Family Migration Policies in the Czech Republic:
Akers, Practices and Concerns

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WP8: Advocating equal rights: Campaigning, advocacy, resistance
About the project

Family related migration has been the dominant legal mode of entry in Europe for the past decades, but has become increasingly contested in recent years. Granting migrants the right to family union traditionally has been considered as promoting the integration of migrants into receiving societies, however, in current debates over ethnic closure of migrant communities and over the alleged “failure” of integration, the “migrant family” is increasingly seen as an obstacle to integration - as a site characterised by patriarchal relationships and illiberal practices and traditions such as arranged and forced marriages. As a result, family related modes of entry have been increasingly subject to restrictions, while the existing conditionality has been tightened up.

The research project analysed family migration policies in nine European countries from two angles. First, the project analysed policies and policy-making in regard to family related migration in a “top-down” perspective through the analysis of legislation, public debates, as well as through expert interviews. Secondly, the project analyses family migration policies from a “bottom-up” perspective, by investigating the impact of conditions and restrictions on migrants and their families and the responses and strategies migrants adopt to cope with these and to organise their family lives.

This project was financed under the programme New Orientations for Democracy in Europe (NODE, www.node-research.at) which is committed to exploring the future democratic development of Europe and its effects on citizens as well as politics. Within the perspective of the NODE-Research, the project on Civic Stratification, Gender and Family Migration Policy in Europe aimed at:

- Providing an empirically grounded analysis and evaluation of family migration policies in a broad range of immigration countries in Europe, including Eastern Europe;
- Investigating how family migration policies create civic stratification;
- providing empirical evidence for the consequences of stratified rights for migrants immigrating for family related reasons;
- analysing how migrants challenge and cope with the constraints imposed by family migration policies;
- analysing the relationship between “civic integration” and social and political integration, and conversely, relationship between civic stratification and social and political exclusion;
- applying a gender based analysis both to the analysis of family migration policies and the impact of these policies on migrants; and
- developing basic principles that might help governments to design and implement fairer immigration legislation.
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1 Introduction: Civil society in the Czech Republic

The role of nongovernmental sector in the Czech society has been a subject of an ongoing debate. Two dominant discourses seem to dominate this field. After the regime change in 1989, the newly emerged possibility for the development of civil society was celebrated as one of the key basis for country’s transition to democracy. The first Czech president, Václav Havel, took the leading role in promoting this idea. His notion of civil society was composed of three main pillars: associational life, state decentralisation and devolution of state functions to relatively autonomous subjects.\(^1\) Opposing views have been propagated by his successor, current president of the Czech Republic Václav Klaus. His recent speech at the Council of Europe Summit in May 2005 provoked an extensive discussion on the role of NGOs in democracy. Klaus warned about the dangerous expansion of what he called NGOism which can lead to “suppression of democracy” because its various forces and structures are lacking democratic mandate, while they are “trying to influence various key aspects of public life which concern citizens”.\(^2\) Besides NGOism, he also cautioned against “political correctness, artificial multiculturalism and radical humanrightism” concluding that these are the new forms which endanger our freedoms difficultly regained after the Communism. It seems that while the general public inclines more towards Havel’s views of civil society, at least at the rhetorical level (less though at the level of personal engagement or financial support of such initiatives), the dominant perception of NGOs by the top political elites and legislators adheres more towards the view of Klaus. More pragmatically, they see NGOs and advocacy groups as unwanted intruders into the field of their decision making powers. This attitude is even more openly expressed nowadays as the Civic Democratic Party which has been lead by Klaus for many years is in power.

2 Organisational landscape: ‘New’ Actors for ‘New’ Immigrants?

Nongovernmental organisations assisting migrants are becoming increasingly important actors in the process of their settlement. However, it seems that Václav Klaus does not have to worry too much about this development, because what we see is a rather selective devolution of roles and responsibilities of the state, especially those regarding social services and implementation of the state policies to the third parties, notably the NGOs. Their new roles in the process of migrant integration are framed by a wider process of restructuring and rolling back of the Czech welfare state. Thus, NGOs are becoming increasingly responsible for securing migrants’ access to social and economic rights, while they do not really have their say in deciding about the actual processes of redistribution and the legislation defining conditions of migrant incorporation.

