

Regional Aspects of Unemployment in the Czech Republic and Slovakia

Pavel Kuchař
Ladislav Vaska (eds.)



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Abstract

This monograph introduces unemployment in a comparative-analytical reflection in the context of its regional specific features. Based on analysing individual components of the labour market issues, it expands the theoretical-empirical knowledge of the social-economic phenomenon of unemployment. The present monograph covers regional aspects of unemployment and the labour market analysed in the context of selected regions of the Czech Republic and Slovakia that have long been reporting unfavourable social and economic development characteristics. The authors analyse selected aspects of unemployment, focusing on contextual definition of regional, mainly economic and social conditions on the labour market, and offer also possibilities and limits for dealing with unemployment in connection with the environment of socially excluded locations in the analysed regions. At the same time, it not only provides a comparison of the state employment policies in both countries, but also points out the reserves and possibilities of providing employment services and realising the employment policy by non-profit organisations in selected regions of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. This publication also contains a comparative view of the possibilities and limits in education on the phenomenon of unemployment with its various implications.

Key words:

Labour market. Employment policy. Region. Employment. Unemployment. Social policy. Social work. Socially excluded location.

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Introduction

Unemployment is a serious social and economic phenomenon which, under certain circumstances, is accompanied not only with a decline of society, but also with a decline of individuals and families in various contexts (social, economic, psychological, health, social pathology, criminal law etc.). On the one hand, it is perceived as a natural phenomenon which is a part of every labour market and relatively well-functioning processes of the labour market (in the national as well as multi-national context). In such case, it is manifested in the form of frictional unemployment which is a natural and necessary part of a “healthy” labour market, if the market is not regulated by power structures preventing unemployment. On the other hand, unemployment is perceived as a phenomenon causing an enormous burden on society, as well as on individuals and families. It is influenced by various factors (globalisation, structure of the population, economic crises, instability on the political scene etc.). The greatest threat for countries and their governments is long-term unemployment leading to deepened problems within the society and in families, while individuals that happen to be almost unemployable become an enormous burden on the state budget. For many years, the Slovak Republic has been placed at the top of lists of countries according to the share of long-term unemployment; the situation in the Czech Republic is somewhat better when compared with Slovakia. Both countries have, however, a lot in common. They have regions that have been reporting for many years high unemployment especially of a long-term nature, connected with several unfavourable social and economic developmental characteristics.

This is one of the reasons why the authors of this monograph and of its individual chapters agreed on a comparative processing and analysis of not only employment policies, but they also realised a regional analysis of the labour market in two selected “problem” regions in both countries.

The monograph is a result of joint efforts of the team of authors who have been working intensely for two years as part of joint scientific and research activities. The team of authors is made up of professionals in the area of employment policy, labour market and social work, active at two universities – the Faculty of Social and Economic Studies of J. E. Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem (Czech Republic) and the Faculty of Education of Comenius University in Bratislava (Slovak Republic). All members of the team of authors are involved in scientific and research activities and also work in the academic field as faculty members of Departments of Social Work and prepare future assisting professionals for practice in the

social sphere.

The aim of the monograph is to offer a complex view on unemployment in a comparative-analytical context focusing on regional specific features, to point out possibilities and limits of unemployment policy and the labour market in regional implications - this all within the optic of the field of social work.

This monograph, entitled "*Regional aspects of unemployment in the Czech Republic and Slovakia*", has been designed so as to be beneficial mainly for a professional audience that has already been informed about this issue. Naturally, this does not mean that it should not be offered to the general public interested in the given issue, though it does assume deeper knowledge of the labour market and its social implications as well as in the field of social work and its application in the mentioned area. It is divided into six chapters that have the ambition to create a logical and compact unit on the given topic.

In the first chapter, the authors introduce the basic aspects of unemployment, such as its definition as a social phenomenon, its consequences and offer its main developmental trends in the comparative optic of both countries. The second chapter is crucial for the monograph and it describes in detail the selected regional labour markets (the selected districts of the Ústí region and the Gemer region), analyses the current situation on the regional labour markets, while not searching for consequences only, but for causes too. This chapter also offers comparative outcomes for the possible solutions to the given situation for both regions. The third chapter depicts the issue of socially excluded communities and unemployment in connection to a group at substantial risk on the labour market which is crucial in the context of their impact and further development on the labour market in individual analysed regions. The fourth and fifth chapter focus on and analyse employment policies at governmental and non-governmental levels. In the fourth chapter, the authors compare both "state" employment policies, introduce their function, possibilities and limits on the application level and search for ways of eliminating barriers causing substantial regional disproportion. In the context of regional aspects, the fifth chapter analyses the current situation and role of the non-profit sector in the area of dealing with unemployment. At the same time, it points out substantial reserves in the non-profit sector in the area of providing employment services or creating/influencing regional employment policies. The last, sixth, chapter analyses study plans (at universities where the authors of the monograph work) focusing on subjects dealing in their contents with the topic of unemployment in various contexts. It includes the opinions of educators from both institutions on the current situation in the area of university preparation for working in the given field. This chapter also presents the outcomes of studies

focusing on evaluating the form of work with the issue of unemployment by respondents – academic faculty.

1 Basic aspects of unemployment

1.1 Unemployment as a social phenomenon

Nowadays, probably nobody doubts that unemployment is an inseparable part of the labour market. It belongs to it just as freely as the choice of profession and the employer of a labour force, though the possibility of the employer to choose a labour force according to his needs is often legislatively restricted. Sometimes these choices of both basic players do not meet – the labour force has another idea about its work application than is offered by the employer, and the employer also may have a different idea about the abilities and skills of his potential employees. The scope of this missing link is reflected in the statistics of vacant jobs and unplaced job applicants.

At times of economic crises, production downfall and reduction of public expenditures usually occurs, thus even though the labour force lowers its requirements, there are simply no acceptable jobs on the market. People become unemployed and the term of unemployment is usually determined by a group of factors in which the individual himself does not always have to play the main role.

There are however other causes of unemployment's origin too. Economics develop at a certain pace, sometimes faster, sometimes slower. This pace is accompanied with a pressure on the labour force that must or should equally quickly adapt its knowledge and skills to new requirements. This is however not always possible, because people have certain work habits and experience, certain qualifications, sets of knowledge and skills that cannot be replaced at the time when the mentioned new requirements on the part of the employer arise.

The personal characteristics of the labour force also determine the success or failure on the labour market. Nobody doubts that younger, more adaptable, and better qualified people with good social, economic and cultural capital as well as people from the majority of society have better conditions. On the other hand, people with lower or obsolete qualifications, older people with rather limited ability to adapt, people from a socially disadvantaged environment or members of national and ethnic minorities find realisation on the labour market harder.

The basic prerequisite influencing the level of risk of unemployment is the ability to be employed, i.e. what is referred to as 'employability'. It is defined as the ability to find a job which is in compliance with individual characteristics (abilities, skills, knowledge, aspirations) as well as with objective requirements of the labour market (compare de

Broucker, Pessoa, 1997; Gallie, White, Cheng, Thomlinson, 1998; Gazier, 1999, 2001). Only someone who is able to be employed can enter the labour market. If a person lacks this ability, he or she becomes unemployable.

Not everyone not working (and at an age of economic activity) is unemployable. Unemployment itself can after all be defined in two ways: formally, i.e. the given individual must meet certain criteria, or non-formally, based on the simple fact of currently not working. In order for an individual to become a beneficiary of corresponding unemployment benefits, he or she must meet according, to the international definition of ILO, the following three conditions:

- a) Not to be employed, i.e. not to work for a wage, monetary or non-monetary;
- b) To be actively searching for a job, i.e. to be registered at a labour office or private labour agency and searching for work directly in companies, using advertisements, preparation for establishing own company, asking for trade license etc.
- c) To be able to start working within a period of 14 days after finding a job;

Experience shows that many so-called 'unemployed' have a serious problem especially with the last of the stated criteria. It involves those who are engaged in various forms of gray or black economy and who are often unable to start regular employment.

However, there are also people who do not need to receive unemployment benefits, though they currently do not have a job. The reason can be ensuring living needs through a form other than employment or business – either with a sufficient financial support network or working in the already mentioned forms of non-formal economy. The reason can however also be certain stigmatisation accompanying registration at the labour office that suggests to a potential employer something about the personal activity and abilities of the given individual. This applies especially to school graduates many of whom hurry to register at the labour office immediately after finishing their studies and only later start searching for their first job.

Unemployment can affect all ages, education levels and social groups. The main role is played by its length according to which it is possible to assess if this is only a temporary affair that will quickly end or if there is a possibility of it being further prolonged, with all consequent risks. According to this it is necessary to choose instruments on how to deal with unemployment – if to simply wait until some job comes along or if to choose an active strategy of solution, but mainly to prevent potential repetition.

1. *Short-term unemployment* (up to 6 months) is clearly the least problematic. It involves mainly a break between leaving one job and starting another, a break that is

perceived as temporary which is not always evaluated negatively (especially in spring or summer months, when nice weather attracts people to other activities or the case of school graduates who want to enjoy their last holiday etc.). The given person can be a client of the labour office, if he or she wills, in order to receive unemployment benefits for the given time period (however, no longer than 5 months to people up to the age of 50 and 8 or 11 months to older people). Such unemployment is called frictional and is usually not a subject of social policy.

2. *Medium-term unemployment* is somewhat longer and is usually limited to approximately 12 months. If unemployment lasts for this long, usually the situation is worse than in the case of short-term unemployment. This is where structural unemployment is often reflected, thus there is a more serious conflict between the knowledge and skills of the given individual and the requirements of the labour market that may (but does not necessarily have to) be solved through re-qualification. Moreover, this unemployment is often repeated, because a part of such unemployed does not actively deal with it (does not acquire new, potentially more effective qualification) and rather hopes that it will all improve and that they will find a job in their original qualification field, at which they can, but do not have to succeed. It is this group that the majority of active employment policy instruments is aimed at, because at this period a substantial breakthrough occurs – either the individual succeeds at returning to the labour market or not and then there is a threat of it being prolonged with all its clearly negative original features. An important role is played by a change in life style which automatically occurs in cases of longer unemployment.

3. *Long-term unemployment* lasts longer than one year and it is this type of unemployment which is related with higher risk. This is where the life style changes from working to non-working occur. With the prolonging, the changes in behaviour become fixed, the structure of social networks changes, previously consisting mainly of former colleagues and neighbours to social networks of people not working, parasiting on social benefits (Kuchař, 2003). While working social networks can help in returning to the labour market, these newly created networks prevent it in fact.

4. In some countries (including Slovakia), the share of long-term unemployed people is so great that long-term unemployment must be further specified. In the analyses of EUROSTAT, the term '*very long-term unemployment*' is also used, denoting a period of unemployment between 24 – 36 months and, also, '*extremely long-term unemployment*' for unemployment lasting more than 36 months. Both types have in common the fact that returning to the labour market is, in reality, almost impossible.

It is however necessary to emphasise that the stated division is only schematic. It is quite difficult to determine an exact border of the period unemployment lasts and especially the impact of individual types of unemployment, because the fact of unemployment itself, thus its length as well, can be conditioned by a series of factors, not only subjective ones (the personality of an individual and his or her characteristics), but also by objective nature (economic situation, thus the offer of jobs in the place, region or the whole country of residence). On the other hand, there is a relative agreement on the fact that the main causes of long-term unemployment are especially the following:

- Minimum education combined with absent qualification;
- Personal characteristics of an individual;
- Permanent decrease in the offer of jobs with the lowest qualification;
- Competition of more reliable, more diligent and cheaper workforce from abroad;

1.2 Consequences of unemployment

The loss of employment affects deeply the experiences of individuals, because their social links created by employment relationships through their work activity are disconnected. Establishing new social relationships at this time requires increased adaptation requirements that can be considered as existential life changes an individual can go through.

Many long-term unemployed have lost, according to Kozoň (1999), the ability to “sell themselves” to an employer. It often seems that these people cannot work any more or that they even do not want to work. If work skills are not exercised in the context of social skills, they are very soon “forgotten” and diminished. As a result of changes in life conditions and a decline of social activity, social and mental aspects of health are endangered after the loss of employment. It is because work helps maintain interpersonal contacts, gives people the feeling of being useful and the loss of a job is accompanied mainly with the loss of motivation to be active in general.

The period of unemployment is connected with many other problems aside from economic ones. It is thus not only an imbalance on the labour market, but also about consequences related to the life of an individual and society. Unemployment is related to growing social tensions and social crisis. Further negative symptoms are the deterioration of health, growth

of poverty¹, crisis of family and community life, increase in crime rate and further socially undesirable phenomena – socially risky phenomena.

Problems related to unemployment can be summarised into the following areas:

- Psychological (mental and somatic);
- Social;
- Economic;
- Cultural;

Much research is being done currently², the result of which gives a clear image of the negative influence of the loss of employment on the individual and his/her social environment. As stated by Vitkovičová (2003, in Tokárová et al., 2003, p. 521), “the unemployed loses with the loss of employment also his/her significant consequences for personal life and it is very hard to go through this loss. In this connection, one can state the knowledge that many negative social phenomena, such as alcohol addiction, drug addiction, gambling, criminal activity of various nature etc. originate often from a failure to deal with the economic, social and psychological consequences of the loss of employment.”

Living through unemployment is different in each individual case. For some, unemployment can lead through insufficiency of finances to a family crisis, in case of someone else unemployment can serve as a trigger for personal and mental problems that can in some cases end in a serious health problem. Many experts (for details see e.g. Buchtová, 2002; Schrageová, 2011; Špatenková et al., 2011; Kuchař, 2007) in this field define problems related to unemployment in various ways, therefore some problems overlap on the theoretical level and it is problematic to classify them to a specific category or type of problems and consequences. It is impossible to determine which of the problems related to unemployment has a greater impact on the individual and society. All problems are mutually connected and some can come to the surface earlier, some later and in various scopes, some come up parallel at the same time.

¹ For details see Novotná – Žilová (2011); Ondrušková (2011, in Pružinská et al., 2011)

² From the history, for details see e.g. publications of authors Jahoda - Lazarsfeld - Zeisel (2013); author Buchtová (2002); Schenka et al., (2003) and currently e.g. research realised by Schrageová – Kopcová (2008); Schrageová (2011) etc.

1.2.1 Social consequences of unemployment

Unemployment is closely related to the social life³ of an individual that was affected by it. The social consequences of unemployment affect not only the specific individual without a job, but also his/her family and, if the unemployment is connected with an economic crisis or if the individual lives in a marginalised region⁴, the impact of this phenomenon affects also groups of people and society and its functioning. The social environment⁵ an individual comes from or co-creates and lives in also influences the level of impact of unemployment on him/herself as well as his/her family and impacts the possibilities of reducing social risk of exclusion due to unemployment. Schneiderová (2011, in Špatenková et al., 2011) states that if a person loses his/her job, he/she loses all that was crucial in life, meaningful and appreciated by family, social environment, society and last, but not least by him/herself.

For the basic classification of social consequences of unemployment can be considered the Ďurdovičová's (1998) *social factors of unemployment* processed into the following areas:

- Loss of employment, namely the long-term loss of employment leading to a **loss of social status** within the family and the environment; The unemployed must regularly report for work, representing the position of a beggar, either for work or confirmation that he/she cannot be employed in the company/organisation recommended by the office of labour, social affairs and family in order to be able to continue to receive benefits;
- **Loss of social securities**, since the unemployment benefits are limited with the amount of benefits and time horizon of its receiving;
- **Loss of self-confidence and the ability to objectively assess one's own status**, as well as the courage necessary to start new employment;

Social implications of the loss of employment are however much deeper. Authors Kodymová and Koláčková (2005, in Matoušek et al., 2005), Buchtová (2002), Vágnerová (1999) define the following social consequences (implications):

Loss of social status – Giddens (1999, in Matoušek et al., 2005) define social status as social

³ For details see the definition of the term 'social life' - Sulík (2012)

⁴ For details see Čavojská (2013); Mihalik et al. (1994)

⁵ For details see Kameníček (2003)

prestige enjoyed by a certain group in the eyes of other members of the society. The group members are expected to live and function in a certain characteristic way of life that the social prestige is connected with. The status can have the nature of a positive or a negative privilege. Šimek (1996, in Matoušek et al., 2005) defines with six basic indicators what is referred to as the 'synthetic status'. Six indicators such as the objective characteristics of the profession, prestige given by the profession, share on power, achieved education, height of income and way of life make up for the synthetic status, in the process of which, in case of a dysfunction of any of these parameters, this imbalance can be considered as a violation of the person's integrity. Unemployment can then be defined as a forced loss or progressive reduction of the value of those parameters of the social status that are immediately related to the socio-professional structure.

In our society, the high value of labour traditionally prevails and therefore the role of the unemployed has a low social status and few privileges in society. To lose social status is a difficult situation for an individual that cannot be bought or gained back simply. People consider their affiliation to the group of employed as a proof of their personal and professional qualities and work competencies.

Decrease of the living standard (loss of social securities) – all people have a living standard and status, but individuals can influence, develop or reduce it by themselves. Living standard is however not influenced by the individual only, but also by the standard of the society, status in the society, social environment, economic situation and many other factors having a positive or negative impact on the living standard of the population and the individual and family. An unemployed person loses his/her social status by losing employment and lowers his/her living standard too. At the beginning of the status they got, many unemployed start to maintain at least some visible signs of their previous way of life. The current period is characterised by the so-called "consumer standard" (Mareš, 2002) when the unemployed perceive great discomfort and stress that their financial situation makes their participation on rituals of mass consumption (visiting shopping centres, entertainment centres etc.) harder.

Low living standard, according to Kodymová and Kolářková (2005, in Matoušek et al., 2005), is not linked to unemployment so closely, namely in the case of people living in families, because the economic situation of the family depends apart from the current status of unemployment of a family member on many other family characteristics – the size of property, security of other family members, created and experienced stereotypes of division of work in the family, cooperation within the family etc. Kuchařová /1991/; Mareš /1999/ (in Matoušek et al., 2005) point out in this regard the concept of what is referred to as 'relative

poverty'. Poverty⁶, or the sense of poverty, exists in every society, because layering and comparing exists in a society. Everyone knowing that someone else is richer can consider him/herself as poor.

The social role of an unemployed – to be in the role of an unemployed means to be socially devalued and this role is associated with various meanings from one's own fault to inferiority for the role. People who do not work are considered in our society as "lazy and work-shy" that the others have to work for. Unemployment is often considered more as a failure of the individual than of the society. If a person is in the role of unemployed, this role requires meeting requirements of an institutional, personal and social nature, because the majority of unemployed is dependent on the help of the government and must meet these requirements, or they would be sanctioned (suspension of unemployment benefits, material distress benefits). Vágnerová (1999) states that the unemployed not fulfilling their duties (not cooperating actively when searching for a job) who do not have an excuse for their actions are usually accused of not cooperating, of passiveness, resignation etc. Therefore many unemployed behave in conformity and fulfil their duties for the effect in order to meet these expectations. However, some unemployed do not believe at all that they have a chance at finding a job, but they pretend to be searching for a job in order to evade stress and they unconsciously create a protective attitude. Many unemployed experience anxiety and feelings of ambivalence, because the refusing attitude of the society usually contributes to the fact that a person who cannot find work is humiliated. This is also connected with the relationship of the unemployed "to benefits they economically need, but which they can hardly accept, because they confirm their second-class status". (Vágnerová, 1999, p. 407)

Social isolation – is connected mainly with restriction of social contacts that a person usually loses together with the loss of employment. We can talk of social isolation of unemployed who lost the majority, if not all ties with the narrower as well as broader social environment (family, relatives, friends, colleagues etc.).

According to Vágnerová (1999), the professional role under usual circumstances enriches the social experience of a person, brings new social impulses, experience, new contacts and the possibility to gain prestige which is one variety of social success. Many non-formal relationships are created at work. An individual gains many impulses and social experience, more than in a family. Therefore, if a person loses his/her job, these contacts are disconnected

⁶ The concept of poverty and poverty in its various implications is presented in great detail in the monograph of Novotný – Žilová (2011).

and the unemployed often even deliberately evades these contacts, because he/she feels inferior and the “common” interests are lost. By the loss of employment and mainly by a long-term loss, one loses social and work skills gained and developed at work. If an unemployed does not work for a longer period of time and does not strengthen his/her skills and limits social contacts to a minimum, his/her personality declines and social isolation deepens.

Social failure – we depicted on all previous levels the problem of gradual to pathological social failure. Kuchařová (1991, in Matoušek et al., 2005) state that especially in the case of adolescent and young unemployed, there is a danger that they lose important elements of personal development at the time when they ought to be learning meaningful self-realisation and positive self-evaluation. Látka (1991, in Matoušek et al., 2005, p. 306) warns “against the origin of “motivational disposition” to unemployment (the decision to remain long-term unemployed and use the social system or illegal activity for subsistence of his/her family)”. Crime can be attractive to people without any working habits and responsibility at work. A professional career and professional path is often much more difficult than the other illegal option – the criminal path.

Among further *social failures* to *pathological phenomena* related with the loss of employment are alcoholism⁷, drug addiction, gambling, criminal delinquency, suicide etc.

1.2.2 Family of an unemployed

Unemployment of a family member is an intervention into the functions of the family and is a burdening situation that each family faces differently, since each family has its own specific features and mechanisms for managing such a situation. It is important to consider the economic, social, relationship and other important factors influencing the functionality of the family with an unemployed member. Unemployment of a family member can, in some cases, lead from a great family crisis to family break-up. As stated by Vágnerová (1999), Mareš (2002a), the loss of professional role of one family member will be manifested as follows:

- Changed relationships between family members and social isolation;
- Loss of roles (e.g. the unemployed father loses the dominant role that is gained by another, economically active family member) and consequent status change;

⁷ For details see Šavrnochová (2011).

- Disorganisation and crisis of the family system by disturbing the family life stereotype and family habits;
- Disturbing of family habits in the area of consumption and necessity to reduce needs of all family members, insufficient financial resources;

Unemployment is however often focused and shown in the families of “weaker” social groups that are also socially handicapped and the risk of a break-up and deprivation is in these groups even greater. In these groups with prolonged unemployment, the possibility to rely on family resources is reduced, because the supporting social network of family members is in an environment without sufficient work opportunities. Living without work becomes a normal part of life and the so-called “multigenerational unemployment” occurs (Kodymová and Kolářková, 2005, in Matoušek et al., 2005).

Due to these reasons, social work with unemployed must thus cover not only working with individuals or a group of unemployed as part of institutional social work, but also working with the family of the unemployed⁸, either as part of an institution or in the field – often in a risky location. In an environment where unemployment becomes a pathological situation, the need for social work is greater, because unemployment becomes in such an environment a multigenerational problem and is reflected in the reproduction behaviour. A great role is played by the prevention of unemployment, the field social work itself and current possibilities of active as well as passive (e.g. in terms of effective use/management of granted benefits) employment policy.

1.2.3 Economic consequences of unemployment

The unemployment rate in our conditions exceeds several times the natural rate and consequently new values are not created, life and qualification potential of citizens is not used, but great losses are incurred and government costs increased. The imbalance between costs and revenues is shown in the lack of financial resources for development programmes, social area, culture and education.

According to Ďurdovičová (1998), unemployment presents a problem in the economic area especially due to the origin and creation of costs related to *expenditures for support in unemployment, payments of social insurance (medical, health and pension) and with the loss in taxes due to economic inactivity of the population.*

⁸ For details see also Gabura (2012); Šavrnichová (2011); Rusnáková (2007)

We can further add the following items influencing the area of income and expenditures:

- *VAT reduction;*
- *Increased costs of healing social-pathological phenomena and the fight against criminality;*
- *Increased costs of active labour market policy where effectiveness is little documentable;*
- *Increased costs of operation of institutions responsible for the labour market policy;*

Unemployment and its consequences affect not only the unemployed him/herself, but the whole of society. The production factor of work is not fully used, and unused valuable economic resources are an irrecoverable loss for the country and the society. As stated by Brožová (2003, p. 103), “the country thus loses tax revenue, while expenditures as a result of unemployment grow. It is because the government must find resources for paying a larger volume of unemployment benefits and other social benefits”.

Martincová (2005) argues that unemployment affects the market economy and that it is necessary to return to the microeconomic implications of this problem – labour market functioning – when searching for implications. On an ideal market which in fact does not work in connection with the labour market, the price of labour – wage – would balance the offer and demand for labour, because on the majority of the market, prices are adjusted so that the offered and demanded volumes are in balance. Unemployment is never zero, but it rather oscillates around the natural unemployment rate, because there are always people without work even in a prospering economy. Martincová (2006, p. 36) explains the non-zero value of natural unemployment rate with “four reasons for differences between the actual labour market and the ideal labour market, namely with *laws of minimum wage, existence of trade unions, wage for effectiveness and searching for a job.*”

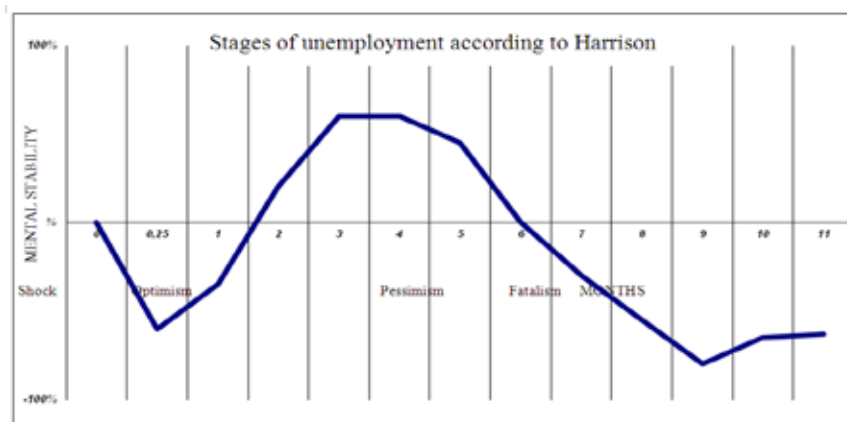
For all those “affected” by unemployment, it means not only a material, but also a psychological and existential problem, when the identity is questioned with the loss of employment. This fact cannot be changed even with a relatively acceptable unemployment benefit or material distress benefit. The consequences of unemployment – especially of long-term unemployment – are catastrophic in terms of national economy and individual psychology.

1.2.4 Psychological consequences of unemployment

Responses to the loss of employment can be varied. Some authors even compare them to the loss of a close person⁹. Naturally, this loss and response to it depends on many factors, such as the support of the social environment, level of unemployment in the region and the ability to find work immediately after its loss, as well as various lengths of the stage of the individual's facing the loss etc. Responses to the loss of employment are contained in the following four stages that an unemployed undergoes in the context of the length of unemployment and other related factors.

For illustration, we provide and describe (Picture 1) the stages of unemployment according to Harrison (Krausová¹⁰, 1996 in the team of authors, 1996).

Picture No. 1 – *Stages of unemployment according to Harrison*



Source: Krausová (1996, in the team of authors, 1996)

⁹ For more details on the topic of psychological aspects of unemployment, see Kozoň (1999) and Schrageová (2011)

¹⁰ Krausová (1996, in the team of authors, 1996) states there are certain stages of responses caused by unemployment and these are differentiated depending on the time horizon of the unemployment period. Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld (1938) followed up on the cyclic theory (Halliday, 1935) talking about the basic stages occurring after the loss of employment and the authors defined this cycle in three stages (optimism /active period/, pessimism and fatalism). The author Krausová (1996, in the team of authors 1996) depicts the stages of responses to the loss of employment according to Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, but she divided the stage of shock and optimism (as did Harrison, 1976) and modified their length of unemployment period and influence of unemployment on the mental stability of the unemployed.

The first stage that a person undergoes after the loss of employment is the **shock** that comes suddenly after being dismissed from work. The unemployed rejects this fact, experiences fear of the future and is mentally imbalanced. This stage usually lasts about four days and is accompanied with sudden a decrease of mental stability.

After the stage of shock, **optimism** settles in, lasting around three months and, at this stage, the mental stability is very good and the person has faced his/her status. The unemployed believes he/she will find work soon and has already started to actively search for it. If failure follows, financial, family and mental problems, loss of self-confidence, feeling of uselessness settle in and start to show in relationships with other people from the nearest environment, as well as in job interviews. Rejections by employers increase, as well as anxieties, and the person loses the feeling of comfort, internal balance and pessimism grows.

At the stage of **pessimism**, activity of the unemployed in searching for a new job decreases, financial and mental problems further increase, depressions and self-pity occur. This stage is the stage of a milestone which is caused by the sense of the degree of the problem's seriousness. The unemployed starts to realise being much more and much more permanently endangered than at the beginning and gradually starts to get used to the lower social status. The stage of pessimism lasts about four to six months after the loss of employment.

At the last stage of **fatalism**, the unemployed resigns, stops looking for a job, gains the impression that his/her situation is not a result of personal insufficiency, but the fault of circumstances that he/she cannot control. The unemployed becomes passive at this stage, because she/he assumes it makes no sense. He/she intellectually declines, accepts the social role of an unemployed and, in the worst case, overall demoralisation and personality decay can occur.

The stated stages and periods cannot be applied universally to all unemployed. It is necessary to consider differentiation of clients and their possibilities and needs. If we look at Harrison's chart, we can see where there is room for social work and at which stages it would be good to "catch" the client in order to prevent or help him/her get out of the last stage – fatalism. It is impossible to exactly define the length of each stage. It is important however that the social worker or social counsellor intervened in time at the start of the first stage already and served as an effective guide of the client during his/her passing through the individual stages of unemployment.

Owen and Watson (1995, in Vágnerová, 1999) consider mental health and unemployment to be a two-sided relationship. The loss of employment deteriorates mental balance, sometimes even

disrupts mental health and it applies vice versa too. If mental problems occur, they can be a risk factor in terms of the person's profession, because people with mental illness lose work more easily or their access to it is harder.

Vágnerová (1999) states the general rule that the longer unemployment lasts, the greater the mental changes caused by it are. The unemployed person evaluates his/her situation, experiences it and responds to it.

In summary, we state the characteristic changes occurring in the individual areas of psyche:

1. Changes in cognitive and affective processes are demonstrated in **rational responses** (including evaluation of the current situation, searching for its causes and possible solutions, they can however also be a protective response and subjectively evaluated), **negative self-evaluation** (reduced self-confidence and self-respect, sometimes feelings of inferiority), **emotional experience** (feelings of an unemployed can be an impulse for a solution or to protective responses), **depressions, mental tension, anxieties and fear.**

2. Changes in saturation of needs (motivation is change since many needs cannot be satisfied in the usual degree and manner), when **the need for stimulation** (unemployed lacks impulses, his/her life programme has changed, the life stereotype is lost, boredom can be a burden etc.) if frustrated, **violation of the daily regime** (lost security that disorients him/her), **the need for activity** (a person without obligations can gradually fall into inactivity and apathy), **the need for meaningful learning and stagnation of personality** (the unemployed loses his/her abilities and knowledge that he/she does not apply, gradually working skills also diminish) and the **need for emotional safety and security** is also frustrated, saturation of the **need for self-realisation** is harder and influenced also is the **need for an open future, hope.**

3. Changes in the behaviour of an unemployed are clearly shown because the unemployed starts to behave differently than when he/she was employed. His/her motivation, will has changed, he/she has no clear aims. This state can lead him/her to mobilisation or on the other side to "decline". We can differentiate between two approaches to unemployment in the context of changes in behaviour:

- **The syndrome of learned helplessness** – this syndrome is seen in people who became apathetic and who consider unemployment as their destiny they cannot do anything about and this response occurs most often in people with low education and people who have gone through many disadvantageous experiences;
- **The sense of a burden can activate** – the unemployed starts to be strongly motivated, wants to prove him/herself as well as to others that he/she can find work. The unemployed is

motivated to improve his/her situation and energetically starts searching for a job.

Mareš (1994, in Vágnerová, 1999) differentiates between three main types of strategies which are a response to unemployment and an approach to deal with this situation:

1. ***Strategy focused on the problem*** – searching for employment is an active protection. This strategy is applied especially by people who do not give up, who cannot take the feeling of failure, uselessness and being dependant on society. They are highly motivated for work, working is a great value for them and a confirmation of their independence.
2. ***Strategy focused on managing current problems*** – dealing with this strategy is based on adaptation to low or lower income. It can be expressed by accepting any job, they prefer a compromise as a solution to falling to an even worse state of unemployment.
3. ***Strategy focused on changing emotions and self-evaluation*** – it often involves a situational solution by rejection of the problem, escape from a better situated and employed group to people where unemployment does not “degrade” a person or accepting a role serving as a substitute solution (early retirement, parental leave). For some, this can involve the strategy of escaping from the problem to alcohol, drugs and other addictive substances. People who chose this strategy usually do not manage and often do not even want to deal with their problem using their own powers and they remain passive.

1.2.5 Health risks of unemployment

The loss of employment causes existential distress to an individual which is shown not only in the area of mental, but also somatic responses to this negative life experience occur. We can call these psychosomatic. If the unemployed has no positive outlook for the future, health risks can deepen and the health condition of the unemployed can deteriorate. Among the usual problems affecting health are headaches, digestive problems, and higher blood pressure. (Vágnerová, 1999).

Many professionals analysed and interpreted research in the area of unemployment impacts, especially with regards to long-term unemployment, on health and health condition of people and they labelled them as alarming. Mareš (2002a) perceives the problem of the relationship between unemployment and physical health in the common denominator, namely stress attacking the immune system and cardiovascular system of a person. Stress accompanying an individual's unemployment has a great impact on many other strengthening factors influencing physical health, such as smoking, alcohol consumption, medicine and drugs.

Kasl (1975, in Mareš, 2002a) adds to the connection between unemployment and health through stress that the stress responses accompanied with behaviour harming the health are a linking bridge between unemployment and cardiovascular diseases. Brenner (1971, in Mareš, 2002, p. 84) for example, did not point out this connection in his research clearly. The top of their occurrence after the top of unemployment was regularly delayed, which can be explained in his view in two ways or through two interpretations: “either is the occurrence of these problems higher at a time of economic conjuncture or the aftermath of economic problems is delayed as this disease needs a certain time to develop. From this point of view, unemployment would have not only a direct impact on the health condition of the population (as in the case of mental health), but it would seem also as an impulse for the origin of long-term processes leading to chronic health problems.”

Generally, we can state that unemployment:

- can lead to a more risky health condition,
- large or massive unemployment leads to significant deterioration of the health condition of the unemployed and has consequences also on those employed and on the healthy functioning of society.

1.3 Main developmental trends

Explaining the causes of the differences in the development of unemployment (and the whole labour market) in the Czech Republic and Slovakia would require a historical look back into the development of societies in both countries far before their separation at the beginning of the 1990's. This has already been described in a number of comparative analysis (Machonin, Tuček et al., 1996, Večerník, 1998) and it thus does not need to be repeated. We will however only focus on influences, impacts of which are still seen today, i.e. after 20 years of independent development of both countries.

Differences in the structure of employment according to the basic economic sectors between the two countries are relatively small¹¹. The same share of population in the Czech Republic (3.1%) and in Slovakia (3.2%) works in agriculture. Only somewhat greater is the share of employment in industry in the Czech Republic (37.4%) than in Slovakia (36.6%), which is

¹¹ All data is taken over from Selected Workforce Registration of the Czech and Slovak Statistical Offices in 1st quarter of 2013.

mainly due to a higher share of employees working in the processing industry in the Czech Republic (26%) than in Slovakia (23.7%). On the other hand, in Slovakia the share of employment in services (60.2%) is slightly higher than in the Czech Republic (59.5%).

From the aspect of sectoral structure, it is undoubtedly interesting that for both countries the car industry plays a dominant role being the main engine of the export-oriented economies (when calculated per population, Slovakia ranks first and the Czech Republic second in terms of car manufacturing in the world). Though from the aspect of innovation potential it is a certain advantage, on the other hand it makes both economies at the moment at times of stagnation, thus decrease in car sales, more vulnerable. It is also necessary to state that the Slovak Republic has been reporting since 2007 (with the exception of 2009) a higher increase in actual GDP than the Czech Republic.

Education structures of both countries are also not as different as they used to be in the past, though the heritage in case of older generations is still visible (see Charter No. 1). On one hand, Slovakia still has a higher share of workers with basic education only, however the share of those who completed upper secondary education with secondary school leaving exam is also higher here. On the other hand, there are more people with upper secondary school education without a secondary school leaving examination (i.e. vocational training) in the Czech Republic as well as tertiary education.

Chart No. 1 – *Education Structure in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, population older than 15 (%)*

<i>Education</i>	<i>Czech Republic</i>			<i>Slovakia</i>		
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Primary, lower secondary	15.3	11.7	19.0	18.8	14.7	22.7
Upper secondary without secondary school leaving examination	34.4	41.1	28.0	29.0	35.7	22.7
Upper secondary with secondary school leaving examination	33.8	30.3	37.1	37.3	35.4	39.1
Tertiary	16.9	16.9	15.9	14.9	14.2	15.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Source: Selected Workforce Monitoring, 1st quarter of 2013, Czech Statistical Office
Selected Workforce Monitoring, 1st quarter of 2013, Slovak Statistical Office*

Both countries differ when it comes to the share of those who started a private business. Their share is higher in the Czech Republic (17.8%) than in Slovakia (15.6%). In the Czech Republic, the share of those carrying out business without employees is higher (14.5% when

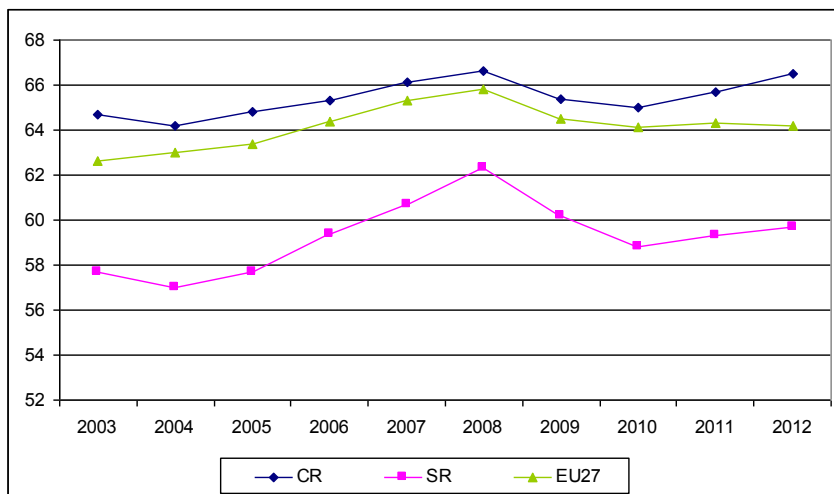
compared to 12.5% in Slovakia). In this case too, we can contemplate about the influence of a certain tradition that can be reflected on differing employment or unemployment rates.

From the aspect of professional structure, the share of workers in working professions (ISCO 08 Categories 7 + 8) are however somewhat higher in Slovakia (32.3%) than in the Czech Republic (30.3%). At the same time here (in Slovakia), more people are employed in the category of assisting and unqualified workers (8% when compared with 5% in the Czech Republic). It is possible to interpret it so that apparently more upper secondary school graduates who passed the secondary school leaving exam work in qualified professions (that are usually characteristic for upper secondary school education without the secondary school leaving examination, i.e. vocational training) in Slovakia.

When comparing the conditions of employability, we should not forget, especially in Slovakia, about the issue of the Roma population. Unfortunately, in none of the countries, there is relevant data available as a result of questionable interpretation of the so-called human rights agenda which could quantify the influence of this part of population on the overall employment or unemployment rate. What is sure is that the share of Roma is significantly higher in Slovakia than in the Czech Republic and it is equally certain that it is the group with lowest level of education, highest dependence on social benefits, lowest employment rate and highest unemployment rate, including the long-term unemployment, in both countries. However, we can speculate about the degree to which these negative sides are reflected on the overall employment or unemployment rate.

If we forget the influence (unfortunately only speculative) of the Roma population on the overall state of employment, there is no decisive factor visible from the stated comparison which would explain the differences in the employment and unemployment rate in both countries. Though, as shown on the following diagrams, these differences are more than clear. We will start with the comparison of the employment rate in both countries, expressing the employment share on the population of the given age, i.e. in our case 15-64 years (Diagram No. 1).

Diagram No. 1 – *Employment rate in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and EU27, population between 15-64 years of age*

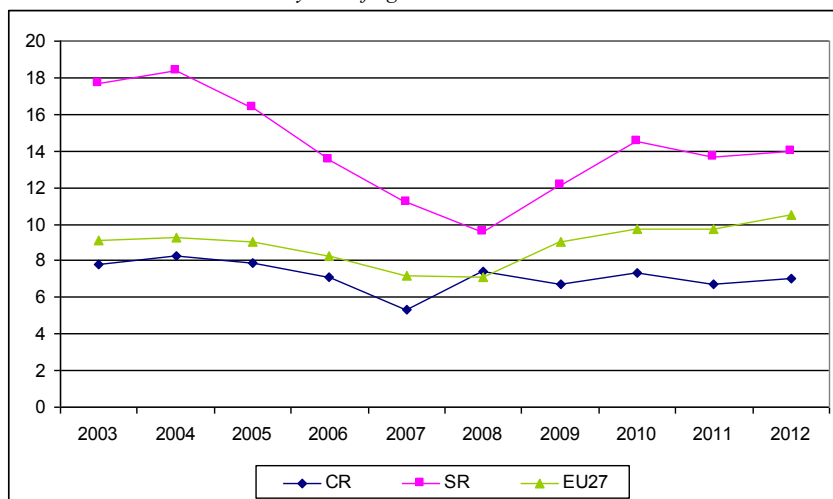


Source: EUROSTAT, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database

The differences between both countries are clear – the employment rate is significantly higher in the Czech Republic when compared to Slovakia, but higher also when compared with the average in EU27. It means, from the given population, almost two thirds are employed in the Czech Republic, while in Slovakia this is only 60% (in 2012). The remaining share is made up of three groups – those preparing for their economic activity (students), those that are passed this time (pensioners) and those who do not work due to various reasons – a significant part of these are unemployed (but also those who do not want or cannot work, such as women in the households or long-term ill patients etc.). These make up for one third in the Czech Republic, and around 40% in Slovakia.

