

NATIONAL REPORT
ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION
(QUESTIONNAIRE)

CZECH REPUBLIC
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Overview of trends in achieving gender equality and women's advancement

1.1. Introduction

Due to the current development in the political, economic and social sphere in the Czech Republic since 1995, essential changes in the social values and attitudes have taken place, which contribute to a positive shift in evaluating the significance of the real application of human rights, including the rights of women. The democratisation process taking place helps to liberalise the civic society and contributes to its gradual cultivation. It thus creates conditions for the formulation of the specific attitudes and interests of women, which is reflected mainly in the strengthening of the tendencies towards the formal association of women and the more striking introduction of their common interests.

Prevailing in the Czech society is still the model of a woman fulfilling her duties to her children and family, parallel with the duties arising from her

part in the successful entry of women in the field of independent gainful employment is also played by the work flexibility of women. The relatively well-developed, state-supported network of facilities for the care of children contributes to the ability to manage their work and family duties.

Although women are relatively well received on the labour market and during the present economic transformation, with an increasing competition pressure and growing unemployment, it is clear that the preservation of this state requires greater efforts on their part than on that of men. This is proved mainly by their higher unemployment rate and the relatively longer period of unemployment. The more difficult approach of women to employment and careers is also caused by the discriminating attitudes of the employers, even though in most cases the attitudes are hidden ones. Similar reasons clearly also play their role in the differences of the average wages of men and women. The elimination of these reasons and their consequences is an essential impulse for the present improvement of the quality of the system protecting human rights, the rights of women and the introduction of the principles of equality for men and women.

Besides the internal influences affecting the strengthening of human (social) rights a significant role, in the sphere of the rights of women, is also played by the will of the government the systematically fulfil the adopted international obligations, the will to remedy shortcomings in the fulfilment of the UN Convention on the removal of all forms of discrimination of women and the effort to prove the readiness to fulfil the obligations related to the future incorporation of the Czech Republic in the European Union.

1.2. The state of the fulfilment of the conclusions of the Beijing Conference, or its Platform for Action.

The government of the Czech Republic has started to systematically fulfil the conclusions of the Beijing Conference already at the beginning of 1998, when it authorised the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs to co-ordinate the internal agenda concerning the position of women, It obliged the other

Ministers to provide the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs with all possible co-operation in its activities. All Ministers were asked to co-operate with the non-governmental organisations of women.

From the same initiative the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs submitted a proposal to the government in March 1998 on the "Priorities and procedures of the government in evaluating the equality of man and women". This document was adopted on April 8, 1998. The UN department for the elevation of women has it since September 1998. In its elaboration the recommendations of the Beijing Conference and its resolutions, adopted in January 1998 by the Commission for the removal of the discrimination of women on the basis of the evaluation of the Report by the Czech Republic on the fulfilment of the UN Convention and the removal of all forms of discrimination of women, were taken into account. This document gives the target spheres (priorities), in which the right and the justified interests of women are not fully met or in which they are threatened. It also determines measures by which the required result is to be reached, determines the bearers of responsibility for the fulfilment of the adopted measures and the dates of their fulfilment. The scope of priorities and measures is limited with a view to the scope of direct governmental jurisdiction. Where the government cannot apply its jurisdiction directly e.g. in the sphere of the internal mechanism of the political parties or in relation to private media, a wider space is created for the non-governmental initiatives. The implementation of this policy in practice is a continuous and long-term process and therefore the government does not consider the adopted national programme document and priorities as definitely unchangeable. The first (annual) summary report on the fulfilment of the government programme was discussed in May 1999. On the basis of the reached results it has been recommended to change or amend some additional measures.

Parallely with the government initiative there is also the initiative of about 25 - 30 women NGO's. Most of these organisations concentrate on specific spheres of public interest, all of them with a charitable character. Only some of them have as their aim to improve the position of women or to enforce a

policy of equal opportunities for men and women. In 1995-7 the last name stayed almost isolated in the spreading of information on the conclusions of the Beijing Conference. In 1998 the aims and procedures of their policy were summarised in an "Action plan for reaching an equal position of men and women", which supplements the government programme (see annex no.1).

1.3. Basic procedures of the government policy.

The rate of reaching the given aims depends, at the moment, on the creation and deepening of the social environment able to fully perceive and accept the justification of the principle of equality of men and women, the justification of specific rights of women and their interests. The aims of the government of the Czech Republic are at the moment mainly:

- the support of the current raising of general awareness of the essence and contents of the principle of equal positions of men and women, of the creation of equal opportunities for women and men and of the rights of men and women and the ways and means of their implementation and fulfilment and thus of a change of public opinion in this sense,
- the improvement of the formal-legal protection of the equal position of women and men, and the improvement of the state of the organisational mechanisms, by which the individual rights and equality of men and women can be applied and
- enforcement of the principle of equality in all spheres of practical policy - mainstreaming.

1.3.1. The general awareness of the essence and contents of the principle of an equal position for women and men, of the creation of equal opportunities for men and women, as well as of the rights of men and women and the method of their application is, so far, relatively low. The present society perceives it more as a general expression of inequality among the citizens, without feeling the need for a specific strengthening of rights from the point of view of the sex. This attitude continues from the communistic regime, which, in its paternalistic approach to the citizens suppressed any expressions of

group interests, including their introduction. The generally low level of general awareness of the given questions is increasing only very slowly.