The landscape of NGOs and advocacy groups in the field of migration and integration has been changing in recent years also due to other factors, most notably the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union (EU) and preceding process of harmonisation. The EU has become a new source of funding for many NGOs. It is thus playing an increasingly important role, not only as a major body of funding but also in terms of defining the targets of NGO work. At the same time, some of the major NGOs

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2\(^\) Quoted in a number of newspaper articles, for example: Numerato, D., & Kouřil, V. (2006). NGOismus: slovo, které se neujalo [NGOism: A term which hasn’t got enrooted]. Literární noviny, 7.
supporters withdrew from Central Europe such as the Soros Foundation which helped to establish a number of Czech civil society organisations.

Many of the NGOs currently assisting refugees and migrants were already established in the first half of the 1990s, when refugees started coming to the country. Initially, they were receiving relatively stable funding from the UNHCR, who saw its role in the Czech Republic not in providing direct assistance to refugees, but in supporting local NGOs in delivering these services. UNHCR has been withdrawing its support since the early 2000s, and NGOs have been increasingly pushed to seek other sources of support. In the conditions of financial insecurity, many concluded contracts with the state institutions responsible for refugee and migration issues: Department of Asylum and Migration Policy (DAMP) under the Czech Ministry of Interior and with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Many expanded their target group of clients and include also labour migrants who were coming to the Czech Republic in much larger numbers than asylum seekers.

Closer relations with the state institutions assured some level of financial security to NGOs, though often putting them in an ambivalent position to these bodies. On the one hand, their primary mission was to defend the rights of refugees and migrants, on the other hand, they wanted to preserve conflict-free relations with their donors, whose main aim was to control and manage the presence of foreigners. This is not to say that NGOs became mute with regard to the state bodies. However, there have been instances, when some NGOs decided to moderate their dissatisfaction with the state policies as a trade off for smooth relations with supporting bodies.

At the beginning of 2000s, NGOs working with migrants and refugees have gradually become recipients of the money from various EU bodies such as the European Social Fund or the European Refugee Fund. This inflow of the “EU money” was believed to lift their dependency on the state. However, this promise was only partially fulfilled as various state institutions were assigned to redistribute the money and to set the conditions for their administration. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs was made responsible for redistributing the money coming from the European Social Fund. The Ministry of Interior and its special body deciding about migration policies and asylum applications, DAMP, was made responsible for redistributing the European Refugee Fund.

Another force that changed the landscape of NGO assistance was a greater administrative load accompanying the entrance of the “EU money”. Many NGO workers complained about increasing load of paperwork over the past few years. Not always do NGOs employ an extra person to administer their projects, and therefore it is not unusual that also social workers have to spend amounts of time recording and demonstrating their activities, often at the expense of their work with clients. Furthermore, the EU projects are mostly aiming at some form of social integration of migrants into various areas of the Czech society, most notably the labour market. Thus, the NGOs have adjusted their activities to this demand and started offering an abundance of computer and language courses to migrants and recognized refugees.

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3 Two large projects have been running since 2005 by a number of NGOs called “Work in Czech” and “Work in Prague” administered within the EU funding stream called “Equal”.
2.1 Gender Mainstreaming and NGO Work with Migrants

Lastly, the EU funding had one more unintended effect on NGO assistance to refugees. In line with the official EU policy of gender mainstreaming, one of its requirements was that NGO projects had to prove that their activities will be gender sensitive and avoid discrimination based on gender. As I have learned from conversations from NGO workers, this section of the project proposals was usually completed in a rather routine way, using once testified formulations again and again without deeper consideration of what gender mainstreaming really means and involves. This approach is illustrated by the following interview with a UNHCR official, who is a member of a number of committees that decide about the distribution of the “EU money”. She anecdotally commented on the level of gender awareness in NGOs:

What they [NGOs] usually write in the section of Gender Mainstreaming is that their training team will consist of a duet: a man and a woman. And that makes a project gender sensitive. [Interview, Prague, December 2006]

The unenthusiastic attitude towards demonstrating gender awareness as a necessary part of NGO projects was also clear from the approach of an official responsible for assessing the projects within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. When he was showing me a few of the projects dealing with refugees and migrants funded from the European Social Fund, he would quickly flip through the “Gender Mainstreaming” sections with a mumble: “This is a usual bullshit...” [Interview, Prague, July 2006].

