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## Arbeitspapier Nr. 14

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Observatory for the Development  
of Social Services in Europe

**Inquiry about the demand for  
cooperation and consulting among  
social service providers in  
the Czech Republic, Hungary,  
Poland and Slovakia**



Observatorium für die  
Entwicklung der sozialen Dienste  
in Europa

Observatory for the  
Development of Social Services  
in Europe

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Working Paper No. 14

Inquiry about the demand for cooperation and consulting among social service providers in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia

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## **Preface**

### **1 Abstract**

This survey is a trend analysis of the demand for consulting and cooperation among social service providers in selected accession countries: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.

Its results show a significant difference between social service providers in different countries and of different type. While Poland can be described as a reform state at large, Hungary and Slovakia progressed well on the whole, but there still are deficiencies in terms of social policy and legislation. Even though various reform efforts in the Czech Republic were undertaken, their results have to be described as rather limited.<sup>3</sup>

In all of those countries, the present-day situation of the social service providers is being dominated by the transformational processes occurring. Changes in the legal framework, which is interpreted in favour of the public providers anyway, leave the non-profit ones in a critical financial situation. Therefore they dispose of a high degree of interconnection, mainly with other providers and umbrella organisations on the national and the international level whereas the public ones can only distinguish themselves by their close collaboration with the state authority.

When it comes to needs of cooperation and consulting, public providers wish for exchange of information and experience as well as support concerning how to get funding from and how to network with EU-institutions while non-profit providers stress the aspect of quality as to the services offered and the personnel employed.

### **2 Introduction**

The collapse of the Eastern Bloc caused many Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries to undergo drastic changes, which have not yet been completed in many cases. The social services providers active in these countries have to face those transitions in two ways: they have to 'reinvent' themselves and to re-establish their role and position while trying to cope with a transforming social and legal framework.

With regard to the eastward enlargement of the EU the calls for a more detailed description of the situation were getting louder. What exactly is the situation of social service providers in the CEE countries like? What are their main problems and can German providers help through cooperation and consulting?

To answer these questions an inquiry was made among social service providers in selected accession countries. The results will be presented below.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Observatory Working Papers no. 12 and 13 on the legal framework and forms of organisation of social services, Prof. Tomeš and et al.

### **3 Methods**

The survey on the demand for consulting and cooperation among social service providers in selected accession countries on hand was conducted by *the Observatory for the Development of Social Services in Europe*. The inquiry was carried out in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia in the summer of 2003. It took place in close cooperation with the German federations of non-government welfare associations and the German federations of municipal associations.

For the data collection a questionnaire in English and German was used (see Annex 1). The quantitative and qualitative analyses made (see Annex 2 and 3) are based on a return of 120 questionnaires, mainly from non-profit-providers (82%) and predominantly from organisations and institutions situated in Poland (55%). Therefore this survey should be regarded as a trend analysis rather than as a representative statistic. The topics it concentrates on are structure, situation, existing cooperation and need for cooperation and consulting of the polled social service providers.

## Results<sup>4</sup>

The following section will provide a comparative overview of the central results of the survey from the provider perspective – for both types of providers (institutions run by local public authorities and non-profit organisations) – as well as from the point of view of each of the four accession countries.

### 1 Quantitative Analysis

#### 1.1 Provider perspective

The majority of the 22 questionnaires returned by institutions involving local public authorities reflect existing cooperation structures within the scope of municipal twinning partnerships between Germany and the EU accession countries concerned. For the most part, the services offered by participating institutions – most of them institutions with staffs of 51 to 100 (including volunteers) – range from services for people with disabilities, elderly care/nursing care, child/youth welfare and family assistance to social/basic assistance. Most funds come from local sources, but also to a substantial extent from government subsidies, grants and other forms of assistance. One interesting aspect of the situation in Poland is that more than 20% of needs in the surveyed institutions are financed from donations, gifts and legacies. Funding from EU assistance programmes plays a relatively minor role, partly because the surveyed providers have not been particularly active in applying for project funding from EU sources.<sup>5</sup> When EU funds are involved, they are primarily from the PHARE programme or from the European Social Fund (ESF). In all four surveyed countries, no more than one third of institutions run by local public authorities are members of national umbrella organisations. Membership in European structures is largely non-existent. Things are quite different in terms of involvement in political decision-making processes: here, providers run by local public authorities are highly active in the fields of social legislation and requirement planning. In addition, most respondents believe that they have adequate opportunity to articulate their interests vis-à-vis national public authorities, with personal contacts between local and central levels of government playing the most important role in this communication process. Participation in consulting processes or in committees is named in second place only. Survey results show that there are regular exchanges between the two levels, but on the whole there can be no talk of a structured, ongoing relationship to national public authorities. This is also reflected in the institutions' evaluation of their relationship to the national public authority most relevant to them: More than half of all surveyed institutions run by local public authorities answered that this relationship was good, but on the other hand, nearly 41% described it as no more than average.<sup>6</sup> Although most of the accession countries do not yet have a proper legal foundation for the allocation of local responsibility for social services, or this legal foundation – where it exists – is not yet stable. The trend analysis shows that institutions run by local public authorities tend to have more exchanges and participation opportunities with national public authorities than non-profit providers. Cooperation structures with other providers of social services are also very strong within each of the four countries. However, only one third of respondents stated that they had cooperation structures with Germany, in spite of the fact that the survey itself was conducted on the basis of municipal partnerships or of links between the German Association for Public and Private Welfare and local authorities. Cooperation with German providers focuses primarily on exchange of information, specialised knowledge/know-how, and train-

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<sup>4</sup> Translation of part "Results" into English by Nicole Gentz, Berlin

<sup>5</sup> With only one exception: providers run by local public authorities in Slovakia.

