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# KING

Knowledge for INtegration Governance

## Prague: Evolution of Integration Governance

**Patrycja Matusz-Protasiewicz**

KING Project – Social Science Unit  
KING In–depth Study n.13/October 2014



# KING - Knowledge for INtegration Governance

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The KING project's objective is to elaborate a report on the **state of play** of migrant integration in Europe through an interdisciplinary approach and to provide decision- and policy-makers with **evidence-based recommendations** on the design of migrant integration-related policies and on the way they should be articulated between different policy-making levels of governance.

Migrant integration is a truly multi-faceted process. The contribution of the insights offered by different disciplines is thus essential in order better to grasp the various aspects of the presence of migrants in European societies. This is why **multidisciplinarity** is at the core of the KING research project, whose Advisory Board comprises experts of seven different disciplines:

**EU Policy** – Yves Pascouau

**Political Science** - Alberto Martinelli

**Public Administration** – Walter Kindermann

**Social Science** – Rinus Penninx

**Applied Social Studies** – Jenny Phillimore

**Economics** – Martin Kahanec & Alessandra Venturini

**Demography** – Gian Carlo Blangiardo

The present paper belongs to the series of contributions produced by the researchers of the “Social Science” team directed by Rinus Penninx.

The project is coordinated by the **ISMU Foundation**.

## Contacts:

Guia Gilardoni, Project Coordinator – [g.gilardoni@ismu.org](mailto:g.gilardoni@ismu.org)

Daniela Carrillo, Project Co-Coordinator – [d.carrillo@ismu.org](mailto:d.carrillo@ismu.org)

Marina D’Odorico, Project Co-Coordinator – [m.dodorico@ismu.org](mailto:m.dodorico@ismu.org)

**Website:** [www.king.ismu.org](http://www.king.ismu.org)

**Twitter:** @KING\_Project\_EU

ISMU Foundation

[www.ismu.org](http://www.ismu.org)

Via Copernico 1

20125 Milano

Italy

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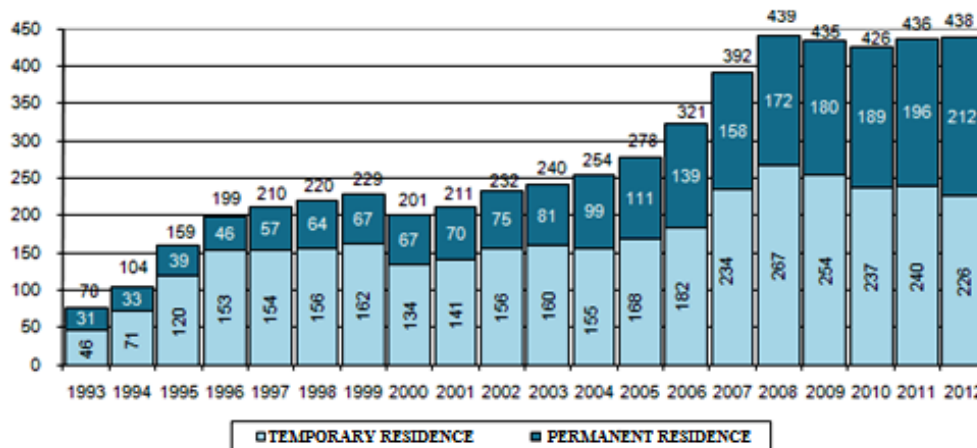
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## Prague: Evolution of Integration Governance

### 1. CZECH REPUBLIC: IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION GOVERNANCE

The Czech Republic has become the most attractive immigration destination among Central and Eastern European countries of the last two decades. As shown in Graph 1, the number of migrants has been gradually growing and exceeded 4 per cent of its total population, although the inflow of migrants has been temporarily reversed due to the economic crises at the end of 1990s and 2000s. Several factors underpin the continually growing number of migrants. First of all, the Czech Republic's transition has experienced a relatively stable development that would establish a considerable pull factor for the foreign workforce. Moreover, there was a parallel internationalization of the Czech production sector, especially in the complex manufacturing industries which depend on the properly skilled but cheap labour (in the relation to Western Europe) with the highest average wages in Central and Eastern Europe at the same time. Once the demand for a particular labour force outpaced the domestic supply in particular sectors of economy, especially the construction sector and subcontracting sectors to the manufacturing industries, the inflow of migrant labourers would be more or less tolerated. Thus, the rapid growth of migrant population has been generally conditioned by an initial lack of solid integration policies, their institutional consolidation with having a quasi-liberal content in the times of economic growth, but later restrictiveness during the global economic crisis.

**Graph 1** – Foreigners with permanent (over 90 days) and temporary residencies 1993 – 2012 (thousands)

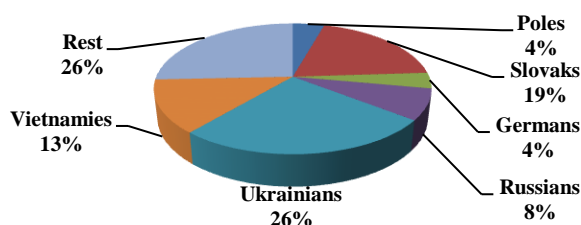


Source: Czech Statistical Office 2014

Moreover, there has been a considerable push factor in the countries of migrants' origin (Drbohlav and Valenta 2014). This can be explained particularly in terms of migrant groups with origin in the European post-soviet space (Russia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine above all). In the post soviet states, the economic and political turmoil established considerable incentives for emigration. For example, in Ukraine, the GDP per capita has not been able to reach the level before the country's independence in 1991. On the contrary, Slovaks, the second largest migrant group, have been formed through historical migratory patterns that

consolidated during the existence of Czechoslovakia as an internal migration and Slovaks are thought as more or less a domestic population. Since the aforementioned migrant groups are Slavic-speaking and culturally (in terms of religion and societal habits) relatively close, they have not been posing a greater socio-cultural challenge which would force the rapid institutionalization of Czech integration policies. The challenge has been considerably greater in the case of the biggest non-European migrant group, namely Vietnamese. The Vietnamese community started to come in massive numbers especially in the 1970s and 1980s due to the intergovernmental agreements; firstly, for economic reasons and later also as a case of family reunification (Matusz-Protasiewicz 2012). Although ethnically and socio-culturally distinct, the Vietnamese community articulates a willingness to accept the cultural and socio-economic integration of the second generation, although it remains generally perceived as an inward looking community and referred to generally in national media discourse as conducting criminal activities (mainly drug and gambling business).

**Graph 2 – Foreigners in the Czech Republic, by nationality**



Source: Czech Statistical Office (2014)

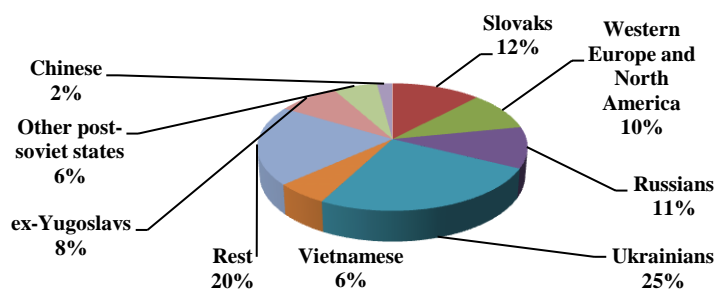
Forced by the mechanisms of migration which are converging with Western European trends, Czech integration policy-making has become one of the most advanced in the Central and Eastern Europe. As Drbohlav (2011) reminds, the Czech Republic, together with Slovenia, have already passed the *take-off phase* and progressed towards the *expansion phase* of integration governance unlike the rest of their regional counterparts. First, there has come a consolidation from the initial *multicultural model* (mainly declaratory) to the *model of civic integration* practiced in Western Europe. Second, the policy-making has proceeded from *highly apolitical* to *apolitical* (with political society becoming involved in the formation of integration governance). In consequence, the policies have been remodelled from *passive approaches* to the systematic and *activist approaches* (issuing and organizing concise integration strategies on the national level, institutionalizing the system of blue and green cards, promotion of local integration strategies). Finally, in the last decade, the responsibility for the regulation of integration governance was initially centralized, but it came to be later decentralized in order to be recently recentralized back under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior. Such migratory trends and policy regulation have then created a broader context for the evolution of Prague's integration governance.

## 2. PRAGUE: IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION GOVERNANCE

Prague is the main immigration centre in the Czech Republic and also main centre for the migrants' internal movement in the country (Čermák and Janská 2011). In 2012, the number of 162,715 migrants lived in Prague accounting for around 13 per cent of the city's population. This stands for 34 per cent of the whole migrant population in the Czech Republic. Indeed, Prague "represents (super)dominant metropolitan region

characteristic of approximately two times bigger extent of economic production per capita and the lowest rate of unemployment in comparison to other regions in the Czech Republic" (Blažek and Csank 2007: 953). Its unique position within the country's political and economic life makes Prague the main factor that conditions the common trends of migratory patterns in the Czech Republic. First, the portion of migrants with permanent residencies, that is 47 per cent of all migrants in Prague, is gradually growing. Second, there is a trend of growing heterogeneity of migrant society which forces the integration governance to become more complex. Thus, these trends bring new challenges for the stakeholders on national and local levels of the integration governance.

