



# **Annual Programme Report No.4 EEA Grants 2009-2014**

**Programme CZ04 – Children and Youth at Risk**

**Reporting period: 1.1.2016 – 31.12.2016**

**Programme Operator: Ministry of Finance**

**Programme Partner: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs**

**Donor Programme Partner: N/A**

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## 1. Executive summary

In August 2016, the Government of the Czech Republic discussed the Final Report on Implementation of the Action Plan for the National Strategy for Protection of Children's Rights for the Period 2012-2015, aimed to evaluate the current progress and success in accomplishing the objectives of the National Strategy implemented in the period 2012 - 2015. The report notes significant success in the shift of focus of activities of socio-legal protection towards supporting the biological family of the child so that they could grow up primarily in their natural environment, reducing institutional care and expanding foster care as preferable alternative care for those vulnerable children who cannot either temporarily or permanently grow up in their biological family. The most positive trend in the sector continues to be a gradual decline in the number of children placed in facilities for institutional care, in children's homes for children up to 3 years of age and homes for people with special needs that work in mode of social services and a gradual increase in the number of children placed in foster care, including foster care for a temporary period.

All projects under the programme except for the pre-defined project, i.e. two open call projects and eleven small grant scheme sub-projects were realized in 2016. The pre-defined project was cancelled in January 2016 due to political reasons. All programme outputs except for the outputs relating to PDP were fulfilled in 2016 and some were even overreached. A significant progress towards programme outcomes was made in 2016. Programme Operator expects that all set programme outputs and outcomes related to open call projects and small grant scheme sub-projects shall be reached and some indicators shall be even exceeded also thanks to approved additional activities. Two calls for additional activities in open call projects and SGS sub-projects were successfully realized in the first half 2016.

Several modifications of the programme were needed in 2016 in relation to the cancelled pre-defined project. The Programme Agreement was amended reflecting changes in programme budget and in Funds for bilateral relations. Funds from the cancelled PDP were partially distributed to 11 approved additional activities and to Bilateral Fund at Programme Level. National Focal Point's request for reallocation of remaining funds into programme CZ01 (Bilateral Fund at National Level) was rejected by the FMO on 22 November 2016.

Implementation of the whole programme contributes to horizontal concerns and cross-cutting issues. The respect of children rights is the main focus of the programme. One particular example of involving the Roma experience is a comics' trilogy produced within sub-project MGS/B6/2014. Cross-cutting issues were taken into account by external evaluators when assessing applications within both calls for additional activities and are taken into account by the PO and PP in the implementation phase.

The programme still belongs to the most risky programmes in the Czech Republic within EEA/Norway Grants. Programme absorption capacity and specific programme risk – political ill will for adoption of new law for protection of children – turned out as the major risk factors in 2015 and also in 2016. Two other risk factors – bilateral relations risk and programme management – influenced development of the programme in 2016. PO strived for maximum mitigation of all possible risk factors.

Programme Operator revised the open call for submission of grant applications for initiatives financed from the Fund for Bilateral Relations at Programme Level – measure B in July and in December 2016 in order to increase the attractiveness of the fund. Regular monitoring of projects and sub-projects within the programme is ensured by the Programme Operator and the SGS Operator. Altogether 1 project, SGS and two sub-projects were controlled on-the-spot during the year. General information about the programme and updates are on the website of Programme Operator and of Operator of SGS as well as on facebook. A final conference of the programme is planned in May/June 2017.

## 2. Programme area specific developments

In August 2016, the Government of the Czech Republic discussed *the Final Report on Implementation of the Action Plan for the National Strategy for Protection of Children's Rights for the Period 2012-2015*, aimed to evaluate the current progress and success in accomplishing the objectives of the National Strategy implemented in the period 2012 - 2015. The report notes significant success in the shift of focus of activities of socio-legal protection (the "SLP") towards supporting the biological family of the child so that they could grow up primarily in their natural environment, reducing institutional care and expanding foster care as preferable alternative care for those vulnerable children who cannot either temporarily or permanently grow up in their biological family.

One of the main outcomes of the Plan was Amendment to the existing Act no. 359/1999 Coll., *On Social-Legal Child Protection, as amended* (hereinafter the "Act on SLP"), which was implemented with effect from January 1, 2013 by Act No. 401/2012 Coll. This amendment has contributed to improving the quality of work with vulnerable children and their families and established that one of the fundamental aspects of SLP is the best interest and welfare of the child, protection of parenting and families, mutual right of parents and children to parental upbringing and care. It also states that measures ensuring proper upbringing and favorable development of the child in their family environment should prevail when performing SLP and if not possible, in an alternative family environment, which of course applies to children with special needs as well.

### Institutional care

The most positive trend in the sector continues to be a gradual decline in the number of children placed in facilities for institutional care, in children's homes for children up to 3 years of age and homes for people with special needs that work in mode of social services and a gradual increase in the number of children placed in foster care, including foster care for a temporary period. The table below shows a gradual decline in the number of children placed in facilities for institutional care established by the amended Act no. 109/2002 Coll., *On Institutional and Protective Education in Schools and on Preventive Educational Care in School Facilities*, as well as in children's homes for children up to 3 years of age, established pursuant to Act No. 372/2011 Coll., people with special needs that work in the mode of social services according to Act No. 108/2006 Coll., *On Social Services*. The long – term trend of growth in the number of children placed in institutions ended in 2009 since when the number of placed children has been gradually decreasing.

Year	Children in Children's Homes, Children's Homes with School, Diagnostic Institutes and Educational Institutes	Children in Children's Homes up to 3 years of age	Children in Homes for People with Special Needs	Children Placed in Facilities for Children Requiring Immediate Assistance	Total number of children in institutional care
2011	7150	1428	834	995	10407
2012	6941	1397	769	1020	10127
2013	6549	1233	646	1088	9516
2014	6495	1213	577	1259	9544
2015	6482	1174	538	778	8972

The professional public agrees that children under 3 years of age are most affected by the institutional care. The statistics are therefore tracked separately. Over the last 5 years, there has been a decrease of 17.79%.

