confidence and responsibility among the members of the society. Under these circumstances, all citizens fit for work want and can take part in the market competition and contribute to economic prosperity.

The human potential, formed on a continuous basis, shall be made use of either in the working activity through the labor market or in the work for the benefit of the community, the benefit of the dependent members of the family or other citizens, in a higher productive power of this activity. Otherwise the system of social policy would collapse in terms of funding and the people would fall into social dependence. That is why the social policy shall formulate much more demanding objectives in the area of employment, especially as it concerns the sphere of active employment policy.

The said objectives include a number of the following basic requirements:

##### **Employability**

This requirement calls for a much greater emphasis to be put on the preparation for work including programs of incentives, module training for unskilled laborers who are getting to the periphery of the labor market, programs of vocational training, programs meant to gain working experience by the people newly entering the labor market, programs of life-long schooling and education for the employees who are jeopardized by unemployment. An active policy in the area of vocational training and preparation facilitates modernization and restructuring changes in the economy. Besides, such policy improves the overall readiness of people to start in business, to implement the necessary social changes and to form a democratic society.

##### **Motivation to activity**

The amounts of the unemployment benefits and in fact of the entire system of benefits shall be determined in a way that would clearly give preferential treatment to working activity

(performed either as paid or voluntary activities) against dependence on the benefits and this is to be applied to all types of households. The working activity of the breadwinner shall in all instances make it possible for the whole family to live in dignity. Similarly, the breadwinner of the family shall be assisted in his move from a temporary employment (combined perhaps with entitling him to continued social benefits for some time) to a permanent job so that the hitherto frequent activities in the informal economy are done away with.

### **Guarantee of working activity**

The said guarantee shall be provided but concurrently with a commitment to working activity on part of the people who get out of the labor market though they are able to work. The notion of work should be understood here to also include a useful kind of activity for the benefit of society – i.e. work not only in the profit bearing sector but also in such areas as social services, ecology, building social infrastructure and/or preparation for such forms of working engagement.

### **A greater proportion of funds in the Gross Domestic Product to be allocated to active employment policy.**

It should be taken into consideration that heavier pressures on allocating such funds are generated just in the periods of increasing or permanently high, not falling unemployment.

## **2. Family and the labor market**

Human potential is formed predominantly in the family. Through its good functioning the family creates favorable conditions for the cultivation of young people, their proper personalities. So, the development of human potential is also subject to having a good family-related policy of the State standing behind the family in all its basic functions.

Equal opportunities, their attainment in working activities assume the existence of an efficient link between the care for family and the engagement in the labor market. The social policy shall enable equal shares by both man and woman of their engagement in the care for children. It should also enable a combination of both the working activity in the market and the care for children which means that a part-time employment may in no way restrict the right to receive benefits or to make use of the services connected with the care for children. Measures shall be taken to reduce the negative impacts of breaks in the working careers arising from the engagement in the care for children. The notion of work shall be extended gradually so as to encompass the linkage and the recognition of social contribution of not only paid jobs but also the voluntary unpaid activities performed for the benefit of the community or the society as a whole, as well as the care for dependent persons in the family or community. The flexibility of the labor market and the effective division of labor in society may rest very well just namely in such extension of the notion of work, the strategy of equal chances, sharing the care-related engagements and the linkage between the areas of work and family.

## **3. Education and the labor market**

One of the objectives of social policy consists in raising the culture to the level comparable with the highly developed countries culturally and economically. That will have positive impacts of the socio-cultural, political and economic nature. The ability of people to carry out

positive social changes will rise as well as will also rise such phenomena as the people's adaptability to these changes, the flexibility of both the employers and employees in relation to the labor market and the chances of safe engagement of the people in the labor market.

The system of life-long education shall give all citizens equal chances and conditions enabling them to become and to stay for all their life well-qualified workers and well-educated personalities in harmony with their individual intentions. This also presupposes an extension of educational activities beyond the sphere of formal schooling (so as to also include the educational activities of employers and other educational subjects) and an acceptance of the idea that the investments in education coming all possible sources are, as a matter of fact, the most effective investments in the long run.

#### **4. Doing away with discrimination**

In terms of values, an important starting point of the social doctrine in the Czech Republic lies in an equal access of all citizens to education, health care, to jobs and social security. Discrimination that we have been witness to rather vividly so far reflects in the different positions of men and women, certain groups of citizens and national minorities goes contrary to that starting point and is one of the sources of social exclusion. Doing away with all forms of discrimination is thus the imperative of the policy of the democratic State.

#### **5. Support for the development of civic society and the non-profit sector**

Strengthening the functions of the family is also a precondition for building up a civic society. Such society arises in the first place from the bonds inside the family and among the families within the community. The family forms a natural environment for solidarity and creation of equal chances. It is just the commonwealth of families that can assert effectively the said principles in the community. Civic society rests on a free association of people in order to assert their interests and needs. It is based on a partnership between the public and the private spheres and on the activities mediated through non-profit organizations. It is the duty and the commitment of the State to extend a pronounced support to the citizens' organizations and associations as these are indispensable in many respects in protecting the families and individuals in case of need and uncertainty. They also form an indispensable environment for the articulation of common interests and represent a great contribution to the formation of public policy in relation to families and communities. Their significance also lies in the fact that the non-profit organizations mediate civic participation in the process of decision-making and in checking upon the formation and implementation of public policy.