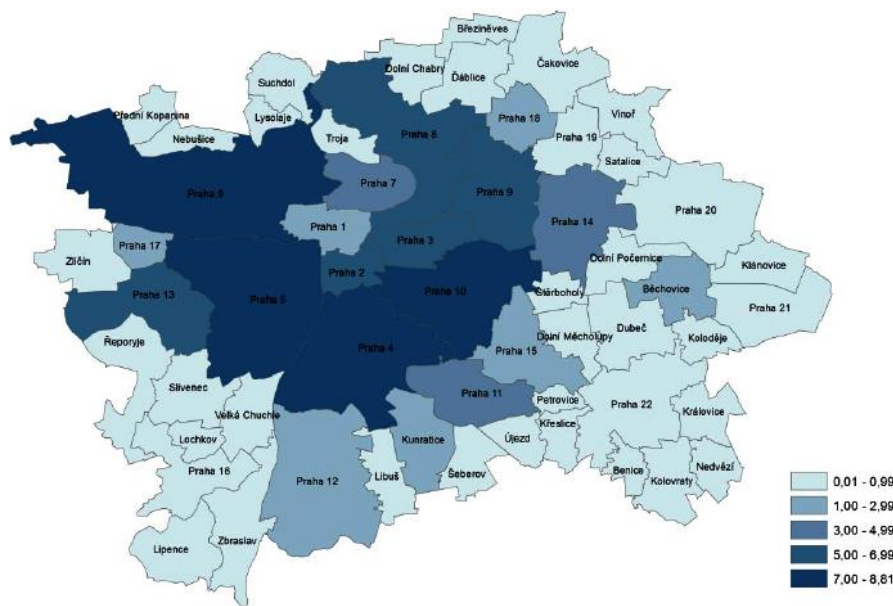
**Graph 3** - Foreigners in Prague, by nationality



Source: Czech Statistical Office (2014)

Prague's migrant population reflects the national structure. It consists largely of the Slavic-speaking population (Slovak, Ukrainians, Russians, ex-Yugoslavs). The Vietnamese represent the biggest Asian migrant group followed by the Chinese. There is also a certain amount of foreign population from countries of Western Europe and North America; mainly as a consequence of Prague's established position in global economy. Moreover, the official statistics do not include the amount of irregular migrants which is estimated at 47,000 illegally existent residents (Drbohlav and Medová 2013). In terms of spatial distribution, migrants inhabit mainly the most densely populated districts of Praha-4, Praha-10, Praha-5, Praha-6 and Praha-8 which form an inner city of Prague inner city and its construction environment is characteristic of the apartment buildings and blocks of flats constructed in the socialist period (Map 1: 4). In terms of specific spatial distribution, migrants with the origins in developed economies are concentrated in the North-Western district of Nebušice and partially also Troja. Although Prague does not replicate the trend of Western European cities in the formation of ethnic enclaves, the districts of Dolní Mělopuchy, Praha-Libuš, and Štěrboholy are characteristic of the high concentration of Vietnamese, and partially Chinese, communities (Map 2: 5). Especially Praha-Libuš hosts highly concentrated community that was formed around the marketplace 'SAPA' a sort of informal social and economic centre for the whole Vietnamese population in the Czech Republic.

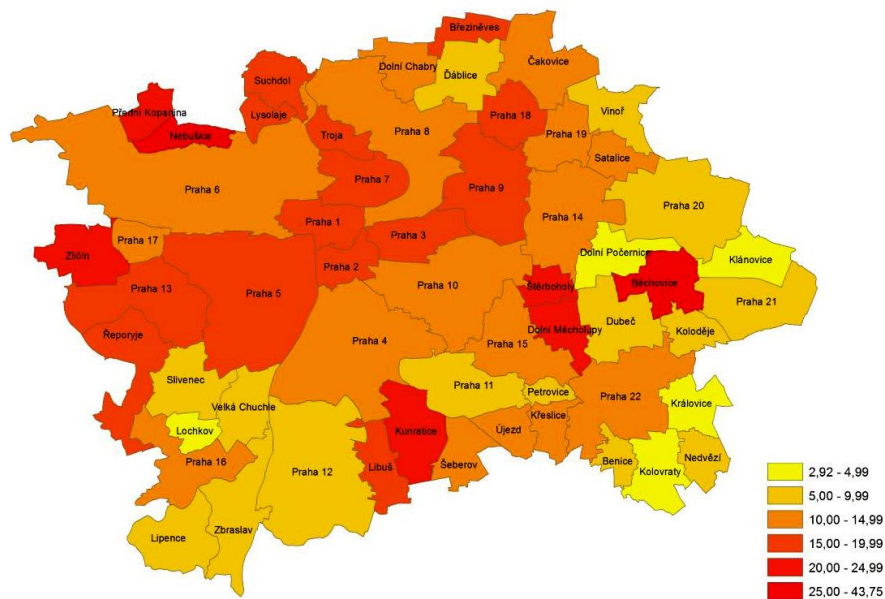
**Map 1 – The spatial distribution of foreigners in Prague (%)**



Source: Mejstřík 2013, 12

Unlike the national level, local integration governance has been only taking off recently; including Prague. The local integration governance lacks an institutional platform and depends on the top-down policy-making driven by the central government. The lack of institutional platform leads to the absence of a conceptualized approach that would be expressed in the history of strategic documents and a consolidated general framework of integration policies, while it would involve variety of actors necessary for the sustainable integration of foreigners - political institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGO), and migrant organizations - and redistribute policy tasks and funding among them. However, there has been an evolving institutional platform in recent years. The evolution was organized along the priorities which were set in the national *Koncepce integrace cizinců* (Conception for the Integration of Foreigners). The conception obliges the Ministry of Interior to establish the so called Integration Centres in each of the Czech Republic's fourteen regions. As it emphasizes, the institutional platform as well as other areas of integration strategies are to be financed from the resources provided mainly by central ministries and EU funds (European Social Fund, European Integration Fund, and European Refugee Fund). Thus, the integration governance on the local level is still situated in the phase of evolution which is organized by state-driven policies and financed by the EU's funding programmes. Due to its dominant position in the Czech Republic's political and economic context, Prague stands out as the most dynamic region in the development of local integration governance.

**Map 2 - The share of foreigners in districts (%)**



Source: Mejstřík 2013, 13

## 2.1 Integration governance in evolution

Prague's integration governance has been characteristic of a weak institutional consolidation, lack of a properly funded political-bureaucratic body, and absence of migrant organizations which would have a full legitimacy to represent the organized interests of particular migrant groups. In terms of institutional coordination, the lack of interconnectivity between stakeholders that take part in Prague's integration governance was already recognized on the ground and the majority of policy-making has been recently employed to improve their cooperation and communication. These institutional features have differentiated Prague from the integration models that could be found in the developed municipal models in Western Europe. Prague's model requires a strong position of NGOs which are able to substitute the role of political-bureaucratic bodies in managing the access to public goods related to successful migrants' integration and the management of integration projects, while they are also functioning as the main nodes for the absorption of policy transfers and good practices from abroad. Likewise, integration governance is funded through short-term budgeting. The City Hall awards low-budgeted grants for particular projects on an annual basis. NGOs remain predominantly funded by state and EU funds. Although Prague's integration governance recently has become institutionally consolidated and improved the interconnectivity among its stakeholders through preparation of a long-term integration strategy, it has been thus only taking off.

In terms of institutions, there is no political-bureaucratic body which would be in charge of Prague's integration governance as is the case in Western European models. Since 2006, integration governance was coordinated through the 'Committee of the Council of Prague for the Area of National Minorities and Integration of Foreigners' (*Komise Rady hl.m. Prahy pro oblast národnostních menšin a integrace cizinců na území hl.m. Prahy*) and the 'Committee of the Council of Prague for the Awarding of Grants in the Area of National Minorities and Integration of Foreigners' (*Komise Rady hl.m. Prahy pro udělování grantů v oblasti národnostních menšin a integrace cizinců na území hl.m. Prahy*). Both committees have no permanent rules of working and are being reconstituted following every municipal election. The first committee has recently



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comprised of fourteen members: political representation, municipal bureaucracy, governmental representatives, and non-governmental sector. It does not have any regularly defined programme and meets as necessary. The committee serves mainly as a mutual information point among the stakeholders involved in the Prague's integration governance. At the same time, it discusses the content and rules of the annual grant competitions to be awarded later by the second committee consisting purely of the political representation and municipal bureaucracy.