Most children from these facilities are sent to family environment and only a very small number to specialized facilities focused on care of children with special needs, e.g. homes for people with special needs. Most (over 60%) children are sent back to their own families, about 11-12% of them leave for adoption. The majority are not children that would require special care that could not be ensured at home.

It is also important to monitor placement of children with special needs in homes for people with special needs which work in the mode of social services, and also receive minor children. The intention of the transformation of the system of care for vulnerable children is to integrate these children into the environment as close to community life as possible. The significant decline in the number of children placed in these facilities is therefore mostly welcomed.

### **The area of authorities for social and legal protection of children**

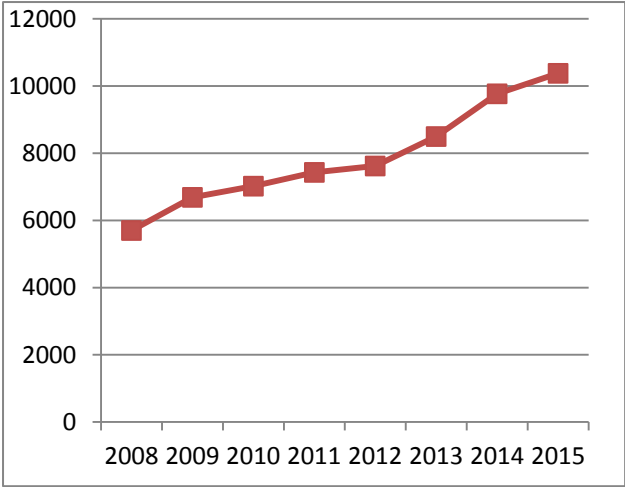
Through the amended Act on SLP new tools of social work were realized, e.g. assessing the situation of the vulnerable child and their family, creating an individual child protection plan and organizing case conferences that facilitate connections and cooperation of all relevant institutions and experts with a major impact on solving the situation of the endangered child (in case of a child with special needs may thus be involved e.g. paramedics, early care providers, psychologists, psychiatrists, special educators, etc.). An important and successfully completed task was standardizing the performance of SLP provided by *Authorities for Social and Legal Protection of Children* (hereinafter "OSPOD") and authorized personnel to perform SLP to achieve high-quality, transparent, effective and non-discriminatory system of care for vulnerable children across all providers of SLP in the country. Standards focus on expanding the performance of SLP to other specialist services, including services for people with special needs.

The total number of OSPOD workers keeps increasing, which has great positive effect on the care of vulnerable children and families. The workers are obliged to adhere to quality standards and since the beginning of 2015 checks and inspections of quality of SLP performance have been carried out by regional authorities in relation to municipalities and by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Regional branches of the Labour Office have been carrying out inspections of authorized persons. Tools of social work such as assessing the situation of an endangered child and their family, creating an individual child protection plan (ICCP) and case conferences are now fully used in practice.

### **Number of children in foster care**

An important step in the transformation was the expansion of foster care in the Czech Republic so as to ensure that each child grows up in a family environment. The amended Act on SLP details the procedures of OSPOD in child custody of other persons responsible for the child's upbringing, specifies conditions of mediating adoption and foster care, sets criteria for training and further training of foster parents. Newly it also sets foster care benefits previously anchored in other legislation, rights and responsibilities of foster parents and other persons performing foster care, including their rights to support and ancillary services, and the area of performance monitoring and evaluating foster care. There has been a long term trend of increasing the number of children in foster care.

The graph below shows the total number of children in foster care, pre- foster care or personal care of a guardian and children that after reaching 18 years of age are entitled to benefits in foster care if still living in the same household with former foster parents.



Another table below shows the number of applications filed for custody of the child to foster care. Although the number decreased in 2015 it reflects a positive trend of having met a great deal of needs of children who cannot grow up in their biological families, having filed a lot of prospective parents, also relatives taking children in custody and preventive work within their biological families as well.

Number of submitted applications for mediation								
year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
adoption	790	725	682	673	729	626	548	585
foster care	612	543	621	703	1152	1756	1156	802

A standardized framework for training and subsequent support of foster families PRIDE (Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education) has been adopted from the United States and adapted to national conditions. PRIDE is now used to prepare applicants for placing a child in foster care and to train experienced foster parents in most of the regions of the country.

In order to increase interest of applicants for foster care or adoption of children with disabilities a campaign, which included the formation of a strategy of active search for foster parents, was organized within the MOLSA project *"System Support of Transformation Processes of System of Care for Vulnerable Families and Children"* in spring 2015. The campaign included press conferences, publishing articles in regional newspapers etc. The campaign was followed by a leaflet promotional event aimed at informing potential candidates for foster care and by series of advertisements in local press.

If for various reasons parents are not able to provide proper care for their children they can ask to place the child in a facility for children requiring immediate assistance. Such facilities provide children with accommodation, food and clothing. They also provide educational and health care, counselling services to children, their parents or persons responsible for the child’s upbringing. They ensure help with school homework and assisting children on their way to school. They create conditions for out-of-school activities; provide services of psychologists and social workers. Children can also be placed in such a facility based on a court decision. „Voluntary stays” are stays ordered by parents or social-legal authorities. Placement in such facilities is a priority if the critical situation is of a short-term nature.

Although the number of children placed in facilities for children requiring immediate assistance decreased in 2015, the numbers still show a positive trend of preventive work with biological families,

placing children in foster care (including temporary one) when fewer children need to be placed in such facilities (see the first table on page 3).

### **The National Strategy for Development of Social Services 2016 – 2025**

*The National Strategy for Development of Social Services 2016 – 2025* has been proposed but needs to be approved by the Government of the Czech Republic yet.

The key areas of the Strategy include transformation of social services, whose priority is to enable people to live in their natural environment, promote improvement of living conditions and fulfill human conditions of current users of social care facilities, including their right to a full life comparable to their peers living in their natural environment. The Strategy directly declares that the deinstitutionalization applies to minors to whom increased attention will be paid in social services.