<sup>6</sup> However, 4.5% of respondents describe the relationship as very good.

ing/education/qualification. On the other hand, networking with other Member States or other EU accession countries is not particularly developed. More than 90% of institutions run by local public authorities show a high degree of interest in more intensive cooperation and concrete consulting with German providers of social services. The main areas where a need for consulting services is felt are exchange of professional information and experience, application procedures for EU funding, networking with EU institutions, financing, and the quality of social services. This result also reflects the answers given to the open-ended question about current problem areas in the course of the transformation process. Particularly for institutions run by local public authorities, the most serious problem in this regard is the inconclusive financial situation of their services. As a result, project funding from EU assistance programmes is attracting more and more interest. Another important problem area for local and regional authorities is legislation and the unclear allocation of responsibility for the provision of social services. Overall, most accession countries have not yet clearly defined what level of administration (national, regional or local) can and should provide social services, and what the type, scope and quality of these services should be.

## 1.2 Non-profit organisations/institutions

Without a doubt, the main focus of the trend analysis is the survey of non-profit organisations and institutions. Indeed, these institutions account for more than 80% of returned questionnaires. As a rule, respondents are associations and church institutions at local level and, in a few isolated cases, foundations. In terms of their size, the respondent organisations/institutions vary greatly. Of the 98 social NGOs who returned questionnaires, more than 20% have staffs of either less than 10, or 21 to 50 (including volunteers); 16.7% – for the most part umbrella organisations like the Hungarian Red Cross or church groups like the Polish diocese of Reshow – have more than 500 employees. In the EU accession countries, volunteers play an important role for the provision of social services in non-profit organisations/institutions. On average, organisations have more than 5,000 volunteers, but the range of actual figures among respondents is widely spread.<sup>7</sup> The highest proportion represents the categories below twenty volunteers.<sup>8</sup> The providers covered by the survey offer social services such as child/youth welfare, services for people with disabilities, social/basic assistance, family assistance, and elderly care/nursing care. In comparison with institutions run by local public authorities, the difficult financial situation caused by the ongoing transformation process in the various accession countries has had far more serious effects on social NGOs. Funding being the central problem for non-profit providers, they must constantly fight for the survival of their organisations as such and/or for the type, quality and quantity of the services they offer. In contrast to institutions run by local public authorities, therefore, funding here is much more widely spread across a variety of sources. In addition to subsidies and assistance from national, regional and local authorities – a form of funding which is not, however, regulated in a uniform or reliable manner – most funds come from donations, gifts, legacies, and above all from the revenue generated by the institutions themselves through the actual provision of their services. Financial assistance from foreign partner organisations also is an important source of funding, as are, more and more, EU assistance programmes. Half of the social NGOs surveyed say that they receive financial assistance from EU programmes, with PHARE and ACCESS heading the list of the programmes concerned. But the difficulties of non-profit providers involve more than funding: these respondents also named the lack of adequate legislation that would compensate for their disadvantaged position vis-à-vis other providers and protect them from institutional upheavals and disruptions in social services systems. A further problem currently affecting non-profit providers is their image in the eyes of the general public and of government bodies. Squeezed between two extreme opinions – expectations of guaranteed and free

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<sup>7</sup> The number of volunteers ranges from zero to nearly 300,000 (for the Polish Red Cross). The high average of 5,000 is particularly due to the fact that more than ten of the surveyed organisations/institutions had more than 1,000 volunteers.

<sup>8</sup> Most organisations have no volunteers at all.

social services offered by government providers versus reservations about the value of social work per se and pressure for individual solutions to social problems –, social NGOs are under permanent social pressure. In none of the four accession countries covered by the survey have non-profit providers yet assumed the role of an intermediary body. It is hardly surprising, then, that more than half of non-profit providers view their relationship with the national public authority most relevant for their work as only average and, in the case of 7.8% of surveyed institutions, as poor or even very poor. Although they do have the possibility of representing their interests vis-à-vis government bodies, there are generally no institutionalised structures or forms for this representation to take place. The most decisive factor is the personal contact that has developed in the course of government-funded projects. In terms of political decision-making processes, social NGOs are primarily active in the fields of social advocacy, application for EU programmes, and training/education standards.

Nearly two thirds of the surveyed organisations/institutions are members of a national umbrella organisation, either on the basis of the type of services offered (child/youth welfare, services for people with disabilities, elderly care/nursing care, etc.) or along denominational or ideological lines (e.g. church umbrella organisations such as Caritas, or interdenominational and/or secular organisations such as the Working Community of Associations of Social Organisations in Poland). The situation with regard to membership in European umbrella organisations is similar, but with a lower figure: just above 40% in this case. One important factor affecting social NGOs' tendency to join European umbrella groups is the size of the organisation or institution concerned: the larger it is, the greater the probability that it will be active as a member of a European umbrella organisation. The European umbrella organisations mentioned by respondents include, for instance, Caritas Europe, Eurodiaconia and the International Red Cross Federation. The analysis also shows clear trends with regard to existing cooperation structures, with well over half of the social NGOs already cooperating with German providers of social services.<sup>9</sup> For the most part, cooperation covers areas such as exchange of information, knowledge/know-how, training/education/qualification, but also relatively often the area of joint application for EU-funded programmes. Applying for European project funding also often provides the opportunity to establish contacts with organisations/institutions in other EU Member States. The most extensive contacts are with Scandinavian countries such as Sweden and Denmark, with Great Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Austria. Like for public providers, cross-border social services only play a marginal role for social NGOs, or even none at all.

