

# Final Report

Service Provider Forum, Czech Republic

14 September 2009



**NADAČNÍ FOND**  
pro podporu zaměstnávání  
osob se zdravotním postižením



Education and Culture

Active European Citizenship



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## Introduction

During the years 2007 and 2008, already three Provider Fora, organised by EASPD, took place in the Czech Republic.

The first Provider Forum was held in Ostrava from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2007. The second and the third event took place in Prague, on the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2008 and the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2009, a fourth follow-up was organised in the city hall of Prague. As in the three previous events, the forum focused mainly on the employment of persons with disabilities. Given the current situation, extra attention was given to the economical crisis and its impact on the employment of persons with disabilities. Also this Forum was very successful and very well attended. With support of the local partners, following report was made.

## Aims and Objectives

Through the organisation of provider forums, EASPD aims at helping local service providing organisations to set up or further develop umbrella structures for providers and providing information about value and principles of the EU. Through these forums, service providing organisations can improve the communication with each other in order to fine-tune the service provision and to exchange models of good practice amongst themselves and with other European Union countries.

## Local Partnership

- B.P.T. – Bohuslava ze Svamberka 4, Praha 4 140 00, Czech Republic  
This partner was the main organiser of the provider forum: programme, participants, technical equipment, refreshment etc.
- Slezská Diakonie - Na Nivách 7, Český Těšín 737 01, Czech Republic  
This partner played an important role in the co-organisation of the provider forum. They organised the first seminar in Ostrava, 2 years ago, and were closely involved in the 3 follow-ups.
- NFOZP – Bohuslava ze Švamberka 4, Praha 4 140 00, Czech Republic  
This partner was mainly involved in PR activities. The directress of the fund was a presenter during all three seminars.

## Date and Place

The provider forum took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2009 in the city hall of Prague 4 (Táborská 350, 2nd floor).

## Programme

The programme was moderated by Hana Potměšilová, directress of Endowment Fund Supporting Employment of People with Disabilities

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|----------------------|---|
| 8.30 – 9:00          | Registration, morning coffee  |
| 9:00 – 9:10          | Opening speech by Lenka Kohoutová, chairperson of Endowment Fund  |
| 9:10 – 9:30          | Milan Cabrnoc, MEP, member of a committee of employment and social politics   |
| 9:30 – 9:50          | Luk Zelderloo, general secretary of EASPD<br>Employment without barriers / Employment for all   |
| 9:50 – 10:10         | Jana Majerová, Ministry of Social Affairs<br>Monitoring project of situation on labour market   |
| 10:10 – 10:30        | Alexandra Zajíčková, directress of Labor Office Písek<br>Contribution to the employment of People with Disabilities in the Czech Republic                 |
| 10:30 – 10:50        | Jiří Herynek, director of social enterprise Ergotep<br>Importance of stable projects for social enterprises   |
| 10:50 – 11:10        | Lenka Kohoutová, Endowment Fund<br>Supporting Employment of People with Disabilities / Supporting projects towards employment of People with Disabilities |
| 11:10 – 12:30        | Discussion  |
| <b>12:30 – 13:30</b> | <b>Lunch</b>  |
| 13:30 – 15:00        | Discussion on the development of a Service Provider network in the Czech Republic   |

## Participants List and Profile

A list of participants is available in annex. The audience consisted of public authorities, European and national politicians, civil society, employers of people with disabilities and of course people with disabilities themselves. In total 63 participants participated.

## Main conclusions

The three previous seminars in the Czech Republic mainly focused on the importance of a stable legislation, as a crucial precondition for ensuring employment of people with

disabilities. Also the importance of speaking with one common voice was discussed, in order to lobby for major interests and to achieve legislation changes in the Czech Republic. The goal was to establish a platform unifying not only employers of people with disabilities, but also service providers and people with disabilities themselves. Also in this fourth provider forum, the 'employment of persons with disabilities' was a central theme. Given the current situation, extra attention was given, this time, to the economical crisis and its impact on the employment of persons with disabilities.

Within the last couple of years, a strong cooperation was built up with Mr. Milan Cabrnock, a member of the European Parliament. Mr. Cabrnock is highly interested in disability issues and prepared a speech for each of the seminars. Thanks to the different provider fora, we could present his European point of view to the broad audience taking part in the seminar.