In January 2016, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs started a new EU project *System Development and Support of Tools for Child Protection*. The main objective of the project is to support the social – legal child protection at all levels and to further improve the quality and efficiency of work of all those involved. It is aimed at increasing the capacity of staff of the authorities in the field of networking and creating network of services for vulnerable children and families at the local level, as well as at ensuring the quality of necessary statistical data, setting lifelong learning for and upgrading the skills of the workers in the field of the child protection. It is also focused on promotion and development of foster care. It aims to reduce the number of children who must leave their families and to ensure the best possible individual care for children who come into foster care system. Activities of the project support the transformation of the system of care for vulnerable children and thus aim to fulfill *the National Strategy for Protection of Children's Rights*, whose principal objective is to create a functional system of care for vulnerable children ensuring consistent protection of rights and meeting the needs of children in the Czech Republic. 12 regions have expressed interest to participate in the project so far and 53% of authorities of child protection of the Czech Republic were involved in the project in 2016. Eight workshops were organized for the general public interested in local networking. The local networking focused on mapping the needs of OSPOD, services provided in concerned areas for vulnerable children and families, opportunities for cooperation, expanding or modifying services so that they meet present needs. Cooperation was established not only with OSPOD but also with schools, health facilities and services overlapping more resorts. The aim was to create a short-term networking strategy within the framework of which the neediest areas would be attended. The expansion in other areas is expected in 2017. Great attention is paid to training of local networkers and all the outcomes are statistically documented.

Within the framework of the project the Ministry of Labour and Social Care will also continue promoting foster care by defining a strategy of addressing potential candidates for fostering or adopting children with special needs.

## **3. Reporting on outputs**

### **Pre-defined project (PDP)**

The pre-defined project “Codification of legislation supporting families, substitute family care and system of care for vulnerable children and its implementation” was cancelled at the start of the year 2016. On 20 January 2016 the National Focal Point received an official letter from Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs informing that the Ministry as the Project Promoter withdraws from the project contract. The reasons were political. A constructive agreement on the outline of the new law on protection of children among the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Justice could not be reached. Moreover, negative media presentation of the so called “Norwegian system” of care for children in risk also influenced the project implementation. The unfortunate case of the two boys removed from the care of their Czech mother living in Norway made it more difficult to present positive cooperation with the Norwegian partner however fruitful it was. Project Promoter informed the Norwegian Directorate of Children, Youth and Family Affairs (BufDir) about the project cancellation in an official letter from August 11, 2016. The Annex II to the Partnership Agreement was consequently agreed upon.

Some programme outputs were partially fulfilled in 2015 (see the table below). The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will use the produced analyses for its conceptual and methodological work and preparation of the new legislation.

Outcome	Output	Output indicator	Indicator value		
			Baseline	Target	Reached in 2015
Laws, policies and measures in the field of children’s and youth rights, as enshrined in relevant international instruments effectively implemented	Samples of good practices between the Main Project Partner and the Project Partner as well as the transfer of experience among the key national stakeholders exchanged.	Number of coordination meetings	0	6	2
		Number of expert opinions	0	30	30
		Number of national expert seminars	0	1	1
	Implementation of the new legislation as well as the implementing tools prepared.	Number of new legislation timely prepared and submitted for individual phases of the legislative process	0	1	0
		Number of methodologies and procedures for the new legislation	0	10	1
		Number of local authorities and experts in charge of implementation of the new legislation educated and trained	0	3000	0
		Number of information and media campaign of the new legislation implemented.	0	2	0

### Small Grant Scheme (SGS)

All eleven sub-projects - 8 sub-projects with the main objective “Integration of children into the decision-making processes” and 3 sub-projects with the main objective “Raise of awareness about the rights of the child via local or national activities” – were under implementation in 2016. In March 2016, an open call for additional activities of sub-projects within the framework of SGS was announced. 9 out of 11 sub-projects applied in the call and all nine applications were approved by the Selection Committee in May 2016. As a result, all nine sub-projects were prolonged till April 30, 2017. Two remaining sub-projects - MGS /B4/2014 “Awareness Campaign Aimed at Children’s Rights Promotion for



*Children in Foster Care*“ and MGS/A17/2014 „*Playing with Stories – a New Method for the Child’s Involvement in Decision-Making Processes*“– were successfully completed in May and July 2016.

Within the sub-project MGS /B4/2014 tools of the campaign were a web page [www.naseprava.cz](http://www.naseprava.cz), internet advertising, commercial and educational video spots, promotional materials, facebook page and key personnel of accompanying NGOs. The campaign was then assessed in a professional research that showed that it had contributed to greater understanding of the issues of rights of the child in foster care. In the framework of the sub-project MGS/A17/2014 output of the project was a new method for work with children with its methodology “*Working with the Family by Play. Playing with Stories, or the Child’s Involvement in Decision-making Processes*”. Newly developed teaching aids - sets of textile toys that help children to express their opinion and evaluation cards are also a part of the methodology. The method contributes to the child's participation in decision-making processes that directly concern them. It is intended for trained social workers and was presented at two workshops for the professional public.

Target values of below mentioned output indicators were reassessed in connection with approved additional activities and will be reached as follows: The target value for “Systems and measures of protection of children and young people supported” shall finally reach 28 instead of the original value 3. The actual value 17 represents: MGS/A3/2014 “Child in the Centre of Interest”–individual plans, case conferences (2), MGS/A4/2014 “Family Circles in the Vysočina Region” – workshops, methodology, family circles (3), MGS/A5/2014 “Safety Network – Transit Care as a Systematic Tool for Involving Children in Decision-Making Processes” – methodology, educational programmes (2), MGS/A9/2014 “With Children about Children” - methodology, case conferences (2), MGS/A11/2014 “Voice of a Child in Foster Car and How to Listen to It” – education, methodology (2), MGS/A17/2014 “Playing with Stories – a New Method for the Child’s Involvement in Decision-Making Processes”– methodology, educational programme (2), MGS/A22/2014 “Joining Children of the South Bohemian Region in Decision-Making Processes of Family Issues” – methodology, education (2) and MGS/A27/2014 “I Have ADHD and I know what I Can Do” –education, methodology (2).