Nearly all of the social NGOs who participated in the survey are interested in more intensive cooperation and consulting with German providers of social services. The main areas where a need for consulting is felt are exchanges of professional information and experience regarding individual fields of social work, training/education/qualification, EU funding/application procedures, financing, and the quality of social services. These areas are nearly identical to those mentioned with regard to more intensive cooperation with German providers (cf. question 19 of the survey). Overall, analysis on the basis of the survey shows very clearly that non-profit organisations/social NGOs have been facing a great number of problems in the course of the transformation process, and that, in contrast to the situation in Germany, these providers do not yet constitute an institutionalised entity serving as an intermediary body between the state authorities, society, the economy and the family. Closer examination shows, however, that non-profit providers of social services have been playing an increasing role in the four accession countries surveyed. This is supported by the expert report drawn up by Prof. Igor Tomeš and co-authors (cf. Observatory for the Development of Social Services in Europe, Working Papers 12 and 13). The end of chapter 2.3 reads: *“Overall evaluation of the processes seems to indicate that all four countries tend to encourage, in different ways and efforts, the increasing involvement of NGOs and the close cooperation of NGOs and municipalities. The concept thus seems to tend towards a public/private mix, where the public partner shall maintain the institutions and tools to solve social crises within*

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<sup>9</sup> This cooperation takes place primarily with German national or state federations of non-governmental social welfare organisations or with their institutions at local level.

*public responsibility for crisis management, while the NGOs would develop, with public support, personal social services assisting people to maintain or reassume their social integration”.*

## **1.3 Country perspective**

### **1.3.1 Poland**

More than half of the questionnaires analysed in the course of the survey came from Polish organisations/institutions (55%). This is perhaps not particularly surprising, as German providers of social services already established far-reaching cooperative structures with Poland – the largest of the nine Central and Eastern European countries that joined the European Union on 1 May 2004 and the one with the largest population – soon after the collapse of the Socialist system in 1989/90. On the basis of shared traditions, such as the strong position of the churches as providers of social services (this applies particularly to the Catholic Church), many German social organisations and federations got involved in Poland right from the start of the transformation process, for instance to encourage the establishment of civil society structures. The close cooperation between German and Polish bodies is also a consequence of the fact that, on the whole, the new Polish social welfare system is rather similar to the German one. Polish law follows a principle analogous to the German subsidiarity principle and clearly regulates the cooperation of national, regional and local authorities with non-government organisations and/or non-profit providers. Since May 2003, another special law has been introduced to regulate the activities of non-profit organisations/institutions and of volunteer work.<sup>10</sup> Generally speaking, Poland plays a pioneering role in a number of areas, including legislation. Even in Poland, of course, social organisations are under constant financial pressure, and the new legal framework has not yet been fully put into practice, but the main difficulties respondents associated with the transformation process – funding, legislation, social image, cooperation, etc. – are all somewhat less present on the whole than in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

There also are significant differences between Poland and the other three accession countries when looking more closely at the context of individual questions. With regard to the degree of organisation and organisational structures, we see that a number of the surveyed social NGOs are members of a strong national umbrella organisation, the Working Community of Associations of Social Organisations (WRZOS). The survey was conducted on the basis of existing cooperation structures between German federations and organisations/institutions in the individual accession countries. The relative frequency with which membership in WRZOS was mentioned is clearly linked to the cooperation structures already established between WRZOS member organisations/institutions and members of the Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband in Germany. This cooperation is based on a formal agreement between the two umbrella organisations, the primary objective of which is to establish a European network of federations of social NGOs based on the principles of civic commitment.<sup>11</sup> Another important source of influence in Poland are the church umbrella organisations, particularly the Polish Caritas, which consists of 42 separate bodies. In contrast, not even half of the social NGOs are members of a European umbrella organisation; for those that are, there is a causal link between this membership and membership in a national umbrella organisation. In this context, Polish respondents name Caritas Europe/Caritas International. And in contrast to respondents in the other three accession countries, the participating Polish institutions run by local public authorities are neither in a national nor in a European umbrella organisation.

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Observatory Working Papers no. 12 and 13 on the legal framework and forms of organisation of social services, Prof. Tomeš et al.; critics say, however, that this legislation does not adequately regulate tax issues.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Parität EU-Report, 2/2003 (April-June 2003), p. 9.

Irrespective of their kind of provider, all Polish organisations/institutions are given the opportunity of articulating their interests vis-à-vis national public authorities. Although the reform process in Poland is rather dynamic in comparison to Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary, there has not been a greater number of permanent institutional exchange and cooperation structures between public authorities and social NGOs developing here than elsewhere. Personal contact continues to be the main factor affecting the establishment and maintenance of exchanges. In this context, it is surprising to see that the surveyed organisations/institutions in Poland criticised the quality of these exchanges. The assessments of non-profit institutions are particularly noteworthy in this respect. For instance, two thirds of respondents described the quality of their relationship to the national public authority most relevant to them as no better than average, with 10% qualifying it as poor or even very poor. Just like in the Czech Republic and Hungary, the activities of social NGOs in Poland tend to focus on the areas of application for EU-funded programmes and social advocacy/lobbying in the field of social policy. Institutions run by local public authorities also find requirement planning to be particularly important – with one third of respondents in this category mentioning this aspect.