The following diagram convincingly points out the influence of the size of the share of the unemployed on the lower employment rate in Slovakia.

Diagram No. 2 – Unemployment rate in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and EU27, population between 15-74 years of age



Source: EUROSTAT, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database

The values prove that throughout the monitored period, with the exception of the economic conjuncture in 2008, the unemployment rate in Slovakia was approximately double when compared with that of the Czech Republic. When compared to EU27, the rate in the Czech Republic was lower (again while stating the exception), the situation in Slovakia is different with the rate being stably significantly higher.

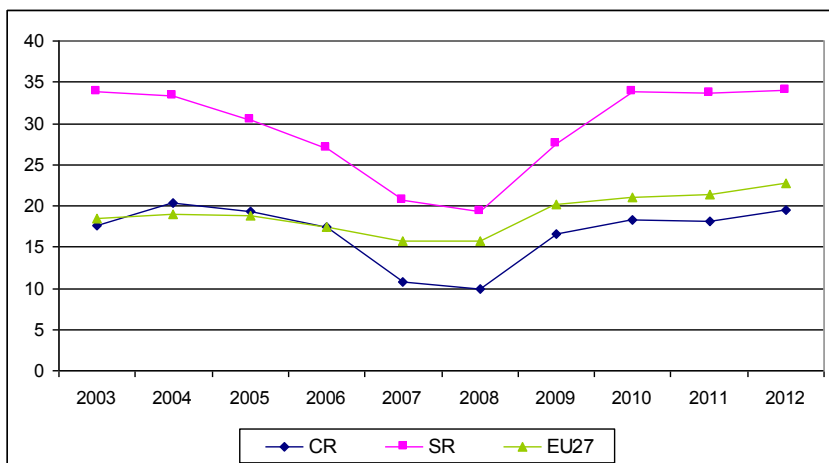
Both stated diagrams also point out another very important factor which is the sensitivity of the labour market in both countries to the development of the economy. The mentioned economic conjuncture peaking in 2008 recorded understandably an increase in the employment rate and vice versa a decrease in the unemployment rate. Interesting are the differences when it comes to the depth of these movements. In the Czech Republic, the employment rate reached the value of 66.6% in 2008 which reduced somewhat in the following years (by 1.6%), but it was achieved again already in 2012. On the other hand, in Slovakia it reached a similar level in 2008 (65.8%), however this level was not achieved in following (or preceding) years.

The developments of the unemployment rate is similar. Though it got under 10% in 2008 in Slovakia, it grew afterwards to the current 14%. On the other hand in the Czech Republic there is no such development recorded and the unemployment rate has been long oscillating

around 7%, with the lowest rate being in 2007 (5.3%). It means the Slovak labour market is clearly more sensitive to the development of the economy, it can mobilise its workforce quickly at favourable times, however it is just as quickly excluded from the labour market during times of recession.

The youngest age groups are most at risk of unemployment in all EU countries and this trend can also be seen in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. It is also confirmed again that the situation is much worse in Slovakia than in the Czech Republic.

Diagram No. 3 – *Unemployment rate in the age group of 15 – 24 years in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and EU27*



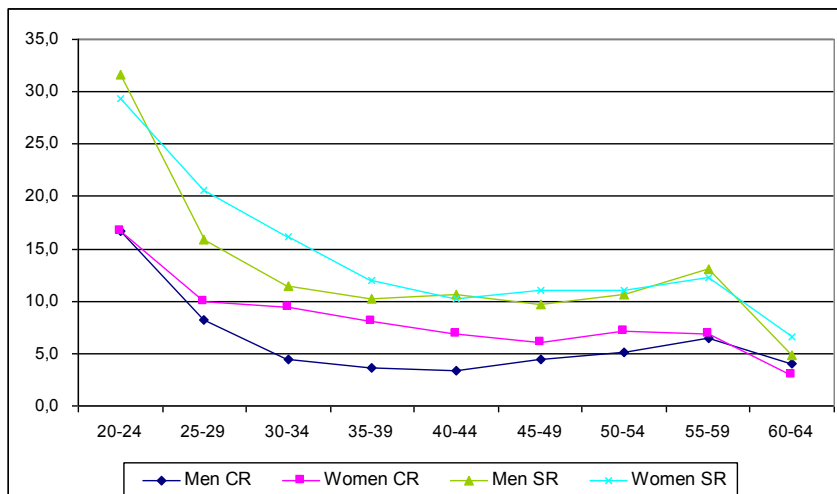
Source: EUROSTAT, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database

The unemployment rate does not reach in the case of Slovakia the double value of the unemployment rate in the Czech Republic, as is the case of the whole population, nevertheless the difference between more than one third of young people without employment in Slovakia and one fifth in the Czech Republic is big. In this case too, oscillations according to the situation in economy are deeper in Slovakia, i.e. young people in Slovakia are more affected by the decrease of economic performance than young people in the Czech Republic.

A more detailed view of the course of unemployment in both countries can be shown on the comparison of the rate according to age and gender (Diagram No. 4). The form of the curves is not greatly different. The highest value is at the beginning of the professional path, the

lowest at its end. Relatively low values are achieved also in case of men approximately after the age of 30, this limit is moved in case of women by 10 years later. There is a slight increase in the unemployment rate, especially of men, of the pre-retirement age.

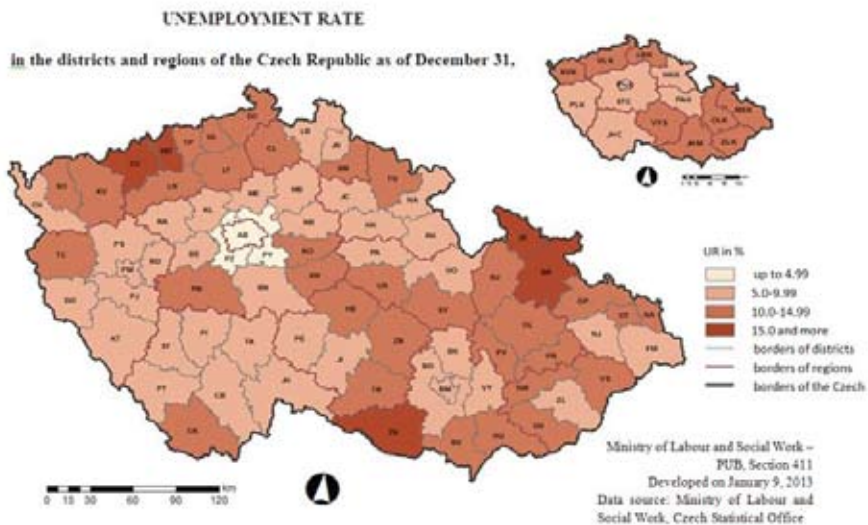
Diagram No. 4 – *Unemployment rate according to age and gender in the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 2012*



Source: Slovak Republic: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, SLOVSTAT Time Series Database
Czech Republic Czech Statistical Office, Public Database

Another significant indicator that needs to be mentioned in this regard is the regional difference in the rate of registered unemployment in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia.

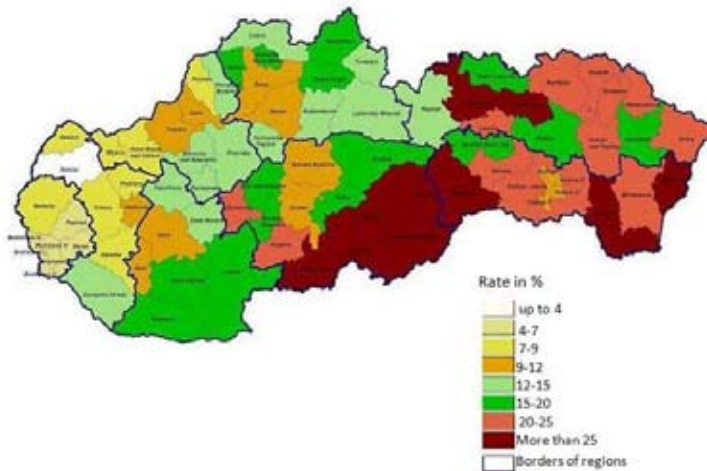
Picture No. 2 – *Unemployment rate in the districts of the Czech Republic as of December 31, 2012*



Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, top on the list have long been the districts of Bruntál and Most with the unemployment rate being around 16% in 2012. The other pole is traditionally represented by Prague, Prague-West and Prague-East with the values being between 3-4%. The difference between the first and the last in this order is four to fivefold.

Picture No. 3 – *Map of registered unemployment rate in the districts of the Slovak Republic as of December 31, 2012*

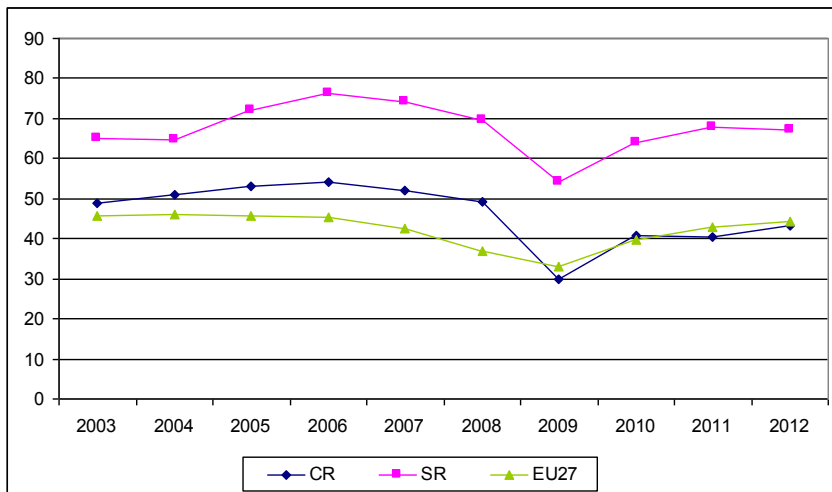


Source: Monthly statistics of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family

The highest unemployment rate in Slovakia at the end of 2012 was recorded in the district of Rimavská Sobota (35.6%) and Revúca (32.6%), on the other hand the lowest rate was recorded in Bratislava (5.7%). The difference is in this case more than fourfold. Though these differences can be influenced by the fact that Slovak districts are smaller than in the Czech Republic (Slovakia has approximately the same number of districts as the Czech Republic, while the Slovak population is half that of the Czech) and thus changes on the labour market are reflected more clearly, the significant regional differences are unquestionably alarming. We have to point out (however again only on the level of pure speculation) that a significant role in the districts at the top of the list according to the unemployment rate in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic is played (or can be played) by the high share of Roma population.

The unemployment itself is nothing serious, if it applies to short-term horizons. However, if it exceeds the period of six or especially twelve months, it becomes a problem deepening with continuation on the state. It also becomes increasingly difficult to tackle, because its accompanying phenomenon is the reinforcement of the non-working way of life and all that is associated with it. If we focus, for the sake of clarity, on unemployment longer than one year, we will probably come to the most significant differences between both compared countries.

Diagram No. 5 – *Share of long-term unemployed (more than 12 months) in % on all unemployed in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and EU27*



Source: EUROSTAT, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database

The diagram shows clear similarity of the curve of long-term unemployment development in both countries however, in the Czech Republic, the share of long-term unemployed is lower by approximately 20-25%. In Slovakia, the rate has been oscillating in recent years between 65-70% of all unemployed, in the Czech Republic between 40-45%.

Conclusion

Unemployment is unquestionably a serious problem of contemporary societies, accompanied not only with economic, but also serious social consequences. These are not only “traditional” accompanying phenomena produced in the long run by unemployment and that have sufficiently convincingly been described in professional literature as well as fiction, such as the economic, cultural or moral decay. Current unemployment produces also some of what is referred to as ‘new social risks’, such as the growth of unemployment not only among people without education, but also with education or the increased pressure of workforce flexibility, without limiting more significantly risks associated with such flexibility (Keller, 2011).

The current unemployment is however also a significantly differentiated phenomenon, which needs to be divided into short-term, predominantly frictional unemployment, not associated as a rule with greater problems, and long-term unemployment which on the other hand cumulates the most serious problems. In this chapter we showed which consequences unemployment can have, especially in its long-term form.

Using statistical data we have shown how unemployment developed in recent years and what social and age groups are most at risk. Though its consequences usually apply universally, the occurrence of unemployment takes a very different course in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia. Slovakia has been significantly more affected with a high unemployment rate since the division of the common state in 1993. In the following chapters we will demonstrate what its sources are and what instruments are applied in Slovakia as well as in the Czech Republic in an effort to deal with its consequences and especially with its causes.

2 Regional labour markets

We chose regions that are infamous for having high unemployment rates for the analysis of problems with it. The Ústí Region and the Gemer Region¹² have long been placed on the top of the list of regions with high unemployment rates in both countries. These not only deal with the heritage of the past from the times of one country, but a significant role in the sources of the current unfavourable situation is placed also by the not so distant past – the development of economic and social structure from the beginning of the 1990's, restructuring of economy in both regions, the economic growth in the middle of the past decade and sudden fast decline to crisis at its end, with consequences having an impact until this day.

The analysis of both regions is developed separately for the sake of clarity, it is however apparent that they are in many aspects similar. It is this similarity that consequently also predetermines the possibilities of how these problems can be dealt with or at least how conditions for their solution can be created.

2.1 Ústí Region

It is difficult to find a region in the Czech Republic where the labour market is impacted by its historical development more than in the Ústí Region. The displacement of Germans meant not only a drastic depopulation of these regions, but also a crucial change in the nature of economy. The predominantly light industry (textile and glass-making) and already since the 19th century quickly developing chemical industry prevailing for many decades in this region, provided relatively sufficient jobs for the local population with corresponding qualification. After the displacement and gradual re-settlement, this industrial structure was supplemented

¹² In Slovakia, we went for the specified region which does not exist on the current territorial and administrative map. The reason for this decision was primarily the fact that the gravity of the problem of unemployment is rather more identifiable on the sub regional level than the current region, respectively „higher territorial units“ (HTU), specifically at the county level. On the other hand, the reduced analysis of the unemployment to the county level, we are losing the broader regional context, which provides more complex information (traditional economic and social structures, etc.). Therefore, we decided in our analysis to focus our attention on the region defined earlier by historical natural boundaries, which is also relatively homogeneous in terms of socio - economic characteristics. Characteristic of this region is relatively complicated complex of social problems, including long-term nature of unemployment, nor the division of the region between 2 higher territorial units (HTU) did not bring successful solutions to these problems so far.

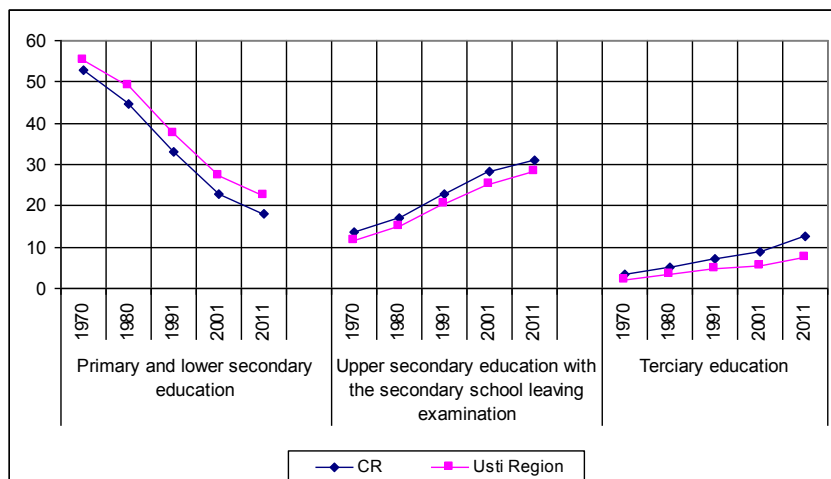
and eventually replaced by heavy industry, with coal-mining and consequent power industry playing a dominant role. This, however, required mostly a workforce with low qualifications, but in large quantity. The result was a pressure on increased hiring of people for these jobs from all parts of former Czechoslovakia. The qualification structure of the workforce, as a result of this immigration, changed very slowly and the whole region (which underwent changes in terms of its size in the second half of the 20th century) started to fall behind when it came to education and qualification level in comparison to the other parts of the republic.

2.1.1 Educational structure

The impact of the stated development started to show with the arrival of the market economy at the beginning of the 1990's. As shown in Diagram No. 6 pointing out the differences in the educational level of population in the Ústí Region when compared with data for the whole country based on a census, the distance between both compared units has been deepening in the long run. While in 1970, the Northern Czech Region¹³ had only 2.1% more people with a basic education, in 2011 it was already 4.5% in the current Ústí region. On the other hand, while in 1970 there were only 1.4% more people with a university education in all of the Czech Republic, in 2011 it was already 5% more than in the Ústí Region.

¹³ This included in addition to the current arrangement also the districts of Česká Lípa, Jablonec nad Nisou and Liberec. This could have influenced the stated shares to a certain degree, however not the primary tendency.

Diagram No. 6 – Education of 15 (14) year old and older population according to the census



Source: Census of people, apartments and houses 1970, 1980, 1991, 2001, 2011, Czech Statistical Office

Note: The remaining shares represent people with secondary education without the secondary education state examination

This historical look back was inevitable in order to determine the basic framework in which the labour market in the Ústí Region developed. The structure of the local workforce still contains around one quarter of people without an education, which is a quite serious problem in terms of their realisation on the labour market. Though on the opposite end of the educational structure, the share of university educated people has increased (7.6% in 2011), this pace is however still lower than in the rest of the country (12.5%). While since 2001, their share in the whole country increased by 3.6%, in the Ústí Region it was only by 2.2%.

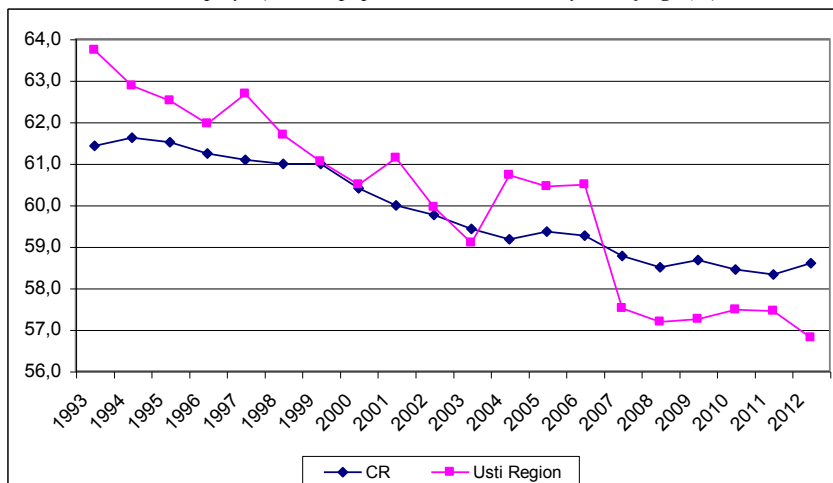
A higher share of people with lower education alone would not be such a big problem, if there were enough suitable jobs offered. The problem is that the share of jobs with the lowest degree of work difficulty has long been declining, and the pace of this decline is faster than the loss of the low-qualified workforce¹⁴. Thus, a surplus of this workforce has occurred, for which it is very difficult to find realisation on the labour market.

14 For details see Kuchař P., 2007.

2.1.2 Employment

Stability of the workforce, in other words, whether the workforce is settled down in a given area in the long run and whether it thus represents a relatively stable potential for the creation of jobs with a more long-term perspective, or whether the workforce is more mobile, migrating is quite significant for the labour market. In the latter case, the workforce can be used rather for jobs of a transitory, short-term nature. Diagram No. 7 showing the rate of economic activity in the Ústí Region when compared with the whole country suggests a relatively significant workforce mobility.

Diagram No. 7 – Rate of economic activity, i.e. the share of workforce (employed and unemployed) on the population older than 15 years of age (%).



Source: Labour market in the Czech Republic 1993-2012, Czech Statistical Office 2013

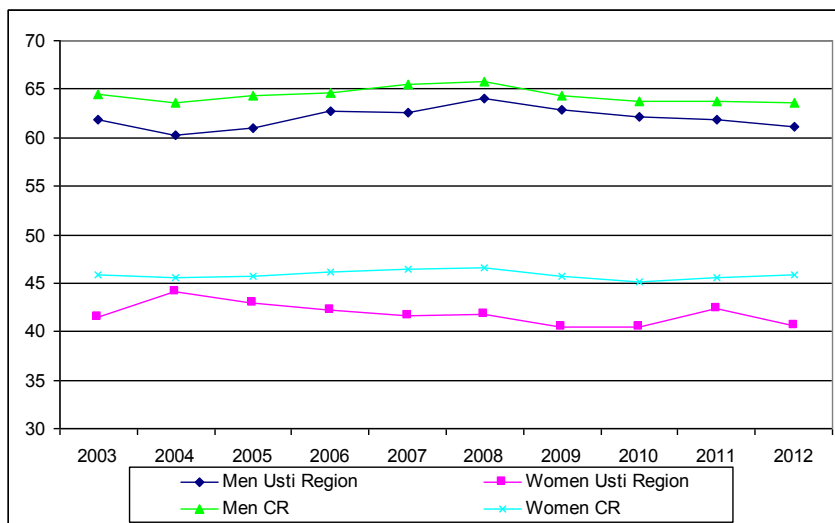
While this rate had a stably declining tendency in the Czech Republic until 2011, caused mainly by the aging of the population and more people participating in tertiary education, its development in the Ústí Region is full of shifts and swings. After a long period when this rate moved above the country average, a more significant growth was recorded between the years 2001-2007, but at the end of this period, this rate sharply declined. The stage of the first decline can be explained probably with a greater number of early retirements of people with low income (thus higher substitute ratio between the salary and the height of the expected pension benefits) in response to the loss of employment. Then, however, activity increased,

caused partly by immigration of a greater number of the workforce in response to launching the operation of some industrial zones (esp. Triangle). In 2007 though, a sudden decline under the country average followed again and is still maintained today. In 2012, the difference between the rate in the Ústí Region and the whole Czech Republic increased even more. We cannot reliably say yet, whether this is a result of the increased share of long-term unemployed or of demographic development. Currently, the rate of economic activity in the Ústí region is the lowest in all of the Czech Republic.

While in 2007 the region recorded the highest influx of immigrants so far, namely 16.5 thousand people, 9.5 thousand people on the other hand moved away, i.e. the immigration rate (i.e. the share of migration and immigration) was 1.73, while it was negative one year earlier, reaching the value of 0.99 (i.e. more people moved away than moved in). The total increment, i.e. including the newborns, was 7,915 persons, while it was only 92 in 2006 and even negative (decrease by 422 persons) in 2011. Only in the form of a hypothesis can we explain the mentioned increase in economic activity with the response of the mobile workforce to the economic conjuncture peaking in the years 2007-2008, to be eventually replaced by a recession and repeated decrease in economic activity.

The course of economic cycles is naturally reflected in the employment and unemployment rate. Diagram No. 8 shows the situation in the Ústí Region when compared with the Czech Republic, separately for men and for women.

Diagram No. 8 – Employment rate, i.e. the share of employed persons on the age group of 15 and more years (%)



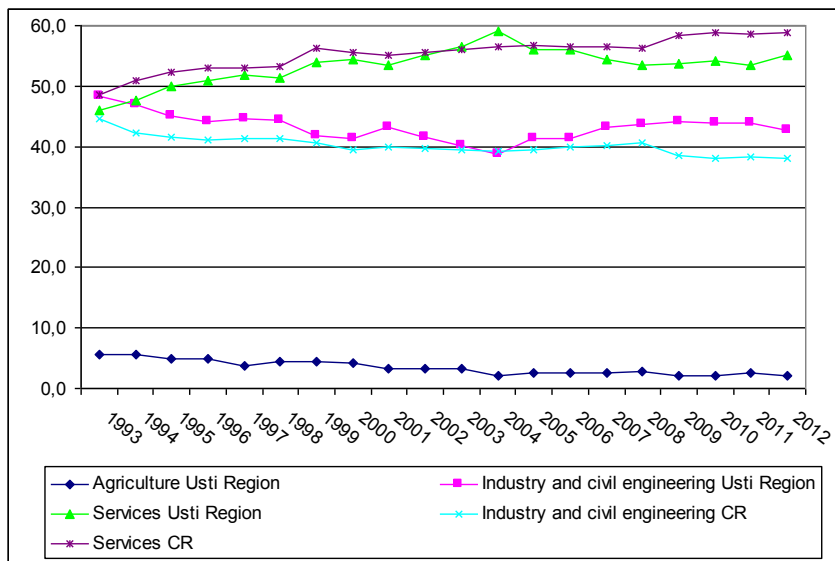
Source: Public database, Czech Statistical Office

Throughout the whole country, the employment of men is, in the long run, higher by 20% than the employment of women. This is caused by the maternity duties of women, as well as by traditional patterns of upbringing in the family with the central role of education being played by women. This rate is in the Ústí Region lower for both genders than in the whole country, which can be interpreted as an effect of a higher unemployment rate. We have to notice the fact that the course of this rate is in the Ústí Region different for men and for women after 2004. While in the case of men (in the whole Czech Republic as well as in the Ústí Region), it grew until 2008, in the case of women (however only in the Ústí Region, not in the Czech Republic) it declined in the same period. The reason can be seen in the growth of employment opportunities in the industrial zones that were however mainly aimed at the male population. The less qualified female workforce did not meet with corresponding offers of employment opportunities even at the time of higher economic growth. The economic activity of women grew again until 2011, but then it declined again to the level of 2010. This rate too is in the Ústí Region the lowest in all of the Czech Republic.

Another area that we have to pay attention to is the structure of employment according to the basic economic sectors. Here again, we can see significant differences in the development in

the Ústí Region when compared with the whole Czech Republic (Diagram No. 9).

Diagram No. 9 – Employment in the basic sectors of the national economy (%)



Source: Long-term development of the Ústí Region between the years 1993-2012, Regional Time Series, Czech Statistical Office

At the beginning of the monitored period in 1993¹⁵, the differences between the Ústí Region and the whole country were very small. We have deliberately omitted agriculture, which is not significant for the overall employment of the region (in 2011, only 2.5% of all employed persons worked in agriculture). The Ústí Region was a very industrially developed region at the beginning of the monitored period. Almost half of the workforce worked in industry (especially power and chemical industry) and in civil engineering, while this ratio was somewhat lower for the whole country. Until 2012, this ratio reduced in the region (to 43%), the difference between the region and the whole Czech Republic however deepened even more by now – whereas in 1993 it was around 4% plus for the Ústí Region, in 2011 it was already 5.5%, and then it fell to 4.7% in 2012. It is however necessary to assume that this decrease is caused by the overall growth of unemployment in the Ústí Region.

¹⁵ In 1993, the regular Selected Monitoring of Workforce was started by the Czech Statistical Office, which serves as the source of the presented data.

Opposite is the situation in the development of employment in services. Already in 1993, almost the half of the economically active population worked in services in all of the Czech Republic, while it was only 46% in the Ústí Region (the difference was 2.6%). There too, however, services started to develop dynamically and employment in services equalled already in the next year the employment in industry. From then on, services have been the main employing sector in the Ústí Region. However the difference in the development in the Czech Republic has gradually increased and the rate is lower in the Ústí Region by 5%.

Both mentioned differences (in the case of industry and services) are reflected in the fact that while the difference between the employment rates in industry and in services is 20% for the benefit of services in the whole country, in the Ústí Region this difference is half the size (10%). We may assume that the reason is first of all the qualification level of the workforce with the already mentioned lower qualification prevailing. The lower share of services also provides room for increased employment of especially a female workforce.

2.1.3 Unemployment

High unemployment¹⁶ is one of the greatest social as well as economic and political problems of the Ústí Region. At the beginning of the 1990's this was not yet the case, because unlike in other parts of the country, this region maintained a high employment rate especially in the mining industry. With the first restructuring steps, the situation started to change significantly, therefore between 1993 and 1994 the general unemployment rate grew from 4.6 to 6.5, while it was around 4 and 5 % in all of the Czech Republic all the way up to 1998 (see Diagram No. 10). Since that time, it has copied the development in the unemployment rate in the rest of the country, but it is 50-80% higher and has reached the highest values of all regions.

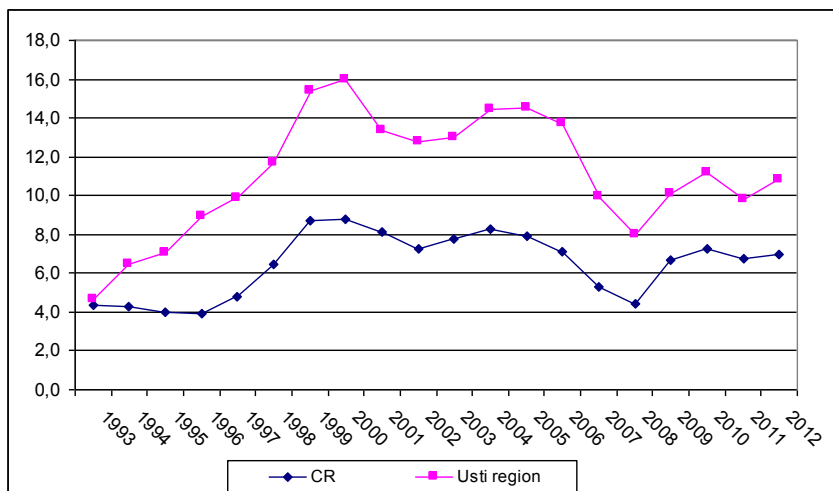
¹⁶ We have to state that two unemployment rates are used in the analyses:

1) General unemployment rate represents the share of the number of unemployed on the overall workforce, calculated from the Selected Monitoring of Workforce. It applies to a quarter and is published by the Czech Statistical Office.

2) Registered unemployment rate is the share where the numerator is the number of achievable not placed applicants for employment and the denominator is the sum of employed from Selected Monitoring of Workforce, number of working foreigners according to the records of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the number of achievable not placed applicants for employment. It applies to a month and is published by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic.

As of January 2013, this rate was replaced by a new indicator entitled the Share of unemployed persons representing the share of achievable applicants for employment aged 15-64 of the whole population of the same age. The interpretive value of this rate is however problematic, because it in fact copies the general unemployment rate.

Diagram No. 10 – General unemployment rate (%)

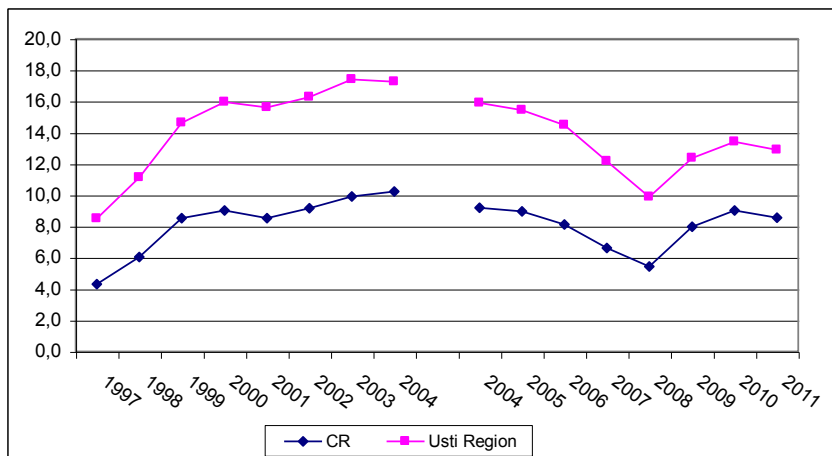


Source: Labour market in the Czech Republic 1993-2012, Czech Statistical Office 2013

The mentioned diagram shows that the highest rate was achieved in 2000, namely 16%, and in 2011 it was only 10%. Afterwards it however grew again by one percentage point to 10.8 in 2012. To the contrary, the lowest rate was achieved, with the exception of the beginning of the 1990's, in 2008, i.e. in the year of the peaking economic conjuncture.

The general unemployment rate reached in the long-run approximately values lower by 2 percentage points than the registered unemployment rate. This was caused especially by difference construction based on self-categorisation of respondents in the Selected Monitoring of Workforce. The registered unemployment rate was published more, because it enabled monitoring of the monthly and seasonal oscillation and was decisive for the enforcement of the active employment policy. As is shown in Diagram No. 11, it does not undergo significant shifts as in the case of the general unemployment rate. In the Ústí Region, it oscillated around 12-13% in recent years. This does not affect the fact that the registered unemployment rate placed the Ústí Region on the top of the list for the whole country. In 2011, its average annual value reached 12.9; the second, Morava-Silesia Region, recorded 11.3; and the third, Olomouc Region, 11.1. On the other hand, Prague on the opposite end recorded the rate of 4.0. We have already mentioned that this rate ceased to be used as of 2013 and was replaced by what is referred to as the 'Share of unemployed persons', interpretative value, which is quite questionable.

Diagram No. 11 – Average registered unemployment rate



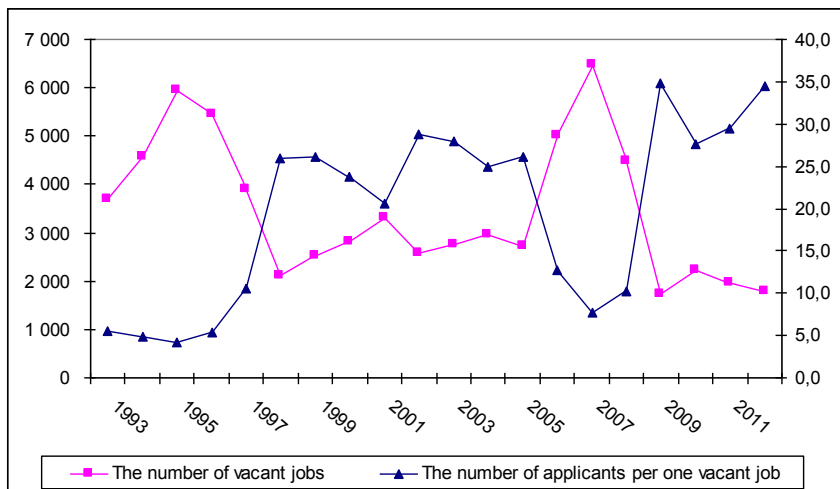
Source: Portal of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic, Time Series

Note: The calculation until 2004 according to the old methodology, as of 2004 according to the new methodology

The data on the unemployment rate is inseparably associated also with information about the number of vacant jobs. It is clear that the development of this indicator is opposite to the development of the registered unemployment rate. Nevertheless, it would be an illusion to assume that all jobs declared as vacant can be filled with people that are unemployed at the given time. A certain amount of such jobs is filled only very rarely, because their nature from the aspect of performed work is remunerated financially so that it excludes prior the field of potential applicants. They are almost exclusively filled with agency employees, local as well as from abroad.

Diagram No. 12 shows the number of vacant jobs in the Ústí Region as well as the number of applicants per one such vacant place. It can point out several interesting facts. The first is the fact that there were times when the majority of those who wanted to work, found work. It applies as expected mainly to the first half of the 1990's when this ratio oscillated around 5 unemployed per one vacant job, but also for 2007 and partly also for 2008, thus for the years of economic conjuncture when it oscillated around 7 to 10. On the other hand, it is clear that if this ratio is higher than 30 unemployed per one vacant job, as was the case especially in 2009 and 2012, it is rather difficult to find a job. In these years, the number of vacant jobs decreased for the first time in the history of the Czech Republic below 2,000 in the Ústí Region.

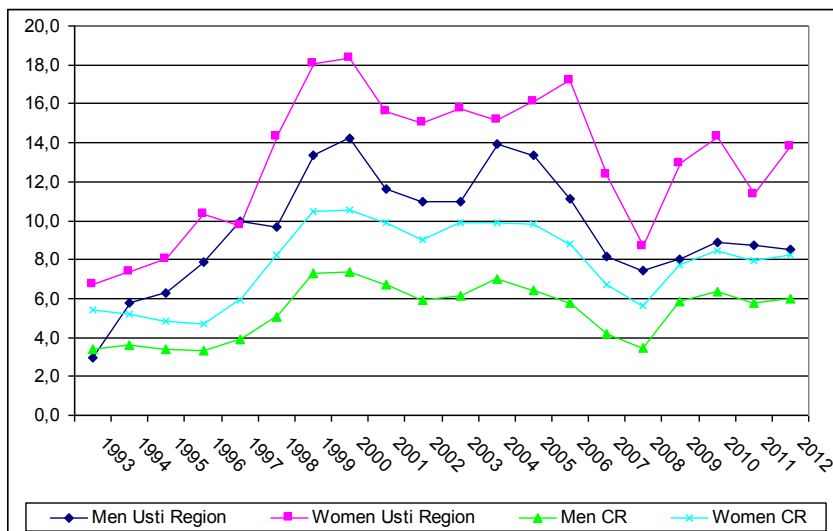
Diagram No. 12 – *The number of vacant jobs and the number of applicants per one vacant job*



Source: Long-term development of the Ústí Region between the years 1993-2012, Regional Time Series, Czech Statistical Office

We have already shown how important is the role of gender aspect in the analysis of employment. We have to deal with it also from the aspect of unemployment. Throughout the country, female unemployment is higher than male. It is given by the different offer of jobs on the labour market, the roots of which are in the historical development, in natural, biological and social conditions, as well as unnatural social and economic differences of both genders. The position of women on the labour market will always be significantly influenced by family duties and related limits in the availability of the female workforce on the part of the employers. At the same time, we cannot hide the fact that their substantial part is prejudiced against hiring women, regardless of their stage of the life cycle or the level of work position. Diagram No. 13 shows the stated differences on values of the general unemployment rate.

Diagram No. 13 – General unemployment rate according to the gender (%)



Source: Labour market in the Czech Republic 1993-2012, Czech Statistical Office 2013

The unemployment rate of women in the Ústí Region reaches the highest values in all of the Czech Republic. In the most critical period of the years 1999-2000, almost one fifth of women were unemployed (the registered unemployment rate shows even higher values). The diagram also suggests somewhat surprising findings concerning male unemployment in the Ústí Region in the last five years: it is relatively low, similar to the rate of 1996, and is very close to the unemployment rate of men in the whole country. Moreover, it has slightly decreased in recent years. The female unemployment, however, has developed differently – after a decrease in 2011, when the rate got close to the rate of 1996, it repeatedly grew in 2012. We can state that it is female unemployment which makes the Ústí Region the mentioned “leader” in the national comparison.

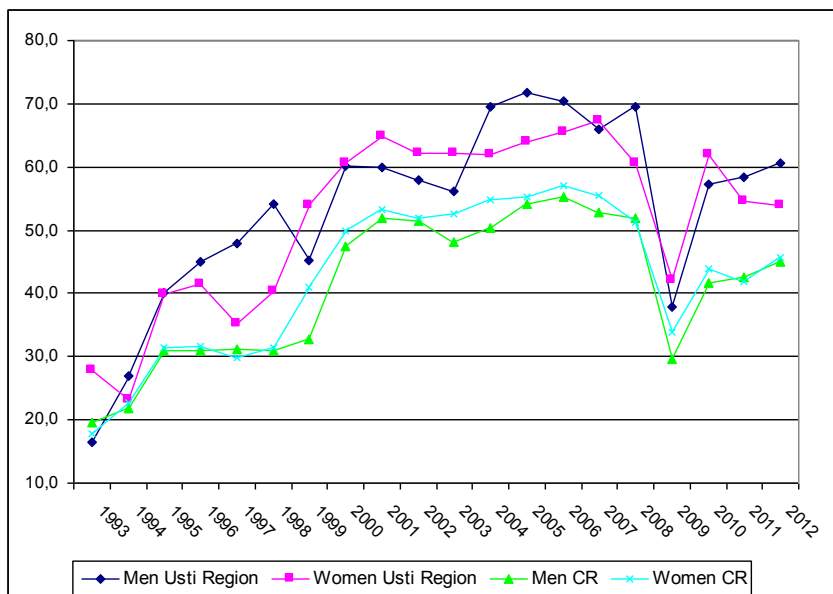
It is clear that the main role in the causes of unemployment is played by the qualification and educational level. In order not to confuse the readers with excessive charts, we will point out its influence in an area which is especially representative, namely in long-term unemployment.

2.1.4 Long-term unemployment

Long-term unemployment belongs to the greatest problems of the current employment policy in terms of the region as well as the country. It involves in fact mainly structural unemployment, thus the imbalance between (most often) the qualification structure of the workforce and the requirements of the labour market. If the qualification level is low in the long-run, it leads to a lack of interest in the given location on the part of investors, because higher profits can only be achieved with higher labour value added. This is however not possible with the given low level of workforce qualification, so the result is low interest from potential investors and a corresponding low offer of jobs. We thus get into a “vicious circle” the only outcome of which is the increase of the workforce qualification level. This will then attract the attention of the investors and their interest in the creation of jobs.

The development of long-term unemployment, i.e. unemployment longer than one year (according to the results of Selected Monitoring of Workforce) is depicted in Diagram No. 14. It points out several crucial findings.

