

COUNTRY: CZECH REPUBLIC

INTRODUCTION

This national report deals with the problems of flexicurity in the Czech Republic from the gender perspective. Its purpose is to identify and analyse the existing political measures in the Czech Republic that are related to the pillars of flexicurity from the gender point of view. Taking note of these facts, the report is based on a number of qualitative and quantitative data that characterise the policies themselves as well as illustrate the situation on the labour market and in other related areas, in order to make the picture as complete as possible. Many relevant international statistical indicators illustrate the situation in the original Europe-15 and there are no data available for the Czech Republic and for other new EU countries. For this reason, information from these international data banks are completed by the report about information from Czech public institutions, Czech Statistical Office, National Training Fund, Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and from employment offices. The report is divided into four chapters. The conclusion of each chapter includes a summary and evaluation of the situation and of measures related to the given area of security of labour market, completed in addition by our own proposed measures leading to an increase in security of the given area in the Czech Republic.

CHAPTER 1. JOB SECURITY

The term "job security" refers to the level of protection of the employees from dismissal from their current job position.

1.1. EXTERNAL FLEXIBILITY

The term "external numerical flexibility" refers to the degree of flexibility of the processes of dismissal and recruitment of fixed and flexible employees. This degree is given mainly by the provisions of Employment Protection Legislation (EPL) related to different forms of employment. Before giving its characteristics in the Czech Republic and evaluating the effect of gender on the differentiation of winners and losers on the Czech labour market according to their form of employment, it is necessary to mention basic development trends of the Czech labour market and of forms of employment differentiated according to the gender.

The economic activity of men and women in the Czech Republic is slightly decreasing since the early 1990s. In 1993, it amounted to 71.3% in the case of men and it fell to 68.3% before 2007. The percentage of economically active women decreased approximately by the same amount during this period, from 52.3% in 1993 to 49.8% in 2007. The most frequent reason of economic inactivity of women is filial leave and then studies. In case of men, studies are the most frequent reason. The trends in employment of men and women in the Czech Republic are practically identical. Although the employment rate for women is lower, the development curve imitates the development in men. The average employment rate of men was 65.8% in the first three trimesters of 2008. The employment rate for women was 46.5% in the same period. The difference in employment for men and women is slightly increasing year after year, to women's disadvantage. This difference was 18.5% in 2007 and, in 2008 (more precisely during the first three trimesters), it was already 19.3% (Czech Statistical Office, 2009). Indicators of unemployment in the Czech Republic are also more unfavourable to women in the long term. Thanks to a high economic growth, the unemployment rate decreased considerably in both genders. Despite this fact, the unemployment rate for women remained still about twice as high as the value for men. In the first three trimesters of 2008 the

unemployment rate was 3.5% for men and 5.6% for women. The disproportion between the unemployment rate of men and women in the Czech Republic differ strongly in individual regions (the lowest differences are in Prague and in the Karlovarský region, the highest is in the region of Central Bohemia). Due to the increase of economic crisis in the Czech Republic, this numbers are far from being true today, the unemployment rate of men and women increases rapidly in most regions of the Czech Republic. A high degree occupational segregation by gender according to sectors of economy occurs on the Czech labour market. This situation is caused mainly by different choices of education pathways of men and women. Women are only minimally represented in the building sector and in mining and quarrying, on the other hand, they take a high share in employment in health care and education. According to EU Labour Force Survey, the Czech Republic belongs to countries where the sectoral segregation is slightly above average.

The proportion of part-time jobs in the Czech Republic is low in the long term, it remains at around 5%. Women work part-time significantly more often than men - only 2.3% of men worked part-time in 2007, compared to 8.5% of women. Men choose to work part-time mostly for health reasons, or to reconcile work with studies, while care of children and other family members highly predominates in women. Further reasons for women are health problems and impossibility to find a full-time employment. Fixed-term contracts in the Czech Republic amounted to 7.2% in 2007, the proportion of women (3.9%) was higher than that of men (3.3%). In the civil sector, only 5.7% of men were employed on fixed term, compared to 9.1% of women. The proportions of women working on fixed-term contract were distributed equally across all categories of age. For men, employment on fixed-term contract predominated until the age of 29 and after only in retirement age, which is logical, since pensioner workers are obliged by the Act on Pension Insurance to conclude only fixed-term labour contracts. Men working on fixed-term contracts have lower professional qualifications and work in the manufacturing industry and the building sector. Professions requiring secondary school education predominate for women, they work in the manufacturing industry as well, but also in commerce, health care, social care and education. The average number of weekly hours worked by men working full-time in the Czech Republic is 43.5 (male employees work 42 hours). The number of hours worked by women is a little lower - 39.4 (female employees work 40.5 hours). On the contrary, women employed part-time usually work a higher number of hours - 22.6, men only 21.4 hours.

Employment protection in the Czech Republic is relatively differentiated. Permanent posts, which are still a majority on the Czech labour market, are strictly protected. On the other hand, protection of temporary posts, mainly of agency employment, is still relatively low in comparison to other EU countries. In addition to a number of provisions that protect men and women alike, the Labour Code reinforces the position of employed women in some aspects. This is mainly the case of pregnant women, women on maternity and parental leave and single women with small children. For example, the Labour Code prohibits the employer from dismissing a woman during the aforesaid periods, prohibits certain types of work, obliges the employer to meet the woman's needs as to the arrangement of working time and prohibits them from sending pregnant women and women with children up to 8 years of age to business trips away from home. It is also not permitted to assign overtime work to pregnant women and women with children up to 1 year of age. A significant role in job protection is also played by another provision, that obliges the employer to keep the same job position to an employee on maternity leave during half a year after the birth of the child and to offer her a job position corresponding to the labour contract or to her qualifications until the child is three years old. Unfortunately, it is precisely this increased protection of women in these periods, multiplied by the fact that in the Czech Republic it is mostly the woman who stays home from work when the child is ill, that, besides doubtless positive effects of the protection legislation, also causes a more complicated position of women applying for an employment. Employers above all in the private sector prefer recruiting men or women that do not plan to found a family. And all this in spite of the fact that provisions prohibiting discrimination on the labour market form part of the Labour Code. Mainly in the industrial sector, besides the above-mentioned, it is also involvement of social partners in the process of negotiations on

collective agreements on the corporate or sectoral level that plays a protective role. The authors of these contracts have the possibility to include further protective measures to the benefit of employees, which go beyond the scope of the Labour Code.

The social security system in the Czech Republic is recently becoming more and more favourable to equal position of fathers and mothers with small children on the labour market. Social security during pregnancy and the first half a year of the child's life is still bound to the role of mother, who is supposed to leave the labour market at least for this period. However, after its end, i.e. after expiration of the so-called maternity leave, either the mother or the father can request the so-called parental leave and receive the parental benefits. So far, the new model is only seldom used in practice, it is chosen only by families where the woman's employment is the main source of income. In addition to maternity and parental leave, the social security system also compensates for income loss of one of the parents in case of illness of a child up to 10 years of age. As a rule, it is mostly the mother who stays with the child. Considering the frequency of illnesses of most small children, it is understandable that the factor of age of the woman and the child is often decisive for the employer when recruiting a female employee, because a pregnant employee with one, let alone two small children is costlier for the employer and, at the same time, less productive.

It is evident from the exposition given above that women employed on permanent contract are so-called "insiders" on the Czech Labour market, since they are considerably more protected than e.g. women employed temporarily through employment agencies, but also than women employed on fixed-term contract. The winners are also women without children or with maximally one child. Mothers with university degree have also a relatively good position for finding an employment. However, they do not have a high possibility of finding a job position corresponding to their education and to the position they occupied before the parental leave. The labour legislation in the Czech Republic protects mothers with children and this relatively high protection, together with potentially high frequency of absence of the women during the children's illness, leads to discrimination by the employers of women applying for a job, despite the fact that discrimination by gender is prohibited here. For this reason, it is also not surprising that there is a considerable difference in employment rate of women with children and single childless women. Of course, the position of women with children varies a lot in different regions, according to the level of economical development, and also according to their age. It is relatively easier for women of all categories of education and age to find employment in Prague or in Central Bohemia region in comparison with Moravskoslezský and Ústecký region. Women from 42 years of age with secondary-school education also have great difficulties to find a new job. For the above-mentioned reasons, women are also more often employed on fixed-term contracts, as the employers try to insure themselves preventively against costly dismissal in case of need. Single mothers have great difficulties to find employment after parental leave. In order to find at least any work, in particular women with lower education choose again fixed-term work contracts. They are exposed to a higher risk of unemployment, one of the few solutions of which is again accepting a temporary employment.

1.2. INTERNAL FLEXIBILITY

The term "internal numerical flexibility" refers to the possibilities/ways of adjustment of the number of workers without the necessity of recruitment of new workers or dismissal of redundant ones. It is also a way of solution of problems connected with the need to reconcile family and work obligation. The aim of this part of Chapter 1 is precisely the analysis of the effect of flexible forms of work organisation, i.e. forms of internal numerical flexibility, on the needs of women from the point of view of reconciliation of work and family demands.

In the Czech Republic, the use of forms of internal flexibility for a faster and more durable return of women-mothers to the labour market, and therefore for the reconciliation of family and work needs, is still limited. On the one hand, we belong so to the countries with the lowest difference of employment rate between genders in case of childless persons (similar to

Scandinavian countries). On the other hand, the birth of a child deepens this difference (from 5.4% to 21.2%) and we rank among countries such as Belgium, Germany and The Netherlands, while Scandinavian women maintain their advantageous position on the labour market even after the birth of a child. Besides the reduced use of part-time employment, another explanation of such a huge leap in employment of Czech women is a relatively low availability of day-care nurseries and care of children under 3 years of age subsidised by the state. Moreover, parents of children must contribute financially to the functioning of these pre-scholar establishments. Besides the lack of such establishments for children, a frequent problem for women of middle and elderly age who take care of ill family members is unavailability of healthcare and welfare services. The forms of internal numerical flexibility are not only part-time employments, but also flexible working time, work sharing, working hours account, overtime work, work in shifts or work on Sundays and Saturdays, night work. All above-mentioned forms of working time flexibility, with the exception of work sharing, are used in the Czech Republic, some of them comparably to the practice in other EU countries, some of the less *e.g. flexible working time, working hours account, work sharing).

Despite the low percentage of part-time employment, meeting the family obligations influences the preference of working time length for women. While in case of men reduced working time is used mainly at advanced age, women in the Czech Republic work part-time mostly at the age of 30-44 years. A total of 46% of all part-time employments of women are in the category of 25-44 years. The total number of hours worked by men and women in productive age also gives the evidence about the degree of use of reduced-time employments. Less than 68% of employed women at the age of 25-44 years worked in 2007 more than 40 hours a week, compared to 77.4% of men of the same age. However, only 7.8% of men worked less than 30 hours a week, the percentage of women was twice as high.