Until recently only NGO's of women tried to change this attitude. At this time they were joined by state bodies, mainly the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The increased adult education and information activities also attracted the interest of the media. However, it is clear that so far it has not been possible to awake a broader interest of the public.

A topical chance to mobilise public interest is the future participation of the Czech Republic at the IV. Medium-term EU programme, aimed at the support of the activities (projects) strengthening new opportunities for men and women. The Czech Republic asked the respective EU bodies to participate in this programme in 1998.

In the mean time, as well as in the future, it is presumed that in the sphere of adult education, the newly established Government Council for Human rights, will also participate in this activity.

A basic conditions for the work of the state and public entities to the benefit of increasing the level of information on the position of women, their rights and the way of how to introduce them, is the existence of a system financial funds. The state of the introduction of this system is given in part 2.

1.3.2. The formal-legal protection of the equal position of women and men and the improvement of the state of the organisational mechanisms, through which the individual rights to equality of men and women can be applied:

This protection is ensured by the Constitution of the Czech Republic or the Constitutional Document of Human Rights and Liberties. Another basic legal document is the UN Convention on the removal of all forms of discrimination of women, which was adopted by Parliament as part of the legal order in 1987, and in 1993 became also part of the legal order of the newly founded Czech Republic. With the exception of legal norms, which on the basis of constitutional authority grant, in the labour-legal relations, a special protection of women in general, pregnant women and women shortly after

giving birth, all the provisions in the respective legal spheres have essentially a neutral character.

For the introduction of the principle of equality for men and women in the legal order a revision of the respective legal rules, or actually their impact is made and changes in the legal order are introduced wherever it seems necessary. The basic measure for this revision is mainly the level and demands of the rules of the European Community, or the legal rules of its member states and the contents of the adopted international obligations. The experience gained so far in the effort to transpose the Community norms to the national jurisdiction lead to the endeavour to open a public discussion on the subject of the adoption of the special law on equal opportunities for men and women.

Part of the process of introduction equality for men and women is also the improvement of the state of the organisational mechanisms, by which the individual rights to equality of men and women can be applied, or enforce. The existing system of court protection does not give sufficient guarantees of an effective protection of the respective rights, mainly for reasons of the time and procedural demands of the court proceedings and thus their expense. There does not exist any possibility of a parallel impact of an extra court mechanisms, mainly of a peaceful character, in which professional or tripartite bodies or state control bodies could participate. At present material basis for the solution of this state is being formulated.

The above process takes place with the participation of the whole society, it is part of the discussion of the government, social partners, NGO's, the professional public and the media. It is presumed that it will be concluded in 2003.

1.3.3. The introduction of the principle of equality in all the spheres of practical policy:

Mainstreaming is another political tool that helps to improve the position of women, which is not yet made full use of. The main reason for this is the present relatively low level of awareness of the essence of the principle of

equal opportunities, or the principle of equal treatment, both on the level of state authorities dealing with the creation of professional conceptions and partial policies, as well as in the sector of public administration. It is clear that the social partners also lack a really professional representation, which would introduce the respective principles and justified interest of women to their programme documents and collective negotiations. Another reason is the present state, when the structure of territorial bodies of the public administration is undergoing a long-term reconstruction, connected with the creation of new territorial bodies. We therefore consider the effective grasping of mainstreaming as a long-term process in every respect.

In spite of the above difficulties the method of mainstreaming was applied

the Czech Republic in spring 1999. The amendment defined more precisely the prohibition to discriminate women and men in the approach to employment and in its performance, at the same time the discrimination of advertisement was prohibited. In connection with the obligations connected with the process of the Czech Republic joining the EU, the principle of equal treatment of men and women in their jobs is transposed to the draft amendment of the Labour Code and the draft amendment of legal regulations dealing with the reward for work.

The rate of the actual introduction of equality for men and women in their gainful activities depends on the specific conditions in which citizens take care of children or needy members of the family, i.e. mainly women can, parallelly with this care, fulfil their duties resulting from their jobs. The government also considers the support of the creation of these conditions, mainly the preserving of a net of pre-school care centres, among its main priorities. Results so far prove that facilities and services of this kind are sufficient, of good quality and attainable.

The interest of the state is also directed at the protection of women from violence. Although this subject was at first received by the public with certain doubts that it has become very topical can be seen ever more clearly. The approach of the state concerning this question has a wide scope: from providing formal legal regulations for an effective punishment of the respective unrequired behaviour up to the introduction of suitable methods of social work in the sphere of prevention and care of the victims of violence. A decisive role in the practical help for women threatened by violence, as well as victims of violence, is played by NGO's dealing with the struggle against violence perpetuated on women. In this activity they are supported by the state.

Permanent attention is being paid to the protection of the health of women, including pregnant women, and that mainly at work. The formal-legal framework of this protection is on a high level, the interest of the state is therefore concentrated on the effectiveness (frequency, quality, consistency) of control carried out.

Relatively outside the sphere of government priorities remain the questions of the participation of women in decision-making, i.e. the participation of women in politics. The absence of women in the government is explained not by the lack of will, but more by the lack of public understanding of the principle of new opportunities and the recognition of the significance of the participation of women in politics. The adoption of specific measures in this respect must therefore be preceded by systematic adult education, including education within the political parties, It is presumed that it is more the NGO's and the public that have a chance to succeed than the government itself.

suitability, adequateness and easy accessibility of motivation sources, as well as the acceptability of the provided models from the point of view of traditional culture, historical and territorial affinity.