The content and extension of integration governance is still dependent on the results of municipal elections and change in Prague's political leadership. This documents the fact that the integration governance has not been properly established as a permanent institutional domain of Prague's public policy agenda which would be partially resilient to the election cycles. Indeed, the City Hall has one established bureaucratic position, *Specialista pro národnostní menšiny* (Specialist for National Minorities) which has been assigned the agenda of integration policies. The 'Specialist for National Minorities' takes care of the administration of grants awarded by the City Hall in the domain of cultural integration concerning the activities of national minorities and migrant communities. Its role embraces the monitoring function as well as contact with other stakeholders of integration governance; especially regarding the meetings of the two aforementioned commissions.

The lack of robust political-bureaucratic body has been compensated with the relatively developed network of NGOs dealing with the integration governance. Due to its position within the whole country, Prague hosts up to 15 fully established NGOs, acting both locally and nationally, which provide social/legal counselling and educational/cultural activities for migrants, while they also advise and provide skill-formation for the municipal and state bureaucracies dealing with integration governance. Thus, Prague-based NGOs have taken part in the realization of national integration strategies and they are also involved in the formation of legislative acts concerning the integration of migrants which then create a broader framework for the evolution of local strategies for integration governance. On the local level, they have constituted a backbone of Prague's integration governance and performed multiple tasks. Firstly, they have been helping migrants to access public goods through the social/legal counselling and also organized courses of Czech language. Secondly, they have substituted the weak or even non-existent migrant organizations in lobbying for migrants' interests and articulating their needs. Thirdly, they have represented main contact places for migrants and functioned as crucial intermediaries between individual migrants and public administration. Moreover, thanks to their firsthand experience, the NGOs have had the ability to reflect on everyday needs when providing policy advice and taking part in the evolution of Prague's integration governance.

### *2.1.1 Integration centre and policy platforms*

Integrační centrum Praha (Integration Centre Prague, ICP) was established in 2012 as part of the continual implementation of 'Conception for the Integration of Foreigners'. The costs of ICP's establishment and subsequent operation have been covered by annual subsidies provided by the European Integration Fund as in the case of other integration centres across the Czech Republic (including 25 per cent of mandatory co funding covered by City Hall). The ICP is assigned a double function. First, it constitutes a coordination platform for all stakeholders in the Prague's integration governance. In this sense, it is a fully funded and established institution which facilitates an exchange of information among these stakeholders and synchronizes their activities in favour of a more coherent, efficient and predictable policy environment. Second, having opened already six branches around Prague (with office space provided freely by particular city districts), it complements the provision of social/legal counselling, socio-cultural education and teaching of Czech language that have been organized exclusively by NGOs so far. In general, the integration centre forms a real basis for the potential establishment of a sound institutional framework. Indeed, the



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need for institutionally coherent and strategically planned integration governance was expressed by the municipal politicians in the context of ICP's establishment. As Václav Novotný, the Deputy Mayor of Prague, defined its expected mission:

*"Integration centre shall secure the systemic cooperation of non-governmental organizations, individual institutions and district governments [...] the centre shall cooperate with the partner organizations to provide services leading to the integration of foreigners on the Prague's territory, especially in the particular spheres of counselling activities for foreigners, teaching of the Czech language, and other educational activities. Hereby, Prague starts finally to tackle the issues concerning the integration of foreigners. In the capital city, there is the biggest amount of foreigners in the Czech Republic, but nothing has been done in this policy area yet. Here, we have an expectation of a long-term, systemic and purposeful activity leading to the continuous integration of foreigners into the structures of majority population."*

Thus, the ICP declares several general targets for its operation in integration of Third Country Nationals who live in Prague. It attempts to eliminate the abuse of migrants' disadvantaged position in the various spheres of life. It intends to reduce the possibility of separated ethnic enclaves that have a potential to develop in Prague. There is also a declared aim to support the development of civil society and reduce the potential tension between Prague's majority and migrant populations. At last, integration centre commits itself to engage migrants in the decision making policy processes and public life. Hence, in the first year of its operating, the ICP provided services to 2025 clients; including around 580 clients who used social counselling, 400 clients who used legal counselling, while 328 clients were involved in the courses of Czech language with the success rate of 70 per cent in final exams.

Although initially perceived as a redundant and new competitor by the non-governmental sector, the ICP has become a crucial policy platform in the coordination of Prague's integration governance. As a policy platform, it is a meeting place for consultation fora which facilitate formal interaction of various stakeholders in Prague's integration governance and promote an exchange of interests, needs, and opinions among these stakeholders: Forum migrantů (Forum for Migrants), *Regionální poradní platforma* (Regional Advisory Platform), *Expertní skupina* (Expert Group). There has also been *Poradní platforma zástupců městských částí a Magistrátu hl. m. Prahy pro oblast integrace cizinců* (Advisory Platform of City Districts and City Hall for the Area of Migrants Integration) that involves the representation of ICP and all city districts in order to discuss the progress of integration policies in Prague. Moreover, based on these consultation fora, the ICP was also assigned to coordinate the preparation of a strategic document that would define the long-term targets and direction of Prague's integration governance for the very first time in modern history, while it would also respond to the 'Conceptions for the Integration of Foreigners'. The preparation of the strategic document *Praha - metropole všech* (Prague - Metropolis for All, henceforth also as Prague's integration strategy) was finished in June 2014.

'Regional Advisory Platform' was established as a major policy forum for the coordination of integration governance. Since its establishment in 2012, it has been regularly convened on a two- or three month basis. The platform involves 54 experts representing main Prague's NGOs that deal with migrant's integration, Prague's public administration (city districts, city hall), state public administration, Ministry of Interior, and academia. The majority of its working history has been spent on the creation of the Prague's integration strategy. The platform is a very first large-scale and long-term project which represents an institutionalized body where contacts, experiences, information, and policy practices can be shared, discussed, and transformed subsequently into a consensual strategic documents and guides that would address main issues of integration governance in Prague. In this sense, the problem of interconnectivity among the stakeholders was very much highlighted during the platform's meetings. The platform has come to make the stakeholders aware of their counterparts and established formal relationship among them. Owing to the regular meetings, mutual exchange of information about the projects organized by the member organizations and institutions, and through the discussion of crucial shortages of existing integration

policies that were experienced by the stakeholders and their clients, the platform has improved the much needed interconnectivity and created the knowledge hub which gathered the sum of issues and problems to be later addressed in Prague's integration governance.

**Table 1** - Regional Advisory Platform (Statutory Members)

<b>NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS</b>	<b>PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION</b>
AMIGA o.s.	Prague City Hall
Centrum pro integraci cizinců, o.s. (Centre for Integration of Foreigners)	Department for Asylum and Migration Policy (Ministry of Interior)
Člověk v tísni, o.p.s. (People in Need)	Alien Police of the Czech Republic (regional department)
Dům národnostních menšin, o.p.s. (House of National Minorities)	Pilsen City Hall
Evropská kontaktní skupina, o.s. (European Contact Group)	Prague Institute of Planning and Development
InBáze, o.s.	City District Prague 1
Klub Hanoi, o.s.	City District Prague 3
Konsorcium nevládních organizací pracujících s migranty v ČR, o.s. (Consortium of Migrants Assisting Organizations in the Czech Republic)	City District Prague 5
La Strada ČR, o.p.s.	City District Prague 7
Lačhe Čhave, o.s.	City District Prague 10
Maltéžská pomoc, o.p.s. (Malthesian Help)	City District Prague 11
META, o.s.	City District Prague 12
Multikulturní centrum Praha, o.s. (Multicultural Centre Prague)	City District Prague 13
Organizace pro pomoc uprchlíkům, o.s. (Organization for Aid to Refugees)	City District Prague 14
Poradna pro integraci, o.s. (Counselling Centre for Integration)	City District Prague 17
Sdružení pro integraci a migraci, o.s. (Association for Integration and Migration)	Office for the Administration of Refugee Facilities (Ministry of Interior)
Slovo 21, o.s.	Labour Office of the Czech Republic (regional department)
<b>EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS</b>	<b>INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS</b>
Faculty of Humanities (Charles University)	International Organization for Migration
Faculty of Philosophy and Arts (Charles University)	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
University of Economics in Prague	
Municipal Library of Prague	

Source: Integration Centre Prague (2014)

This has happened especially thanks to the cooperative preparation of Prague's integration strategy. The preparation process involved the division of the platform into four working groups. Each group had 8 members (free to invite external guests) representing the ICP, NGOs, academia, and public administration. Each group worked separately on broader policy areas: education; social activation of migrants; access of migrants to social services; employability of migrants on the labour market. The outputs of all working groups were once again being consulted and revised within the whole platform. The process of consultations also included a workshop which brought all working groups together to resolve the possible duplicities or incoherencies in their work. At the same time, the executive 'Expert Group' was elected that included representatives of the City Hall, ICP, city districts, NGOs, and the Ministry of Interior. The Expert Group was responsible for the coordination of working groups' outputs and their final transformation into Prague's integration strategy.

