

cooperation of the state, local administrations and social partners is no less important. The Council meetings are regularly attended by permanent guests - representatives of Ministries that are not represented in the Council, of regions, of the Union of Towns and Municipalities in the Czech Republic, representatives of regional authorities and the Chairwoman of the Permanent Commission of the Chamber of Deputies for Family and Equal Opportunities.

After the parliamentary election in 2002 Mgr. Anna Curdova was nominated to the position of the Chairwoman of the Council by the Government Resolution no. 1095, 6th November 2002.

The Government Council Activities

The Government Council for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men intensified its activity in 2003 and 2004. The methods and forms of work were made more specific to ensure the maximum efficiency. The Council managed to prepare six individual recommendations for the Government concerning the implementation of equal opportunities during 2003 and 2004. The Council recommended to the Government:

- to prepare information methodology for gender budgeting,
- to prepare a legal regulation relating to voting legislation that would secure equal

representation of women and men in the elected bodies,

- to prepare a legal regulation that would provide efficient protection against domestic violence,
- that the materials presented to the Government for discussion contain data (e.g. statistics, analyses), which diagnose differences between women and men,
- the range of priority topics for subsidized projects in the area of equal opportunities for women and men,
- to support the location of the newly-formed European Union institution, the European Gender Institute, in Prague.

The implementation of equal opportunities policy is a difficult and long-term process that cannot be restricted to legislative regulations. The most significant task is to change the deeply rooted stereotypes in the thinking of the general public, which is impossible to achieve by mere amendments to laws, but rather through the support and promotion of partnership, togetherness and mutual respect between men and women.

Government Council for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

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THE CZECH REPUBLIC



GOVERNMENT COUNCIL FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN



„There is no women's issue just as there is no men's issue, there is only the human issue.“

T. G. Masaryk

(the Czechoslovak President 1918 - 1935)

Equal opportunities for women and men in the Czech Republic

In 1995 the United Nations World Conference on Women was held in Beijing. The Czech Republic accepted significant obligations ensuing from the conference. With respect to the changes in the society, the Government arrived at the conclusion that the policy of gender equality requires systematic and coordinated implementation. The task was entrusted to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in 1998.

To fulfil the principle of gender equality the Government adopted the national action plan „The Government priorities and procedures for the enforcement of the equality of men and women“. The programme document takes up the Czech Republic's obligations ensuing from the Beijing action platform. Every year the Government analyzes the performance of the programme document and updates the measures contained therein through its resolution. From 1st January 2002 the Government requested all Ministries to establish a position for a half-time employee at least to pursue the equal opportunities issues.

Constitution of the Government Council and its tasks

The Government Council for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men was established by Government Resolution no. 1033, 10th October 2001, as an advisory body for equal opportunities for women and men.

The primary activities of the Council, as the Government's advisory body, are in particular:

- to prepare proposals aiming to promote and achieve equal opportunities for women and men,
- to discuss and recommend to the Government basic conceptual directions for the Government's steps in the implementation of equal opportunities for women and men,
- to coordinate main basic conceptual directions of ministerial policies in the field of equal opportunities for women and men,
- to set the range of priorities for ministerial projects to promote the implementation of equal opportunities for men and women,
- to identify current problems in the area of equal opportunities for women and men in society,

- to evaluate the efficiency of the implementation of the equal opportunities principle.

Composition of the Government Council

There are 23 male and female members of the Council who represent particular Ministries, employers, trade unions, citizens and professional individuals. Namely: Deputy Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs, of the Interior, of Justice, of Education, Sports and Youth, of Foreign Affairs, of Finance, of Health, of Defence, of Regional Development, of Agriculture, the Government Commissioner for Human Rights, the Vice Chairman of the Czech Statistics Office, representatives of the employers' delegation in the Council of Economic and Social Agreement in the Czech Republic, 5 representatives of the public from non-governmental, non-profit organizations active in the field of equal opportunities for women and men (Equal Opportunities Association, Czech Women's Union, Mothers' Centres, Catholic Women's Union), and professionals who work in the area of equal opportunities for women and men.

Undoubtedly, the existing practice shows that a necessary prerequisite for the fulfilment of the Government's policy in this area is the involvement of the general public, including non-governmental organizations, and that the enhancement of mutual