Diagram 14 – Long-term unemployment (longer than 1 year) according to gender (%)



Source: Labour market in the Czech Republic 1993-2012, Czech Statistical Office 2013

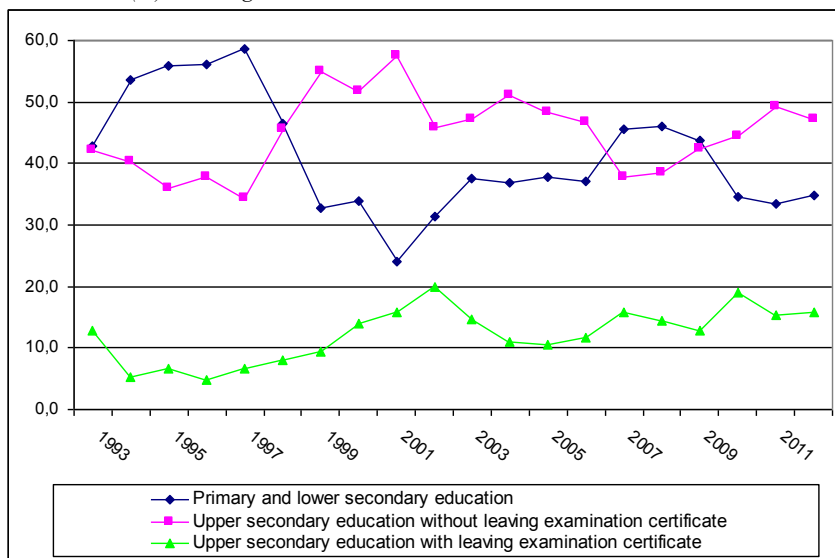
The first is the fact that it is possible to get also in the Ústí region in the case of economic conjuncture to the share of approximately 40% of long-unemployed on the number of all unemployed. In all of the country, it was only 32% in 2009, but still considering the mentioned lower education level in the Ústí Region, this value is quite positive. The problem however is that at a time of worsened economic situation, the mentioned share will grow again all the way to approximately 57% in 2012. This shows that this workforce segment is easily vulnerable by the shifts of the economic cycle.

Another significant finding is the difference in the development of male and female long-term unemployment in the Ústí Region and the development in the whole country. While in the Czech Republic female unemployment is in fact always higher, in the Ústí Region higher shares of male and female unemployment often take turns. Since the male unemployment rate oscillates more, the given shifts can be explained especially by the one-time nature of occasional work aimed especially at the male population. The nature of male work is more flexible, because due to lasting patterns of work division in families it is especially the man who has to ensure the necessary financial resources and is therefore forced to accept even time-limited and not such well-paid jobs, but still a job.

Now we get to the promised evaluation of the influence of education on unemployment, especially long-term unemployment. It is not necessary to point out that this influence is substantial and many times described (compare Tuček et al., 2003). We are more interested in this regard, how the mentioned quite unfavourable situation in the educational structure impacts unemployment in the Ústí Region.

The first thing that needs to be emphasised is that this influence, just as the unemployment itself, is different for men and for women. For the sake of clarity, we provide the structure of long-term unemployment separately for men and separately for women in the following Diagrams No. 15 and 16. We never state the share of unemployed with university education, because this is too low and affects the long-term unemployment in no way. However, considering the degree of labour market saturation with tertiary education graduates, the unemployed with this highest level of education will soon start to play a significant role in similar overviews.

Diagram 15 – Long-term unemployment (longer than 1 year) of men according to education (%), Ústí Region



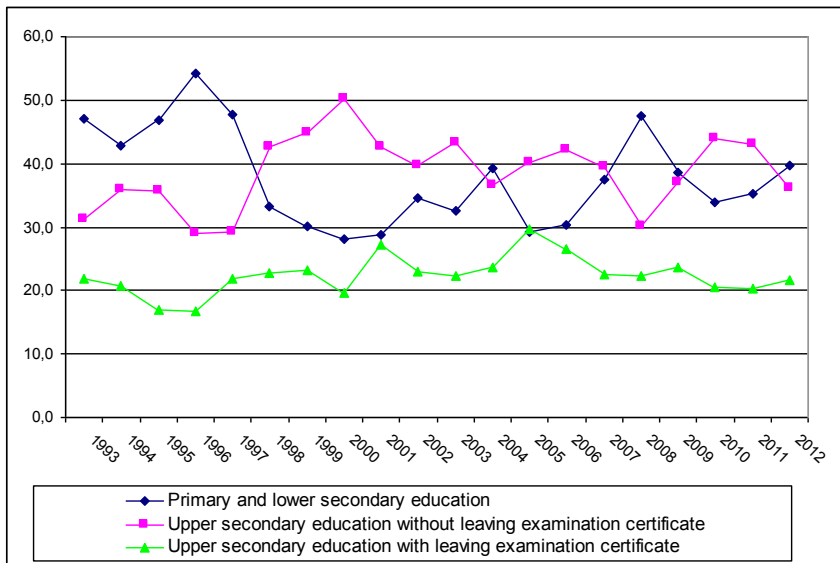
Source: Labour market in the Czech Republic 1993-2012, Czech Statistical Office 2013

The development of the educational structure of the long-term unemployed men points out the stable division of this population into two groups. The first group is made up of those who have completed secondary education with the secondary school leaving exam. Their share is around 10-20 % and is probably mainly a result of the imbalance between the field of qualification and the field structure of jobs offered on the labour market.

For the long-term unemployment of men however, decisive are those with lower education, namely secondary without the secondary school leaving examination certificate, i.e. vocational education, and those with primary education only and no qualification at all. Their dominance takes turn according to the economic cycles and an important role is played by the absolute numbers of unemployed with primary education. This is regardless of crises around 7-8.4 thousand. At a time when the economy grows and needs a more qualified workforce, the number, thus the share of unemployed with vocational education, decreases as can be seen in the situation of the years 2007 and 2008. On the other hand, at a time when the economy declines to a recession, their number increases, just as their share in all other educational groups. In years of conjuncture, i.e. 2007 and 2008, there were around 7 thousand unemployed men with vocational education, in 2011 already 10 thousand and in 2012 as

many as 9.2 thousand. It means that the economic decline affects more workers with lower qualification than with no qualification.

Diagram 16 – Long-term unemployment (longer than 1 year) of women according to education (%), Ústí Region



Source: Labour market in the Czech Republic 1993-2012, Czech Statistical Office 2013

The situation in the long-term unemployment of women is somewhat different. At first glance it is clear that education does play a role, but definitely not so important a one as in the case of men. In the case of women, much more significant are factors such as the previously mentioned availability of the workforce considering the fulfilment of maternity and parental duties, which include also a lower degree of migration due to work. The share of women with secondary education with secondary school leaving examination certificate is higher by around 10% than of men and oscillates between 20-25%. While the difference between the lowest and the highest share was triple (16% for secondary education with the secondary school leaving examination certificate and 47% for secondary education without the secondary school leaving examination certificate) in the case of men, in the case of women this interval is “only” 1.6 times of the secondary education (22% for secondary education with the secondary school leaving examination certificate when compared to 36% for secondary education without the secondary school leaving examination certificate), however it is double

between the secondary education with the secondary school leaving examination certificate and a primary education. The relationship between the level of education and the economic cycles is, however, the same.

It is unquestionable that the level of the achieved education itself is not the most important characteristic when evaluating unemployment. Fields of education play a more important role, because it is from their relationship with the field profiles of the offered jobs that we can assess the structural disproportions. As pointed out by the analyses of the labour offices, such differences can be addressed at least partly by re-qualification programmes. In case of non-existing qualification though, there is nothing to re-qualify.

The problem for the analysis of influences of the qualification fields on unemployment is the input data which is available only at the labour offices. The labour offices however process it sufficiently and it is therefore unnecessary to repeat it at this point. The analysis of the development of the labour market in the Ústí Region for 2012 thus suggests that among the most asked-for professions were especially business representatives, drivers in international truck transport, welders and locksmiths, waiters, cooks, attendants of sewing and embroidering machines, mechanics and servicemen as well as other fields on the level of secondary education without the secondary school leaving examination certificate. On the other hand, the highest number of unemployed was in the economically focused fields, as well as in the fields of gastronomy, hotel and tourism industry, in the fields of personal and operating services, especially the field of hairdressing. At the same time, all analyses suggest that the most serious cause of unemployment, especially of young people, is their small flexibility, exaggerated demands for salary, unwillingness to learn and develop skills and knowledge.

2.2 Gemer

Slovakia is a small country characteristic of large regional disparities. When we tried to identify a region affected by unemployment to a larger degree, we faced the problem of choosing between parts of southern and eastern Slovakia. Eventually, districts of Rimavská Sobota, Revúca and Rožňava were chosen that have long been reporting the highest unemployment rate in the Slovak comparison. These are districts that are relatively solidly connected, not only from the aspect of geographic location. They share common history,

culture, many social and demographic characteristics, as well as leadership in unfavourable social characteristics, especially from the aspect of the share of unemployed. The monitored districts are a part of the historical Gemer and Malohont Region. The area is situated in the south eastern part of Slovakia on the border with Hungary. From the aspect of the current regional-administrative division, they belong to different regions. Rimavská Sobota and Revúca are a part of the Banská Bystrica Region and Rožňava belongs to the Košice Region. Fractionalisation of this traditional region can however present a barrier for a more effective dealing with the issue of unemployment and related economic and social consequences.

We consider choosing such defined region to be important from the aspect of cumulating the problem of unemployment and related social and economic problems.¹⁷ In practice, however, we came across the problem of availability and applicability of data for the purposes of analysis. Data from the district Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (Rimavská Sobota, Revúca, Rožňava) served as the basis for us in the form of last available analyses from 2010, as well as data from the Census of Population, Houses and Apartments of 2011 and monthly statistics of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

The Gemer Region is known for its rich history as the traditional mining centre with numerous monuments of high cultural and historical value, rich in natural phenomena (Muránska Planina National Park, numerous natural preserves). Its geographical location, especially neighbourhood with Hungary, presents a significant aspect in terms of work opportunities abroad, opportunities for joint business, tourism and cross-border cooperation. This broad potential is however at the moment used only to a very small degree.

When it comes to the industrial structure, industry focused to a great degree only on raw material resources considering the mining tradition of Gemer (mainly the districts of Rožňava and Revúca). In the last two decades, mining has gradually declined, most often due to low effectiveness in various areas. The more southern Rimavská Sobota District has focused more on agriculture for a long time and on the (often linked) food industry. This part of the economy too was affected by a dramatic drop in recent decades which meant not only a reduction in agricultural production, but also further food production (meat processing plant, dairy, brewery etc.).

¹⁷ For details see Čavojská (2012)

2.2.1 Selected demographical characteristics of the Gemer Region

The total population living in the Gemer Region (the sum of population in the districts of Rimavská Sobota, Revúca and Rožňava) equals according to the data based on the census of population in 2011 the total of 188,640, including 51.19% women. The overview of the number of population in the individual districts is provided in the Chart No. 2:

Chart No. 2 – *Permanently living population of the Gemer Region (according to the Data from the census of population, houses and apartments 2011)*

	<i>Population</i>	<i>Including women</i>	<i>In %</i>
Rimavská Sobota	84,889	43,580	51.34
Revúca	40,400	20,504	50.75
Rožňava	63,351	32,482	51.56
Total for Gemer	188,640	96,566	51.19

Source: Census of Population, Houses and Apartments 2011, calculation of the author

The settlement structure of the region is represented by small towns, townships as well as rural settlements. In terms of their number, there are 8 settlements in all three districts with the statute of a town and 205 townships. According to the overall characteristics this means that we look at a region with relatively sparse settlement, of rural type, with rural population prevailing.

When it comes to the education profile of the region, this can be evaluated as not favourable. The results of the Census of Population, Houses and Apartments 2011 suggest a high share of population with primary or no education (approx. 39% when compared to 31% in the Slovak Republic). Population with primary education is represented to a large degree (22% when compared to 15% in the Slovak Republic), at the expense of professional and higher education numbers, which are below the Slovak average (Chart No. 3). In case of university education, a difference is achieved when compared with the Slovak average of almost 5 percentage points.

Chart No. 3 – *Educational structure of Gemer Region*

	<i>Gemer</i>	<i>Gemer in %</i>	<i>Slovakia in %</i>
Primary, lower secondary	41,021	21.74	15.00
Upper secondary vocational, secondary school without secondary school leaving examination certificate	40,646	21.54	23.10
Upper secondary vocational, secondary school with secondary school leaving examination certificate	49,022	25.98	28.40
Tertiary	17,269	9.15	13.80
Without education, including children up to 16 years of age	33,557	17.79	15.70
Not determined	7,125	3.7	2.80

Source: Census of Population, Houses and Apartments 2011, calculation of the author

Another demographic characteristic that we consider to be important to point out when it comes to the nature of this region is its national structure. This is presented by two large national minorities, namely Hungarian (28.82%) and Roma (5.98%). Citizens of the Slovak nationality represent 55.32%. The shares of members of other nationalities are irrelevant.

Chart No. 4 – *National structure of Gemer Region (%)*

	<i>Rimavská Sobota</i>	<i>Revúca</i>	<i>Rožňava</i>	<i>Gemer total</i>	<i>Slovakia total</i>
Number of population	84,889	40,400	63,351	188,640	5,397,036
Slovak	47.49	66.2	58.88	55.32	80.07
Hungarian	35.94	19.15	25.42	28.82	8.5
Roma	6.20	6.28	5.5	5.98	2.0
Other + not determined	10.37	8.37	10.2	9.88	9.43

Source: Census of Population, Houses and Apartments 2011, calculation of the author

When it comes to the relatively low percentage representation of the Roma one must state that the reality in the region is significantly different from what is stated in the official sources of the census. Vaňo points out in this regard the fact (Vaňo, 2002, p. 45) that members of other ethnic groups living in Slovakia identify themselves with the nationality according to their ethnic affiliation, however the majority of Roma does not report as belonging to the Roma nationality, but chose a different nationality. Therefore in the praxis we experience the situation when the number of Roma is in fact significantly different from the number of citizens identifying themselves with the Roma nationality. The Gemer Region belongs traditionally to areas with a high Roma concentration. In 2004, the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma realised sociographical mapping of Roma

communities. Based on data determined through the field mapping of Roma settlements, the numbers of Roma currently still probably being close to the reality (data for 2004) are as follows:

Chart No. 5 – *Population – Roma (data for 2004)*

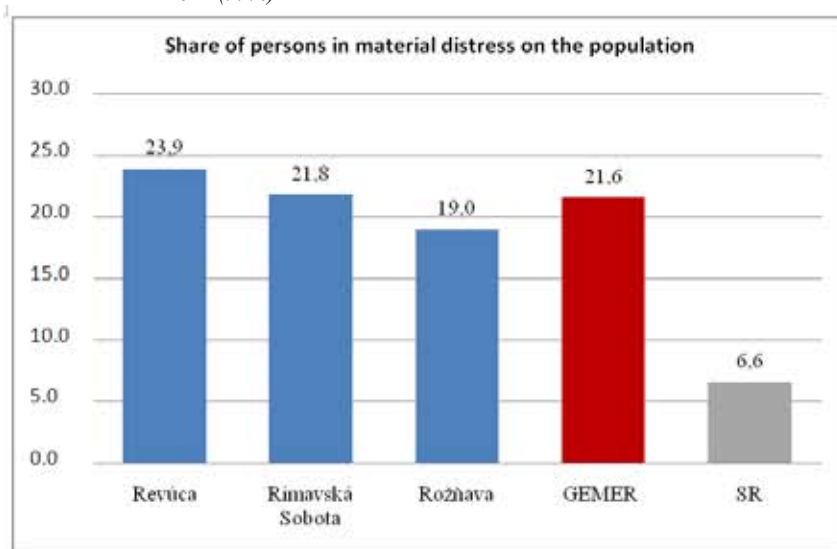
	<i>Rimavská Sobota</i>	<i>Revúca</i>	<i>Rožňava</i>	<i>Total for Gemer</i>
Number of settlements	3,590	3,102	2,280	8,972
Population - Roma	23,535	18,616	16,628	58,779

Source: Atlas of Roma Communities, 2004, calculations of the author

The share of the number of Roma on the total population of Gemer represented thus based on this data around 32%. A substantial part of the Roma population in the region suffers from many unfavourable characteristics from the aspect of economic and social situation. What we cannot oversee is also the occurrence and scope of the so-called socially excluded communities which are concentrated in this region to a higher degree.

An unfavourable economic situation as well as persisting problems with high unemployment can be seen also in the deterioration of the overall social situation in the region. This is consequently reflected also in the number of citizens depending on material distress benefits. As of December 31, the three monitored districts of the Gemer Region were at the top of the lists of regions according to beneficiaries of material distress benefits and bonus benefits. Diagram No. 17 shows the comparison of the share of persons in material distress on the population based on which it is clear that more than one fifth of the population of the region is in material distress.

Diagram No. 17 – *Share of persons in material distress on the population as of December 31, 2012 (in %)*



Source: Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, *Social Issues – Statistics, 2012*, calculation of the author

2.2.2 Employment

Based on the data from the last census in the Slovak Republic, the population of the Gemer Region is made up of 47.76% economically active persons, which is approximately 1 percentage point less than the average figure for Slovakia (48.7%).

Chart No. 6 – *Share of economically active population of the Gemer Region*

	<i>Population</i>	<i>Economically active</i>	<i>In %</i>
Rimavská Sobota	84,889	43,580	47.52
Revúca	40,400	20,504	48.35
Rožňava	63,351	32,482	47.41
Total for Gemer	188,640	96,566	47.76

**working (apart from retired), working retired, persons on maternity leave, unemployed*

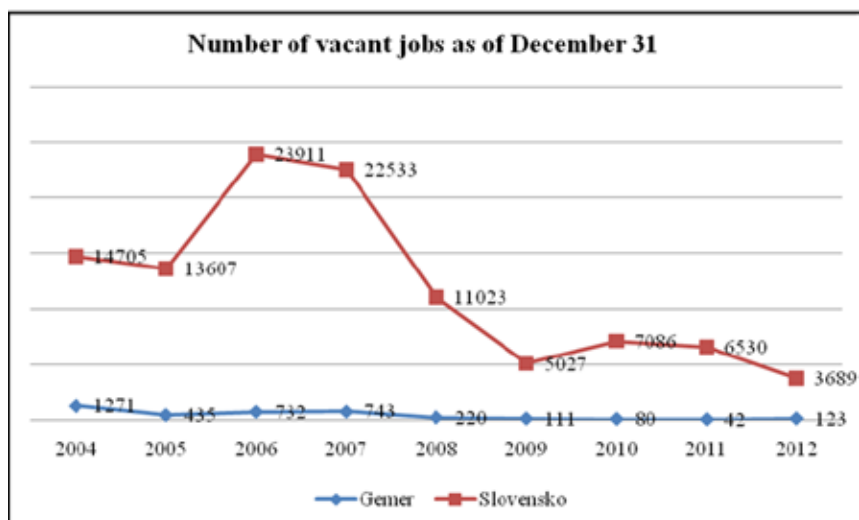
Source: *Census of Population, Houses and Apartments 2011, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic*, calculation of the author

The development of employment has got an unfavourable tendency in the long run based on

the data available from regional analyses from the districts of Rimavská Sobota, Revúca and Rožňava (2010).

In relationship to its development, it is possible to see one more unfavourable tendency, namely in terms of the development of the number of vacant jobs. As suggested by available statistical data of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, the Gemer Region has been heavily lagging behind in terms of the number of job opportunities. Since 2004, we see practically a continuous reduction in the number of vacant jobs. The situation in the region was not affected more significantly by the so-called “good years” of the Slovak economy (2006-2007) either. On the other hand, economic stagnation dramatically seen in the offer of job opportunities in 2008-2009 in the Gemer Region only fixed the declining tendency which was seen in the following years in the number of vacant jobs amounting to several dozens - the sum of vacant jobs in all 3 districts of the Gemer Region was 42 (!). Diagram No. 18 shows the development of vacant jobs when comparing the situation in Gemer and the Slovak Republic.

Diagram No. 18 – *Development of the number of vacant jobs in Gemer, 2004-2012*



Source: *Monthly statistics of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, calculation of the author*

According to regional analyses of the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the monitored districts of the Gemer Regions (Rimavská Sobota, Rožňava, Revúca, 2010), this

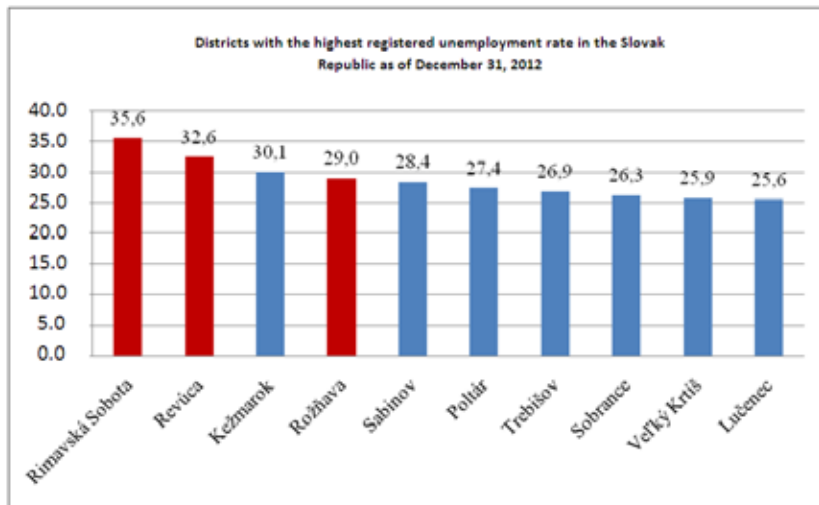
situation is caused not only by the long-term unfavourable structure of the economy in the region, but also the decline of the economy in the global context. The unfavourable tendency in the development of employment is however based on these analyses threatened not only by few job opportunities, but also payment conditions below average. A deteriorating demographic situation, low educational standard of the population, as well as a substantial migration of qualified employees (so-called brain drain) play an intervening role too. Problematic is also the structure of school preparation which does not correspond with the requirements of the labour market. A significant problem from the aspect of employment development is also the existence of a substantial number of the so-called excluded communities. In this case, on the part of the administration, we can see reference to reduced motivation to work as well as long-term to permanent remaining in the social support network. It involves that part of the population which represents in the structure of applicants the group of long-term registered applicants for employment with primary education or no education.

In this regard, a role is definitely played also by the insufficiently established infrastructure, road and rail transport as well as insufficient transport connection, mainly among townships and towns, as well as the problem of work opportunities concentrated in towns and minimum of work opportunities available in the rural areas.

2.2.3 Unemployment

In terms of unemployment, the Gemer Region is a concentration of districts with the highest unemployment rate in the Slovak Republic (Diagram No. 19) and it places highest in the Slovak comparison (long-term). The relatively worst situation is in the district of Rimavská Sobota with the registered unemployment rate exceeding 35%.

Diagram No. 19 – Districts with the highest registered unemployment rate in the Slovak Republic as of December 31, 2012



Source: Monthly statistics, Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, December 2012

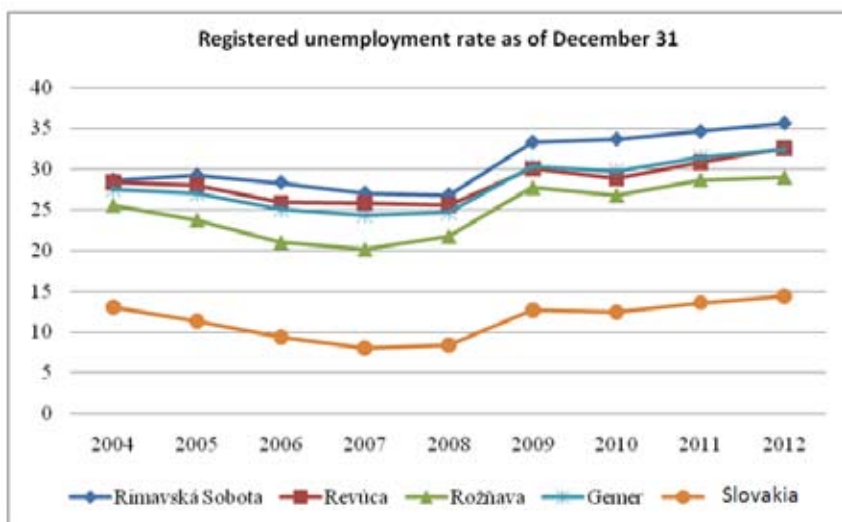
The unfavourable development of the economy after 2008 also marked the situation on the labour market throughout the country. Based on the recent available data we can thus state that we can see a relatively unfavourable situation almost in all of the south-eastern stretch and in north-eastern Slovakia, with the unemployment rate exceeding 20% to 25% (see Chapter 1).

The analysis of the development of the registered unemployment rate suggests a tendency for a slight decrease in the unemployment rate in all 3 monitored districts in the period of years 2004-2008. This tendency also copied the relatively favourable development of decreased unemployment in the Slovak Republic in general. We have to state, however, that the average registered unemployment rate in the Gemer Region was not lower than 25% even in the best years (2006-2008). In 2009, the regional labour market started to respond to global tendencies related with the economic crisis with a repeated increase in the registered unemployment rate. This tendency slightly slowed down in 2010. In the districts of Revúca and Rožňava, the registered unemployment rate slightly decreased. As stated by relevant regional analyses, this situation did not occur due to an improved economic situation, but due to more significant use of instruments of the active labour market policy, especially the graduate internship and high share of applicants for employment on temporary work disability + family member care leave

that reduced during the year (Regional Analysis Revúca, 2010). In Rimavská Sobota, we see a continuous growth of the registered unemployment rate to the current rate of around 35%. The average registered unemployment rate as of December 31 in the Gemer Region represented 32.4%.

The comparison between districts shows the relatively worst situation in the district of Rimavská Sobota with the stably highest registered unemployment rate recorded. Relatively the most favourable situation is in Rožňava.

Diagram No. 20 – *Development of registered unemployment rate as of December 31 (in %)*



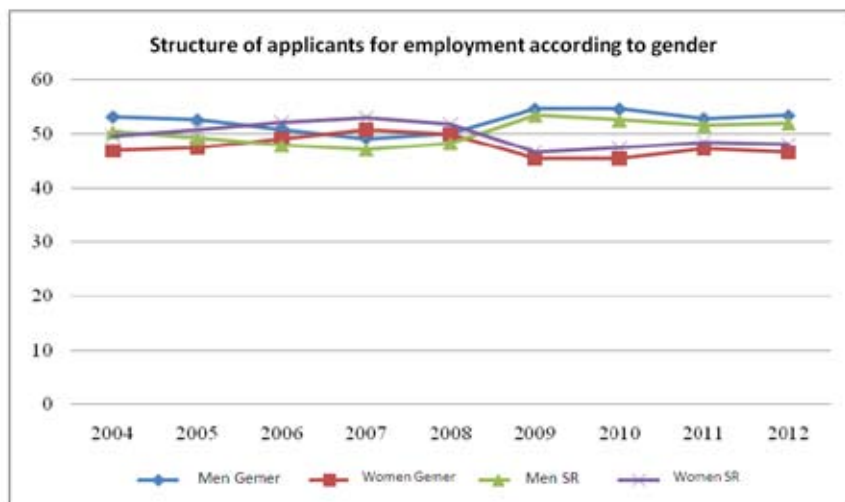
Source: *Monthly statistics of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, calculation of the author*

From the aspect of the situation in the Gemer Region, we consider it to be important to monitor also the structural characteristics of unemployment and their development in time. The relevant period of analysis we focus on is the period of years 2004-2012.

With regards to the representation of men and women among unemployed, i.e. from the aspect of the definition of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in line with Act No. 5/2004 of the so-called applicants for employment, we can see an interesting development. During the years 2004-2007, more men than women were represented among applicants for employment, however this share has a declining tendency in the stated period. In 2007, women even prevailed shortly in the structure of unemployed. From 2008, we can

see a turn in the development towards higher representation of men among applicants for employment. The regional development follows the national development. We can thus currently state that men prevail in the long-run among applicants for employment. The stated development after 2008 can probably be interpreted as a result of the economic crisis (return of family breadwinners from abroad, massive lay-offs of key employers in the region etc.).

Diagram No. 21 – *The structure of applicants for employment according to gender as of December 31 (in %)*



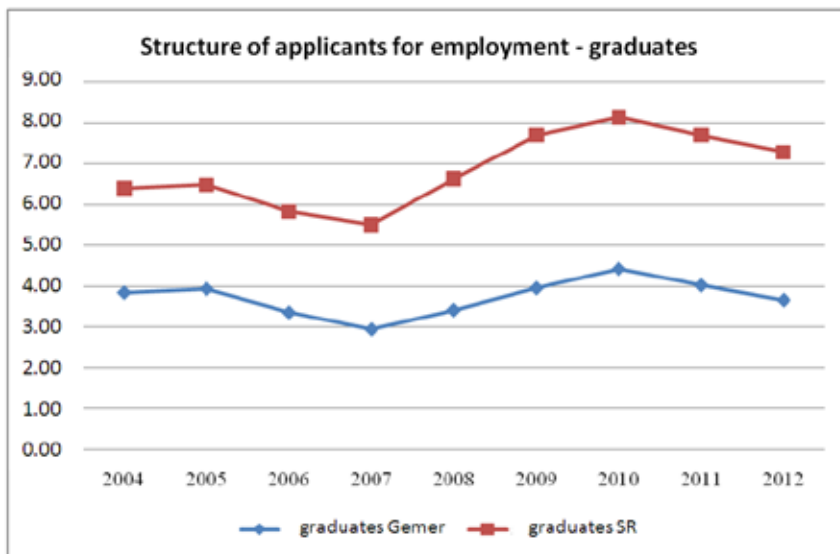
Source: *Monthly statistics of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, calculation of the author*

The problem of graduate unemployment was considered as one of the key problems in terms of unemployment in the last two years. Though this category is defined according to the Act on Employment Services No. 5/2004 as one of the so-called disadvantaged groups, with regard to which specialised instruments of active labour market policy are created (graduate internship separately).

The share of graduates among applicants for employment is currently at 4% in Gemer on the total number of applicants for employment, when compared to 7% in the Slovak comparison. From the developmental perspective we can see a relative decline of the share of graduates on the overall number of applicants for employment by 2007. In 2008, the growth of the share of this category of applicants for employment started again in line with the overall state of the economy and problems brought to the labour market by global developments. From 2010 we

can see a declining tendency of the share of graduates which can however be also connected with a significant application of the instrument of the active labour market policy – the graduate internship.

Diagram No. 22 - *Share of graduates in the structure of applicants for employment as of December 31 (in %)*

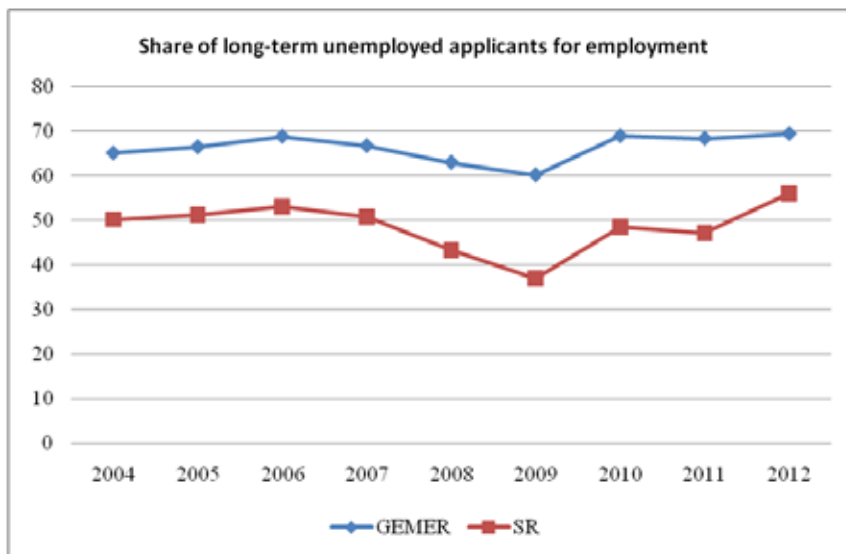


Source: *Monthly statistics of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, calculation of the author*

From the aspect of social and economic consequences, the high share of long-term unemployed among applicants for employment is considered to be the most serious problem. From this perspective, the situation in Gemer is alarming. The current share of long-term unemployed registered for more than 12 months represents as many as 70% of all applicants for employment. From the aspect of this development, the declining tendency in the share of long-term unemployed can be seen between the years 2006 and 2009. Since 2009, we can see a growth in the share of this group of applicants for employment. This share stopped rising already in 2010 at the level of 2006 and has remained stable until this day.

The high share of long-term unemployment is a problem also in the Slovak context. The growing tendency of the share of long-term unemployed became relatively fast and it currently reaches the share of 60% even within the Slovak Republic.

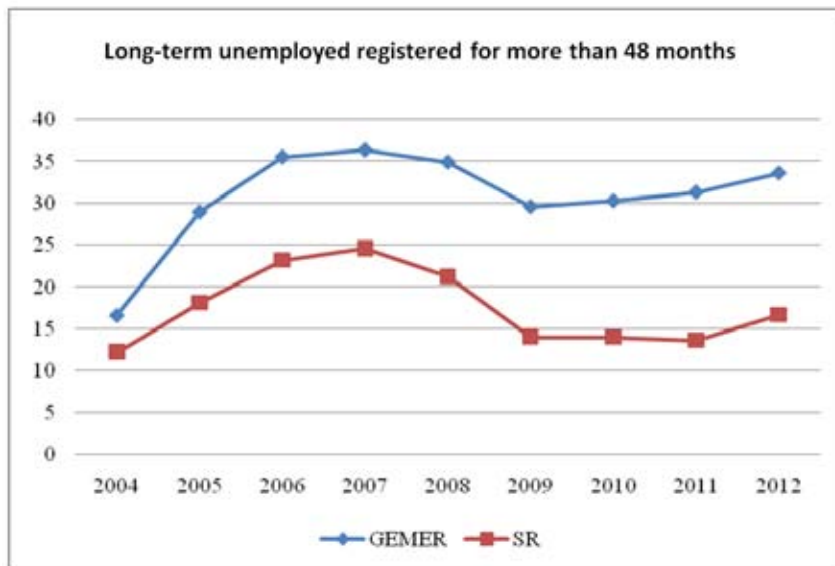
Diagram No. 23 – *The share of long-term unemployed (more than 12 months) in the structure of applicants for employment as of December 31 (in %)*



Source: *Monthly statistics of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, calculation of the author*

Apart from the high share of long-term unemployed, the nature of unemployment in Gemer is characterised by a high share of the so-called long long-term unemployment (more than 48 months). The share of registered for such a long time on the overall number of applicants for employment represents currently approximately one third (33.7%); in the Slovak comparison it is 16.7%. In the monitored time horizon we can see a continuous growth of the share of long long-term unemployed since 2004, while the share of these applicants culminated in the period of relatively favourable conditions of the Slovak economy when it was possible to see rather an overall decline in the number of unemployed, even in the unfavourable economic conditions of the Gemer Region. A slight decline occurred only during 2007-2009. Since 2009 we can however see again a growth in the share of very long-term unemployed among applicants for employment. We have to add that the development characteristic for the Gemer Region in fact follows the Slovak development, but in a much greater intensity.

Diagram No. 24 – *The share of long-term unemployed (more than 48 months) in the structure of applicants for employment as of December 31 (in %)*



Source: *Monthly statistics of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, calculation of the author*

If we sum up the outcomes of the last available regional analyses, the labour market of the Gemer Region is characterised by a constantly deepening imbalance between the offer and demand side of the labour market. The key problem is the issue of long-term unemployment. District Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family see as crucial in connection with the persisting high unemployment also the high share of applicants with low education, relative high share of applicants at the productive age (the most difficult realisation on the labour market is in the age category of 50+) and the high share of persons without work experience (they have never worked). District analyses are also in congruence in identifying the most endangered group among the unemployed, with very weak perspective of realisation on the labour market, which is characterised by the cumulation of the following advantages: long-term unemployed, with primary education or without education, with low qualification and limited or no work experience. The problem of cumulating these risks in the ethnic environment – Roma minority in the region - is more suggested than openly stated. We find “reference” to “passive”, “unadjusted”, “applicants with bad work morals”. Affiliation to an ethnic group cannot be recorded in administrative praxis due to the discriminatory nature of such a procedure. We can thus only perceive, rather than name and define the actual scope,

the real degree and nature of this problem in connection to the Roma. After all, it comes not as a surprise that the current “non-discriminatory” setting of instruments of active labour market policy has been failing in the long run when it comes to dealing with long-term unemployment.

Conclusion

A brief look at the facts related to employment in both analysed regions is sufficient to notice that the majority of the possible labour-market related problems are concentrated in both countries are in these two regions. The historical burden of past as well as rather recent developments and accumulated social, demographic, and economic problems influences not only the current situation, but especially the possibilities of future development.

In order to evaluate complexly the development of employment in the Ústi Region in more than the past 20 years, it is necessary to supplement the mentioned analysis with circumstances characterising the region’s potential for development. It includes especially its advantageous geographical location at the border with Germany - though with its historically poorer part (former German Democratic Republic). This itself provides the base for possible investments, as well as cross-border cooperation using workforce mobility. The region is rich in mineral resources and is home to developed industrial agglomeration with water and power industry infrastructure as well as transport infrastructure. Last, but not least, we must not forget about the high number of available workforce with unfavourable educational qualifications, however of favourable age structure and relative low salary costs and cost of housing. This all however does not suffice yet to balance the mentioned bad heritage.

On the other hand, a negative role is played in this case by the high share of materially and energy demanding industrial sectors, concentration of economic entities in the centres of the region and small number of long-term prospering medium and small enterprises. Unquestionably stigmatising in the long run is the high share of social and ethnic minorities with their insufficient integration and high crime rate.

When searching for possibilities of how to change this situation, it is necessary to return to what has already been said. First of all, negative impacts of a high share of people with primary or no education must be mentioned together with the still low share of university educated inhabitants of the region. It is clear that changing this structure is a long-term

process, nevertheless foundations for the gradual growth of the educational level have already been established. The Ústí Region is currently in a somewhat conflicting situation – though numbers of university graduates increase, a significant part of them however leaves the region because they cannot find corresponding work realisation there. They cannot find it because not enough investors were attracted to the region that could offer suitable jobs to them.

Unquestionably, the main role in considering further development of the region is played by economic growth. No matter how unfavourable the current prognoses (2013) are, the presented look back at past development shows that the Ústí Region has the potential for development. It only needs sufficient conditions for it to be realised.

From the perspective of overall evaluation of the situation and estimates of development in the Gemer Region when it comes to unemployment, the overall economic situation which is quite unfavourable must be considered first. Economic and social-economic problems can be seen in the region, the cause of which can be identified to a large degree in the decline of the production in the main economic sectors, as well as in the overall decline of agricultural production that was providing employment mainly to low-educated persons. And though in all three districts of the monitored region, it is possible to see, based on the regional analyses, a slight year-on-year increase in the number of business entities and tradesmen, from the aspect of industrial production development in the Slovak comparison, it is one of the most underdeveloped areas of the Slovak Republic. In connection to this fact it is not surprising that Gemer also is the area where employees achieve one of the lowest levels of average salary in the Slovak Republic. Considering its large natural and cultural richness, the Gemer Region has a substantial potential for the development of tourist industry that it cannot make use of for years. There is a lack of services, accommodation facilities, attractions, and for now even of an information system that would help potential interests understand the possibilities it offers.

Among the more serious flaws of the region is insufficient equipment in terms of infrastructure, especially from the point of view of transport access, either road or railway. Moreover, the majority of roads are in bad to horrible technical condition. Highway connection to other regions is not built and the connection with the capital city to the south is problematic, because of heavy traffic on the roads and high number of traffic accidents.

From the aspect of employment, industry (electro-technical, wood-processing, agricultural, and to a lesser degree food-processing, magnetite, machinery, clothing, shoemaking, chemical and rubber industry) as well as public administration, services, retail and wholesale belong to

the important economic sectors according to regional analyses. The labour market in the region is influenced by the seasonal nature of the work which is characteristic of areas such as agriculture, forestry and civil engineering. This tendency can be seen by the fact that in the spring and summer months the employment rate increases and towards the end of the year (November, December, January) the number of employed declines again. Employment impacts also the conclusion of employment contracts for a definite period of time, especially in the area of services. A significant element in the labour market tendencies in Gemer is the migration for work abroad. The target countries are mainly the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, Ireland, and Italy where employees find realisation in civil engineering, services, commerce and agriculture. The problems of economies in the EU countries however have reduced these possibilities.

Opportunities for employment growth are equally linked with necessary support for investments that are “missing products” in this region. The industrial park in Rožňava seems to be a promising project from this point of view with the first investor launching production in the spring of 2013. Expectations are also connected with the launch or renewal of mining of mineral resources. The potential also lies in the starting of the so-called “brown-field” projects which would mean revitalisation of old industrial complexes that currently present especially an ecological burden for the region. In the district of Rimavská Sobota, the arrival of the Korean company YURA Corporation Slovakia, s.r.o. (2007) ensuring manufacturing of products for the car industry contributed to an increased employment rate. In this case, positions for medium and higher management were also created in addition to workers' jobs. In the district of Revúca, companies focusing on mining and processing of mineral resources are the industry players. The arrival of a foreign investor (LVD Company, Belgium) from the area of machine industry is expected. (Regional analyses, 2010).

We have to state that the Gemer Region is unlike the Ústí Region currently quite outside of the focus of attention of (foreign) investors. Local resources are rather destroyed in terms of economic revival and the economy of the region cannot be restarted without governmental support. It is not enough to just bring investors looking for a cheap workforce in order to start positive processes in both regions. A complex approach is needed that would deal with the infrastructure simultaneously with the human capital. When it comes to employment, an extremely sensitive approach to future structuring of the economy, especially industrial production, will be needed. Its diversification will be inevitable so that potential shifts of the economic cycle do not affect more significantly the employment rate in both regions. The

condition their economies are in at the moment cannot be handled without the mobilisation not only on the local level, but especially on the regional (use of the whole potential of the region, not only on the level of districts), by creating so-called micro-regions as well as by supporting cross-border cooperation. Support and coordination of these activities on the national level (or the country level) is however inevitable.