Single mothers/fathers have a very difficult position in the Czech Republic from the point of view of making use of internal numerical flexibility. There exist even research surveys on their position on the labour market and in the society that confirm this hypothesis. Moreover, the unfavourable economic and social situation of these households has an effect on the social and educational development of their children and the vicious circle closes itself. Single mother mostly cannot afford to work part-time, the time dedicated to the family is therefore limited by their long working time. Their preferences go towards free (flexible) working time, or towards the possibility of working more from home. But since the character of the working time is determined mainly by the kind of profession, requirements of such nature cannot be met in all cases. In the Czech Republic, adjusting the working hours according their needs is possible more likely for female and male employees with university degree of certain professions, positions, domains and sectors of the economy. If the employer needs the employee in question and his/her work activities enables e.g. flexible or reduced working time, work from home etc., they try to meet his/her needs. For employees on lower positions and with lower education, however, these possibilities are still limited and, considering the situation on the labour market, they do not have much chance to assert their needs.

The Czech government has decided to change the situation in the domain of use of forms of internal numerical flexibility, with a view to increase the participation of women on the labour market and, at the same time, to enable women with small children or taking care of long-term ill family members to reconcile family and working needs. They start firstly from the fact that the use of part-time employment, that should meet these needs, is minimal in the Czech Republic. For this reasons, the reform actions in progress are aimed at lowering the work costs of reduced-time employment of the above-mentioned groups of persons, with the assumption of growth of interest in this flexible form of working time. The government also makes an effort to resolve the complicated and stagnant situation of mothers with small children and single mothers in particular, in relation to the needs of the labour market as well as those of the family by supporting the development and the availability of childcare services. Within the scope of a reform package of pro-family measures, they newly support the reconciliation of work and family also by tax advantages for employers that open so-called "mini-kindergartens" and day-care nurseries within their companies and that grant their

employees an allowance for childcare. A completely new possibility is also an institution of providers of mutual parental help and supporting the development of childcare services for self-employed persons.

1.3. FUNCTIONAL FLEXIBILITY

The term "functional flexibility" refers to the degree of difficulties connected with a change of organization of the work or also of the capacity of workers and enterprises to adapt to the new market needs. The aim of this part of Chapter 1 is to evaluate the effect of gender differentiation of forms of employment and working time length to the equality of access to programmes of continuing vocational training (CVT) on the level of employers/enterprises in the Czech Republic.

The number of employers that bear in mind the development of human resources of the enterprise is only slightly increasing in the Czech Republic, CVT is still undersized in comparison with most EU countries. The impulse to CVT comes mostly from the employers. The employees undergo the corresponding form of training mainly in order to maintain the job, or to reinforce their position in the company. For training of employees, employers select mostly CVT courses - up to 63%. This is naturally not the only form of training, as also evidenced by the fact that 9% of companies in the Czech Republic that train their employees otherwise do not use it. Besides these courses, companies choose to send their employees to conferences, seminars and similar actions (46%). Minimally expanded in the Czech Republic is the work rotation, by means of which only 4% of companies trained their employees. The so-called quality circles and training circles were used by 9% of companies in the Czech Republic. The highest attention in company training is paid to employees with so-called atypical forms of contracts (fixed-term contracts or part-time employment contracts). Up to 35% of companies with employees on such types of contracts provide specially adapted CVT courses to persons with fixed-term contracts and 29% to part-time workers. Lowest attention is paid to women on parental leave (National Training Fund, 2009).

The Czech Republic belongs to countries with the highest difference in participation of men and women in CVT, with men prevailing strongly over women (difference of 11%). From the total number of employed men, 63% underwent further training in these courses, and 52% of women. As to the length of the training courses, women studied in average 22 hours in 2005, men 23 hours. There are more causes of gender inequality, both objective ones consisting in different employment structure and subjective ones consisting in the employers' preference of men to women. Most disadvantaged are women employed in the fields of commerce, motor vehicle repairs and in the group of fields including mining, energy and water management industry, building industry, accommodation and transport services. In enterprises in these fields, the difference in participation of men and women in CVT courses is the same, 12%. The lowest difference was found in enterprises in the fields of other public, social and personal services (4%). Inequality of participation on company training may also lead to inequality from the point of view of career promotion, but also shift from permanent contracts to fixed-term contracts (National Training Fund, 2009).

In CVT where the participation depends to a large extent on the decision of an individual, women in the Czech Republic are on the contrary more active. This is also supported by data from Labour Force Sample Survey, according to which during the last four weeks preceding the survey 6.2% of women of 25-64 years were going through training, but only 5.9% of men of the same age. This difference was even greater in the previous years. It is possible to draw general conclusion that the importance of CVT decreases proportionally to the degree of education in case of both genders - but men with lower education, as opposed to women, are more aware of the importance of further training. The main reason to participate in CVT is, in case of men, the effort to maintain the current work position and to improve their financial situation and their professional position at work. Women, on the contrary, focus on the possibility of finding a new job by increasing or changing their qualifications when choosing a CVT. Single mothers show only minimal interest in CVT, most motivated are mother

with university degree. In general, mothers with small children do not consider CVT a necessity, they perceive it more as an advantage for their integration into the labour market. It is evident that their priorities during this period are connected more with the family life (Kulhavý - Bartáková, 2007).

International differences in percentage of enterprises training their employees are influenced considerably by legislation of EU countries. An indirect effect is that of legislation regulating the processes of dismissal of employees. In this connection, high protection from dismissal leads to higher investments of the companies to CVT of current employees. A direct effect on training of employees is that of legal provisions regulating the obligations of companies to support development of employees, which may apply to all employees or only to certain professions (National Training Fund, 2009). According to the Czech Labour Code, every employer "shall ensure staff training in order to ensure occupational safety and health protection, ensure appropriate vocational practice for employees - graduates from secondary schools and universities, arrange induction training and on-the-job training for an employee who starts the job without any qualifications, arrange on-the-job training for an employee who is transferred to a new workplace or a new type of work if such training is necessary" (Act No. 262/2006 Coll., the Labour Code). In accordance with the Labour Code, the employer may also require from an employee to take part in training in order to improve his/her qualifications. For some fields, training and prerequisites necessary for the exercise of certain professions are regulated by law or decrees (for example in public health care, education, electrical engineering, transport and similar). The influence of the legislative environment is relatively strong in company practice, as evidenced by the proportion of so-called compulsory training on the total number of hours spent in CVT courses. Hours dedicated to training in the field of environmental protection and occupational safety and health protection in the Czech Republic represented 20% of the total number of hours, which was the highest percentage in the EU-27 together with Great Britain (National Training Fund, 2009). The engagement of the state in the sense of financial support of company training is already lower. The state support consists exclusively in the possibility to deduct from taxes the finances spent on CVT provisions.

1.4. WAGE FLEXIBILITY

The term "wage flexibility" expresses the degree to which the development of wages reflects the development of economy. The aim of this part of the chapter is to assess the influence of wage flexibility (given by the existing income inequality and concentration of women in low-income sectors, fields and professions) on men and women on the labour market.

In the Czech Republic, despite the existing prohibition of wage discrimination, the difference between incomes of men and women remains constantly at 25-27% to women's disadvantage and it is still growing. According to Fischlová (2005), the greatest differences in wages are in the category of middle-aged workers, the least, on the contrary, among young persons. We can also find the highest differences between men and women among employees with university degree. As to employment classification, the greatest wage discrimination occurs in the category of managers - the income of women remains at around 54% of that of men. The differences in income between men and women also increase in science and in so-called white-collar jobs. Up to a certain extent, the trend towards increase of income differences between men and women is reinforced by sector segregation of women in certain professions, both on the vertical and the horizontal axis, connected with generally lower wages. Women on the labour market are concentrated above all in 4 economic sectors and fields - public health care, education, hotel industry and public and social services. Precisely these sectors are typically located at the lowest end of the income scale. According to Fischlová (2005), vertical professional segregation persists even in spite of the changes that occurred in the Czech Republic since the early 1990s. Therefore, although the education and qualifications of women have increased considerably, men still hold the major part of manager positions in the economy (about 77%). In top positions of legislative, managerial or other similar nature we find women only rarely (the ratio is 19:1). Women with

highest education are most concentrated in the public sector where employers do not have problems with appreciating the qualifications and professional skills of women, and, at the same time, there exists greater wage equality between men and women. By contrast, in sectors with great competition, women very seldom hold high managerial posts.

Binding legislative acts regulating the conditions of remuneration of employees in the Czech Republic (i.e. the Labour Code, Act on Wages, Act on Payment and Remuneration for Work and implemented regulations) are based on the equality of amount of remuneration for men and women that occupy the same working position with the same employer. It ensues from this that EPL should lead to an objective equality of wages of men and women on the labour market. Wage discrimination by (not only) gender is explicitly prohibited in the Czech Republic. Therefore a person of one sex whose wages are lower in comparison with another person of the opposite sex that performs the same work or work of equal value may claim the right to balance the unlawful difference. In case of a court case, it is incumbent on the employer to provide proof that the wage difference is legitimate.

The social security system in the Czech Republic contributes to a certain extent (this is by far not the only factor) to the persistence of wage differences between men and women on the labour market. The influence of the social security system can be seen already in the facts mentioned in the previous chapters. High social and labour protection of women together with their role in the family and their reproductive function lead the employers, already when recruiting, to take into account in the remuneration future losses incurred in connection with fulfilment of the woman's reproductive function. This does not mean that this approach is justifiable, it merely shows the employer's effort to optimise the costs of labour force, which are objectively higher in case of women than in case of men.

1.5. SWOT ANALYSIS OF A POLICY/ACTION

A. Job security level is differentiated in the Czech Republic - although we have high protection of permanent job positions, there is at the same time very low protection of temporary jobs. Since women represent a higher percentage in temporary jobs, the said disproportion affects them more than men. On the other hand, EPL reinforces the position of women in the employment, in particular in case of pregnant women, women on maternity and parental leave and single women with small children. Unfortunately, precisely this increased protection, multiplied by higher absence of women-mothers from work due to the children's illness (besides doubtless positive effects of the protection legislation) is also a handicap for women applying for an employment. The fact is that employers prefer to recruit men or women that do not plan to found a family (in spite of the prohibition of discrimination, which is difficult to enforce in practice). Changes in the social system help to create equal opportunities for men and women on the labour market. Social aid during pregnancy and the first months of a child's life is still bound to the mother, but after expiration of the maternity leave, either the mother or the father can take the parental leave. The social security system also compensates for income loss of one of the parents in case of illness of a child up to 10 years of age. Support of functional flexibility increasing the employment protection is in the hands of employers and employees. The involvement of the state is minimal, EPL merely obliges the employer to develop human resources, it does not regulate gender aspects. The state support consists merely in the possibility of companies/individuals to deduct from taxes the costs of CVT. Development of internal forms of numerical flexibility increasing the participation of women on the labour market and reconciliation of family and work is the objective of further government measures in progress. These are aimed, firstly, to reduce work costs of employers that employ women with small children on part-time. Secondly, they are aimed to development and availability of childcare services. The state offers tax advantages for employers that open company mini-kindergartens/day-care nurseries or that grant their employees an allowance for childcare. As a support of care of children of self-employed persons, there was also created an institution of mutual parental help. EPL regulating the remuneration of workers in the Czech Republic guarantees equality of wages of men and

women on the same job position with the same employer. In case of different wages, it is possible to lodge with the court a claim for balance of the difference. It is then the obligation of the employer to prove that the difference in wages is justified. Bad enforceability of the law is clearly evident here, because the difference in wages between men and women is about 26% to the women's disadvantage and is still increasing. The high protection of women on the labour market also contributes to the persistence of wage inequality. Already when recruiting, employers take into account in the remuneration future losses incurred in connection with fulfilment of the woman's reproductive function. This is not a justification, it merely shows the employer's effort to optimise the costs of labour force, objectively higher in case of women than in case of men.