The target value for “Awareness regarding the rights of the child through local or nation-wide activities raised” shall finally reach 4 instead of the original value 3 and the actual value 3 represents the completed awareness campaigns of sub-projects MGS/B3/2014 “Children’s Voices – And What Shall We Do About Them?” (a media awareness campaign – animated video spots explaining basic children’s rights promoted also by means of citylight boards, roll-ups, touch screens on trains, an exhibition etc.(1) and an awareness campaign at schools – teaching school children about children’s rights with the use of the animated video spots, preparation of worksheets, presenting workshops for teachers, discussions etc. (1) and MGS/B4/2014 “Awareness Campaign Aimed at Children’s Rights Promotion for Children in Foster Care” - an awareness campaign focused on rights of children in foster care realized by means of promotion and educational video spots , a web page and a Facebook page and promotional materials.(1).

Outcome	Output	Output indicator	Indicator value		
			Baseline	Target	Actual
Quality of child welfare systems and protection measures effectively improved, relaying the views of relevant	Systems and measures of protection of children and young people supported	Number of tools and procedures (methodologies) elaborated on the basis of supported projects for the effective determining of children’ opinion and its involvement in various types of decision-making processes including number of trainings for employees of relevant institutions in this area.	0	3	17

stakeholders and society at large through high quality and participatory debate	Awareness regarding the rights of the child through local or nation-wide activities raised	Number of activities, whether local or nation-wide, aimed at raising awareness about children's rights	0	3	3
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### Open Call (OC)

Two projects within the open call: 1) EHP-CZ04-OV-1-004-2014 (Children and Youth at Risk in the Zlin region) and 2) EHP-CZ04-OV-1-005-2014 (Transformation of care for vulnerable children and youth) in the Pardubice region were under implementation in 2016. In March 2016, an open call for additional activities of projects within the open call was announced. Both projects applied in the call and both applications were approved by the Selection Committee in May 2016. As a result, projects were prolonged till April 30, 2017.

The output indicator “Number of methodologies for the creation and implementation of transformation plans for residential institutions” was achieved in 2014. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs issued a methodological instruction with minimum criteria to be met in the transformation process in the spring 2014 before the launch of the open call. Both applicants within the call proceeded in line with the methodology. The target value of programme output indicator “Number of transformation plans of institutions” was even exceeded – within the project EHP-CZ04-OV-1-004-2014 three transformation plans were elaborated; within the project EHP-CZ04-OV-1-005-2014 altogether eight transformation plans for institutions were created. Original results of both projects were fulfilled until mid-2016 and realization of the projects continue with additional activities arising from developed transformation plans.

Outcome	Output	Output indicator	Indicator value		
			Baseline	Target	Actual
Effective and efficient measures addressing vulnerable groups of children and youth facing particular risks implemented	Conditions for coordination of transformation of residential facilities into an effective network of services providing care for children in need and families created.	Number of methodologies for the creation and implementation of transformation plans for residential institutions.	0	1	1
	Transformation plans focusing on needs of vulnerable groups of children, youth and families elaborated.	Number of transformation plans of institutions (substantive solution, schedule, budget, educational needs, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms).	0	10	11

## 4. Reporting on Programme outcome(s)

### Pre-defined project (PDP)

Programme outcomes related to the pre-defined project shall not be reached due to the fact that the pre-defined project was cancelled at the start of 2016.

Outcome	Indicator	Indicator value		
		Baseline	Target	Actual
Laws, policies and measures in the field of children's and youth rights, as enshrined in relevant international instruments effectively implemented	Number of newly developed and/or enforced child-centred legislation	0	5	0
	Number of laws, policies and practices developed/improved as a consequence of stakeholders' actions	0	1	0

### Small Grant Scheme (SGS)

Target value of the outcome indicator was reassessed in connection with additional activities implied within the framework of SGS and will reach 8 instead of the original value 3. The target value 8 represents 8 sub-projects that focus on helping children to speak their mind in decision-making processes that directly concern them. The indicator will be fulfilled after sub-projects' completion. The actual value 1 shows the only completed "A" sub-project so far – MGS/A17/2014 - „Playing with Stories – a New Method for the Child's Involvement in Decision-Making Processes“. The consultative mechanism established is a new method for work with children with its methodology "Working with the Family by Play. Playing with Stories or the Child's Involvement in Decision-making Processes". The mechanism helps children to express their opinion in decision-making processes that directly concern them. It is intended as a new method for trained social workers.

Outcome	Indicator	Indicator value		
		Baseline	Target	Actual
Quality of child welfare systems and protection measures effectively improved, relaying the views of relevant stakeholders and society at large through high quality and participatory debate	Number of established and operational consultative mechanism involving children, youth and other stakeholders	0	3	1

### Open Call (OC)

The programme outcome shall be achieved in April 2017 by the projects' completion. Thanks to approved additional activities within both projects the transformation process was started and transformation plans shall be partially put into practice. It is expected that the results within both projects shall be used in the post-completion period for the transformation process itself.

Outcome	Indicator	Indicator value		
		Baseline	Target	Actual
Effective and efficient measures addressing vulnerable groups of children and youth facing particular risks implemented	Number of measures addressing the needs of vulnerable groups of children, youth and families facing particular risks	0	1	0

## 4.1. Progress on horizontal concerns

### Progress towards horizontal concerns

#### Respect of human rights, multicultural dialogue incl. integration of national minorities

The respect of children's rights is the main focus of the programme. New methods of finding out their views in decision-making processes and helping them to express them are tested and implemented and general awareness of the rights of children is raised especially within sub-projects that are being implemented within the Small Grant Scheme. Activities of the sub-projects within SGS are aimed at target groups without depending on ethnicity but since Roma children create one of the major groups of vulnerable children, the sub-projects support Roma involvement in their activities leading to the streamlining the system of care for vulnerable children. Outcomes of the whole programme will benefit the Roma children individually and in all types of the institutional care

One particular example of involving the Roma experience is a comics' trilogy prepared by sub-project MGS/B6/2014 "The Voices of Threatened Children", final beneficiary Ašta Šmé, where one story is narrated by a Roma boy (now a grown-up man) who shares his experience with foster care. Three comics were produced and will be distributed in 2017.