Accompanied with a relatively low awareness of gender issues and feminism among Czech young NGO professionals (most of them graduate from Social Work or Law where there is hardly any mention of gender as an important social category), “gender” has been turned into an empty word and a box to be ticked. Some of NGO workers acknowledged lacking deeper understanding and would appreciate some training and debate about gender aspects of their work with migrants. However, when asked about putting this possibility into practice a usual response was: “Yes, but that would require writing a special project and we do not have time to do this at the moment.”

In general, the increased financial insecurity after the withdrawal of major donors pushed some NGOs into a close and sometimes uncomfortable alliance with the state institutions which tend to work as a “corrective” force to NGO advocacy activities. The access to EU funding has led to more financial security for civil society organisations, but at the same time did not free them from the surveillance and sometimes even indirect pressure of the ministries. Moreover, it burdened NGOs with more administrative work and inadvertently instilled a particular understanding of gender as a category imposed from above and as an additional administrative obstruction which has little to do with the “actual work” of NGOs. Together with a lack of gender training, this added to blocking discussion and reflection on gender aspects in working with refugees and migrants, for some time.

2.2 The Relevance of Family Migration as an Political Issue

Despite statistically documented significance of family migration as one of the crucial streams of current immigration in the Czech Republic and the largest source of permanent-settlement immigration (see the Country Report), it has not been widely discussed either in the political and media arena or in academic research.\(^4\) It is partly

\(^4\) This finding has also been confirmed by two Czech migration scholars with whom expert interviews were conducted within the framework of this project.
because migration in general does not constitute an important political topic in the Czech Republic. The last Parliamentary elections in the summer 2006 are a clear illustration: although some of the political parties briefly mentioned migrant workers in their program statements, this topic has not been extensively discussed in any of the pre-election debates and did not make it into the headlines. The parties have so far not formulated and promoted any specific approach to migration. Moreover, migration policy-making remains almost fully under the control of the Ministry of Interior whose appointed representatives have tended to present it as a “technical matter” driven by the need to harmonise the national legislation with the EU, leaving almost no space for a debate. It is not unusual for the Ministry to “cover up” some more “indigenous” changes in the legislation – mostly those which take a restrictive direction and cut down migrants’ rights and possibilities of entry – emphasising requirements to transpose EU legislation.

In spring 2007, the issue of family migration got into the spotlight of the Czech media. In particular, the position of bi-national families, i.e. foreigners who marry Czech citizens or proclaim fatherhood to Czech children, has been publicly discussed. It was in reaction to the new amendment of the Alien and Asylum Act. The Ministry of Interior presented it as a set of changes necessary to complete the process of joining the Schengen area set for December 2007. The underlying assumption behind the change of the status of foreigners marrying Czech citizens or proclaiming fatherhood of Czech children was that those seeking entry on the basis of family relationships are undermining state control of immigration flows because according to current legislation, these foreigners can be immediately granted a Permanent Residence Permit (PRP). The only exception to this rule is, when there are serious reasons to consider this a sham marriage or proclamation of fatherhood. With the new amendment foreigners married to Czech citizens or proclaiming fatherhood of Czech children are granted with a temporary residence permit that could be turned into the PRP after two years of residence under the condition that the purpose of stay does not change, i.e. that the marriage still exists. In case of a divorce, there would be no entitlement to the PRP, and the foreigner would have to change the purpose of stay or leave the country. Travelling abroad would be necessary in any case, because at the moment, it is possible to apply for the change of residence permit only from outside of the Czech Republic.

The Ministry of Interior justified this move as a means to fight the practice of sham marriages and proclamations of fatherhood that are being used by some foreigners as the fastest way to obtain the PRP (“Vládní návrh 191,” 2007). The issue of sham marriages has also been perceived as a major problem of control by the representative of the Alien Police responsible for granting residence permits to foreigners. He argued that foreigners are becoming more and more sophisticated in covering up sham marriages and proclamations of fatherhood and therefore, the law should both restrict the conditions for receiving the residence permits based on marriage and proclamations of fatherhood and grant the Alien Police more power to prevent these [Interview, Prague, April 2007].