B. Proposed measures or more likely political interventions should contribute to the elimination of a considerable part of the above-identified problems connected with employment protection of women in the Czech Republic. It is necessary to increase the protection of temporary forms of employment, in particular agency employment. It is also necessary to increase the enforceability of protective work legislation with a view to eliminate infringements of the prohibition of discrimination in recruiting women and to eliminate wage discrimination of women. It is also essential to eliminate, by means of effective controls, the proportion of illegal employment (connected with zero employment protection), including so-called covered employment, concerning both men and women above all in building industry, services, tourism and hotel industry. In this connection, it is necessary to carry out measures aiming to control mechanisms leading to more effective control work of employment offices, labour inspectorates, customs offices, tax offices and, last but not least, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs itself. It is mainly good to focus on the cohesion of their information systems and to ensure cooperation of these offices in case of need. In order to increase employment protection, it is also necessary to change the attitude of the society towards the role of functional flexibility as a prevention of unemployment and a source of competitiveness. Employers, but above all employees themselves (men as well as women) should change their attitude. Regular participation in continuing vocational training as a part of the working life improves considerably the workers' perspective of success both with the current employer and on the labour market in general. The role of the state should consist, on one part, in a stronger support of persons participating in CVT and, on the other, in ensuring the framework of a functional CVT system. However, the main problem connected with the position of women in employment still remains in the deep-rooted conviction of the Czech society about the roles of woman and man in the family and about their value on the labour market. It will take decades to change these stereotypes and there exist no measures that would accelerate this turnaround in cultural values.

C. The development of employment protection from the gender perspective is influenced by more external factors. It is mainly the general economic situation that positively influences the position of women on the labour market during the period of economic growth, because the work offer prevails the demand and employers make an effort to find and keep their employees. In case of economic recession, or even crisis, there logically exists a real threat to the position of weaker groups on the labour market, including women. The general political orientation of the government has also considerable influence on the development of employment protection. Liberal right-wing parties take steps toward greater liberalisation of the labour market, including liberalisation of conditions of recruitment and dismissal of employees. By contrast, left-oriented government tend to implement protective measures related to the labour market and, in cooperation with labour unions, they promote increasing or at least maintaining high job security. Without doubt, the level of employment protection is also influenced by the demographic situation in the country and the migration policy of the government. An important factor is also the intervention of EU by means of its directives and decrees coordinating the level of protection on the labour market. The level of education of women in the society also affects their position on the job; the higher and better corresponding to the needs of the labour market, the higher is the real job security, and vice versa. The last, but not the least important factor is the development of cultural values in the society, when changes towards equal opportunities of women and men in the family and on

the labour market contribute to the reduction of wage differences and different approach to employment of men and women on the labour market.

D. The level of employment protection from the gender point of view is also influenced by a number of internal developmental aspects. In the first place, it is the level of control activity supervising the observation of employment protection legislation (i.e. employment offices, labour inspectorates, customs offices, tax offices and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs). A weak point of the Czech environment is precisely a low enforceability of this legislation. Another important factor that may weaken, but also reinforce the women's position in the employment, is the degree of use of financial resources from ESF to support gender equity on the labour market in the projects of Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, employment offices and other subject on the regional and local level. So far, these resources have only rarely been used to reinforce the security of women on the labour market objectively and in the long term. A fundamental role is also that of implementation of government measures influencing gender differences and problems on the labour market. Geographical and financial availability of childcare services is certainly important in the long term, which would enable most women to participate actively in the labour market and to reinforce their position there.

E. Important benefits should ensue from an increase of EPL enforceability with a view to eliminate the infringements of the prohibition of discrimination in recruiting women and to eliminate wage discrimination of women. It is also necessary to eliminate, by means of effective controls, the proportion of illegal employment (zero employment protection), concerning both men and women above all in building industry, services and tourism and hotel industry. In this connection, it is necessary to implement effective measures mainly in the domain of control mechanisms, i.e. in employment offices and labour inspectorates, customs offices and tax offices.

F. Current steps taken by the government are focused on one of the important fields supporting the position of women (in particular with children) on the labour market and at work. The changes in progress will enable women with small children to reintegrate more quickly into the labour market after the end on the parental leave or to reconcile care of a small child with part-time work activity. Better availability of childcare services and reduced insurance contributions connected with part-time employment of women with children certainly help achieving this objective. On the other hand, the government neglects to take steps in another important area that would reinforce the position of women on the labour market by making the employers observe the provisions of employment protection legislation. Current control mechanisms serve their purpose very ineffectively. It is in particular the problem of an ineffective control of observation of prohibition of women discrimination on the labour market (wages, recruitment, sectoral and occupational segregation). More effective control activity would also contribute to the elimination of forms of illegal employment and breaking of regulations of agency employment in the Czech Republic. Another area of the proposal, still put aside by the government, is support of functional flexibility development. The role of state in this area should consist in a stronger financial support of CVT participants and also in ensuring the framework of a functional CVT system.

CHAPTER 2. EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

The term "employment security" refers to objective chances of employees to maintain adequate employment, not necessarily with the same employer.

2.1. EXTERNAL FLEXIBILITY

For definition of the term "external numerical flexibility" see Chapter 1.1. The aim of this part of the chapter on employment protection is to assess the influence of gender segregation on the labour market on equal access to instruments of active employment policy (ALMP) in the Czech Republic.

The existing gender segregation on the Czech labour market (such as it has been described in Chapter 1) has no influence on the access of women and men to the instruments of active employment policy. There are no differences in ALMP availability even as to the forms of employment, i.e. between employees (on fixed-term and permanent contract, part-time), self-employed persons or working on short-time contracts of work performance. The employment protection legislative plays no differentiating role in case of ALMP.

The possibility of registration with an employment office applies to all unemployed persons, but also to employees or otherwise economically active persons who try to change the job - so-called job applicants. The employment office can provide these job applicants, within the scope of employment support, with suitable retraining that would accelerate this change. In addition to unemployment financial aid, employment offices help unemployed job applicants to find new employment. During this process they use a number of ALMP instruments (retraining, employment support, individual action plans, etc.) that contribute to faster reintegration into the labour market. ALMP in the Czech Republic is probably least successful in resolving problems of long-term unemployment, which belongs to the highest in the EU. The long-term unemployment rate in the Czech Republic is in general higher in case of women (3.6% in 2007), there were 2.1% of long-term unemployed men. While the Czech Republic belongs to the European average in case of the value for men, in case of the other sex it definitely falls between countries with a high long-term unemployment rate.

In spite of this fact, the percentage of all persons (regardless of gender) participating in ALMP activation programmes in the Czech Republic is relatively low in the European context - 9.4% in 2006. Lower percentages can be found only in Eastern European countries and in Great Britain. We lie on the bottom of the scale in particular as far as retraining measures are concerned (lower participation is only in Slovakia and Great Britain). Decidedly better is the situation in the area of supported employments of disabled persons, where only The Netherlands outweighs other countries. More women than men take part in ALMP retraining programmes in the Czech Republic, on the other hand, less of them are placed in directly created subsidised jobs (subsidiary occupation and socially purposeful job place).

Also the lower proportion of state expenses on ALMP in 2006 corresponds to its lower priority; it amounted only to 0.13% of the total country's GDP. Less was spent only by Great Britain and Greece. When recounting the expenses per capita (unemployed persons plus labour force in reserve), the Czech Republic lies at the bottom of the EU scale as well.

2.2. INTERNAL FLEXIBILITY

For definition of the term "internal numerical flexibility" see Chapter 1.2. The aim of this part of Chapter 2 is to consider the availability of training programmes taking place during work time with respect to gender differences in so-called unpaid time. Most of the text is identical with Chapter 1.3, therefore we do not mention it here again.

CVT of employees as a prevention of unemployment and thus internal (company) component of employment protection in the Czech Republic is, in relation to advanced EU countries, a relatively slowly developing component of company policies - although its proportion has been in slight increase since the end of the 1990s. With its low proportion, the Czech Republic belongs to the group of countries of the former Communist bloc. Most impulses for CVT come from the employers, not from the employees. The latter agree to undergo a course/training in order to keep their job, or to reinforce their position in the company (National Training Fund, 2009). Over time, insufficient use of CVT by both

companies and employees is apparently negatively reflected in constantly lower labour productivity in the Czech Republic.

Further - see the whole Chapter 1.3.

2.3. FUNCTIONAL FLEXIBILITY

For definition of the term "functional flexibility" see Chapter 1.3. The aim of this part of Chapter 2 is to assess the influence of gender differences in valuation of professional knowledge and skills in male and female sectors and professions in the Czech Republic. A part of the text concerning the wage differences is identical with Chapter 1.4.

Differences in valuation of skills and knowledge (mainly in the form of remuneration) are relatively great in the Czech Republic as to men and women. The difference in wages between men and women in the Czech Republic remains at around 25-27% to women's disadvantage and is still increasing. According to Fischlová (2005), the greatest differences in wages are in the category of middle-aged workers, the least, on the contrary, among young persons. We can also find the highest differences between men and women among employees with university degree. As to employment classification, the greatest wage discrimination occurs in the category of managers - the income of women remains at around 54% of that of men. The differences in income between men and women also increase in science and in so-called white-collar jobs. Up to a certain extent, the trend towards increase of income differences between men and women is reinforced by sector segregation of women in certain professions, both on the vertical and the horizontal axis, connected with generally lower wages.

Women on the labour market are concentrated above all in 4 economic sectors and fields - public health care, education, hotel industry and public and social services. Precisely these sectors are typically located at the lowest end of the income scale. According to Fischlová (2005), vertical professional segregation persists even in spite of the changes that occurred in the Czech Republic since the early 1990s. Therefore, although the education and qualifications of women have increased considerably, men still hold the major part of manager positions in the economy (about 77%). In top positions of legislative, managerial or other similar nature we find women only rarely (the ratio is 19:1). Women with highest education are most concentrated in the public sector where employers do not have problems with appreciating the qualifications and professional skills of women, and, at the same time, there exists greater wage equality between men and women. By contrast, in sectors with great competition, we find very seldom women on high managerial posts.