Eleven transformation plans that were produced in the Pardubice and Zlín regions (two projects from the open call) consider development of new services in the care for children and youth at risk, especially field and ambulatory services. Main aim of the services is work with biological family, prevention from taking children away from their biological family and provision of care in a family-friendly environment. Number of minority groups placed in institutions should decline and they will be able to stay in their original family. Equal opportunities for children and youth at risk as well as for their families are observed during projects' implementation. The same standard of protection is applied for all children and youth without any difference.

## 5. Project selection

All main calls within the programme were closed in 2014 except for the permanent call for bilateral initiatives (for more information please see the chapter 6). Two calls for additional activities of projects under the open call and sub-projects under the SGS were realized in line with the art. 6.9 of the Regulation. Both calls were announced on 8 March 2016 with deadline for submitting applications on 8 April 2016. Funds in the amount of CZK 10 million (EUR 377, 358) were allocated for the additional call for two open call projects. Allocation of the additional call for eleven SGS sub-projects was CZK 17 million (EUR 641,509). After evaluation of formal requirements and eligibility of applications followed expert assessment (independent experts were hired by the Programme Operator and SGS Operator).

Selection Committee for both additional calls was held on 18 May 2016. The Selection Committee recommended all project applications for approval, i.e. two applications under the open call and nine applications under the SGS. The total amount of CZK 7,4 million (EUR 280,951) was granted for additional activities within both open call projects. The total amount of CZK 12,8 million (EUR 484,270) was granted for additional activities within nine SGS sub-projects. Realization of all additional activities started at the beginning of June 2016 and relevant projects were prolonged until April 30, 2017.

The whole selection process went smoothly without any complications. All approved additional activities are in accordance with programme outcomes and outputs. The additional activities of "A" SGS sub-projects (focused on children in decision-making processes) mostly extend the original activities due to high demand from those in need, develop new methods for finding out children's opinions or teaching aids for methods tested in the original projects, include new workshops, courses or discussions, create new information materials, transfer good practices (e.g. in self-help groups) and further capitalize on experience gained in the original projects. One of the sub-projects – MGS/A3/2014 "The Child in the Centre" shares good practices (e.g. by transferring an innovative method "No Kids in the Middle" to its Norwegian partner Oslo Krisesenter). The additional activities of "B" SGS sub-projects (focused on raising awareness of children's rights) extend the impact of their campaigns and also the topics included (e.g. children in the decision – making processes, bullying, integration etc.), develop new marketing tools (mobile applications, games, interactive information materials, etc), shoot additional video spots, organize discussion groups, literature competition and other events and activities. The additional activities of open call projects extend original project activities by leading to creation of conditions for practical implementation of transformation process. Technical documentation of objects, operational documentation, seminars, etc. will be realized.

## 6. Progress of bilateral relations

### **Bilateral Fund at Programme Level – Measure A (BFA)**

Bilateral Fund at Programme Level – Measure A was closed in 2014. For more information please see previous APRs.

### **Bilateral Fund at Programme Level – Measure B (BFB)**

As the interest for bilateral initiatives within the open call for the Bilateral Fund at Programme Level – measure B is quite low (just one initiative was approved and realized since the launch of the call at the start of 2015), Programme Operator opened the call for all possible entities in line with the Regulation, art. 3.6. in July 2016. Project promoters, NGOs and other entities are highly encouraged to submit their proposals. Programme Operator also contacted other POs from programmes CZ03 (Civil Society Development Foundation) and CZ12 (Open Society Fund) and requested promotion of the open call on their websites. The open call is also promoted by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Prague.

On 19 December 2016 the FMO approved a partial reallocation of remaining funds from the cancelled pre-defined project (see more in chapter 8) to the Bilateral Fund, setting the cap at 10% of total eligible programme expenditure, i.e. EUR 273,880. On 21 December 2016 the Programme Operator updated the open call in the light of making the bilateral call more attractive for all entities active in given programme area. The update lied mainly in increase of allocated amount EUR 257,890 (CZK 6,834,101) and increase of maximum grant amount per initiative EUR 20,000 (CZK 1,325,000), prolongation of period for submitting applications till July 31, 2017 and deadline for realization of initiatives until 15 September 2017, possibility of advance payment up to maximum 60% of the grant. Programme

Operator expects that thanks to above-mentioned update of the call the interest on the part of the applicants will be enhanced. Programme Operator strives for maximum publicity of the open call through programme webpage, FB profile, Norwegian Embassy webpage as well as webpages of programmes CZ03 and CZ12.

### **Bilateral relations at project level**

Sub-project MGS/A3/2014 "The Child in the Centre" (final beneficiary Spondea) cooperates with Oslo Krisesenter - a crisis center for children and families who find themselves in difficult situations. The partnership helped mutual transfer of good practice and strengthening of cooperation that has lasted since 2013. The expert professional benefit was bilateral transfer of good practice in relation to the issue of children living in families where parents are in a divorce process. The Norwegian partner was inspired by Spondea for a special therapeutic program, "No Kids in the Middle" (in the original "Kinderen uit de priesters", in the Czech Republic under the title "Child in the Centre"). The methodology of this programme was acquired directly from its Dutch authors, Justine van Lawick and Margreet Visser back in 2014. Spondea values highly the inspiration for work with children who live in families with domestic violence and who are actors in decision-making processes concerning their future. Thanks to cooperation with Norwegian partners Spondea managed to establish additional partnerships and sharing of good practice with other Norwegian organizations, especially the organization ATV. Other topics worth following bilateral discussion arose.

## **6.1. Complementary action**

Programme Operator was invited at the final conference of Estonian Youth Work Centre (Programme Operator of Estonian Children and Youth at Risk programme) which was held on 8 June 2016. Two PO's representatives and two Programme Partner's representatives participated in the final conference. On 7 June 2016 a POs meeting with Estonian PO and Lithuanian PO was organized. Purpose of the meeting - information exchange, sharing of experience and establishing cooperation within the programme area 11 – was successfully met. Good practices and outcomes of individual projects implemented in the framework of programmes for vulnerable children and youth at risk were presented. The acquired contacts for experts from Iceland, Estonia and Latvia will be possibly used in future joint projects (e.g. in the framework of the bilateral fund at the programme level).

