

## **Social Exclusion and Housing in the Czech Republic: Pathways to Permanent Housing**

**Martina Mikeszová**

Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Czech Republic

e-mail: [martina.mikeszova@soc.cas.cz](mailto:martina.mikeszova@soc.cas.cz)

### **Abstract:**

The objective of the paper is the housing dimension of social reintegration. Following the political changes after 1989 in the Czech Republic, homelessness and social exclusion emerged as a visible social problem. Policy responses to this issue have been slow to develop. The role of non-profit organisations has thus been crucial in ensuring the provision of services for the homeless in the last years. Hostels and emergency shelters have become functional tools in giving people a safer alternative to rough sleeping or in stopping a downward spiral towards homelessness for people living in very insecure or inadequate housing. Nevertheless, the main problem of housing re-integration in the Czech Republic is the lack of pathways out of temporary accommodation. Numbers of people experience difficulty in accessing decent housing. Based on the case studies and the experiences of non-profit organisations, the aim of the paper is to identify the barriers to housing integration as well as the factors of success in the fight against social exclusion. Good practices and possible strategies to combat housing exclusion in the Czech Republic are discussed in the paper.

*Keywords:* social exclusion, homelessness, housing, policy, non-profit sector

### **Introduction**

In general, social exclusion means separation of a person or a group out of normal life of the majority society. The process of social exclusion is related to reduced social mobility of the excluded individuals which prevents them from reintegrating into the society's social, economical, cultural and political activities (Atkinson 2000, Somerville 1998). Social exclusion can be understood within different dimensions of social life. Social exclusion can be seen as exclusion from the local labour market or permanent employment. On the other hand, social exclusion can also be defined as denial of civil rights to certain individuals and cutting these individuals off the state social welfare network (Somerville 1998). Cultural dimensions of exclusion may be reflected in the ignorance of (or failure to share) values, symbols and rituals obvious for the majority society; an excluded group of individuals might also differ in different language, ethnicity, religion and lifestyle (Madanipour 2005).

Social exclusion is reflected spatially, particularly through the concentration of low-income households in a given segment (space) of cheap, therefore often lower-quality or otherwise unattractive housing (spatial or residential segregation). Locations where low-income households are concentrated are therefore associated with many social problems: crime, vandalism, conflicts in coexistence with other people, low levels of education achieved, unemployment, deteriorating housing stock and poor availability and quality of services (Crane 1991 Selod 2003, Owen 2007, Mares 2006). An important aspect of spatial and social segregation is also the restricted social mobility in the vertical and horizontal level, i.e. the inability to climb the social ladder and the inability to move, often because of low income

(Vignale 2006, Coutard et al. 2002). One of the factors causing spatial segregation is the affordability of housing, however, cultural differences, ethnicity, or housing preferences of certain groups of households are usually identified as important causes. The factors behind spatial segregation can also be found in terms of housing, labour or even in the forms of governmental intervention (urban planning, housing policy), as certain forms of assistance to socially disadvantaged households (providing cheap housing) may, for example in case of mass construction of social housing, cause segregation of the socially disadvantaged households in „estate“ type of social housing.

An extreme manifestation of social exclusion in relation to housing can be seen in homelessness (Hradecká, Hradecký 1996). Homelessness is characterized by loss of housing, where loss of housing can result in long-term exclusion, which is reflected by social marginalization in the final stage. The society tends to consider homelessness to be a despised, deformed, discriminated against, segregated and marginal substructure of the society. Homeless people lose their ties with their families in addition to lacking administrative connection to the place of their permanent residence. "Alone, jobless, with no relation to their family, relatives, they accumulate frequent handicaps, wandering through towns and countryside, looking for financial assistance, food package or some old worn out clothes" (Hradecká, Hradecký 1996). There is a relationship between loss of housing, employment and identity card<sup>1</sup>. Homeless people are usually trapped into a spiral of social exclusion and lose confidence in themselves. The process of re-adaptation of dissocialised individuals is long and uncertain and the experience of non-profit organisations implies that making homeless people learn elementary norms of collective life requires enormous effort (Hradecká, Hradecký 1996).

Among the factors causing homelessness as an extreme form of social exclusion the availability of housing plays an important part, even though not the only one. In some countries (England, Ireland) family relations are more often emphasised as primary determinants (family breakdown, marital problems, violence and sexual abuse), followed by material hardship (FEANTSA 2008). Alcoholism and drug addiction are not primary and (according to conventional wisdom) the most powerful triggers; early exclusion is rather caused by loneliness and isolation (Hradecká, Hradecký 1996). The causes of homelessness may include both objective and subjective factors. Objective factors are influenced by the state social policy, social laws or regulations; subjective factors are then shaped by individuals, families, social groups - their abilities, traits, temperament, character, age. Subjective factors can be organized into four categories (Hradecká, Hradecký 1996): 1/ *material factors* (homelessness, insecure housing, job loss, long-term unemployment, inadequate income, indebtedness, inability to manage own budget, a tragic event in terms of loss of breadwinner, property etc.); 2/ *relational factors* (family structure changes, family or marital problems, discrimination against women, disrupted relationships between partners or between parents and children, separation or breakdown of family, family violence, sexual abuse and rape, loneliness), 3/ *personal factors* (mental retardation, mental or physical illness, dependence, loneliness, disability, alcoholism and other addictions, gambling, social immaturity), 4/ *institutional factors* (departure from institutional care, prison, leaving children's home). There are many risk factors for homelessness, however, loss of housing is their common consequence; therefore, the factor of affordability and availability of suitable housing dominates other factors.

The term „homeless“ does not only refer to someone who has lost or left their home, their flat, their accommodation; in a broader sense, homelessness may also be perceived as hidden and potential. On the one hand, homeless people are people without shelter, sleeping on the street, in the park or other public places, or live in squats, basements, heat exchangers. On the other hand, a homeless person can also be someone who does have a flat, however, the accommodation is uncertain or unsatisfactory (poor quality housing, non-payment of rent); somewhere in between there are also people in emergency

---

<sup>1</sup> For a number of homeless people in financial crisis, the identity card becomes a convenient merchandise. In many cases, the homeless sell their new identity card immediately after it has been issued.

(asylum, temporary) accommodation. ETHOS<sup>2</sup> typology developed by the European Federation of National Associations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) is based on the principle that the concept of home can be seen in three areas, absence of which can lead to homelessness. Having a home can be understood as:

- having adequate housing, which the person and its family can exclusively use (physical domain);
- having a private space enabling social relationships (social domain);
- having a legal reason to use (legal domain).

This implies four forms of exclusion from housing: *rooflessness* (without a shelter of any kind, sleeping rough), *houselessness* (with a place to sleep but temporary in institutions or shelter), *living in insecure housing* (threatened with severe exclusion due to insecure tenancies, eviction, domestic violence), *living in inadequate housing* (in caravans on illegal campsites, in unfit housing, in extreme overcrowding).

In addition to households in the acute shortage of housing, a significant part of people at risk of spatial exclusion is made up of the households which are discriminated against in the housing market, because of their ethnicity or because they are part of a "risk" group of households. Often it is a household, which due to low income under standard conditions cannot afford housing in the open market, but are sufficiently competent to use rental housing; these households may face discrimination despite the fact that their members are employed and thanks to public assistance they would find reasonable rental housing affordable. These households in the Czech Republic include a large proportion of Romany and immigrants' households, but more generally (irrespective of ethnic or national origin), young families with children, incomplete families (mothers with children) or families with children - these groups of households are perceived by landlords as 'risky', especially when they collect housing allowance. As social workers confirm, if such households are actually offered rental housing by the free market (and often by municipalities), the housing is often located in areas at risk of social and spatial exclusion, or in locations which are socially and spatially excluded already, and almost always only for a short period with an uncertain outlook for rent development in future years (2-5 years in council flats, usually no more than just one year with private landlords).