Financial and institutional measures

2.1. Institutional measures

2.1.1. From the second half of 1997 the attitude of the government changed to a systematic approach concerning its responsibility for the position of women in the society. This approach resulted in the specific determination of the formal responsibility of the co-ordination of this policy. At the beginning of 1998 charged with this co-ordination role was the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs. At the same time all the ministries were asked to cooperate with the NGO of women. The Minister of Labour and Social Affairs was also

Human Rights. At the head of the Council stands the government Representative of the Czech Republic for Human Rights. As a result of the interlinking of the office of Representative and chairman of the Council the jurisdiction of the two bodies partly overlaps. The Council also studies and evaluates the state of keeping human rights, specifically evaluates the fulfilment of international obligations, including the UN Convention on the removal of all forms of discrimination of women. Represented on the level of deputy ministers are those ministries with a decisive influence on the state of meeting human rights. Represented in the Council by the same number is the public, represented by the representatives of NGO's, publicly acknowledged personalities and experts. Auxiliary bodies of the Council are professional sections, aimed at specific spheres of human rights. According to the statute of the Council, adopted in February of this year, one of the eight professional sections is the section for equal opportunities for men and women. In the about 15 member section are representatives of six to seven women's NGO's and the same number of representatives of the relevant ministries, the remaining number will consist of representatives of the professional (scientific) public. By establishing the institute of the Council of the government of the Czech Republic for human rights, the government gives, for the first time, an opportunity to the NGO's to directly influence the policy in the sphere of human rights, including the policy of equal opportunities for men and women.

2.1.4. The Parliament of the Czech Republic also deals with the position of women. The commission for the equal position of women, attached to the petition committee and the committee for human rights (mentioned in the Report of the Czech Republic on the position of women, which was prepared for the Beijing Conference in 1995), was dissolved after the elections in 1996, but on the initiative of the female members of Parliament, in 1998 a sub-committee of the Parliament committee for social affairs and the health service was established, which deals with equal opportunities and questions concerning the family. Members of the sub-committee are by Parliamentary procedural rules, besides MPs, also representatives of women's NGO's.

2.1.5. The good attitude of the government concerning the participation of NGO's in the solution of the problems of women and initiated their increased activity: women's NGO's reacted by adopting their own programme - "Action Plan for Reaching an Equal Position of Women and Men". Besides their own activities the women's NGO's co-operate with state authorities and ministries. A regular and close co-operation was introduced with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, i.e. with its department dealing with the co-ordination of the agenda of the position of women and equal opportunities for men and women. The contents of this co-operation is mainly the mutual exchange of information and the participation in the preparation of basic documents concerning women and equal opportunities. Those women's NGO's who are responsible for publicly beneficial activities are supported by the state.

Another important expression of the growing activation of women's movements is, the at present, formally declared will to create a constructively aimed national representation, the target of which is to be a partner for in opposition to the government in forming the conception of the national policy in the given sphere (Association for Equal Opportunities). The first formal steps towards the foundation of an association of women's NGO's were already taken in December 1998

2.1.6. The above structure of the institutionalised agenda of equal opportunities was introduced in the course of 1998 - 1999. Already now it is clear that the given conception and mutual co-operation bonds between the respective bodies are not ideal. There continues the doubt whether the right of NGO's to be represented in the Council of the Government of the Czech Republic for Human Rights is a sufficient guarantee for these organisations to be able to actually and directly participate in the systematic creation of the conception of the national policy of equal opportunities for men and women. Difficulties are also caused by the state in which the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, by its co-ordination jurisdiction, cannot effectively influence the effectiveness and fulfilment of those measures which come under the authority of other ministries or outside the range of the executive power. The creation of essential measures exceeding the authority of the respective

ministries remains at present under the general jurisdiction of the government and in the given state it can be systematically influenced only indirectly and ad hoc (through the government members, the Council of the Government for Human Rights, the Representative of the Government for Human Rights and by the interpellation of the members of parliament).

The above present problems are, however, viewed to the fact that the very institutionalisation of this policy raised its prestige, initiated public interest and supported public and state activities, which, in spite of their nation-wide importance, for a long time, unsuccessfully, looked for official support. This a relative new system and its effectiveness will have to be judged and evaluated after a certain period of time. However, what is essential is that the gained experience will doubtlessly result in initiatives, which will, in time, improve the effectiveness of the whole system

2.2. Financial questions

2.2.1. The state budget of the Czech Republic does not have any specific funds for the implementation of the policy of equal opportunities for men and women yet, nor for the improvement of the position of women. The costs connected with the inter-branch co-ordination of the agenda of equal opportunities by the specialised department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs are covered from the state budget allotted to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The costs connected with the activities of the specialised section for equal opportunities in the framework of the Council of the Government of the Czech Republic for Human Rights, will be similarly covered from the budget of the Vice Prime Minister of the Government for legislation.

The costs for measures carried out by the state for the improvement of the position of women and the providing of equal opportunities, nor the cost. with which the state co-finances the activities of the NGO's are not recorded nor entered separately. The situation is the same for the activities co-financed by supranational organisations or other foreign partners.