From the financial point of view, it is remarkable that more than 20% of surveyed Polish institutions run by local public authorities are funded to a significant extent from donations, gifts or legacies. Funding from EU assistance programmes is particularly important in the non-profit sector.<sup>12</sup> Applications for project funding are generally based on existing cooperation structures with provider organisations both in Germany and in other EU Member States. More than 50% of the surveyed organisations/institutions that cooperate with German providers of social services report that they have already applied for project funding within the scope of EU assistance programmes. Evaluation of the responses shows that there is an even greater correlation between the application for EU funding and the contact/cooperation with providers in other EU Member States. Financing of social NGOs in Poland is largely based on performance contracts negotiated with the relevant national, regional and local authorities (project or task-related). The over-all financial situation of Polish providers of social services seems to be somewhat better than that of providers in other accession countries.

The Polish organisations and institutions surveyed show a clear need for intensified cooperation and consultancy with German bodies. Whereas the areas where cooperation is seen as most desirable are largely aligned to the services offered by the survey participants, there is indeed quite a range of priorities among the individual accession countries in terms of consulting needs. In the case of Poland, the main area is training/education/qualification. This is followed by a need for consulting in the area of EU subsidies/application procedures, exchange of professional information and experience, financing, and issues concerning the quality of social services. Although Poland can be described as an accession country that has introduced concrete reforms since the early nineties, several issues do remain open – for instance training/education standards, the quality of social services and tax issues – and they affect not only non-profit providers.

### **1.3.2 Slovakia**

With its 5.4 million inhabitants, Slovakia is one of the smaller countries that joined the European Union in May 2004. A country report drawn up by the Gesellschaft für Versicherungswissenschaft und -gestaltung e.V. attests that Slovakia has progressed well on the whole, particularly in its efforts to satisfy EU economic stability criteria. In terms of social policy, however, there are deficiencies that cannot be overlooked. In this context, the report mentions high unemployment, the standstill on reforms in the health and pension fund area,

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<sup>12</sup> The two EU funding programmes most relevant in this respect are PHARE and ACCESS.

and the regional imbalances between eastern Slovakia and the region around Bratislava.<sup>13</sup> The social services system, too, still needs significant reform efforts, as demonstrated by the expert report of Prof. Tomeš et al. (cf. Observatory Working Papers no. 12 and 13). Although a 1998 social welfare law has attempted to unify the hitherto fragmented systems, legislators have not yet been able to implement the plan of establishing a new system for social services. Central problems for the social services providers in Slovakia are without a doubt the funding of their services and the maintenance of the activities of their organisations/institutions. Within the past two years, an intensive process has started to shift funding responsibility from national authorities to the regional or local level. But for social NGOs, planning uncertainty continues in spite of this decentralisation: the negotiation process for institution or project-based funding has merely been shifted to another level. New forms and other sources of funding must therefore be found for non-profit organisations/institutions. In the survey, subsidies from foreign organisations (13.6%) and funds from EU assistance programmes (10.6%) were often named as types of funding.<sup>14</sup> Most of the funds received from this latter source are subsidies from the PHARE programme, provided in preparation to EU accession. In contrast to surveyed organisations/institutions in the other three accession countries, applications of Slovak organisations/institutions for EU funds were successful in only half the cases. The qualitative evaluation shows that rejected applications tended to be those that had been addressed to the EU Development Bank jointly with the relevant Slovak Ministry for Social Affairs and Employment.

On the whole, answers to the open-ended question on the main difficulties currently experienced confirm the fact that reforms have not been fully implemented. Beside the main problem of funding, respondents also named insufficient and/or uncertain legislation, a negative social image particularly of social NGOs, the lack of cooperation with government authorities and the absence of regular exchanges of information as additional difficulties. It is therefore not surprising that, on the whole, Slovak social NGOs also qualify their relationship to the national public authority most relevant to them as only average. The surveyed institutions run by local public authorities agree in characterising their relationship to government authorities as good.<sup>15</sup> As in the other accession countries, articulation of interests is based primarily on personal contacts. In particular social NGOs often expressed the desire to establish a structured relationship to local public authorities. As suitable instruments to achieve this, they mention regular meetings, active involvement in consulting processes and participation in working groups. With regard to participation in current processes and tasks in the field of social policy, the trend analysis shows interesting results for Slovakia. The relatively high proportion of 20% of social NGOs stated, that they are directly involved in shaping the legal position of providers of social services (incl. laws on the public utility status). Institutions run by local public authorities reported a similar proportion concerning their involvement with regard to the fields of social advocacy, (social) legislation, and quality standards. Even keeping in mind the low number of respondents, it is nevertheless remarkable that all institutions run by local public authorities who participated in the survey are members of a national umbrella organisation. Respondents name the “National Association of Towns and Communities” (ZMOS), which is comparable to Germany's “Städte- und Gemeindebund”. In contrast to membership in national organisations, however, there is no membership in European umbrella organisations, for instance through direct membership in ZMOS. The interviews also show clear results as to existing cooperation structures with other providers of social services. All institutions run by local public authorities stated that they have exchanges with other institutions within Slovakia. Informal or formal exchanges of information and experience are generally sought with organisations/institutions

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Gesellschaft für Versicherungswissenschaft und -gestaltung e.V.: “Study on the Social Protection Systems in the 13 Applicant Countries; Slovak Republic – Country Report”; financed by the European Commission – Employment and Social Affairs DG, January 2003.