The aim of this paper is not to deal with the problem of social exclusion in the Czech Republic in its entirety; it rather focuses on tools to support the availability of housing for socially excluded people. The article focuses on two groups of households, households with insufficient skills to retain rental housing and households discriminated against in the housing market. The basic research questions address reintegration of the housing market in the Czech Republic, key factors in successful reintegration and also the obstacles preventing successful reintegration. The first chapter describes data sources and methods used. The following chapter provides a brief overview of strategies to tackle homelessness applied in European countries, which aims to give a general overview of possible tools to address homelessness. The main part of the paper then deals with issues of acute housing shortage and unavailability of housing caused by discrimination in the Czech Republic. The next chapter focuses on barriers to integration in the housing market and discusses implemented strategies to assist households. Findings and discussions about possible tools applicable in the Czech Republic are summarised in the conclusion.

### **Data and methodology**

In recent years, several sub-studies dealing with issues of homelessness (e.g., Hradecká, Hradecký 1997) have been carried out in the Czech Republic. Also, in larger cities (Prague, Brno, Ostrava)

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.feantsa.org/code/EN/pg.asp?Page=484>

censuses of homeless people were realized (e.g. Hradecký et al. 2004), there are also studies mapping socially excluded Romany localities (MPSV 2006) as well as studies of segregation (Sýkora ed. 2007). However, there is no comprehensive material in the Czech Republic to closely analyze the housing situation of the socially excluded, evaluate particular existing programmes aimed to support housing of these people and identify factors and barriers of their successful reintegration into the housing market. Therefore, the project "Regional disparities in availability and affordability of housing, their socio-economic consequences and tools directed to increase availability and affordability of housing and decrease the regional disparities" involves extensive investigation aiming to map acute unavailability of housing in three regions with the country's three largest cities (Prague and Central Bohemia, Brno and South Moravia and Ostrava with the Moravian-Silesian Region). The investigation has been underway since mid 2009 and consists of three phases: 1/ a questionnaire survey to estimate the number of people at risk of acute unavailability of housing was conducted at city halls in all major towns (in excess of 10,000 inhabitants) in the above regions; 2/ next phase involved interviews with representatives of managements of non-profit organisations active in the area of assistance to socially excluded and individual interviews with social workers. In the final stage both individual and group interviews will be conducted with socially excluded.

This paper summarizes findings of the second stage of the research, in particular. To determine the current situation of homelessness in the Czech Republic a research of available sources (individual reports of non-profit organisations and community plans of cities) was performed; in addition, a great part of the data collected comes from interviews with staff (management representatives and social workers) of five largest non-profit organizations dealing with homelessness in Prague<sup>3</sup>. The Romany issue was discussed with representatives of the People in Need (Člověk v tísní o.p.s.), a foundation with long-term experience in dealing with social integration. Based on the interviews, three examples of programmes for integration in the housing market were selected and the staff in charge of these programmes were interviewed.

### **Strategies to help homeless people in terms of housing - international perspective**

Ever since the mid 1980s many European countries have seen their system of public support for rental housing reforming, a change particularly apparent in the decline from supporting the supply in favour of enhancing the demand. The main explicitly claimed reason for such changes on the one hand is to achieve savings in public expenditure. On the other hand, it is dissatisfaction with the results of the support of supply (misuse of allocation of social housing, emergence of socially excluded ghettos of social housing). However, neither of the two possible directions of support (focused on demand or supply) is uncontroversial and therefore a combination of both approaches seems a most convenient solution. Rapid changes in the structure of demand in private rental housing have been taking place in recent decades. Private landlords are increasingly focusing on the lower segment of the market, namely households previously living in social rental housing (De Decker 2002, Bush-Geertsema 2001). Their focus is driven by the growing importance of housing allowance (which in many developed countries, after the reforms described above have taken place, has become the main instrument of housing policy and allowed low-income households to pay the market rent) as well as by the innovative and relatively efficient non-profit models to help the low-income households in the form of so-called *mediation*. These models, where a non-profit (or public) organization "mediates" a lease of housing for a household in need with a private landlord (in return for a long-term lease the private landlord is usually guaranteed payment of the rent by the organisation) or where an organization leases flats from private landlords and further subleases them to target needy households (therefore making the payment guarantee implicit), are fairly widespread in France and Belgium.

<sup>3</sup> The inquired organisations included Naděje, Salvation Army, Charity Czech Republic, Centre of Social Services Prague (CSSP) and Nový prostor.

The specificity of the situation of people with insufficient skills to maintain long-term rental housing is in the fact that the lack of affordable housing (which can be solved by more general tools to increase the affordability of housing) is just one of a wide range of challenges these people face – along with housing affordability, these include problems associated with family relationships, domestic violence, high debt, alcoholism, drug, unemployment, low qualifications, and others. Moreover, those are mostly households not only at risk of social exclusion but already facing social and spatial exclusion; as a result, housing policy is necessarily much more intertwined with social policy and social services. Specific strategies to tackle homelessness (or to assist people/households in acute housing shortage with insufficient skills to maintain long-term rental housing) in each developed EU country differ; in general terms, however, they are based on application (or collision) of two fundamental concepts: "housing first" and "housing ready".

The „housing first" concept is based on the idea that housing problems (ensuring steady and certain housing) should be solved as soon as possible and should have a priority over other challenges an individual or household may face. An interesting experiment was conducted by Tsemberis (1999) in the USA - the results showed that clients who were immediately provided with independent housing have a greater chance of successful completion of the social reintegration process than the observed group of clients who were not given the opportunity of long-term housing. Long-term housing can promote social integration and contribute to successfully solving problems in other areas. Obviously, the concept does not rule out social assistance and therapy (treatment of addictions, strengthening skills to maintain housing) after obtaining housing (it is not "housing only"), however, its principle is to provide the homeless with accommodation in a standard apartment with a lease without the homeless person first having to gain skills associated with independent housing even without the condition of social services programme (Bush-Geertsema 2001).

Another concept, which in turn points out that if the people/households are moved too soon to independent housing, they may end up homeless again, is the "housing ready" concept. Under this concept, solution to (or reduction of) other social, personal or family problems such as alcoholism, addiction, bereavement, marriage breakdown or debts, is a prerequisite for successful reintegration in terms of housing; thus, it is the achievements in other areas of life that make it possible to successfully find long-term housing. A „staircase" housing system is used under this concept to define various degrees of housing, where individual clients are provided with adequate level of housing based on their eligibility. Each stage is characterized by a certain standard of quality and security of housing, monitoring and control.

Strict differentiation between the above two concepts, however, is greatly simplified and an ideal intervention usually involves diversification of help and combination of both approaches. Although many programmes are ranked among the "housing first" concepts, they also require clients to attend a training before moving in and social skills training before living in individual housing (e.g., SNL in France or „tiered model" in Denmark). In this case, homeless people provided with either special housing (training flats, "skaeve huse" - unconventional housing for the homeless in Denmark) on a temporary basis, or use the „full mediation" system, where the client first concludes a sublease and later a lease agreement (France, Belgium). In practice, it is most usually a mix of the „housing first" and „housing ready" concepts that is applied. Even the "housing instead of accommodation" initiatives in German cities (e.g., Bielefeld and Munich) or „permanent housing as quickly as possible" in Norwegian cities, which are considered typical examples of the "housing first" concept, include some elements of gradual transition to fully independent housing .