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However, unlike the 'Regional Advisory Platform', the 'Forum for Migrants' has not been working up to its expected potential and confirmed the organizational incapacity of Prague's migrant communities. This was already acknowledged during the initial meeting of 'Regional Advisory Platform' when the absence of any proper migrant representation, typical for the platforms in the Western European cities as reminded during the meeting, was explained with migrants' organizational incapacity. Moreover, there were repeated appeals to the platform's members to provide contacts for those migrants who could be deemed as having the willingness and social position to talk on behalf of their particular group. As such, the operation of 'Forum for Migrants' was problematic. It was generally welcomed by migrants as a step forward in their own involvement in public life. However, the invited representatives of particular migrant groups were visiting the forum rather randomly, while the forum itself has been convened only five times since its establishment in 2012. In this sense, the migrant communities have not been able to actively participate in the policy-making process, since they are not able or willing to articulate their own organized interests.

### 2.1.2 Non- governmental sector as an engine of integration governance

For the last two decades, the non-governmental sector has been gradually growing up to the number of around 15 organizations of various sizes, policy specializations and territorial scope of activity. This also includes organizations which do not specialize in migrant issues per se, but work with migrants as people in need of social services. The majority of these organizations has become statutory members of the 'Regional Advisory Platform'. Moreover, their more than fifteen-year long existence established a basis: professional skill-formation, source of policy expertise, fieldwork experience, and relations with migrant groups for the successful institutional evolution which has been taking place in recent years. There are NGOs which constitute the core of non-governmental sector in Prague's integration governance: *Inbáze* (est.2006), *Organizace pro pomoc uprchlíkům* (est.1991), *Sdružení pro integraci a migraci* (est.1992), *Poradna pro integraci* (est.1997); Indeed, these NGOs have taken part in the arrangement of ICP's operational working and their experts have been the ones of those who took part in the completion of Prague's integration strategy.

Although these NGOs are Prague-based, their scope of operation includes also other Czech Republic's regions. Moreover, they are acting both on the local and national (and partially also international) levels in facilitating the policy-making as the civil society counterparts to the public administration. Together with other important Prague's organizations – *La Strada* (est.1998), *META* (est.2004), and *Centrum pro integraci cizinců* (est.2003) above all, they function generally as contact centres for those migrants who need social, employment, legal, housing, but also psychotherapeutic counselling in all forms: office, street work, and emergency. The average turnout of clients for the seven aforementioned NGOs is more than 13,000 per year. At the same time, the non-governmental sector functions as an expertise hub for public administration in providing advice on the legal rights of migrants in the access to public goods. Moreover, apart from offering general counselling for all migrants, some of the NGOs target specific social groups in the migrant community and professional groups within the public sector: *La Strada* takes care of the victims of trafficking and exploitation of labour; *META* focuses on the equal access to education and cooperates with Prague's schools in arranging inclusive education system for young migrants; *Organizace pro pomoc uprchlíkům* helps particularly refugees and asylum seekers; *Inbáze* is very much focused on migrant families and children, but it is also actively engaged in the promotion of intercultural understanding between migrant society and Czech society.

As members of many international projects and policy networks, the NGOs have represented main nodes for the direct transmission of good practices from abroad. The specialization of particular NGOs has then allowed to gain expertise on the whole spectrum of integration governance. Thus, *Organizace pro pomoc uprchlíkům* has taken part in projects which were to exchange policy knowledge dealing with asylum

policies. *Sdružení pro integraci a migraci* has been participating in projects and networks that exchange experience on the regularization of irregular migrants and integration policies in the Central and Eastern Europe. Predictably, META took part in projects that focused on the equal access to education and support for migrant youth, while *InBáze* attempted to bring knowledge for training of professionals in intercultural mediation. In the same vein, *La Strada* took part in international projects which involve anti-trafficking campaigns.

### 2.1.3 Insufficient and competitive funding

The absence of budgeted political-bureaucratic body and lack of institutional coordination have resulted in unstable and insufficient funding for integration governance. Since 2007,

**Table 2 - NGOs – involvement in international projects (Examples)**

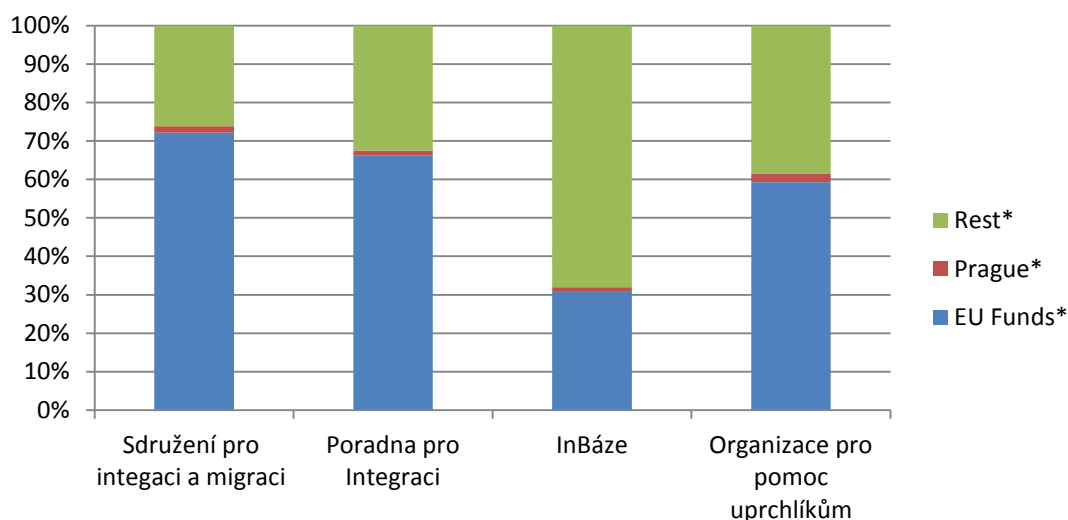
ORGANIZATION	PROJECT	NETWORK/PARTNERS
<i>InBáze</i>	<b>Formation of Profession "Sociocultural Mediator" - Inspiration by the Portuguese Model:</b> Incorporation of the profession of "sociocultural mediator" into the system of Czech Republic's integration governance. The project is inspired by the good practice that was recognized in Portugal.	Alto Comissariado para a Imigração e Diálogo Intercultural (PT)
<i>Organizace pro pomoc uprchlíkům</i>	<b>LUTA (Learn-Understand-Trust-Act):</b> Contribution to a transnational civic education process focusing on asylum policy in Europe. The aim of the project is to equip adult learners of the majority societies with profound knowledge of, on the one hand, EU asylum directives and national asylum legislation in the partner countries, on the other hand biographies of refugees and their individual experiences within the EU.	Universität Klagenfurt (AT), Sprachendienst Konstanz (GE), Associazione ASHRAM (IT), Write Deal (MT), Marieborgs Folkhögskola (SE), Instytut Tolerancji w Łodzi (PL)
<i>Sdružení pro integraci a migraci</i>	<b>INTEGRO (Integration on the Ground):</b> Project focuses on developing and implementing integration project that will be beneficial and effective for the integration of third country nationals in each partner's countries at local context. Project will also focus on implementing the Toolkit for Integration that was developed by the European Network Against Racism.	The Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (UK), KISA (CY), Citizens For Europe e.V. (GE), Radio Africa TV (AT)
<i>Organizace pro pomoc uprchlíkům; Sdružení pro integraci a migraci, Multikulturální centrum Praha</i>	<b>Foreign Workers on the Labour Market:</b> Focuses on the opening of a public debate and the resolution of the taboo topic of occupational safety of foreigners (job-related injuries, occupational diseases), as well as the reinforcement of equal rights for foreigners at the labour market. Its core activity lays in developing a thematic network with foreign partners from the United Kingdom and Germany, through which transfer of good practices and exchange of information as well as involvement of key stakeholders in the Czech Republic and Europe are foreseen	Caritasverband für die Diözese Osnabrück (GE), Anti-Slavery International (UK)
<i>META, International Migration Organization (IMO) - Prague</i>	<b>Models for Integration and Prevention of Exclusion: Empowering Migrant Youth (iYouth):</b> Aims to empower migrant youth organizations to better work towards integration and prevention of exclusion of young migrants through three main activities: 1. Development of models and training materials on integration and prevention of exclusion; 2. Capacity-building of migrant youth organizations; 3. Awareness raising and dissemination of results	IOM (Helsinki, Vienna, Marseille and Warsaw), Interface Vienna (AT), Kanava Nuorisio Ry (FI), ADRIC (FR), Nash Vybir (PL), Austrian National Youth Council (AU), Ministry of Interior (CZE), City of Helsinki (FI), City of Warsaw (PL)