<sup>14</sup> The validity of this statement has to be relativised, as the number of respondents for Slovakia is comparatively low.

<sup>15</sup> It must be admitted, however, that only four questionnaires were returned by Slovak institutions run by local public authorities!

offering similar services. There are also strong cooperation structures – and this applies to both types of providers – with providers in other EU accession countries. Closer analysis of this question shows that most of these relationships are exchanges with organisations/institutions in the Czech Republic (51.9%), which is hardly surprising in view of the deep-rooted historical structures between the two countries. There is also a high proportion (76.9%) of relationships between non-profit providers in Slovakia and those in other EU Member States – in contrast to the results for the other three accession countries. Besides Austria, answers in this regard surprisingly often name organisations in Great Britain. Cooperation covers the areas of exchange of information, specialised knowledge/know-how, and training/education/qualification. Cross-border services, on the other hand, play only a limited role.<sup>16</sup>

Institutions run by local public authorities in Slovakia see the most important need for consulting in the area of funding and quality of social services. Next in their order of priority are training/education/qualification and social management. Social NGOs, in contrast, are particularly interested in consulting with German organisations in the areas of exchange of professional information and experience, EU funding/application procedures, and networking with EU institutions. Overall, although Slovakia is well on the way to establishing a stable system of social services, the results of the trend analysis show that there is still significant need for improvement. Support should also be provided by German provider organisations.

### 1.3.3 The Czech Republic

In contrast to the situation in Poland and Slovakia, reform efforts in the Czech Republic – particularly in the area of social work and social services – can be described as rather slowly proceeding. In the area of social services, there are still many laws dating back to the Socialist system that remain largely in effect. Although the last ten years have witnessed several efforts to push forward with reforms – for instance intensive efforts to reform social work legislation (1994) and laws affecting social services (2002)<sup>17</sup> – no lasting success has been achieved until today. This situation places particularly non-profit providers and social NGOs in a very difficult situation, as no final arrangements have been made regarding either their legal position or funding for their institutions. It may therefore appear surprising that, in spite of these difficult conditions, there is a rather large network of non-profit providers of social services in the Czech Republic. One important reason for this is that many organisations and federations operating in the social sector can look back on a long (church) tradition<sup>18</sup> that was reactivated when the transformation process began. Today, cooperation structures with Germany are based on shared traditions. Three fourths of the non-profit organisations/institutions who participated in the survey stated that they have extensive relations with Diaconia or Caritas institutions. In addition, organisations/institutions based on church traditions are also members of the national and European federations relevant to their denomination. Cooperation with other EU Member States is not as prevalent here as in the other three polled accession countries. Statements regarding cooperation with other EU accession countries in the areas of exchange of information and of specialised knowledge/know-how and the direct offer of social services in border areas<sup>19</sup> largely refer to cooperation with neighbouring Slovakia.<sup>20</sup>

Although non-profit providers of social services play an important and indeed indispensable role in the Czech social welfare system, neither their institutional position nor funding for their

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<sup>16</sup> The question as to whether cross-border social services/social work are offered is answered affirmatively by only one third of organisations/institutions (N=17).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Observatory Working Papers no. 12 and 13 on the legal framework and forms of organisation of social services, Prof. Tomeš and et al.

<sup>18</sup> For instance institutions of the Czech Diaconia and Caritas federations.

<sup>19</sup> Here, 57.1% of surveyed organisations/institutions (irrespective of type of provider) state that they offer cross-border social services/social work!

<sup>20</sup> But to a somewhat lesser extent, cross-border social services/social work also means cooperation with the border regions of Germany and Austria.

services are adequately secure, and survey participants named these two points as the main difficulties they have to cope with. Looking at the answers to the question on main sources of funding, we see a very broad range of sources. In addition to subsidies or benefits received from national, regional or local authorities, social NGOs fund their work through subsidies from foreign organisations – on the basis of the religious cooperation structures already described – and from their own funds from the actual provision of their social services. In comparison with the other accession countries, we note a rather high proportion of funding provided by EU programmes, 14.1%, with most of this amount coming from PHARE and ACCESS. There is without a doubt a causal link between the answers to the question on main sources of funding and the question as to whether an organisation/institution has already applied for financial support from the EU. Far more than 80% of respondents answered affirmatively, and applications were successful in nearly all cases. On the whole, the results of the trend analysis also show a significant correlation between application for EU support and already existing cooperation structures with German providers of social services.

Nearly all respondents are interested in more intensive cooperation and concrete consulting with German providers of social services. Irrespective of the type of provider<sup>21</sup>, the main demand for consulting was expressed in the areas of exchange of professional information and experience, training/education/qualification, EU funds/application procedures, and fundraising.