In their own categorization Benjaminsen and Dyb (2008) indicate differences among three models of interventions for homelessness as part of housing policy in Nordic countries - normalising model, tiered model and staircase of transition. The "normalising model" applied in Norway aims to provide homeless people with individual housing as soon as possible. The approach requires a wide range of social services and various types of housing ranging from rental housing in common residential buildings to living in special Danish-type homes for the homeless; in principle, it is a model where the "housing first" model is preferred. The "tiered model" which found its place in Denmark, is characterised by interlaced social assistance during the stay in social housing after going through the basic stage in a hostel or a similar form of temporary housing. The staircase and strictly hierarchically organized housing model applied in Sweden has been facing criticism recently. Some studies have even shown the link between the introduction of staircase model of housing and increase in the number of homeless people. According to the studies, an overly rigid model of staircase housing (containing excessively strict rules for promotion to higher grades) has been applied in many Swedish cities during the past decade and so, paradoxically, the cities face a higher number of homeless people.

The basic problem of the Swedish model is that only a very limited number of homeless people has reached the peak of the multi-level housing system (typically regular rental housing), and most of them remain at lower levels, because of very low permeability of the system. Even for those who endure, subject themselves to strict supervision and comply with the rules, it takes several years to obtain independent housing; in addition, strict controls and penalties associated with violations of the rules would be unacceptable in, for example, England (Fitzpatrick, Stephens 2007). Sahlin (2005) pointed out that the system proved to be more discriminatory than the open market. When homeless people are not (or did not want to) be included in the staircase housing programme, or have failed, they are labelled as "high-risk tenants" in the open market. The staircase housing system can have a potential impact on greater stigmatisation of the target population. The study showed that clients of the programme proceed no more than a step or two before they are turned back and have to make their way through the system again. Therefore, the system of staircase housing has lost trust of both clients and the social workers.

The essence of all the measures in the field of homelessness is the reintegration of socially excluded households into the "normal" housing market, into permanent housing areas outside socially and spatially excluded localities. Integration ladder is often mentioned in connection with integration. The first stage of the integration process is actually to find a shelter, where the helping hand with asylum accommodation (or another form of temporary accommodation) should be offered before the homeless person (households with insecure housing) ends up on the street and accepts lifestyle changes. Personal assistance is necessary in the first stage, mostly assistance in dealing with the authorities, obtaining documents and processing of benefit claims. The next stage is mediating and maintaining a job to achieve one's own income. In terms of housing, we speak of integration once the client has achieved independent housing. It is, however, a "relative integration" only (Bush-Geertsema 2005) as clients are no longer homeless, but in the vast majority of cases they remain poor or unemployed. Greater social integration is especially preconditioned by avoidance of social isolation, getting addictions under control and ensuring adequate income.

The summary report on case studies of different programmes of reintegration of homeless people in Germany, Italy and Ireland, and programmes for people at risk of homelessness due to poverty or unemployment in Austria, Denmark and Switzerland (Giorgi 2003) outlines the key aspects of programmes enabling successful reintegration. The report stresses the vital role of ensuring quality housing. The quality and location of the flat in which the household is threatened or directly affected by

homelessness has an impact on the success of reintegration. On the contrary, localities with a high degree of segregation characteristic of social housing in many European countries cause the inhabitants to go downward on the mobility spiral. Other significant factors affecting the success of reintegration include finding a job and restoration of social ties. Employment and skills development are important factors in achieving autonomy. A job is not only a source of funds as it also brings opportunities to establish social contacts and to regain self-esteem and confidence. Provision of housing for the homeless people may mean the end of homelessness; however, it is not an escape from poverty. Households usually have very low chances in the labour market; the solution is short-term, odd as well as illegal jobs and use of social contacts, if available. What appears to be a key in rehabilitation programmes is personal assistance and consultancy in dealing with financial difficulties and debt administration, which is also the primary tool for preventing recurrence of homelessness. The limiting factor for the success are health problems - many former homeless people suffer from mental and other health problems; the prerequisite to achieve success is keeping alcoholism (or other addictions) under control. Many homeless people are also burdened by loneliness and social isolation. After moving into new housing they typically break contact with other homeless people and have no other left. At least formal personal support provided by social workers is essential, as it is the only social contact the clients have immediately after the move.

### **Tools to support the availability of housing for people in acute housing shortage - conditions in the Czech Republic and the experience of non-profit organisations**

In communist Czechoslovakia unemployment or even homelessness did not officially exist. The government declared provision of adequate housing for all members of the 'socialist' society<sup>4</sup>. The communist system also guaranteed the right to work, conditioned by the obligation to work. Those who were not employed or have been out of their permanent residence for a longer time, were prosecuted for parasitism. Unnaturally, the "socialist enterprises" were obliged to employ unnecessary and low efficient staff as well and even offer them accommodation - often ensuring a permanent residence permit. After 1989, the enterprises were no more required to employ redundant workers. Corporate hostels were transformed into hotels or conformed to the market situation and as a result hidden homelessness partially surfaced in its overt form (Hradecká, Hradecký 1997). Foreign migrants, refugees and many prisoners who were released under Havel's amnesty in 1990 (a total of 15 000 prisoners were given freedom) were amongst those who found themselves in a precarious situation in terms of housing. Some people, out of their naiveness, also lost their flats wanted by someone else. Social safety network to provide assistance to people in crisis was built gradually, especially in the housing sector.

Like in other spheres of the economy, transformation of the rationing system of housing management into a system based on respect for market principles, was initiated after 1990. The role of the state, as defined in the first housing policies based on neoliberal principles (Draft National Housing Policy, Czech Republic 1991, Background and Principles of Housing Policy, 1993), was to be restricted to creating the conditions for the emergence of housing market only. Key events in the transition area of housing policy include the termination of mass construction of state-owned rental housing (comprehensive housing programme), restitution of a part of the housing stock, free transfer of the non-restituted part of the housing stock to community ownership, privatization of council rental housing stock and the introduction of new instruments of housing policy - in particular, housing allowance,

---

<sup>4</sup> An officially proclaimed thesis on equality and necessity resulting in injustice, corruptcy and protectionism (Lux 2009).

## WS-14: WELFARE POLICY, HOMELESSNESS AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

bonus on building savings and support of mortgages (interest subsidies, tax support). The process of gradual deregulation of rents, which began in 1992 and has been underway to date, can also be seen as a change.

Decentralization of state power and restoration of local governments also included a free transfer of the housing stock from the state property to municipalities' properties. Municipalities became owners of the housing stock; their responsibilities also included the creation of local housing policies, they were forced to bear the costs of operation, administration and maintenance of newly acquired assets. Transfer of the housing stock was not accompanied by adequate strengthening of municipal budgets, local authorities were not ready for a new role in terms of methodology, no rules or recommendations for the management of housing stock were given. As a result of the rent regulation restricting municipal income from renting of the housing units, it was assumed from the very beginning, that the municipalities would privatise this newly acquired housing stock. Unlike in other transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe, tenants in the Czech Republic were not given the *right-to-buy*, which would allow them to request privatization of a council rental apartment and make the municipality comply with such request under statutory payment terms. Form and extent of privatization of housing, unlike the forms and extent of rent control in these flats, were left entirely in the discretion of the individual municipalities and even boroughs.