#### **6. Promotion of confidence and reciprocity, responsibility and security in the setup of the system of social protection**

An active civic society is the only kind of society able to create an ideal environment for trust and solidarity among its members. The social policy contributes to such mutual confidence and the legitimacy of the strategy of protection against the social hazards and the shared risks in case that it respects the principle of reciprocity. That means that the system of social security shall reflect to a considerable degree the contributions of the individual participants in the system and their deserts, working or other, as e.g. their care for family or some other benefit for the society. Moreover, the system must respond sensitively to the justified and specific needs that arise from health and other handicaps. This system of the jointly shared risk shall promote mutual trust and confidence by barring parasites on the system, i.e. putting

to an end the misuse of common resources by some individuals or groups and will also efficiently see to it that the obligations to the common system are carried out (e.g. tax and social security payments).

Apart from the collective system of social insurance and supplementary insurance, the assumption of personal responsibility for the future of an individual or a family in the form of individual additional insurance shall also be encouraged and developed.

Trust, solidarity and the legitimacy of the mutual risk-sharing are based above all on the fulfillment of obligations. It is the obligation and the responsibility of different generations, different social groups and other subjects not lay higher costs of their needs onto the shoulders of other generations, groups of subjects, unless it is absolutely necessary in consequence of their objectively limited possibilities to cover sufficiently the costs. If that obligation were not carried, the solidarity and the jointly shared risks would be unfeasible.

## **V. WAYS OF ASSERTING THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE IN PRACTICAL SOCIAL POLICY**

In the practical social policy the principle of subsidiarity shall be applied (i.e. responsibility and co-responsibility in accordance with the possibilities of the given subject) in the order of the individual, then the family, then the municipality, then the region and, finally, the State while a broad space and support for a free and voluntary engagement of the non-State subjects shall be in place too. Naturally, the requirement of subsidiarity and responsibility of citizens, their families and communities presupposes the presence of support by the State and the creation of favorable conditions, again by the State, for the activities and initiatives on part of individuals and other subjects. The State develops a legal framework and concentrates in its hands the biggest resources and authorities inclusive of the control mechanisms.

The State is the chief manager of the risks in a modern society. However, it does not follow from this that the State would assume a full guarantee for all sorts of risks. The activities of the State shall not damp or eliminate the interests and the activities of other subjects acting in the field of social protection, on the contrary, the State shall rather stimulate those subjects. A responsibly moderating and coordinating role of the State consists in forming the conditions for the effective implementation of the Czech social doctrine with other actors of the democratic civic society, i.e. the citizens and foundations, foundation funds, generally useful societies, religious organizations, civic associations and initiatives, all these taking part in the process. The State shall also define the scope for the assertion of the market subjects in this field.

The social doctrine is implemented through the participation of the State acting together with the social partners (trade unions and the employers' unions). Social dialogue enhances the credibility and the legitimacy of the social doctrine and is a precondition of its durability and, at the same time, of testing its adequacy and, moreover, a precondition of the doctrine's ability to develop face-to-face with the changing circumstances. It also concerns direct participation in decision-making. In accord with the laws enforced in the framework of the European Union the employees shall be rendered an adequate room for their participation in the decision-making of the employers through the assertion of the employees' influence.

One of the most important tasks for the immediate future in relation to the reform of the Czech public administration will be the search for and the definition and introduction of a new functional division of work between the State, the newly formed self-governing regions, the municipalities and other subjects that take part in the formation and implementation of social policy so as to allow the reform of public administration to be a clear contribution especially for the citizens in this area too.

Providing clear and exhaustive information for the public about the objectives, measures and the costs of social policy is a condition for the social policy to be carried out effectively. It is necessary to carry an on-going public discussion with the citizens about what should be considered fair and just, what is a right, what is an obligation, from what sources and on what purposes the financial funds are spent. By means of the social doctrine the State acknowledges its objectives and obligations, and in case the State is unable to bring about what it defines as fair and just, it informs clearly the citizens of what is within the State's reach now and what are the State's intentions for the future.

When implementing the social doctrine, the possibilities determined by the available economic resources should be taken into consideration. The priorities and requirements of the doctrine shall be considered along with other needs of the citizens as individuals and, also, along with other social needs. It is desirable from the standpoint of a long-range view to use the economic growth and the gradual enlargement of economic resources for active social policy. The social policy shall be interlinked with the economic, ecological and cultural policies. The social policy conceived in this way should become a contributing factor for the society that prospers economically and culturally for as long time. Then the social policy itself can make use of the rewards of prosperity for the implementation of its priorities and the objectives derived from them.

The practical conduct of social policy shall:

- + enhance the dignity of people and minimize the risks of social exclusion;
- + be flexible and adapted to the needs of the users;
- + enable the payers, i.e. the citizens and the State, to check on the costs;
- + minimize possible misuse and waste of the funds.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

The preconditions for the implementation of the Czech social doctrine are formed thanks to a continuous political dialogue among the Government, the opposition and the representatives of the professional and civic public about social and political issues.

The Czech social doctrine can hardly be formulated once for all. An on-going confrontation of the doctrine with reality and further development of the doctrine are envisaged. This will depend directly on the knowledge available, the social development and the experience gained in the process of administering public affairs. Any change in the doctrine, however, shall be preceded by a responsible public debate.

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