<p>Člověk v tísni (People in Need)</p>	<p><b>Migrant Inclusion Strategies in European Cities (MiStra):</b> is a mainstreaming project aiming to involve policy makers, local authorities and public and private stakeholders on initiatives directed to the integration of policies and targeted interventions for the social inclusion of migrants identified as good practices at European level. The project provides for the transfer of four good practices, from the cities of Dublin, Berlin, Vienna and Bologna, in four target cities, Taranto Burgas, Prague and Budapest,</p>	<p>CIOFS-FP (IT), MetropolisNet EH2S (EU), Gsub-Projektgesellschaft (DE), Zentrum Für Soziale Innovation (AT), Job Ballymun Centre (IR), EUROPARTNERS 2007 Foundation (EU), Refugee Ministry (HU), Don Bosco Nővérek Háza Alapítvány (HU)</p>
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Source: Annual Reports (InBáze), Organizace pro pomocprchlíkům, Sdružení pro integraci a migraci, META

City Hall has been steadily awarding annual grants for selected projects. However, the provided financial resources are insufficient. By 2013, the total sum of CZK 4,510 million was redistributed in the six-year period. This is less than the annual budget of *Sdružení pro integraci a migraci* or half of annual budget of *Poradna pro integraci* in 2010. Other financial resources were provided by the City Hall in order to co finance the ICP's establishment and operation. Apart from this, there have been implicit expenses which do not target integration policies as such, but they are accessible to migrants on the basis of citizenship rights as public goods (social, health, educational services). Nonetheless, the funding of integration governance has been predominantly financed through the provision of financial resources facilitated by the EU funds and budgets of national ministries; especially the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Although the majority of Prague-based NGOs operates in a broader territorial scope, their funding structure confirms that the Prague's integration governance has been rather dependent on the external resources.

**Table 3 - NGOs – structure of budgets (2009-2012)**



\* *EU Funds* include European Integration Fund, European Refugee Fund, European Social Fund; *Prague* includes subsidies provided by City Hall and all municipal districts; *Rest* includes predominantly funding provided by Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, but also funding facilitated by international organizations or private foundations.

Source: Annual Reports (Sdružení pro Integraci a migraci, Poradna pro integraci, InBáze, Organizace pro pomoc uprchlíkům).

Some of the city districts have become involved in the funding of integration projects thanks to the provision of financial resources in special program that was set up by the Ministry of Interior in 2009 *emergentní projekty* (emergent projects). Emergent projects were construed as the main activation tool used by the ministry to encourage municipalities around the Czech Republic to become engaged in

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integration projects. In Prague, 5 out of total 22 city districts have participated in the projects; dedicated mainly to the cultural integration.

The funding through external resources introduces a partial paradox into the consolidation of Prague's integration governance. The paradox consists in the fact that the funding opportunities have been supplied, especially in the case of EU funds, already prior to the emergence of any organized (political and bureaucratic) demand for them. Such a coordinated demand has been actually formed in recent years as a response to the available funding. Furthermore, the external supply of resources has incurred four issues. First, the integration governance has been financed without strategic targets. In consequence, the projects scarcely develop into long-term policies that would be recognized as good practices and subsequently supported by the City Hall on a long-term basis. Second, the terms of funding provided by the EU funds do not allow to establish long-term and sound policies, either. The funding is provided on one- to three-year periods only. Third, such an unpredictable budgetary environment destabilizes the management of NGOs themselves and can force them to reduce provided services and involvement in other projects once they fail to win the competition over grants provided in a particular year. Last, the scarcity of long-term financing promotes competition rather than cooperation among NGOs. Instead of creating common projects, NGOs compete over the resources provided by the EU funds on individual bases. Predictably, ICP was initially perceived by the non-governmental sector as a new competitor over the already scarce resources rather than a beneficial institution that could improve coordination of Prague's integration governance. Thus, the competition over grants has been rather stalling the consolidation of the integration governance in Prague.

### **3. POLICIES OF INTEGRATION**

As for the policy practices, Prague's integration agenda cannot be easily compared with the integration models in the Western European cities, because many of the policy domains inherent to their developed integration models are simply missing or being just in the process of evolution. Indeed, the very first integration strategy 'Prague -Metropolis for All' has been issued and approved by the City Hall only in June 2014. In this sense, the Prague's integration governance is mainly being constituted of an uncoordinated variety of short-term projects with an unrealized potential to develop into generally applied good practices with a guaranteed long term funding, established rules of implementation and a formal political support. At the same time, there has not been a politically articulated demand for sound integration policies so far, because the trend of a growing share of migrants on Prague's population can be still considered as a relatively new phenomenon. In general, the cultural proximity of Slavic speaking migrant groups have not spurred widespread conflicts which would have brought the issues of cultural integration and the need to mediate relations of migrant groups with the Czech population to the forefront of Prague's policy-making. This could explain the absence of long term, explicit and systematic diversity oriented approach of public policies in Prague. However, there was an exception in the case of Vietnamese community whose ethnic background and inward looking self-organization have caused conflicting situations and the subsequent need to develop projects and policies that would address them.

The City Hall has not been able to develop policy tools or discursive practices to promote the ideas of ethnic diversity as cultural and economic assets. Indeed, the political representation does not openly articulate the advantages of growing diversity of Prague's population and its possible contribution to the economic growth or cultural life. There has been neither official commitment of leading politicians, nor campaigns promoting diversity and highlighting simultaneously the local municipal identity. However, a larger-scale campaign which would explain advantages of culturally diverse Prague and appeal to the local



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identity at the same time is being planned by the ICP. Moreover, Prague administration bodies do not have any official policy which would establish employment programmes to promote cultural diversity of municipal employees and reflect the growing cultural diversity of Prague's population. Likewise, advanced policies that would establish anti-discrimination codes for municipal bureaucracies dealing with migrants have not been published, although some sort of printed guidelines that instruct bureaucratic staff about the handling of migrant clients are being considered. There has not been any kind of systematic approach to prevent and, if needed, resolve conflicts between Czech population and migrant communities. However, the policies of cultural integration, conflict avoidance, and diversity recognition that would be programmed and lead to the restoration of social cohesion through the production of bridging capital seem to be supported by the municipal granting policies and emerging as the most prospective policy domain in Prague's integration governance.

Besides the cultural-religious domain of integration, the domains of legal-political and socio-economic integration are even less established. In terms of political-legal domain, Prague has not been able to develop explicit local strategies which would promote political participation. This is also partially impossible when compared to the Western European cities, because majority of the migrant communities are historically new and they have not produced a considerably populous second generation to be targeted by such strategies. As for the socio economic domain, there seems to be more space for local policies to complement and adjust national policies rather than implement them outright. However, once again, there are no sound policies which attempted to complement and adjust national policies, while the national policies and legislative acts do not seem to promote any kind of emancipation measures for migrant population in socio-economic dimension. One of the reasons is that the welfare states in the Central and Eastern Europe focus on status quo and appeasement of traditional social groups rather than on promotion of emancipation and activation measures which would also reflect growing social and cultural diversity of their own populations (Cerami 2008). Thus, there is no consistent policy which would address ethnic entrepreneurs as such in the promotion of ethnic entrepreneurialism or Prague's support to the companies employing migrants (see also Čermáková and Kohlbacher 2012).

At the same time, there are projects and initiatives which substitute partially the lack of properly defined and recognized domains. Moreover, Prague's integration strategy gives a promise of the potential establishment of systematic integration policies, although it does not present an outright plan to streamline integration policies into clearly delineated policy domains. In terms of policy practices, the Prague's integration governance consists of projects exercised by the non-governmental sector which have various potentials to be developed into long-term policies. In the socio-economic integration, many of the projects focus on the provision of social/legal counselling, which gives the migrants an ability to access public goods which shall be legally available to them, and can be said to be complementing the national policies in a particular sense. Indeed, the recent institutional consolidation of Prague's integration governance has been focusing on the improvement of stakeholders' coordination and training of bureaucratic staff to guarantee the migrants more flexible and comfortable access to the already existing public goods. The domain of cultural integration seems to be the most developed, because this is an area of activity which allows the NGOs to reach tangible results that would require a little political support and smaller sum of invested resources than in other domains and it would not be hindered by existing legal framework.