In the Czech Republic public support for housing policy is now clearly inclined to owner-occupied housing, a fact which in itself reduces its aggregate efficiency (the possibilities of targeting low-income households in case of support of the owner-occupied housing are rather limited) (Lux 2007). The current mix of public support strongly favours the support of demand to enhancing the supply, particularly in the area of owner-occupied housing. In the Czech Republic the system of "social housing" is defined at the central level and only in some cases it is defined at the level of individual municipalities (with the exception of the definition made for the purpose of maintaining a reduced rate of VAT on new housing developments). Rent regulation ("frozen" rent) applied to controlled rental housing built before 1992 is not a social measure as such and was justified as a protection against possible abuse of market position by landlords; a large proportion of users of rent-regulated rental housing belonged and belongs to the high-income households (Lux, Sunega 2006). Although a part of the council released flats was re-rented for regulated rent to individuals defined socially and in terms of income, the number of released flats is low and the majority of the released flats is rented by the municipalities under market conditions („envelope method“). Moreover, some programmes to enhance the supply introduced in the course of economic transformation, such as rent regulation, created social inequalities instead of reducing them. State offers no support (grants, soft loans, guarantees) to purchase existing flats for social housing service (intended, for example, for non-profit organizations); this is also because social housing as a housing concept is not clearly defined by law. Generally, the support of non-municipal non-profit housing operators to provide social housing and housing management in the Czech Republic is completely absent, regardless of the fact that these operators are preferred in many developed countries these days. In the Czech Republic, non-profit organisations can only apply for grants for the operation of shelters and dormitories.

The main tool to support the demand for rental housing in the Czech Republic, as in other developed countries, is the housing allowance. In terms of promoting affordability of housing for people affected by social exclusion the major barrier is the need to have concluded a lease agreement as households in sub-lease relationship are not entitled to the allowance. Persons in material need, as long as they comply with the statutory requirements, are entitled to one or more allowances in material need including living allowance, housing supplement and immediate emergency assistance. In „justified cases“ housing



supplement (along with housing allowance) may cover housing costs in full; this, however, depends on the assessment made by a member of staff of the social department of the competent municipal office in the place of the citizen's permanent residence. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that especially families at risk of social exclusion typically have their housing costs paid in full (or nearly in full) in the form of the housing supplement (possibly in combination with the housing allowance), where often the costs do not correspond to the housing standard, in which the household lives (prohibitively high costs of housing in commercial lodging houses, where the standard of housing does not correspond to what the household would be able to „afford“ for the same or similar price in the free market, not to mention living in council rental flats). In this way the state budget is used inefficiently to provide high housing supplements to cover excessively high rents in inadequate housing conditions which do not comply with basic quality standards.

Another part of the chapter focuses specifically on issues of homelessness and household assistance programmes at risk of acute unavailability of housing. Another aspect of social exclusion taken into consideration in relation to housing is the unavailability of housing because of discrimination, where low financial competence may or may not be linked to discrimination in the housing market. Interviews with social workers were used as nearly an exclusive source of data.

### *Homelessness*

A typical example of a homeless person in Prague, according to respondents, is, simply said, "a man in his early forties with primary education from out of Prague who has lost his job, started drinking, has faced a family break-up, therefore lost housing and went to Prague expecting to find work but failed to do so and became addicted to alcohol". A typical homeless person often has a criminal record, which is either one of the causes of his homelessness (or unemployment) or its consequence. In terms of age structure two specific groups are the most numerous: people aged around 45-55 and young people aged under 25 running away from home. Experience of social workers suggests rejuvenation among the homeless people and shows that the group of young homeless people is increasing. Part of the young people comes from children's homes and lack the safety net of family contacts. Homeless people are also among senior citizens and disabled pensioners. In terms of education, these are generally people with primary education. Generally, the representatives of the inquired non-profit organisations agreed that reintegration took about as long as the homeless person spent living on the street. Stages of reintegration programmes for the homeless in the Czech Republic are usually the following:

#### *1. Street work*

Social workers working on the street, called street workers, trying to get the homeless to day centres and to convince them of the possible solutions to their situation.

#### *2. Day centre*

Day care centres provide counselling (psychologist, social worker, social educator and/or lawyer), food, basic sanitation and medical assistance.

#### *3. Dormitory*

Provides paid for (20 - 50 CZK, c. 0.80 – 2 EUR) one-night accommodation, basic sanitation and counselling. During the night social workers, social and special educator, lawyer and psychologist are often available for the homeless people to discuss their situation. Dormitories may require clients to cooperate, some organizations define acceptance conditions, such as legal age and sobriety. Dormitories of some organizations may be attended only for a limited period (up to 3 days to several weeks depending

on each organization), others are not restricted (Hermes boat – Centre of Social Services, Prague - CSSP). The aim of social workers is to encourage clients to deal with their situation, to find work, to obtain documents, to handle their debts and other.

#### 4. *Shelter*

Shelters provide short-term accommodation (not only overnight) in single- or multi-bedded rooms with catering. The price of accommodation varies from CZK 65 (EUR 2.50) to CZK 100 (EUR 4) per adult (legislatively set maximum amount). The contract is usually signed for 6 months, for one month with CSSP with possible extension. Admission into the shelter is preconditioned by income (work or pension), developing an individual plan and its implementation. According to the Salvation Army's staff, 80% of dormitory users get accepted to shelter. CSSP states only 20% of clients who achieve established criteria for admission to the shelters. A major problem is the indebtedness of households, which ranges from the tens of thousands to millions of crowns; in most cases, it is due to outstanding health insurance, failure to pay alimony, outstanding personal loans or outstanding loans associated with business. After distraintment of salary the clients are left with living wage only.

#### 5. *Independent rental housing*

Only in very few cases homeless people left the asylum form of housing for individual long-term rental housing. Those are cases of elderly or retired people, who managed to get a council flat, homeless people who find partners from mainstream society, and women who became pregnant and as mothers they achieved to get municipality flat. In exceptional cases clients win trust the landlord. A key success factor is especially ensuring of continuous work. In most cases clients of shelters (after the expiration of stay) are encouraged to use sublease, hostels, or change shelters of various organizations; a small proportion rents cottages in gardening colonies. Some organizations leave selected clients in shelters for up to 8 years, because the clients have no prospect of finding independent housing. According to non-profit organizations' staff, 20% of clients of shelters would be able to live independently but lack the opportunity to transition into independent rental housing. According CSSP, this figure is lower, but even CSSP admits that more rapid provision of independent housing could encourage clients to maintain their jobs and to successfully integrate.

A substantial barrier preventing the return to long-term independent rental housing is the *lack of council housing fund for this purpose* (insufficient or rather completely non-existent cooperation between non-profit organisations and municipalities in this area and/or lack of cooperation between the social and housing departments of municipalities in the area) and *financial inaccessibility of private rental housing*, which is very often due to the fact that most clients fail to conclude a usual lease agreement and to register their permanent address, which would entitle them to a housing allowance. To register permanent address it is necessary to have the property owner's consent or a proof of eligibility to use of the flat (lease agreement); it is also possible to use an authorized person's consent. Private landlord cannot prevent his tenants from registering permanent address of the used flat if the tenant has a lawfully concluded lease agreement. However, private landlords often lease their flats to the risk group of tenants, which can provide no guarantees, without any lease agreement to avoid legal problems associated with possible ejection for non-payment of rent; nevertheless, this way they make it impossible for the tenants to register permanent address and to receive a housing allowance. These flats are also often located in geographically and socially excluded apartment buildings and localities. In some other cases flats are subleased, which, despite the existence of legal contracts, has similar consequences on possible claiming housing allowance. That is to say, housing allowance in the Czech Republic can only be paid to a tenant (or a resident of permanent residence accommodation facility) or a landlord, however, not to a person with sublease agreement. The only option for households that meet

the conditions to be recognised as being in material need, is the provision of a rent supplement, which is individually assessed; in consideration of the sublease agreement concluded an exemption may be granted and the supplement can be paid. As a result, former homeless people are thus paradoxically left to rely on their income and cannot use regular public assistance for low-income households (unless they leave for commercial hostels, which are well-prepared for this type of customers, including the use or "misuse" of their housing allowance).