2.2.2. In connection with the decision of the Czech Republic to participate in the IV. medium-term EU programme on equal opportunities for women and men (see item 1.3.1) the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs received from the state budget for 1999, the amount of about 80 thousand EURO, corresponding to 50 % of the financial funds, the depositing of which with the respective bodies of the European Commission is a condition for the participation of the Czech Republic in this programme. The remaining part of the required funds will be covered from EU funds determined for the mutual co-operation creating conditions for the Czech Republic to join the EU (PHARE Fund). It is the aim of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to use these funds exclusively to the benefit of non-governmental initiators increasing the level of public awareness or in support of their information, educational and training activities. The introduction of this objective is considered to be the first step towards the foundation of a state supported system of non-governmental initiatives aimed at the creation and implementation of equal opportunities for men and women. The proposal to establish a system of co-financing of the women's NGO's activities is presumed to be submitted to the government in connection with the preparation of the state budget draft for the year 2000.

Implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform
for Action

I. Women and poverty

1. Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the official areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action :

1.1. Newly adopted legislative amendment : - By the Act on state social support specific benefits paid by the state were allotted to the benefit of incomplete families in 1997.

2. Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned : - - -

3. Commitment to further action/new initiatives:

3.1. Measures adopted by the government in the framework of the programme " Priorities and procedures of the government in the enforcement of equality for men and women":

- Enforce that the indispensable performances of the personal care of a child and needy members of the family by taken into consideration in determining the conditions and claims of social benefits, social insurance, unemployment benefits, etc. and at the same time see to it that this advantage be systematically directed at citizens taking care, regardless of their sex.

4. Other : - - -.

II. Education and training of women

1. Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action:

1.1. National Training Fund (public entity) organised in Prague in December 1998 with the support of CEDEFOP an international workshop "Vocational Training and Women".

2. Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned : - - -

3. Commitment to further action/new initiatives:

3.1. The measure adopted by the government in the framework of the programme "Government Priorities and Procedures in Introducing Equality of Men and Women":

- In the interest to increase the women's ability to compete on the labour market to continue to support the creation of educational qualification and requalification programmes making it easier for women to get a job, including their own gainful employment. Pay special attention to the offer of educational programmes for women, who did not work for a long period, because they took care of their children.

4. Other:

4.1. It is proposed to add the following measure to the programme "Government Priorities and Procedures in Introducing Equality of Men and Women, which will be evaluated in May of this year.

- Support the individual capabilities and interests of girls and women in their training for a profession in those branches, which from the point of view of the sex are considered as atypical.

- Insure the state support for the requalification of citizens, mainly women, who did not work for a long period because they took care of their children.

- Include in the programme of the employees of administrative bodies, education in the sphere of human rights with a view to applying the principle of equal opportunities for men and women.

- Continue to introduce in the future work relationships an increased protection of the legal work conditions of women, mainly pregnant women and mothers of very small children.

- In connection with the state budget develop the National Health Programme and support projects supporting health aimed at the improvement of the reproduction health of women and the prevention of cardiovascular and tumours diseases.

3.2. Measures adopted by women's NGO's in the framework of the "Action Plan for Reaching an Equal position of Men and Women":

- Increase the prevention of drug addiction and HIV infection by broader information campaigns, mainly by sexual education in schools.

- See to it that social partners should systematically deal with matters of safety and the protection of the health of women at work, and that mainly as far as the safety and health of employees of medium-sized and small private firms is concerned.

- Provide women with information about the effective protection of the consumer from the risk of consumption or using health harming goods, mainly food, toys or cosmetics.

4. Other :

IV. Violence against women

1. *Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action :*

1.1. Activities of women's NGO's

- International seminar organised by La Strada on the subject trade with women.

- Project La Strada and ProFem to create a consultation and co-ordination centre of lectures aimed at the prevention of trade with women.

- Project of the organisation "The White Circle of Safety" ensuring services of victimology consultations for women.
- Projects of the organisation ROSA, aimed at the foundation and operation of asylum centres, giving help mainly to victims of violence at home.

2. Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned:

2.1. The women's NGO's consider as an obstacle the insufficient legal protection concerning the qualification and punishment of violence on women, mainly violence at home and sexual harassment. They also object to the insufficient legal protection of witnesses of violence on women.

3. Commitment to further action/new initiatives:

3.1. Measures adopted by the government in the framework of the programme "Priorities and procedures of the government in the enforcement of equality of men and women".

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the present legal rules in relation to the new

- Support the development of the possibilities for citizens, taking care of children in difficult situations, to stay in asylum homes.

3.2. Measures adopted by women's NGO's in the framework of the "Action plan to reach an equal position of men and women".

- Contribute to the improvement of the tools and procedures of the state administration in negotiating with women who were exposed to violence, including protection against revictimization.

- Improve the laws for the protection of victims and witnesses, definition of violence at home as a criminal offence and the protection of women working in sexual services.

4. *Other: - - -*

V. Women and armed conflict

1. *Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical area of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action : - - -*

2. *Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned: - - -*

3. *Commitment to further action/new initiatives: - - -*

4. *Other: - - -*

VI. Women and the economy

1. *Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical area of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action : - - -*

2. *Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned: - - -*

3. *Commitment to further action/new initiatives:*

3.1. Measures adopted by the government in the programme "Priority and procedures of the government in the enforcement of equality of men and women".