This year, also national members of the Parliament were present at the seminar. This is a very important development, given the rare opportunities in the Czech Republic to debate with public authorities. The communication between politicians and officials from the Ministry on the one hand and employers of people with disabilities, social service providers and people with disabilities on the other hand, was one of the main outcomes of the seminar.

They all have their own point of view, when it comes to employment of persons with disabilities. Therefore, a debate between the different stakeholders was crucial. A strong and long term cooperation is highly important in order to create together clear conditions for employers of people with disabilities.

MEP Milan Cabrnock talked about the empowerment of citizens in general and the need to let them take up their own responsibility. At the same time, conditions should be set up for people endangered by social exclusion to find a job and keep that job.

Luk Zelderloo, secretary general of EASPD, mentioned the danger of long term unemployment, especially for people with disabilities. This target group has more difficulties to adapt to the working process. Further more they easily loose working habits when loosing a job. Therefore, very often these people face extreme difficulties when coming back to work, after six months of being unemployed.

Jana Majerova from the Ministry of work and social affaires informed the plenary about a project which will monitor the situation of people with disabilities in the Czech Republic when it comes to employment. A proposal for new legislation will be the main outcome of this project. The problematic parts of the employment system will be underlined and direction will be given on how to improve the motivation of employers to employ people in risk of social exclusion.

Lenka Kohoutová, directress of B.P.T., stressed out the importance of transforming companies in their way of thinking, their work system and their (often competitive) services. Employers of people with disabilities should act as partners, sharing information and models of good practice amongst each other. It's necessary to get organised and to think together about the needed changes in our companies.

Romana Bělová from Slezská Diakonie and Jiří Herynek from Ergotep introduced their companies' projects on how to become financially independent from state benefits. Jiří Herynek emphasised the importance of finding a good partner, providing work to an employer of people with disabilities. A mail order service, for example, could ask a company, employing persons with disabilities, to control the postal orders.

Equally important is the issue of 'self presentation'. Companies employing people with disabilities need to introduce themselves in a positive way. Indeed, they have many products and services of high quality to offer. Insufficient propagation is a problem in this regard. Therefore, NFOZP is trying to offer a solution for this problem by starting a project on a quality label.

This project is creating a system where products, made by people with disabilities, will get a quality label. Those products has to be made, completed or packed by people with disabilities in decent working conditions and for a decent wage. The system of evaluation is fixed for all companies. The quality label is already registered and is part of the National quality policy.

During the seminar, many concerns, regarding the high unemployment rate of persons with disabilities during the economical crisis, were discussed with public bodies, employers and persons with disabilities themselves. We need to ask ourselves the question, however, whether the bad situation on the labour market can only be attributed to the economical crisis. Isn't this part of a larger need for a systematic solution, supporting employers of people with disabilities on a long term basis?

Employment of persons with disabilities on the open labour market should be profitable for employers. Apart from the moral aspect of employing people with disabilities, a financial motivation from the state should be provided as well in the form of tax deduction once a year. In our opinion, a regular tax deduction by cutting social and health insurance delivery would be the best solution.

Next to the employment of persons with disabilities on the open labour market, the possibility of sheltered employment remains important as well. It serves as a doorway to the open labour market and helps those, facing insurmountable problems in regular work environments, to stay employed.

We can conclude that the employment system of people with disabilities, need to be restructured and stabilised. This stable system should be set up under a wide agreement across all political parties, in order to avoid unnecessary changes in the short run.

## Impact

The provider forums, organised in the Czech Republic the last two years, have had a positive impact on the disability sector in general and on the service providers and persons with disabilities themselves in particular. Apart from the network opportunities and capacity building amongst people working in the field, also an impact can be seen in the legislation of the country.

During the provider forum, which took place on 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2008, the audience agreed on the necessity to further lobby for the employment of people with severe

disabilities, instead of decreasing the state benefit regarding the employment of those people. We are very happy to announce that, in the meantime, this agreement turned into reality. The employment act was corrected and people with a severe disability have the same right and the same benefit now, as the other people with disabilities.

The ultimate goal of the provider forums, however, is the setting up of a national platform, lobbying for the interests of employers and social service providers of people with disabilities in the Czech Republic.

If we want to facilitate a change in the current situation, a structured and unified body is needed to lead the negotiations with public administration and to promote the concerns mentioned above.

The voice of an individual will never be as strong as a unified voice of all stakeholders.