Another obstruction in returning to independent rental housing is a *criminal record*, which determines the conclusion of a contract of employment and/or an agreement to perform work. In case of more serious offenses these clients are entirely dependent on illegal work or casual earnings. Nonetheless, the position in the labour market has a crucial influence on the availability of private rental housing - landlords are generally not interested in the criminal history of a tenant but in his current employment and employment stability. A very significant barrier is *debts*. Resolving the issue of paying off the debts and definition of instalment schedules is a prerequisite for life in a shelter. Unfortunately, debt relief (personal bankruptcy) proves unsuitable for the homeless in a number of respects - courts allow debt relief, provided that within five years at least 30% of the client's liabilities (unless the lender forgives a greater part of the debt) are guaranteed to have been paid off and that the client's employment is documented in the coming years. Also, a limiting factor for successful integration is *addiction* (usually alcohol addiction, drug addiction). Even a partial failure usually causes the clients to become addicted again and to return to the street or to shelters. A non-trivial barrier can also be seen in a *poverty trap* or, under certain circumstances, in the overly generous social benefits system, which does not encourage clients to seek employment (if the client is employed, the benefits are reduced by the income from employment and the household's financial situation remains unchanged); this phenomenon also leads to misuse of the housing allowance (and supplement) to pay inappropriately high rents in commercial hostels or rental flats in excluded localities. Social security system "penalizing" or insufficiently motivating to return to work must necessarily be reformed; given the fact that stability of employment and housing stability are very closely linked, this barrier is substantial even from the perspective of housing policy.

Reintegration programmes usually consider three levels of housing: short-term emergency housing, social housing with supporting field social services and long-term independent rental housing. However, due to the unavailability of higher-level housing, the programmes are often practically implemented on the first stage only (short-term emergency housing). Currently, the slowly developing cooperation between non-profit organisations and municipalities has been causing the second level of housing to appear, yet still only to a very limited extent. In order to ensure its genuine development non-profit organizations would need independent rental flats – yet some non-profit organizations do not want these (People In Need) and others, which would be interested, receive very little from municipalities. Naděje association, for example, currently has one council flat and soon will take over three more council flats. For this purpose CSSP managed to lease five flats scattered throughout Prague.

CSSP has also developed a staircase housing programme, which follows the advancement from life on the street to final integration (Figure 1). According to social workers, however, 99% percent of the clients are still in the early stages of the programme (up to the shelter). Since the introduction of the last stages of the programme is underway, it is too soon to assess the system; nonetheless, the mere fact that clients constantly fluctuate between the first stages speaks of a very low permeability of the system. It is likely that clients in the Czech Republic are generally insufficiently motivated for the staircase model of housing to work efficiently - examples of successful reintegration into the long-term independent housing outside of social exclusion localities in comparison with developed countries are significantly

less frequent, also because there are no tools to help the transition to the last level of housing within the reintegration process.

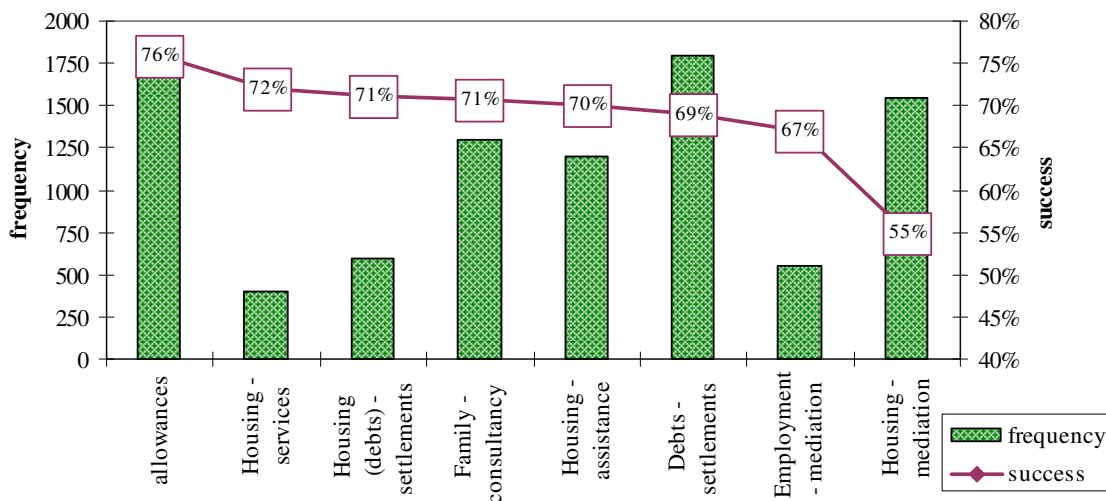
**Figure 1: Sequence of the services provided - CSSP**

*life on the street* → field programmes → Hermes dormitory (233 beds) → shelter for individuals for 3 months (55 beds) → Šromovka shelter for individual and families with children for no more than 1 year (100 beds) → social housing for no more than 3 year (5 flats) → *independent rental housing*

**Romany issue**

Although a large part of Romany households belong to a group of households with insufficient capacity to maintain long-term rental housing, many of them also belong to a group of households for which the market offered housing is unaffordable without public assistance and which are discriminated against both for this and for other reasons in the housing market, but have sufficient competence to maintain long-term rental housing. More likely, their problem is the discrimination in the open housing market due to their ethnic origin; this results in the unavailability of long-term rental housing (the same group generally comprises young families with children, families with more children, incomplete families and households of immigrants). According to the representatives of non-profit organisations, in terms of housing Romany experience discriminatory treatment in a much greater extent than in terms of employment or education. For example, in People in Need’s Social Integration Programmes addressing the issues of Romany population in the Czech Republic, the "housing mediation“ order is the least successful category of all 35 types (see Figure 1). Success is achieved only in approximately 56% of cases and it is mostly related to mediation of short-term housing in a shelter or hostel. Of the total of more than 1500 orders focused on mediation of housing in only several dozen cases housing was mediated in the open housing market.

