

## **REFUGEES, IMMIGRANTS, AND THEIR CHILDREN IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

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Problems of migration are very relevant for all the states in the EU, as well as for the whole world. At the end of December 2006 there were 323 343 foreigners with permanent and long term residence in the Czech Republic. The most frequent five nationalities of these foreigners were the following (number of foreigners): Ukrainian (102 594); Slovak (58 384); Vietnamese (40 799); Polish (18 894); Russian (18 564), and others (82 221). Foreigners with permanent and long term residents represent about 2,3% of inhabitants of the Czech Republic. Above mentioned nationalities show, how multifarious is the composition of inhabitants in this post-communist state and how important is the endeavour to provide successful integration.

This presentation will inform about legal and social system concerning asylum seekers, recognized refugees and immigrants, and their children in the Czech Republic.

## **SOCIAL WORK AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

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From a historical point of view it has been necessary for different groups of citizens to fight for or to demand their rights or equal opportunities, as it has not happened voluntarily. It has always been not easy to get equal opportunities depending on which community/country it has been. However, equal opportunities can not be discussed without issues of gender and ethnicity. Sometimes it is also related to sexuality, culture, and religion as important factors. There are many examples of that in history, for example, women's fight for equal opportunities, civil rights' movements in USA, apartheid in South Africa, etc.

The International Federation of Social Workers and the International Association of Schools of Social Work made a declaration of ethical principles which can be used in social work to support the claim for equal opportunities. Equal opportunities can also be given or gained through other means, as mentioned below.

The Danish welfare state is under pressure in those days and several changes have already been introduced there, which have influenced the principle of equal opportunities in social work, and there might come more in the future. There are different ways to draw attention to and to reach equal opportunities. The different approaches have their benefits and disadvantages.

In Denmark, awareness about equal opportunities exists for a long period already, and it has been given through legislation, but there are still problems for certain groups in the society, for example, the socially marginalized groups. In 2002, the Government established The National Council for Socially Marginalized People as a way to give a voice for those people. The workshop will enlighten the work of the Council and the process of gaining equal opportunities.

Equal opportunities can also come through service users who speak from their own experiences through cooperative societies in order to reach the political system, for example, unions of people with mental illness, of homeless people, etc.