3 Socially excluded localities and unemployment

This text discusses the interrelationship between the social exclusion of people in excluded localities and their unemployment rate. Unemployment, which is a social problem in any area, here in combination with other factors, takes specific forms with major implications not only for these locations.

The first part will define social exclusion itself, and also deals with the terms "Rom", "Roma". Although Roma are not the main topic of the text, no paper on social exclusion in the Czech and Slovak area can be developed without clarifying the approach of ethnicity in the text – if only because a number of measures, projects and concepts have the ethnicity of the recipients of allowances in their names, and therefore its relevance to the topic can be assumed.

Furthermore, we will focus on particular dimensions of social exclusion and their interaction with unemployment. Some other areas will also be mentioned that in addition to unemployment significantly contribute to the complexity of problems associated with socially excluded localities – housing issues and general education.

Causes of high unemployment – especially long-term unemployment – the people living in socially excluded localities are closely tied to its consequences that in a vicious circle of social exclusion can be difficult to distinguish. However, we will introduce a kind of schematization.

There are a number of programs, approaches and policies which seek to address the issue of unemployment in the context of socially excluded communities at the local level. Possible areas for consideration, advantages and limitations of each approach will be also mentioned. In the end, the problem of social exclusion will be presented using the examples of two relatively well-known Czech sites – the residential area in Chanov near Most, and the Předlice district in Ústí nad Labem.

3.1 Social exclusion and Roma

Social exclusion as a technical term is relatively new to our environment, only recognised since the mid-1990s. The reality that is described by this term, however, is not entirely new. In every society and in every age, there were people excluded from society for some reason. Czech and partly Slovak societies encountering social exclusion were partly surprised (in

contrast to societies in Western Europe, where development was natural and more continual) after decades of living under socialism creating the illusion of full employment though nowhere was it explicitly stated but duty to work was required. And it was surprising also for the people who lost out from the transformation as having been set apart in the labor market and, consequently, in the area of the village, as well as for the majority, which had openly to meet the phenomenon of social exclusion. It should be noted that the majority here is not meant as a numerical superiority, but is understood on the basis of differences in the distribution of power and access to resources (Mareš, 2002b). The terms majority and minority in this text also have no ethnic connotations. Since this message may not act completely naturally, and the issue of social exclusion and socially excluded localities is often viewed through ethnicity (whether perceived or externally attributed) of the population of the locations, it is important to explain the approach to being Roma and the Roma ethnicity in this text.

The answer to the question: "Who is Roma actually?" is not simple at all. Three different answers are offered by Moravec (2006). Firstly, the definition of Roma by culture. People living a way of life that is sometimes referred to as "traditional Roma culture" (Jakoubek, 2004), primarily associated with the environment of settlements in Eastern Slovakia. In the context of Czech socially excluded localities, we may assume a considerable influence of such culture, as many of them come from Eastern Slovakian settlements, however, the culture of socially excluded localities we could define rather as Lewis (1968), i.e. as a culture of poverty. Mareš (2006) in this context speaks of anomie, when Roma in an environment of social exclusion have lost values and norms of their original culture and no new values and norms were accepted. He sees such indicators of anomie as alcoholism, drug addiction, prostitution and abandoning own children, which is something unthinkable in traditional Roma culture.

Secondly, Roma as those who declare themselves as of Roma ethnicity or nationality. People can select the Roma nationality during censuses, when a relatively small number of people select Roma nationality, and the number of Roma according to this indicator is on the decline. In the last census in the Czech Republic only about twelve thousand people declared Roma nationality, and in the Slovak Republic in 2011 (also data from the census) 105 738 people, i.e. 2% (qualified estimates: 420,000). If we accept the view that a Roma is only one who declares his/her Roma ethnicity, then the estimates of how many Roma there "really" are

would be irrelevant, because "real" Roma would only be those who declare it about themselves¹⁸. This approach is certainly possible and for many reasons also legitimate, but in connection with the phenomenon of social exclusion non-applicable. Various reasons were found why Roma do not avow to "their" nationality. There are explanations, such as they are afraid of any subsequent repression, as they have experience from the past. A concise argument can be found in Jakoubek's work (2004), where he claims that for Roma the term "nationality" is not significant, they do not understand it, and therefore do not need to declare any nationality as not being identified with any. This is indeed one of the common features of "traditional Roma culture" and the culture of poverty – lack of orientation in abstract terms and the inability to deal with it. There is another common feature of both cultures – lack of information about history, the concentration on the present, and the limited space in which people now live can be used to argue against the hypothesis of Roma ethnicity denial, due to the fear of potential reprisals. These schemes obviously do not match the concept of "nationality".¹⁹

Thirdly, Roma as those regarded as Roma by their environment. Such a definition can be quite ambiguous and vague, it leaves considerable scope for the subjective assessment of each observer, and a particular individual in the eyes of some observers may be Roma, and in the eyes of others may be not, even the assessment of one observer may vary depending on the situation and context. Despite these and many other reservations for the purposes of this work, we will consider Roma as those people who are perceived the way by their environment. This approach is preferred as programs and policies created at different levels and aimed at socially excluded (sometimes described as Roma) sites are developed by creators from the majority. They usually assume their ideas of defining Roma, which can differ mutually, however, their connecting element is that they define being Roma based on looking from the outside, not by detecting the identity of each potential target persons of these programs. In addition, locations

¹⁸ Klíčová (2006) presents in her text attempts to explain, pronounced by representatives of some organizations and institutions who are trying to explain why not all Roma declare "their" nationality.

¹⁹ From his own experience, which would certainly be checkable, the author of this text expresses the hypothesis that the Roma nationality or ethnicity are often declared by people with higher education, i.e. people who went through educational institutions of the majority, are largely assimilated, and therefore think in abstract terms like "nationality" or "ethnicity". Residents of socially excluded localities usually do not put weight on these terms, and they do not even see any content in the terms. Moreover, Klíčová (2006) also mentions the fact that the Roma nationality in the census is declared just by the assimilated "Roma". The author considers it paradoxical. It may not be a paradox, as those who adopted the way of life of the majority and the majority view of the world, take among other things also the definition of identity in relation to the "nation", which is abstract and uninteresting for residents of socially excluded localities and therefore have no need to consider it.

that have been created in the past as "Roma" were artificially created on the basis of external ideas about who is and who is not Roma²⁰. If people become the target of racist attacks, discriminatory behaviour or recipients of allowances based on their Roma ethnicity, it is again done on the basis that they are attributed to Roma ethnicity externally, not on the basis of the identity that they themselves avow to.

Indeed, this approach to identity is also identified by Jenkins (2008), who distinguishes the perspective of "group" and the perspective of "category". The perspective of group refers to the identity that the people themselves avow, accept, and together form a group based on, and consider themselves to be members of the group. Belonging to a group is a matter of own choice, and thus leaving the group is on a voluntary basis. The perspective of category then refers to the identity attributed from the outside, its carriers could not choose it, they do not decide about it, and therefore they cannot even leave it on a voluntary basis.

Although residents of socially excluded localities have not chosen their ethnicity and actively do not declare it, this attributed ethnicity works as a multiplier of their socio-economic disadvantage (Gabal, 2009).

3.2 Dimensions of social exclusion and unemployment

Mareš (2006) defines social exclusion as a lack of individual and group participation in the economic, political and social life of the society, or a lack of access to resources that are the norm in the given society. It can take economic, social, political, territorial and symbolic dimensions.

Unemployment permeates all these dimensions. Probably the most obvious link is with the *economic dimension* when, apart from other benefits, jobs bring especially financial reward to humans, in the form of wages. An individual who is not employed in the primary labor market has no assurance of regular income, he must rely on non-standard working contracts in the secondary market, or remains dependent on financial assistance from the state. Such assistance is, however, by the logic of things, designed to bridge the necessary time period; it does not assume that some individuals should be dependent on it for several years. And certainly it does not assume any dependence of whole families and subpopulations lasting for

²⁰ No matter whether it was the case in Matiční street in Ústí nad Labem or the Chanov residential area near Most, which will be addressed further.

decades.

Unemployment is also evident in the *social dimension*. Long-term unemployed with low social capital do not have any social network in their natural surroundings helpful for them in finding a new job. The social dimension of exclusion is closely linked to the spatial dimension, where natural social contacts and social networks cannot be created in an environment of segregation. This occurs at the level of primary schools, where children from socially disadvantaged families, particularly children identified as Roma, based on confusion of the cultural disability for mental handicap are recommended to practical elementary schools. This practically closes them the opportunity to continue in further education, and they have a lack of experience with children from the majority (Mareš, 2006). Mareš also points out the transformation of racism, which in this context is applied as cultural racism, which serves as a substitute for biological racism. Placement of children from socially disadvantaged, mostly Roma, families here serves as an instrument of segregation.

The political dimension of the exclusion is described by Lewis (1968), when he talks about people in the culture of poverty being separated from the poor, among other features, by just a lack of a sense of joined belonging to a social group and therefore also a lack of the ability and ambition to determine themselves politically and define their common requirements.

The territorial dimension of the exclusion refers to the situation when the socially excluded are concentrated in specific locations identified as socially excluded localities, where an accumulation of problems related to social exclusion arises. This location, which may consist of one house, one street or even a city quarter, is abandoned by the majority population at the same time as the arrival of the socially disadvantaged. The site and its surroundings experience a reduction in property prices; businesses and services leave the area, shops are closed, and thus jobs in the area disappear.

With the availability of jobs outside their own locality, *symbolic exclusion* is then connected and characterized by a stigmatization of individuals and groups perceived as other, deviant, foreign people (Mareš, 2006). One of the symptoms is the application of stereotypes against job seekers who are perceived as Roma, being treated on the basis of the attributed ethnic label. The second is the application of stereotypes against residents of some streets or quarters. In creating such images in the majority, the media plays an important role. The stereotypical perception of the Roma in the media are also shown in two other analyzes (Sedláková, 2002; Křížková, 2012), which explored the image of Roma formed by the media. Specificity of social exclusion is given just by the set of factors that participate in it – it is not

possible to label someone as socially excluded merely because he has low income, low education or no permanent job. And just the combination of these and other individual factors creates the phenomenon called social exclusion. Pierson (2010) considered low income, lack of access to the labor market, rare or non-existing social support and social networks, influence of environment (neighbourhood), and exclusion from services as signs of social exclusion and poverty. Each is sure to act as a handicapping factor in an individual's participation in social life. Each alone is solvable with known and proven instruments of social policy and social work. A significant risk, however, is created by their combination. It appears that for the solution of the complex it is insufficient to apply strategies used in the case where any of the foregoing factors occurs in isolation for an individual. Just the accumulation of multiple factors that are closely interrelated forms the complex of social exclusion.

It means that programs focusing on the reduction of long-term unemployment designed for the majority society are not likely to be effective in the environment of socially excluded localities, where unemployment is one of the key issues, but here it is just part of a wider complex of interrelated and inseparable components where the problem of unemployment is only one such component. The interconnection of these issues is clear from the aforementioned signs of social exclusion. We will focus now on these signs.

Poverty and low income make access to the resources that could help overcome social exclusion more difficult. It is for the low income of individuals and families, and then for the low average income per capita of citizens of quarters in which they live. Pierson (2010) highlights particularly relative poverty, which is dependent on time and territory, when although in Europe absolute poverty is rather marginal, relative poverty is increasing. Today it is possible to consider such a family as relatively poor that cannot afford to purchase a computer, while twenty years ago, such a measure of relative poverty would fail. This particular sign results in further consequences in the form of computer illiteracy, which reduces the chances of success in seeking a job for adults and makes access to quality education for children difficult.

Difficult access to the labor market and a paid job is one of the sources of poverty. Employment can be understood as a usable source for overcoming poverty not only because it brings funds to individuals, but it is also a source of contacts. This is especially true for single parents for whom receiving an income leading from employment will often not change significantly their financial situation, on the contrary, starting a job brings many practical problems that must be addressed, and because of these reasons they prefer to leave the job and

remain in poverty and social isolation.

Social networks providing social support are an important component for enhancing participation in social life. In the last twenty years, social workers have been more aware of this fact, and in addition to providing services to clients they also focus on the creation of informal structures in local communities. Pierson (2010) presents two of the various possible types of social network categorization. The first is "Networks for getting by", which are closed, relatively stable, include the family, friends and neighbours with whom people are in daily contact, and understanding the functioning of these networks is important for the understanding of social exclusion in the environment. The second type is "Networks for getting ahead" as networks created occasionally, accidentally, according to actual needs, including familiarity arranged through other people, which serve as a means of transfer of information and can be used as resources such as when seeking job offers.

The importance of neighbourhood or life in the context of the environment involves the relationship of people to the location in which they live, and even its perception by the people entering the area from outside. The area inhabited by socially excluded people is separated from the settlements of other peoples either by natural or urban obstacles – e.g. a forest or a highway. Housing quality or condition of public areas is a noticeable feature of the area, in which socially excluded people concentrate themselves or are concentrated. Unmaintained housing stock and public areas reduce the value of all properties in the area, which may become practically unmarketable. Residents do not feel related to their residence, do not feel safe in it, which is reflected in low participation in solving matters relating to communal areas, however, they do not have the resources to leave so they adapt to life in the context of the environment.

Exclusion from services means that individuals, families and groups face barriers that make their access to services - that are normal for the majority of society - more difficult, no matter whether they are services coming to users directly to their households, i.e. from electricity supplies to the home care of physically or otherwise disadvantaged members of households, or services provided in public areas such as postal services, medical and banking services. The characteristic features of people living permanently in an environment of social exclusion even include combinations of such indicators as bad health condition due to limited access to health care or a lack of bank accounts. The situation where people in an environment of social exclusion do not have services of serious institutions available, in the specific case they

cannot receive a loan from a bank, they use alternative providers ²¹ who provide loans that Pierson (2010) concisely refers to as predatory.²²

In the case of socially excluded localities, the principle of subsidiarity cannot be effectively applied. If an individual cannot manage problematic life situations himself, it should be the turn of his family and subsequently the local community.²³ But they find themselves in the same or very similar situation as that individual, and face a similar range of problems. Sirovátka (2002) shows a significant aggravation in the position of families in which both adult members are unemployed for a long time. In the case of families living in socially excluded localities, their environment is also facing long-term unemployment, and natural social networks consist of people with the same disadvantage. Therefore we can assume that the utilization of social networks, consisting again of the long-term unemployed as an available source for addressing their unemployment, is ineffective.

3.3 Other areas linked to social exclusion

In addition to unemployment, there are other areas where social exclusion is shown most remarkably – housing and education. The area of education is divided by some authors (e.g. Gabal, 2006) into education as the *actual level* of education at the disposal of inhabitants of the excluded locations; and *access* to education, due to the existence of barriers or supporting tools for children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds to educational institutions and access of adults to further education options.

The housing issue and its solution is primarily the responsibility of local governments. Based on Act No. 172/1991 Coll. on the transfer of assets from the state to municipalities, the housing stock that belonged to the state was transferred to municipalities. Those handle the newly acquired property in different ways. In some towns local councillors took a role in the formation of municipal housing policy, elsewhere they preferred the rapid monetization of

²¹ Some authors, e.g. Moravec (2006), calls them as "merchants of poverty".

²²The term "predatory" in this context is also used in the Czech Republic, by Člověk v tísni (A Man in Need), o.p.s., which on their website www.rozhodneme.cz publishes so called "Predatory Indexes" showing the extent of inexpedience of consumer loans offered by various participants in the financial market.

²³The local communities are often called communities; however, the characteristics of communities are only meeting in terms of the settlement and spatial definitions, i.e. the jointly occupied territory. Thus, we shall use the term "local community", which more accurately captures the essence.

housing stock with its sale into private hands. The argument that the private owner of the property can better maintain it than a community, which accompanied the privatization in many cases carried out spontaneously, was indeed logically correct, but the spontaneity of the sale of the vast majority of municipal residential properties in some communities appears in retrospect as a stumbling block. The new owners tried to evict their socially disadvantaged tenants living in rent controlled at that time, sometimes using such tenants' ignorance about own rights²⁴, sometimes by directly using illegal practices or intimidation, and then tried to use the vacated property for commercially interesting activities or reconstruct and rent to wealthier people. In other places in villages, others property owners focus on trade with poverty (Moravec, 2006), providing accommodation for the poor in substandard housing for exorbitant rents that are paid largely from allowances and housing supplements. The result is residential segregation (Sýkora, 2010) on "both sides" – on the one hand, voluntarily chosen and well-guarded residential segregation of wealthy people, on the other hand, involuntary, but hardly able-to-leave residential segregation of poor people.

Municipalities that had abandoned their control of housing stock in villages in the past, exchanging it for quick profit for the municipal budget, may have little influence on these processes. A certain degree of residential segregation on the basis of property is natural and has existed in all historical periods. However, there were communities that carried out the care of individuals and families who had failed in an unfavourable position to help themselves. Municipalities that performed the privatization of all or substantially all housing stock in recent years, however, lost the instruments of possible intervention.

Residents of socially excluded localities, which are dependent on the owners of residences in which they live, are often unable to leave because of the discriminatory approach of property owners in other areas, and also because they cannot save a deposit, since a large part of their low income ends up in the hands of the private lessors.²⁵ "Poverty merchants" thrive in those municipalities that sold own housing policy and left the field open for the market housing

²⁴ Frequently, for example, the ignorance of legal regulations of leases was used. The new owner thus persuaded tenants that contracts concluded for an indefinite period with the previous owner or the municipality had lost their validity with change of owner and it is necessary to conclude a new contract, issued just for a limited period and thus less protected. Although property owners had to know that they misled their tenants, as the conclusion of the lease relations is not affected by a change of ownership, and the rights and obligations arising from contracts transferred to the new ownership entity (Křeček, 2002).

²⁵ Tenants, as mentioned above, may often had high rents paid by subsidies and housing supplements, however, of course, these allowances do not cover the full amount of the rent, and due to different reasons a number of tenants do not ever receive these benefits.

solutions of all social groups. Where a municipality retains at least partial control of housing stock, municipalities may use the set conditions to effect the approach – for example, pricing policies – of private entities.

Living in a particular area can itself act as a handicap in seeking a job. At the local level, there are "known" addresses that are associated with socially excluded or associated directly with Roma by the majority. Based on statistical discrimination, employers may (Steiner, 2006) believe that the people settled in this area have some shared features, which disadvantage them in relation to employment. To what extent it is a self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 2000), or the result of the interaction of various causes discussed below, is the question. In addition to the fact that employers may refuse to engage a person residing at a certain address²⁶ based on prejudice, the individual himself can be handicapped by uncertainties associated with housing at work, so employers see him as problematic and unreliable. Indeed, Pierson (2010) and also Lewis (1968) mention the importance of local society. People will adapt to life in such society, which allows him to survive relatively successfully in socially excluded localities, but prevents him from leaving the location. That which is sometimes called by the tabloid media as "socially non-adaptable", Moravec (2006), however, explains perfect adaptability to the environment in which people live and the resources available. You cannot assume that these people "adapt" to the norms, values and goals of the middle class that are placed on them as requirements, because they do not experience the same environmental conditions as the middle class.

Education and training are clearly closely linked to the labor market. The better educated you are, the greater the chance you will not become unemployed, and if already unemployed, it's less likely to be long-term unemployment. The low educational level of residents of socially excluded localities is a generally known fact. Most people there have achieved only a basic level of education, and often at practical primary schools, formerly known as special schools. Mareš (2006) highlights the problem when children with social and cultural disabilities attend facilities for children with mental disabilities. The Czech Republic has been internationally criticized for this practice, among others the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights has called this practice discriminatory. Although the decision concerned only specific cases of families that had decided to sue the Czech Republic, it can be assumed that similar

²⁶ Although mostly it is not sound as a clear reason, there are cases where the place of residence in a particular area for employers is a bigger problem than Roma ethnicity.

discriminatory practices could also be described in many other cases (Svoboda, 2010).

3.4 Causes and consequences of unemployment in socially excluded localities

Attention will now be focused on the characteristics of causes behind the high unemployment rate of residents of socially excluded localities, and also behind its long-term character. Some have been outlined in the preceding text; here their details will be given. It is true that social exclusion is composed of a number of interrelated causes and consequences, where it is difficult to identify clearly the original cause and the result, but for systematic work with the theme, at least some degree of structure is necessary.

Šimíková (2005) as the main reasons for the high rate of unemployment among residents of socially excluded localities indicates their low level of education and skills, unmotivating system of social allowances, discrimination and low mobility capability. These reasons should be added by another that has come to the fore in recent years, and yet has not been addressed in professional texts very much, over-indebtedness, i.e. a larger number of overdue liabilities. Over-indebtedness arises mainly due to consumer loans and their unlimited accessibility for everyone. This will be addressed later, now briefly about individual causes.

Low levels of education related to the aforementioned trend of placing children with socio-cultural handicaps are pushed onto secondary educational side-lines, which makes it practically impossible to return to mainstream education. In addition, for people of the culture of poverty (Lewis, 1968), where the majority of the population of excluded localities can belong (Bartáková, 2005), education is usually not valued very much. Education as a long-term strategy associated with long-term time and financial investment is not implemented in socially excluded environments as other long-term strategies. Value from investing in education is reaped by individuals in the long run; whilst in socially excluded localities problems are addressed as arising and considered in hours or days rather than years. Another typical feature of people of the culture of poverty, according to Lewis (1968), is their focus on the present and real experience, inability to orient themselves in history and to plan for the future, as well as an inability to think in the abstract terms and categories mentioned above. Therefore, the use of popular reasoning for people in the culture of poverty, for example, that educated children will have a better adulthood, encounters misunderstanding from the very beginning.

Katrnáček (2004) in his study notes educational reproduction in working class families. A

similar educational reproduction occurs even in families living in social exclusion, when children assume their parents' educational aspirations.

Moravec (2006) describes a situation where a family with children whose breadwinner starts a new job after a period of unemployment, it can easily get into a financially worse situation than at the time of his unemployment. Although the net income of the household adding wages and the benefits that remained for the family may be higher than the previous income consisting entirely of various social allowances, unless the difference is significant (which is usual for minimally salaried professions requiring minimum qualifications), it becomes a non-incentive. If the family subtracts the expenses that previously were not spent on travelling to work, food at work, and other related work costs, the resulting amount for the family may be less than when he was not employed, and the family budget was not burdened by those expenses.

Discrimination by potential employers or by employment office staff can discourage unemployed from further efforts to find a job. Especially when they have experienced repeated discrimination. It can be both individual discrimination, where an individual discriminates, for example, by denying a right of individuals to access any service or program on the basis of their identity attributed by him, as well as institutional discrimination, where a regulation or law has a discriminatory impact. Although the current legal system cannot include an act that is openly discriminatory and speak about any ethnic or social group²⁷, nevertheless certain laws whilst not naming anyone directly may predictably effect a particular group, or at least be traced from real events. Vašečka (2004) considers the Act on Acquisition and Loss of the Citizenship of the Czech Republic No. 40/1993, approved by the Czech National Council on 29 December 1992 and that entered into force on 1 January 1993; it is still considered by many people as an act of institutional discrimination of the state against a group of people. Although this Act never directly mentions Roma or other ethnic or social groups, the formulation of the requirements for entitlement to obtain Czech citizenship can be understood as disadvantageous, especially for citizens born outside the newly formed Czech Republic (even in Slovakia, i.e. until federation was found) and resided in the Czech territory later. The Act complicated the possibility of obtaining Czech citizenship even for their children born on Czech territory. Thus many people when Czechoslovakia separated became foreigners, without having to change their residence. This issue of "foreigners in their

²⁷ Such legislation also existed during the "First Republic" (Law on Wandering Gypsies of 1927), which is often presented as a model of democracy (e.g. Pavelčíková, 2008).

own country" resulted in a lot of entirely practical problems, such as getting a job or obtaining financial support from the state. To be complete, it should be noted that even any forced relocation of residents to the Slovak Republic (even though such requirement could be difficult to accept ethically), it would not solve anything, because a similar law was also developed in the Slovak Republic so that these people would not receive citizenship. The institutional discrimination could be seen also in the conditions of some municipalities for the allocation communal flats, where nobody is directly named, but e.g. a combination of such indebtedness conditions and employment under a working contract again disqualifies the inhabitants of socially excluded localities.

Šimíková (2005) states low mobility as the next cause. In the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, migration and moving from place to place based on the job opportunities is not generally something too frequent. Moreover, it is not even supported by the housing market. Migration of underprivileged people to a village is always monitored with concern, and is associated rather with real estate speculators than with support for employment.

Debts become a barrier to labor market entry when reaching the stage of execution. For the person against whom the enforcement is conducted, the potential entry to a job stops being economic, as part of his income would be affected with the enforcement and hence a job would mean a very small improvement in household income or none at all. Debts themselves are not a reason that a person becomes unemployed, but are often a barrier for a person even to seek a job or accept an offered one. Especially if the owed amount enforced by execution is higher and is not redeemable in the near future, or if the number of executory enforced debts is greater, a person loses interest in seeking a job that would bring income to cover the obligations executory enforced.

Underprivileged people without a stable job and stable income try to keep up with the consumer lifestyle of the majority population. They are buying things they are not able to save up for, so acquire them using various consumer loans. If they are unable to save up for a thing, they are not able logically to pay regular instalments for the loan.

In the Czech Republic, the situation of the high level of indebtedness, which is not related only to underprivileged people, but also to majority households should be solved by Act No. 182/2006 Coll. on Bankruptcy and Settlement, which came into general awareness as the "Insolvency Act". According to this, someone who proves to be most likely able to pay at least a third of his obligations in the next five years in regular instalments can be allowed to pay off developing his instalment plan. And if he really fulfils the conditions and no obstacles appear during the next five years, and complies with his commitments, other liabilities will be

declared by the court as unenforceable, in other words, the rest of his debts is "forgiven". For many people the effective date of this Act meant protection from the debt trap. For the most indebted population of excluded localities it is unusable. Firstly, the court assesses their ability to pay according to the income that they have at the moment and had in the previous three years, and the information is the basis for future income forecasts. Secondly, the amounts of debts of the debtor and the persons to whom the debtor owes maintenance obligations are considered. Both these conditions practically eliminate people without stable income and with a higher number of dependents, which corresponds exactly to the characteristics of most households in excluded localities.

Joining socially excluded localities, the growth of debt occurs. Also people who came to the locality without debts get into debt. A number of localities or buildings called locally as houses for debtors are actually represented by a very heterogeneous composition of the population, and by far not all are debtors. Already the Analysis (1999), dealing with the situation on Matiční street in the acute period of the late 1990s, accompanied by the construction and demolition of the infamous wall, pointing to the fact that the gallery residential houses that were in media discussions were called, among other things, flats for rent defaulters, were inhabited by people with various personal histories and reasons for coming to the site. Besides debts, the reasons were such as replacement flat allocation or municipal housing assigned based on an application. The only unifying element was the appearance of the Roma population.

Also in the case of the Kladno site called "Masokombinát" ("Butchery") for the plant previously located here, it has been shown that the debts of its residents incurred either after moving to the site, or if the debts had existed earlier they increased (Radostný, Růžička, 2006). The practice of addressing the inability of village inhabitants to pay their obligations with their concentration to one place proved counterproductive (Vašečka, 2002). However, some villages continue to do so. In some cases they even take steps that further complicate the situation of insolvent families without providing any solutions. As the most flagrant it is possible to give the so called "lifebuoy" example in Chomutov, consisting of a series of randomly applied repressive measures without any pre-prepared implementation plan. The execution of social benefits was the most remarkable of these measures. The result was, on the one hand, deterioration of the situation of people who lost their source of relied on income, and they had to make money for living and pay rent otherwise. On the other hand, the

result was a transfer of funds from the state budget to support people in need to the hands of private entities (executors) with the assistance of the municipality (Report, 2009).²⁸

The effects of long-term unemployment can include the loss of work habits, or the inability to create any work habits among the younger generation, low confidence of socially excluded in relation the majority institutions, and also strengthening the stereotypical perception of excluded localities by the majority.

Some residents of socially excluded localities are without a job for many years, some have not worked since the first waves of dismissal in the early 1990s. As workers with the lowest qualification, they were the first redundancies. Since many live in regions that underwent significant changes in industry associated with increasing unemployment, they had a less favourable position in the newly profiling labor market compared with the general population. A role could be played by the already mentioned Act No. 40/1993 Coll. on Acquisition and Loss of the Citizenship of the Czech Republic, which made access to employment for people who left the state without any citizenship more difficult. Those who remain in the imaginary queue waiting for a job for a longer period have a lower chance than those who joined it later. As according to the theory of queues (Bartáková, 2004), employers prefer to choose from potential employees those unemployed as short as possible, in other words, who joined the queue later and wait at its end. People at the beginning of the queue who have spent in the queue already a considerable time, gradually become unemployable.

As a particularly problematic situation can be seen the situation of young people who already perceive their unemployment as a natural part of life. They never experienced any of their parents going to work, or worse, they do not have even in their broader family or local community anyone who regularly attends a job. Life without work is thus considered to be the standard norm, and the goal at the end of their compulsory schooling – in many cases of already mentioned practical primary school – is registration at labor offices.

²⁸ In most cases originally the amounts owed were in hundreds of crowns in unpaid fees for waste collection or a fine for travelling without a ticket, which, however, were increased with enforcement and so almost all the enforced funds ended in the account of executors (Report, 2009).

3.5 Possible approaches to addressing the issue at the local level and their limits

Although at the state level a number of policies and programs to address the issue of socially excluded localities have been developed, in terms of their real impact in practice, it is important how they are implemented at the local level where they can be modified in various ways. Winkler (2007), characterizing local employment policy approach, compared that the central approach distinguishes adaptation and substitution. This distinction is useful not only for employment policy, but also for other areas focusing on social integration. *The adaptation approach* is reflected in the implementation of central policies, which are modified just to meet local needs and specificities. *The substitution approach*, in contrast, replaces the central policy by another policy that may not be compatible with it, or can be directly in contradiction. The same author in another publication also distinguishes the use of rationalism and institutionalism in decision-making in the political process. If *rationalism* is used, the deciding on objectives and procedures becomes a separate phase of the political process, which precedes the implementation. If *institutionalism* is used, the deciding is included directly in the implementation activities. The program is then decided at the time when it is implemented, which can significantly change its originally intended purpose (Winkler, 2002). The case mentioned above, the "lifebuoy" in Chomutov, is an example of a combination of institutionalism and substitution. Institutionalism because decisions about activities were carried out at random, and deciding on its objectives and practices did not form a separate part of the political process. And substitution for the reason that this "project" has not responded to any concept created at the state level. After all, the substitution approach at the local level is not unique. This may be due to the very ambiguity of the state concepts, which occur at a number of different departments and are changed frequently (Vašečka, 2004) without any practical impact. Some of these concepts also tried to respond directly to this fact. For example, the proposal by the Ministry for Regional Development (2008) included a requirement for the state budget to support only those activities that would be based on the concepts adopted at the state level that could only be modified to local conditions, but not transformed. This proposal seeking to replace the substitution approach with consistent adaptation as well as the previous ended almost unnoticed.

Programs created either at national or regional levels aimed at reducing unemployment have minimum impacts on socially excluded communities. This is primarily due to the above mentioned linkage between the problems connected with the life in an environment of social exclusion, where unemployment is only part of a complex mosaic. Furthermore, also other

factors can limit the engagement of people from socially excluded localities to employment programs.

One is the so-called "creaming effect" (Bartáková, 2004), when employees of institutions classifying individuals into different programs favour those potential candidates where the assumption exists that the program will be completed without difficulties, compared with those who are most needy and most disadvantaged in the labor market. In order to avoid failures in working with "difficult cases", they can prefer easily marginalized individuals (i.e. standing on the imaginary social edge) over excluded, i.e. those who already stand completely outside the majority society. This tendency of employees is understandable in their effort to increase the success of implemented programs, but a risk exists that those who were once excluded from society will be excluded also from programs that would help them return to society. In Alexander's (2006) concept we can talk about employees of institutes selecting suitable candidates for inclusion, since they are just the majority institutions that define who is "worthy" to be included in the core group, the members of which are covered by the majority solidarity.

The sticking point is whether the programs for residents of socially excluded localities should be directed at individuals or communities. Both approaches have their strengths and weaknesses. *The liberal approach focusing on individuals* and defending their rights, regardless of their belonging to any group is particularly advantageous in the fact that it is free from possible stereotypes formed on the basis of actual or perceived group membership. Its disadvantage, however, is that majority society on the one hand and an isolated individual who it is at that moment in an apparently favourable negotiating position on the other, enter mutual interactions. In the process of integration, thus the assimilation strategies will prevail. Baršová and Barša (2005) presented as an example the integration of immigrants in France, which based its policy on ignoring the differences of immigrants and the assimilation of individuals as individuals, not as part of different groups.

The communitarian approach is built on the assumption that inhabitants of socially excluded "communities" are linked, that represent a kind of functional unit to be integrated with another functional unit, majority society. This approach gives a stronger negotiating position to members of the community where a community actually exists. However, this should be

clearly identified and "Roma community" should be avoided in the virtual groupings²⁹, or to identify whether it is a community of interest with more common features, or just a local community defined by the place of living.

There are frequent debates about the extent to which social exclusion was caused by the people who are in this situation themselves, by their own viciousness or their personal failures, or the extent these people only become victims of the system they are not able to control adequately. This Toušek (2006) describes as distinguishing internal and external reasons of social exclusion. As the *internal influences* that can be supported by socially excluded people, and may be at least to some extent influenced by the people themselves, he assigns a loss of working habits from long-term unemployment, inability to manage money, their focus on meeting current needs and the resulting inability to effectively plan for the future, apathy and low motivation to address their own problems. As the *external influences* that the individual himself has no ability to influence because they are determined by the conditions prevailing in broader society, he assigns the housing policy of the municipality, the situation on the labor market, social policy of the state, but also the discriminatory manifestations of the majority, which are related especially to the Roma ethnicity of the population of excluded localities.

A more detailed breakdown of approaches to sources of social exclusion are offered by Levitas (2005), dividing approaches into redistributive, moral and social-integration.

Redistributive discourse focuses on poverty and inequality in society. After their removal, a redistribution is necessary. This approach defines itself as especially against individualism, as an individual alone cannot handle all the problems related to his social exclusion.

Moral discourse points to the inadequacy (viciousness) of individuals and their failures. According to this discourse, some people take anti-social standards followed in their behaviour. These people tend more to addiction to drugs, have less stable relationships, become offenders. These individuals are referred to as the "underclass" and occupy the lowest rungs of the social ladder.

Social-integration discourse focuses its attention primarily on paid work and labor market participation. This is considered as the main basis for achieving cohesion in society. It defines itself against the redistributive discourse that with the simple redistribution of resources does

²⁹ The ambiguity of state policies is also shown in the naming of an advisory body of the Czech government "The Government Council for Roma Community Affairs." The name of the Slovak equivalent authority is given in plural (Roma communities), which is more realistic.

not offer any opportunity of secured paid work to people, and on the contrary confirms their exclusion from the labor market.

Barša (1999) then in connection with guilt for social exclusion talks about "blaming the victim" when the system pushes individuals into a situation in which they have no other chance than to adopt alternative behaviours that society considers pathological, and then the individuals are labelled by the system as guilty; the system that way basically legitimizes the marginalization or exclusion of such individuals.

3.6 Chanov and Předlice as examples of socially excluded localities in the socially disadvantaged region of the Ústí nad Labem region

The panel housing estate on the outskirts of Chanov within the statutory Most city streets and some streets of older brick on the outskirts of the regional capital - Ústí nad Labem – named Předlice – these two places for many people in the Czech Republic became a symbol of social exclusion. They have a number of features in common. In their past, present and the resulting potential looks into the future, however, there are also significant differences.

The problem of socially excluded localities is enhanced by the fact that most are located in regions where more social problems are accumulated. As a typical example, we can state Most. The city has a long history of mining, during World War II chemical plants for processing oil were built near the town, in the post-war years they even expanded. They along with other industrial plants required a large amount of manpower for mostly unskilled positions. As in the post-war years as a result of the displacement of Germans, it was difficult to find enough manpower, a solution solved by Roma from settlements in Eastern Slovakia. Although several waves of migration from east to west from 1940s to the 1970s were partly state-organized, partly spontaneously, the majority of Roma came to Most shortly after the war and other migratory waves were less important (Haušild, 2008).

In the 1970s, when the historic town was flattened due to coal mining, it was decided to build a housing estate for Roma. This was completely contrary to the policy of dispersal enforced by the state (Pavelčíková, 2004). Roma residents of the old Most were classified into three categories according to way of life; today we would say rather by the degree of assimilation. People of the "first category" should be in accordance with the government policy scattered throughout the city to new housing estates among the majority, members of the "other two categories" should be concentrated into a new housing estate, which was built near Chanov

ancient village. The argument was that it would be easier for institutions to influence Roma concentrated in one area (Haušild, 2008). It is not necessary to note how the new housing estate made the village infamous, not only throughout the country but also abroad.

After social conditions changed, two interrelated changes occurred that affected the status of the population in the Chanov location – and not only this location, but also a number of similar ones in the Czech Republic. First, job duties became more liberalized, or having no formal employment was not considered a criminal offense from that time. Second, there were significant changes in the sectoral structure of Czech industry and mining, along with heavy industry, which used to have its markets mainly in the Soviet Union, lost their importance and therefore needed less labor. Roma from Chanov were among the first who lost their jobs because they were the least skilled workers who became redundant as soon as possible, and also discrimination by employers played a role, as first they sacked Roma employees. There were probably cases of people who voluntarily chose unemployment, but it is not possible to assume that it was a numerically important group.

Since, as mentioned above, the Chanov housing estate consists of just Roma concentrated there, who were the least adapted to the way of life of the majority, it is possible to conclude that the social changes taking place in the early 1990s, where the Roma were only a passive component, caught them prepared least. The orientation in these changes and the new social order thus took them a longer time, and was less clear for them than for the majority or other members of the minority, who were more adapted for the majority way of life and more oriented in their institutions. This initial "delay" was never caught up. The socialist society in the 1950s assumed that the Roma issue – then the "Gypsy question" – was not an issue, as the Roma were considered victims of capitalism and their problems would disappear due to socialism automatically; the same was presumed by the liberalism of the early 1990s – that to solve problems it was sufficient to give individuals enough personal freedom to fulfil their visions and ideals. In the beginning, however, those who did not have sufficient skills to use this personal freedom and to formulate their own visions and ideals were left behind.

The Předlice quarter in Ústí nad Labem experienced another development; but very similar problems associated with social exclusion, which are now characteristic of both sites, are recorded there.

Unlike the Chanov housing estate, Předlice is not clearly defined by an area demarking it from other parts of the city. Administratively, it falls under the city district of Ústí nad Labem – the city. The socially excluded locality with all the associated characteristics is considered

part of the so-called "New Předlice" bordered by Hrbovická and Majakovského streets. In the past, Předlice was a separate village which became attached to Ústí nad Labem because of the gradual development of industry, when industrial complexes spread between Ústí and Předlice. Therefore unlike Chanov, the constructions were not intended for Roma. They gradually began moving there in the 1970s (i.e. at the same time as Chanov was settled). The people moving there were Roma who came to Předlice from Eastern Slovakia, especially from Hanušovce, because they found jobs and also cheap housing in Předlice. Initially the Roma were a minority there, however, during the 1980s they began to predominate. This was partly due to the arrival of the next "Hanušovce Roma" who migrated for work based on references from their relatives who lived for some time in Předlice. For the most part, however, it happened because of an assumption of the majority institutions that it would be appropriate for the Roma to live in a communal area. There was an idea of political leaders that the Roma themselves wanted to live together. So flats in Předlice were allocated in particular to Roma in order to "live among their kinship". Like in Chanov, people from different families, with different personal history and system of norms and values, just based on their attributed ethnicity, were moved there. Such tendencies also continued after 1989. Prices of Předlice housing thus dropped more and more. Those who had the capital to move did so, and those who did not adapted to life in an environment of social exclusion. Other socially weak, who did not find housing elsewhere, came to Předlice (Husák, 2012).

For the development of Předlice, the most essential step was the privatization of houses implemented in several waves since the mid-1990s. An alliance of several Roma families from northern Moravia³⁰ that controlled most of the market with flats in Předlice became a very important player – they bought some houses directly³¹, others through intermediaries. Thus the municipality completely lost control over the situation in Předlice, the new homeowners took control. Among other things, this period is associated with the onset of the drug trade in this part of the town (Husák, 2012).

Recently, Předlice began to be a topic of discussion between politicians and officials in the city as well as in the media, especially in the context of the technical condition of individual properties, which directly threaten the life of residents. The discussions flared up after the collapse of one of the houses in September 2012, which was not inhabited but the fall killed

³⁰ In Předlice they are known as "Moravians".

³¹ Prices of sold houses were then very low, according to Husák (2012) they ranged from 50 to 100,000 Czech crowns maximum.

one person present in the house at the time. Subsequent inspections revealed deficiencies, unauthorized building interventions, and risks of collapse for other properties.

In the last over two decades, Přeblice has become another well-known site in the media, which on the one hand encourages representatives of relevant institutions to take action, while on the other hand the media interest raises the already mentioned negative labels, when if residents of some Přeblice streets declare their residence, they are disqualified the same way as representatives of Chanov streets or the infamous Matiční street at the opposite end of the regional capital.