The basic orientation of the platform was already discussed last year, but unfortunately we haven't managed to bring the strongest bodies in the field together.

During the provider forum this year, we talked about the possibilities of improvement and we tried to find specific answers to most pressing questions in this hard time.

We are convinced that the problems at this stage are not only caused by the economic crisis, but also by the system of employment. The possibility to cooperate with state administration on a long term basis is very limited and the system allows fraud.

As a conclusion, all participants agreed on further debating and enlarging the platform. Given the high unemployment rates for people with disabilities at this stage, we have to be aware of the fact that these people will depend on the social system more and more. Therefore, a strong and unified platform is even more needed than before.

## Visibility and Valorisation

The seminar was promoted in the main media in the Czech Republic. So, not only stakeholders but also the wider public received basic information about the provider forums and its outcomes.

Media which published our press report:

- ČTK (Czech press office – the main and biggest media body)
- Zdravotnické noviny (Health newspaper)
- Český rozhlas Radiožurnál (Czech radio – Radiožurnál)
- Český rozhlas Praha (Czech radio – Praha)
- Helpnet (website for disability issues)
- Aktivní život (website for people with disabilities)
- Iporadna (website for people with disabilities)
- Mediafax (online news agency)

## Budget

### Exchange rate:

1 Czech Koruna (CZK) = 0.03927 Euro (€)

1 Euro (€) = 25.46172 Czech Koruna (CZK)

### Costs

Accommodation			
<b>Hotel EASPD</b>	Luk Zelderloo	48,21 € (1215 CZK)	EASPD
	Goedele Avau	49,00 € (1242 CZK)	EASPD
<b>Total Accommodation:</b>		<b>97,21 €</b>	<b>EASPD (Progress)</b>

Travel & Subsistence			
<b>Travel EASPD</b>	Flight, Luk Zelderloo	331,74 €	EASPD
	Flight, Goedele Avau	400,78 €	EASPD
	Ethias travel Insurance	4,93 €	EASPD
	Bus to Airport, Goedele Avau	4,00 €	EASPD
	Bus Prague, Goedele Avau	1,02 € (26 CZK)	EASPD
	Mileage, Goedele Avau	10,83 €	EASPD
	Bus Prague, Luk Zelderloo	2,04 € (52 CZK)	EASPD
	Parking, Luk Zelderloo	32,00 €	EASPD
<b>Subsistence EASPD</b>	Dinner, Goedele Avau	15,30 €	EASPD
	Lunch, Luk Zelderloo	7,00 €	EASPD
	Dinner, Luk Zelderloo	6,05 € (147 CZK)	EASPD
	Dinner, Luk & Goedele	44,24 € (1115 CZK)	EASPD
<b>Total Travel &amp; Subsistence:</b>		<b>859,93 €</b>	<b>EASPD (Progress)</b>

Venue & Catering			
<b>Venue</b>	1 day	0,00 €	EASPD
<b>Catering</b>	1 day	1121,55 € (28560,00 CZK)	EASPD (Progress + Bridging)
<b>Total Venue &amp; Catering:</b>		<b>1121,55 €</b>	<b>EASPD (Progress + Bridging)</b>

Translation & Interpretation			
<b>Interpretation</b>	1 day	200,00 €	EASPD
<b>Interpretation: equipment</b>	1 day	596,83 € (15198,00 ZCK)	EASPD
<b>Translation conference material</b>	1 day	0,00 €	EASPD

<b>Total Translation &amp; Interpretation:</b>	<b>796,83 €</b>	<b>EASPD (Progress)</b>
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<b>Other costs</b>			
<b>Printing conference material</b>	Programme, posters, leaflet	11,91 € (285 CZK)	B.P.T.
<b>Gifts participants</b>		58,91 € (1500,00 CZK)	B.P.T.
<b>Gifts host</b>	Chocolates	36,00 €	EASPD (Bridging)
<b>Local transport</b>	Materials to venue	4,7 € (120 CZK)	B.P.T.
<b>Total other costs:</b>		<b>111,52 €</b>	

<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>2987,04 €</b>
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### Income

<b>Conference fee</b>	0,00 €
<b>EASPD &amp; co-funding</b>	2911,52 €
<b>Slezska Diaconia</b>	0,00 €
<b>BPT</b>	75,52 €

<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>2987,04 €</b>
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### Annexes

- Programme of the event
- List of participants