- In the interest to improve the ability of women to compete on the labour market continue to support the offer of educational, qualification and requalification programmes making it easier for women to find a job, including independent gainful employment. Pay special attention to the offer of educational programmes for women, who for reasons of taking care of children had not been employed for a long time.

- Elaborate and propose a method for evaluating the individual kinds of work in such a way that would give an objective viewpoint for evaluation equality in awards.

- Aim the control of keeping the labour-legal rules at the keeping of the provisions on the prohibition of discrimination from the point of view of sex, including keeping the principle of the same wage for the same work and work of the same value, and keeping the provision on improved protection of women at work.

- At the meetings of the Council of economic and social understanding, enforce the principle of an equal position of men and women, mainly in the questions of awards and working conditions.

- By the future legal amendments of work relationships enable the creation of variable work regimes, which would enable employees taking care of children and the family, harmonise their employment with their duties in the family.

- In the framework of legal authority support the foundation and operation of facilities for the care of children and needy family members, mainly if they supplement or replace the care rendered to employed citizens.

3.2. Measures adopted by women's NGO's in the framework of their "Action plan for the enforcement of equal positions of men and women".

- Create legal conditions for the financial awarding of the so called unpaid (home) work, mainly in taking care of needy family members.

4. *Other:*

4.1. The government submitted to parliament for discussion a draft amendment of the Employment Act, which in the labour-legal relations:

- makes more precise the definition of a right to work, regardless of the sex.
- Forbids the discrimination in the approach to employment carried out in the form of discriminating advertisements.

4.2. It is proposed to add the programme "Government priorities and procedures in the enforcement of equality of men and women", which will be evaluated by the government in May of this year, the following measures:

- Ensure the possibility of state support for the requalification of citizens, mainly women, who for reasons of taking care of children had not been employed for a long time.

4.3. The following measures are proposed to be included in the National Employment programme, to be discussed by the government in April of this year:

- Enforce the strengthening of the legal and institutional tools and mechanisms for the removal of discrimination expression on the labour market.

- Work in the interest of doing away with the differences in the rate of the representation of men and women in the respective economic sectors and in the respective professions. Develop the possibilities and methods for women to hold leading functions.

- Contribute to the removal of differences in the awarding of men and women.

- Facilitate the approach to employment and its performance by citizens taking care of children and needy family members. Support the operation of facilities which will enable these citizens to perform their duties in the family parallelly with their employment.

VII. Women in power and decision-making

1. Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action :

2. Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned:

- Insufficient understanding of equal opportunities for men and women on the part of representatives of political parties and movements.

3. Commitment to further action/new initiatives :

- With regard to the continuing insufficient level of knowledge by the members of the two parliamentary chambers about the principle of the position of men and women, organise a seminar for members of parliament and senators on the subject .

4. Other:

4.1. It is recommended to add to the programme "Government priorities and procedures in the enforcement of equality of men and women", which will be discussed by the government in May of this year, the following measures:

- Judge whether the adoption of exceptional temporary measures for the balancing of the great differences in the representation of women and men in the decisive social activities, is sufficiently based on the legal order. On the basis of the result of this judgement propose procedures, which would remove any obstacle hindering the application of these measures.

VIII. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women.

1. Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action :

1.1. By the resolution of January 1998 the government authorised the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to co-ordinate the agenda concerning the position of women in the society.

1.2. By the resolution of September 1998 the government nominated a Government Representative of the Czech Republic for Human Rights.

1.3. By the resolution of December 1998 the government established a Council of the Government of the Czech Republic for Human Rights, part of which is a professional section for equal opportunities for men and women,

1.4. At the Committee for social policy and health of the Parliament of the Czech Republic a Sub-committee for equal opportunities and family questions was established.

1.5. Women's NGO's founded, in December 1998 an Association for equal opportunities

2. Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned:

3. Commitment to further action/new initiatives:

3.1. Measures adopted by the government in the framework of the programme "Government priorities and procedures in the enforcement of equality of men and women":

- Will ensure that the respective ministries and administrative offices, in the framework of their authority, will start or continue co-operation with NGO's, dealing with the questions concerning women or the equality of women and men. Part of this co-operation can also be the right to demand the viewpoints of the prepared legal rules or basic decisions.

- Subordinate the conceptional, decision-making and evaluation process in all stages of its preparation and operation to the viewpoint of equality of men and women.

- In the framework of their authority study and evaluate the effectiveness of the measures for the application of the principle of equality of men and women and, on request, submit their results to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the CR.

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the measures for the enforcement of the principle of equality and, on request, submit the result to the government and NGO's, dealing with the position of women and the equality of men and women.

3.2. Measures adopted by the women's NGO's in the framework of their "Action plan for the enforcement of an equal position for women and men":

- Establish on a high governmental level an institution for equal opportunities for women and men, equipped with the necessary authority and financial funds.

- Elaborate a national action plan obliging the executive power as well as the public sector to carry out specific events.

4. *Other: - - -*

IX. Human rights of women.

1. *Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action :*

1.1. In 1998 the Ministry of Justice introduced the monitoring of court cases of discrimination on the basis of sex and cases of the suppression of other rights of women.

1.2. The activity of the ProFem Foundation (NGO):

- On the basis of the project: "Advocates for women" carried out in the framework of the EU Phare Democracy programme, activists were trained for rendering legal services to women.