### **3.1 Prague – 'Metropolis for All': Setting Priorities**

Prague's integration strategy derives its own normative paradigm from the national integration strategy which posits that integration policy must "improve the understanding of the mutual interconnection of migration and integration with all social, cultural, economic, and political aspects of societal life," while the



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"the task of integration is to reach a non-conflicting and reciprocally satisfactory co-existence, mutual learning and understanding between foreigners and society [...]." It also adopts the definition of migrant groups that are to be targeted by integration governance as "legally residing Third Country Nationals (those coming outside the EU states), who have not applied for or are not users of international protection, and also the EU citizens in exceptional and crisis cases". At the same time, Prague's integration strategy plans to target the general public as well as professionals employed in public and non-governmental sector, while it also reminds that certain groups of EU citizens, exactly those countries entering into the EU after 2007, shall also be included into the national integration strategies. However, it does not cover the case of undocumented migrants in any way. Since national laws do not allow regularization of undocumented migrants, integration strategies do not specify any possible policy solutions for irregular migrants, although they are those most endangered by exploitation and represent around 47,000 Prague's residents by estimation.

Prague's integration strategy does not delineate concrete policy domains of integration governance. Instead, it offers five general priorities that shall be addressed through one-year action plans by 2017 when the strategy is to be replaced by an updated version. The set of priorities shows that Prague's integration governance is only at its initial stage. Especially the first priority shows that there is still a lack of comprehensive knowledge about the social and economic living conditions and needs of migrants who are residing in Prague. In general, the integration strategy attempts to address the institutional deficiencies (in skill-formations of public servants, in cooperation among stakeholders) of Prague's integration governance rather than to complexly outline, with exception in the fourth priority, the development of particular policy domains, policies, projects and strategies:

- The first priority requires to make a thorough socio-economic and socio-cultural analysis of migrant communities living in Prague.
- The second priority meets the need for the introduction of more coherent and efficient system of funding by the City Hall.
- The third priority sets aims to raise awareness of all targeted groups about the issues of integration and fighting stereotypes about migrants in the Czech society.
- The fourth priority articulates measures that are necessary for the improvement of access to education for migrants in all sectors (primary, secondary, tertiary) of education.
- The fifth priority contemplates the requirements for the more efficient delivery of social services to migrants.

### **3.2 Practice of Policies in the Hard Socio Economic Domains**

As such, there is not any organized policy domain which would arrange monitoring and a planned development of migrants' socio-economic integration (work and entrepreneurship, migrants and education, housing, health). The policies exist implicitly in the form of rather uncoordinated projects which are organized by non-governmental sector. At the same time, the socio-economic integration represents the main part of everyday activity employed by the non-governmental sector in the form of social/legal counselling which provides the migrants with assistance in accessing public goods related to their legal status in the aforementioned socio-economic spheres of life and informs them about their social and legal rights in general. This is also reflected in priorities of the Prague's integration strategy that are dedicated to education and social services.

In terms of social services, migrants with permanent residence are legally guaranteed full access to social services like other Czech citizens. As the integration strategy reminds us that legal guarantees of full access

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do not reflect real experiences of individual migrants in many cases. Social services for migrants with temporary residence are more or less restricted to a minimum and hardly accessible. The municipality does not provide any kind of additional social services that would complement the legally defined ones. In this context, the major propositions suggested by the integration strategy are to improve the awareness of providers of social services about the migrants' rights, raising their competencies in work with migrants, while also informing migrants about their social/legal rights and assisting them in claiming these rights when needed. This is to be realized through the continual provision of social/legal counselling and operating a fieldwork in migrant communities on the one hand and information-sharing and networking among the providers of social services on the other hand.

In terms of education, the integration strategy concludes that the potential of the educational system in the migrant integration has not been properly utilized so far. First, kindergarten and elementary schools are facing insufficient financial and material (in terms of strategies, teaching guidelines) resources, and lack of training for the pedagogic personal. They are not prepared to integrate newly incoming pupils due to language barriers and are unprepared to deal systematically with education of such children. Second, the secondary and tertiary educational levels expect students to speak Czech language fluently and are no longer legally obliged to provide any assistance in language education. In this context, the integration strategy proposes recommendations reflecting on the need to provide free access to Czech language courses, improve the intercultural competencies of teaching staff through methodical support and further skill formation, and establish cooperation among major stakeholders.

### *3.2.1 Social/legal counselling*

Social and legal counselling is the cornerstone of integration projects organized in Prague. It is formed to encompass all spheres of migrant social life. Normally, it is taking place in specialized centres that are established by NGOs as part of their own office space solely or as part of the space which includes meeting rooms for other social activities or as separate branches that operate around the whole city as is the case of the ICP. Such centres are either organized as general meeting places, Community Centre (*InBáze*), or as specified places, Consultancy and Information Centre for Young Migrants (META). Many of the NGOs are organizing street counselling as well. For example, *Organizace pro pomoc uprchlíkům*, in cooperation with the districts Praha-13 and Praha-14, has been organizing street counselling in order to map the social situation of migrants in the districts, raise awareness of migrants about their social and legal rights, and attempt to prevent social exclusion.

The social counselling concerns the provisions of basic information about the migrants' rights based on their residency status, assistance with dispatching documents and general communication with public administration, registration in the labour office, and validation of documents regarding the achieved education of migrants. In particular, this includes assistance in applying for the state social support, social and financial benefits; registration at the health insurance companies; giving information on healthcare system; assisting in job search by facilitating information on the labour market, looking for free vacancies, inspecting the ability of legal employment, and assistance in writing of curricula vitae and preparations for job interviews; help with a search for proper housing capacities on the real estate market; as well as assistance with educational activities of migrant youth in mediating relations between educational institutions and parents, providing free after-school education, and support in the application process for higher education institutions. Moreover, the social counselling also comprises provision of psychotherapeutic consultations in case of mental stress caused by living in culturally distinct environment as well as the long-term isolation from the social networks in the country of origin (family and friends).

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Legal counselling is organized to provide knowledge about the legal system in case of both alien and asylum legislature, and other legal problems that were encountered by the counselled migrants. The counselling includes preparation of necessary documents and also legal representation in procedural dealing with courts and public administration such as procedure of granting a state citizenship. Moreover, the legal consultations include also general issues of life ranging from Family Law (newly born children, under-age children, weddings or divorces), Civil Law (real estate purchases), Labour Law (extortion) salary, wage refunds, labour contracts consultations, improper severance of the labour relations) to Commercial Law (commercial register) and Criminal Law.

### *3.2.2 Migrants and work*

#### SOCIO – CULTURAL MEDIATORS, FOREIGNERS AS TEACHER ASISTANTS, FOREIGNERS AS COMMUNITY INTERPRETERS

The project 'Formation of Profession Socio-Cultural Mediator' attempts to establish the newly emerging profession in the Czech educational and legal system, while it is using international cooperation with a Portuguese partner to arrange a transfer of good practice from abroad. The project is mainly organized by *InBáze* and it is financed by the EU Funds and Ministry of Interior. Its main aim is to create an accredited learning programme in six language mutations which would serve to certify members of migrant population as intercultural mediators and allow them to work for the public administration. Thus, not only the training of first socio-cultural mediators is organized, but the projects set up a network of interested actors from the non-governmental sector and public administrations which are to be targeted as main consultation bodies as well as the potential employers.

The project is complemented by two other projects that were prepared by META. Both projects aim to train the migrant population with higher education, especially whose representatives of it whose residence status or unfavourable position on the labour market prevent them from undertaking appropriate jobs as teaching assistants and community interpreters. As for teaching assistants, the project enrolled twenty applicants into an accredited course. In the second phase, 15 vacancies of teacher assistants were created at 10 primary schools for the period of one year. The project was supervised by methodical experts who took care of the applicants' further training and were attempting to provide the continuation of new vacancies after the end of the project. As for community interpreters, the applicants firstly underwent an accredited course at the Institute of Translation Studies at the Charles University. Main skills to be received by community interpreters (in Arabic, Mongolian, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese) were the ability to surpass the language and socio-cultural barriers between migrants and the providers of public goods and services. Following the course, 16 community interpreters were employed by NGOs mainly providing services for schools (during registrations of children to schools, during parent-teacher meetings, during pedagogical-psychological meetings), public administration dealing with foreigners (Office for the Administration of Refugee Facilities), hospitals and other public facilities.

#### TOGETHER ON THE LABOUR MARKET; EMPLOYMENT HEADING TOWARDS INTEGRATION; HELP THEM OUT OF CRISIS

'Together on the Labour Market' was a project organized by the district Praha-Libuš as part of the emergent projects, and thus sponsored by the EU Funds and Ministry of Interior. Moreover, the project included two foreign cities for the exchange of experience as well as the national Union of Vietnamese in the Czech Republic due to its focus mainly on the Vietnamese community residing in Praha-Libuš. During three years, the project offered a six month training for small entrepreneurs and employees that made them aware of legal regulations in service industries, catering and hospitality industry, as well as food industry. The courses were interpreted and the learning materials were translated into the particular languages. In sum,

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685 applicants (296 Vietnamese, 184 Russian speakers, 219 Chinese, 76 Mongolians) enrolled in training courses, with 54 per cent of applicants finishing the course.