The examples of both described places, Chanov and Přeblice, show that although the circumstances at the beginning of the socially excluded localities were significantly different, since then their development took very similar direction. The fundamental difference, which can also be crucial for their future development and intervention efforts in these locations, is the difference in ownership of property. While in Přeblice the vast majority of property is in private hands, Chanov residential panel buildings are still owned by the municipality. The fact that the origins of both sites date to the 1970s is also interesting – in the case of the Chanov housing estate it was the creation of a "socially excluded locality built on Greenfield", in the case of Přeblice there were gradual steps towards reforming an urban district to the socially excluded locality. After 1989, in neither case did a reversal in this tendency occur. On the contrary, in the case of Přeblice it was even supported by unrestrained privatization.

Young (1999) talks about society in the 1970s as the exclusive society. He defines it as opposed to an inclusive society characterized by the "golden years" of post-war development. Compared with inclusive societies, considered by Young as having a tendency to incorporate and draw diverse people to their centres, exclusive societies have separative tendencies, when the social structure keeps only its "core" and "edge". The core gradually loses people who cannot stay there for various reasons and they move to the edge.

In regions such as Most mentioned here, characterized by high unemployment, low-skilled labor and high rates of population with attributed ethnic membership, more people get to the "edge" than in regions with favourable social structures. The more people are exposed to the risk of moving from the "core" to the "edge", the more they try to keep their position and contribute to the displacement of other people to the "edge". The first candidates to be moved from the "core" to the "edge" become those referred to by Alexander (2006) as the last candidates of inclusion. So the last covered by the majority solidarity, or those who are

characterized by strong primordial differences. This is supported by the stability of the environment and the short-term of mutual coexistence (Alexander, 2006). People on the "edge" with such features are pushed away from the primary labor market, and thus their unemployment is more visible for the majority than that of other, less diverting individuals and groups. With appropriate interpretation, this mixture can easily become a time-bomb for social mayhem, which can be seen in recent times more and more often at various places in the country, but particularly those regions where it is difficult to keep the position in the "core" of the society, and where you can also classify a sufficient number of people as "the others" legitimizing their place on the "edge".

Conclusion

Unemployment of residents of socially excluded localities has specific features compared with unemployed in other parts of villages. Thus, the measures effectively used to reduce unemployment as such may not have practically any effect in the socially excluded localities, if they do not reflect the complex system of causes and effects of the unemployment of socially excluded and are not tied with other areas in which social exclusion occurs. Social exclusion is multidimensional in its substance, and responses to only one dimension, e.g. ensuring income from a stable job, in the long term will fail if other dimensions are not addressed.

To characterize the processes and issues associated with the environment of socially excluded localities, we can use the concepts of foreign authors, i.e. the culture of poverty (Oscar Lewis, 1968), the concept of social exclusion (Pierson, 2010), the theory of inclusive and exclusive societies (Young, 1999) and central solidarity towards marginalised groups (Alexander, 1999). It is possible to conclude that the Romani specifics, through which the topic is often discussed, is not so important in terms of the content of the problem as such, but rather in terms of its interpretation by individual participants who attribute it various degrees of significance.

4 Employment policy in the Czech Republic and Slovakia

Unemployment as a mass phenomenon is becoming the primary problem of the current developed countries. Even though opinions on their causes vary, only radical liberals adhere to the argument that it is a case of individual failure or a temporary problem that will be solved by market forces. The current situation confirms the Keynes' view of mass unemployment as a permanent phenomenon that cannot be solved by the market mechanism without regulatory interventions by the state.

High unemployment is associated with big problems from the economic, social and individual aspect. Especially emphasised are economic consequences associated with the inability to create a potential product due to insufficient use of the available resources or economic loss connected with direct expenditures on the employment policy and with the lack of public financial income. If the nature of unemployment is frictional, it is not a significant social problem. A functioning social security system is a sufficient solution able to ensure enough income for the period of job searching to maintain the living standard of the unemployed and members of his/her family and, at the same time, institutional arrangement of job mediation. Unemployment, however, becomes a serious social problem when it becomes mass unemployment with a more numerous group of long-term unemployed. The solution to unemployment and its impact becomes the primary issue, not only due to economic, but mainly due to political reasons.

The right to work realisation is one of the basic social rights and as such it is guaranteed by the Convention of Fundamental Rights and Liberties which is defined in Article 26 Par. 1 and 3 as follows:

Everyone shall have the right to a free choice of profession and preparation for it, the right to conduct business and carry out other economic activity.

Everyone shall have the right to win resources for his/her needs of life by working. Citizens who cannot exercise this right not through their own fault shall be provided material security in adequate scope by the state (Tomeš, 2009).

As part of the act on employment, the right to work has been specified as the right *“of an individual to employment in a legal relationship if the individual wants and can work and applies for work... to employment mediation and provision of further services under terms and conditions stipulated by this act”*. (Act No. 435/2004 Coll. as amended, Art. 10)

The employment policy has a clear European dimension, as it is based on the common legal documents and parts of its activities are financed from European funds, however it varies in individual countries because of the specific conditions of the individual countries.

4.1 State employment policy in the Czech Republic

Although economic science started to deal with unemployment as early as in the 18th century, the opinions on the causes of unemployment have not been united to this day. The liberal stream following up on classical and neoclassical economics in fact does not accept involuntary unemployment at all. Unemployment is determined by preferring free time to work opportunities. According to monetarists, there is a natural unemployment rate under which unemployment can drop thanks to the economic policy of the country only for a short period of time but, in the long run, this intervention will be reflected negatively mainly on inflation growth. In their view, unemployment is caused by labour market inflexibility. The natural unemployment rate can be reduced by increasing labour market flexibility (flexibility of wages, working hours). The most effective employment policy is a policy mitigating imperfections of the labour market (Friedman, 1993). On the other hand, the Keynesian approach emphasises that the basic cause is insufficient effective demand. Market mechanism alone cannot bring about a balance between supply and demand when production resources are used insufficiently. The government should substitute the lack of private investment through fiscal policy and ensure full employment in this way. Keynes however also states that the market system can get into a state of long-term balance even when there is involuntary unemployment (Keynes, 1963).

The stated suggests that the problem of existence of unemployment is connected with macroeconomic processes. “Dealing with the problem of unemployment cannot thus be ensured by microeconomic instruments, but is very closely related with the elimination of its main causes. The core of the solution must be measures applying instruments of key partial economic policies.” (Martincová, 2002, p. 105)

The mentioned measures that are not immediately oriented at the labour market, but that affect it substantially, are often labelled as indirect instruments of active labour market policy. On the macroeconomic level it is therefore inevitable to link the concept of increasing employment mainly with areas of investment and fiscal policy, changes in the taxing and deduction system as well as the monetary and wage policy.

A significant role is assigned to wage as labour market regulator. Simply, the growth of wages leads to reduced demand on the labour market and at the same time increases the supply side, because it leads to a growth in cost of free time. From this aspect we can agree with the argument that when wages are flexible in the downwards direction, unemployment is always voluntary. This view however does not consider the fact that a workforce has a value. Adam Smith realised that wages must cover the subsistence of the employee, thus they cannot sink below a certain minimum (Smith, 2001). This requirement was the base for the minimum wage which is the only important legislative intervention impacting the height of labour costs. It has been set in the Czech Republic for 2014 to equal CZK 8,500³². Though the height of the minimum wage is very often discussed and its height is the subject of political disputes, its impact on the demand for a workforce is rather exaggerated and can be perceived more significantly only in case of certain segments of the labour market (working retired, graduates).

The price of labour impacts mainly the demand for work. According to the data of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the average wage in the Czech Republic in 2012 was CZK 25,101, in the Ústí Region CZK 23,785 (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2012 Regional Statistics of the Price of Labour). However, when it comes to the demand for work, the gross salary is not important, but rather the overall price of work which needs to include also deductions of the employer to social and health insurance equalling 34%. Nevertheless, as stated by Keller “the Czech Republic competes with neighbouring Germany already with almost four times lower cost of labour” (Keller, 2011, p. 99).

Apart from the wage mechanisms, the demand on the labour market is also impacted by institutions, and especially by the legislation-defining relationships between the employer and the employee. More significant are the impacts of legislative provisions restricting work flexibility:

The length of the trial period is no more than 3 consequent months.

Employment for a definite period of time as of August 2013 not restricted and can be concluded repeatedly.

Termination of employment by notice of the employee is connected with a notice period of two months.

Termination of employment by notice of the employer can occur only based on a limited number of reasons and the notice period is at least 2 months. The employee shall be

³² 1 EUR = approximately CZK 25

entitled to a compensation payment equalling 1-3 monthly salaries.

There is the obligation to provide employees with paid days off for at least 4 weeks per year.

Work flexibility in the Czech Republic is considered to be relatively low. This statement is based on statistics indicating a low share of not fully-fledged contracts. These statistics however do not consider the high share of self-employed persons, the employment of whom (on the basis of a trade license) significantly reduces the price of work thanks to reduced deductions. The basis for calculating deductions for social and health insurance is 50% of the taxed income. Self-employed persons pay in these deductions approximately one third of what is paid for social and health insurance of employees. At the same time, this type of employment that is being labelled as the “Schwarz system” significantly increases work flexibility with all its risks on the part of the employee as well as the society. “Work flexibility reduces the market risk of companies and separating work from payments for insurance makes the price of workforce cheaper for them. The strategy is extremely beneficial for companies, it is however problematic from the perspective of employees and the social state” (Keller, 2011, p. 46).

From the perspective of the supply of work, the difference between work-related income and possible work-unrelated income is significant. Work-unrelated income influencing the supply of work includes mainly unemployment benefits and social benefits. The difference between past work-related income and unemployment benefits is clearly determined and the period of its payment is limited (see below). Unemployment benefits can thus be de-motivational only in cases when the existing offer of salary is significantly lower than income from past employment. This situation occurs in the case of structural type of unemployment. Nevertheless, the height of benefits and period of their payment is subject to discussion. The argument is that their reduction or potential reduction of the payment period would motivate applicants for employment more to search for a job. On the other hand, the height and period of payment is to ensure conditions enabling finding a job under terms leading to a more long-term stability of maintaining this employment. In a situation that forces a worker economically to accept any employment, frustration of the worker occurs, and the fluctuation rate is higher as well as the costs on the part of the employee, employer as well as on society. Negative consequences of unemployment benefits are reduced also by the fact that they are received only by a small part of registered unemployed (in the Ústí Region 15%) and the Czech Republic is among countries that are at the end of the list in terms of height of benefits as well as the period of its payment when compared with other EU countries.

The height and structure of social benefits, mainly material distress benefits exceeding the achievable income from work activity in case of certain types of families, has a significant impact on the supply on the labour market. It is questionable where the reasons for high decommodification are high benefits or low level of achievable salary.

The height of income motivation for work is also impacted by further costs of the employee connected with the work activity. It is mainly the financial and time costs of transport to work, costs of taking care of children, changing homes etc. If we consider the first, lowest decile of gross monthly salary which was in the Ústí Region in 2012 CZK 11,087 (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Regional Statistics of the Price of Work, 2012), it is clear that the motivation to start work is, for certain types of households, minimal.

In general, the employment policy is considered to be an activity which is to contribute to a balance on the labour market, to a balance between the supply and demand for workforce, it should also serve to ensure effective use of workforce resources and last, but not least, help ensure the right to employment especially for citizens who want to work (Kuchař, 2007). In the case of such a broadly defined employment policy, one has to agree with the statement that “a good economic policy is eventually the most important active employment policy” (Večeřa, 1996, p. 86). It can have the nature of the liberal policy focusing on supporting supply (low taxes, tax allowances) or the Keynesian policy based on supporting consumption (social income, state investments).

Specific tasks of the state employment policy are the following:

- ensuring the right to employment;
- monitoring and evaluating the situation on the labour market, processing of prognoses and concepts of employment and development of human resources on the labour market section, programmes and projects for work realisation of individuals;
- coordination of measures in the area of employment and development of human resources in the labour market section in line with the European employment strategy and conditions of receiving assistance from the European Social Fund;
- creation and coordination of individual programmes, measures to ensure priorities in the field of employment and human resources development on the labour market;
- implementing active employment policy;
- creation and participation in international programmes related to the development of employment and human resources on the labour market;
- management of resources for the employment policy;

- provision of information, counselling and mediating services on the labour market;
- measures for supporting and achieving equal treatment of men and women, persons regardless of their racial and ethnic origin, disabled and other groups of persons whose position on the labour market is more difficult, in terms of access to employment, re-qualification, preparation for work and specialised re-qualification courses and measures for employment of these persons;
- measures for employing disabled individuals and other groups of individuals whose position on the labour market is more difficult;
- guiding employment of workforce from abroad to the territory of the Czech Republic and from the territory of the Czech Republic abroad. (compare Tomeš, 2009, p. 211)

Apart from the above stated it is necessary to emphasise that effective employment policy should also mitigate the impact of unemployment on individuals.

4.1.1 Entities of the employment policy

Entities of the active employment policy and their activity have been defined in detail by Act No. 435/2004 Coll. on Employment, Part One – Introductory Arrangements, Chapter III and IV.

The government guarantees the employment policy. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) ensures the administration of the field of state employment policy. Among its main tasks are:

- developing national analyses, concepts and programmes, the aim of which is to evaluate and predict the situation on the labour market;
- ensuring and administering financial resources from the state budget;
- managing and controlling projects of the European Social Fund and their realisation;
- ensuring project solution and programme technical equipment of the information system in the field of employment;
- realising international cooperation;
- maintaining a central register of those interested in employment, employment applicants, disabled, foreign nationals, and vacant jobs;
- creating the system to prevent illegal work; (§ 6)

The realisation of employment policy measures is ensured by the Labour Office through its

institutions. The highest of them is the General Directorate of the Labour Offices, the tasks of which are the following:

- a) Ensure documents for the Ministry necessary for the development of concepts and programmes of the state employment policy, evaluate the overall situation on the labour market and adopt measures to influence the demand and supply for work;
 - b) When creating and realising measures, cooperate with administrative bodies, territorial self-governing units, social security authorities, material partner assistance authorities, state health administration authorities, employers and further entities according to special legal regulations when creating and realising measures related with labour market development and employment;
 - c) Adopt measures to eliminate discrimination in the access to the market;
 - f) Ensure provision of material assistance in creating new jobs and material assistance for re-qualification or training of new employees as part of investment incentives and ensure other related programmes approved by the government;
 - g) Grant and take away licenses of legal entities and individuals for employment mediation and keep a register of employment agencies; forward data from this register to the central register kept by the Ministry;
 - j) Establish training and re-qualification centres for the disabled, work rehabilitation centres;
- (§8)

The Regional Branch of the Labour Office realises the employment policy within a specific region establishing contact points for this purpose. It mainly:

- a) Processes statistics, analyses and prognoses of employment for a specific area;
- b) Approves and ensures projects and measures on the labour market, including international programmes and projects financed from the European Structural Funds;
- c) Mediates employment;
- d) Provides counselling and information services;
- e) Maintains a register of vacant jobs and of those interested in employment;
- f) Ensures the implementation of active employment policy, provides contributions to this policy, pays unemployment benefits, and re-qualification benefits;
- g) Decides and pays material partner benefits and state social assistance benefits; (Art. 8a)

Financing of the employment policy is covered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Apart from transferring resources to regional branches, it checks its use. The employment

policy is financed mainly from the social insurance, thus income to the state employment policy is created by deductions of employees, employers and self-employed persons. The active employment policy uses, apart from resources from the state budget, also resources from the European Union Funds, mainly from the European Social Fund.

The definition of who can be an applicant for employment is decisive from the aspect of employment policy realisation, because a decisive part of this policy's activities is aimed at applicants for employment. Legislative definition of applicants for employment is based on the definition of the International Labour Organisation. This definition differs, however, in certain aspects from the definition of applicants for employment, as stated in the Act on Employment. According to the Act on Employment, an applicant for employment is an individual who:

- does not have work-related income, with the exception of non-colliding employment, thus employment with monthly income not exceeding a half of the minimum monthly salary (CZK 4,250);
- does not systematically prepare for a profession;
- is able to work;
- asks to be included in the register of the labour office and provides the necessary data;
- provides the necessary collaboration to the labour office;
- did not terminate employment mediated by the labour office without serious reasons on her/his own or based on an agreement or employment of this person was not terminated by the employer due to serious violation of work discipline;

If the applicant for employment is excluded from the register due to not collaborating with the labour office, he/she can be included in the register again after 6 months from this exclusion. (Act No. 435/2004 Coll. on Employment, Part Two, Article 24-26)

4.1.2 Aims of the passive employment policy

The passive employment policy is perceived as activities focusing on mediating suitable employment and material securing of applicants for employment. The aims of this policy are:

1. Linking an existing job to a suitable applicant for employment (Act No. 435/2004 Coll. on Employment, Part Two, Section 14 – 23);
2. Mitigating economic impacts of unemployment on an individual by providing unemployment benefits, or re-qualification benefits, for a certain time (Act No. 435/2004

Coll. on Employment, Part Two, Chapter III, Article 39-57).

Ad 1. Providing information about vacant jobs shortens the period during which the applicant for employment is without a job. A significant role is played by this part of the employment policy mainly when reducing frictional unemployment. Mediating employment for applicants for employment can also be provided by employment agencies (shared mediation – Act No. 435/2004 Coll. on Education, Part Two, Article 58-66). In this case, the labour office pays to the agency for mediation a fee of CZK 5,000, for placement for an indefinite period of time CZK 1,250 and in case the applicant for employment remains in employment for at least 6 months another CZK 500. A significant activity related to the mediation of employment is the counselling activity that is supposed to not only enable choosing a suitable employment or activate the applicant for employment, but also guide the applicant to overcome negative situations related to unemployment.

Ad 2. Unemployment benefits are based on the system of insurance, thus deferred consumption. It enables the person who got into the situation characterised by the loss of income deal with this situation, while having a certain part of the past income secured for a certain period of time. Opinions on the height and period of unemployment benefits payment differ significantly. On the one hand, its de-motivational nature is emphasised (the relationship between the height of benefits and income from potential realisation on the labour market is decisive in terms of the willingness to start employment), on the other hand the need for a certain security is emphasised during the period which is necessary in order to find conditions of employment suitable enough to prevent fluctuation after a short period of time.

Unemployment benefit equals, during the first two months of support, 65%, another 2 months of support 50% and the remaining period of support 45% of the average monthly salary or the assessment base. The maximum limit is 0.58 times the average wage in the national economy for the first to fourth quarter of the calendar year preceding the calendar year in which the request for unemployment benefits was submitted. If the applicant for employment terminated employment without any serious reason by him/herself or by agreement, he/she shall be entitled to only 45% of his/her average income during the whole period of support. For 2013, the maximum possible unemployment benefit is CZK 14,157, the maximum benefit during re-qualification is 0.65 times the average wage, thus currently CZK 15,866.

The period of support has been defined according to age:

- Up to 50 years of age – 5 months;
- From 50 to 55 years of age – 8 months;

- Above 55 years of age – 11 months;

Only such an applicant for employment shall have the title to benefits who has earned during the last two years by income-earning activity the period of pension insurance of 12 months, whose employment was not terminated due to violation of work discipline and who has asked for support at the relevant labour office. The legislation does not enable the receiving of benefits simultaneously to income from the so-called non-colliding employment.

4.1.3 Aims and Instruments of the active employment policy

The aim of the active employment policy is mainly to create conditions for a balance in supply and demand on the labour market and support of problem groups in their access to the labour market. The active employment policy can be divided into activities aimed at supporting the demand and activities aimed at supporting the supply on the labour market. According to the Act on Employment, the active employment policy includes the following:

- 1) Investment incentives (Article 111)
- 2) Social purpose jobs (Article 113)
- 3) Publicly beneficial jobs (Article 112)
- 4) Span-over benefit (Article 114)
- 5) Initial training benefit (Article 116)
- 6) Benefit when transiting to a new business programme (Article 117)
- 7) Re-qualification (Article 108 - 110)
- 8) Targeted programmes to deal with employment (Article 120)

1. Investment incentives are material support for employers to create new jobs. They are approved by the government of the Czech Republic and their purpose is to attract investment into the region affected by high unemployment. Investment incentives can take the form of:

Discount on corporate income tax that can be applied for a period of 10 years.

Transfer of land slots at an advantageous price realised by the state or municipality.

Material support for the creation of a job and re-qualification in regions with unemployment higher by at least 50% than the average unemployment rate in the Czech Republic. Material benefit per one job created is CZK 50 thousand, support for training and re-qualification can be provided up to 25% of the total costs.

Material support when purchasing property can equal as much as 7% of costs.

2. Social purpose jobs are jobs created by the employer based on an agreement with the labour office and filled with applicants for employment that are difficult to place or a job created by the applicant for employment in order to perform income-earning activity as self-employed.

The labour office can provide:

Returnable financial assistance;

Subsidy to cover wages, including social and health insurance paid by the employer;

Subsidy to cover loan interests;

Other purpose-related subsidy;

A subsidy of as much as CZK 80,000 can be awarded per one job and if the job ceases to exist within a period of two years, the subsidy beneficiary is obliged to partially return the subsidy. Apart from the state budget, social purpose jobs are also financed from the European Social Fund Operational Programme for Human Resources and Employment.

3. A span-over benefit is aimed at a self-employed person who ceased to be an applicant for employment and earned the benefit for creating a social purpose job. It is thus a solution to unemployment in the form of supporting small businesses. It provides a lump sum for a period of 5 months equalling no more than 0.25 times the average wage. It is aimed at covering operational costs.

4. Publicly beneficial jobs are an activity aimed at temporary dealing with the situation of long-term unemployed applicants for employment. Their purpose is mainly to maintain basic working habits and to incorporate work activities into the daytime structure. This involves unqualified jobs, mainly for the benefit of townships or other socially beneficial organisations. The labour office provides a benefit up to the gross salary (gross salary + expenditures of the employer for social and health insurance) for this specific activity.

5. Initial training benefit is provided to the employer who hires an applicant with difficult realisation on the labour market. It is provided for a maximum period of three months and represents a maximum of half of the minimum wage.

6. Benefit when transiting to a new business programme serves to maintain employment, if an employer transits to a new programme. It is provided as compensation for a maximum of 6 months. Its amount is no more than half of the minimum wage. It is an effective means of reducing structural unemployment.

7. Re-qualification is perceived as gaining a new qualification, increasing or expanding it, including its maintenance and renewal. Re-qualification is realised by accredited facilities. Re-qualification can be directed at applicants for employment or employers, if it is in the interest of maintaining jobs. The labour office covers the costs of its realisation. It is an activity important if there is an imbalance between the supply and demand because the qualification structure of the workforce is not in compliance with the structure of the demanded workforce, thus in the case of structural unemployment. From the economic aspect, re-qualification can be considered as an investment in human capital. Though the level of realisation of re-qualified applicants for employment can be seen as low, from the long-term aspect it is capital that can be realised on the labour market also later after acquiring or expanding qualifications. During 2012, a new form of re-qualification started to be applied, i.e. chosen re-qualification when the focus of re-qualification is chosen by the applicant him/herself. Its advantage is increased motivation during the realisation of re-qualification and during searching for employment after its completion.

8. Targeted programmes to deal with employment represent a system of measures aimed at increasing the possibilities of persons or groups of persons to be realised on the labour market. These programmes are supported apart from the state budget resources also from the EU structural funds. Regional grant projects supported from the European Social Fund are a significant part of the employment policy in regions with unemployment above average for a long period of time. These projects are usually focused on groups at risk of long-term unemployment. Supported activities include a whole range of active employment policies from supporting the origin of new jobs to preparation of individual groups of applicants for employment enabling them to enter the labour market.

A specific area of the employment policy involves activities focusing on employing persons with disabilities (Act No. 435/2004 Coll. on Employment, Part Three, Employing persons with disabilities). Apart from the stated instruments, there are employment policy instruments specific for this group of population including:

Work rehabilitation consisting mainly of counselling activity and activities aimed at preparation for employment in order to mediate, maintain and change employment. (§69)

Protected job is a specific job enabling a disabled person to perform work, created by the employer and supported by the labour office. The benefit can be no more than eight times, in case of more serious disability twelve times, the average wage, in case of creating ten and

more jobs as much as ten times or fourteen times the average wage. After 12 months from the day of creating the protected job it is possible to provide a benefit to cover operating costs which can equal as much as CZK 48,000 per year.

When employing more than 50% persons with disabilities from the total number of employees, it is possible to receive a benefit equalling 75% of salary costs, including payments for social and health insurance, however not more than CZK 8,000. After 12 months, an increase by CZK 2,000 is possible. (§75 – 78)

4.1.4 Active employment policy in the Ústí Region³³

Active employment policy in the Ústí Region focused in 2012 mainly on the most endangered groups on the labour market, namely:

- Individuals with disability;
- Individuals up to the age of 24 who have not yet worked for more than 12 months;
- Individuals taking care of a child up to 10 years of age;
- Individuals older than 55 years of age;
- Individuals registered in the register of applicants for employment uninterruptedly for more than 5 months;
- Individuals in need of special help;

As shown on the following chart, almost 721 million CZK was set aside for the active employment policy in 2012 including more than 153 million from national resources. Only 44% were however used from the allocated resources. Almost 124 million CZK (81% of the allocated resources), 194 million CZK (34% from the allocated resources) were used from national resources for active employment policy.

The most frequently used instrument of the employment policy was the publicly beneficial jobs through which a total of 2,406 jobs were created, engaging 2,413 applicants for employment. The total costs reached almost 122 million CZK, which means an average of 50,700 CZK per one job, while one such created job cost by 13 thousand more from national resources than a job created thanks to the ESF.

939 social purpose jobs were reserved at the employers, including 485 funded from national sources and 454 from European funds. The number of applicants for employment employed

³³ Data received from the Report on the Activity of the Office for EU projects for 2012

this way was 930, while the costs per one employed were 31,700 CZK.

Individual income-earning activity was started with the contribution of the labour office by 182 applicants for employment that received a contribution from the labour office in the total amount of CZK 5.25 million, representing CZK 28,800 per one such created job.

In 2012, benefits were provided for 113 protected jobs of employers and 4 applicants were supported when starting individual income-earning activity. While one protected job at the employer was subsidised on average by CZK 46,900, the support for individual income-earning activity represented an average of CZK 80,250. At the same time, 2,386 protected jobs were reserved for 3,574 persons with disabilities which is closely related to the claim for a benefit in case of employing more than 50% disabled from the number of employees, as stated above.

Re-qualification of applicants for employment took two forms. As part of regional and national projects, 1,785 applicants for employment were re-qualified. The regional branch of the labour office realised 1,538 re-qualifications, involving mainly the new form of re-qualification titled as "Chosen re-qualification". The success rate of placement of a re-qualified applicant is stated to be 50%. (Regional branch in Ústí nad Labem, 2012, p. 11)

Chart No. 7 - Active employment policy in the Ústí Region

<i>Instruments of AEP</i>	<i>Number of created jobs</i>	<i>Number of placed applicants</i>	<i>Including disabled persons</i>	<i>Used resources in thousand of CZK</i>	<i>Use in %</i>
National AEP					
Publicly beneficial jobs	1,313	1,346	193	74,431	10.2
Social purpose jobs created by the employer	0	3	0	0	0
Social purpose jobs reserved by the employer	485	485	39	23,713	54
Social purpose jobs – individual income-earning activity created by the applicant for employment		182	6	5,250	10.5
Protected job created by the employer	113	147	147	5,304	87
Protected job – individual income-earning activity of disabled		4	4	321	10.7
Protected job, protected workshop, protected job – individual income-earning activity - operation		3	3	7,652	63
Benefit for initial training		0	0	0	0
Span-over benefit		0	0	0	0
Counselling activity		0	0	0	0
Work rehabilitation		0	0	0	0
<i>Total national AEP</i>	1,911	2,445	397	123,963	81
ESF – OP HRE					
Publicly beneficial jobs NIP	1,093	1,084	135	47,529	44
Social purpose jobs NIP	454	445	18	611	17
Requalification of NIP		112	2	140	4
Counselling activities of NIP		284	7	1,050	7
Work rehabilitation of NIP		0	0	0	0
RIP OP HRE		972	12	138,070	37
Targeted programmes OP HRE		0	0	0	0
ESF grant projects		516	10		
<i>Total ESF – OP HRE</i>	1,547	3,413	184	94,166	34
<i>Total national AEP + ESF</i>	3,458	5,858	581	18,126	44

Source: Modified from the Report on Activity of EU project office for 2012

A new activity labelled as Public service was realised in 2012, the main aim of which was to maintain or renew the work habits of long-term unemployed. In addition, it was supposed to serve as an instrument to prevent illegal work and to motivate the active search for employment. Until the ruling of the Constitutional Court that labelled this activity as illegal, as it was forced unpaid work, 9,137 applicants for employment were enrolled in this service, including 3,402 who were excluded from it in the course of its realisation due to various reasons. After the ruling of the Constitutional Court, only approximately 200 people remained voluntarily in this service. The experience confirmed that in case of certain groups of unemployed, this instrument can have a positive motivational effect, but at the same time it represents an intervention in the functioning of the labour market that necessarily reduces the demand for workforce in organisations that are authorised to realise this service.

In the Ústí Region, 17 regional individual projects were realised in 2012, 11 of which are from area 2.1 Strengthening active employment policies. These projects are aimed at persons that are hardly employable, that are endangered through long-term unemployment. According to the Report on the Labour Market Situation on AEP realisation, 320 people were successfully supported in 2012 through project activities, including 155 who succeeded at finding a job. Another five projects were realised in the area of support 1.2 *Increasing adaptability of employees of restructured companies*. As part of this type of project, 259 people were successfully supported, including 225 that succeeded at being employed again. The last project realisation of which started in the half of 2012 focused on the area of support 1.1 *Increasing adaptability of employees and competitiveness of companies*. This type of project focuses mainly on developing company education, and supporting the competitiveness of business entities and organisations. This project supported 393 employees and 19 employers in 2012. (Regional Branch in Ústí nad Labem, 2012, p. 10) The effectiveness of the individual projects themselves cannot easily be evaluated since each of the projects focuses on a different target group. Individual projects are characterised by relatively high costs, at the same time however by a relatively high share of employed applicants. Projects targeting groups of which persons are at risk of unemployment or projects supporting employers have definitely the highest effect. Incurred costs of individual projects are shown in the following chart.

Chart No. 8 – *Projects realised in the Ústí Region*

<i>Project title</i>	<i>Place of realisation</i>	<i>Area of support</i>	<i>Costs</i>	<i>Project start</i>	<i>Project end</i>
Educate yourself for the growth in the Ústí Region!	UL Region	1.1	52.7	1. 6. 2012	31. 5. 2014
RESTART - LOUNY	LN District	1.2	63.8	1. 10. 2009	30. 4. 2012
RESTART - MOST	MO District	1.2	50.0	1. 9. 2009	31. 1. 2012
RESTART - CHOMUTOV	CV District	1.2	29.7	1. 9. 2009	31. 7. 2012
RESTART	UL Region	1.2	57.6	1. 10. 2010	31. 3. 2013
Restart two in the Ústí Region	UL Region	1.2	49.2	1. 10. 2012	31. 7. 2015
It is not over when we are fifty	UL Region	2.1	90.0	1. 7. 2009	30. 6. 2012
The first chance for uneducated youth	UL Region	2.1	73.2	1. 7. 2009	30. 6. 2012
ROAD of long-term registered applicant for employment	UL Region	2.1	115.0	1. 7. 2009	30. 6. 2012
CREDIT – Social economy in Most Region	MO District	2.1	10.3	1. 9. 2009	31. 5. 2012
SUPPORT of employment in socially excluded locations of the Most Region	MO District	2.1	34.8	1. 9. 2009	31. 7. 2012
Joint way to work	DC District	2.1	42.9	1. 1. 2010	30. 11.2012
Micro-regions of the Most Region: The future belongs to those qualified	MO District	2.1		1. 4. 2010	31. 3. 2013
With support to work in the Děčín Region	DC District	2.1	75.9	1. 4. 2010	30. 11.2012
Work without barriers	UL Region	2.1	75.9	1. 8. 2011	31. 7. 2014
Work for all in the Ústí Region	UL Region	2.1	63.0	1. 9. 2012	30. 8. 2015
Socially excluded locations of the Ústí Region	UL Region	2.1	60.8	1. 12. 2012	30. 8. 2015

Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Modification of the Author.

Based on the available data it is possible to state that the active employment policy cannot influence unemployment significantly. The number of jobs created thanks to this activity enabled the employment of only less than 6% of registered unemployed in the Ústí Region in 2012. Its importance lies mainly in its focus on specific groups of the population for which a certain degree of support is a necessary pre-requisite for at least some chance at succeeding on the labour market.

4.2 Employment policy in the Slovak Republic

The main aim of the state employment policy is to ensure the right to employment to all inhabitants of the Slovak Republic, i.e. citizens as well as those who reside permanently in the territory of the Slovak Republic. The right to employment is based on Article 26 of the Convention of Fundamental Rights and Liberties and is also anchored in the Constitution of the Slovak Republic in its fifth section devoted to economic, social and cultural rights in Article 35 Par. 3 as follows: “Citizens have the right to work. The government shall provide material security in adequate scope to citizens who, not through their own fault, cannot exercise this right. The conditions shall be set by a law.”

4.2.1 Factors impacting the employment policy

Act No. 5/2004 on Employment Services is considered to be a legal regulation functioning in line with the above-quoted provision and represents a key document of active employment policy. The measures themselves anchored in this legislative regulation are unable to ensure the application of the stated law without collaboration with the economic policy of the country which must consider several aspects affecting the labour market, such as the quality of the business environment, infrastructure, deduction burden on the employers, height of minimum wage etc.

In the Slovak Republic are currently discussed in the stated context especially broader implications of the recent changes in the labour-law legislation (recent amendments to the Labour Code, deduction burden of not fully-fledged work relationships, changes in the tax laws etc.) as well as the increased influence of trade unions (negotiations about the height of minimum wage for 2014, collective treaties).

Relatively problematic seem to be the mentioned provisions of the Labour Code related with the dismissal of employees, since the concurrence of the notice period and compensation money was introduced again in the new legal regulations. This however entails a potential for making the workforce more expensive as well as complicating the situation of employers in case they are forced to reduce the number of permanent employees. Together with shortened periods for repeated conclusion of employment contracts for a definite period of time, they can represent a burden for the employer when creating new jobs.

The currently often discussed flexibility of the labour market, e.g. in the form of agreements on work performed outside of employment is questioned in the Slovak Republic by employers

due to the deduction burden which is partly or completely the same as in the case of the fully-fledged employment relationships.

This fact was especially reflected in the current job offers that are limited by employers almost exclusively to student part-time work agreements since this is freed from deduction payments to a certain amount of the worker's income. In reality thus, the interest in workers with the status of a student lightly increases on the labour market and the possibility of work for other persons on the labour market reduces. This reduces the possibility to earn income for workers who e.g. worked in various jobs based on a contract without having a main employment relationship or retired persons, seasonal workers or mothers on maternity leave.

Considering the current political distribution of power in the Slovak Republic, the influence of trade unions has also been increasing in the Slovak Republic in recent times. This was reflected especially in the efforts to introduce national validity of collective treaties also in companies that have not yet undertaken to fulfil them as well as on the efforts to significantly increase the minimum wage.

The influence of wage regulation on un/employment is a frequently and intensely discussed topic. In any case, one can state that apart from the increased level of paid income, with its increasing value also the overall price of work is increasing for the employer, influencing further fulfilments provided to the employee related directly with the amount of minimum wage, such as the salary advantage for working at night or compensation for difficult work etc.

Negotiations with the trade unions eventually led to an increased minimum wage for 2014 to the level of EUR 352 which represents an increase by 4.2% when compared to the current height.

Apart from the above-mentioned aspects influencing the demand side of the labour market in the Slovak Republic, the system of social benefits has an substantial influence on the supply side. In this area, the Slovak Republic faces again several problems related to it. First of all, there is the excessive burden on public finances that is not conditioned by any counter-value at all. Benefits are often used excessively or even abused especially due to the relatively low level of their addressed nature. Last, but not least, these measures do not present a sufficient motivational factor, especially in the case of low-income families whose income from benefits and support system is comparable with the amount of potential work-related income.

“The system of maintaining income for the unemployed plays an extremely important role in

the course of unemployment, mainly as a factor forming the motivation to work. The effect of the system of maintaining income of unemployed has the form of substitution level, i.e. mutual ratio of the level (amount) of benefits provided from the system of maintaining income of unemployed (unemployment benefit, material distress benefit and contributions to material distress benefits) and expected income from work. The higher the substitution level indicator, the weaker the motivation to return to employment and the willingness to accept an offered job. The impact of a high substitution level is clearly shown mainly in the case of groups of unemployed with a low level of education and low level (or missing) qualifications when the level of expected salary after returning to work oscillates around the minimum wage. Therefore, especially in the case of these groups, the high substitution level acts in favour of prolonging the period of unemployment.” (Hanzelová, 2007, p. 55)

In order to optimise the situation on the labour market, it is necessary to pay in this regard great attention to changing the ratio between income from the distributed system of benefits and potential work-related income.

Another important and not-to-be-forgotten aspect influencing the situation on the labour market of the Slovak Republic is the great regional diversity. Individual regions of the Slovak Republic are characterised by differentiated spatial distribution of manufacturing forces, education level, various infrastructure as well as human potential which can lead to unequal social and economic development.

“Increasing the effectiveness of regional labour markets functioning is possible through the application of instruments of active labour market policy. When dealing with the employment policy of rural areas, it is necessary to stimulate the development of new job opportunities in the area of small and medium enterprise. When applying active labour market policy, we have to consider the diversity and selectively apply instruments which must have a clear regional impact and nature.” (Rievajová, 2009, p. 257)

4.2.2 State employment policy

The employment policy can be defined as a “set of measures co-creating conditions for a dynamic balance on the labour market and for effective use of the workforce.” (Rievajová, 2009, p. 231)

The basic aims of the employment policy in the Slovak Republic include the following tasks:

- ensure work for all who can and want to work and search for a job;

- enable free choice of employment and acquiring of qualification for suitable employment;
- create and maintain a balance between the supply of work and demand for work;
- minimise the scope of unemployment;
- ensure support in unemployment of citizens who are unemployed not due to their own fault, in direct scope and so that it encourages them to search for employment;
- ensure preparation for a profession and re-qualification corresponding to labour market requirements;
- create conditions for the origin of work opportunities by creating new jobs;
- create conditions for maintaining employment and preventing mass dismissals;
- adopt measures to support
 - a) Professional mobility in order to adjust the supply of work to possibilities of employment in various professions;
 - b) territorial mobility with the aim of supporting relocation of employees to areas offering possibilities for suitable employment;
- ensure citizens free mediation of employment and free provision of counselling; (compare Polonský, 2002, p. 28)

4.2.3 Entities of the employment policy

In line with Act No. 5/2004 on Employment Services defining the legal framework of the employment policy in the Slovak Republic, employment services in the territory of the Slovak Republic ensure the following:

The Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic

- Manages, controls and coordinates the activity of offices in the area of employment services;
- Develops a proposal of priorities in employment services and submits it for approval to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic;
- Determines the minimum scope of employment services provided by the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family;
- Develops and realises national projects to improve the situation on the labour market financed by the European Social Fund;
- Methodologically guides the Central Office of Labour, Social Work and Family when developing and realising projects to improve the situation on the labour market;

- Approves national programmes of education and preparation for the labour market;
- Approves and realises projects and programmes in the field of employment policy;
- Budgets, administers and redistributes financial resources for the individual Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family;
- Checks the following of acts and generally binding legal regulations;
- Creates and updates the national system of professions;
- Publishes statistical information about employment and active measures of the labour market;
- Ensures further education of employees in the area of employment services;
- Develops analyses and prognoses of the development on the labour market;

Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family

- Ensure the registration of unemployed citizens searching for employment, of vacant jobs, mediation of suitable employment, provision of counselling services, education and preparation for the labour market, implementation of active measures on the labour market;
- Arrange for increased care in work realisation of specific groups of citizens, preparation and realisation of projects co-financed from the European Social Fund;
- Ensure medical assessment activity;
- Control the activity of workplaces established in their territorial precincts;
- Ensure tasks related with mass dismissal;
- Develop analyses and prognoses of the development on the labour market in their territorial precincts;

Non-governmental providers of employment services in the Slovak Republic

Legal and physical entities performing mediation of employment for remuneration based on a granted license.

Agencies of temporary employment – temporary assignment of an employee to perform work for another legal or physical entity. The activity can be performed only based on the granted license.

Agencies of supported employment – provides services to citizens with disabilities, long-term unemployed citizens and employers focused on facilitation of employment.

Financing of employment in the Slovak Republic is a combination of resources from the system of social insurance (compulsory participation of employers, employees and self-

employed persons in the payment of unemployment insurance), state budget of the Slovak Republic and the sources from the European Social Fund.

Applicant for employment in line with the valid legislation of the Slovak Republic is defined by Article 6 of the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services as a citizen that can work, wants to work, searches for work and is registered in the register of applicants for employment of the office (hereinafter referred to as the “Register of Applicants for Employment” and that

- a) is not an employee, unless otherwise stipulated by Par. 2 Letter a);
- b) is not in a labour-law relationship based on the agreement on work performed outside of employment or does not perform income-earning activity based on a legal relationship according to a special regulation, unless otherwise stipulated by Par. 2;
- c) does not operate or does not perform independent income-earning activity;
- d) does not perform income-earning activity in a Member State of the European Union or abroad.“

4.2.4 Passive employment policy

The passive employment policy is perceived as the fulfilment of palliative function that in reality means redistribution and distribution of financial resources to citizens without work.

Compensation of income is necessary due to two reasons that are closely related. The first of them is material security of the individual who is currently unable to earn income from employment, thus enable him to have an adequate standard of living. On the other hand, the system of income substitution helps to ensure that the purchasing power of the population does not sink under a certain level which would put the whole economy of the country at risk and eventually endanger also the income to public sources and their consequent distribution to areas that are directly dependant on them.

