

CZ-HUMAN RIGHTS

ANNUAL PROGRAMME REPORT 2020: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The programme Human Rights has been running in the Czech Republic since 2018. The Programme Agreement was signed in 2019 and has been revised twice since then. The Ministry of Finance - the Programme Operator - approved the remaining two predefined projects in early 2020 and so all eight predefined projects are under way. In June 2020, the Programme Operator announced the first two open calls for proposals – Support for Roma platforms at local and regional level and Capacity building of Roma advisors – with the deadline for submission of applications at the end of November 2020. The process of application appraisal started thereafter. On the International Day of the Elimination of Violence against Women at the end of November, the Programme Operator announced the third open call for proposals for establishing new specialized services for victims of gender-based violence with the deadline for submission of applications in mid-March 2021.

The Programme Operator shares all information about the programme in Czech and English (including general information about the Norway Grants) on the website <https://www.eeagrants.cz/en/programmes/human-rights>. The upcoming events or interesting news are also available on social media (Facebook, Instagram). In close cooperation with the Office of the Government and with the help of other various entities, such as for example the Union of Towns and Municipalities, NGOs, Network of Healthy Cities, the Czech Television and the Czech Radio, the Ministry of Finance promoted the open calls to all relevant stakeholders and project applicants.

The Covid-19 pandemic has influenced human rights in the Czech Republic in 2020 with regard to measures adopted by the Czech Government to prevent the further spread. The developments in 2020 showed that the three programme areas remain highly relevant. The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the need for further action in the Czech Republic in order to achieve Roma inclusion, increased support of human rights (public institutions, people) and better prevention of domestic and gender-based violence. In order to reverse negative trends in the social circumstances of the Roma and to ensure effective protection of Roma against discrimination, the Czech Commissioner for Human Rights presented the follow-up Roma integration strategy to be implemented until 2030 for signature by the Prime Minister in December 2020. The Committee for the Prevention of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence has also issued a set of recommendations to the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Health, Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, and Prosecutor General's Office aimed at improving the prevention and protection of victims of domestic violence. The help to the victims of domestic and gender-based violence was also provided by the Czech Post, as its personnel were among the few people who may be in contact with the victims due to the lockdown. The mail delivery personnel were trained in recognising the signs of domestic violence, communicating with the victim and offering help.

The Programme Operator learned several valuable lessons from the programme implementation in 2020 when facing a new and unique challenge related in Covid-19 and its impacts. We would like to highlight very smooth and effective cooperation and communication among the Programme Operator, the National Focal Point, the Office of the Government,

the International Partner Organizations and the Financial Mechanism Office. We managed to organize all the necessary meetings (including the Cooperation Committee meeting) by using various web-communication tools, keep to the timeline of the Open Calls announcement and ensure programme publicity. With regard to the fact that all predefined projects are in the early stage of implementation, only some outputs or activities have been affected in terms of how and when they are, or were, realized. Although project promoters or their partners could not travel last year, they managed to communicate extensively online.

The total risk score of the programme remained unchanged. The Programme Operator removed two programmatic risks from the risk analysis that are not relevant at the stage of the programme. The risks are “limited impact of the programme on direct target groups due to lack of their interest to participate at trainings” and “social environment not in favour of programme's objectives and areas of support that creates challenges for programme's/projects' publicity”. Thanks to the hiring of new people, the Programme Operator reduced the likelihood of the risk “the lack of personal capacity to administer the programme”. The Covid-19 pandemic has also had an effect on three risk factors of the programme, namely time, programme performance against output and outcome targets, and bilateral relations. It has also affected and might further affect realization of projects in the future. Should Covid-19 continue to have a significant impact on society in the future, we would try to enable the smooth implementation of projects by being in frequent contact with project promoters and allowing for necessary modifications of projects.