Two projects 'Employment Heading to Integration' and 'Help Them out of Crisis' were organized by Sdružení pro integraci a migraci. The first project attempted to facilitate migrants with skills for the success on the labour market. Moreover, it focused on the migrants with small children who find it hard to combine work with family life and the elderly who have no right to claim pension benefits in the Czech Republic and are generally disadvantaged on the labour market due to their age. Participants were instructed by HR professionals how to look for a job, enrol in requalification courses, and how to write curricula vitae and cover letters. The second project aimed to protect the rights of labour migrants and prevent the abuse of agency employees or forced labour. It offered counselling on the issues of labour law, residence issues, social security law, and healthcare.

#### ETHNOCATERING

'Ethnocatering' is a social enterprise that is run by *InBáze* and provides a standard catering services for companies and social events with the exception that it serves exotic dishes prepared by migrant women with the origin from Georgia, Armenia, Afghanistan, and other countries. It has several aims: to employ as many migrant women as possible on the long-term labour contracts, to help the women use their cooking abilities in the working process, and generate profit which would be reinvested into the social enterprise and co-finance also other integration activities of *InBáze*, especially its Community Centre.

#### 3.2.3 Migrants and education

##### COUNSELLING AND INFORMATION CENTRE FOR YOUNG MIGRANTS

The centre has been established thanks to the EU Funds and co-financing provided by the City Hall. It has been realized as a flagship project of META. The centre mediates relations between young migrants, their parents, schools, and other institutions related to the educational process. In case of children who have not completed primary education, their parents are assisted through contacting and selecting appropriate schools, fulfilling further enrolment obligations and finding solutions for problems which might occur during the process of enrolment. Furthermore, migrants are being instructed about the Czech educational system. The centre also helps migrants to follow their studies in the secondary and tertiary education by informing them about the admission processes, mentoring them in the selection of suitable institutions, and assisting them in the legal recognition of the migrants' previous education that was gained abroad. This also includes providing information about various governmental and international scholarships for students arriving from developing countries.

##### YOU ARE NOT ALONE IN THIS!

Other projects organized by META have focused on the support to students with a different mother language and their educators. Owing to the project, six teaching assistants work in five elementary and one secondary school. They have several tasks: to teach Czech language for foreigners, to support children and their teachers in the classroom during lessons and to provide individual tutoring to migrant students. The project took place in various elementary schools around and outside Prague. Furthermore, it involves the cooperation with the Faculty of Pedagogy at the Charles University whose students attend regularly the elementary schools to assist its teachers and pupils. Thanks to its long-term activity which strives to establish a network of engaged volunteers, the projects were complemented also in this matter. Indeed, META and its projects, especially the offer of individual tutoring, are also benefiting from the cooperation with volunteers from both native Czechs and migrant backgrounds.

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## SUPPORT OF PEDAGOGICAL STAFF IN THE WORK WITH FOREIGN PUPILS; TEACHERS WORKING WITH PUPILS OF FOREIGN ORIGIN

As the NGO focusing on the inclusive education of migrants, META has also been developing projects that aimed to prepare and train current and future educators through methodological support: to gain competencies in their work with migrant pupils and to most effectively promote the integration of these pupils into the Czech education system. The general aim of such projects has been to establish a systematic methodological approach and guidelines for the education of migrants that could be implemented in the whole Czech educational system.

The projects had two forms. In the first one, working groups consisting of educators and experts in teaching Czech language as a foreign language have developed teaching materials for specific teaching subjects such as Czech language, natural science, history. Moreover, the project was organized in cooperation with faculties of pedagogy at several Czech universities, including the Charles University, which incorporated the intercultural skills into the university curricula. On the other hand, the second project has been focused on the methodological assistance to kindergartens, primary and secondary schools in their attempts to include the principles of inclusive education into their own work with migrant children. Thus, the project consisted in the provision of learning materials, regular workshops for teachers and also other employees of public administration working with issues of educational policies. Both projects have then led to the formation of policy platform that includes policy experts, representatives of public administration, teachers, Czech School Inspection, labour unions, and faculties of pedagogy. The platform is expected to network the major stakeholders in the educational policies and prepare the ground for the systematic approach to the education of migrant children.

### *3.2.4 Migrants and housing*

#### OPEN DOORS FOR REFUGEES

The project 'Open Doors for Refugees' is organized by *Poradna pro Integraci* and has been supported by the Ministry of Interior as part of State Integration Program for several years. Once again, the project provides services for migrants in several regions of the Czech Republic, including Prague. It aims to provide the clients with personal assistance in finding and arranging accommodation and to inform them how to apply for the financial support for housing provided by the State Integration Fund. Furthermore, the project offers its clients a six-month support in the adaptation to the new place of residence that includes assistance with the orientation in new environment, surpassing the initial insecurity through social/legal counselling, assistance in communication with the public administration and institutions and in the registration for the local healthcare and educational services.

### **3.3 The practice of handling cultural and religious diversity and social cohesion**

Despite the absence of clearly delineated and articulated diversity-oriented approach, the promotion of cultural diversity has been supported as an important policy domain of Prague's integration governance. The majority of the municipal grants were awarded to projects which promote events and construct spaces leading to the intercultural exchange and mediation between Czech society and migrant population. On the other hand, the promotion of religious diversity is not prominent in general, because Prague's population remains rather homogenous in religious terms and the city has not faced any major interfaith conflicts. Dominant religious communities, Jews and Orthodox Christians, are treated as religions belonging to the national minorities and they are awarded grants for preservation of traditional culture of national minorities. Furthermore, thanks to the emergent projects that were financed by the Ministry of Interior,

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the municipal districts have also become involved in the diversity-oriented policies to solve growing disruption of social capital among their population. This was especially the case in district Praha-Libuš which can be a source of evidence about the evolution of integration governance in Prague; especially its slow shift from the understanding of migrant population as a security issue towards the introduction of integration policies that promote the creation of bridging social capital and diversity as an economic and cultural asset.

### *3.3.1 The practice of policies of inter – group relations and social cohesion*

- PRAHA-LIBUŠ: FROM CONFLICT TO CO-EXISTENCE

Praha-Libuš is a small city district with 9,700 inhabitants that is situated on the periphery of Prague. As such, the district experienced a dramatic increase of migrant population in the last decade. Only between 2004 and 2008, the share of migrants on the district's population had grown from 11 per cent to 25 per cent and it has remained stable since then. Especially the Vietnamese community became highly concerted in Praha-Libuš since the establishment of marketplace 'SAPA' in 2000. Although Vietnamese remain the second biggest migrant community following Ukrainians, the concentration of population with different ethnic and socio-cultural background led to the inter-ethnic tensions in the city district that reached a national appeal in 2008.

The growing tensions emerged into open discussions after a fire had burned down parts of 'SAPA' marketplace. Following the event, negative articles emerged in local and national newspapers that were informing about the locals' concerns with Vietnamese community allegedly causing the growth of criminality, drug dealing, gambling industry, widespread prostitution, and street vandalism. The tensions had two amplitudes in 2008 and 2010-2011 when the issue of security and Vietnamese community became a part of the local and national concern. The conflicting line was also supported by particular politicians. In 2010, Peter Mráz, the mayor of Libuš-Praha, sent an open letter to the City Hall and Ministry of Interior that informed them about the allegedly unbearable co-existence with the Vietnamese community due to its criminal activities and urged the institutions to take action. In the same manner, Pavla Jedličková, head of the district's Committee for Multicultural Co-existence, paradoxically declared the marketplace 'SAPA' a ghetto and case threatening national security.

However, the multiple tensions had an effect on the parallel emergence of integration policies; especially following the municipal elections and change in the district political representation. The policies were organized by multiple actors including NGOs, EU Funds, state funding activities, City Hall, Praha-Libuš municipality, and also migrant organizations:

*VIETNAMESE THROUGH CZECH LENSES AND CZECHS THROUGH VIETNAMESE LENSES; SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INTEGRATION OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND ADULTS ON THE TERRITORY OF PRAHA-LIBUŠ* - As a precondition to get the state funding, the municipality has initially included the integration of Vietnamese community into its strategy of development for the period 2010-2015. In consequence, the Ministry of Interior with the use of EU Funds have financed many projects, including 'Vietnamese through Czech Lenses and Czechs through Vietnamese Lenses' and 'Social and Cultural Integration of Children, Youth, and Adults on the Territory of Praha-Libuš', that led to the establishment of Committee for Multicultural Co existence (that has actually failed to materialize any beneficial outcome) and pursued the aim to involve Vietnamese associations into the district public life and public discussions, while they provided intercultural workshops and language courses as well as the systematization of inclusive education in the district's kindergartens and primary schools. One of the projects sponsored also the preparation of detailed studies about the socio



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cultural and socio economic integration of Vietnamese community that was facilitated by the experts in social geography from the Charles University ().