A public debate about this amendment was initiated by a coalition of twenty-seven nongovernmental organisations, independent lawyers and academics who published a declaration in reaction to some of the suggested changes. A group of representatives started intensive lobbying in the Lower House of the Czech Parliament and wrote a number of newspaper articles. Such a joint effort was previously unseen

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5 Another factor is that no far-right party made it into the Parliament and became a significant political player.
6 This declaration is now available also in English at: http://www.migrationonline.cz/e-library/?x=2010459.
The strategy of the Czech NGOs coalition in politicising family migration can be summed up in the following points of argumentation. They stated that:

- This law will not only be more hostile towards foreigners who want to settle permanently in the Czech Republic, but will also limit the rights of Czech citizens who decide to marry a foreigner;

- A bi-national couple (formed by a Czech citizen and a third country national) will paradoxically have less rights than an EU citizen and his or her family member (including also third country nationals) living in the Czech Republic;

- Bi-national families will have harder access to the Public Health Insurance and some welfare benefits;

- The possibility to apply for the Czech citizenship for foreign spouses will move from the current five years of the PRP to a total of seven years. In this way, a foreigner who forms such a substantial family relationship with a Czech citizen would be treated by law in a similar way as any other foreigner with no family ties in the country.

- From the interpretation of the proposed legislation, it seems that after a two year period, the couple would be obliged to prove that their marriage is not a sham. This constitutes a substantial change to the current situation, where it is the Alien Police which has to prove that the marriage is not genuine.

After this debate has started at the end of April 2007, the coalition of Czech NGOs managed to push its arguments into the parliamentary discussion via some Members of Parliament (MP) and into the media. One of the meagre achievements was postponing of decisive hearings in the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament to September and October 2007. This provided them with more time to get in touch with individual MPs and try to convince them to adopt and propose some changes in the upcoming hearings. While these negotiations seemed as a success to some members of the coalition, at the end of the day, only a tiny minority of these changes have been passed in the preliminary hearings of the specialised committees assigned to discuss the amendment and even less have been accepted in the final general hearing of the Lower House.

Conducting participatory observation at a number of these hearings proved to be a useful exercise in understanding the kinds of debates that lie behind migration and asylum legislation in the Czech Republic. The increasingly complex character of both the Asylum and particularly of the Alien Act makes discussion with a wider public a difficult task. Logically, this applies also to the sphere of official politics. Nevertheless, I was astonished by the low level of knowledge and understanding of migrations from the side of the MPs who were discussing related pieces of legislation in committees. This ignorance of migration and asylum issues occasionally contributes to creating a breeding ground for the Ministry of Interior to shape the legislation according to its own needs. Moreover, it also makes the work of NGO advocates more demanding and complicated as they have to spend lots of time simply explaining effects and problems of policies to MPs.

The EU and “Schengen” work as crucial frameworks for convincing the MPs that this or that change is actually “out of discussion” because it is required by the EU or necessary to enter the Schengen Area and therefore, the Czech Republic simply “has to adopt it”. A deeper insight shows that in case of many measures to be adopted, the
Member State still exercises a significant level of freedom in deciding about the actual form of the amendment, not to mention the process of implementation of these measures. Regulation of conditions for third-country nationals marrying Czech citizens is one of these areas.

The EU also served as the key reference and legitimiser in introducing the two year probationary period for foreign wives and husbands of the Czech citizens and fathers of Czech children before the eligibility for the PRP. The Ministry of Interior has repeatedly alerted the public to the “worrying extent” of the practice of sham marriages and proclamations of fatherhood despite not being able to support these claims by any statistics. When asked about the existence of numbers which could indicate such a rampant occurrence of these practices, the spokeswoman of the Alien Police argued that they: “Do not have any statistics about discovered or suspected sham marriages and proclamations of fatherhood” and thus she was not sure “where these statements that appeared in the media are coming from” [telephone interview, 14.8.2007]. The argument about the abuse of the system has been strongly supported by pointing to other EU countries out of which, the majority have already introduced some kind of a probationary period. Thus, the reference to the EU seemed to exert sufficiently convincing power even without an analysis of the actual situation of foreigners marrying and becoming fathers of Czech citizens. It appeared to easily override the arguments of the NGO coalition who argued that such a measure will not only fail to solve the problem of sham family relations formed as a way to get a legal status, but it will also wrongfully deprive the majority of genuine marriages from a number of rights and more generally from an easier way to integration into the Czech society.