2. *Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned: - - -*

3. *Commitment to further action/new initiatives:*

3.2. Measures adopted by the government in the framework of the programme "Government priorities and procedures in the enforcement of equality of men and women":

- In the framework of its grant policy support the research of social phenomena, which lead to the discrimination of women, or to the threatening of their dignity, health or life.

4. Other:

4.1. It is proposed to add to the programme "Government priorities and procedures in the enforcement of equality of men and women" to be discussed by the government in May of this year, the following measures:

- Evaluate the possibility to adopt a special Act on equality of men and women, the right to equal opportunities and equal treatment and advancement, by which equality can be realistically implemented. In case of a positive result of this evaluation, submit to the government a proposal for further steps.

4.2. Activity of the Czech Women's Union (NGO):

- In September 1999 the Czech Women's Union will be a co-organizer of the regional conference The Associated Country Women of the World.

X. Women and the media

1. *Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action : - - -*

2. *Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned: - - -*

3. *Commitment to further action/new initiatives:*

3.1. Measures adopted by the government in the framework of the programme "Government priorities and procedures in the enforcement of equality of men and women":

- In the framework of the medial policy of the members of the government stress the principle of an equal position of men and women and provide information about measures contributing to their implementation.

4. Other: - - -

XI. Women and the environment.

1. *Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action :*

2. *Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned: - - -*

3. *Commitment to further action/new initiatives:*

3.1. Measures adopted by the women's NGO's in the framework of their "Action plan to enforce and equal position of women and men".

- Enforce the co-financing of the state of those women's NGO's which deal with the global questions of the environment (not only with ecology in theal q

Common Data Sets/Indicators for Measuring Development ProgressPopulation and fertility (1997 data) :

Population size, December 31:

Total	10 299 125
Males	5 008 730
Females	5 290 395

Population aged 0 - 4	501 510
0 - 14	1 795 032
15 - 49	5 346 546
60 +	1 857 481

Non-urban population :	2 614 294
Urban population:	7 684 831

Population growth rate:

(from 1994 population decrease)

1997 natural increase	- 22 087
net migration	12 075
total increase:	-10 012

Total fertility rate	1,173
Fertility rate for women aged 15-19	18,0

Mortality (1997 data)

Life expectancy at birth:

males	70,50
females	77,49

Infant mortality rate	5,9
Index-five mortality rate	1,4
Maternal mortality rate	2 deaths only

Health

Population with access to health services 100 %

Reproductive health

Contraceptive prevalence rate (medical prescription) 31,8 % (1997)

% of births attended by trained health personnel 99,9 %

No. HIV - adult (age 20+) 344 (1998)

HIV prevalence in 15-24 year old pregnant women¹⁾

a) No. of pregnant women HIV+ 24 (1998)

b) No. of women HIV+ in 15 - 24 age group 35 (1998)

¹⁾ figures by age are not available

Gender equality in education

Ratio of boys in primary and secondary education combined :

ISCED level 1 51,3 %

ISCED level 2 51,4 %

ISCED level 3 48,4 %

ISCED level 2 – 3 50,1 %

ISCED level 1 – 3 50,6 %

Ratio of literate females to males at ages 15-24¹⁾

¹⁾ literacy does not occur (excluding mentally handicapped)

Economic activity (October to December 1998)

	Total	Males	Females
Unemployment ratio	7,3	5,7	9,3
Employment-population ratio	61,3	71,0	52,3
% of labour force engaged:			
in agriculture ¹⁾	5,3	6,2	4,1
in industry	40,6	49,8	28,7
in services	54,1	44,0	67,2
% labour force by employment status ²⁾			
employees	84,4	8,06	89,3

member of producer co-operatives	1,2	1,4	1,1
entrepreneurs without employees	9,6	12,1	

Education (1998, December 31)

Net enrolment ratio (%)

Total

age	population	ISCED level
	size	

Males

age	population size	ISCED level				
		ISCED 1	ISCED 2	ISCED 3	ISCED2-3	ISCED 1-3
5	62 104	-	-	-	-	-

6	62 377	55,3	-	-	-	55,3
7	62 345	94,6	-	-	-	94,6
8	61 576	99,8	-	-	-	99,8
9	63 620	99,8	-	-	-	99,8
10	62 393	100,0	0,0	-	0,0	100,0
11	63 639	54,5	45,5	-	45,5	100,0
12	65 206	6,7	93,3	-	93,3	100,0
13	65 436	0,3	99,7	-	99,7	100,0
14	65 553	0,3	99,7	0,1	99,7	100,0
15						

% population with access to adequate sanitation ¹⁾	66,4 %
% population with access to safe (drinking) piped water	97,4 %
% population with access to electricity	100,0 %
% population relying on traditional fuels for energy use (estimate)	100,0 %
Arable land per capita (thousand hectares) ²⁾	3091

¹⁾ public sewage disposal plant

²⁾ Agriculture statistic, 1997

P L A N O F A C T I O N

TO ACHIEVE EQUALITY FOR WOMEN AND MEN

DRAFTED BY THE CZECH NON-GOVERMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

The Czech non-governmental organisations dealing with the equal status of women and men