Of course, the education has a great effect on evaluation of workers on the labour market. As far as men are concerned, the Czech Republic occupies the first place in the EU as to the percentage of persons with at least secondary-school degree of education (it was 93.7% in 2007). In case of women, holds also a very good position in comparison with most EU countries, as the percentage of women that graduated successfully from any type of secondary school was 87.2% in 2007. In case of the group of young person of 20-24 years of age, up to 91.3% of men has at least secondary-school degree. The percentage of women is even higher - 92.4%. The unemployment rate of juvenile persons, i.e. of 15-19 years, is very high in the Czech Republic. In 2007, when the Czech economy was at its peak, it reached almost 27% (for comparison, other age groups remained at around 2-5% in that year). Almost one third of women of this age are unemployed, and one fourth of men under 19 years. This is caused by a very low degree of education of juvenile persons, who are not helped in their effort to find a career even by the country's favourable economic development. Despite the undoubtedly weakest position of juvenile persons on the Czech labour market, when counting the coefficient of juvenile unemployment rate (it expresses the proportion of unemployed persons of the age of 15 to 24 years in the total number of the population of the same age), the Czech Republic belongs to the countries with the lowest value.

EPL regulating the conditions of remuneration of employees in the Czech Republic (i.e. the Labour Code, Act on Wages, Act on Payment and Remuneration for Work and implemented regulations) is based on the equality of amount of remuneration for men and women that occupy the same working position with the same employer. It ensues from this that employment protection legislation should lead to an objective equality of wages of men and women on the labour market. Wage discrimination by (not only) gender is explicitly prohibited in the Czech Republic. However, the Czech reality differs considerably from the above-mentioned assumption. A certain role in different valuation of work of men and women can be also played by the social security system. This enables the parents, but in practice most often mothers, to stay at home with the child up to his/her 10 years of age in case of his /her illness. Women are also financially protected in case of maternity and during parental leave, from which men can benefit as well, but again, it happens only in isolated cases. The employers then, with the view of more frequent absence of women from their workplace, may compensate in advance for labour productivity losses by lower total wages.

2.4. SWOT ANALYSIS OF A POLICY/ACTION

A. The approach to employment protection by means of ALMP in the Czech Republic is determined neither by gender segregation nor by forms of employment. EPL plays no differentiating role in case of ALMP. ALMP is least successful in resolving long-term unemployment, which is very high in the Czech Republic and affects women more often. In spite of this, still only a low percentage of unemployed women and men are included in activation and retraining programmes. The causes, however, are mostly not on the part of employment offices, but of the applicants themselves. In the time of economic crisis, the government comes up with a new measure based on the possibility for workers to increase their qualifications during the period of partial unemployment by means of retraining courses in employment offices. CVT realised within companies help considerably to increase employment rate and possibility of assertion on the labour market. The degree of use of CVT is in the hands of employers and employees. The Czech Republic is characteristic by a high difference in participation of men and women in CVT - men prevail considerably over women. The lowest attention as to CVT is paid by the employers to women on parental leave. The involvement of the state in support of CVT is minimal, EPL merely obliges the employers to develop human resources, it does not regulate gender aspects. The state support consists merely in the possibility of companies/individuals to deduct from taxes the costs of CVT. Differences in valuation of skills and knowledge of men and women on the labour market are considerable (about 26% of difference of incomes). Up to a certain extent, this attitude can be explained by sectoral segregation of women on certain positions, both on horizontal and vertical axis, connected with lower wages in general. Women with the highest education are concentrated in the public sector, where employers appreciate the qualifications and professional skills of women and, at the same time, where greater wage equality between men and women can be seen. Of course, the degree of education has an influence on valuation of workers on the labour market, but it is comparable in men and women and therefore there is no reason for wage discrimination. In particular women at the age of 15-19 years have difficulties to assert themselves on the labour market with their skills and knowledge (1/3 of them are unemployed). High protection of women on the labour market also contributes to the persistence of different valuation of men and women. Already when recruiting, employers take into account in the remuneration future losses incurred in connection with fulfilment of the woman's reproductive function. This is not a justification, it merely shows the employer's effort to optimise the costs of labour force, objectively higher in case of women than in case of men.

B. The proposed measures should contribute to the elimination of a significant part of the above-identified problems connected with employment protection of women in the Czech Republic. The first proposal consists in conditioning the right to unemployment benefits by participation of applicants in activation and retraining ALMP programmes. It is important that the possibility of elimination from the register should be real, not merely proclaimed. Another proposal starts from the fact that the so-called CVT acts as a prevention of unemployment

and main strategy of possibility of long-term assertion on the labour market. Mainly employees themselves should change their attitude in this connection (and most of all, women with small children). CVT as a part of working life improves considerably the perspective of assertion of workers with the current employer as well as on the labour market in general. The role of the state should consist, on one part, in a stronger financial support of persons participating in CVT and, on the other, in ensuring the framework of a functional CVT system. It is necessary to focus on changing the attitude of women on maternity and parental leave towards CVT and at the same time to offer various forms of CVT for these women. It is necessary to increase personal responsibility of companies to their employees (most often to women) who partly or completely interrupted their work activity. It is necessary that employment offices and employers cooperate mutually in case of structural difficulties of companies, e.g. by automatic inclusion of employees in danger of dismissal in retraining courses that will enable their long-term assertion on the labour market with the same or with a different employer. The education system in the Czech Republic must be permeable and accessible to all interested persons of all ages. It is important to motivate already school children and youth to reach such degree of education that would increase their chances to long-term assertion on the labour market. Use of employment agencies as intermediaries between employers and employment offices will also contribute to improve employment protection. The basis is to expand their activity on the market to so-called social agencies providing CVT and arranging short-term, but regular employments for long-term unemployed women (as well as men). It is also necessary to ensure effective control of observation of prohibition of wage discrimination with the aim of equal evaluation of work of the same kind of both men and women, particularly in the private sector. The last proposal is of the same nature as in the previous chapter, since it concerns progressive social change in perception of value of women's work and their right to equal access to job positions that are occupied by overwhelming majority of men at present.

C. The development of employment protection from the gender perspective is influenced by more external factors. Firstly, by the general economic situation. Economic crisis or recession leads to an increase of unemployment rate, which implies lower actual employment protection on the labour market, moreover considering the fact that unemployment affects more women, they become the endangered group of on labour market. By contrast, during the economic growth, the employment protection of workers increases, since the demand for work is lower than work offer and employers make an effort to keep their employees. An important role is also played by evolution of economic structure and development of technology, implying changes of needs of qualifications on the labour market. Inability of workers/educational system to adapt to new demands can then represent a danger. The general demographic situation plays an important role for sure, i.e. the volume of available labour force in productive age. And migration policy, i.e. volume and structure of foreign labour force on the labour market, is also connected with this area, as is also influences the level of employment protection of women, but also men. An important factor is the development of European Employment Strategy, which reflects itself in the National Reform Programme of the Czech Republic and also adopted directives and decrees of the European Commission concerning the area of employment protection of women, which the Czech Republic has the duty to implement in the national law.

D. The level of employment protection from the gender point of view is also influenced by a number of internal developmental aspects. In the first place, the employment policy itself can be the strong as well as the weak point. It depends on whether the employment offices will be able to provide the necessary retraining and activation courses for women during the period of interrupted work activity. Their regular offer and purposeful orientation increasing the chances of reintegration into the labour market is a key factor. The level of cooperation of employment offices and employers in case of structural difficulties of companies is another decisive factor. The employment protection can be increased e.g. by automatic inclusion of employees in danger of dismissal in retraining courses that will enable their long-term assertion on the labour market with the same or with a different employer. Employment protection is also supported by wider use of partly unemployed for participation in retraining courses of

employment offices. The last factor of influence is the activity of so-called employment agencies on the Czech labour market. Their use as intermediaries between employers and employment offices would also contribute to increase the employment protection. The basis is to expand their activity on the market to so-called social employment agencies providing CVT and arranging short-term, but regular employments for long-term unemployed women (as well as men).

E. Basic measures consist in regular participation of women on the labour market in continuing vocational training. This is a basic prevention of unemployment and the way to the possibility of long-term assertion on the labour market. This would apparently most reinforce the employment protection of women. In so doing, the state can participate in development of integration of women into the labour market by its financial support and functional CVT system, employers by development of company human resources and employment offices by cooperation with employment on inclusion of employees in danger of dismissal into retraining courses.

CHAPTER 3. INCOME SECURITY

The term "income security" can be defined as the level of income protection during periods of loss of income from economic activity.

3.1. EXTERNAL FLEXIBILITY

For definition of the term "external numerical flexibility" see Chapter 1.1. The aim of this part of chapter on income protection is to assess the influence of flexible work contracts and interrupted work activity of women on their access to social income transfers.

The percentage of economically active women decreased between 1993 and 2007 from 52.3% to 49.8%. Main reasons of economic inactivity of Czech women are in particular care of family members and only much behind come studies. Although the Czech Republic belongs to the countries with the lowest difference of employment rate between genders in case of childless persons, this difference deepens considerably after the birth of a child (from 5.4% to 21.2%). Women in the Czech Republic are therefore much more dependent on the system of social protection of income during the period of fulfilment of their duties related to the reproductive and nurturing function of the family. The Czech Republic can count among countries with higher tax limit, which impose more considerable taxes on incomes in order to be able to ensure a rich social security system (France, Sweden, Germany). In the Czech Republic, probably also due to high redistribution of incomes and high legal labour protection, we also find a very low number of persons that, although employed, are at a high risk of poverty, because their income lies below 60% of the income median in the Czech Republic. In case of women, our situation is the best after Denmark, and in case of men, we are the best in Europe.

The influence of EPL in this domain is interconnected with the influence of the social system. The influence of social system, which differentiates the right of women to social allowances according to the type and period of performed work activity, is fundamental in this connection. During the so-called maternity leave, i.e. the period of a total of 6 week before the birth of the child and 22 weeks after the birth, women who during the last 2 years had paid at least 270 days of sickness insurance, have the right to so-called financial aid in maternity. Self-employed women enjoy a clear advantage in this system, because they can pay minimal contributions to social insurance during most of their past work activity and then increase this contribution to the maximum one month before taking the maternity leave, and so they get into one of the highest income groups as to the amount of this aid. This is a clear case of favouring of self-employed women over employed women who were forced in their employment to pay still relatively high contributions. If an unemployed women takes

maternity leave, she has no right to the so-called financial aid in maternity, which is financed from sickness insurance, but she receives, from the day of childbirth, directly the parental allowance (parental leave). However, she cannot choose its amount - she automatically gets CZK 7,600 during the period of 21 months from the birth of the child and then CZK 3,800 until 4 years of age of the child. Therefore, during the first half a year after the childbirth, she finds herself in a considerably worse financial situation in comparison with employed women in average or above-average income group. Her situation during this period is comparable to that of women on maternity leave whose income had been on the lower end of the income scale in the Czech Republic, i.e. at around CZK 11,000 of gross wage. Women who take maternity leave 60 days or less after the end of a fixed-term contract have also the right to financial aid in maternity, which is paid to them by their former employer. However, they do not have the right to cancellation of their dismissal or to maintain their job position with this employer. When working in so-called short-term employments, e.g. contracts of work performance, participation in sickness insurance is not obligatory. Exempt from sickness insurance are also employers who perform only occasional jobs - i.e. casual short-term work (whether employment or contract of work performance), which should not last according to the agreement and actually did not last more than 7 consecutive calendar days, or employments where the counted income does not reach CZK 400 in a calendar month. If a woman who, in the long term, had been employed only on so-called contracts of work performance, where, as already mentioned, contributions to sickness social security (of which sickness insurance forms part) are not obligatory, becomes pregnant, it depends on whether the woman had been paying this insurance herself. If this is not the case, she has the same rights as an unemployed pregnant woman. She is not entitled to financial aid in maternity. During the first 21 months she receives the medium tariff rate of parental allowance, i.e. CZK 7,600, and then CZK 3,800 a month up to 4 years of age of the child. Women employed on contract of work activity, where contributions to social security are obligatory, are entitled to financial aid in maternity if they fulfil the conditions (minimal amount of monthly wage - CZK 400 and duration of insurance - 270 days). The amount of financial aid in maternity is obviously influenced, in addition to the form of work activity, also by the work time. Women who had been employed part-time will receive a considerably lower amount of financial aid in maternity than those employed full-time.