What proved as one of the major obstacles in this struggle was the fact that NGO representatives involved were doing most of the activities in their spare time or had to temporarily compromise some aspects of their paid work. I was told by some of them that it is increasingly difficult to get funding for a project which would allow for some kind of “political” work and permit a stable influence on migration policies. As I was following this campaign over the months, I have seen people exhausted after spending long hours of their free time on preparing materials for MPs who hardly read them. Their general attitude was that this process could have been more effective, if more resources and more professional experience would be attached to lobbying.

Indeed, the everyday counselling of NGO can be very exhaustive and overwhelming work which does not leave enough energy for more advocacy oriented work that would push the activists to discuss, sharpen and spell out their visions on migration and integration policies. As a young lawyer with five-year experience of working for one of the main refugee/migrant NGOs explained to me:

NGOs are more like firms today. They employ ten to fifteen people, mostly paid by the EU or by the state. This brings a particular attitude to their work that is increasingly being defined exclusively by calls for project applications. NGOs are turning into an extended arm of the state; they can do the job cheaper, at lower expenses, better and faster. But it is much more difficult to get funding to be a watchdog or to do advocacy. People in NGOs are no longer willing to work for free, even if it is for a good cause. [Interview, Prague, April 2007]

Although the above described example of an NGO campaign partly disproves this statement, it still seems to apply as a general tendency in the field of NGO advocacy nowadays.
3 Immigrant Advocacy and Advocates in the Czech Republic

The most prominent nongovernmental actors active in the field of migration in the context of the Czech Republic are NGOs and occasionally some independent lawyers or representatives of the academic sphere join them in rare instances of advocacy initiatives such as the one described above. It is important to highlight that none of these organisations deals exclusively with family migration, but they all serve a broader clientele.

Although there are some migrant community organisations (Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Russian, Belarusian, etc.), they are predominantly active in the sphere of cultural activities, publishing their own journals for example. So far, they have not been more engaged in advocacy work in the field of migration.

In general, Czech NGOs can be divided into four broader groups (see organisations listed in the table below according to this categorisation):

1. Refugee and migrant NGOs

Refugee and migrant NGO represent the majority among the organisations. Initially, many of them focused predominantly on refugees and only gradually broadened their scope to incorporate other groups of migrants. The main focus of their activities lies in social and legal counselling, they run integration projects, many regularly comment on legislative changes in the field of migration policies, occasionally organize awareness raising activities and cultural events involving migrants and refugees.

2. Counselling NGOs also working with migrants

There are only few organisations counselling NGOs and working with migrants whose main target groups are not only migrants but also Czech citizens. They predominantly focus on counselling and occasionally participate in advocacy activities.

3. Organisations with religious background also working with migrants

These are larger organisations which consider migrants and refugees in need of help part of their clientele alongside Czech citizens. They mostly provide counselling and material help.

4. Information NGOs

Information NGOs focus on informing the general public about migration issues, they organize public debates and various awareness raising campaigns, occasionally run research projects on migration issues and participate in advocacy campaigns.

Another actor which could be relevant for some cases of family migration is the Public Defender of Rights in the Czech Republic (Ombudsman). This state institution was established in 2000 and acts to protect people from “conduct of offices and other institutions undertaking state administration, should such conduct be contrary to the law or even if not contravening the law then otherwise faulty, erroneous or incorrect.” That means also a conduct which does not comply with the principles of a democratic state respecting the rule of law and the principles of good administration. One of the fields of Ombudsman’s activities is the so-called area “Matters of foreigners”. In the past, the Public Defender of Rights has pushed through some progressive changes in the Alien and Asylum Acts. It also publishes annual reports where the main issues of foreigners seeking its help are listed together with Ombudsman’s response.