## **7. Monitoring**

Programme Operator as well as the Operator of the SGS (MoLSA) regularly monitor projects and sub-projects within the programme. Project Promoters send four-month monitoring reports together with requests for payments to the Operators for check in line with the Guidelines for Project Promoters. Moreover, the Operator of SGS also sends monthly monitoring reports for the SGS for the check to the Programme Operator.

In line with the internal manual, the Programme Operator performs interim on-the-spot controls of all the running projects and final/financial on-the-spot controls after the projects have been finished. In 2016 one project and SGS administration with two chosen sub-projects were controlled on-the-spot during the implementation. Project EHP-CZ04-OV-1-005-2014 "Transformation of care for vulnerable children and youth" was controlled on-the-spot on 28 April 2016. One minor finding concerning project publicity – update of websites in English – was found and subsequently remedied by the Promoter. On-

site control of SGS administration at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs was realized on 21 September 2016 and on-site controls of two sub-projects (MGS A11 2014, MGS B6 2014) were realized on 11 October 2016. The control is under way.

Review of the programme shall be carried out in 4Q 2017 by the external company that shall be contracted in January 2017. The programme shall be evaluated based on the five evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability) with respect to its outcomes and outputs as specified in the Programme Agreement. Each criterion will be scored using the five-grade grid. The score will be awarded based on objective and impartial expert opinion substantiated by verifiable and well-founded data, facts and evidence

The theory of change shall be developed for the programme; Outcome Harvesting shall be used as one of the methods for data collection, so as to exploit all effects of the programme, including unintended or unexpected ones. The review report will be subject to consultation process and debriefing with all relevant stakeholders prior to its publication in Czech and English.

The Monitoring Plan for 2017 of all the expected on-the-spot controls and of the programme review within the programme is enclosed to the report. In 2017 final controls of all the projects, sub-projects and SGS as a whole will be carried out.

## **8. Need for adjustments**

On 20 January 2016 the National Focal Point and the Programme Operator received an official letter from Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs informing that the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs as the Project Promoter withdraws from the pre-defined project contract. As a result, the National Focal Point sent a request to the FMO notifying of project cancellation and use of the project grant totalling EUR 1,046,083 for additional activities in line with the article 6.9. of the Regulation on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014. On 29 February 2016 the FMO approved requested use of funds and announcement of open calls for additional activities. Altogether eleven additional activities in two open call projects and nine sub-projects were approved in total amount of EUR 765,220 in June 2016. Based on the decision of the programme Steering Committee on 31 August 2016 the National Focal Point requested the FMO for reallocation of remaining funds (EUR 280,000) from the cancelled PDP into the programme CZ01 – Bilateral Fund at National Level. Nevertheless, the request was refused on 22 November 2016. As a result, the Programme Operator asked the FMO for use of the remaining funds in the Bilateral Fund at Programme Level. On 19 December 2016 the FMO Programme Committee decided to approve a partial re-allocation to the BF, setting the cap at 10% of total eligible programme expenditure, i.e. increase of bilateral fund to EUR 273,880. Amended Programme Agreement reflecting changes in programme budget and in Funds for bilateral relations was issued on 20 December 2016.

## **9. Risk management**

Programme Operator updated the programme risk analysis in December 2016. Compared with the analysis made at the start of 2016, results remained the same. The programme CZ04 still belongs to the most risky programmes implemented in the Czech Republic within EEA/Norway Grants 2009-2014.

Programme absorption capacity and specific programme risk concerning political ill will for adoption of new law for protection of children turned out as the major risk factors not only in 2015 but also in 2016.

Absorption capacity of the programme CZ04 is nowadays threatened due to the fact that realization of the pre-defined project with grant amounting to EUR 1,046,083 was cancelled at the start of 2016 owing to political reasons. Programme Operator therefore announced two open calls for additional activities within open call projects as well as SGS sub-projects with total allocation corresponding to the grant of pre-defined project. Altogether 11 applications for additional activities (2 OC projects, 9 SGS sub-projects) were approved with total grant of EUR 765,220. Based on the decision of the Programme Steering Committee, the National Focal Point asked the FMO for reallocation of remained funds amounting to EUR 280,000 into CZ01 (Bilateral Fund at National Level). However, the request was rejected by the FMO and therefore the Programme Operator asked for increase of the bilateral fund at programme level. The FMO approved partial increase of the bilateral fund at programme level (setting cap at maximum 10% of programme eligible expenses). The rest of funds shall remain unused within the programme. Programme Operator strives for maximum publicity of the bilateral fund at PO's webpages, FB, PP's webpages, webpages of POs for CZ03 and CZ12 and webpages of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Prague. Some initiatives are already envisaged in 2017 and PO hopes that the fund will be efficiently and effectively drawn.

As regards the specific programme risk concerning the political ill will for adoption of new law for protection of children, this risk was fulfilled as the Promoter withdrew from the project contract in January 2016.

Two other risk factors influenced development of the programme in 2016 – bilateral relations risk and programme management. Bilateral relations risk arose as the risk of middle importance in 2015 and further in 2016 being influenced also by the non-completion of the pre-defined project which has negative impact on the donor partner involved in the project. Just one initiative in cooperation with donor project partner from Bilateral Fund at Programme Level – measure B was supported within the programme and realized in 2015 and 2016. Programme Operator and Programme Partner therefore strive for maximum promotion of permanent call for Bilateral Fund at Programme Level – measure B. In order to increase the interest of applicants within the permanent call, the call was revised in July and in December 2016 reflecting opening to all entities active in the programme area in line with the Regulation, prolonged time period for submitting applications (until 31 July 2017) and realization of initiatives (until 15 September 2016), increase of grant amount up to EUR 50,000 and possibility of 60% advance payment for grants exceeding EUR 20,000.