*CITIZEN COMMUNITY FORUM; ASIAN EVENING; ORGANIZED GUIDE TOURS TO MARKETPLACE 'SAPA'* - Financially supported by the emergent projects and cooperating with Prague's NGO Lačhe Čhave, the municipality has started to promote platforms and social events that aimed to deepen the integration and peaceful coexistence of all citizens of Praha-Libuš. First of all, Lačhe Čhave helped to establish a Citizen Community Forum that plans to gather and engage those citizens from Czech population and migrant community that are interested in the district public life and willing to cooperate on the organization of social event in the city district. Thus, the forum has begun to organize guided tours to the 'SAPA' on a regular basis, separately for municipal bureaucrats and ordinary citizens, in order to correct the locals' views on the marketplace as a centre of criminal activities and being generally inhospitable to outsiders. On the other hand, 'Asian Evenings' served the same purpose in getting the locals familiar with their Vietnamese neighbors and their culture and cuisine through workshop sessions.

*JABLKOBRAVNÍ (APPLE-HARVEST FESTIVAL); FESTIVAL OF TRADITIONS: ASIAN LUNAR YEAR AND CZECH MASOPUST* - Since 2013, the one-day festivals Jablkobranní as well as 'Festival of Traditions: Asian Lunar New Year and Czech Historical Masopust' have been established with an aim to support multicultural exchange and mutual co-existence among the district's population. Both events were co-prepared by the Citizen Community Forum. The festivals offer musical, gastronomic and cultural traditions of particular ethnic groups living in Praha Libuš through music performances, workshops and entertaining activities. For Jablkobranní, this included performances of Kazakh, Russian, Ugandan musical formations, presentations of Vietnamese and Czech traditions, and degustation of various world cuisines. On the occasion of 'Festival of Traditions', the ambassador of Vietnam and leaders of Vietnamese community in the Czech Republic as well as local political representation visited the evening which combined performances of Czech and Vietnamese folk culture.

- COMMUNITY CENTERS AS MEETING PLACES

*HOUSE OF NATIONAL MINORITIES* - The House of National Minorities was opened by the City Hall in 2007. It shall form a permanent space that is provided to the national minorities (Bulgarian, German, Slovak, Roma, Greek, Serbian, Ukrainian, etc.) in order to preserve their cultural traditions and present them to a wider public. The seat of the House of National Minorities consists of a library and study room, exhibition rooms, lecture theatre, and other social rooms which host thematic exhibitions related to the life, art and culture of the national minorities and their original countries as well as academic conferences on topics connected with issues of particular national minorities, and their cultural and historical relations/ relationship with the Czech Republic and Prague in particular. Moreover, several organizations representing national minorities are provided office space (financed by annual grants) and are also authorized to manage the thematic programmes of the House of National Minorities.

*INBÁZE COMMUNITY CENTRE* - Apart from social/legal counselling, *InBáze* provides space and cultural programme for regular social events and meetings. In the 'Atelier *InBáze*' sessions, children with Czech and migrant background can attend painting classes and are to be taught creativity, team work, respect and tolerance to cultural diversity. This is also realized during other after-school activities which focus on sport, dancing or playing instruments. In 'ClubIn' sessions, teenage migrants gather every fourteen days to participate in special workshops and small trips and excursions around Prague. Meanwhile, the 'Multicultural Group CIRCLES' is separated into individual circles that gather on weekly basis and are dedicated to the meeting of adult migrants for conversations on different topics and playing of parlour games with the aim in creating relaxed atmosphere based on mutual trust and open sharing of memories



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and experiences of everyday life. Some circles are dedicated to meetings for migrant mothers or seniors such as the circle called 'Indian Summer'.

*LOW-THRESHOLD CLUB ROZHLEDNA; SAS DOMINO* - 'Low-Threshold Club Rozhledna' is a club for youth which is organized by Lačhe Čhave in the area of Praha-12 and near to Praha-4 and Praha-Libuš. The Club is open to all young people, but it has also been used for the purpose of integration projects which focus on the migrant youth. The club has also established cooperation with district educational institutions and migrant organizations. Thus, although providing services and space for social activities of all young people, it attempts to offer social counselling, leisure activities and integration projects for migrants as well. As an integral part of the club, 'SAS (Social Activization Service) DOMINO' is a project focused on parents with children under the age of 6 years. The aim is to provide all available social services and support for those children whose development is at risk due to prolonged social exclusion of their families. The services consist of weekly group sessions and individual consultations in the family homes. Although the service is provided for all socially weak families, there is an expected support for Vietnamese and other migrant families in the surrounding city districts.

- FESTIVALS AS MULTICULTURAL SPACES

*PRAGUE HEART OF NATIONS*- 'Prague Heart of Nations' is the biggest social event of national minorities that is taking place in the Czech Republic. It aims to promote folk culture of various nations from all over the world, mainly the Central and Eastern Europe, including music, dance performances, crafts, and folk costumes. It takes place annually right in the city's centre. It is co-organized by more than twenty organizations that represent national minorities in the Czech Republic, many of them seated in the House of National Minorities in Prague. The festival receives considerable financial support from the City Hall.

*REFUFEST* - 'RefuFest', organized by InBáze, takes place on one of Prague's river islands every year. Its main target is to show that Prague is no longer a homogenous city, but it is becoming a cosmopolitan centre where people of various religions and nationalities live. The festival strives to look beyond stereotypes and celebrate the benefits of plurality. The presentations and degustation of national cuisines are generally prepared by migrants living in the Ministry of Interior's asylum centres. The representatives of selected countries present facts about their homelands in information tents. Music is performed by various bands from all over the world. On average, the one-day festival is visited by 4,000 people.

*COLOURFUL NINE* - 'Colourful Nine' is an ethno-festival that is organized by the private agency with the support of district Praha-9. The festival strives to provide space to all ethnic minorities living in the territory of the Czech Republic while arranging theatre and music performances as well as ethno-market and various workshops. *This one-day festival is being visited by up to 5,000 people.*

- NEIGHBOR INITIATIVE, INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

*NEXT-DOOR FAMILY* - 'Next Door Family' is a long-term project that is organized by the Prague-based NGO Slovo 21 which is regularly financially supported by the City Council. It has not only proven to be successful in Prague, but it has inspired the establishment of same projects in other European countries (Belgium, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Slovakia, Spain, and Portugal). The project is based on meetings of Czech families and migrant families for a common dinner in one of the two families' households. The main assumption of the project is that stereotypes are best overcome by the establishment of personal meetings and ties. The meeting is organized by a special assistant who is also present during such dinner. Moreover, the families were matched as sharing the criteria of same age, occupations, hobbies, and language abilities.

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*FACE 2 FACE* - 'Face 2 Face' is a project realized by Člověk v tísni. The project understands Prague as a place for meeting and mutual communication of cultures. Its basic aim is to break down negative stereotypes and improve public perception of migrants and the phenomenon of migration. Hence, it attempts to involve migrants into the media and public debates and inform the general public about migrants living in the Czech Republic. Also it strives to cooperate with journalists and students of journalism in order to train them in the issues of immigration and integration, while it makes them aware of the negative media discourses and how to change them to provide balanced news about immigration as well. Moreover, the project trains migrants in production of photography, video making, social media and encourages them to use these skills to communicate their own experience of life in the Czech Republic. The project has been already supported by the City Hall, Ministry of Interior and European Funds. It is being realized in cooperation with partner organizations in the United Kingdom, Spain, and Italy.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Integration policy-making in the Czech Republic has become one of the most advanced in the Central and Eastern Europe. As it was mentioned before, the Czech Republic, together with Slovenia, has already passed the take-off phase and progressed towards the expansion phase of integration governance unlike the rest of their regional counterparts (Drbohlav 2011). The policies have been remodelled from passive approaches to the systematic and activist approaches (issuing and organizing concise integration strategies on the national level, institutionalizing the system of blue and green cards, promotion of local integration strategies). In the process of integration governance in the Czech Republic there are two most important elements that should be underlined, firstly, the European funds available in the area of integration and the role of NGOs in policy making and implementation of diverse projects.

The projects mentioned in this report were mainly financed from the European Integration Fund. This important source of financing has influenced not only the projects targeted at third-country nationals, but also the divers analysis and reports on migration and integration. EFI has played an important role in development of integration strategies as well as exchange of knowledge and experiences among stakeholders involved in migration- and integration- related issues. In this group NGOs seemed to be most dynamic and influential. They played an important role in the policy making (in consulting and advisory bodies, authors of reports, strategies) but mainly in development and implementation of integration programmes.

The case of Czech Republic seems to be very interesting for further in-depth analysis and studies comparing other CEE countries.

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