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PROBLEM OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET CAN'T BE SOLVED BY LEGISLATION. IT IS AN ISSUE FOR THE WHOLE SOCIETY!



At the beginning of the 20th century, the average life expectancy was barely 50 years. Nowadays, half of the children born after 2000 are expected to live more than 100 years. Rapidly increasing life expectancy and better health care together with lower birth rate lead to adverse demographic trends. The ageing population represents an extreme burden for public budgets. Therefore, year 2012 has been designated by the European Commission as the "European Year for Active Ageing". Active ageing is the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life. Participants of the debate organized by CEBRE on 7th March in Prague agreed that "future perspectives are uncertain. For this reason the problem must be immediately challenged." In the long run, it is necessary to enhance the birth rate. Maternity should not be seen as an obstacle for the labour market success. „Social challenges have to be addressed at EU level, however many Member States perceive them as national issue“, said Richard Falbr, Member of Committee for Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament. States have to create flexible labour markets and promote part-time jobs. Last but not least, requalification

and vocational training opportunities should be cornerstone for effective tackling of structural crisis. Employees have to be able to react on changing demand of working labour. According to Jan Dobeš, Deputy Minister of labour and social affairs responsible for social inclusion and equal opportunities, it is necessary to address the issue of active ageing as well as related issues not only in medium but also in the long run. National priorities have to be based on this approach, particularly with regard to health and social care. Therefore, new National Program "Preparing for Ageing 2013–2017" will be prepared by the end of 2012. However, successful implementation of the strategy has to be measured on peoples themselves. "Elderly need to feel that they really live active ageing", added Dobeš. Tomáš Dombrovský, the spokesman of LMC Company, says that the key problem of the Czech labour market lies in its rigidity and alternative forms of employment are not often used. Without saying, only 6% of youth and old people are working on part-time, nevertheless the European average of part-time workers is 20%. However, part-time job is in many cases addressing solution to unemployment of disadvantaged persons.

Welcome by Tomáš Hartman



It has been almost three years now since I had had the first opportunity to work for CEBRE. After returning back to the Czech Republic and realizing that once Brussels catches you in its net, there is no going back, I was looking for ways how to return as soon as possible. Therefore, it is a great pleasure for me to work for CEBRE office again. Some things have changed since then, but many remained

the same. Most importantly, CEBRE has not ceased to raise awareness of Czech entrepreneurs in the heart of the EU and has kept Czech entrepreneurs and enterprises up to date on the latest legislative proposals and business related issues. As a Deputy Director of CEBRE I am happy to be a part of Czech business lobbying in Brussels and I promise to do our best to ensure that the second decade of CEBRE will be as successful as the first one.

Yours faithfully,
Tomáš Hartman,
Deputy Director of CEBRE

CEBRE was founded in 2002 by the three most important Czech business organizations - Czech Chamber of Commerce, Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic, Confederation of Employers' and Entrepreneurs' Associations of the Czech Republic with kind support of the Ministry of Industry and Trade via its Trade promotion agency CzechTrade.



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News FLASH

>WOMEN IN EUROPE STILL EARN LESS ON AVERAGE THAN MEN

Women across the EU continue to earn in average 16.4% less than men, according to new figures released by the European Commission on European Equal Pay Day. The gender pay gap is persistently high, with considerable differences between countries and sectors. In the Czech Republic, the pay gap is more than 25%.

>REGIONAL DETERMINATION OF COHESION FUNDS

According to the data released by Eurostat in March, financial participation in allocation of European subsidies will be determined on the basis of the reached regional GDP per capita. By these results, the GDP per capita in individual regions of the Czech Republic (except for Prague) has not reached in the 3-year period of 2007–2009 75% of the EU27 average.

>IDOS WINNER OF FIRST SMART MOBILITY CHALLENGE

The Commission announced that the winner of the First Smart Mobility Challenge on European multi-modal journey planners in the category of 'operational journey planners' was Czech IDOS. IDOS is a door-to-door journey planner for the Czech Republic and Slovakia. It also provides other cross-border travel connections around Europe by bus and train. It has 66 million online views per month.