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3.1 Pro-Immigrant Activities by Czech NGOs

Focusing mainly on the biggest group of NGOs dealing with family migration (Refugee and migrant NGOs), their activities can be listed as follows, starting with those that are most prominent in their work:

- Individual counselling:
  - legal (also involving legal representation – mostly in case of refugees),
  - social (individual case work and counselling about social benefits, care, family),
  - psychological (group and individual counselling);
- Providing migrants with information: mostly in the form of publishing booklets and leaflets;
- Integration projects: mostly funded by the ministries or by the EU and geared towards migrants’ integration into the labour market;
- Supporting community activities among migrants: typically in the form of multicultural groups, creating spaces where migrants can meet;
- Awareness raising about migration issues among the general population: cultural events with participation of migrants, discussions, writing newspaper articles;
- Political campaigning: commenting on legislative changes in Asylum and Alien Law and other policy relevant documents influencing migrants’ lives;
- Participation in decision-making bodies created by the Ministries, e.g. Committee on migrant integration or the Council for the rights of foreigners;

With the exception of few organisations, migrants are generally treated as clients coming to get a service, they are not included in decision making bodies of these organisations and projects are rarely consulted with migrant representatives. It can be concluded that migrants have a little direct say in NGOs activities.

3.2 Pro-Immigrant Liaising in the Czech Republic

More and more often, NGOs are required to form coalitions and partnerships in order to be eligible for funding. This sometimes results in purely formal ways of cooperation which could be characterised as follows: “I put you on the list, you put me on the list but we will not ask each other to do anything, OK?” Moreover, relations among NGOs are often marked with competition and secrecy as they are competing for scarce resources and trying to “sell” their know-how as a unique commodity.

Unfortunately, these major NGOs only rarely communicate with existing migrant organisations. Those organisations do not seem to be engaged in wider political struggles for better position of foreigners in the Czech society. Established NGOs could possibly encourage this involvement because it would make future coalitions stronger and perhaps also more accountable to the migrant populations.

Concerning the representational function of different actors, the sometimes conflictual relationship of different roles within one organisation has to be pointed out. From NGO representatives I often spoke with I heard that they see their different roles in migration policies standing in conflict: on the one hand, they feel responsible to their clients. Indeed, trying to fulfil their needs in a changing legislative and political landscape takes larger part of their personal and organisational capacity. On the other hand, they are well aware that if they will not be able to change structural conditions of migrants’
incorporation into the Czech society, they will always be in a position: one step behind state policy-makers, always trying to catch up and fill in the empty spaces and smooth the contradictions created by yet another amendment.

The shared impression among NGO workers is that in the current system of funding, available resources push them in the role of an extended arm of the state: providing services that the state does not want to do and dealing with social problems emerging from ill-conceived or over-restrictive migration legislation.

4 Ethics in Pro-Immigrant Advocacy

One of the problems with counselling that emerged among the most prominent issues voiced by the informants is the very basic fact that NGO assistance does not reach migrants who are in need of it. Some of the informants have never heard about the existence of organisations to which they could turn for help and free legal advice. When informed about their existence, some resented the fact that NGOs do not provide more information about their services on the notice boards of the Department of Alien Police where most people could find out about them.

Many reports on the state of migrant integration in the Czech Republic published in the last few years concluded that one of the key problems is that migrants lack basic information about the functioning of administrative procedures that concern them as well as more general orientation in the Czech society. Consequently, NGOs have been granted substantial level of funding to produce such information. Many booklets have been published and distributed in the languages of the most numerous groups of foreigners. However, the problem seems to persist. When going through these booklets, I was struck by the inaccessible language they used. Many of them are abundantly quoting from the legal texts. How could they address foreigners who are often coming from societies where administration works in a different way and who lack reference points which would make these texts understandable?

Katya, for example, a young educated woman from Belarus who has been living in the Czech Republic for five years and speaks Czech fluently, complains about the lack of comprehensive information which would be relevant to the problems she deals with in her daily life. As opposed to many other migrants, she is well connected to a number of refugee and migrant NGOs:

Q: “Do you think that you are receiving the kind of information you need from these NGOs?”

K: “Maybe ... but sometimes, you simply don’t know what to ask about. When you ask them, they give you an answer but what if there is a problem but you don’t know how to ask about it? Especially at the beginning, when you know so little, these important questions may just not emerge in your head at all. I had a look at the brochure published by the Counselling Centre for Integration. There are some useful things, but it is written in such a language ... you simply don’t understand it, even if it is in Russian.”