**Figure 2: Comparison of absolute frequency and success of selected types of orders in 2006-2009, People in Need**



Source: ARA database system of the People in Need

The discrimination can be understood using the behavioural economics theory (e.g. Kagel, Roth 1995, Holt 2006) which suggests a general relationship between subject’s size and level of risk aversion. The

larger the subject, the smaller the risk aversion. Conversely, small entities and individuals tend to show maximum risk aversion. The above theory clearly implies that in a situation where the majority of the rental flats in the Czech Republic is owned by small owners, the threat of discrimination is logically (and "rightfully", from the economic point of view) very high. Small landlords seek to find a tenant with minimum risk and to achieve this objective they make use of prejudices; their aversion to risk comes naturally from the fact that any failure (tenant's non-payment of the rent) could seriously endanger their family finance. This analogously applies also to municipalities, which are most likely to discriminate against. In the early 1990s our country saw a significant decentralization of power; responsibility for local housing policy was assigned to more than 6,000 municipalities; in Prague this meant to more than 50 boroughs. The Czech Republic belongs to countries with the most decentralized local government in the EU. Although this fact may have various positive aspects, small municipalities (e.g., boroughs) will always act differently than larger municipalities (e.g. city hall) in terms providing assistance to „risk households“. Such decentralization leads, among other things, to great difficulties placing any social assistance facilities anywhere within the municipalities (logically, no borough wants to "host" the poor from all other boroughs). In the long run, the logic of the small municipalities' discrimination may be "tampered" with using emotion or media criticism (voter attitudes will change), but it is better, at least in the short term perspective, not to count on such a "miracle". Eventually, the consequences of social decline of the discriminated against will necessarily have to be addressed by the government (regional authority), which keeps distance from local issues and local constituency.

Rationality of behaviour may also explain the strategy of marginalization of the Romany in many municipalities. Any municipality is obviously expected to act in the public interest. The term „public interest“, however, may pose a risk, because marginalisation of such an extensively rejected target group as Romany are can be demagogically declared to be a matter of public interest. Moreover, the electoral period is too short to allow optimal integration policy to change anything and to score political points. The convenience of the marginalisation policy decreases with higher levels of government. Therefore, it proves the most convenient at the level of small communities as in larger cities there is a threat of a "jojo effect", meaning the constant return of the displaced families. At the regional level marginalisation policy proves inefficient, as "volatile migration" occurs in the same region, which strengthens social instability; at the national level, unless families permanently migrate abroad, the situation is analogous to that in the regions. That is why the role of the government or regional authority in the process of conceptualizing of social housing policy is irreplaceable, especially with regard to target groups vulnerable to discrimination.

Obviously, many people may fall victims of discrimination. In addition to the Romany, who are the most vulnerable group in this respect, there are mainly foreigners from certain countries. According to surveys, long-term unpopular potential neighbours include Ukrainians, Vietnamese, Arabs. Nevertheless, Romany are distinctively worst off and the society's aversion towards them has been showing a fairly increasing trend over the past 10 years (Table 1). According to a survey realized by STEM, which was done in April 2009 and included 1297 respondents, only 12% of respondents would not mind Romany as neighbours. Approximately 30% of respondents indicated that they would not mind having the Ukrainians and Vietnamese as neighbours.

**Table 1: Coexistence of Romany and non-Romany population: a comparison over time (in %)**

	1999	2001	2003	2006	2007	2008	2009



## WS-14: WELFARE POLICY, HOMELESSNESS AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

good ( <i>very, fairly good</i> ) in %	23	18	18	22	16	15	10
bad ( <i>very, rather bad</i> ) in %	66	68	78	69	79	79	85

Note: „Do not know" answers form the remaining numbers until 100%

Source: *Naše společnost 2009, v09-04, Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology ASCR*

### **Example 1: The Resocialisation Programme - Centrom, Ostrava**

Since the end of 2005 Centrom, o.s., has operated "social housing" (housing for the resocialisation programme - a programme of housing with the supporting social programme). In 2005 the organisation leased ten flats and the housing stock has been gradually increasing to 26 flats in 2009. For the year 2010, the organization offers approximately 40-50 flats from different landlords, which is an unprecedented number under Czech conditions. The organization does not own the flats, it leases them. However, the flats (primarily council), however, are mostly placed in two locations which are also socially excluded Romany localities; two flats are provided by private landlords in Moravian Ostrava. The organization's client, "social housing" subtenant, is not only a low-income, but also a socially excluded household, mostly from ethnic ghettos. Rents in these flats are paid by the clients themselves, the costs incurred by non-profit organizations, in addition to the costs of social work, include costs of reconstruction of housing for inclusion in the programme and the costs of regular repairs and maintenance.

Basic resocialisation cycle should terminate in 1.5 years, the maximum length of the client's stay in „social housing“ is not defined. The following "additional" cycle takes about 1-2 years in the same flat. Unless the family violates the conditions of the programme, it remains in the flats even after the expiry of the period, this time without social services. Integration linked with housing in the standard housing market (departure from social housing to long-term rental housing) has proved successful in only two out of the original ten households. The organization is trying to get their own apartments, which would make it easier to obtain funds needed for their reconstruction. A key factor in starting the programme was successful partnership with the city and several boroughs as well. Experiences of the organization's staff show that while in the initial stage the programme was limited by mistrust of owners of flats and houses, currently the programme is limited by restricted funds for the reconstruction of housing, which the organisation must not, as a "mere" tenant, pay from the existing subsidy programmes.

### **Example 2: Homelessness Prevention Programme - The Salvation Army, Ostrava**

For the Homelessness Prevention projects the Salvation Army currently leases from Moravská Ostrava and Přívoz boroughs a total of 25 council rental apartments to house 93 clients residing in Moravská Ostrava and Přívoz (including 52 children). Most users of "training flats" have experienced some form of asylum housing within the territory of the city of Ostrava. The Homelessness Prevention Project was launched in 2004 with the support of Moravská Ostrava and Přívoz boroughs and City of Ostrava. Sublease agreements are concluded with users of the "training flats" for two months (with possible extension up to 5 years). Users initially conclude and independent contract for energy consumption. Further extension of the sublease agreement is subject to regular payment of rent and charges for electricity and gas. The intention of the training housing is to enable users to become independent in housing as well as in professional, personal and family life. Project users were encouraged to repay their debts, to fit and furnish the household and to find a job within a specified period of time.

A feature which is original within the Czech context is the transfer of lease from the Salvation Army to a specific user based on the recommendations (post-conception). This recommendation is issued to users based on fulfilment of predetermined criteria. The user would then turn from a subtenant into a

tenant of the original training flat. The first stage is the conclusion of a fixed-term lease agreement (6 months), which both parties will accept as a test agreement. Project staff will continue to perform social work with these families, which will be of largely supportive and controlling nature; afterwards, a lease agreement will be concluded for a longer period. Once the lease is transferred to a subtenant, the boroughs provide the Salvation Army with another council flat for the purpose of "training housing" for new users. From October 2007 until the end of 2009 6 households out of the original 18 concluded a lease agreement with the municipality (borough); one household found independent housing and 11 households left the programme for violations of the terms of the programme.

Clients must meet the following criteria for inclusion in the programme:

- permanent residence of at least one of the members of the household in Moravská Ostrava or Přívoz borough (according to the organization's staff, it is not a problem for potential clients in crisis residing outside Ostrava to get permanent residence, eg, by registering permanent address with their relatives and later in the training housing);
- neither the applicant or his/her family members have debts or other claims against the Moravská Ostrava or Přívoz boroughs;
- the user is committed to establishing long-term and intensive cooperation with the field and social worker of the Homelessness Prevention project. The minimum frequency of contact with the workers is twice per month.

The housing fund made available to the Salvation Army mostly consists of small apartments, usually one-bedroom and lower quality, more in locations where there is a higher concentration of Romany. Minor repairs of the flat are carried out by the borough; the Salvation Army currently has no interest in participating in the reconstruction or ownership of housing. Costs associated with housing management are covered by subsidies provided by the City hall and by subsidies for field social services. An important factor for the success of the programme is the support given by the City hall (which, however, does not own any apartments) and co-operation with boroughs.