- 1) Being aware that women's rights are human rights, they base their position on the provisions of the Czech Charter of fundamental Rights and Freedoms: however, they consider that document to be a general framework only; therefore, its provisions should get a more concrete shape,
- 2) Stating that the international obligations of the Czech Republic as a signatory of relevant. UN documents (Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, documents of the IV. World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995) as well as commitments following the Czech affiliation to the Council of Europe and the anticipated full membership of the European Union and - last but not least - a pressure of the Czech NGO's resulted in a partial improvement of a situation in this sphere,
- 3) Being aware that the international and intergovernmental organisations mentioned above emphasise the importance of a development of a civil society and co-operation with non-governmental organisations,
- 4) Taking results of the topical activities of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs into their consideration and approbation its attempt to institutionalise both the activities and the co-operation with non-governmental organisations in this sphere taking also into consideration that the situation related to men and women equal opportunities was described by the Ministry in a document that was submitted to the Cabinet together with a scheme of appropriate steps,
- 5) Estimating that the scheme was also passed to the NGO's for amendments,
- 6) Resulting from their previous experience with elaborating and adopting their own report for the European Regional Preparatory Meeting before the IV. World Conference on Women (Vienna 1994) and the Conference itself (Beijing 1995),
- 7) Being aware that the IV. World Conference set a task the signatories of the Beijing Declaration to elaborate strategies or plans of action in consultation with appropriate institutions and non-governmental organisations and that - at the same time . NGO's were invited to work out their own programmes in order to complement a governmental effort (compare: Platform of Action, V/A: 297, 298)),
- 8) Believing that neither embodying their own situation analysis nor paraphrasing the ministerial one in this document is needed,

present following views and positions as well as requirements as a basis for the National Plan of Action ranging at the same time individual paragraphs according to the priorities how they consider them from their own point of view.

I. L E G I S L A T I O N

- Czech Republic had certain difficulties with a law enforcement in general what was many times confirmed through practice. Several studies suggest the Czech legislation in the sphere of equal opportunities is insufficient: there exists an indirect discrimination in particular which cannot be eliminated through an existing complex of legal standards and regulations dispersed in various individual Acts (see: Evaluation of equal opportunities of women and men, final report of the PHARE 95 project-1053.00 by M.Castle-Kanerová).

PROVISIONS:

- To draw up and pass the Antidiscrimination Act that should cover discrimination issues completely in compliance with EC directives and recommendations including the burden of proof. To consider whether to adopt an Act covering gender only or other forms of discrimination as well.

II. S U F F I C I E N T D A T A A S A B A S I S F O R

D E C I S I O N M A K I N G

- Non-governmental organisations cannot accept the opinion that the existing statistics together with unsystematic individual surveys are sufficient. The entirety of and access to gender statistics represent one of the priorities of intergovernmental organisations; therefore, they arrange a number of training courses and issue specialised publications (UN in particular). Statistics can be complemented by systematic targeted surveys: however statistics cannot be replaced by them.

PROVISIONS:

- To compare existing statistical methodology and criteria with those of UN and EU; to achieve a compatibility with them through adopting appropriate measures (the Czech Office of Statistics in particular),
- To follow all research studies/surveys related to the equality issues and produced by other prominent research/opinion survey institutions (including the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences); to work out lists of their outcomes regularly and to distribute them to relevant NGO's (the ministry in charge or another body of the State Administration).

III. E S T A B L I S H M E N T O F T H E N A T I O N A L

M A C H I N E R Y

- / national executive body for equality of women and men/
- System of one ministry with its own responsibilities which was charged to deal with another issues that had not yet been covered by an; a other body did not proved to be successful. It is a case of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. First of all, such a ministry deals with those issues using its specific angle of view only there are certain spheres which such a ministry cannot affect at all (political representation of women and men, standing for discriminated persons at a court etc.). Second, all other co-operating ministries reflect equal opportunities issues as a marginal matter - just in addition to their main activities. Third, such a ministry in charge has usually neither human nor financial sources to work out strategies/projects in "supplementary" activities and to co-ordinate research and monitoring. Therefore, equality issues should be covered in a concentrated and comprehensive way. The comparative study of the Council of Europe (Eliane Vogel-Polsky: National Institutional Machinery, Strasbourg 1994) offers an inspiration from 21 member states of the Council of Europe.

PROVISIONS:

- To establish:
 - 1) One national executive body
 - 2) Ombudsman office (or a department in the ombudsman office) entrusted - among others - with monitoring and standing for

Women in politics: in political representation, political parties and international organisations)

- Women represent 15% of MPs in the House of Deputies (Lower House) - i.e. the Czech Republic is in the 28th position of a total of 179 countries indexed by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (January 1, 1997). However, not only Netherlands, Austria, Germany or Switzerland took better positions on the list but also South Africa and other African countries. In the Senate (Upper House), there are 11 % of women; 17,9% women representatives have been elected on a municipal/local level. Women's participation in a political system depends on a number of factors - beginning from women's own will and qualification and their support by voters up to the variety of electoral systems. Women's position within individual political parties represents the most important factor: it includes both women's representation in decision-making positions and their placement on eligible places on candidate lists - in particular as regards either parliamentary or municipal/local elections. However, we find frequently independent women candidates in municipal/local elections: factors like qualification are more important in that case.
- Political parties in developed democracies use to be characterised - among others - through their attitude towards parity democracy.

In the Czech Republic, lack of information about women and men equal opportunities and marginalisation of these issues have been manifested across all the political parties. Therefore, adoption of confirmative action has been discussed - among others a quota system. Regretfully, due to an absolute misinterpretation of that concept such a measure has been almost utterly rejected.