Although the Czech Republic is still in the process of establishing and consolidating the necessary legislation and financing regulations in the area of social services, it currently offers quite a broad range of social services, characterised by a high degree of flexibility, motivation, active involvement of volunteer workers and a relative broad variety of social NGOs.<sup>22</sup>

### 1.3.4 Hungary

From an economic point of view, Hungary – with its population of 10.2 million roughly comparable with EU Member States Belgium or Portugal – plays a leading role among the reform states of Central and Eastern Europe. But although the Hungarian economy grew by 4.2% in the first six months of 2001, the country is characterised by regional imbalances.<sup>23</sup> There is still a great need for improvement in the area of social policy. This assessment also applies to the social security system – in particular social services –, where significant reform efforts are still necessary for Hungary to reach EU standards. Although Hungary, like Poland, tried to get reforms started in the area of social services right from the very early days of the transformation process, unlike Poland it cannot be described as a true reform state from today's perspective. In spite of a number of changes, the overall social services sector has developed slowly and the role of non-profit/social organisations has remained marginal. This can be attributed to a number of reasons – for instance, that these organisations in Hungary had little in the way of pre-Communist tradition to fall back on, as has been the case in the Czech Republic. Today's structures are based on a new social law that was passed in 1993<sup>24</sup> and that regulates the provision and funding of social services.<sup>25</sup> It states that social services can be provided by local public authorities as well as non-profit providers, and by religious as well as private commercial institutions. An important element of this law concerns arrangements for the concrete provision of social services. Under the terms of the law, the

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<sup>21</sup> The proportion of interviews carried out with Czech providers of social services, 12%, is the lowest, so that there would be little sense in splitting the analysis according to types of providers.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Observatory Working Papers no. 12 and 13 on the legal framework and forms of organisation of social services, Prof. Tomeš et al.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Peter Michalzik in: "Wirtschaftliche Erfolge und sozialpartnerschaftliche Handikaps", *Bundesarbeitsblatt* 2/2002, p. 15ff.

<sup>24</sup> Last amended in 2003.

<sup>25</sup> The law explicitly names social services in the area of elderly care/nursing care, services for the homeless, for people with disabilities, for the mentally ill, etc.

relevant local authorities<sup>26</sup> can commission both non-profit and private commercial organisations or companies as providers of social services on the basis of service contracts. A further central aspect of the new law is that it establishes qualification rules for employees in the social work sector.

The results of the trend analysis show that there is a larger discrepancy between the desire to implement reforms swiftly and the actual day-to-day reality. Asked about their main difficulties as providers of social services, non-profit organisations most often named inadequate financial circumstances and the lack of uniform conditions applying to their service contracts with the relevant local public authorities. Most funding, they complained, is still based on personal contacts rather than on objective criteria. There are also relatively frequent complaints about the scarcity of qualified professional personnel, which means that the quality of social services is not adequately ensured. In this context, respondents also pointed out the gaps in legislation with regard to the formal prerequisites for qualified, professional social workers. An interesting comment was made by one local institution in Salgótarján, that offers services in a variety of social work-related fields. It describes the very difficult position of social work in society, a situation that can partially be attributed to the fact that Hungarians perceive and assess social problems in very different manners.

The results of the trend analysis with regard to levels and structures of organisation show that social NGOs operating in the area of social services have not yet evolved particularly far. In comparison to the other three polled accession countries, only half of the surveyed organisations/institutions are members of a national umbrella organisation. Results regarding membership at a European level are even more clear-cut: in this case, 80% of respondents admitted that they are not members of any European umbrella organisation. As in the case of the Hungarian Red Cross, the degree of organisation depends to a large extent on the size of the organisation/institution concerned. In spite of the main difficulties outlined above, it is amazing that nearly 60% of the surveyed social NGOs describe their relationship to the national public authority most relevant to them as generally good. But although social NGOs in Hungary do have the possibility of articulating their interests vis-à-vis national or local authorities, the exchange is based primarily on personal contacts within the scope of individual projects. Answers to the question regarding commitment and/or direct participation to current tasks and processes show that non-profit organisations in Hungary are highly interested in improving their social position and their position vis-à-vis legislators and political decision-makers. In this respect, more than one third of respondents mentioned social advocacy and lobbying in the field of social policy. This is followed by application for EU-funded programmes, at 23.7% the highest proportion among all accession countries. However, only one third of survey respondents have already received assistance from such programmes. This places Hungary far behind the other accession countries in terms of actual results. It is conspicuous that the surveyed Hungarian federations seldom take advantage of the possibility of actively applying for European project funding.<sup>27</sup> If this is generally the case, it would mean that European cooperation partners only play a minor role.

Hungarian organisations/institutions see their main need for consulting in the area of exchange of professional information and experience in a broad range of areas of social work and – a particularly relevant aspect for the further development of social society structures – in funding. Other consulting needs mentioned are (social) management, the quality of social services, EU funding/application procedures and exchange/transfer of experience. Overall, the results of the trend analysis confirm the known situation in Hungary, particularly for non-profit organisations/institutions. Several development and transformation processes were introduced in the 1990s, but so far there have not yet been resounding successes in the area of social services, so that there is still an urgent need for further reform efforts.

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<sup>26</sup> The fact that this responsibility is in the hands of local authorities shows once again clearly to what extent the decentralisation process has already been implemented in Hungary!

<sup>27</sup> From a limited total of N=18, 61.1% of organisations/institutions said they had not done so.

## **2 Discussion**

The results of the survey clearly show, that the prevailing situation and the encountered problems differ greatly according to provider type and country. But irrespective of existing connections a need for consulting and cooperation is being articulated. Public providers wish for exchange of information and experience as well as support concerning how to get funding from and how to network with EU-institutions, while non-profit ones stress the aspect of quality as to the services offered and the personnel employed. In fact the question of quality is predominant in the whole Polish subgroup of the sample, whereas providers from the other countries put the exchange of information and experience in the first place.

Thus there is a variety of starting points for social service providers of the member states. They might support the establishment of federational structures in the new member states by conceptual just as much as by financial means. By doing so they would – among other things - enhance the setup of a civil society in the new member states and ease the future cooperation in border regions.