The right to allowances of parental leave, which for all, with the exception of unemployed women and women not fulfilling the conditions for receiving the financial aid in maternity from sickness insurance (see above), starts 22 weeks after the birth of the child, applies to all groups of economically active parents (women or men). However, only those who had been receiving financial aid in maternity have the possibility of choosing the "speed" of parental leave, i.e. they have the choice between 2 years with the amount of allowance of CZK 11,500, 3 years with the amount of CZK 7,600 or 4 years with the amount of CZK 3,800.

During the period of care of a sick child under 10 years of age, the woman (or the man) employed on work contract (regardless of whether part-time or full time, on fixed-term or permanent contract) has the right to an allowance for care of a family member. The employer has the obligation to excuse the employee's absence from work during the time of care of the child. During this period, the employee is not entitled to a compensation for wages or salary, but he/she is entitled to sickness insurance benefits. The amount is fixed at 60% of the daily assessment bases that depend on the level of income during the past 12 months. In addition to employees, who are obliged to contribute to sickness insurance, self-employed persons are also entitled to these benefits if they contribute to sickness insurance. Their contribution is optional in the Czech Republic. Employees working only in so-called short-term employments - up to 7 days - are not entitled to sickness insurance benefits, nor, therefore, to so-called care allowances. The same applies to workers employed on contracts of work performance. Parents who work on so-called contracts of work activity do have the rights to care allowances if their income reaches at least CZK 400 a month.

The amount of unemployment allowance in the Czech Republic also depends on the level of previous income, therefore, a considerable role is played by the length of work time and the

form of work activity in general. In this connection, there are most problems with persons - men and women - working on very short contracts. A number of them, under current circumstances, do not attain the unemployment allowance at all.

The decisive factor for entitlement to retirement pension is the duration of payment of pension insurance, in which are included also so-called reimbursable periods - at least 25 years at the time of statutory retirement and at least 15 years when retiring at the age of 65 years. The period of unemployment is included in the reimbursable period only up to the extent of 3 years maximum. So-called long-term unemployed persons, with total duration of unemployment about 10 or more years, have naturally great difficulties to meet the condition for granting of retirement pension. They are thus at a disadvantage due to their unemployment. If the worker does not succeed in meeting the above-mentioned conditions, he is fully dependent in his old age on not very high social allowances and on the help of his/her own family. Naturally, the level of previous incomes has an influence of the amount of retirement pension, but there is a very strong levelling of retirement pensions, and for this reason groups of employees with medium to high incomes are strongly disadvantaged. Their income from retirement pension is very low in comparison with their previous incomes, and without savings, or possible incomes from private supplementary pension insurance, their living standard declines considerably. For groups of pensioners with low income, the decline in living standard given by the amount of retirement pension is not so steep.

3.2. INTERNAL FLEXIBILITY

For definition of the term "internal numerical flexibility" see Chapter 1.2. The aim of this part of chapter on income protection is to assess the influence of part-time employment contracts and other flexible forms of employment on getting and maintaining independent work incomes of men and women in the Czech Republic.

The percentage of flexible workers (i.e. on part-time and fixed-time contracts plus self-employed persons) in the Czech Republic was less than 25% in 2007. The Czech Republic belongs thus to the group of former socialist countries, which are typical by lower proportion of flexible workplaces. The proportion of part-time contracts in the Czech Republic is low in the long term - it remains at around 5%. It is understandable that women work part-time significantly more often than men, only 2.3% of the latter were employed on part-time contracts in 2007. In the same year, 8.5% of women worked part-time in the civil sector. Men choose to work part-time most often for health reasons, or because of the need to reconcile work with continuing education, while care of children and other family members highly predominates in women. Further relatively frequent reasons for women are health problems and impossibility to find a full-time employment. The income level in part-time employments is of course lower in comparison with full-time employment. Fixed-term contracts in the Czech Republic amounted to 7.2% in 2007, the proportion of women (3.9%), not only in this year, was higher than that of men (3.3%). Of the total number of men employed in the civil sector, only 5.7% were employed on fixed term; compared to 9.1% of the all women. Moreover, the proportions of women working on fixed-term contract were distributed equally across all categories of age. For men, employment on fixed-term contract predominated until the age of 29 and after only in retirement age, which is logical, since pensioner workers are obliged by the Act on Pension Insurance to conclude only fixed-term labour contracts. Men working on fixed-term contracts are characterised by lower professional qualifications and they work in the manufacturing industry and the building sector. Professions requiring secondary school education predominate in women, they work in the manufacturing industry as well, but also in commerce, public health care, social care and education. The income level of fixed-term employees depends on the sector, domain, field and profession, but employees on fixed-term contract earn lower wages in comparison with employees on permanent contract.

In the Czech Republic, despite the existing prohibition of wage and gender discrimination, the difference between wages of men and women remains constantly at 25-27% to women's disadvantage and it is still growing. According to Fischlová (2005), the greatest differences in

wages are in the category of middle-aged workers, the least, on the contrary, among young persons. We can also find the highest differences between men and women among employees with university degree. As to employment classification, the greatest wage discrimination occurs in the category of managers - the income of women remains here at around 54% of that of men. The differences in income between men and women also increase in science and in so-called white-collar jobs.

In the Czech Republic, probably also due to high redistribution of incomes and high legal labour protection, we find a very low number of persons that, although employed, are at a high risk of poverty, because their income lies below 60% of the income median in the Czech Republic. In case of women, our situation is the best after Denmark, and in case of men, we are the best in Europe.

The influence of employment protection legislation in the Czech Republic in case of ensuring income from employment is identical with the factors mentioned in Chapter 1.1. In addition to protection provisions that are identical for men and women, the protection legislation reinforces the position of employed women in some aspects and preserves so their right to independent income from work activity. This is mainly the case of pregnant women, women on maternity and parental leave and single women with small children. The Labour Code prohibits dismissing a woman during these periods, prohibits certain types of work, obliges the employer to meet the woman's needs as to the arrangement of working time and prohibits them from sending pregnant women and women with children up to 8 years of age to business trips away from home. Moreover, it is not permitted to assign overtime work to pregnant women and women with children up to 1 year of age. Precisely this increased protection of women in these periods, multiplied by the fact that in the Czech Republic it is mostly the woman who stays at home to care for a sick child, causes, besides doubtless positive effects of the protection legislation, also a more complicated position of women applying for an employment. Employers above all in the private sector prefer men or women that do not plan to found a family.

The influence of the social security system can be again described as in Chapter 1.1., since it is the case of factors that support or disadvantage women or men in getting and maintaining an employment, or, in this case, the income from employment. The social security system in the Czech Republic is becoming recently more and more favourable to equal positions of fathers and mothers with small children on the labour market. Of course, social security during pregnancy and the first half a year of the child's life is still bound to the role of mother, who is supposed to leave the labour market at least for some time, and benefits from social security during these periods are thus bound to the woman. After their end, i.e. after expiration of the so-called maternity leave, which is financed from sickness leave, either the mother or the father can take the so-called parental leave and receive the parental benefits. So far, the new model is only seldom used in practice, but it is an automatic choice of families where the woman's employment is the main source of income. The social security system also compensates for income loss of one of the parents in case of illness of a child up to 10 years of age. As a rule, it is mostly the mother who stays with the child, although the above-mentioned exception holds here as well. Considering the frequency of illnesses of most small children, it is understandable that the factor of age of the woman and the child is often decisive for the employer when deciding to recruit a female employee, because a pregnant employee with one, let alone two small children is logically very costly for the employer and little effective.

3.3. WAGE FLEXIBILITY

For definition of the term "wage flexibility" see Chapter 1.4. The aim of this part of Chapter 3 is to describe protective measures against the decrease of wages caused by inequality of income between men and women and concentration of women in low-income employments in the Czech Republic.

In the Czech Republic, despite the existing prohibition of wage discrimination, the difference between incomes of men and women remains constantly at 25-27% to women's disadvantage and it is still growing. According to Fischlová (2005), the greatest differences in wages are in the category of middle-aged workers, the least, on the contrary, among young persons. We can also find the highest differences between men and women among employees with university degree. As to employment classification, the greatest wage discrimination occurs in the category of managers - the income of women remains at around 54% of that of men. The differences in income between men and women also increase in science and in so-called white-collar jobs. Up to a certain extent, the trend towards increase of income differences between men and women is reinforced by sector segregation of women in certain professions, both on the vertical and the horizontal axis, connected with generally lower wages. Women on the labour market are concentrated above all in 4 economic sectors and fields - public health care, education, hotel industry and public and social services. Precisely these sectors are typically located at the lowest end of the income scale. According to Fischlová (2005), vertical professional segregation persists even in spite of the changes that occurred in the Czech Republic since the early 1990s. Therefore, although the education and qualifications of women have increased considerably, men still hold the major part of manager positions in the economy (about 77%). In top positions of legislative, managerial or other similar nature we only rarely find women (the ratio is 19:1). Women with highest education are most concentrated in the public sector where employers do not have problems with appreciating the qualifications and professional skills of women, and, at the same time, there exists greater wage equality between men and women. By contrast, in sectors with great competition, women very seldom hold high managerial posts.

Binding legislative acts regulating the conditions of remuneration of employees in the Czech Republic (i.e. the Labour Code, Act on Wages, Act on Payment and Remuneration for Work and implemented regulations) are based on the equality of the amount of remuneration for men and women that occupy the same working position with the same employer. It ensues from this that employment protection legislation in the Czech Republic should lead to an objective equality of wages of men and women on the labour market. Wage discrimination by (not only) gender is explicitly prohibited in the Czech Republic. Therefore a person of one sex whose wages are lower in comparison with another person of the opposite sex that performs the same work or work of equal value may claim with the court the right to balance this unlawful difference. In case of a court case, it is incumbent on the employer to provide proof that the wage difference is legitimate. Despite of the above-mentioned, data stated at the beginning of the chapter evidence the bad enforceability of the law ensuring the equality of wages between men and women.