That deficit should be put out of the way.

PROVISIONS:

- After the 1998 elections, to organise a seminar "Women in politics" for newly elected MPs,
- According to an analysis of a good practice in certain EU member states (Belgium, Germany), to recommend to the Czech political parties to consider introducing a quota system,
- To take equality issues into consideration when discussing any changes in a political system (including forthcoming discussion on electoral system),
- To follow a good practice of co-operation between governmental and non-governmental organisations as regards participation in programmes/projects of international bodies: for instance, to include non-governmental women representatives in national delegations to the international/intergovernmental events and to use specific women's capacity in prevention and solution of conflicts.

V. E Q U A L I T Y O F W O M E N A N D M E N I N

T H E E C O N O M I C L I F E

(Indirect discrimination, co-operation of social partners)

Women are discriminated in a labour market. It can be demonstrated by:

- Gender segregation of labour market (including feminisation of selected sectors),
- Lower payment of women having the same competence (level of education, skills, experience) like men,
- Indirect discrimination of women with children and elderly women,
-

"The changing pattern of demography, household composition and family types requires new responses corresponding to changed living conditions in Europe. The organisation of European society is not adapted to these changes. The challenge of the late nineties is to put forward viable solutions for the reconciliation of working life with the needs of families, households and individuals. /.../ Research and action on care and reconciliation will be co-ordinated and hitherto dispersed developments in relation to public and private time, proposals for leave and other methods of reconciliation, policies on working time and on social infrastructures and care provision will be brought together." (see: FOURTH MEDIUM-TERM COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMME ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN, page 19-20).

- Equal responsibilities of women and men in a family care

trafficking. This phenomenon relates also to the illegal migration. Special attention should be paid to the home violence (negative social impact on a family and children).

- An urgent need to train law enforcement representatives (such as police and judicial staff), issues of revictimisation and importance of co-operation with NGO's taking care of victims has not yet been emphasised sufficiently.

PROVISIONS:

- To amend legislation in the sphere of forced prostitution and trafficking in women, home violence, rape, sexual abuse and sexual harassment. To establish a standing working group consisting of respective civil servants and NGO's representatives. To institute a nominee-reporter for trafficking in women and thus to establish an international co-operation in legislation, law enforcement (police), social sphere and prevention (analogically to the EU structure -among others a specialised liaison officers in source countries),
- To improve legislation in the sphere of protection of victims and witnesses, defining home violence as an offence and protection of human rights of women working in sexual services,
- To draft a detailed system of monitoring cases of violence which had been included in a police evidence but were not heard at a court,
- To organise urgently training of law enforcement staff (police in particular), social workers, young people in schools and homes, and public information campaigns.

VIII. W O M E N ' S H E A L T H , E N V I R O N M E N T

- Despite of certain improvement (decline of infantile mortality and pregnancy interruptions rate - thanks to massive information campaigns on contraception), the state of health of the Czech population is not quite satisfactory. There are higher risks of cardiovascular diseases and malignant tumours (see the Ministry of Labour analysis). Threat of sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV) is increasing as well as the drug abuse of young people (including girls). Increasing prices of pharmaceutical goods, expected new arrangements of paying for health care as well as cancelling certain top and very well equipped medical centres (including maternity and gynaecological hospitals) raise fears of families with lower earnings of their access to the medical care. There are also health risks connected with polluted environment
- Global deterioration in equality of environment raise fears as well. It is very well known that women are more sensitive to toxic impacts of various chemicals: it means that ecological risks in their household or on a working place could influence their health more than in case of men; moreover, it also endangers their reproductive health.
- Women have still neither information's and education enough (including consumers risks) nor an adequate influence in

decision-making in this sphere (natural sources, area planning, energy etc).,

- However, women represent a very important power in so called "home" ecology: consume itself, waste sorting and recycling etc. Last but not least, they educate children in ecological behaviour; but they cannot get along with such a role as regards environmental issues.

PROVISIONS:

- To continue in information campaigns connected with reproductive and other health issues related to women; to monitor systematically access to preventive and medical care,
- To pay special attention to:

the civil society develops so will patriarchal stereotypes wane. By that time, we shall worry with various forms of intolerance: not only with a fundamental conservatism but also with racism, xenophobia, lack of understanding a concept of multicultural society and with a negative attitude towards minorities: ethnic, sexual and others.

- Mass media play an important role in influencing the public opinion. However, the Czech media have rather saved patriarchal views: advertising which has trespassed the bounds of good taste and ethics very oft has been the worst one.

- To inform systematically relevant public authorities about all results achieved by associated NGO's and to make them available to research/academic/governmental bodies,
- To establish contacts with Roma women organisations and to offer them a co-operation in various fields according to their interests and priorities.

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The Plan of Action was worked out on a basis of suggestions of co-operating NGO's as follows: Gender Studies Foundation, ROSE Foundation, Democratic Alternative, LA STRADA, Movement for Women's Equal Rights, PROFEM. The co-operating organisations represented by the Plan of Action editor Ms.Hana Klimešová reserve a right to submit the document to both the Czech and the international organisations/institutions and to the mass media. This wording was amended and finally adopted by representatives of 20 NGO's at a meeting held in Prague on 15th of April, 1998.