### **2.1 Country perspective**

#### **2.1.1 Poland**

More than half of the questionnaires analysed in the course of the survey came from Polish organisations/institutions (55%). This is perhaps not particularly surprising, as German providers of social services already established far-reaching cooperative structures with Poland – the largest of the nine Central and Eastern European countries to join the European Union on 1 May 2004 and the one with the largest population – soon after the collapse of the Socialist system in 1989/90. On the basis of shared traditions, such as the strong position of the churches as providers of social services (this applies particularly to the Catholic Church), many German social organisations and federations got involved in Poland right from the start of the transformation process, for instance to encourage the establishment of civil society structures. In comparison with the other accession countries analysed in the survey, this stronger cooperation between German and Polish bodies is also a consequence of the fact that, on the whole, the new Polish social welfare system is rather similar to the German one. Polish law follows a principle analogous to the German subsidiarity principle and clearly regulates the cooperation of national, regional and local authorities with non-government organisations and/or non-profit providers. Since May 2003, another special law has been introduced to regulate the activities of non-profit organisations/institutions and of volunteer work.<sup>28</sup> Generally speaking, Poland plays a pioneering role in a number of areas, including legislation – a position clearly confirmed by an analysis of the answers to question eight of the survey. In Poland too, of course, social organisations are under constant financial pressure, and the new legal framework has not yet fully been put into practice, but the main difficulties respondents associated with the transformation process – funding, legislation, social image, cooperation, etc. – are all somewhat less present on the whole than in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

There are also significant differences between Poland and the other three accession countries when we look more closely at the context of individual questions. With regard to degree of organisation and organisational structures, we see that a number of the surveyed social NGOs are members of a strong national umbrella organisation, the Working Community of Associations of Social Organisations (WRZOS). The survey was conducted on the basis of existing cooperation structures between German federations and organisa-

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. Observatory Working Papers no. 12 and 13 on the legal framework and forms of organisation of social services, Prof. Tomeš et al.; critics say, however, that this legislation does not adequately regulate tax issues.

tions/institutions in the individual accession countries. The relative frequency with which membership in WRZOS was mentioned is clearly linked to the cooperation structures already established between WRZOS member organisations/institutions and members of Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband in Germany. This cooperation is based on a formal agreement between the two umbrella organisations, the primary objective of which is to establish a European network of federations of social NGOs that is based on the principles of civic commitment.<sup>29</sup> Another important source of influence in Poland are the church umbrella organisations, particularly the Polish Caritas, which consists of 42 separate bodies. In contrast, not even half of the social NGOs are members of a European umbrella organisation; for those that are, there is a causal link between this membership and membership in a national umbrella organisation. In this context, Polish respondents name Caritas Europa/Caritas International. And in contrast to respondents in the other three accession countries, the Polish institutions run by local public authorities who participated in the survey are neither in a national nor in a European umbrella organisation.

All Polish organisations/institutions believe that they have the opportunity of articulating their interests vis-à-vis national public authorities. Although the reform process in Poland is rather dynamic in comparison with Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary, no more permanent institutional exchange and cooperation structures between public authorities and social NGOs have developed here than elsewhere. Personal contact continues to be the main factor affecting the establishment and maintenance of exchanges. In this context, it is surprising to see that the surveyed organisations/institutions in Poland criticised the quality of these exchanges. The assessments of non-profit institutions are particularly worthy of note in this respect. For instance, two thirds of respondents described the quality of their relationship to the national public authority most relevant to them as no better than average, with 10% qualifying it as poor or even very poor. Like in the Czech Republic and Hungary, the activities of social NGOs in Poland tend to focus on the areas of application for EU-funded programmes and social advocacy/lobbying in the field of social policy. Institutions run by local public authorities also find requirement planning to be particularly important – with one third of respondents in this category mentioning this aspect.

From a financial point of view, it is remarkable that more than 20% of surveyed Polish institutions run by local public authorities are funded to a significant extent from donations, gifts or legacies. Funding from EU assistance programmes is particularly important in the non-profit sector.<sup>30</sup> Applications for project funding are generally based on existing cooperation structures with provider organisations both in Germany and in other EU Member States. More than 50% of the surveyed organisations/institutions that cooperate with German providers of social services report that they have already applied for project funding within the scope of EU assistance programmes. Evaluation of the responses shows that there is an even greater correlation between application for EU funding and contact/cooperation with providers in other EU Member States. Financing of social NGOs in Poland is largely based on performance contracts negotiated with the relevant national, regional and local authorities (project or task-related). The overall financial situation of Polish providers of social services seems to be somewhat better than that of providers in other accession countries.

The Polish organisations and institutions surveyed showed a clear need for intensified cooperation and consultancy with German bodies. Whereas the areas where cooperation is seen as most desirable are largely aligned to the services offered by the survey participants, there is indeed quite a range of priorities among the individual accession countries in terms of consultation needs. In the case of Poland, the main area is training/education/qualification. This is followed by a need for consultation in the area of EU subsidies/application procedures, exchange of professional information and experience, financing, and issues concerning the quality of social services. Although Poland can be described as an accession country that has introduced concrete reforms since the early nineties, several issues do

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. Parität EU-Report, 2/2003 (April-June 2003), p. 9.

<sup>30</sup> The two EU funding programmes most relevant in this respect are PHARE and ACCESS.

remain open – for instance training/education standards, the quality of social services and tax issues – and they affect not only non-profit providers. This is also confirmed by the trend analysis.