Besides this unfavourable trend, however, we can find in the Czech Republic also positive data relating to the income level of low-income households. Due to high redistribution of incomes and high legal labour protection, we find a very low percentage of persons that, although employed, are at a high risk of poverty, because their income lies below 60% of the income median in the Czech Republic. In case of women, our situation is the best after Denmark, and in case of men, we are the best in Europe. In order to maintain the incomes of groups at risk on the labour market above a certain level and to protect them from actual poverty, the employment protection legislation stipulates the institution of so-called minimum wages. This is the lowest allowable amount of remuneration for work in employment relationship. Its basic regulatory framework is stipulated by the Labour Code. In case of citizens yet at risk of poverty despite all, the social security system of aid in material neediness in the Czech Republic serves as social aid for persons with insufficient incomes, motivating these persons to make active effort to find means to satisfy their necessities. This is one of the measures by which the Czech Republic fights against social exclusion. It is based on the principle that every person that works must have higher living standard than the one that does not work, or that avoids work.

3.4. SWOT ANALYSIS OF A POLICY/ACTION

A. The influence of social security system and the previous form of economic activity are fundamental for differentiation of women's rights to social benefits during the period of interrupted work career. An advantageous position is that of self-employed women, women employed full-time and on permanent contract; in case that the employment is of a long-term nature, also that of women employed on fixed-term contract. By contrast, women employed on part-time and women who had been working on short-term contracts of work performance face lower social benefits during this period. The proportion of flexible workers in the Czech Republic in 2007 was less than one fourth. The Czech Republic belongs thus to the countries with lower proportion of flexible workplaces. The income level of part-time employees is naturally lower in comparison with full-time contracts, whereas they mostly perform more work than stipulated by their employment contract. The income level of fixed-term employees depends on the sector, domain, field and profession, but employees on fixed-term contract generally earn lower wages in comparison with employees on permanent contract. In case of a difference in wages, it is possible to claim with the court the right to balance this difference. It is then incumbent on the employer to prove that the difference in wages is justified. Bad enforceability of the law is clearly evident here, because the difference in wages between men and women (including flexible employment positions) is about 26% to the women's disadvantage and is still increasing. Besides this unfavourable trend, however, we can find in the Czech Republic also positive data relating to the income level of low-income households. Due to high redistribution of incomes and high legal labour protection, we find a very low percentage of persons (women) that, although employed, are at a high risk of poverty, because their income lies below 60% of the income median in the Czech Republic.

In order to maintain the incomes of groups at risk on the labour market above a certain level and to protect them from actual poverty, EPL stipulates the institution of so-called minimum wages. This is the lowest allowable amount of remuneration for work in employment relationship. Its basic regulatory framework is stipulated by the Labour Code. In case of citizens yet at risk of poverty despite all, the social security system of aid in material emergency in the Czech Republic serves as social aid for persons with insufficient incomes, motivating these persons to make active effort to find means to satisfy their necessities. This is one of the measures by which the Czech Republic fights against social exclusion. It is based on the principle that every person that works must have higher living standard than the one that does not work, or that avoids work.

B. The proposed measures should contribute to progressive elimination of the above-identified problems connected with protection of income of women in the Czech Republic. In the first place, it is necessary to increase the ability of control bodies to actually enforce the observation of employment protection legislation, in particular the prohibition of illegal forms of employment and lower income protection ensuing from them. In the area of protection of women during the period of interrupted career for reasons of fulfilment of the reproductive function, it is necessary to regulate the evident favouring of self-employed women in receiving the so-called financial aid in maternity. The right to high social benefits should be consistent with the amount of contributions to sickness insurance paid in the long term. It is also necessary to reinforce the position of women working only on contract of work performance, who, for the present, are not entitled to benefits from sickness insurance (i.e. financial aid in maternity, unemployment allowances, retirement pension). It is necessary to ensure the observance of prohibition of wage discrimination of women performing flexible forms of work. For this reason, control activities of relevant authorities have to be more effective. At the same time, it is necessary to stipulate the normative volume of work performed for example in part-time employment, to avoid the situations when employers, more often women, perform more work than they are paid for. All forms of legal economic activity should be connected with the right to social protection of income in case of loss of livelihood sources from one's own work. In view of the increasing number of forms of employment and above all of flexible contracts, it is necessary to consider a change of conditions of entitlement to social benefits, since certain forms of work are may not be covered by some social benefits at all

C. The development of income protection from the gender perspective is influenced, similarly to the previous areas, by more external factors. First of all, it is again the economic development, because economic growth implies an increase in employment opportunities and low unemployment rate, which enables the men and women to choose more form the work position and to press the employer to offer higher wages. At the same time, the social security system has enough resources for income protection of women who voluntarily or involuntarily interrupt their career. By contrast, during economic downturn or even crisis, there exist a real danger of increase of unemployment rate, wage lowering and general reducing of the volume of family finances. The income protection can be increased by suitably adapted education system that would react promptly to changing needs of the labour market. The income protection level is also influenced by the development of sectoral and professional segregation on the labour market and the level of actual discrimination of women on the labour market. The development of cultural values in the society also plays a fundamental role here, as it reflects itself in the attitude of employers towards recruitment of female labour force and valuation of their work performance and utility.

D. The income protection level from the gender point of view is influenced above all by two internal factors. First of all, it is the degree of ability of control bodies to actually enforce the observation of employment protection legislation. In particular, the prohibition of illegal forms of employment and lower income protection ensuing from them, prohibition of discrimination of women during recruitment, requirement of equal wages of women and men performing work of the same value with the same employer, observation of conditions related to remuneration of female agency employees and observation of the condition that the real volume of work must correspond to half-time contract and half wages and must not exceed them. Another decisive factor is the setting of the social security system. In this case, its weak point can be its excessive generosity (high compensation ratio) as well as parsimony (very low compensation ratio). It is important that all forms of legal economic activity are entitled to social protection of income in case of loss of livelihood sources from one's own work. In view of the increasing number of forms of employment and above all of flexible contracts, it is necessary to consider a change of conditions of entitlement to social benefits, since certain forms of work are may not be covered by some social benefits at all

E. An essential measure consists in the requirement that all forms of legal economic activity are connected with the right to social protection of income in case of loss of livelihood sources from one's own work. In view of the increasing number of forms of employment and above all of flexible contracts, it is necessary to consider a change of conditions of entitlement to social benefits, for example, it is good to take inspiration from the Scandinavian social model and to adapt out social system, based on insurance, with some elements of the universalistic system.

CHAPTER 4. COMBINATION SECURITY

The term "combination security" refers to the ability to combine work activity with other private and social activities.

4.1. EXTERNAL FLEXIBILITY

For definition of the term "external numerical flexibility" see Chapter 1.1. The purpose of the first part of Chapter 4 is to assess the influence of flexible employment history on the access to so-called "leave-schemes" and possibilities to reconcile work and family in the Czech Republic.

The form of employment, or more precisely of the economic activity in the Czech Republic influences in case of some family incidents and does influence in other cases the entitlement to state social benefits or its amount during the fulfilment of basic parental responsibilities (i.e.

during the period of maternity leave, parental leave, during care of a child up to 10 years of age, during care of a long-term ill family member, in partial or complete old-age retirement).

During the so-called maternity leave, i.e. the period of a total of 6 weeks before the birth of the child and 22 weeks after the birth, women who during the last 2 years had paid at least 270 days of sickness insurance, have the right to so-called financial aid in maternity. Self-employed women enjoy a clear advantage in this system, because they can pay minimal contributions to social insurance during most of their past work activity and then increase this contribution to the maximum one month before taking the maternity leave, and so they get into one of the highest income groups as to the amount of this aid. This is a clear case of favouring of self-employed women over employed women who were forced in their employment to pay still relatively high contributions. If an unemployed woman takes maternity leave, she has no right to the so-called financial aid in maternity, which is financed from sickness insurance, but she receives, from the day of childbirth, directly the parental allowance (parental leave). However, she cannot choose its amount - she automatically gets CZK 7,600 during the period of 21 months from the birth of the child and then CZK 3,800 until 4 years of age of the child. Therefore, during the first half a year after the childbirth, she finds herself in a considerably worse financial situation in comparison with employed women in average or above-average income group. Her situation during this period is comparable to that of women on maternity leave whose income had been on the lower end of the income scale in the Czech Republic, i.e. at around CZK 11,000 of gross wage. Women who take maternity leave 60 days or less after the end of a fixed-term contract have also the right to financial aid in maternity, which is paid to them by their former employer. However, they do not have the right to cancellation of their dismissal or to maintain their job position with this employer.

When working in so-called short-term employments, e.g. contracts of work performance, participation in sickness insurance is not obligatory. Exempt from sickness insurance are also employers who perform only occasional jobs - i.e. casual short-term work (whether employment or contract of work performance), which should not last according to the agreement and actually did not last more than 7 consecutive calendar days, or employments where the counted income does not reach CZK 400 in a calendar month. If a woman who, in the long term, had been employed only on so-called contracts of work performance, where, as already mentioned, contributions to sickness social security (of which sickness insurance forms part) are not obligatory, becomes pregnant, it depends on whether the woman had been paying this insurance herself. If this is not the case, she has the same rights as an unemployed pregnant woman. She is not entitled to financial aid in maternity. During the first 21 months she is entitled to the medium tariff rate of parental allowance, i.e. CZK 7,600, and then CZK 3,800 a month up to 4 years of age of the child. Women employed on contract of work activity, where contributions to social security are obligatory, are entitled to financial aid in maternity if they fulfil the conditions (minimal amount of monthly wage - CZK 400 and duration of insurance - 270 days). The amount of financial aid in maternity is obviously influenced, in addition to the form of work activity, also by the work time. Women who had been employed part-time will receive a considerably lower amount of financial aid in maternity than those employed full-time.

The right to allowances of parental leave, which for all, with the exception of unemployed women and women not fulfilling the conditions for receiving the financial aid in maternity from sickness insurance (see above), starts 22 weeks after the birth of the child, applies to all groups of economically active parents (women or men). However, only those who had been receiving financial aid in maternity have the possibility of choosing the "speed" of parental leave, i.e. they have the choice between 2 years with the amount of allowance of CZK 11,500, 3 years with the amount of CZK 7,600 or 4 years with the amount of CZK 3,800. Simultaneously with parental leave, parents have the right to participate on the labour market, but they must ensure all-day care of the child for which they receive parental allowances.

During the period of care of a sick child under 10 years of age, the woman (or the man) employed on work contract (regardless of whether part-time or full time, on fixed-term or permanent contract) is entitled to an allowance for care of a family member. The employer has the obligation to excuse the employee's absence from work. During this period, the employee is not entitled to a compensation for wages or salary, but he/she is entitled to sickness insurance benefits stipulated by special regulations. The amount is fixed at 60% of the daily assessment bases that depend on the level of income during the past 12 months. In addition to employees, who are obliged to contribute to sickness insurance, self-employed persons are also entitled to these benefits if they contribute to sickness insurance. Their contribution is optional in the Czech Republic. Employees working only in so-called short-term employments - up to 7 days - are not entitled to sickness insurance benefits, nor, therefore, to so-called care allowances. The same applies to workers employed on contracts of work performance. Parents who work on so-called contracts of work activity do have the rights to care allowances if their income reaches at least CZK 400 a month.