In the industrially developed countries, there are two forms of support of income in unemployment:

- the system of unemployment insurance (unemployment insurance – UI), in the Slovak Republic expressed by a system of unemployment benefits;
- Systems of state assistance in unemployment (unemployment assistance – UA), in the Slovak Republic included in the system of social assistance benefits; (Sirovátka, 1995)

Unemployment benefits are time-limited and directly dependant on the amount of compulsory contributions of employers, employees and self-employed persons to the system of unemployment insurance basic characteristics of which are included in the following clauses:

- sources of financing are contributions (insurance premium) of employers and employees associated with salary (as a certain percentage of the salary);
 - acknowledging the title is conditioned by a certain time, length of previous employment (that usually excludes newcomers to the labour market or those entering it after a longer break from the title);
 - abuse is controlled by requiring the fulfilment of certain conditions (unemployment must be "involuntary" or a "waiting period" is introduced);
 - the amount of benefits represents a significant part of earlier salary and applies to the length of previous employment insurance;
 - period of providing benefits is limited and applies to the length of previous insurance;
- (Rievajová, 2006, p. 157)

Unemployment benefits in the Slovak Republic are based on the insurance principle and its title as well as the amount depends on payments of deductions to unemployment insurance.

The amount of the unemployment benefit is 50% of the relevant daily assessment based multiplied by the number of days in the month, however no more than EUR 52.9 per day. The maximum unemployment benefit per month shall not exceed EUR 820.5.

Depending on the number of days of insurance in the system during the period preceding the origin of the title to unemployment benefits, the period of their payment follows for 4-6 months. The minimum number of insurance days to determine a title is 730 days in the decisive period of three to four years.

4.2.5 Active employment policy in the Slovak Republic

The active employment policy of the Slovak Republic is strongly oriented at activating individual entities on the labour market emphasising disadvantaged applicants for employment as defined in Article 8 of the Act on Employment Services.

Instruments of active employment policy of the Slovak Republic are defined by Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services and on the Amendment and Supplements to Certain Acts as follows:

Mediation of Employment (Section 32)

It involves searching for jobs and offering them to applicants for employment and those interested in employment as well as searching and offering suitable employees to employers.

The Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in the territory of the Slovak Republic provides the mentioned services free of charge and unbiased, while respecting the choice of the applicant and the employer. There is no legal title to mediation of a specific employment.

Mediation can be provided based on a license issued by the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family by a physical or legal entity for remuneration.

It also involves registration activity, maintenance of lists of vacant jobs and lists of searched-for jobs by applicants and publication of these lists.

Based on a written application by an applicant for employment, the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family can provide a substitute for a part of travel expenses related to the initial interview or selection procedure with an employer.

The mediator must maintain a register of citizens to whom he/she mediated employment for remuneration, provide data to the central office, ensure personal data protection, and create conditions for the performance of control of regulations following.

Agencies of temporary employment are legal or physical entities employing citizens for the purposes of their temporary assignment to the user employer – also based on a license issued by the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

The agency shall be obliged to follow legal regulations related to personal data protection, enable the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining, access of the temporary employee to education or gaining of professional skills prior to the assignment to the employer (with the aim of increasing his/her employability). It is also obliged to create conditions for the performance of control on how to provide a report on activity to the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family once per year.

Information and counselling services and professional counselling services (Section 42 and Section 43)

Information services are provided by the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family free of charge. They are aimed at solving problems when choosing a profession, suitable employment with regards to personal pre-requisites of the applicant in connection with the requirements of performing a certain work duty.

It also involves services of providing information about the conditions of the title to

unemployment benefits, possibilities and terms of participating in programmes of active labour market measures and activation activity, as well as providing professional advice for employers.

Professional counselling services are also aimed at problems related to the realisation of an applicant on the labour market. Their main task is to establish a balance between his/her personal pre-requisites and requirements, to influence the decision-making process and behaviour of the applicant, social and work adaptation. They are provided individually or in groups. They also involve an individual action plan to support work realisation.

The office can authorise a physical or legal entity with the performance of the state activity based on a license and cover a part of the expenditures of the applicant for employment and a person interested in employment related to his/her participation in activities within professional counselling services (travel, accommodation, board).

Education and preparation for the labour market (Article 44, Article 46, Article 47)

This is the theoretical or practical preparation enabling the gaining of new knowledge and professional skills in order to ensure work realisation of the applicant, for example completion of primary education or secondary school studies, as well as the preparation to start operation or performance of independent income-earning activity.

It is ensured by the office of labour, social affairs and family on behalf of the applicant or by the employer on behalf of the employee, especially in the case of missing professional knowledge and skills, need to change knowledge and skills considering the demand on the labour market, or loss of ability to perform the work activity of previous employment.

The office also provides benefits for education activities to applicants as well as benefits to employers, provided certain conditions are met.

Contribution to independent income-earning activity (Article 49)

The contribution of no more than 4-times the total price of labour in the decisive period is provided by the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family to an applicant registered in the register for the given period based on a written request. The amount of the contribution depends on the region and affiliation of the applicant to a group of disadvantaged applicants for employment.

The office concludes an agreement with the applicant, the condition of which is the passing of preparation to start an independent income-earning activity and the submission of a business plan.

The activity must be performed for a period of at least three years uninterruptedly, otherwise he/she shall be obliged to return an aliquot part of the contribution.

Contribution to support employment of a disadvantaged applicant for work (Article 50)

The office can provide this to the employer based on a written request on a monthly basis in the amount of a part of the total price of labour for a disadvantaged applicant depending on the territorial location of the employer.

Integration of disadvantaged applicants for employment in a social enterprise (Article 50b)

A social enterprise shall be perceived for the purposes of the Act on Employment Services as a legal or physical entity acknowledged by the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family based on conditions defined by law:

- employs employees who had been disadvantaged applicants for employment prior to being hired, and who represent at least 30% of the total number of employees;
- provides support and assistance to employees who had been disadvantaged applicants for employment on an open labour market prior to being hired;
- at least 30% of financial resources acquired from income from the line of business are used every year to create new jobs or improve working conditions;

Contribution to support the development of local and regional employment (Section 50j)

It is provided to an employer that is a municipality or self-governing region (or a legal entity that they are the founder or establisher of) and that hires a disadvantaged applicant for employment for the created job for a definite period of time. The amount of the contribution is 80% of the total price of labour of the employee and it is provided for a maximum of nine calendar months based on a written agreement.

Contribution to support maintenance of jobs (Article 50k)

It can be provided by the office to an employer who in spite of serious operational reasons when the employer cannot assign work to his/her employees does not dismiss the employees immediately, but provides a wage substitute. The contribution is provided for a period of no more than 60 days in a year in the amount of 50% of the employee's wage substitute.

Contribution to perform graduate internship (Article 51)

The office can provide a flat-rate contribution to a graduate in order to cover the inevitable

expenditures related to the performance of work after concluding an agreement on graduate internship at an employer.

The nature of the activity at the employer is to correspond with the acquired skills and theoretical knowledge of the graduate and lasts no longer than six months. The graduate internship is performed for at least 3, but for no more than 6 months in a scope of 20 hours per week.

The office shall also provide to the school graduate a substitute of the premium for accident insurance while performing the graduate internship.

Contribution to activation activity in the form of smaller municipal services for the township or in the form of smaller services for the self-governing region (Article 52)

Smaller municipal services (or smaller services for the self-governing region) in the scope of no more than 20 hours per week can be performed by a long-term unemployed citizen who is a beneficiary of material distress benefits and contributions to the benefit.

It serves to maintain work habits of the applicant for employment. As a rule, it is carried out in the form of services for the municipality or the self-governing region through which the office provides the contribution to defined expenditures related to arranging for activation works based on a written agreement.

Contribution to activation activity in the form of voluntary service (Article 52a)

The aim of this contribution is to support the volunteering activity which is to help gain practical experience for the needs of the labour market. Volunteering activity, the nature of which is defined by law, shall be performed by an applicant for employment in a scope of 20 hours per week, uninterruptedly for a period of six calendar months for the benefit of non-profit organisations.

During this activity, the office shall provide a flat-rate contribution to the applicant for employment and can also provide contribution to cover a part of costs incurred due to volunteering activity of the physical or legal entity arranging this activity.

Contribution to commute to work (Article 53)

The office shall provide to an employee registered in the register of applicants for employment for the period of at least three months the payment of a part of travel expenses related to commuting from the place of permanent or temporary residence to the place of work for a maximum of six months in the maximum amount of EUR 135 per month.

Contribution to move to work (Article 53a)

It represents a substitute for a part of documented expenditures related to the move of the applicant for employment from the place of his/her permanent residency when finding a job to the place of the new permanent residency at a distance from the original residency of at least 50 km. It is provided as a lump sum in the amount of no more than EUR 1,327.76.

Contribution to transport to work (Article 53b)

The contribution can be provided to the employer under conditions defined by law in order to ensure everyday transport of employees to work and back in an amount of no more than 50 % of the incurred costs.

Contribution to create a new job (Article 53d)

The contribution is considered to be an investment assistance to support initial investments in the form of a contribution to create a new job. It can be provided for partial payment of eligible costs. The maximum amount of the contribution depends on the registered unemployment rate in the region of the employer's operation.

Projects and programmes (Article 54)

Projects and programmes focus on improving the position of the applicant on the labour market. It is approved or realised by the ministry, central office, office or physical or legal entity.

Their focus is determined by law as follows:

- projects focusing on improving the position of applicants for employment on the labour market;
- pilot projects serving to verify new measures of active measures on the labour market;
- pilot projects and programmes aimed at supporting the development of regional or local employment;

Their funding is ensured from the sources of the European Social Fund, state budget or other sources.

To support employment of citizens with disabilities, there are:

Protected workshop and protected workplace (Article 55) – are workplaces with at least 50% citizens with disabilities working. A protected workplace can also be a workplace adjusted to the health condition of a citizen with disability or established in his household as well as a

production cooperates of disabled.

The legal or physical entity shall be obliged to keep a special record of costs, performance and profit or loss of the protected workshop or workplace.

The contribution to the establishment of a protected workshop or workplace (Article 56) – is granted to such an employer who has established a workshop or a workplace to cover a part of costs inevitable for ensuring the work activity of a citizen with disability that relate to the establishment of this job.

The amount of contribution depends on the place of the employer's operation and on the amount of the average registered unemployment rate in the district.

The employer shall be obliged to maintain the established workplace for at least two years.

Contribution to keep a citizen with disability employed (Article 56a)

It can be provided based on a written request to an employer employing more than 25% of citizens with disability who has not acknowledged the status of a protected workshop or a protected workplace in order to cover prepayments for insurance premium paid by the employer.

Contribution to citizens with disability for independent income-earning activity (Section 57)

The contribution can be provided by the office to a citizen with disability for partial payment of costs related to the operation of an independent income-earning activity who had been registered in the register of applicants for employment for at least three months, if he/she asked for it.

The amount of the contribution depends on the place of the self-employed person's operation and on the amount of the average registered unemployment rate in the district.

The condition of the title is that the uninterrupted independent income-earning activity lasts for a period of at least two years.

Agency of supported employment (Article 58)

The Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family shall issue a license to carry out the activity of an agency of supported employment to a legal or physical entity providing services defined by law to citizens with disabilities, long-term unemployed citizens and employers focused on facilitating or maintaining employment or finding employment of citizens with disability or long-term unemployed.

Contribution to the activity of a work assistant (Article 59) – is provided to an employer employing a citizen with disability or self-employed person for the purposes of the activity of work assistant providing assistance exclusively to the employee with disability when performing work activities, other activities and personal necessary tasks during work time. The amount of the contribution depends on the average salary of the employee in the economy of the Slovak Republic and reaches 41-70% of the total price of labour.

Contribution to the payment of operational costs of protected workshop or a protected workplace and to the payment of costs of transport of employees (Article 60) – is provided based on a written request of a legal or physical entity operating a protected workshop/workplace or employing citizens with disability to cover exactly defined operational costs and costs of transport of employees.

Chart No. 9 shows the use of instruments of active labour market policy in the Slovak Republic in 2012. Considering the fact that Act No. 5/2004 on Employment Services underwent in 2013 relatively significant changes, some of the above-mentioned measures are not shown in the chart. The total number of unemployed persons in the monitored period was 377,500 according to the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. To demonstrate the actual use of the selected instruments of active labour market policy of the Slovak Republic, absolute numbers of unemployed using individual measures are calculated as a % share on the overall number of unemployed in 2012.

As is clear from the chart, apart from Article 60 which is an instrument aimed at a specific group of unemployed on the labour market, i.e. citizens disadvantaged due to disability, the most frequently used instruments were the contribution to activation activity, contribution to perform graduate internship and contribution to commuting to work.

There were 20,118 agreed jobs for applicants for employment and with the use of the contribution to activation activity in the form of smaller municipal services for the municipality or smaller services for the self-governing region which represents 5.3% of the total number of unemployed persons in the monitored period. The amount of EUR 4,015,782 was made available for the mentioned contribution from the sources of financing active labour market policy.

The contribution to perform graduate internship was used in 2012 by 14,164 graduates, i.e. 4.6% of the total number of unemployed with the total costs of this measure being EUR 18,184,578.

Chart No. 9 – *The use of instruments of active labour market policy in the Slovak Republic in 2012*

<i>The use of instruments of active labour market policy in the Slovak Republic</i>		<i>Absolute number</i>	<i>% share on the total number of unemployed</i>	<i>Totally incurred resources (EUR)</i>
Article 32	Substitute of a part of travel expenditures of the applicant for employment (related to initial interview or selection procedure with the employer)	6,212	1.65	68,037.76
Article 43 Par. 8	Substitute of a part of travel expenditures of the applicant for employment (related to the participation in activities within professional counselling services)	1,294	0.34	16,563.71
Article 43 Par. 9	Contribution to services for families with children for the applicant for employment and persons interested in employment	0	0.00	0
Article 46	Education and preparation for the labour market of the applicant for employment	1,783	0.47	685,190.08
Article 46	Education and preparation for the labour market of the person interested in employment	0	0.00	0
Article 47	Education and preparation for the labour market of an employee	0	0.00	0
Article 49	Contribution to independent income-earning activity	8,690	2.30	29,389,692.77
Article 50	Contribution to unemployment benefit of a disadvantaged applicant for employment	599	0.16	1,457,117.78
Article 51	Contribution to perform graduate internship	17,164	4.55	18,184,578.11
Article 52	Contribution to activation activity in the form of smaller municipal services for the township or in form of smaller services for the self-governing region	20,118	5.33	4,015,782.15
Section 52a	Contribution to activation activity in the form of voluntary service	5,288	1.40	6,101,292.03
Article 53	Contribution to commute to work	16,136	4.27	4,918,369.69
Section 53a	Contribution to move to work	66	0.02	63,091.27
Article 53b	Contribution to transport to work	0	0.00	0
Article 54	Projects and programmes – applicant for employment	712	0.19	3,303,978.32
Article 56	Contribution to establish a protected workshop or a protected workplace	2,225	0.59	19,375,904.81
Section 56a	Contribution to keep a citizen with disability employed	411	0.11	884,807.85

Article 57	Contribution to citizen with disability to operate or perform independent income-earning activity	536	0.14	4,741,475.46
Article 59	Contribution to the activity of a work assistant	610	0.16	4,287,787.89
Article 60	Contribution to the payment of operating costs of a protected workshop or protected workplace and to the payment of costs of transport of employees	20,691	5.48	15,771,944.1
Total		102,535	27.16	113,265,613.78

Source: www.upsvar.sk

The last and the most used measure in 2012 was the contribution to commute to work which represented 4.3%. The absolute number of the supported applicants for employment was 16,136 and the total amount of used financial resources was EUR 4,918,370 from the resources allocated for the realisation of active labour market policy in the Slovak Republic. Instruments of the active labour market policy however do not have an actual potential to solve unemployment in the long run (see Pilot evaluation of impact of selected measures of active labour market policy, 2013) and they excessively burden the public expenditures of the country, thus emphasising the importance of collaboration of other policies and legislation directly or indirectly influencing the labour market in the Slovak Republic. The issue of employment policy in the Slovak Republic requires the development of concepts based on actual analyses and impact studies that have not been sufficient in Slovakia so far or that are completely missing.

Conclusion

In the Czech Republic and Slovakia there are minimal differences in the conditions of labour market functioning as well as in the employment policy. Though labour costs are higher in the Czech Republic as a result of higher average salary, in Slovakia on the other hand the burden of social and health insurance deduction is slightly higher. The deduction burden of employers in the Czech Republic is lower by 1.2 percentage points than in Slovakia however, in spite of somewhat lower deductions, both countries face problems with the reduction of this burden. In Slovakia, reduction of deductions was dealt with in recent years by employers concluding mainly agreements on work outside of the main employment relationship. Following the most recent changes in deductions in the case of these agreements, employers

as a rule use the same strategy as in the Czech Republic, namely in an attempt to increase flexibility with regards to the employee they prefer hiring employees as self-employed. This way, a business relationship is established and apart from the reduction of the total costs of the price of labour, the employer gets the advantage also in terms of e.g. reduced numbers of workers working based on a trade license since some provisions of the Labour Code do not apply to them.

The deduction burden is closely connected also with the issue of minimum wage, especially when it comes to minimal costs and increasing the amount and other fulfilments on the part of the employer linked directly to the value of minimum wage. The minimum wage in the Czech Republic is currently at CZK 8,500 which makes up for approximately 33.8% as the average salary in the economy of the Czech Republic for 2012 being CZK 25,101. The minimum wage in the Slovak Republic is at EUR 337.70 which represents 41.95% of the average monthly salary in the economy of the Slovak Republic set for 2012 (EUR 805). In the Slovak Republic, as mentioned earlier, the minimum wage in 2014 will grow to 43.73% of the average monthly salary in the Slovak Republic for 2012 (its value is currently for the first two quarters of 2013 even lower – EUR 803.50).

In the area of labour-law legislation, there are only minimal differences between the two countries – in selected areas e.g. concurrence of the notice period and compensation money, length of the trial period, days off etc., the conditions are almost identical. The difference in the mentioned areas was only in the fact that the most recent modification of the Labour Code in the Slovak Republic limited the number and period of renewal of employment relationship for a definite period of time, while this provision is not limited in the Czech Republic.

When it comes to the area of state employment policy funding, conditions are, in both countries, the same. Passive employment policy – unemployment benefits – is covered from the compulsory insurance while measures of the active employment policy are financially ensured by a combination of sources from state budgets of both countries and resources from the EU Funds (mainly ESF).

There is a certain difference in the structure of employment services. While in the Czech Republic, the realisation of the employment policy was shifted to the regional labour offices, in the Slovak Republic district labour offices remain the basic realiser of active employment policy. The nature of the passive employment policy itself shows differences between the two countries. While in Slovakia, passive policy includes exclusively substitute of income during loss of work-related income of persons, the Czech Republic perceives passive employment policy also as the mediation of employment which is in Slovakia included into employment

services and is thus perceived as a part of active policy.

When it comes to the payment of benefits substituting for work-related income, there are differences between the two countries in terms of benefits as well as the support period of their payment. While in Slovakia, unemployment benefits are paid always in the amount of 50% of the assessment base, their amount is in the Czech Republic classified according to the length of their receiving. The support period of payment of benefits is in the Slovak Republic from four to six months (in the context of merits, according to the length of payment of deductions to the relevant system in the period preceding the origin of the title to benefits), the support period in the Czech Republic is determined according to the age of the unemployed for a period of five to eleven months.

There are only minimal differences in the active employment policy of both countries. Almost each measure of the Czech Act No. 435/2004 Coll. on Employment we can find an equivalent in the Slovak Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services and vice versa (see Chart No. 10).

Both mentioned acts define the rights and duties of the involved entities on the labour market, stipulate conditions of mediating employment, professional and counselling services, registration of applicants for employment etc., determine measures and instruments of active employment policy.

Chart No. 10 – *Comparison of instruments of Active Employment Policy in the Czech Republic and Slovakia*

<i>Czech Republic</i>	<i>Slovak Republic</i>
Re-qualification	Education and preparation for the labour market and relevant contributions
Investment incentives	Contribution to support the development of local and regional employment Contribution to create a new job
Publicly beneficial work	Contribution to activation activity in the form of smaller municipal services for the township or in form of smaller services for the self-governing region Contribution to activation activity in the form of voluntary service
Social purpose jobs	Contribution to support employment of a disadvantaged applicant for work
Span-over benefit	Contribution to independent income-earning activity
Targeted programmes to deal with employment	Projects and programmes

Apart from the above stated, Act No. 435/2004 Coll. on Employment states measures not included in the current version of the Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services into instruments of active employment policy. It is the benefit for initial training and benefit when transiting to a new business programme.

On the other hand, Slovakia has many more provisions without an equivalent in the relevant act in the Czech Republic. It involves e.g. the contribution to perform graduate internship, contributions serving to increase the mobility of applicants for employment or modification of creation of social enterprises.

Similarly as in the Czech Republic, Slovakia has special instruments devoted to the support of employment of citizens with disabilities in its active measures of employment policy.

In spite of the high degree of similarity of both key acts, specific conditions, rights and duties, as well as conditions of eligibility and the final form of active employment, policy realisation differs in many details.

5 Activities of regional bodies

The aim of social work is to support the social functioning of individuals, groups and communities. Social functioning³⁴ can be defined as the ability to handle environmental demands, and meet society expectations defined in relation to social roles.

Unemployment is a social problem the seriousness of which is characterized by the high number of those affected (unemployed or persons at increased risk of unemployment), but especially by its impacts on the situation of those affected, his relatives, and also the negative impacts for the community and society itself, as final consequences. In connection with the negative impacts of the material shortages caused by unemployment, Hangoni (2010, p. 78) highlights the possibility of socially pathological phenomena ranging from crime, through addictions of various types up to suicidal behaviour.

Therefore, it is more than obvious that work with persons unemployed or threatened by unemployment is an important task of social work. The question is how it is possible to work with this target group or social issue in the context of contemporary social work.

Hangoni (2010) states that social work is aimed at eliminating the effects of unemployment in two areas:

1. Addressing unemployment.
2. Addressing the social consequences of the absence of income from employment. (cd: 78)

It can be said that addressing these two tasks involves a number of organizations and institutions of state and public administration as well as from the non-profit sector. In this text we focus on organizations and institutions active in the surveyed regions, namely social services of various types that are registered in these regions.

5.1 Ústí Region

The main research question of this section was whether in the surveyed regions, in addition to public and state institutions responsible for this area on the basis of the existing legislation (in particular the Labour Office of the Czech Republic and its branches - its scope is described in detail in Chapter 4), other organizations at least partially focus on unemployment in their activities.

³⁴ For more details see Bartlett (1970), Gordon (1969)

Initially, two types of materials were analyzed - publicly available information of selected service providers, and the community plans of the cities in the surveyed regions.

The set of social services, which will be investigated in more detail, was obtained using the Registry of Social Service Providers, which is kept by the MLSA of the Czech Republic. In the surveyed regions, all social services were selected, except those specialized to target groups that do not fall into the category of unemployed or at risk of unemployment (e.g. victims of human trafficking, victims of crimes, etc.), and also those that provide services of a type without any space for work with the issue of unemployment (e.g. guiding, translation and interpretation services, day care, etc.). For the remaining services, available information was searched (through websites, catalogues of social services, etc.) whether issues related to unemployment, employment support or employability, etc. are among the topics they cover. If the published information was unclear or incomplete, the organizations were contacted by telephone or e-mail. Based on this investigation, it was found that the topic is thoroughly (in terms of solving social situations associated with unemployment) dealt with exclusively by those organizations that registered the social service named Professional Social Counselling. They were then re-contacted to verify whether they actually work with this theme.

Since unemployment is a problem not only for society as a whole, but also has a big impact on the region in which it occurs, and a certain amount of resources to address it is possible (and reasonable) to seek, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity in the vicinity of carriers of victims we also dealt with the question of how the topic of unemployment is involved in the planning of (not only) social services in the surveyed regions. We have therefore performed the content analysis of community plans dealing with the development of social and related services provided by municipalities focused on unemployment and how it is dealt within various municipalities. Community plans are the subject of information disclosures, therefore we were looking for them through the websites of municipalities. In the community plans, we then investigated the performed analysis, defined targets of the community plans, the means to achieve them, the intended sources, and the entities participating in achieving the goals.

Then the results of the investigation under the above two paragraphs were used to map the terrain in the surveyed regions, focusing on the already-mentioned question - what organizations and institutions deal with the field of unemployment in terms of working with the unemployed and those at risk of unemployment.

5.1.1 Unemployment and institutions

Before presenting the results of the performed analyses of social service databases and community plans in the surveyed regions, we will briefly define these two areas that we focused on in the investigation.

Social services

Social services in the Czech Republic are currently controlled by Act No. 108/2006 Coll. on Social Services, as amended, and a number of implementing regulations.

The mission of social services is to provide assistance and support to people in difficult social situations. The extent and form of assistance and support is to preserve human dignity, be based on individual needs, work actively, promote the independence of service users, encourage them to perform activities that do not result in long-term persistence in a difficult social situation or its worsening, but rather to enhance their social inclusion.

In the context of the topic, it is obvious that the main objective of social services is to help and support those who, for various reasons, find themselves in a situation that negatively affects the quality of their lives and is risky both in terms of meeting their needs as well as their integration in society.

Act No. 108/2006 Coll. states that social services can be implemented through:

- social advisory
- social care services
- social prevention services.

The following facilities are established to provide social services:

- a) day service centres;
- b) day care centres;
- c) week care centres;
- d) homes for people with disabilities;
- e) housing for the elderly;
- f) homes with special care;
- g) protected housing;
- h) shelter homes;
- i) halfway houses;
- j) crisis centres;
- k) low-threshold day centres;

- l) low-threshold facilities for children and youth;
- m) cheap lodgings;
- n) therapeutic communities;
- o) social counselling centres;
- p) social therapeutic workshops;
- q) social rehabilitation service centres;
- r) early care centres;
- s) intervention centres;
- t) after-care centres.

The basic activities in providing social services:

- a) assistance in the general activities of self-care;
- b) assistance in personal hygiene or providing conditions for personal hygiene;
- c) providing food or assistance in providing food;
- d) providing accommodation or overnight stays;
- e) assistance in running the household;
- f) educational and motivational activities;
- g) social counselling;
- h) arranging contacts with the social environment;
- i) social and therapeutic activities;
- j) assistance in the implementation of rights and legitimate interests, and in dealing with personal issues;
- k) call centre help;
- l) training skills in self-care, self-sufficiency, and other activities resulting in social inclusion;
- m) support for the creation and improvement of basic work habits and skills.

The overview of types of social services and activities they are authorized to exercise shows that scope to work with the unemployed or those at risk of unemployment is in a wide range of services. Our investigation also indicates that not many services are focused exclusively on working with the surveyed group, moreover, there is no specific target group defined for social services in terms of job loss, difficulties in seeking a job or a risk position on the labour market. However, we believe that a significant part of social service users are either directly or indirectly affected by unemployment, either as the cause or consequence of their

unfavourable situation.

Community planning

One of the most important tools that enable finding the needs and problematic areas of lives of residents of particular areas (community, etc.), as well as solutions for these problems with the maximum use of local resources, is community planning. Kubalčíková (2009, p. 87) provides a definition of community planning by Popple (1996), who understands it as “.. a process, during which local conditions, programs and services are analyzed, goals and priorities for their further development are set, and resources for help are mobilized. The parts ... also represent an evaluation of the effectiveness of services and programs.”

Zatloukal (2006, p. 84) considered the method of the community planning of social services to be “... how to plan social services in communities. Using this method it should be possible to plan social services to:

1. correspond to local **requirements**;
2. be provided **effectively**, so that:
 - a) **useful services** are supported
 - b) resources (financial, material and human) are **used reasonably** and targeted
 - c) **new resources** are searched for to ensure needed social services
3. be planned with **participation** (or with the option to participate) of those concerned.³⁵

Community planning may therefore be a very fundamental tool that will support the opportunity to solve the unfavourable life situations of individuals, groups and communities in accordance with their current needs. At present, community planning in the Czech Republic is governed by Act No. 108/2006 Coll., on Social Services, as amended, and according to it the regions (under Section 95 letter d):

"conduct their medium-term plans for the development of social services in cooperation with municipalities in regions, representatives of social service providers and representatives of persons who receive the social services, and inform the municipalities in the regions of the results identified in the planning process...". Municipalities are then imposed by the cited act with the obligation to identify the needs of social services provision, and to check the availability of information about the possibilities and methods of providing social services in its territory; the processing of medium-term plans for the development of social services in the administrated area is allowed but not mandated (Section 94).

³⁵ Highlighted - the author of the cited source

5.1.2 Analysis of community plans

Since unemployed persons and persons at risk of unemployment are not directly defined as a target group for social services, it was difficult to determine which of the services primarily work with this target group. The investigation (interviews with registered social services in the surveyed regions by e-mail or phone) showed that the only services for which it is possible to say that they deal with this topic systematically and repeatedly, are some of those that provide social counselling, and services of other type rather marginally in addressing other tasks of clients. Therefore, the first selection included all organizations that have registered professional social counselling in the surveyed regions³⁶; through their websites and direct contact it was investigated whether the theme of unemployment is among those they currently work on with clients.

Table 11 - *Social services in surveyed regions*

<i>District</i>	<i>Number of registered social services (SS) in total</i>	<i>Number of register services Professional Social Counselling (PSC)</i>	<i>Included services that demonstrably work with the theme of unemployment</i>
Chomutov	73	9	4
Louny	63	7	6
Most	73	12	10
Total	209	28 (13.4% of SS)	20 (71.4% of PSC)

Source: Register of Social Service Providers

In the surveyed regions, the analysis focused on three districts: Chomutov, Louny and Most. It is evident that the Professional Social Counselling represents little more than a tenth of all registered social services, which may also be due to specific personnel requirements for performing the service, unlike the basic counselling that is required to be provided by all registered services.

The significant finding, however, is that the issue of unemployment is one of the common themes that users of the Professional Social Counselling solve with the assistance of social workers; almost three quarters of providers work with this issue.

³⁶ All providers of social services are recorded in the Register of Social Services Providers kept by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic

When determining the selection of the test sample, we considered different approaches based on exploring the information published by individual municipalities of various types that are located in the surveyed regions. We concluded that community plans are mostly drawn by cities, not small towns. So we looked at the website of all cities in the surveyed regions- the basic question was whether a community plan of social services was developed in the city. The community plans were then analyzed in detail, the primary area of interest was to determine whether, and if so how, social work (or similar forms of assistance) is planned for unemployed persons or persons at risk of unemployment.

Table 12 - *Community plans in the surveyed regions*

<i>District</i>	<i>Number of towns</i>	<i>Number of analyzed CP</i>
Chomutov	8	3
Louny	6	3
Most	6	2
In Total	20	8

Source: own investigation

In the district of Chomutov, 3 community plans were analysed – Chomutov, Jirkov and Kadaň/Kláštrec nad Ohří.

In the district of Louny, 3 community plans were analysed – Louny, Žatec and Postoloprty. In Louny and Žatec it is a well-established part of community activities; in Postoloprty, community planning –began only in the second half of 2013, working groups were established, SWOT analysis were developed, no community plan itself has been completed.

In the district of Most, 2 community plans were analysed – Most and Litvínov.

It has been found that community planning (according to the available resources) is performed in less than half of towns, but not only in the largest cities in the regions (Most, Chomutov, Louny), we can appreciate that even in smaller cities, community planning is performed or at least beginning (Postoloprty). It shows an active approach to community development using internal and external sources, to contribute to solving the issues that citizens consider important.

Chomutov

The Community Plan defines six priorities, three of which are more focused on target groups, which are also the subject of our investigation. Priority No. 2 – Focus on addressing the situation in risky forms of behaviour, emphasising the issue of socially excluded localities to

eliminate such exclusion; priority No. 3 – Focus on debt reduction for citizens of the town; and particularly priority No. 5 – Focus on addressing the unfavourable social situations of people effected by losing employment, crisis situations, changes in life situations or health conditions.

The document includes a SWOT analysis of the social services in Chomutov. Key results in the field of options to work with the issue of unemployment using various organizations and institutions include the following - weaknesses are high unemployment, a lack of local job opportunities, and a reluctance of employers to employ those disadvantaged in the labour market; threats are the unwillingness of employers to employ short-time workers for the abovementioned points. Strengths include functional social counselling and adequate source of labour; opportunities are the involvement of unemployed in alternative forms of employment, protected jobs and the cooperation of the town with NGOs.

In the proposed measures, within each priority the plan focuses on further developing and supporting professional social counselling as a means of preventing and dealing with difficult life situations, the expansion of offered services, and strengthening cooperation between the different types of organizations working with selected sets of issues. Chomutov uses its community plan to "... follow societal and regional trends in employment, focus on helping people affected by long-term unemployment, people for who it is difficult to find their place in the labour market, and people socially excluded." (Short-term Development Plan, p. 37)

The following tasks are defined to meet the goal:

- 1) mutual cooperation, awareness - job offers and information resources
- 2) utilization and support of alternative employment opportunities - community work, socially useful jobs, public service
- 3) support for the creation and sustainability of jobs for people disadvantaged in the labour market.

Subjects that in fulfilling the set objectives participate in their implementation are the City of Chomutov, labour office, District Chamber of Commerce, employers, employment agencies, and social service providers.

In the long-term priorities (till 2020), two of the 15 defined priorities focus on areas of unemployment (support for people at risk of social exclusion in returning to the labour market, and a focus on helping those affected by long-term unemployment and people for whom it is difficult to find a place in the labour market).

Jirkov

The creation of the community plan of Jirkov involved three working groups, none of which had the issue of unemployment primarily defined as a core area of interest. Even though the SWOT analysis, which is part of the plan, identified high unemployment as first among the risks, and the socio-demographic overview and forecasts show that the unemployment rate in the Jirkov district is increasing and the number of vacancies is decreasing. The community plan provides a general basis consisting of closer cooperation with the Labour Office of the Czech Republic.

In terms of concrete goals, the issue of unemployment can be put into Objective 3 - Addressing indebtedness, lack of finances, housing and unemployment. It is the only measure that can be considered applicable when working with unemployed and those at risk of unemployment - to support existing services, including professional social counselling.

Kadaň/Kláštevec nad Ohří

Community planning is unusually performed for the two municipalities together, the reason is their proximity, interconnection of services, rationalization and efficiency of planning and funding services.

The issue of unemployment was addressed by the working group focused on the care of people at risk of social exclusion.

The prepared SWOT analysis shows the region's high unemployment rate as one of its weaknesses. The community planning process also included a questionnaire survey among users of social services; most respondents expressed satisfaction with the services of the Labour Office and disappointment with the lack of free social legal counselling.

In the region, the Agency for Social Inclusion operates too. The analysis carried out by the institution indicates as the main positive result (in relation to the topic we survey) the functioning of the social firm Slunce (Sun); negative is the long-term unemployment rate of persons at risk of social exclusion. The recommended priority should be job counselling and the employment entry system.

In the Community Plan of Social Services and Related Services in the region Kadaň - Kláštevec nad Ohří, the field of unemployment is focused by Objective No. 4 – Establishment, implementation of activities aimed at promoting the employment of people at risk of social exclusion; it is support for the establishment of social companies that employ long-term unemployed people. The expected implementers are the two partner cities, religious organizations, charities and limited companies (without stating the specific intended

organizations).

Also in the six cross-sectional objectives for all ways of care that the community plan focuses on, it is possible to find one aimed at reducing unemployment and its negative impacts. Within the realization of this objective, public services should enhance maintaining the work habits of unemployed people, thus increasing possibilities to get a job and preventing social isolation, especially of long-term unemployed.

Louny

The analysis of the Community Plan of Louny shows that unemployment is not the primary priority of any of the working groups participating in the creation of the plan. It does not appear even in the prepared SWOT analysis, objectives or specific measures. However, we can assume that the declared support for expanding the network of services providing professional social counselling can potentially bring new options to work with the unemployed and those at risk of unemployment.

Žatec

The published version of the community plan has no basis or analysis, provides an overview of defined objectives, measures for their fulfilment, description of target groups, resources needed for implementation and measuring indicators.

Objectives focused on (un)employment are included in the general objectives, it is specifically the maintenance and development of professional social counselling, and support for projects and measures to increase employment and job creation.

If we focus on the measures aimed at fulfilling the objectives, they are as follows:

- support of citizen's counselling centre establishment;
- support of projects and measures adopted to create specific sustainable jobs;
- support of social entrepreneurship, sheltered workshops, social therapy workshops and similar forms of worksites;
- support of projects designed to actively prepare for future jobs and to enhance the skills of job seekers.

Postoloprty

The Community Plan when the survey was performed had not been prepared, only outputs of the SWOT analysis for each working group were available.

The Employment working group considers the functioning of large employers (KB Blok,

ČEZ) in the region to be a strength, as well as proximity to the Triangle industrial zone, transport access to Prague is also good. The weaknesses include the closure of two factories of Panasonic and Hitachi, the unfavourable educational structure of job seekers (53% with primary education) and the small number of local employers. The threats include changes in technology (automation), not broken mining limits and the impact of the crisis in the automotive industry that prevails in the region. The opportunities represent the largest number in the analysis - developed programs for unskilled people, legislative changes, various grant measures (support for small businesses, community work), the announced arrival of two new employers to the region.

Topics related to unemployment also appear in the SWOT analysis of the working group Social Prevention and Professional Counselling - in the weaknesses refusing offers of employment, lack of work habits; in the threats unemployment is the priority; the opportunities include employment opportunities for unemployed people, but without more detailed information about where and when.

The available analyzes and separate Employment working group can indicate that the issue will be a priority in the new-coming community plan.

Most

In the Community Social Services Plan in Most, the issue of unemployment occurs in two coordination groups - Individuals and Families in Crisis (KS2), and National and Ethnic Minorities (KS5).

The first of the coordination groups (KS2) focused on the area of professional social counselling, considering it an essential tool for preventing social exclusion. Crucial in the implementation of the community plan will be the development of professional social counselling, support for the comprehensive approach, and the focus on solving the difficult life situations of clients. These objectives will be fulfilled with the participation of several organizations that currently provide professional social counselling - church and charity organizations (Diakonia ČCE, the Most Regional Charity), and the Most Municipal Social Service Administration.

In the second coordination group, the priority is to support the return of unemployed people to the labour market by providing educational programs and professional social counselling. The implementation of the measures will be performed with the contribution of Most Statutory City, as well as of many organizations offering social services and other activities related to the defined objectives (Dům romské kultury o. p. s. (House of Roma Culture), the Chanov

Community Centre), and selected state authorities (the Labour Office of the Czech Republic - the Most Branch Office).

Litvínov

The Community Plan for the Development of Social and Related Services of Litvínov deals with the issue of unemployment in the outputs of two of three working groups.

In the field of Seniors and Disabled Citizens, one of the defined objectives is to ensure the employment of people with disabilities by supporting the establishment and development of sheltered workshops, the creation of a social firm, and the inclusion of people with disabilities in the open labour market. In addition to helping the target group with finding a job, work with employers is also planned; the implementation will involve social service providers, Litvínov and Most municipalities, and other entities.

In the field of Citizens at Risk of Social Exclusion and Citizens in Crisis, one of the objectives is focused exclusively on (un)employment. This is the development of activities and programs intended to help improve employability and employment. The objective is implemented using measures related to the motivation of unemployed people and employers; using supported employment, work assistance, career counselling and public services; reduction of discrimination and work in the informal economy; promotion of social firms and subsidized jobs. A number of implemented projects are focused on working with unemployed or those at risk of unemployment. Participating organizations are from the non-profit sector, government and public administration (the Labour Office of the Czech Republic - the Most Branch Office, Municipalities of Litvínov and Most, the Most Regional Charity, Omni Tempore o. p. s., the Libuše Citizens' Association, and others).

5.2 Gemer

Social policy in Slovakia addresses the biggest social group, i.e. unemployed people with difficulties and long-term unemployed. The unemployment rate in January 2013 in Slovakia was 14.8%, while in Rimavská Sobota it was 34.51%. Only very small deviations from the actual data could be found throughout the over twenty-year history of recording the unemployment rate. The most threatening is not the rate of registered unemployed, but particularly its composition. In the Gemer region, most jobseekers at labour offices are long-term unemployed. Their low level of education, combined with weak economic capacity of

the region are preconditions for a large group of population, which is characterized by a complex of social symptoms. Both left-wing and right-wing political ruling parties have failed to solve the situation for a long time, and are unable to do it now, despite the fact that 15% of the working population do not produce. On the contrary, they squeeze funds from the state budget. During the post-revolutionary period, Slovak social legislation reported qualitative and quantitative progress. Social laws are targeted to different social groups, which simplifies the implementation of legislative measures. However, social problems are characterized by circular causality. Therefore, many people who suffer from multiple social symptoms do not get to the spectrum of interest of legislative standards, or remain on its edge.

5.2.1 Social security

State social security in Slovakia is based on three pillars: social insurance, social support and social assistance. "For the building of the legal system of social security, the state as the main guarantor creates conditions for implementing legally binding social security relations accepted by society, and at the same time controls the needs of institutions acting in the area. Although the provider of social security is the state, it is not always the only entity that meets the needs of subjects at certain social events" (Kečkéšová, 2012, p. 151). Within its competencies, the state implements some measures in favour of a group of people reliant on its assistance using Act No. 5/2004 on Employment Services, as amended. The implementation of measures of the Act is provided by Labour, Social Affairs and Family Offices using instruments of active and passive labour market policies. The objective of this Act are a job-seekers. The system of social allowances, the support system in need, health disability compensation, social and educational measures of social and legal protection and social guardianship, can act on a complementary basis.