Concerning programme management risk, some restructuring and personal changes occurred at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half 2016 having the impact on SGS administration. Financial manager of the SGS left at the end of year and a new head of unit was appointed. MoLSA and PO endeavour to ensure smooth continuation of the SGS by operational meetings and daily communication.

## **10. Information and publicity**

General information about the programme is provided both on the website of the Programme Operator [www.eaagrants.cz](http://www.eaagrants.cz) and the Programme Partner's national campaign "The Right to Childhood" ([www.pravonadetstvi.cz](http://www.pravonadetstvi.cz)) administered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Any news and updates are presented on the official Czech EEA and Norway Grants' Facebook profile <https://www.facebook.com/EHPaNF>.

The publicity activities focused mostly on project level and the closing conferences of supported projects. The conferences summarized the results and outcomes of the projects. These were channelled at national level mostly via Facebook and national newspapers. The article about the progress in Zlínský



Region was repeatedly promoted in national daily “Deník” in December 2016. Another article about the results of the SGS is planned in the first half of 2017.

The results of the programme will be presented in an information brochure which will be distributed at the final conference of the programme. The preparation of the brochure will take place during spring 2017.

The final conference of the programme including the SGS is planned in May/June 2017. The programme of the conference will be prepared in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. It is expected the conference will last one day and will be open to donors and all involved entities to share their experience from projects and their results. Participants from other relevant institutions including the foreign Programme Operators within programme area 11 will be invited.

A seminar for the applicants of the call for additional activities in SGS was organized by MoLSA in April 2016. All issues relevant to application, evaluation, monitoring, publicity, financial matters and bilateral relations were presented and discussed at the seminar. Bilateral Fund at Programme Level was further promoted.

## **11. Cross - cutting issues**

Cross cutting issues were taken into account by external evaluators when evaluating applications within both calls for additional activities and are taken into account by the Programme Operator and the Programme Partner in the projects/sub-projects/SGS implementation phase.

### **Good governance**

Good governance is monitored by the Programme Operator and the Operator of SGS during projects/sub-projects/SGS implementation. PO and SGS Operator check especially during projects/sub-projects on-the-spot controls that all projects and sub-projects are consistent with the principles of good governance, are economically feasible and their operations and methodologies are relevant.

### **Economic sustainability**

The economic sustainability is being monitored by the Programme Operator and the Operator of SGS in monitoring reports submitted by projects and sub-projects and during the on-site controls.

### **Social sustainability**

Interests of target groups are taken into consideration and their comments are continuously taken into account. In the case of the primary target group (children, the young, young adults) the principle of best interest of the child is reflected in all activities. The social sustainability is monitored by the PO and the Operator of SGS in monitoring reports and during the on-spot controls.

## **12. Attachments to the Annual Programme Report**

**Annex 1: Risk assessment of the programme**

**Annex 2: Monitoring plan 2017**

**Annex 3: List of projects for communication purposes or as examples of best practices**

**SIGNATURE:****For Programme Operator**

*I certify that I am duly authorised to sign this Annual programme report and that I have thoroughly reviewed the progress of the programme, reporting on outcomes and outputs, risk management provided in this report and the information are correct and accurate.*

				<i>Optional second signature</i>		
<b>Name</b>	Zuzana Matyášová			Martina Bečvářová		
<b>Position</b>	Head of the Department of International Relations			Head of the Monitoring Unit		
<b>Organisation</b>	Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic			Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic		
<b>Signature</b>						
<b>Date</b>	Day	Month	Year	Day	Month	Year
	8	2	2017	08	02	2017

**For the National Focal Point**

*The National Focal Point certifies that the status of reporting of the programme described above is accurate.*

				<i>Optional second signature</i>		
<b>Name</b>	Lenka Dupáková					
<b>Position</b>	Deputy Minister of Finance					
<b>Organisation</b>	Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic					
<b>Signature</b>						
<b>Date</b>	Day	Month	Year	Day	Month	Year
	10	02	2017			

## Annex 1: Risk assessment of the programme

Type of objective <sup>1</sup>	Risk	Description of risk in the reporting period	Likelihood <sup>2</sup>	Impact <sup>3</sup>	Importance <sup>4</sup>	Mitigation planned/done
Cohesion (Programme) outcomes:	Programme absorption capacity	Programme absorption capacity is threatened due to the fact that the pre-defined project with the total eligible costs amounting to approx. 34 mil CZK (1,2 mil. EUR) was cancelled. Two open calls for additional activities were realized and 11 applications were approved in the amount of EUR 765,220. A part of the remaining funds was re-allocated to the Bilateral Fund after the FMO approval. The rest shall remain unused.	High	High	High	PO realized two open calls for additional activities – EUR 765,220 was granted for additional activities. The National Focal Point asked for reallocation of the remaining EUR 280,000 from CZ04 to CZ01. The request was rejected in November 2016. Programme Operator asked therefore for the full reallocation of the funds to BF at programme level. Just a partial reallocation was approved by the FMO. The rest of funds will remain unused.
	Legislation changes	The result of non-implementation of the pre-defined project is that the new law for protection of children will not be submitted to the government in the near future. However, it does not have any effect on the OC projects and SGS sub-projects which are under realization.	High	Middle	Middle	Search for a political agreement in the case of the law for protection of children.

<sup>1</sup> The risks should be categorised in one of 3 ways, depending on whether it poses a risk to the cohesion objective, the bilateral objective, or is more of an operational issue.

<sup>2</sup> Likelihood is described as Low, Middle or High according to its scoring gained in the risk analysis. (Low: 1-2, Middle:3-4, High:5)

<sup>3</sup> Impact is described as Low, Middle or High according to its scoring gained in the risk analysis. (Low: 1-2, Middle:3-4, High:5)

<sup>4</sup> Importance is counted as Likelihood multiplied by Impact and described as Low, Middle or High according to its scoring gained in the risk analysis (Low: 1-8, Middle: 9-15, High: 16-25).