When taking partial or total retirement, previous duration of economic activity plays again an important role as to the right to benefits of old-age retirement pension. Of course, the amount of the early or official retirement pension benefits is also influenced by the type of previous economic activity, duration of employment, income level, duration of unemployment. It is namely the duration of payment of pension insurance which is decisive; it must be at least 25 years when retiring at the age of 65, 15 years when taking the retirement after 65 years of age.

The period of unemployment is included in the reimbursable period only up to the extent of 3 years maximum. So-called long-term unemployed persons, with total duration of unemployment about 10 or more years, have naturally great difficulties to meet the condition for granting of retirement pension. They are thus at a disadvantage due to their unemployment. If the worker does not succeed in meeting the above-mentioned conditions, he is fully dependent in his old age on not very high social allowances and on the help of his/her own family. Naturally, the level of previous incomes has an influence on the amount of retirement pension, but there is a very strong levelling of retirement pensions in the Czech Republic, and for this reason groups of employees with medium to high incomes are strongly disadvantaged. Their income from retirement pension is very low in comparison with their previous incomes, and without savings, or possible incomes from private supplementary pension insurance, their living standard declines considerably. For groups of pensioners with low income, the decline in living standard given by the amount of retirement pension is not so steep.

Of course, the worst situation from perspective of income compensation when passing from the labour market to economic inactivity is that of women and men employed illegally, i.e. without contributions to social and health insurance. Statistical data about their number in the Czech Republic are not available, but it is supposed that their number is constantly increasing.

In order to support progressive retirement and, at the same time, to extend the period of working life, the Czech government makes it possible to postpone the retirement and remain economically active. In such case, the amount of future retirement pension benefits of these persons is increased with each time unit. They can also take official retirement, receive old-age pension and still remain employed. The condition in such case is that their employment contract is only temporary, concluded for a period of one year maximum. After a year, it can be renewed for another year. When concluding part-time employment contract with a person over 50 years of age, employers have the possibility to pay lower contributions to social security. This way, the government promotes the use of part-time employment as a way of reconciliation of family and work needs of elderly persons and their progressive retirement from the labour market.

4.2. INTERNAL FLEXIBILITY

For definition of the term "internal numerical flexibility" see Chapter 1.2. The aim of this part of Chapter 4 is to assess the influence of the period of interrupted working activity on reintegration of women into the labour market in the Czech Republic.

Employers in the Czech Republic are obliged to maintain the same job position for female employees as they occupied before taking the maternity leave for 28 weeks after the birth of the child. Up to three years of age of the child, they are obliged to offer this employee a job position corresponding to the labour contract, or, if it has been cancelled, a job position corresponding to her qualifications, experience, etc. If there is no such position available, the employee becomes redundant and the employer shall end the employment relationship for redundancy with 3-month gratuity. Women whose fixed-term employment ended 60 days or less before taking the maternity leave are not entitled to cancellation of their dismissal or to maintain their job position with this employer. The Labour Code also prohibits all forms of discrimination, i.e. also by gender, in recruiting to a new employment after maternity or parental leave. Unfortunately, actual observation and enforceability of this provision is very debatable. The reason is, among other things, that the Labour Code refers to the Antidiscriminatory Act, which has not yet been accepted in the Czech Republic. It is relatively difficult for a woman with one child, let alone more small children, to find employment especially in the private sector. In the public sector, the situation of women with small children is significantly more favourable.

Public employment services, when arranging an employment, pay increased attention to pregnant women, nursing mothers and women after maternity leave and further to women with children up to 15 years of age who need it because of their state of health and care of the child. The employment office in cooperation with the applicant for employment may draw up an individual action plan aimed at increasing the applicant's possibility of assertion on the labour market. Moreover, employment offices offer various motivation, activation and retraining courses to women ending their parental leave, in order to facilitate their reintegration into the labour market. The percentage of persons, regardless of gender, participating in activation programmes of AEP in the Czech republic is relatively low in the European context - 9.4% in 2006. Lower percentages can be found in Eastern European countries and in Great Britain. We lie on the bottom of the scale in particular as far as retraining measures are concerned (lower participation is only in Slovakia and Great Britain). The situation is better in the area of supported employments of disabled persons, where only The Netherlands outweighs other countries. More women than men take part in AEP retraining programmes in the Czech Republic, on the other hand, less of them are placed in directly created subsidised jobs.

The social security system in the Czech Republic also supports the entry of women into the labour market by making it possible to receive parental allowance and perform concurrently gainful activity improving the economic situation of the family. However, they must ensure all-day care of the child for which they receive parental allowance. Support of employers (lower insurance contributions) who employ a woman or a man with a child up to 10 years of age on part-time contract is newly implemented into the social security system.

Within the scope of the social security system, the government also promotes fast reintegration of women into the labour market by developing and improving the access to childcare services. The purpose of acceptance of the so-called "pro-family package" was to create friendlier environment for parents (mainly mothers) helping them to reconcile working and family life more easily. It was also a reaction to the fact that, contrary to foreign countries, there exist practically no pro-family services in our country. For this reason, the government expanded the offer of childcare services on individual basis with a view to increase their availability, whether it is the care in family environment or in mini-kindergartens.

4.3. FUNCTIONAL FLEXIBILITY

For definition of the term "functional flexibility" see Chapter 1.3. The aim of this part of Chapter 4 is to assess the influence of the period of interrupted or partial work activity on access of women to training programmes in the Czech Republic.

The influence of the period of interrupted work activity connected with fulfilment of family functions, or of the period of part-time employment, on the access of women to training programmes in the Czech Republic has not yet been statistically examined. So far, it has been found out that employers pay the highest attention to employees on so-called atypical forms of contracts (fixed-term contracts or part-time employment contracts). Up to 35% of companies with employees on such types of contracts provide specially adapted CVT courses to persons with fixed-term contracts and 29% to part-time workers. Lowest attention is paid to women on parental leave (National Training Fund, 2009).

In CVT where the participation depends to a large extent on the decision of an individual, women in the Czech Republic are more active. This is also supported by data from Labour Force Sample Survey, according to which during the last four weeks preceding the survey 6.2% of women of 25-64 years were going through training, but only 5.9% of men of the same age. This difference was even greater in the previous years. The main reason to participate in CVT is, in case of men, the effort to maintain the current job position and to improve their financial situation and their professional position at work. Women, on the contrary, focus on the possibility of finding a new job by increasing or changing their qualifications when choosing a CVT. Single mothers show only minimal interest in CVT, most motivated are mother with university degree. In general, mothers with small children do not consider CVT a necessity, they perceive it more as an advantage for their integration into the labour market. It is evident that their priorities during this period are connected more with the family life (Kulhavý - Bartáková, 2007).

In addition to training programmes paid by individuals or reimbursed by the employer, there exists another possibility for women in the Czech Republic to adapt to needs of qualifications and competence on the labour market. Public employment services, when arranging an employment, pay increased attention namely to pregnant women, nursing mothers and women after maternity leave and further to women with children up to 15 years of age who need it because of their state of health and care of the child. The employment office in cooperation with the applicant for employment may draw up an individual action plan aimed at increasing the applicant's possibility of assertion on the labour market. Moreover, employment offices can offer various motivation, activation and retraining courses to women ending their parental leave that are interested in finding an employment, in order to facilitate their reintegration into the labour market. But the women must register with the employment office as interested in an employment (not applicants - these are only unemployed persons). However, programmes helping women to reintegrate into the labour market after ending the parental leave are still not sufficiently widespread in the Czech Republic. Employment offices have realised several programmes aimed at this group at risk on the labour market within the scope of previous operational programmes. The experience of employment offices, however, is unequivocal - it was very difficult to complete the fixed number of participants. There is the repeatedly encountered problem of low interest of mothers themselves, who begin to manifest it, if at all, only "too late", shortly after ending the parental leave. It would also be necessary to verify to which extent the programmes offered correspond to what really enables the women to enter a job.

Besides the instruments of ALMP, involvement of the state in the sense of financial support of continuing education and training is low. However, an individual can deduct from taxes a certain amount he/she had to invest to the training as a participant in a training programme. The state therefore, by means of provisions of the Labour Code, stipulates only the basic framework of human resources development in enterprises. According to it, every employer *"shall ensure staff training in order to ensure occupational safety and health protection, ensure appropriate vocational practice for employees - graduates from secondary schools and universities, arrange induction training and on-the-job training for those employees who*

start the job without any qualifications, arrange on-the-job training for an employee who is transferred to a new workplace or a new type of work if such training is necessary" (Act No. 262/2006 Coll., the Labour Code). In accordance with the Labour Code, the employer may also require from an employee to take part in training in order to improve his/her qualifications. For some fields, training and prerequisites necessary for the exercise of certain professions are regulated by law or decrees (for example in public health care, education, electrical engineering, transport and similar).

4.4. WAGE FLEXIBILITY

For definition of the term "wage flexibility" see Chapter 1.4. The aim of this last part of Chapter 4 is to assess the influence of interrupted or partial work activity on financial independence of women in the Czech Republic.

It is not easy to establish the degree of influence of partial or complete interruption of work activity (for reasons of fulfilment of reproductive and care function of the family) on the financial situation of women in the Czech Republic. Social benefits, which compensate for the woman's income loss during these periods, have an overall growth tendency. In case of women who belonged to higher-income group, it is naturally true that during periods of income loss (and in case of single mothers) the objective living standard decline significantly. However, this does not mean that they find themselves in material neediness, we are talking about a relatively steep decrease in comparison with their previous income. In case of women with medium and lower incomes, the percentage of compensation remains at around 60-70% of their previous income. In case of following parental leave, this percentage is significantly lower only for women with medium and, of course, higher incomes.

In case that the woman is also a single mother, the state evens up her financial resources up to the amount of existential minimum of her family, by means of social transfers (from the system of social security and system of aid in material neediness). The income of the whole family should not be inferior to the existential minimum of the family in question - that is, of all persons living in the same household. As to the financial allowance for living, it is decisive for its assessment the mother with the child lives alone or together with her parents, whether she owns or rents the apartment, etc.

Women in the Czech Republic may naturally improve their financial independence during the period of receiving the parental allowance by part-time or full-time work activity, which does not mean a loss of entitlement to this allowance if they ensure all-day care of the child for which they receive parental allowance.

The Czech state naturally protects single mothers with small children also by enforcing the so-called alimony obligation of fathers, although they do not live in the same household. If this obligation were always observed, only a very small percentage of mothers would find themselves in difficult financial situation. However, the reality is different and a high percentage of families afflicted by divorce have a problem to enforce their rights from the adverse party, even at a court. Divorced men - fathers very often state distorted facts about the level of their income and therefore, even if the family succeeds in enforcing their rights, the amount of alimony is often ridiculous and does not correspond to the financial possibilities of the father.