FUTURE OF EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

In October 2011, the European Commission proposed the rules that will determine how the European Social Fund (ESF) will work in the 2014-2020 period. The proposal is part of an overall legislative package for the Union's future cohesion policy. It will allow the ESF to continue providing tangible support to people who need help to find a job or to progress in their current job. The aim of the European Social Fund is to improve employment opportunities, promote education and life-long learning, enhance social inclusion, contribute to combating poverty and develop institutional capacity of public administration. The new ESF proposal is based on the flagship initiatives of the European Union "Agenda for new skills and jobs", which aim to reduce structural unemployment, improve self-regulatory function of the labour market and ensure the improvement of working conditions and the "Youth on the Move", which responds to the high unemployment of young Europe. The participants at CEBRE debate, held on 3rd April in the European House in Prague, agreed that

there was an urgent need to promote vocational training and crafts as the young generation (but also their parents) do not consider the crafts as well as technical professions attractive. In this sense, the Czech Ministry of Education is preparing a national project to have more learning programmes in this field and, at the same time, to promote technical professions locally. The impulse to launch such a project in the Czech Republic comes from businesses/employers who say it is very hard to find people with suitable qualifications. In the current financial period (2007-2013), the Czech Republic is still facing difficulties with drawing on support from the EU. Therefore, in the next program period, the priority will be correcting deficiencies from previous years and ensuring full depletion of subsidies allocated for the Czech Republic. Particular focus should be on simplification of the programmes and adequate and efficient control of utilization of European funds. It seems that for ESF there could be only one operational programme. However, it is not only about money. The



From left: Martin Simacek, Director of Agency for Social Inclusion, Sona Van Deelenova, General Director, Union of Czech and Moravian Production Co-operatives, Vladimír Kvaca, Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs CR.



From left: Tomas Novotny, Association of Regions CR, Martin Simacek, Director of Agency for Social Inclusion.

cohesion funds should help to kick off the reforms and carry out changes but should not be used to finance regular activities of the administration. Reforms and changes must be also accompanied by regulatory changes and changes in peoples' mind.

EESC CORNER – ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP IS MORE THAN FREE MOVEMENT AND RIGHTS



"Civil society is one of the ways in which our human nature can be exercised in its entirety."
Václav Havel

The Year 2013 will mark the 20th anniversary of the establishment of European Union citizenship under the Treaty of Maastricht. The European Commission has designated 2013 as the European Year of Citizens.

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), as a representative of the organised civil society, has taken the opportunity and developed an opinion on European Year of Citizens (rapporteur Andris Gobiņš), highlighting participatory democracy and calling for better reflection of citizens' needs. The current proposal for a decision on this thematic year places too much importance on the free movement of individuals and the rights they should

enjoy in a cross-border context. The EESC believes that the main aim for this year should be a subject that is particularly topical for individuals, namely how EU policies match up with the values, interests and needs of its citizens. It is possible to achieve this goal by fully implementing the provisions on strengthening democracy laid down in the Lisbon Treaty, i.e. by emphasising, in particular, the informed participation of all EU citizens at all levels and at every stage of the decision-making process, on all aspects of active citizenship, as well as on European awareness and a feeling of belonging to Europe and on peace, freedom, the rule of law, equality, solidarity and respect for human rights. In order to better reflect the basic priorities of the 2013 European Year and to avoid any uncertainty or confusion regarding the main idea behind the thematic year, the EESC proposes making its title the European Year of active and participatory

citizenship. Working closely with its Liaison Group with European civil society organisations and networks the Committee proposes forming a particularly broad coalition of CSOs to help organise this thematic year. In preparing to launch the 2013 European Year, the EESC is determined to embark on and implement a large-scale programme of participation, transparency and innovation capable of showing society and the EU institutions the advantages to be gained from involving the broader public.

Vladimíra Drbalová
Member of the EESC



CEBRE CALENDAR:

- Seminar on Tenders in EU Development Aid (Prague), 19th April 2012
- CEBRE debate on COSME and Horizon2020 (Brussels), 26th April 2012
- European Business Summit (Brussels), 26th April 2012
- CEBRE conference on Competitiveness and Growth (Prague) 9th May 2012

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CEBRE – Czech Business Representation, protects the interests of the Czech business community in relation to EU institutions, informs Czech businesses about EU legislation affecting them, trains Czech entrepreneurs in Brussels and represents Czech business associations at European business federations. Contact: Czech House, 60 Rue du Trône, 1050 Brussels, Tel: +32 2 502 0766/+32 2 502 8091, e-mail: brussels@cebre.cz, www.cebre.cz