Type of objective <sup>1</sup>	Risk	Description of risk in the reporting period	Likelihood <sup>2</sup>	Impact <sup>3</sup>	Importance <sup>4</sup>	Mitigation planned/done
	Time risk - delay in commitment and disbursement of funds	Thanks to approved additional activities two open call projects and nine SGS sub-projects were prolonged until April 2017. Time risk is perceived as middle due to possibility of projects prolongation until April 2017. Two sub-projects were successfully finished in 2016. Open call within Bilateral Fund at Programme Level was prolonged.	Middle	High	Middle	Possibility of prolongation of projects/sub-projects till April 2017. Bilateral Fund at Programme Level – open call was prolonged until 31 July 2017 (submission of applications), realization of initiatives until 15 September 2017 and eligibility of expenditures for promoters until 15 October 2017.
	Specific programme risk – political ill will for adoption of new law for protection of children	The risk was fulfilled in January 2016 – the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Project Promoter of the PDP) withdrew from the project contract owing to political reasons (political ill will for adoption of the new law and cases of children taken away from their families in Norway).	High	High	High	PO strived for project modification. Nevertheless, politically it could not be accepted.
<b>Bilateral outcome(s):</b>	Bilateral relations	Two bilateral partnerships were established within the PRG – one within PDP and one within SGS sub-project. However, due to non-realization of the PDP, the partnership was finished. Within the permanent open call under the Bilateral Fund at Programme Level just one application was submitted and approved in cooperation with donor project partner. Other initiatives are	High	Middle	Middle	Promotion of the permanent call for Bilateral Fund at Programme Level (BFB) – PO webpages, FB profile, webpages of CZ03 and CZ12 programmes, webpages of Norwegian Embassy, prolongation of time period for submitting applications and realization of initiatives within BFB

Type of objective <sup>1</sup>	Risk	Description of risk in the reporting period	Likelihood <sup>2</sup>	Impact <sup>3</sup>	Importance <sup>4</sup>	Mitigation planned/done
		planned in 2017.				
<b>Operational issues:</b>	Management and control structures, programme management	The Steering Committee of the Programme composed of representatives of Programme Operator and of Programme Partner met three times during the year 2016 and twice per rollam. Communication between the PO and PP runs smoothly. However, there were personal changes at the PP in 2 half 2016 (head of unit, financial manager of SGS).	Middle	High	Middle	Flexible and efficient communication between the PO and PP, ensuring stable staff at the PP
	Programme implementation set up	Manuals and guidelines for the Project Promoters are in use. PO updated guidelines for project promoters with regard to advanced stage of projects implementation period in May 2016 and internal manual in November 2016. SGS Operator also updated its guidelines. A guideline for Bilateral Fund at Programme Level was updated in November 2016.	Low	Middle	Low	Observance of manuals and guidelines, regular checks and updates of manuals and guidelines.
	Reports and irregularities within programme	Just minor irregularities were identified within management of PO and were reported to the FMO in 1Q 2016. One minor irregularity was found at the on-the-spot control of Pardubice region, which was further remedied.	Middle	Middle	Middle	Consistent verification of monitoring reports, performance of on-the-spot controls.

Type of objective <sup>1</sup>	Risk	Description of risk in the reporting period	Likelihood <sup>2</sup>	Impact <sup>3</sup>	Importance <sup>4</sup>	Mitigation planned/done
	Programme audits/controls	On-the-spot controls of Pardubice region and of administration of the whole SGS (+ two sub-projects) were carried out in 2016. The control of the whole SGS administration is under way. Audit Authority performed an audit of SGS implementation in 2016 which was not closed yet.	Middle	Middle	Middle	Regular monitoring, on-the-spot controls.
	Information system	The IS CEDR used by the PO runs and is being updated/adjusted.	Low	Middle	Low	Intensive cooperation with contractor of the IS.
	Corruption risk	The PO and PP management control system is set.	Low	High	Low	Thorough verification of procedures, evaluation, etc.

## Annex 2: Monitoring plan

Project no.	Name of the project	Planned date of on-site monitoring visit /review	Note
MGS/A3/2014	Child in the Centre of Interest	5/2017	Final on-site control
MGS/A4/2014	Family Circles in the Vysočina region	5/2017	Final on-site control
MGS/A5/2014	Safety Network – Transit Care as a Systematic Tool for Involving Children in Decision-Making Processes	5/2017	Final on-site control
MGS/A9/2014	With Children about Children	5/2017	Final on-site control
MGS/A11/2014	The Voice of a Child in Foster Car and How to Listen to It	5/2017	Final on-site control
MGS/A17/2014	Playing with Stories – a New Method for the Child's Involvement in Decision Making Processes	6/2017	Final on-site control
MGS/A22/2014	Joining Children of the South Bohemian Region in Decision-Making Processes of Family Issues	6/2017	Final on-site control
MGS/A27/2014	I Have ADHD and I Know What I Can Do	6/2017	Final on-site control
MGS/B3/2014	Children's Voices – And What Shall We Do About Them?	7/2017	Final on-site control
MGS/B4/2014	Awareness Campaign Aimed at Children's Rights Promotion for Children in Foster Care	7/2017	Final on-site control
MGS/B6/2014	Voices of Threatened Children	7/2017	Final on-site control
EHP-CZ04-OV-1-005-2014	Transformation of care for vulnerable children and youth	3Q 2017	Final on-site control
EHP-CZ04-OV-1-004-2014	Children and Youth at Risk in the Zlin region	3Q 2017	Final on-site control
EHP-CZ04-OV-1-	Transformation of	3Q 2017	Final on-site control

005-2014	care for vulnerable children and youth		
-----	Administration of SGS + sample of sub-projects	3Q 2017	Final on-site control
CZ04	Programme Review	4Q 2017	Programme Review



**Annex 3: List of projects for communication purposes or as examples of best practices**

<b>Project no.</b>	<b>Name of the project</b>	<b>Note</b>
MGS/B3/2014	Children's Voices – And What Shall We Do About Them?	Visually interesting and effective awareness campaign focused on children's rights. <a href="http://www.hlasydeti.cz/en-info/">http://www.hlasydeti.cz/en-info/</a>