4.5. SWOT ANALYSIS OF A POLICY/ACTION

A. The form of employment influences the entitlement to some social security benefits or their amount during the period of interrupted career in connection with the reproductive function of the woman. An advantageous position is that of self-employed women, women employed full-time and on permanent contract; in case that the employment is of a long-term nature, also that of women employed on fixed-term contract. Women employed on part-time and women who had been working on short-term contracts of work performance face lower

social benefits. Illegally employed women are in the worst situation. Social security benefits compensating the woman for income loss, have an increasing tendency. Women in higher-income group face the steepest decrease of income, but they do not find themselves in material neediness (the lowest compensation ratio). For women with medium and lower incomes, the compensation ratio is at around 60-70% of their previous income in case of financial aid in maternity. In case of parental allowance, this ratio is significantly lower only for women with medium and higher incomes. If the woman is also a single mother, the state evens up her financial resources up to the amount of existential minimum of her family. The social security system facilitates the reintegration of women into the labour market by the possibility of concurrence of parental allowance with gainful activity. The system also supports employers who employ a woman with a child up to 10 years of age on part-time contract. Fast reintegration of women into the labour market is also promoted by improved accessibility of childcare services. The influence of the period of interrupted work activity or part-time employment on the access of women to training programmes in the Czech Republic has not yet been statistically examined. Employers pay the highest attention, as to CVT, to employees on so-called atypical forms of contracts. The lowest attention is unfortunately paid to women on parental leave. On the other hand, increased attention as to arranging employments is paid by employment offices to pregnant women, nursing mothers and women after maternity leave and further to women with children up to 15 years of age. Moreover, employment offices may offer various motivation, activation and retraining courses to women ending their parental leave, in order to facilitate their reintegration into the labour market. However, these programmes are not very widespread.

B. The proposed measures should contribute to progressive elimination of problems identified in connection with "combination security" of women in the Czech Republic. The first measures are identical with those mentioned in the chapter on income security. It is necessary to increase the ability of control bodies to actually enforce the observation of employment protection legislation, in particular the prohibition of illegal forms of employment and lower combination security ensuing from them during the period of fulfilment of reproductive functions of the family. It is also necessary to regulate the evident favouring of self-employed women in receiving the so-called financial aid in maternity. The right to high social benefits should be consistent with the amount of contributions to sickness insurance paid in the long term. Furthermore, it would be desirable to reinforce the position of women working only on contracts of work performance, who, for the present, are not entitled to benefits from sickness insurance (i.e. financial aid in maternity, unemployment allowances, retirement pension). Further measures relate to professional training of women on maternity leave. It is necessary to offer such forms and specialisations of CVT that would correspond to the needs of women with small children, through employment offices, employers, municipalities, schools), and that would improve considerably the women's chances of reintegration into the labour market. If the government project of increasing the geographical and financial accessibility of childcare services succeeds, it will be another important step towards higher combination security of women with children that will enable their relatively fast and progressive reintegration into the labour market. A challenge in this connection is a higher participation of municipalities and other local subjects in the development of accessibility of childcare services and development of offer of training, activation and motivation programmes for women on parental leave. Further development of flexible working hours will be also essential for reconciliation of family and work. Higher use of e.g. work from home, part-time employment contracts, flexible working hours, work sharing, etc. would contribute to better reconciliation of family and work obligations.

C. The development of combination security from the gender perspective is influenced, similarly to the previous important aspects, by more external factors. It is already traditionally the economic situation, since in the period of economic growth the need of human resources increases and employers are more willing to adapt to the employees' requirements of reconciliation of work and family. By contrast, during economic decline, the unemployment rate increases and the employees are those who adapt to employers' requirements. The factor of attitude of employers towards valuation of female employees'

work also plays an essential role. Opportunities are hidden in a broader use of internal forms of flexibility in enterprises and in CVT for women currently at parental leave, in order to make their return to the workplace as effective and easy as possible. Government policy, so-called pro-family measure packages and other steps, can contribute significantly to reconciliation of work and family. Local conditions for women as to their access to CVT and to childcare services can play similar role. The need of double income is a strong motivation factor for a number of families, because the level of wages in the Czech Republic is still low in relation to other EU countries. In conclusion, we can state again the factor of development of cultural values in the society (therefore also in the family) that determines the distribution of roles in the family and the attitude towards economic activity of women.

D. The level of combination security from the gender point of view is influenced by four main internal factors. Firstly, the development and availability of childcare services, an important factor determining the possibilities of women to combine the period of care of a child with partial economic activity. Secondly, the social security system favourable to the concurrence of work activity and right to social benefits of mothers. Thirdly, there is the influence of AEP, whether and to what extent it is focused at the group of women with small children. And finally, fourthly, labour legislation regulations of flexible forms of employment and organisation of working hours influence from the inside the possibility of reconciliation of work and family.

E. Probably the greatest influence, given the current situation on the Czech labour market, would be that of achieving better geographical and financial accessibility of childcare services. These services would enable women on parental leave relatively fast reintegration into the labour market, if they are interested in it.

F. Current steps taken by the government are focused on increasing the participation of women with small children on the labour market. So far, it is not possible to evaluate its effects due to a short time of effectiveness of these measures. The proposed measures rather complete these steps by the matter of adaptation of qualifications of these women to changing needs of the labour market and involvement of local subjects in support of reconciliation of work and family life of mothers residing in the given locality. A certain overlap into the previous chapter is also pointing out the need of elimination of unprotected and illegal forms of employment and equalisation of the right to social security benefits of women/mothers in all forms of legal employment.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion of the whole study, it is necessary to give a concise and complex picture of measures of flexicurity policies in the Czech Republic implemented so far and, at the same time, to summarise their effects on the gender dimension of the labour market. The level of job security is differentiated in the Czech Republic; it is high in case of permanent job positions, very low in temporary jobs that are significantly more often occupied by women. On the other hand, employment protection legislation reinforces the position of women in employment, in particular in case of pregnant women, women on maternity and parental leave and single women with small children.

Unfortunately, it is precisely this increased protection, multiplied by frequent absence of employed mothers from work, that (besides doubtless positive effects of the protection legislation) is also a handicap for woman applying for a job. Employers prefer recruiting men or women without family ambitions (in spite of prohibition of discrimination, which is badly enforceable in practice).

Employment security by means of AEP is determined neither by gender segregation on the labour market nor by forms of employment. However, ALMP is not very successful in resolving problems of long-term unemployment, which is very high in the Czech Republic and affects

women more often. Despite this fact, still a low percentage of unemployed persons, women as well as men, participate in activation and retraining programmes that eliminate qualification barriers to integration into the labour market. The causes of this mostly are not on the part of employment offices, but on the part of the applicants themselves. The state, except for financing ALMP, does not support continuing vocational training very much. The Labour Code only obliges the employers to develop human resources; it does not regulate gender aspects. The state support consists merely in the possibility of companies/individuals to deduct from taxes the costs of this training.

Employment protection legislation regulating the remuneration of employees in the Czech Republic guarantees equal income of men and women on the same job position with the same employer. In case of difference in wages, it is possible to lodge with the court a claim for balance of the difference. Bad enforceability of the law is clearly evident here, because the difference in wages between men and women (including flexible employment positions) is about 26% to the women's disadvantage and is still increasing. The high protection of women on the labour market also contributes to the persistence of different valuation of men and women. Already when recruiting, employers take into account in the remuneration future losses incurred in connection with fulfilment of the woman's reproductive function. This is not a justification, it merely shows the employer's effort to optimise the costs of labour force, objectively higher in case of women than in case of men. Besides this unfavourable trend, however, we can find in the Czech Republic also positive data relating to the income level of low-income households. Due to high redistribution of incomes and high legal labour protection, we find a very low percentage of women that, although employed, are at a high risk of poverty, because their income lies below 60% of the income median in the Czech Republic. In case of citizens yet at risk of poverty despite all, the social security system of aid in material neediness in the Czech Republic serves as social aid for persons with insufficient incomes, motivating these persons to make active effort to find means to satisfy their necessities. This is one of the measures by which the Czech Republic fights against social exclusion. It is based on the principle that every person that works must have higher living standard than the one that does not work, or that avoids work.

Social security benefits compensating the woman for income loss during the fulfilment of the reproductive function have an increasing tendency. However, the form of employment influences the entitlement to certain social benefits or their amount. An advantageous position is that of self-employed women, women employed full-time and on permanent contract; in case that the employment is of a long-term nature, also that of women employed on fixed-term contract. Women employed on part-time and women who had been working on short-term contracts of work performance face lower social benefits. Illegally employed women are in the worst situation. The social security system facilitates the reintegration of women into the labour market by the possibility of concurrence of parental allowance with gainful activity. The system also supports employers who employ a woman with a child up to 10 years of age on part-time contract. Fast reintegration of women into the labour market is also promoted by improved accessibility of childcare services. On the other hand, increased attention as to arranging employments is paid by employment offices to pregnant women, nursing mothers and women after maternity leave and further to women with children up to 15 years of age. Moreover, employment offices may offer various motivation, activation and retraining courses to women ending their parental leave, in order to facilitate their reintegration into the labour market. However, these programmes are not very widespread.

Realising the concept of flexicurity is, according the (resigning) Czech government a part of the way out of the economic crisis. According to the minister Nečas (2009), *"flexible labour market balanced by the security of maintaining on it - the concept labelled as flexicurity - belongs to main priorities of the Czech presidency of the European Union in the area of employment. Instead of artificial conservation of workplaces, it is necessary to offer application of principles of flexicurity, with an aim to creating new job positions, motivation to find new employment, possibility of retraining and improvement of qualifications, additional*

training, maximal use of geographical and professional mobility and reducing costs of work." The above-mentioned measures, implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in the last years, confirm this approach. The government will not have more time to implement other prepared measures, because it resigned some time ago on the basis of vote of censure and so-called caretaker government will govern the Czech Republic until anticipated elections. In this moment it is not possible to anticipate what priorities and policies in relation to the labour market will be promoted by them. Nevertheless, other two of the main social partners of the Czech Republic - representatives of employers (Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic) and representatives of employees (Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions) have a constant attitude towards the implementation of flexicurity. Whilst the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic welcomes the concept and principles of flexicurity and supports the implementation of this policy in the Czech Republic, representative of employees are strongly opposed to further liberalisation of the labour market, since they do not believe that protective measures will compensate sufficiently for lower job security of Czech employees.

RESOURCES

Studies, articles and statistical reviews:

Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines including indicators for additional employment analysis. 2008 compendium. European Commission. Available from: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=477&langId=en>

Fischlová, D. (2005). The employment and status of women in the labour market. Dublin: EIROnline - Eurofound

Kulhavý, V. - Bartáková, H. (2007). Rodina a zaměstnání II. Mladé rodiny. (Family and Employment II. Young Families). Prague: Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs

Nekolová, M. (2008). Flexicurity - hledání rovnováhy mezi flexibilitou a ochranou trhu práce v ČR. (Flexicurity - searching of the balance between flexibility and labour market protection in the Czech Republic). Prague: Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs

Composite authors (2009). Ročenka konkurenceschopnosti České republiky 2007 – 2008. Kvalita lidských zdrojů. (Year Book of the Czech Competitiveness 2007-2008. The Quality of the Human Resources.). Prague: The National Observatory of Employment and Training of the National Training Fund

Websites of institutions:

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>; www.czso.cz (website of the Czech Administration of the Social Security); www.mpsv.cz (website of the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs)

Czech Labour Acts:

Act No. 262/ 2006 Coll., Labour Code; Act No. 435/2004 Coll., on employment; Act No. 251/2005 Coll., on labour inspection