Social assistance has special status when social services are the most sophisticated. For social services, the state puts executive competences under Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on Social Services, as amended (hereinafter the "Act on Social Services") into the hands of government and private providers. The Act aims to support the social inclusion of citizens and meet the social needs of people in unfavourable social situations. The Act considers as *unfavourable social* situations such as the state of social deprivation of individuals, families and communities, in which the person, the family, and the community is situated. The Act on Social Services guarantees the right of natural persons to be provided with social services or arrange its provision, and the right to choose a provider when meeting the conditions laid

down by the law, and other rights in providing social services. *Under the Act, providers of social services are municipalities, legal entities established or founded by municipalities or self-governing regions (public social service providers) and other legal or natural persons (private providers of social services). Under the Act, social services are provided using professional, ancillary and other activities, which providers must provide or arrange, if these activities are exhaustively defined for these services. The professional activities provided within the social services include basic and specialized social counselling. One of the targeted social groups for specialized social counselling is unemployed people. Under the Act on Employment Services, counselling is provided by the specialized personnel of labour offices, but under the Act on Social Services it is performed by non-state, especially non-profit organizations that must obtain a decision of the Accreditation Commission of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family authorising to perform specialized social counselling.* Based on these two fundamental legislation standards helping to address the social situation of unemployed, you can see that the state is quite directly targeting a relatively narrow target group of unemployed people, and the self-government and non-profit sector dealing with more complex social assistance of the population under powers delegated by the state.

The mission of self-government is to provide a service to citizens, constantly directed to increasing the quality and range of services provided (the Code of Ethics for Elected Officials of Bratislava Municipality, 2006). The objective of self-government is the complex, integrated development of the municipality or higher territorial area for entities operating therein in accordance with the development policy of the Slovak Republic and the European Union (Knežová, www.kri.sk/web_object/203.pdf). *Self-government and its executive components also perform some tasks of government transferred to its various sections, among others, in the field of social affairs. Specifically, the development of social services is one of the preconditions for economic and social development in the territory, and it is therefore essential for municipalities to take into account the development of social services in accordance with national priorities even in developing plans for economic and social development in accordance with Act No. 539/2008 Coll. on Regional Development.*

Local governments provide the social services development of their regions by creating *Community Social Service Development Plans*. The obligation to create these plans is imposed on municipalities by the above-mentioned Act on Social Services. Each year, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic declares so-called *Priorities of Social Service Development*, which are formulated in several points. These national priorities are then transformed by higher territorial units to so-called *Conceptions of*

Social Service Development of the territorial area focused with their content mainly on improving the quality of social services.

Manifestos of the strongest political parties in major cities and towns elaborate social issues in the following documents several years ahead: *The Program of Economic and Social Development* and *Priorities a Program Objectives*. Throughout Slovakia, you can find job-seekers, unemployed people and their families in the target groups of the self-government's documents. Municipalities of cities and towns developing community social service development plans get citizens to formulate and present their social needs and demands. These include needs related to unemployment. All these plans are incorporated into the analysis of the social needs of citizens, the SWOT analysis and demographic analysis. Community plans are publicly available documents, and can therefore be obtained from the websites of towns in the region. The level of these statutory documents varies, but all reflect the approach of the self-government authorities to its electorate. The community plans are used by municipalities of towns to create registers, and also to networks of private providers of social assistance.

Under the Act on Social Services, non-state entities wanting to provide specialized social counselling are to be accredited by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. If an authorized representative of the organization obtains accreditation for counselling also for the target group of unemployed people, their non-governmental organization can apply for funding from the state through higher territorial units. Grants for specialized counselling change every year, and are tied to approval by the council of the higher territorial unit. The Ministry of Labour on its website publishes lists of accredited bodies which carry out the specialized counselling in accordance with Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on social services.

5.2.2 Analysis of community plans

Based on searches in the registers of higher territorial units, as well as of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, and based on data from community plans, organizations can be identified according to their forms of constitution, their missions, target groups, provided services and regional activities. Based on regional indicators, 48 private organizations were analyzed and underwent further selection by their target groups and whether the organization was established as non-governmental, i.e. profit-making or non-profit. The mission of the organization, formulated in their charter or statutes, should somehow relate to helping unemployed people and people without income. Across the Gemer

region, these basic requirements were met by only 12 organizations.

The Gemer region is mostly consists of small settlements in towns and villages. The biggest towns in the region are: Rožňava, Rimavská Sobota, Tornaľa, Tisovec, Jelšava, and Dobšiná. These six cities met their statutory requirements, and created their community social service development plans that are a major source of regional potential to mobilize self-help. It is assumed that towns can concentrate more power of civil activities through NGOs to meet local needs.

Rožňava

Under the Social Development Fund, the town implements the project "Social Work in the Field", which aims to implement programs supporting human resources, develop employment, improve social inclusion and build capacities through social work in field for the period 2010-2012. The analysis performed with 19 providers of social services shows that about 6% of social services in the territory of the town aim to address unemployed people, mostly through specialized counselling provided by non-profit organizations³⁷. The performed satisfaction survey with the quality of life in the town indicated, among other things, that 25% of respondents felt dissatisfaction with low income and unemployment³⁸. It is interesting that the residents themselves (12%) perceive the total lack of preventive measures against the occurrence and development of unemployment in the region. Participating experts and officials of the city perceive the exodus of young and educated people due to the lack of suitable jobs as a major threat for the region.³⁹

The priorities of the Community Plan include the integration of people with disabilities into broader social and working life by creating sheltered workshops and sheltered workplaces in the implementation period from 2012 until the end of the plan in 2016. The responsibility for implementing the measures is borne by the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, the municipality and the higher territorial unit. Citizens have the idea that the application of standards should be emphasized, providing equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in all areas of social life. Planned resources for this priority should come from the normal costs of the town, state, and providing free counselling.

In the territory of Rožňava, several NGOs operate that are only marginally concerned with the

³⁷ The Community Plan of Social Services Development of Rožňava, p. 40-41

³⁸ The Community Plan of Social Services Development of Rožňava, p. 48

³⁹ The Community Plan of Social Services Development of Rožňava, p. 58

issue of unemployment. They are the following: Diocesan Charity, the branch in Rožňava, the non-profit organization Miesto pod slnkom (Place under the sun), the Univerzus citizens' association, the LAVUTA citizens' association, the Slovak Union of Physically Disabled, the Slovak Blind and Partially Sighted Union - the Counselling Centre in Rožňava. The special facility of the Catholic Church in Slovakia, *the Diocesan Charity Rožňava* provides, among other activities, basic and specialized social counselling especially for children from poor families, poor people and the homeless. They are intended for people who find themselves in need, have family problems, and are unable to orient in their rights and obligations. Then they are intended to help in solving family problems, finding a shelter, help in communication with authorities and to orient in social legislation, to help disabled people, and people with addictions. Unemployed people are not the primary target group of this organization, but through counselling it also addresses the problem of unemployed people. The founder of another organization, *Miesto pod slnkom n.o.* is the municipality of Košice. The organization, in terms of social services, provides specialized social counselling, measures of social and legal protection, education and social programs, training of foster parents, supervision and education in social work. Its target group are mainly families, seniors, people with health restrictions and disabilities, and unemployed people. The citizens' association *Roma Lavuta*, although presented in the register of non-profit organizations as a "social" non-profit organization, does not provide any serious information about the mission, activities and target groups in the public space. The same is valid for the citizens' association *Univerzus*, proclaiming the provision of social and legal counselling and the preparation of cultural and educational activities and counselling. The citizens' association *the Slovak Union of Physically Disabled, Rožňava* provides social counselling, social services, social prevention, social welfare, operates a rental of assistive devices, implement programs of social rehabilitation and reconditioning. The instruments of social assistance to unemployed people could include specialized counselling for people with disabilities, and employment services. The citizens' association, the Counselling Centre Rožňava of the *Slovak Blind and Partially Sighted Union*, according to its mission of providing social services, advocates the interests of people with visual disabilities aimed at creating equal opportunities, equal treatment, and the implementation of positive measures to overcome and compensate for the consequences of visual disability. Within **specialized social counselling**, which they provide not only to customers with visual disabilities, but also to their closer or wider social environment, they help to handle disabilities, to orient in social legislation, in the selection of assistive and optical devices, and in issues related to learning and employment. With **social rehabilitation**

they help to acquire and develop knowledge and skills to increase the independence of their clients. For unemployed people they provide particularly specialized social counselling in seeking a job and adapting for work those with visual handicaps

Rimavská Sobota

The creation of the Community Social Service Plan in the town also included a survey of meeting the social needs of citizens, which was attended by over 250 citizens of the town. Although the group of respondents was not majority represented by job-seekers (only 9% of the survey sample), the problem of unemployment and related problems figured significantly in the ranking of the most pressing social problems of the town as identified by the citizens.⁴⁰ This opinion was supported by professional officials of the town who perceive the problem of unemployment, particularly in relation to children and their families. Especially single mothers losing jobs significantly adversely affect the stability of families (p. 49).

In the town, several state and budgetary authorities are registered that are dedicated to unemployed people. For instance, *the Information Centre for Young* creates conditions for young unemployed people to seek jobs (p. 57). Creators of the community plan defined five social groups at risk, and unemployed people in three of them arose as a fundamental problem. These were family and youth (p. 57), people in difficult life situations and socially inadapted (p. 68), and the Roma community (p. 71). In the performed SWOT analysis (p. 76), representatives of professional organizations, parliamentarians and experts perceived as a major threat particularly the high unemployment rate and associated added social phenomena such as failure to pay rent, unfavourable profile of job-seekers (their low educational level, long-term unemployment), lack of employment opportunities, no interest in work, lost work habits, etc. The organizations that operate in the town and participate in the work of unemployed people include the Association of Relatives and Friends of Mentally Ill People SUPPORT G+N (Opora G+N), the Grassroots Organization of Slovak Association of Disabled in Rimavská Sobota, the Slovak Blind and Partially Sighted Union - the Counselling Centre in Rimavská Sobota, the Citizens' Association Starting Point for a Better Life (Východisko pre lepší život), the Partnership of Gemer and Malohont, the Information Consulting Centre of Roma in Rimavská Sobota.

The mission of the citizens' association called the *Association of Relatives and Friends of Mentally Ill People OPORA G+N* is to enable the internal abilities of citizens with mental

⁴⁰ The Community Plan of Social Services Development of Rimavská Sobota, p. 37

illness to overcome the personal and social consequences of severe disabilities, and prevent and fight against worsening mental illnesses, to provide information about possible solutions in material and social needs, and to guide these people in choosing and applying social assistance. The primary target group are people with mental illness, their families and their vicinities. In terms of employment, the region is provided with help mainly in specialized social counselling and rehabilitation, and thus they try to increase the employment potential of people with mental illness.

The Grassroots Organization of Slovak Association of Disabled in Rimavská Sobota is a non-profit organization with the mission to associate people with disabilities and their friends. The proclaimed form of their activities is social assistance and counselling especially for people with disabilities. The organization probably only very rarely provides some counselling in terms of instructions of its central authority, and hence in the employment of persons with disabilities.

The citizens' association the *Slovak Blind and Partially Sighted Union - the Counselling Centre Rimavská Sobota* with its mission of providing social services, advocates the interests of people with visual disabilities aimed at creating equal opportunities, equal treatment, and the implementation of positive measures to overcome and compensate the consequences of visual disability. Its objectives are met mainly through specialized social counselling, which it provides not only to customers with visual disabilities, but also to their closer or wider social environment. Within this service, it helps in handling disabilities, orientation in social legislation, choosing assistive and visual devices, and in issues related to learning and job-seeking. Members of the association are visually impaired people, their supporters, friends and parents of blind and partially sighted children. For unemployed people they provide particularly specialized social counselling in seeking a job and adapting for work to people with visual handicaps.

Starting point for a better life –the proclaimed mission of the civic association is to increase the employment rate, provision of services, and creation of educational opportunities. However, we have not obtained any relevant information about the organization.

The mission of the citizens' association *the Partnership of Gemer and Malohont* is addressing the issues of improving the quality of life of citizens by increasing employment and employability. This organization has been dormant for a few years.

The mission of the citizens' association *the Information Consulting Centre of Roma, Rimavská Sobota* is an organizer of events aimed at cultural, educational and sports activities, dissemination of awareness about the harmful effects of drugs through discussions, lectures,

creating space for the convergence of Roma and the general population, cooperation with governments, with Roma associations in the location, and the establishment of community centres for the Roma community. The target group is the Roma community, for which they provide counselling services in the social, labour and education fields, and active assistance for Roma mothers and families in raising children. They organize charity events, facilitate employment for the Roma, and organize various retraining courses. Activities of this association, however, remain basically in the proclamation level.

Tornaľa

The community plan of Tornaľa does not have any planning period formulated. The document includes all chapters of the Act on Social Services and the strategic objectives defined in the Plan of Economic and Social Development of the town in 2011. This is not entirely linked to national development priorities, and social services do not overlap even with the target groups under the Act on Social Services. The strategic objective 3 mentioned in the document on p. 6 is "*The development of active labour market and social integration policies*". In Tornaľa, the goal should be achieved through several activities such as developing programs to support unemployed people (retraining, education and counselling programs), promoting equal opportunities in the labour market and social inclusion, and developing lifelong learning. The document lacks implementation of these activities and the resources to perform them. Unusually - at the end of the document - the demographic analysis of the town is given. The plan lacks the basic elements of any planning. It lacks any analysis of the current state of the social services provided, any survey of the social needs of the population is missing, as well as an analysis of the current providers of social services), there are no clear objectives of the community plan, nor its temporal composition (schedule). As there are clear objectives of the plan, no individual activities to achieve the objectives are chosen, nor are their implementation, and finally, no resources are planned. The community plan as such is practically useless and a completely unnecessary document. No non-profit organization is registered in the register of providers of social services of the Higher Territorial Unit or the register of accredited entities under the Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on Social Services, as amended, in the town.

Tisovec

The community plan of the town also includes the published SWOT analysis. The threats are in the part "Weaknesses" and state also *the high number of long-term unemployed* in the town.

The part Threats also mentions *the number of unskilled unemployed people increasing*⁴¹. The text of the document indicates that the survey of social needs was performed among randomly selected residents and cooperating professionals. As the first problem respondents reported "*high unemployment rate*" (p. 17), which is one of the most critical issues in Tisovec. A high proportion of the unemployed come from high-risk groups, particularly people with primary education or no education, long-term unemployed, young people after their studies who are without work experience, and persons over 50 years of age. In the city there are about 390 unemployed people, the demand for jobs significantly exceeds the offer, you can see a relatively high number of job-seekers per one vacancy, and young people leave the town temporarily for work outside the SR or permanently to other towns in the Slovak Republic. One measure of the Tisovec municipality will be the implementation of programs that will focus on the completion of primary and secondary education for children and youth, and retraining courses according to the requirements of the labour market for long-term unemployed, through the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

The aim of the Tisovec municipality is also to maintain and develop work habits of long-term unemployed job-seekers through activation works and the creation of a "work incubator". One of the measures is to educate the Roma (adult long-term unemployed and Roma youth) in traditional crafts such as weaving, Gypsy faggots, tinkering, making wire jewellery, and basketry which can be easily made at home for sale. They would like to use workshops to restore and preserve the traditional skills of Roma. It is also necessary to raise awareness of job opportunities for socially excluded people in the business sector.⁴²

Based on this survey, the municipality established critical areas, the first of which is aimed at unemployment. They formulated the issue as objective 1, which is to *raise the level of education*; the Municipality in Tisovec, non-governmental organizations, the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, schools and educational institutions are responsible for its fulfilment. Financial resources to cover it should be European Union structural funds, the state budget and the municipal budget. Planned activities to achieve the objective are programs aimed at helping completion of primary and secondary education, preparing retraining courses, and developing cooperation between the business sector and schools in order to select study programs. Other priority objectives of the Tisovec municipality included *to maintain and develop work habits* in the period of 2010 - 2015, in the responsibility of the

⁴¹The Community Plan of Social Services Development of Tisovec, p. 8

⁴²The Community Plan of Social Services Development of Tisovec, p. 19

institution mentioned above. Financial resources are the same as in the previous paragraph. Objectives should be fulfilled keeping jobs in activation works and creating short-term or part-time employment. *Increasing the number of jobs* is another priority objective of the town in the period from 2010 to 2015. Responsible authorities for the implementation of the task is the Municipality of Tisovec, non-governmental organizations, the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. Financial resources are the same as in the previous paragraphs. They plan to reach the objective through the support of self-employment in traditional crafts and using local resources, raising awareness of employment opportunities for socially excluded people in the business sector, supporting all new activities aimed at increasing employment and the employment rate, and creating opportunities for short-term or part-time employment in facilities of the town.

No non-profit organization is registered in the register of providers of social services of the Higher Territorial Unit and the register of accredited entities under Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on Social Services, as amended.

Jelšava

The Community Social Service Plan of Jelšava was compiled for the period of 2009 to 2013. It also includes a SWOT analysis, demographic analysis, and a survey of needs for 55 people. The community plan shows the following facts for the field of unemployment: the basic demographic data include the information that the unemployment rate in the town is 29 %⁴³ with a high number from Roma ethnic group (405 of 522 people) among job-seekers (p. 8). The plan makers identified the four most vulnerable social groups, focused on by the plan. The group, which requires full social support, include long-term unemployed people with 248 people unemployed in total in the community (p. 10). Unemployed also appear in the second social group, i.e. those with social and societal problems (p. 13). Since the unfavourable social situation can usually be seen in a number of social symptoms at the same time, it is only possible to estimate that the number of Roma ethnicity with behavioural problems represents 30% of the population in the town; most of which up to 90% are also long-term unemployed. The authors of the plan consider tools to address this problem such as prevention, counselling and implementation of training focused on the labour market.

No non-profit organization is registered in the register of providers of social services of the Higher Territorial Unit or the register of accredited entities under Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on

⁴³The Community Plan of Social Services Development, p. 6

Social Services, as amended.

Dobšiná

The unemployment rate in the town is 27%⁴⁴. A high proportion of registered job-seekers, as across the region, are of Roma ethnicity (p. 7). In the demographic analysis socially problem groups are divided into several categories. One of them - socially unadoptable citizens - also includes unemployed people. *"According to the analysis, people from the Roma community represent the most socially weak group of the population. The estimated number of Roma living permanently in Dobšiná is 1700, i.e. 33% of the total population of the town. This information differs significantly from the statistical data of the population declaring themselves as the Roma minority. As at 31 December 2001, only 464 inhabitants declared Roma nationality, which is about 24% less than the estimated number of Roma living permanently in Dobšiná. This target group needs special attention and approach. Their social situation is complicated for a long time by the high unemployment rate, due to their low level of education, reckless approach to life and poor work habits."*⁴⁵ Another social category are citizens in need and homeless people. Those in need consists particularly of long-term unemployed people with limited financial income, and people that due to their financial situation lost housing, or stopped paying rent and became defaulters. In the performed SWOT analysis, in the part "Weaknesses" of the locality, officials and participating assisting professionals first report high rates of unemployment, and in particular the long-term problem of unemployment. The category of "Threats" (p. 16) states the risk of stagnation of long-term unemployed people and their aversion to participating in the labour market. As is apparent from the SWOT analysis, the town *"...lacks social service centres, community centres, social housing and housing of a lower standard. In this state, if lasting for a long time, the following social and economic risks could occur: the risk of stagnation of long-term unemployed and their aversion to participating in the labour market; the decline of living standards increases the risk of small crimes, the rise of social tensions destabilizes the situation and relations in the community, and the decrease or loss of confidence in the authorities and institutions of the community and their ability to solve problems in the social field"*(p. 17). The strategic part of the plan states an outline of solutions⁴⁶, where they want to establish field social services

⁴⁴ The Community Plan of Social Services Development of Dobšiná, p. 5

⁴⁵ The Community Plan of Social Services Development of Dobšiná, p. 13

⁴⁶ The Community Plan of Social Services Development of Dobšiná, p. 17

designed to work with clients suffering from addiction, a crisis and counselling centre, and they want to build social housing for vulnerable groups of the population. However, in the matrix of the implementation of the development social service plan, the group of unemployed has no "own" measures or proposals.

No non-profit organization is registered in the register of providers of social services of the Higher Territorial Unit or the register of accredited entities under the Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on Social Services, as amended.

Conclusion

The analysis of the operation of regional bodies in both countries showed some significant differences. Their common feature is a quite developed structure of non-profit organizations dealing with issues of unemployment, and the associated deeper elaboration of the community planning system.

In the surveyed districts of the Ústí nad Labem Region, the community planning of social and related services is performed in less than half of towns. The issue of unemployment is in the analyzed community plans in various forms - from a peripheral mention in the context of counselling services (Louny, Jirkov), to thoroughly elaborated objectives aimed at reducing unemployment and promoting employability (Chomutov, Most, Žatec, Litvínov).

The most extensive work on the issue of unemployment is in the context of the social service of Professional Social Counselling (operated by various organizations - contributory, charitable, citizens' associations, and generally useful organizations), all of them focus on the potential development of these services in terms of their number and availability. Another field is support for projects helping in employability, i.e. education and motivation of unemployed people or those at risk of unemployment, cooperation with employers, or the establishment of new entities - social firms, sheltered workshops, etc.

The development of a network of cooperating organizations can also be considered an important finding; they are involved in the implementation of the plans, the use of diverse resources for both funding and staffing required to implement the set goals.

We recommend focusing on addressing unemployment as a complex life situation, with special emphasis on the negative impacts on various aspects of the life of those affected.

The key approach when working with this target group is described as a holistic approach based on cooperation between various social services and other entities from the public and

state government, NGOs and others.

We consider it essential to develop community planning as a tool for coordination, streamlining and increasing the efficiency of work with the target group.

We also recommend integrating the issue of unemployment as a separate part of community planning, and to support projects focused on specific, measurable and sustainable outcomes with regional impact.

Since the surveyed regions are among those with higher levels of unemployment, it is, in our opinion, necessary to focus on this issue. We believe that only by joining various organizations can a combination of tools and resources result in positive effects for inhabitants of these regions, and thus the regions themselves. The focus on regional specifics, developing local resources and finding solutions based on a thorough knowledge of local conditions can create a functional counterpart of national policies, the effectiveness of which is often controversial, particularly from the perspective of the micro- and meso-level of social work.

The Gemer region is characterized by high unemployment with an unfavourable composition of job-seekers. Unemployment in the region is followed by a chain reaction when other social risks arise, e.g. failure to pay rent and utility bills, and subsequent loss of housing, family breakdown, poverty, and mass exodus of young people abroad.

Community social service development plans developed by municipalities do not deal directly with unemployed people, primarily because they do not form a group of clients of social services. Nevertheless, unemployed people appears on top in the surveys conducted. This may mean, firstly, that the people experience their unemployment as a major social phenomenon in their lives, and secondly, they do not have the opportunity to present their social problems and needs somewhere else. Municipalities incorporate into their community plans such social programs and services not listed in the Act on Social Services. On the one hand, the communities and local governments feel the need to do something about the phenomenon of unemployment, but legislation is performed in double-track under the state line through the Act on Employment. Governments, based on surveys, can identify the needs of their citizens, but the proposed solutions are mostly ineffective. Citizens in their analysis suggested some solutions, but these are not in the competence of self-governments. The municipalities generally only withhold "their" findings and do not pass them further, and do not discuss specific needs of the region with state authorities in terms of the used tools. For instance, citizens themselves proposed a market of short-term jobs and self-help in villages and towns,

and then markets for poor people, counselling for poor people, counselling at the time of the loss of employment, etc. These, however, are not supported by the law, which in practice means that there is no one to finance them.

Gemer has quite a few non-profit non-governmental organizations compared with other parts of Slovakia. The few that are partially and only marginally dedicated to unemployed people have a primary range of activities targeted more or less to those with disabilities. They focus on a specific performance of help to improve the lives of these people or their integration into social life. The issue of employment is actually dealt with just as a secondary issue, and social assistance is implemented mainly through specialized social counselling. Some non-profit organizations provide assistance to persons with disabilities, where in addition to counselling, social and medical rehabilitation is also provided. Helping people to find a job and participation in the job market was formulated in the mission of only four non-profit organizations, which were focused mainly on Roma ethnicity. All, however, are mainly characterized by the fact that it is impossible to obtain any relevant and reputable data about them, their activity is more or less just based on proclamations.

The analysis of public documents of the investigated NGOs of the region shows a link between unemployment and poverty.

The weak economic strength of the region is also reflected in the poor level of development of its civil society. The biggest towns in the region, i.e. Tornaľa, Tisovec, and Jelšava, have no non-profit organizations. The inhabitants and officials of local government "rely" on the state, as if they cannot create self-help mechanisms to address the issue.

6 Unemployment in Teaching

The central theme of the monograph is unemployment in a variety of contexts. One of the key issues is how this social issue is handled in both countries in terms of helping unemployed people and those at risk of unemployment, especially through the activities of various organizations and institutions in the surveyed regions. An important source of assistance is social work, but the question remains: what tools do social workers have at their disposal in the field of active employment policies, methods and techniques of social work, counselling skills, etc. It is therefore logical that we also investigate how, within university education, future social workers are introduced to the issue of unemployment, and trained for work with this target group. For this purpose, we analysed the bachelor's and master's degree programs in social work and social policy at the Department of Social Work of the Pedagogical Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava (Slovakia), and the Department of Social Work of the Faculty of Social and Economic Studies of Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad L. (the Czech Republic).

6.1 Methodological Introduction

In the processing and evaluation of information sheets/syllabus of subjects, we will use the method of document analysis. In the broader meaning, we understand the analysis of documents in this context, in accordance with Miovský (2006, p. 98) as the analysis "of any material, which is a source of relevant information in relation to the study objectives. Such a relatively broad definition of document analysis allows the investigation of a wide range of materials usable for any kind of qualitative analysis." As stated by Hendl (2005, p. 132), the advantage of the analysis of documents as a method of research is "the fact that it opens access to information that would otherwise be difficult to acquire. The second advantage is the fact that data are not exposed to sources of errors or distortions arising in the implementation of interviews, observations, measurement and testing". In this sense it is therefore a so-called non-reactive method of data collection. The procedure defined in this way opens the door for processing information sheets/syllabus as a key empirical material, which is a fundamental theoretical and organizational basis of teaching issues of unemployment in the surveyed academic contexts.

In addition to analyzing information sheets/syllabus of subjects, we found additional information on the course and implementation of teaching issues of unemployment using a questionnaire with several questions distributed to lecturers of bachelor's (both universities) and master's (in Bratislava) programs.

The goal and survey questions

The objective of the analysis of documents (subject information sheets, syllabus) is the identification, interdisciplinary and interdepartmental comparison of the unemployment issue in its different contexts in teaching subjects in the study program of Social Work at the two universities. The target of the analysis is therefore the content of syllabuses and information sheets of the subjects. We monitor the type of subject in which the teacher discusses the issue, time range devoted to the issue, and the year in which the issue is taught. In relation to the research objectives, we formulate the following research questions:

RQ 1. What subject is intended to deal with the issue of unemployment?

RQ 2. How many hours are devoted to the issue of unemployment in the course syllabus?

RQ 3. How is the issue of unemployment processed in the teaching of the subject?

RQ 4. What is the minimum expected knowledge or capabilities required by lecturers from the graduates of the study program in the social work specialization in the area of unemployment, work with groups of unemployed people, or people at risk of unemployment?

RQ 5. How is the current scope of the unemployment issue in the surveyed teaching assessed?

The given research questions shall be observed in terms of the above-stated facts on the basis of the content analysis of the investigated material (information sheets of the subject, syllabi), while we will concentrate on the three fundamental aspects of teaching, i.e.: the type of subject, the teaching type, and the learning extent of the unemployment issue in the subject teaching. In addition, the content of the open questions in the on-line questionnaire sent to teachers to complete will be analyzed. The questionnaire contained 5 open questions, which directed to describe and evaluate the form and scope of the course (teaching) in terms of the observed research questions. Individual survey questions were read as follows:

- In which subject did you deal with the issue of unemployment?
- In what way do you work with the issue of unemployment?
- How many hours do you devote to the issue of unemployment?
- In your opinion, what is the minimum knowledge or capabilities required by lecturers

from the graduates of the study program in the social work specialization in the area of unemployment, work with groups of unemployed people, or people at risk of unemployment?

- Do you believe that this topic is dealt with adequately in the study program? If yes – why? If not - what should the program of study focus on more intensively?

6.2 Social Work as a Field of Tertiary Education

The bachelor study of social work is the first stage of university education. The presented form of students' education is specialized in the field of social work in a wide range of theoretical investigations of social practice, professions helping in the field, and personal growth of students. The bachelor study is oriented particularly extensively. It focuses on the theoretical basis of social work methods and ways of helping professions, and the development of students' social skills. Its content is based on the sociological, psychological, philosophical, legal and ethical ideological systems. Study of this concept is thus interdisciplinary. This means building new quality of knowledge through several interconnected social and legal disciplines. The social work conceived interdisciplinary integrates various aspects of the perception of social, socio-cultural, socio-psychological, socio-legal, socio-economic and socio-political phenomena, focusing on their analysis, correction, development or assisting in the micro-social level, meso-social and macro-social environment.

The issue of qualifying education is addressed by Drucker (2003), who works with aspects of the conception characterized as an academic social work at one end of the spectrum, or practical social work on another. He notes that social work must necessarily combine concepts both in education (theoretical and practical) and in the field. "Situations addressed by social workers often show the poor functioning of our societies, and the gaps and contradictions in our strategies and programs. The role of social workers is therefore vigilance of and sensitivity to these issues in providing systematic information about them; social workers therefore crucially contribute in the policy and planning of the normal course of their "ancillary activities". (Drucker, 2003, p. 37 – 38)

The goal of this study is to develop the mental concept of social work as an academic applied discipline, to promote the ability to think critically and professionally, to understand the problem, to analyze and implement theoretical models directly into practice, to learn the skills

of professional social work, as well as to develop the personal potential of students.

Graduates of bachelor's degrees in social work specialization know the theoretical sources, foundations and history of social work, can apply the theoretical knowledge in the practice of social workers, have acquired professional skills of social work, and are competent to provide social services in the activities of primary prevention, field, ambulant, semi-residential, residential and post-residential forms of social work.

Building on the presented concept of the bachelor study and the general profile of graduates - graduates of bachelor's degree should be able to work in employment services after graduating in the bachelor studies, and to apply their knowledge and skills.

Master's degree is the second stage of university education. Education of students is oriented on social work specialization in the socio-political contexts, and management and research methods in the social field. Master's degree is oriented particularly intensively. In content it is based on the scientific and methodological concepts of social sciences and social work. The second stage of professional education symbiotically links professional, research, management and intervention aspects of social theory and practice.

The aim of the master's degree is to stimulate, prepare and develop scientific, research, political and management concepts of social work, to implement theoretical knowledge in social practice, and to enhance the professional and personal potential of students for professional performance in the social field. Graduates of master's degree should know the theoretical concepts of social work, social policy and management. They should be able to implement conceptual solutions for social issues, to participate in addressing issues of life quality, and to address conceptual issues with different target groups. Graduates should be prepared to hold management positions in the social field, and to plan and implement prevention and intervention programs. In research, they should be able to coordinate and conduct research in the social field, and to use both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

The university education of social workers in some universities is also performed at their third-level education - doctoral studies in social work specialization, which aims to develop the mental concept of social work as a scientific and academic discipline, to support the ability of scientific and critical thinking, and therefore to develop the ability to identify relevant social phenomenon and social processes, to analyze and interpret them adequately, to define the application process, and to create professional and scientific concepts. Doctoral candidates are expected to think integratively, to develop knowledge of related disciplines creatively, and to build a better quality of knowledge in the sphere of social work as well as

other social and behavioural sciences.

In the context of master's degree we can speak - in connection with the acquired knowledge and skills and the profile for the field of employment/unemployment of its graduates (with the profile of graduates) - rather of preparing professionals for the development of legislation, research and development in the field. This does not exclude direct work with clients (in particular e.g. within professional counselling services), however, training for this area should be sufficiently covered by the bachelor's degree. The highest degree (PhD) rather prepares for this area specialists (who address the issue in their dissertations) for specific areas of the labour market and employment policies, and in particular in the context of the development of science and research.

Studying social work has, compared with other fields of study of helping professions, remarkable specifications and benefits. This is because the study of social work consists of three pillars, which we can briefly explain and thus show the "perfect" linkage between the essential components of the university education of social workers.

- *What is social work? – theory.*

Students have the opportunity to learn the theory of social work, the scientific foundations of social work, the theoretical basis of reference science, research strategies and research methodology; they have the opportunity to learn and understand the principles of social work, and master social work methods through theoretical lectures that are implemented in the educational process. The preferred theoretical concept builds on an integrative understanding of social work as an applied behavioural science discipline.

- *How to do social work? - training/lessons.*

Lessons in social skills/training are intended to teach participants of education, by using training methods and techniques, how to use social work in practice and acquire the necessary skills for its performance; because during practice (or in practice) it is often already too late. Training activities have two basic levels - work with individuals, families and groups, and activities stimulating the development of student personality at the level of the acquisition of new skills, self-reflection and self-knowledge (the basic instrument of social workers is considered their personality and skills).

- *How to do social work best? – practise (professional working experience).*

When we want to do social work as well as possible, students should have enough theoretical knowledge and skills for its performance, and this effect can only be achieved in practice - in performing the profession itself or during professional practice performed during the study. The aim of professional experience as a whole is acquiring the practical skills in direct work with clients and for clients.

The area of education in social work, qualifying or lifelong, is the subject of interest of many authors, from qualifying theses to representative international comparative studies. In the Czech-Slovak area, in the past 10 years just one specialist journal oriented on this topic, the journal *Sociální práce/Sociálna práca* (Social Work) dealt with the issue.

Schavel and Davideková (2005, p. 92 – 93) define the desired graduate knowledge and skills of social work graduates in bachelor's and master's degrees as follows:

- overview of political and social contexts of social phenomena and processes
- models addressing social problems
- knowledge of human rights, mechanisms of discrimination, options to organize and manage social processes.

The study program should then "... provide students with theoretical knowledge along with professional experience." (c. d., p. 92)

Navrátilová (2011) describes several approaches to the education of social workers, she distinguishes between practical and theoretical education. Practical education is "... one of the components of professional training... This type of education is characterized by a focus on practical experience in social work and the conditions under which it is carried out." (c. d., p. 42) Theoretical education then "... includes a broader process ... in which learning goes beyond the immediate requirements of practice, and integrates work tasks and demands into a wider professional context." (c. d., p. 42) It focuses on three possible approaches, i.e. the "evidence-based" approach, the reflexive approach, and the competency approach; and based on the research, she concluded that the education of social workers mostly contains integrative strategies whereby components of all three approaches participate in balance. (c. d., pp. 43 – 49)

As follows from the previous part of the text, we deal with an analysis of teaching in its entirety, not differentiating whether the subjects are oriented to theory or practice. The key question is how the issue of unemployment is dealt with in teaching.

The outputs are divided into two parts, where teaching provided at each department is analyzed separately, including a summary of the most important findings; then in the end the findings are listed based on a comparison of both analyzes and recommendations directed at possible innovations of working with unemployment in tertiary education in the field of social work.

In the following main part of the text, we present the results of the analysis of syllabi/information sheets and the questionnaire survey among teachers of both departments.

6.3 Department of Social Work of the Institute of Social Studies and Therapeutic Pedagogy of Comenius University in Bratislava (Slovak Republic)

6.3.1 Type and scope of subjects teaching the issue of unemployment

Unemployment is a social phenomenon that appears in different forms and often has a disastrous impact on the lives of individuals and even societies, and it must be considered in different contexts - not only social but also psychological, economic, legal, etc. These contexts cannot be understood without basic information about social work, economics, sociology, psychology, law, etc. The university education of social workers and subsequent experience in social work requires its implementers to have a lot of knowledge and skills from different areas of social life. Being competent to work in the field of social work with unemployed people, employment services and employment policy requires knowledge and competences that students of social work - future helping professionals - must get during their studies and subsequently apply in practice. The Department of Social Work, Faculty of Education, University in Bratislava in the field of study in the social work specialization provides full-time and part-time education at all levels of university studies.

In general, it can be concluded that in both study plans/programs it is in the bachelor's (see Table 13) and master's (see Table 14) degrees that the teachers address the issue of unemployment in the whole complex of subjects, i.e. in compulsory subjects as well as compulsory optional ones. This fact must then be assessed positively, because without the basic knowledge of other subjects or without linking the issues in question with other areas of university education, students cannot think in context and often also correctly. Students receive the first information about unemployment in the first year of study in subjects such as Introduction to Economics, Introduction to Demography, Sociology, History and Principals of

Social Work. It is obvious that these are relevant theoretical contexts that always present the issue from a different perspective. Because of the number of hours devoted to the issue within individual subjects, however, it is a relatively marginal area. Based on the available materials and information from teachers, the overall extent of the course dealing with problems of unemployment does not exceed 5 hours in the first year of the bachelor's degree.

The second and third year of the bachelor's degree brings deeper insight not only into social problems, but also to the very nature of the scope and performance of social work in practice. Increased attention to the issue of unemployment is paid within the compulsory subjects, where the total number of hours in relation to unemployment is 18 hours, while most is used in teaching Social Prevention (8 of 12 hours). In addition, in the second year students can already choose compulsory optional subjects, which are selected by students on the basis of their profiling or preference to work with the target group of social work. Students who are interested in working with the target group of social work, with the unemployed and other entities in the labour market (employers, employment agencies, etc.) can thus choose the specialized subject Employment Services with total time of 24 hours. In the third year, this subject is followed by an option to choose the subject Social Work with Unemployed People (it can be completed only if the prerequisite is met, which is the subject Employment Services), again with the duration of 24 hours. Important contextual information about the issue of unemployment, however, is also found in other compulsory optional subjects aimed at different target groups (Gender Studies, Socially Excluded Communities, Homeless People, etc.), or specificities of social work as a profession (Social Work in Non-Profit Organizations, Volunteering in Social Work). If interested, students can also use optional courses available, which are designed to deepen knowledge in selected areas. Based on the information provided, considerable scope for issues of unemployment is created in the education of the subjects Social Assistance and Material Deprivation, with a total hours of 14 hours (of 48 hours).

The master's degree of study deals with the issue of unemployment less than in the bachelor's degree, which is logical and unsurprising due to the goals and graduate profile. In general, 7 hours are used to deal with the issue. Within the key subject for social policy it takes 4 hours, and marginally it is taught in the context of the objectives of subjects (Social Inequality and Exclusion - a compulsory subject, and Gender Studies - compulsory optional), where it takes the remaining 3 hours. The specified number of hours (and thus information on the topic) are acquired by all students who complete the master's degree of study. Many students, however,

address the theme/issue of unemployment in their research (within the subjects Methodology of Science and Research Methods, Statistical Data Processing in Research, Interpretive Procedures, etc.), or then in their final (diploma) theses under the guidance of advisers.

Based on the available materials (information sheets and syllabi of subjects) it can be stated that the issue of unemployment is presented across both degrees of the study program of social work. Although marginally, it is still part of the initial introduction core subjects that are required for successful entry into the understanding of the wide scope and complexity of social work. It is present across the study, while the problem of unemployment is addressed by lecturers with key target groups of social work, but also in teaching procedures and the specifics of social work in terms of different organizational concepts. Moreover, in this study program we find two separate subjects focused on issues of unemployment for those interested in further work in this area. At the same time, it can be stated that the issue of unemployment is more emphasized in the bachelor's degree of study.

In terms of types of subjects including social work, it can be stated that the issue is prevailing in practice-oriented subjects that are aimed at developing the skills of future social workers acting in the performance of the practice of social work. On the other hand, we can see the significant under-dimensionality of the issue in the master's degree of study, indicating gaps in the theoretical reflection of the issue in future graduates. We believe that due to the demanding processes on labour markets in socio-political contexts, but also legal and so on, this important issue (especially in Slovakia) is undervalued. If the master's degree is to prepare qualified employees also for social policy (in our case, in particular for employment policy), for the area of science and research in social work, thus currently only a few subjects (or their parts) exist that this phenomenon can present in a broader context (economic, political, legal, transnational), and it means that opportunities to receive some competence in this area for master's degree graduates of social work are very limited. The optimal solution would be if the study program includes subjects such as Labour Market and Employment Policy, Labour Law, the European Union and its Legislation in Socio-Political Contexts (Employment Policy), etc. The listed subjects are planned for the prepared master's degree program in the next comprehensive accreditation of the master's degree at the Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava, which begins in 2014.

In terms of hours, we find relatively marginal representation of the issue in a package of compulsory courses (23 hours of the 1008 teaching hours for theoretical education, which represents 2.28% of the entire bachelor's degree of study). On the other hand, in addition to the "classic" theoretical subjects in the bachelor's degree of study (see Table 13), we find a

relatively well-saturated offer of rather practically - rather than theoretically - oriented subjects of compulsory optional character. The offer of two specialized compulsory optional subjects in the total of 48 hours (the proportion of the total amount of compulsory optional/optional subjects that students must complete at minimum during the study is 8% of the total amount of 600 hours) offers, however, quite wide scope for students to familiarise themselves with the issue. We also welcome the fact that the issue is also presented (albeit marginally) in a number of other subjects (with approximately 20 hours, the proportion of the total number of compulsory optional and optional subjects with 600 hours in total, i.e. together with specialized subjects up to 11.33 %, which can be seen as a positive fact). The anchoring of the issue is also a positive fact because it is part of the subjects where it should be actually discussed or lectured. Unemployment (as already mentioned in other parts of the textbook) has a wider context, and without basic information about relevant areas of reference sciences it would be impossible to understand its causes, consequences and context.