Q: “And you are an educated, intelligent person, who is already quite well oriented here.”

K: “Yes, but still, I have to read it very carefully, concentrate a lot and sometimes reread it to make sense of the information. But I rarely have time and energy for that.” [Katya, Belarusian woman, family reunification/asylum, 28 years]

This example clearly shows that formal translation from one language to another is not enough! What is needed is a sensitive cultural and social contextualization of these texts
geared specifically to particular groups of foreigners. For example, booklets for Vietnamese immigrants should be written with some knowledge of the levels of information Vietnamese migrants in the Czech Republic usually have and most importantly, with the knowledge of what their reference points will be while reading these booklets. It may sound like hard to achieve aim. However, it might not be so difficult, if these booklets were consulted and written in cooperation with migrants themselves. Men and women, people of different social classes, older and younger generation should act as co-authors and reviewers. That could make a dramatic difference for the spread of information and also create a valuable feeling among foreigners that they can participate actively in the process instead of being in a passive position of clients.

The example of availability of information is just one expression of a wider problem with NGO advocacy, i.e. low mobilisation of migrant communities into the struggle for better position of foreigners in the Czech Republic. This situation could obviously not be blamed solely on NGOs. Their representatives often complain that migrant organisations are not very active and they do not want to cooperate.

It seems that more structural change is needed. If it does not emerge from the grassroots level, it could start at the level of redistribution of funding. For example, participation of migrant organisations could be one of the requirements. This should then go hand in hand with funding of their activities, encouraging them to go beyond cultural programs serving only a small community of members. There is a strong need for migrant organisations which would try to address wider problems of migrants’ incorporation into the Czech society.
5 List of organisations in the field of family migration and activities they provide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address (website only if also in English)</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Type of actor</th>
<th>Target group</th>
<th>Services provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Counselling Centre for Refugees     | Senovážná 2 110 00 Praha 1                      | Tel: +420 224 224 379                                    | Refugee and migrant NGO  | Refugees & migrants of various residence permits | Social and legal counselling  
Integration programs  
Community programs  
Awareness raising  
Occasional advocacy                                                                 |
| Centre for integration of foreigners| Kubelíkova 55, Praha 3, 130 00                   | Tel.: +420 222 713 332 info@cicpraha.org                 | Refugee and migrant NGO  | Refugees & migrants of various residence permits | Social and legal counselling  
Integration programs  
Community programs  
Awareness raising  
Occasional advocacy                                                                 |
| Berkat                              | Rumunská 24, Praha 2, 120 00                     | Tel./ fax: (+420) 224 941 415 berkat@berkat.cz          | Refugee and migrant NGO  | Refugees & migrants of various residence permits | Social and legal counselling  
Integration programs  
Community programs  
Awareness raising  
Occasional advocacy                                                                 |
| Centre for migration questions       | Senovážná 2, Praha 1, 110 00                     | Tel.: +420 224 224 379 migrace@refug.cz                  | Refugee and migrant NGO  | Refugees & migrants of various residence permits | Social and legal counselling  
Integration programs  
Community programs  
Awareness raising  
Occasional advocacy                                                                 |
| Organization for Aid to Refugees     | Kovářská 4, Praha 9, 190 00,                    | Tel: (+420) 284 683 714 opu@opu.cz                       | Refugee and migrant NGO  | Refugees & migrants of various residence permits | Social and legal counselling  
Integration programs  
Community programs  
Awareness raising  
Occasional advocacy                                                                 |