### ***Example 3: IQ Roma servis, Brno***

The programme consists of just one model apartment for families with children, which has been running for a year. The apartment is owned by Brno-Centre borough and leased by IQ Roma servis, o.s.; the target household is a subtenant. This is a pilot project, at this stage verifying the functionality of the defined model and the organization's ability to operate social housing (verification of staff capacities, financial security, etc.). Based on the evaluation of the pilot model consideration will be given to increasing the number of flats operated. In the future, the organization counts on a maximum of five apartments.

Minor repairs are paid by subtenants themselves, major repairs are borne by the owner, i.e. the municipality. In addition, the subtenant deposits an extra amount into a repair fund from which the organization can cover potential damage or normal wear and tear associated with long-term use of the apartment (or loss of rent). The long-term operation of the apartment, however, needs to take operating costs into account. These include buying necessary materials for maintenance of the flat, which are not converted by the flat owner, but are essential for ensuring and maintaining long-term effect of the model social apartment with a supporting social programme (transfer to new clients) - e.g. changing locks and keys, materials for decoration of the flat, minor small home repairs (wear and tear or damage not caused by subtenants, but as a result of long-term use of the apartment).

## WS-14: WELFARE POLICY, HOMELESSNESS AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Another additional cost may be covering the rent in the time when the apartment is not occupied by any client family (Borough requires IQ RS to make periodic payments). Workers should therefore also always try to ensure the continuity of tenants to avoid interim periods when rent is not paid by accommodated subtenants. Agreements are concluded for a period of 6 months and, if necessary, may be extended up to further 6 months. Therefore, applications and supporting documents of candidates for accommodation in the model social apartment are collected in regular half-yearly cycles and a selection committee is initiated. The aim of the cooperation between a social worker and a client family is to stabilise the family situation and to intensively search for follow-up housing. In some cases (especially if follow-up housing is offered in short term and thus the family leaves the social apartment quickly) an interim period can arise, when the selection committee meets to select another client family for the social apartment.

The apartment with a supportive social programme is designed for families with dependent children, finding themselves in a difficult social situation and whose housing conditions are unstable. A prerequisite for participation in the programme is meeting the commitments in the existing housing (except for the payment of the principal amount of a debt or active debt repaying for at least 3 months) and the family represents to address other problem areas (family problems, debt, employment, social system, school problems).

The sublease agreement is always for 6 months with possible extension for another six months. The total length of stay is no more than one year. Because of the short duration of the programme it is yet impossible to assess the achievements of the programme. The organisation's staff sees barriers for the programme in the methodological guidelines of the City hall's Social Department not allowing to grant housing allowance or supplement to subtenants. The City hall, however, is supportive of (multiple) three-level model of social housing, which could help in securing follow-up housing in integrated flats (council flats or flats rented from private owners). However, the borough of Brno-Centre is worried about the pressure following the termination of our clients' sublease agreements intended to make the borough provide a council flat from its housing stock. Based on the existing cooperation with the borough potential bureaucratic obstacles and difficulties in negotiating a larger number of apartments for the purpose of reintegration (inflexibility in the authority's decision-making, defining terms, which the organization may not find acceptable, such as selection of applicants residing in the respective borough, etc.) can be anticipated.

### **Conclusion**

The examples shown indicate that the current practice in the Czech Republic does not adequately address the problem of social and spatial exclusion, as non-profit organisations are yet unable to acquire housing outside the excluded areas. The examples also highlighted many barriers, particularly the impossibility of claiming a housing allowance and supplement for subtenants, extra maintenance costs due to a specific target group (high level of deterioration) or the non-profit entities' inability to raise money to repair assets not owned by the entities. The role of municipalities in implementation of reintegration programmes is gradually improving as they rent their apartments for the purpose of training housing to non-profit organisations more than they did in the past, however, still insufficiently (especially in Prague); successful completion of the reintegration process is generally hindered by insufficient number of apartments, which non-profit organizations in the Czech Republic have available for this purpose, or by their lack of activity in securing housing and housing management (rarely do they have their own housing stock, mediation model is not applied). The interviews with representatives of various organizations showed that in the case of Prague, Brno, Ostrava and Plzeň the experience with

the approach of the City hall is generally better than that of individual boroughs; however, boroughs of Ostrava are more active than boroughs in Prague in this respect.

The examples of good practice from abroad suggest a clear trend in greater flexibility and variety of tools (no more talks of mass construction of uniform social housing), greater involvement of private capital and private rental housing (various forms of "mediation") and especially the greater role of non-profit organisations in the field of housing administration, or closer co-operation between municipalities and local non-profit sector including volunteers. Another trend to address homelessness, which also assumes a broad framework of co-operation, is provision of services "under one roof but not from one hand". Contact centres have a group of consultants from various fields working with the client, providing the client with comprehensive consultancy and assistance.

In recent years, households with insufficient skills to maintain long-term rental housing in many countries have been assisted using the "housing first" concept, which highlights the positive impact of rapid acquisition of long-term and certain rental housing on other aspects of integration into society. Independent housing necessitates responsibility and motivates one to find and retain work. These findings were confirmed by research results, which showed that, after receiving independent housing the chances of a household's reintegration increase. The main criticism of the opposite approach, the staircase housing model, where the client must demonstrate the capacity for independent housing, is the fact that clients only fluctuate between the early stages of the model with series of successes and failures and reintegration is unsuccessful. This "conflict" of concepts and uniqueness of the results of their comparison not as obvious in practice by far: even the models of the "housing first" concept contain some elements of a staircase housing (for example, a six-month shelter and the subsequent one-year training housing – common in Germany, for example) and there are transition countries where the staircase model for a specific target group (Romany with insufficient skills to maintain long-term rental housing) is seen as functional and where there is a concern that immediate acquisition of independent housing would in turn jeopardize the success of reintegration (Slovakia). Criticism of the multi-stage housing model is focused more on the excessive rigidity in the definition of individual levels (strictly given period of stay in each stage, strict criteria for moving to higher stages) and the inability, if possible in a specific individual case, to "jump" lower degrees of reintegration (strict insistence on all clients passing through the system); this is an example of the model applied in Sweden.

The inquired non-profit organizations in the Czech Republic agreed that successful reintegration needs a fast pathway to independent housing; however, in a situation where it is very difficult to mediate independent housing for people in shelters who, as observed by non-profit organizations, would already be able to live independently, it is unrealistic to provide such housing for people who do not have such competence. For example, in Freiburg, Germany 30 flats are leased for training housing and become common rental flats after one year (unless the conditions of the programme are violated); this programme also assumes the selection of clients according to their competencies. In the Czech environment, where it is very difficult for many target groups to get even council rental housing (long waiting time, public housing stock shrinking due to privatization), where the majority of the population shows great distrust and prejudices of the reasons that lead to unavailability of housing and social exclusion (the same distrust and prejudices are then shown by the elected representatives of municipalities), and where even objectively large proportion of households has no competence to maintain long-term rental housing (which is due to the legacy of cheap housing under the former regime, deeply rooted state paternalism, long-term failure to address non-payment of rent) rejection of the multi-stage model does not seem rational, not only because of greater legitimacy; on the contrary,

this model could become, if sufficiently flexible, a more efficient option to the concept of a rapid return to long-term rental housing.