Table 13 - *Unemployment in teaching at the bachelor's degree of study*

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Type of Subject</i>	<i>Total Time Dedicated to Subject in Hours</i>	<i>Year and Degree</i>	<i>Number of Teaching Hours</i>	<i>Form of Teaching</i>
Introduction to Economics	compulsory	24	Year 1 - bachelor	2 hours	lecture
Introduction to Demography	compulsory	24	Year 1 - bachelor	1 hour	lecture + lessons
Sociology I	compulsory	24	Year 1 - bachelor	1 hour	lecture + seminary
History and Foundations of Social Work I	compulsory	36	Year 1 - bachelor	1 hour	lecture
Risky Social Phenomena	compulsory	36	Year 2 - bachelor	2 hours	lecture + seminary
Social Prevention and Counselling (Social Prevention)	compulsory	36 (12 for Social Prevention)	Year 2 - bachelor	8 hours	seminary
Field Social Work	compulsory	24	Year 2 - bachelor	2 hours	lecture + seminary
Community Development and Community Work	compulsory	24	Year 2 - bachelor	2 hours	seminary
Evaluation and Assessment in Social Work	compulsory	24	Year 2 - bachelor	2 hours	seminary + lesson
Social policy	compulsory	36	Year 2 - bachelor	2 hours	lecture + seminary
Social Work in Non-Profit Organizations	compulsory optional	24	Year 3 - bachelor	2 hours	lecture + seminary
Introduction to Gender Studies	compulsory optional	24	Year 1 to 3 - bachelor	1 hour	seminary
Social Work in Excluded Communities	compulsory optional	24	Year 2 to 3 - bachelor	1 - 2 hours	seminary
Homeless People and Social Work	compulsory optional	24	Year 2 to 3 - bachelor	1 hour	seminary
Volunteering in Social Work	compulsory optional	24	Year 1 to 3 - bachelor	1 hour	seminary
Employment Services	compulsory optional	24	Year 2 - bachelor	24 hours	seminary
Social Work with Unemployed People	compulsory optional	24	Year 3 - bachelor	24 hours	seminary + lessons
Social Assistance	Optional	24	Year 1 to 3 - bachelor	4 hours	seminary
Material Deprivation (Poverty)	Optional	24	Year 1 to 3 - bachelor	10 hours	seminary
Total				91/92 hours	

Source: processed by the authors

In the master's degree (see Table 14), teaching of the issue represents a negligible percentage of the total number of hours for theoretical instruction. This is mainly because now it is not a specialized subject in the current study program, and it appears only marginally, or in creating the final thesis (as stated in another part of the text).

Table 14 - *Unemployment in teaching at master's degree of study at the Pedagogical Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava*

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Type of Subject</i>	<i>Total Time Dedicated to Subject in Hours</i>	<i>Year and Degree</i>	<i>Number of Teaching Hours</i>	<i>Form of Teaching</i>
Social policy	compulsory optional	48	Year 1 – master	4 hours	seminary
Social Inequality and Social Exclusion	compulsory	24	Year 1 – master	1 hour	lecture
Gender Studies	compulsory optional	24	Year 1 – master	2 hours	seminary
Total				7 hours	

Source: processed by the authors

6.3.2 How is the issue of unemployment dealt with?

In addition to the issue and its duration in hours, it is undoubtedly important to also monitor **how this issue is handled**. In processing this aspect of teaching unemployment, we started from spontaneously given responses. It is therefore a subjective assessment of teaching by lecturers.

The bachelor's degree is characterized by incorporating the issue into topics that are closely related to this phenomenon (e.g. linking economic policy with employment policy, labour market economic contexts, psychological impacts of unemployment on personality, preventive measures and labour market, etc.), and they may also encounter the topic/area in the course of professional practice, in creating the final thesis, and often in training social skills, where they can model various situations related to unemployment (e.g. group work with unemployed people, training of entrance interviews, training of a part of social counselling with unemployed people, dysfunctional families where unemployment appeared, etc.).

The master's degree is rather characterized by understanding (presentation) of unemployment

in the sense of "higher level", which means that rather the social context of the labour market is looked at, and unemployment is dealt more often within the personal interest of students in the given issue, or it occurs in the contexts of gender studies, social inequality and exclusion, and so on.

The following document and questionnaire analyses for lecturers describe the content of subjects in relation to the presentation/work on the topic of unemployment in the educational process:

Within the subject ***Introduction to Economics*** the issue of employment/unemployment is given in the form of lectures on the labour market and its forms, demand and supply of labour and motivation to work, the definition of the employable population, labour force, employment and unemployment, the method of the calculation of total unemployment, and the relationship between unemployment and inflation. The risk of the unemployed, the consequences of unemployment and the implementation of labour market policies (active and passive) is briefly presented.

In the subject ***Introduction to demography***, the lectures are used to teach the issue of the labour market in the context of population issues. Specifically, the following areas are covered:

- Mutual influences between demographic trends and the labour market at the national and regional levels - demographic determinants of the labour market and vice versa, effects of economic activities and employment on reproduction rates (in particular fertility and starting families, as well as migration and mortality).
- Analyses focused on the population of productive and non-productive age, including the calculation of indicators (various indices of dependence).
- Forecasting the development of labour. Methodologically they are forecasts derived from the forecast of population development. In terms of their content, they are analyses of the expected impact of demographic trends on the labour market. The regional perspective is also important here.

Within the subject ***Evaluation and Assessment in Social Work***, students are to assess the life situation of the unemployed. Each student will receive the task, prepare and then present the result of their work.

Within the subject ***Social Work in Non-Profit Organizations*** – the unemployed are addressed as one of the target social groups. Students are taught the possibilities of non-profit organizations in the utilization of voluntary unemployed potential, and how they can

contribute to their education and training. Particular attention is paid to specific groups disadvantaged in the labour market from the legal point of view, as well as in terms of special programs created.

In the subject ***Sociology I and Social Inequality and Social Exclusion*** – the theme of unemployment is not programmatically and systematically learned, it is rather an indication of the conditions in the context of the subject. The issue of unemployment is also often used ad hoc, with illustrative examples.

In legal disciplines, the topic of unemployment is taught in the subjects ***Social Assistance, Material Deprivation and Labour Law***, where in all the subjects in question the topic is focused on relevant legislation and its application in practice.

Within the subject ***History and Introduction to Social Work I*** – the topic of unemployment is lectured as a phenomenon of the 20th century, which was also reflected by social work. Since the early 20th century, the number of clients of social work (poor and sick) expanded in this group. The topic of unemployment is also lectured in relation to the development of insurance schemes.

In the subject ***Risky social phenomena*** the topic of unemployment is learned as one of the causes of socio-pathological phenomena, and in the subject ***Social Prevention and Counselling (Social Prevention)*** in the context of prevention programs focused on a particular target group at all levels of prevention.

Within the subject ***Field Social Work***, the topic of unemployment arises in the context of the issue of unemployed people as a target group of social work and a forefield of homelessness.

In the subject ***Community Development and Community Work*** the topic of unemployment arises in the diagnosis of local communities. Within the demographic profile, the students are discovering the unemployment rate in their area. The linking of individual profiles into the final diagnosis must be evaluated in terms of how unemployment is related to the infrastructure of the area, educational level and other factors.

In the subject ***Social Policy*** (in the bachelor's and master's degrees of study) in one of the lectures teaching this subject, the topic is focused on issues of work precarization as a result of the modernization of the welfare state, the issue of working poor people, and new social risks. The issues are presented in contrast with previous decades, and particularly the period before the crisis of the welfare state. In both cases, the lectures emphasise the economic and social consequences, and the adjustment of systems (society of employment vs. flexible wage labour).

The second lecture of the subject ***Social Policy*** focuses on employment policy and its

instruments, relations of economic policy with employment policy, and their impacts on unemployment in different contexts. The bachelor's degree of study emphasizes rather a basic definition of each topic through lectures, and the master's is oriented to understanding the broader context of the issue in question in the context of its links to other state policies and its impact on society and specific people.

The subject ***Gender Studies***, that is lectured in the master's degree of study, deals with the issue of unemployment through statistics and expert analysis; the role of gender in society and its impact on life choices, and the gender aspects of employment/unemployment; gender segregation of jobs; the disadvantaged position of women in the labour market - mothers, women over 45, gender audit of organizations; glass ceiling phenomenon.

In the subject ***Introduction to Gender Studies*** the method of teaching is similar to the teaching of Gender Studies, however, it focuses less specifically on employment and rather on gender in society and organizations, gender-based discrimination also in employment, as well as gender socialization and the choice of occupation/employment

The subject ***Social Work in Socially Excluded Communities*** addresses the issue more through scientific studies and personal stories; topics: double discrimination of Roma women in the labour market, measures to support employment, regional programs - the priorities of the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in employment.

The subject ***Homeless People and Social Work*** introduces the problem of unemployment among homeless people and their difficulties to enter the labour market in the context of searching for options to address the unemployment of homeless people, mainly because of the lack of identification documents and bad experience with their payment of ad hoc work.

The subject ***Volunteering in Social Work*** works with the theme of unemployment in connection with explaining the phenomenon of volunteering as a temporary alternative and support of employment, or using the period of unemployment for volunteering work.

The issue of unemployment is not directly covered in the subjects ***Philosophical Basis of Social Work, Methodology of Science and Logic, Human Ecology*** (bachelor's degree) and ***Theory of Social Conflicts, Environmental Policy, Methodology of Science*** - in social anticipation, knowledge and forecasting (master's degree) - only indirectly.

The subject ***Philosophical Basis of social Work*** identifies the issue in connection with the negative effects of unemployment on the integrity of the personality, the threat of loss of identity, the risk of socio-pathology and exclusion.

In the subject ***Methodology of Science and Logic*** the phenomenon of unemployment is identified in the context of social forecasts relating to the intellectual potential of theorists of

social sciences and politicians, and with the ability of society to acquire scientific priorities "to see further and better".

In the subjects ***Human Ecology and Environmental policy*** this topic is identified in relation to the environment, to economic and environmental limits in relation to the working environment; the environmental policy to protect good quality of life in the regions (and society); unemployment is also the product of the working environment limited by environmental criteria (exploitation of energy sources, environmentally questionable acts, etc.);

In the subject ***Theories of Social Conflicts*** the phenomenon of unemployment is identified by social inequalities, contradictions between rich and poor, and discrimination in the division of labour framed by intellectualization (technical enhancement, digitization, automation and previously robotization); knowledge-based economies also produce unemployed people (paradoxically). The phenomenon of unemployment is also identified by socio-political strategies, the solidarity level, and functional or dysfunctional understanding of the "free market" in which the phenomenon of "planning" state interventionism is needed - in a reasonable and rationally justified extent.

In core subjects the issue is taught very intensively, when the goal of the subject ***Employment Services*** is to clarify the social work issues of employment and the labour market in Slovakia to students - its objectives, functions, tools and the impact of economic policy on employment. To clarify the causes of unemployment to students, to cover the history of unemployment, and to familiarize students with theories of unemployment in terms of major theoretical schools. Another objective is to show the causes and consequences of unemployment, finding options to address unemployment in Slovakia and the EU, and to present all opportunities for employment services not only in terms of the employed and the unemployed, but also from the perspective of employers. The aim is also to introduce basic information on high-risk groups in the labour market, and to define the place and role of social workers in employment services. In the following subject ***Social Work with Unemployed People*** the goal is to introduce optimal forms, approaches, methods and techniques in social work with unemployed people, and to teach students to motivate unemployed clients to increase their education, seek a job, and improve the communication of clients with their potential employers. To clarify the social consequences of unemployment to students, and to teach students about high-risk groups of unemployed clients. To teach students to work with the client's social network and benefit from potential client resources in the labour market. To highlight the importance of retraining for unemployed clients, and to

describe projects and programs for families with unemployed members, and to discuss the principles of work with families with unemployed members, and to introduce not only options for intervention, but also prevention. Within the seminars, entrance interviews are trained; curriculum vitae, cover letters, job applications are prepared; work with ads, and field visits to the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. The goal of the seminars is to experience and understand the status of an unemployed person in the labour market in the context of the role of social workers.

Based on the processing of the answers of lecturers teaching subjects in which the issue of unemployment is targeted or marginally occurs, it can be said that the issue and the way students of bachelor's degree work with it is more than sufficient. Every lecturer in the subject in question gives 1-2 lessons dealing with this issue, or the topic is used across the study in semesters. The issue of unemployment strongly resonates as an important element in the university education of social workers, in particular because it is a serious social phenomenon that addresses a large group of people with big implications not only on the lives of individuals. The topic is reflected in all forms and methods of social work. Unemployment affects almost all target groups and, therefore, it is considered significant. The answers also show a historical context, which is important for students to know, to understand its development, course, causes and consequences, or current options for its addressing, etc.

Lecturers answered the question of **minimum knowledge or competencies of graduates**, often giving information related to the subject or the lecturer's area of interest, but some specific answers occurred that can be inspiring and beneficial for educators in social work. The following statements can be considered as interesting findings:

"Graduates of social work should be familiar with the general aspects of unemployment - they should be informed about the development level and structure of unemployment, should know the factors affecting unemployment, and the impacts of unemployment on different sectors of society. They should have all the necessary skills to work with unemployed persons or persons at risk of unemployment, as it is a serious social problem, the addressing of which should also be with the contribution of social work." Similarly also another answer was formulated: *"Graduates should understand the basic concepts and contexts in relation to the functioning of the labour market, i.e. the functioning of economic mechanisms, the socio-political context; they should understand what unemployment is and how it arises, what types of unemployment exists... They should also be familiar with the full range of consequences of*

unemployment at the micro-, meso- and macro-levels, and understand them. It is very important to know the national, i.e. Slovak situation, development and structure of unemployment, to understand regional disparities, to have at least a basic overview of the Act on Employment Services, and, of course, they should have acquired the specific requirements for working with unemployed clients."

Furthermore, in addition to the above-mentioned, the statements included responses *that "graduates of social work should know the impact of unemployment on people, the psychological, social and economic consequences of unemployment, options for work with unemployed, the institutional network, statistics on the development of unemployment, causes of unemployment, and employment policy."*

Graduates *"should be familiar with the relevant legislation in force, and should have skills in working with unemployed clients for the purpose of their activating and self-employment."*

Following the above, we can mention another similar response, saying that *"graduates should know the specifics of this target group: living, attitudes, values of unemployed people. Their potential and abilities. Instruments which could be used to mobilize labour potential. They should be able to orient themselves in the legislative standards and utilization of social resources."*

Often answers were given with the character that several lecturers stated *"graduates should be able to define the term of social policy and unemployment theoretically, the consequences for individuals, families, society, methods of addressing unemployment (experience from abroad), forms and methods of work with unemployed people, the specifics of work with disadvantaged groups of unemployed people, legislation and prevention."*

There were also some answers in relation to the acquisition of the practical skills of students, when a lecturer stated that *"graduates should know the philosophical and theoretical foundations and social policy in the context of this topic, the actual current situation in Slovakia and abroad, and the prevention of unemployment. Practical skills of working with unemployed clients - through socio-psychological training (training in social skills)."*

"Graduates should understand the mechanism of the labour market, employment policy, activities of state and local governments, and support the options and measures, and specifics of social work while working with vulnerable groups."

"Graduates should know at least the basic concepts (characteristics, types ...) and have the skills to work with this target group (intervention, counselling, education ...)."

The lecturer of one of the key subjects (except the two specialized) said about the issue *that "graduates should have knowledge and skills in:*

- *basic information of free market functioning in capitalism, the link between employment and economic cycles, implications and functioning of Keynesian and monetarist intervention; interests, goals and options of individual participants in the labour market;*
- *types of unemployment and the possibility of working with them;*
- *impact of globalization on employment, outsourcing, historical development of employment in the context of industrialization and the transition to the service society;*
- *employment society, educational society and new social risks;*
- *flexibility of work, public employment and the economic and social impacts;*
- *importance of state intervention and collective bargaining agreements and their implications;*
- *factors of power affecting the opportunities for individual groups in the labour market;*
- *the review of current opportunities in the home country and abroad to get a job, or assistance in the case of the absence of an opportunity to get full-time employment;*
- *the ability to offer alternatives for people falling into the category of employable with difficulties - approaching retirement age, ex-offenders, disabled persons, minorities, etc.;*
- *the ability to understand, analyze, reflect and critically evaluate current and developed measures on the labour market, and their possible impact on clients.*

The second lecturer in a key subject stated that it is important "for graduates to know and to have skills in:

- *the labour market and its specifications, labour market imbalances, types and consequences of unemployment;*
- *identifying the role of social workers in social work with unemployed people;*
- *forms, approaches, methods and techniques of social work with unemployed people;*
- *prevention and intervention in unemployment;*
- *possibilities for social work with unemployed people, and the use of resources for their successful entry to the labour market;*
- *specifics of work with high-risk groups in the labour market and social work with families with unemployed members;*
- *being able to prepare themselves for an entrance interview and prepare their clients for it;*
- *skills practicing for work with unemployed people;*
- *knowledge of employment and the labour market and its functioning."*

Other addressed teachers (who do not work with the issue in their subjects, however, they

expressed their opinion) considered the minimum knowledge and skills of graduates in unemployment to be the following:

- *unemployment from the macro-social perspective - what influences it - necessary linkage to the (macro) sociology, social policy, philosophy (of work);*
- *unemployment from the micro-social perspective of other disciplines - psychology + RCC doctrine (what is work - God's purpose);*
- *unemployment and addressing unemployment - applied (micro) social work - in specific areas - volunteering (one option), work on improving social skills (communication, negotiation, curriculum vitae, image), increasing self-esteem;*
- *unemployment - allowances - the impact of this assistance ...;*
- *addressing unemployment in terms of macro-social projects, interventions ...;*
- *preventive measures of corporate social work against voluntary unemployment increasing, etc.*

Another of the lecturers said that graduates in social work should have:

- *knowledge at the level of macro-social factors of occurrence and addressing in terms of the economic, social, and political approach;*
- *knowledge of the micro-social level - training for jobs, getting a job, keeping a job, loss and change of a job, the impact factors of unemployment (in terms of psychological, social, behavioural, and spiritual (e.g. existential frustration)), the development phases of unemployment, options of social work to drive the potential of individuals in the dyad, in a group, a family, work in the community.*

The answers of teachers also included the minimum knowledge and skills to work in the field of employment services, and specific work with a specific target group of unemployed people, what is also actually and theoretically taught, and in some subjects with seminars and lessons interactively processed or taught using training. Basic competencies that students should have in this area on the basis of answers may be considered as follows:

- *competences to implement existing legislation on the basis of its thorough knowledge;*
- *competencies to develop legislation, and to create plans, programs and projects for the issue in question;*
- *competencies to work with unemployed people, their families, employers in various forms of social work using different methods and techniques of social work;*
- *competencies to train/practise social skills (usable e.g. in work with unemployed people)*

- to increase their ability to apply in the labour market;
- competencies to develop and implement preventive measures, etc.

Another research question was directed to finding views whether the subject **is taught enough in the study program.**

Many lecturers stated that in their opinion the topic is given in the sufficient extent, and they thought it is based on the responses of students at state final exams (*"for example, due to questions on state exams, which are formulated from the legal point of view and also from the point of view of social work*). Sufficient attention could be seen mainly in the bachelor's degree study. The master's degree was taken more sceptically (*e.g. "Due to the wide scope of social work, the way of the promised specialization in the master's program is probably quite promising; it will be focused on social policy. It also seems to me that the new bachelor's program is prepared more systematically also for this target group, but again this is just my feeling."*). The majority of respondents stated that the sufficiency of learning the topic is presented in the study program itself, and that according to discussions with students at their lectures, they conclude that they are also well filled (key subjects dealing with the issue) with quality content. An interesting view has also been brought by a lecturer, who assessed and connected the adequacy of introducing the issue with a teacher's personality (*"yes, if I can assess it, by the personality of the teacher who teaches the courses related"*). Sufficiency was also assessed as follows: *"In addition, this topic is often chosen by students as an area either theoretical processing or research of their final theses."*

But there were also more critical perspectives of lecturers on the sufficiency of the amount of time given to the topic of unemployment. As an example, the following statement can be given: *"as it is the largest social group in Slovakia, it is certainly not given due attention. During the studies, more scope should be given to work with unemployed people in terms of unemployment prevention and crisis intervention. We should teach students to be able to develop independent and effective programs to work with small specific groups of young unemployed people, as well as for work with individuals. We should teach students to evaluate their own program, so that they do not produce new ineffective programs."*

Interesting is also another statement when a lecturer could not reliably assess the situation, but assumes that *"if there is insufficient attention, it is primarily due to a reduction in the time of contact hours of subjects, resulting in a lack of time to devote to all target groups of social work. A focus on more specific intervention with unemployed clients with links to sufficient theoretical knowledge about this phenomenon."*

According to one lecturer of the key subjects (except the two specialized subjects) in relation to the area, it appears that *"the issue is not dealt with sufficiently, and in his opinion it is needed:*

- *to emphasise finding working alternatives for livelihoods for groups for which the labour market does not offer any employment that would cover their living needs, instead of laying emphasis on re-routing clients to activation works and lower working conditions;*
- *to prepare students more consistently to understand current phenomena and processes in the labour market, to be able to reflect and respond to current and future changes, and not to endanger clients with their ignorance."*

Other addressed teachers considered the following knowledge and skills of graduates in the field of unemployment as minimum:

"Theoretically, yes, but there is a lack of application dimension of social work + practice (in the field)"

"I cannot judge it, however, due to the responses in the state examinations I would focus more on employment policy."

"I feel the effects of unemployment on the health of unemployed people, and particularly on the health and health protection of long-term unemployed persons, as dealt with insufficiently and needed to focus on more."

The reviews on paying sufficient attention to this issue in the study program vary. Many consider the issue sufficiently given, but many others see unused scope for the issue. This fact may also be caused by a lack of mutual awareness of teachers about the content of the subjects taught. However, the information obtained is valuable and important to reflect and highlight those areas of training of social workers for work with unemployed people that teachers perceive as the key ones.

6.4 Department of Social Work of the Faculty of Social and Economic Studies of Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem (Czech Republic)

Teaching is carried out only in bachelor's degree, in full-time and part-time.

Graduate Profile

Graduates will receive the knowledge and skills necessary for the work of social workers in the civil service, local governments, non-profit organizations, social and educational facilities. They are familiar with relevant legislation and have the necessary knowledge and skills in the theory and methods of social work, psychology, sociology and pedagogy, enabling them to work with clients and influence the social situation of individuals, groups and communities. A great deal of emphasis is placed on practice in different types of organizations providing social work services.

Possible career orientations - requirements for knowledge and skills

Social workers are confronted with the issue of unemployment very often, the performed investigation showed that social work is rather about solving the difficult social situation of clients, while unemployment itself is either a cause or a consequence of this unfavourable situation.

The primary tool for working with the target group of unemployed people or people at risk of unemployment is therefore consulting, or various forms of assistance aimed at preventing unemployment, strengthening their position in the labour market, making clients more complete or powered - self-knowledge, self-presentation, soft skills, as well as addressing the impact of unemployment on the clients themselves and their surroundings - the economic, social, etc. A characteristic feature is a certain fragmentation among a number of organizations and institutions that have different objectives and instruments.

It means that it is difficult to define generally applicable requirements for the knowledge and skills that social workers should have at their disposal in connection with the issue of unemployment.

A question is suggested - how is it possible for the qualifying education to prepare future social workers to work with a specific target group? For the purposes of this textbook, we will assume that the undisputed aim of learning is to provide a foundation that will be universally applicable, regardless of the specific target group or type of organization where graduates will work later. But it is also desirable in the course of study to provide an opportunity to focus

more closely on a selected area of social work, either through the specialization of professional practice, or compulsory or optional courses. This view is followed by the form of the field of study conducted at the Department of Social Work of the Faculty of Social and Economic Studies of Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem.

So what should graduates of social work acquire during their studies, in accordance with the graduate profile and possibilities of working in the field of social work, in relation to the issue of unemployment and opportunities to work with unemployed people?

- to understand the phenomenon of unemployment from the perspective of sociology, social policy, psychology, psychopathology, law, social work, etc.;
- to know the specifics of various forms of unemployment in relation to the possibilities and limits of working with the relevant target group;
- to be able to assess the life situation of the client;
- to know the network services and possible addressing of difficult life situation of clients, whose characteristics include job loss, risk position in the labour market, the inability to keep a job, etc.;
- to gain practical skills for conducting interviews, planning with individuals and groups;
- to be able to handle difficult situations working with clients, to be reflective and introspective, to work on their professional development and personal well-being.

6.4.1 The type and range of subjects where unemployment issues are taught

Based on the analysis of the syllabi of individual subjects and research among teachers of the Department, we found that the issue of unemployment is dealt with in sixteen subjects, in all cases these subjects are compulsory.

A detailed overview is in the following table.

Table 15 - *Unemployment in teaching at SPD of the Faculty of Social and Economic Studies in UJEP*

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Type of Subject</i>	<i>Total Time Dedicated to Subject in Hours</i>	<i>Year of Study</i>	<i>Number of Teaching Hours</i>	<i>Form of Teaching</i>
Social policy	Compulsory	39	Year 3	4 hours	Lecture, lessons
Labour market and Unemployment	Compulsory	26	Year 2	26 hours	Lecture
Psychopathology	Compulsory	52	Year 2	2 hours	Lecture, lessons
Special Needs Pedagogy	Compulsory	26	Year 1	2 hours	Lecture
Health and Illness	Compulsory	26	Year 1	1 hour	Lecture
Methods of Individual Social Work	Compulsory	52	Year 2	4 hours	Lecture, lessons
Methods of Group Social Work	Compulsory	52	Year 2	4 hours	Lecture, lessons
Minorities	Compulsory	26	Year 2	Marginally	Lecture
Personal management	Compulsory	26	Year 1	4 hours	Lecture
Social Skills Training	Compulsory	52	Year 2	8 hours	Lessons
Andragogy	Compulsory	26	Year 1	6 hours	Lecture
Theories of Social Work	Compulsory	39	Year 1	4 hours	Lecture, lessons
Work with Families	Compulsory	39	Year 2	2 hours	Lecture, lessons
Supervision of Professional Practice	Compulsory	28	Year 2 and 3	2 hours	Lessons
Introduction to Economics	Compulsory	26	Year 1	1 hour	Lecture
Law	Compulsory	52	Year 1	2 hours	Lecture
Total		587		72	

Source: own investigation of authors

It was found that in the first year the topic is learned totally in 20 hours of Introduction to Economics, Law, Theory of Social Work, Health and Disease, Special Needs Pedagogy, Andragogy and Personnel Management. In all subjects it is a sub-topic that is discussed in the broader context of unemployment as a social phenomenon, or a problem or an option (in the field of possible solutions and approaches) to work with.

In the second year, the topic of unemployment is a key issue covered in the subject Labour Market and Unemployment (26 hours in total); it also means that this year the highest number of hours of teaching is focused on the topic, 42 hours in total. Other subjects in this year, which correspond to the selection criteria, are Training of Social Skills, Psychopathology, Individual Methods of Social Work and Work with Families.

In the third year, the lowest number of hours of instruction were focused on unemployment, 10 hours in the subject Social Policy, Methods of Group Social Work, Minorities, and Supervision of Professional Practice.

During the study, the issue of unemployment is taught in 72 hours in total, this represents 12.3% of education in subjects that are related somehow with this issue.

The study program is designed differently - it consists of compulsory and elective courses, in the bachelor's degree it is not possible to choose a partial specialization that would allow students to profile themselves through compulsory elective courses. Students at the Department of Social Work of the Faculty of Social and Economic Studies of Jan Evangelista Purkyně University complete all these courses because these courses are compulsory; in contrast, at the Department of Social Work of the Pedagogical Faculty of the Comenius University in Bratislava, part of the analysed courses falls into the category of compulsory optional, which means that not all students pass them.

6.4.2 How is the issue of unemployment taught?

In the subjects *Social Policy*, the topic of unemployment is one of the core topics, it is not a separate field of syllabus, but is done in relation to social policy objectives, the phenomenon of poverty and social inequality, active employment policy, social security systems, subjects and objects of social policy.

One of the key subjects focusing on the problem of unemployment is *Labour market and Unemployment*. The entire course is devoted to related topics of the labour market and unemployment; the basic premise is that unemployment is an organic part of the labour market. It focuses on the structure and dynamics of the labour market, its formation and functioning. The causes of unemployment, types, its impact on individuals and society are discussed. Next dealt with issues are the prevention of unemployment and tools to address its effects, and the possibilities to work with unemployed people in the context of contemporary society.

Psychopathology works with the theme of unemployment in relation to work and economic

issues with a focus on the reactions of individuals in the case of job loss and unemployment, mental changes, effects of unemployment on health, social importance of unemployment, and options for helping unemployed people.

In the subject *Special Needs Pedagogy*, attention is focused on the group of people with disabilities and their capabilities in the labour market. The group is described as a group of people highly vulnerable in relation to unemployment, with specific needs in this sphere of life. In addition to the analysis of risk factors, crucial attention is paid to the possibilities of improving the situation on the labour market, sheltered and open, tools supporting the employment of people with disabilities, especially in the social services system, but also in education.

The possible impact of unemployment on the health of individuals, preventive and corrective measures eliminating negative consequences of job loss and support systems for people with disabilities or at risk of unemployment are in areas taught in the subject *Health and Illness*, which are devoted to the topic of unemployment.

Methods of Group Social Work in the theory and application levels are focused on the possibilities of working with unemployed people in casework. Methods and techniques are presented, students learn to conduct interviews with clients after job loss, negotiate contracts, work in the context of various theoretical approaches, and to manage critical moments when working with clients.

The subject *Methods of Group Social Work* then pays particular attention to the target group of people at risk of unemployment and unemployed people - specifics, possibilities, and limits. Forms of group work with the target group are discussed - job clubs, education, assistance and development activities.

The subject *Minorities* takes the topic rather marginally, in relation to the issue of unemployment the course works mainly with the development of the concept of unemployment, the impact of changes in professional discourses, and differences between the concept focused on integration and the concept focused on social exclusion.

Within the subject *Personal Management*, attention is paid to the planning, recruitment and selection of employees, selection tools, potential differences, and specific demands in working with job-seekers who are unemployed for a long time, adaptation and development programs within organizations.

Social Skills Training focuses in the first phase on the knowledge of the student's own resources - perception of their own skills, the ability of self-realization and introspection related to the social situation, estimation of chances in the labour market due to the personal

approach. In the second stage, students are taught how to use the tools for self-knowledge and the self-development of others, students are prepared to use these techniques in working with individuals and groups in the context of social work.

Topics for the subject *Andragogy* includes the education of unemployed persons or persons at risk of unemployment, and working with unemployed adults in the context of andragogy understood as care and assistance.

In the subject *Theories of Social Work*, the issue of unemployment is dealt with in the fields devoted to defining the objectives and instruments of social work, life situations and their assessment, and social problems. Discussions about the various theoretical orientations and approaches include searching for the possible application of the approach when working with specific target groups, while persons at risk of unemployment and unemployed people are one of the groups that serve to demonstrate the specifics of each approach.

The course *Work with Families* includes work with specific casuistics of families to present tools used in social work with families. Unemployment as a cause or a consequence of an unfavourable family situation is present in the casuistics (that students bring from experience), very often, students plan processes and model strategies of working with families carrying this problem.

Supervision of Professional Practice - in this course, students bring issues from their own professional practice; they work individually or in groups to support the professional development of students in accordance with the principles of the profession. A significant part of the topics are associated with specific clients, often they are individuals, families or groups with many problems. Especially long-term unemployment is one of the parameters of the life situation of these clients; students often handle life scenarios (even multi-generational) of the clients with difficulties, as the need of these clients to be employed is seemingly or actually absent. The topic of unemployment is developed in Supervision to better understand the world of clients, accept, not evaluate, motivate, and be professional...

The question of unemployment is taught in lectures, seminars and lessons. The form of work varies - from peripheral integration in the context of other topics, through thorough theoretical development, to the specialized course that deals exclusively with the topic. In many practically, training- or support-oriented subjects, the topic also appears - from specific tools of work with the target group, and practicing their use in practice, through searching for motivational elements and ways of their integration into casework, to reflecting the possibilities and risks of working with the target group and ways of strengthening the professional skills of helping people.

Teachers of subjects were asked, what in their opinion would be the **minimum knowledge and skills of graduates related to the topic of unemployment and working with the target group of unemployed people and people at risk of unemployment risk?** The substantial part of the statements are listed below:

Knowing the specifics of unemployed people as the target group, the factors affecting the possible changes in the psychological, physical, social aspects, etc. ... To be able to use tools to eliminate the risk of unemployment, and in the event of a risky situation to be able to apply also non-standard or less conventional approaches in practice. To be able to work with the resulting effects of unemployment (worsened social status, financial situation, etc.).

To understand the types of unemployment, differences in the impact of different types, causes, possible instruments to address them - their implementation, limitations ...

Knowledge of the structure and dynamics of the labour market, its formation and functioning. Students should know why unemployment occurs, its benefits (motivation) and negatives (exclusion), how and why it arises, what are the types of unemployment, and how they can be reflected by individuals, businesses and states. They should know how to defend against it, and how it can be prevented. They should be able to separate long-term unemployment from other types, they should know which types they may encounter in social work.

To know social and individual causes, the effects on individuals and society, tools and programs limiting unemployment, forms of work with unemployed people, social security in the case of unemployment, the specifics of risk groups.

Students of SW willing to work in the SW institution system in the Czech Republic need almost no knowledge. However, if the Department is to direct students to establish a NGO that works with the theme of unemployment differently than in the current labour offices themselves, it would require a lot of knowledge and skills. I think that education at the Department should not be directed at copying the current institutional solutions.

The legal status of unemployed persons, theoretical knowledge on the effects of unemployment on individuals and their environment, impacts on society, practical skills - interviews and work with unemployed people.

The above-mentioned extracts from respondents show that their ideas about the knowledge and skills that during study future social workers should acquire to enter the profession in order to work in different institutional contexts, quite accurately correspond with the list defined on the basis of the profile of graduates and the real image of the field of social work.

Knowledge relates to understanding unemployment from the sociological, legal,

psychological, social and political perspectives. This knowledge should help to understand the causes of unemployment and opportunities of working with unemployed persons and persons at risk of unemployment, in the context of contemporary society, in order to help restore the social functioning of social work clients using relevant approaches, methods and techniques, as well as social assistance and support systems. The skills then include the ability to work with individuals, groups and communities in unfavourable situations related to unemployment, understanding the specific needs of these clients, and respecting their right to choose.

Respondents also assessed whether **the topic of unemployment had sufficient scope within the study program.**

At the level of knowledge, they assess the content and scope as adequate, a desirable extension could be practically-oriented subjects for specific forms of work with this target work group. It could also be useful, according to respondents, to use the experiences with unemployment of many students or people from their surrounding area. Reflecting on these experiences could contribute to a better understanding of the life situations of social work clients affected by unemployment.

Conclusion

Comparison can only be made in the range of bachelor's degree, because only at this level is the degree performed by both departments.

Based on the processing of information sheets and the syllabus of subjects dealing (specifically or marginally) with the issue of unemployment, we can state that the subject is presented sufficiently in the bachelor's study at both universities, i.e. intense insights into the issue of different (but relevant) perspectives and contexts is carried out.

In both cases, it is almost the same number of subjects (the Department of Social Work of the Pedagogical Faculty of the Comenius University, 17 compulsory and compulsory optional subjects, the Department of Social Work of the Faculty of Social and Economic Studies of Jan Evangelista Purkyně University, 16 compulsory subjects); at the DSW FSES JEPU no optional course focusing on issues of unemployment is taught, the DSW PF CU now offers two such optional courses.

The analysed documents and questionnaire survey show that the issue appears not only in key subjects (e.g. Introduction to Economics, Social Policy) and specific/specialized ones (e.g.

Labour Market and Unemployment, Employment Services, Social Work with Unemployed), but very often also in other subjects always linked mutually, and in the context of the objectives and content of education of the subject in question. The advantage of the bachelor's study program at DSW FSES JEPÚ in Usti nad Labem is that the compulsory subjects include the subject ***Labour Market and Unemployment*** with 26-hour allocation, which ensures (assumes) that all graduates of the bachelor's degree of study will have sufficient knowledge in the issue, while graduates of the bachelor's degree of study at DSW PF CU in Bratislava do not. Despite the fact that the time allocated for the issue is higher (48 hours), we can determine only approximately what percentage of graduates choose for their professional growth this 'specialization' through compulsory optional subjects (***Employment Services and Social Work with Unemployed People***). However, we can consider positive for both educational institutions that the issue is dealt with in various subjects sufficiently, the rules of the functioning of the labour market also appear in the subject *Introduction to Economy*, and other context of unemployment through employment policy as part of social policy within the scope of *Social Policy* incorporated into the study plans of both universities. At both schools, the lecturers reported in the questionnaire survey such fields of work with the issue, which in many cases coincide (the need for legislative knowledge of the area in question, handling methods and techniques of work with unemployed people, the ability to create prevention programs in unemployment, knowledge of the causes and consequences of unemployment - for individuals, families, society, etc.). Taking into account the individual graduate profiles (which are generally logically designed), we can conclude that graduates should be adequately prepared for the analysed and investigated work area after their bachelor's degree of study. The master's degree is offered at just one of the analyzed schools, so they cannot be compared, but we can critically note that the issue of the labour market and unemployment in the master's degree of study is not dealt with sufficiently.

It is worth noting that the subjects and lectures allocated relatively little scope to the regional aspects (specifics) of the labour market. Regional specificities occur in such subjects as Principles of Demography, and Social Work in Socially Excluded Communities. The issue of regional specifics of the labour market are absent (or not really found in the analysed documents or statements of respondents - we believe, however, that it occurs within the topics of employment policy, etc., although is not explicitly named) in specialized subjects related to the issue, therefore, it would be appropriate to give this area more emphasis in the context of education on unemployment and the labour market.

Some respondents (teachers at departments) consider graduates to be sufficiently prepared for

the issue, but there were also some critical responses, which cannot be overlooked. It would be optimal if the DSW PF CU in Bratislava incorporated the subject Labour Market and Unemployment into the compulsory subjects, as at the DSW FSES JEPU in Usti nad Labem. Comparison and analyzes should be required by all study programs of educators in social work, thus we achieve a comprehensive picture of the form, content and methods of the university preparation of helping professionals in employment policy and the labour market, which can be a challenge for the further investigation of the issue, and to optimize educational process in both countries and at all universities that train future professionals in this issue.

As optimal we consider (also based on the analysis of documents and responses of respondents), that due to differences of opinions on the adequacy of time allocated for the issue, if the lecturers of individual subjects should mutually communicate more about the content of the subjects they teach. The positive fact is that the issue is also addressed in other than specialized subjects, but the focus on the issue and the purity of its contents should be mainly in subjects relating to specific issues solved (Labour Market and Unemployment, Employment Services, Social Work with Unemployed People, etc.), but also within the subjects that allow students to profile themselves to the issue in question (Paper, Social Project, OJT, Practice/Training in Social Skills, Final Thesis, etc.) Key areas of the university education of social workers to work with unemployed people may include the following areas:

- preparing students to create actually usable programs and projects in practise, which can also be subsequently evaluated by them;
- practical education (practicing and using professional experience) to work with unemployed people;
- using the potential of students to develop solutions to the issues through papers and theses, their participation in the Student's Scientific and Professional Activities and their involvement in volunteering, for example, with the implementation of prevention programs in unemployment, work with families with unemployed member(s), etc.);
- increased demands on students in their preparation for seminars, lessons and tests themselves;
- publishing and recommending literature for the issue in question;
- introducing discussions and inviting lecturers from practise;
- preparing students for work with specific groups of unemployed people;

- emphasising much more regional characteristics (aspects) of the labour market in teaching, and preparing students for work with unemployed people and the labour market, even in the regional context, etc.

Summary

The issue of unemployment due to its seriousness is the subject of many analyses from various angles. The one that this monograph is focused on is based on the study of regional differences, and the role that social work plays in addressing particularly long-term unemployment. At the beginning we emphasized its comparative context, expressed a detailed analysis of the situation in the two regions that in their countries from this point of view are considered most at risk - Ústí na Labem in the Czech Republic and Gemer in Slovakia. On their example, we have tried to show the options of addressing the impact of long-term unemployment through social work.

The conclusions at the end of each chapter highlight several important findings. First and foremost it should be noted that although 20 years have passed since the division of the former federation, the outlines of the main problems in both countries are very similar. Apart from the traditional specifics of the two regions, in particular the industrial nature of the Ústí region and the ethnic composition of Gemer, the labour markets in the two regions are not very different. They are characterized by a low level of education, the outflow of skilled labour into the lucrative parts of both countries, and the gradual decline of industries that had provided job opportunities for low-skilled labour.

The tools that are at hand to address the current problems are also similar. It is both due to the fact that, even historically after 1990, one general employment policy was developed, and because these tools are commonly used in the European Union and are therefore also largely funded financially from European grants.

The chosen optics of social work has allowed to compare the roles of institutions and organizations dealing with the issue in both countries (and particularly in the regions). However, even here no significant differences were identified, although it is clear that in particular the position of community planning in the Czech Republic is more stable and sophisticated.

An important benefit of the publication is without doubt the comparison of educational programs, preparing for the field of social work those who are subsequently in the "front line" addressing the effects of unemployment, i.e. social workers. Here, naturally, some differences exist. However, since in the European Union the teaching of social work is largely unified, it is rather a difference of emphasis on some aspects of the work with unemployed people, rather than fundamental differences in the approach to teaching.

Finally, we have to give the explanatory note of the fact that the work of the Czech-Slovak team is issued in English. It is not that because both teams insisted to their rights to issue it in their own language how a sarcastic reader could think. The reason is that the presented comparison could be interesting not only for domestic interested parties in both countries, but also for readers in countries in the regions adjacent, i.e. in Germany and Hungary. The already mentioned fact that the field of social work in the European Union is perceived very similarly, was another factor that influenced the authors to present their work in this.

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