This list does not claim to be exhaustive. There might be some newly emerged, less known organisations that have something to do with family migration, but I was not aware of their existence at the time of writing this report. Nevertheless, that those most important so far have been included.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Telephone Numbers</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Counselling Centre for Integration</strong></td>
<td>Senovážná 2, Praha 1, 110 00</td>
<td>Tel.: +420 224 233 034, +420 224 216 758, <a href="mailto:ppi@iol.cz">ppi@iol.cz</a></td>
<td>Refugee and migrant NGOs, Refugees &amp; migrants of various residence permits</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Society of Citizens Assisting Immigrants</strong></td>
<td>Mostecká 5, 614 00, Brno</td>
<td>Tel.: +4 20 545 213 643, fax.: + 420 545 213 746, <a href="mailto:soze@soze.cz">soze@soze.cz</a></td>
<td>Refugee and migrant NGOs, Refugees &amp; migrants of various residence permits</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bridge for Human Rights</strong></td>
<td>Havlíčkova 1036 530 02 Pardubice</td>
<td>Tel.: +420 467 771 170, <a href="mailto:info@fomostlp.org">info@fomostlp.org</a></td>
<td>Refugee and migrant NGOs, Refugees &amp; migrants of various residence permits</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>OBERIG</strong></td>
<td>Horova 8, Ústí nad Labem, 400 01</td>
<td>Tel.: +420 475 205 721, +420 774 909 018, <a href="mailto:oberig@email.cz">oberig@email.cz</a></td>
<td>Refugee and migrant NGOs, Refugees &amp; migrants of various residence permits</td>
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<td><strong>2. Counselling NGOs also working with migrants</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Counselling Centre for Citizenship, Civil and Human Rights</strong></td>
<td>Petřská 29/ 1168, 110 00 Praha 1</td>
<td>Tel.: +420 222 809 210, +420 222 809 214, <a href="mailto:poradna@iol.cz">poradna@iol.cz</a></td>
<td>Counselling NGO also working with migrants, Czech citizens, migrants</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Secr@poradna.cz">Secr@poradna.cz</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Czech Helsinki Committee</strong></td>
<td>Štefánikova 216/21, 150 00 Praha 5</td>
<td>Tel.: +420 220 515 188, <a href="mailto:sekcr@helcom.cz">sekcr@helcom.cz</a></td>
<td>Counselling NGO also working with migrants, Czech citizens, migrants</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3. Organisations with religious background also working with migrants</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Caritas Czech Republic</strong></td>
<td>Vladislavova 12, Praha 1, 110 00</td>
<td>Tel.: +420 296 243 330, <a href="mailto:sekretariat@charita.cz">sekretariat@charita.cz</a></td>
<td>Organisation with religious background also working with migrants, Czech citizens, migrants</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Counselling NGOs also working with migrants

3. Organisations with religious background also working with migrants

Social and legal counselling
Integration programs
Community programs
Awareness raising
Occasional advocacy
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Czech Red Cross</strong></th>
<th>Thunovská 18, Praha 1, 118 04</th>
<th>Tel.: +420 251 104 111 <a href="mailto:cerveny.kriz@volny.cz">cerveny.kriz@volny.cz</a></th>
<th>Organisation with religious background also working with migrants</th>
<th>Czech citizens, migrants</th>
<th>Social and legal counselling</th>
<th>Material help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diaconie of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren</strong></td>
<td>Belgická 22, Praha 2, 120 00</td>
<td>Tel.: +420 222 512 245, +420 222 522 553 <a href="mailto:ustredi@diakoniecc.cz">ustredi@diakoniecc.cz</a></td>
<td>Organisation with religious background also working with migrants</td>
<td>Czech citizens, migrants</td>
<td>Social and legal counselling</td>
<td>Material help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diocesan Caritas</strong></td>
<td>Dómské náměstí 10, Litoměřice, 412 01</td>
<td>Tel.: +420 416 731 452 <a href="mailto:migrace@dchltm.cz">migrace@dchltm.cz</a></td>
<td>Organisation with religious background also working with migrants</td>
<td>Czech citizens, migrants</td>
<td>Social and legal counselling</td>
<td>Material help</td>
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</table>

4. Information NGOs

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<tr>
<th><strong>Multicultural Centre Prague</strong></th>
<th>Vodičkova 36 (Palác Lucerna), 116 02 Prague 1</th>
<th>Tel/fax: (+420) 296 325 345 <a href="mailto:infocentrum@mkc.cz">infocentrum@mkc.cz</a></th>
<th>Information NGO</th>
<th>General public, academics and policy-makers NGO workers</th>
<th>Information Occasional advocacy</th>
<th>Awareness raising Public debates Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>People in need</strong></td>
<td>Sokolská 18, Praha 2, 120 00</td>
<td>Tel.: +420 226 200 400 <a href="mailto:mail@clovekvtisni.cz">mail@clovekvtisni.cz</a></td>
<td>Information NGO</td>
<td>General public</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Public debates Awareness raising</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>