Although the staircase housing concept is often being criticized, many countries have applied successful concepts of the less rigid model of permeable or transitional housing, which may turn into long-term housing. The main objective should be to help place a household or an individual into a long-term rental apartment of a common standard in the shortest time possible - which is particularly true for households that have the sufficient competence to maintain long-term rental housing and who "only" face market discrimination or lack of available housing. In the Czech Republic, however, a demonstrable deficit of competence (for example, in case a household has once failed to maintain the offered housing) and accumulation of multiple problems (crime, debt, addiction) are very likely to result in the household having to pass through a certain level of housing linked to individually shaped social work and to participate in the programme (transfer to long-term housing would be preconditioned by co-operation with social workers and problem-solving). In such case (application of more housing levels) it can be expected that some households may return to lower housing levels; however, such a "fall" should probably be last option after all other measures have failed to work (for example, after the household refuses to accept the payment schedule in case of any outstanding rent). At the same time the model should be flexible enough to offer some households that do not need to go through all stages of rehabilitation, the possibility of faster progress.

## References

- Hradecký, I., V. Hradecká. 1996. *Bezdomovství – Extrémní vyloučení*. [Homelessness - Extreme Exclusion.] Naděje: Praha.
- Hradecký, I., P. Kosová, M. Myšáková, L. Omelková, P. Sedláček. 2004. *Sčítání bezdomovců Praha 2004*. Zpráva z projektu. [Homeless Census - Prague 2004. Project report.] Praha: Arcidiecézní charita, Armáda spásy, MCSSP, Naděje.
- MPSV. 2006. *Analýza sociálně vyloučených romských lokalit a komunit a absorpční kapacity subjektů působících v této oblasti*. [Analysis of social excluded Romany communities and detection of absorbing capacity of subjects working in this area.] Available from: [http://www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/3043/Analýza\\_romskych\\_lokalit.pdf](http://www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/3043/Analýza_romskych_lokalit.pdf)
- Lux, M., P. Sunega. 2006. Vývoj finanční dostupnosti nájemního a vlastnického bydlení v průběhu transformace českého hospodářství v České republice (1991 – 2003). *Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review* 42 (5): 851-881.
- Atkinson, R. 2000. „Combating Social Exclusion in Europe: The New Urban Policy Challenge.“ *Urban Studies* 37 (5-6): 1037-1055.
- BAG Wohnungslosenhilfe e.V. 2009. *Wohnungspolitik gegen Wohnungslosigkeit und soziale Ausgrenzung am Wohnungsmarkt*. Wohnungspolitisches Programm der BAG Wohnungslosenhilfe e.V. . [cit. 8. 12. 2009]. Available from: <http://www.bag-wohnungslosenhilfe.de/index2.html>
- Benjaminsen, L., E. Dyb. 2008. „The Effectiveness of Homeless Policies – Variations among the Scandinavian Countries.“ *European Journal of Homelessness* 2 (prosinec): 45 – 67.
- Busch-Geertsema, V. , G. Schuler-Wallner. 2005. „Wohnung normal - alles normal?“ pp. 80 -100 in Specht-Kittler, Thomas (Hrsg.) *Modernisierung des Sozialstaats - Modernisierung der sozialen Ausgrenzung?* Reihe Materialien zur Wohnungslosenhilfe. BAG Wohnungslosenhilfe e.V.: Bielefeld.
- Busch-Geertsema, V. 2005. „Does rehousing lead to reintegration? Follow-up studies of re-housed homeless people.“ *Innovation* 18(2): 205-226.
- Busch-Geertsema, V., S. Fitzpatrick. „Effective Homelessness Prevention ? Explaining Reductions in Homelessness in Germany and England.“ *European Journal of Homelessness* 2 (december): 69 – 92.



- COOP Consortium. 2005. *How to help people excluded from decent housing. Experiences from nine European cities*. SRZ Stadt+Regionalforschung GmbH : Wien.
- Coutard, O., G. Dupuy, S. Fol. 2002. „La pauvreté périurbaine: dépendance locale ou dépendance automobile?“ *Espaces et Sociétés* 2002 (108–109): 155–176.
- Crane, J. 1991. “The epidemic theory of ghettos and neighborhood effects on dropping out and teenage childbearing” *American Journal of sociology* 91 ( 3 ): 1226-1259.
- De Decker, P. 2002. „On the Genesis of Social Rental Agencies in Belgium.“ *Urban studies* 39 (2): 297 – 326.
- FEANTSA. 2008. *The role of housing in pathways into and out of homelessness*. European report 2008. [cit. 8. 12. 2009]. Available from: [http://www.feantsa.org/files/Housing\\_Annual\\_Theme/European\\_Report/08\\_European\\_Report\\_FEANTSA\\_Housing\\_final\\_EN.pdf](http://www.feantsa.org/files/Housing_Annual_Theme/European_Report/08_European_Report_FEANTSA_Housing_final_EN.pdf) .
- Fitzpatrick, S., Stephens, M. 2007. *An International Review of Homelessness and Social Housing Policy*. Department for Communities and local Government: London.
- Giorgi, L. 2003. *The Housing Dimension of Welfare Reform*. Eurohome-impact. Final report. [cit. 8. 12. 2009]. Dostupné z: <http://www.iccr-international.org/impact/docs/final-report.pdf>
- Kemp, P. (ed.) 2007. *Housing allowances in comparative perspective*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Lux, M., Sunega P. 2007. *Nástroje zvyšující dostupnost bydlení. Teoretické a empirické zhodnocení vybraných nástrojů bytové politiky*. Studie pro Ministerstvo pro místní rozvoj. Praha: MMR.
- Madanipour, A. 2005. „Social exclusion and space.“ Pp. 75–89 in A. Madanipour, G. Cars, J. Alen (eds.). *Social Exclusion in European Cities. Processes, Experiences and Responses*. London: Routledge.
- Murray, M. 1997. „Low-income renter housing: another view of the tough choice.“ *Journal of Housing Research* 8 (1): 27 - 51.
- Pawson, H., G. Netto, C. Jones. 2006. *Homelessness Prevention: A Guide to Good Practice*. Department for Communities and local Government: London.
- Sahlin, I. 2005. „Staircase of Transition.“ *Innovation* 18 (2): 115 – 135.
- Selod, H. 2003. „La mixité sociale et économique.“ *Dossier de veille : mixité sociale*. [online] Yvelines: CDU Yvelines. [cit. 8. 12. 2008]. Dostupné z: <http://www2.urbanisme.equipement.gouv.fr/cdu/accueil/bibliographies/mixitesociale/mixitesociale.htm>.
- Somerville, P. 1998. „Explanations of Social Exclusion: Where Does Housing Fit in?“ *Housing Studies* 13 (6): 761-780.
- Till, M. 2005. „Assessing the Housing Dimension of Social Inclusion in Six European Countries.“ *Innovation* 18 (2): 153 – 181.
- Tsemberis, S. 1999. From streets to homes: An innovative approach to supported housing for homeless individuals with psychiatric disabilities. *Journal of Community Psychology* 27 (2): 225-241.
- Tsemberis, S. 2004. Housing First, Consumer Choice and Harm Reduction for Homeless Individuals with a Dual Diagnosis. *American Journal of Public Health* 94 (4): 651-656.
- Vignal, C. 2006. „Concilier mobilité résidentielle et mobilité professionnelle: cadrage statistique et pistes de réflexion“. *La Documentation Française, Horizons Stratégiques* 06 (2): 37-47.
- Kagel, J. H., A. E. Roth 1995. *The Handbook of Experimental Economics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Holt, C. A. 2006. *Markets, Games, and Strategic Behavior*. Addison-Wesley.