## 2.1.2 Slovakia

With its 5.4 million inhabitants, Slovakia is one of the smaller countries joining the European Union in May 2004. A country report drawn up by Gesellschaft für Versicherungswissenschaft und -gestaltung e.V. attests that Slovakia has progressed well on the whole, particularly in its efforts to satisfy EU economic stability criteria. In terms of social policy, however, there are deficiencies that cannot be overlooked. In this context, the report mentions high unemployment, the standstill on reforms in the health and pension fund area, and the regional imbalances between eastern Slovakia and the region around Bratislava.<sup>31</sup> The social services system, too, still needs significant reform efforts, as demonstrated by the expert report of Prof. Tomeš et al. (cf. Observatory Working Papers no. 12 and 13). Although a 1998 social welfare law has attempted to unify the hitherto fragmented systems, legislators have not yet been able to also implement the plan of establishing a new system for social services. A central problem for the providers of social services in Slovakia is without a doubt getting funds for their services and maintaining the activities of their organisations/institutions. In the past two years, an intensive process has started to shift funding responsibility from national authorities to the regional or local level. But for social NGOs, planning uncertainty continues in spite of this decentralisation: the negotiation process for institution or project-based funding has merely been shifted to another level. New forms and other sources of funding must therefore be found for non-profit organisations/institutions. In terms of type of funding, survey results quite often named subsidies from foreign organisations (13.6%) and funds from EU assistance programmes (10.6%).<sup>32</sup> Most of the funds received from this latter source are subsidies from the PHARE programme provided in preparation to EU accession. In contrast to surveyed organisations/institutions in the other three accession countries, applications of Slovak organisations/institutions for EU funds were successful in only half the cases. The qualitative evaluation shows that rejected applications tended to be those that had been addressed to the EU Development Bank jointly with the relevant Slovak Ministry for Social Affairs and Employment.

On the whole, answers to the open-ended question on the main difficulties currently experienced confirm the fact that reforms have not been fully implemented. In addition to the main problem of funding, respondents also name insufficient and/or uncertain legislation, a negative social image particularly of social NGOs, the lack of cooperation with government authorities and the absence of regular exchanges of information as additional difficulties. It is therefore not surprising that, on the whole, Slovak social NGOs also qualify their relationship to the national public authority most relevant to them as only average. The surveyed institutions run by local public authorities agree in characterising their relationship to government authorities as good.<sup>33</sup> As in other accession countries, articulation of interests is based primarily on personal contacts. Social NGOs in particular often express the desire to establish a structured relationship to local public authorities. As suitable instruments to achieve this, they mention regular meetings, active involvement in consultation processes and participation in working groups. With regard to participation in current processes and tasks in the field of social policy, the trend analysis shows interesting results for Slovakia. A relative high proportion of social NGOs – 20% – state specifically that they are directly involved in shaping the legal position of providers of social services (incl. legal issues affecting non-profit status). Institutions run by local public authorities report a similar

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Gesellschaft für Versicherungswissenschaft und -gestaltung e.V.: "Study on the Social Protection Systems in the 13 Applicant Countries; Slovak Republic – Country Report"; financed by the European Commission – Employment and Social Affairs DG, January 2003.

<sup>32</sup> The validity of this statement is relative, as the number of respondents for Slovakia is relatively low.

<sup>33</sup> It must be admitted, however, that only four questionnaires were returned by Slovak institutions run by local public authorities!

proportion regarding their involvement with regard to the fields of social advocacy, (social) legislation, and quality standards. Even keeping in mind the low number of respondents, it is nevertheless remarkable that all institutions run by local public authorities who participated in the survey are members of a national umbrella organisation. Respondents name the “National Association of Towns and Communities” (ZMOS), which is comparable to Germany's “Städte- und Gemeindebund”. In contrast to membership in national organisations, however, there is no membership in European umbrella organisations, for instance through direct membership in ZMOS. The interviews also show clear results as to existing cooperation structures with other providers of social services. All institutions run by local public authorities state that they have exchanges with other institutions within Slovakia. Informal or formal exchanges of information and experience are generally sought with organisations/institutions offering similar services. There are also strong cooperation structures – and this applies to both types of provider – with providers in other EU accession countries. Closer analysis of this question shows that most of these relationships are exchanges with organisations/institutions in the

Czech Republic (51.9%), which is hardly surprising in view of the deep-rooted historical structures between the two countries. There is also a high proportion (76.9%) of relationships between non-profit providers in Slovakia and those in other EU Member States – in contrast to results for the other three accession countries. Besides Austria, answers in this regard surprisingly often name organisations in Great Britain. Cooperation covers the areas of exchange of information, specialised knowledge/know-how, and training/education/qualification. Cross-border services, on the other hand, play only a limited role.<sup>34</sup>

Institutions run by local public authorities in Slovakia see the most important need for consultation in the area of funding and quality of social services. Next in their order of priority are training/education/qualification and social management. Social NGOs, in contrast, are particularly interested in consultation with German organisations in the areas of exchange of professional information and experience, EU funding/application procedures, and networking with EU institutions. Overall, although Slovakia is well on the way to establishing a stable system of social services, the results of the trend analysis show that there is still significant need for improvement. Support should also be provided by German provider organisations.

### **2.1.3 The Czech Republic**

In contrast to the situation in Poland and Slovakia, reform efforts in the Czech Republic – particularly in the area of social work and social services – can be described as rather slow. In the area of social services, there are still many laws dating back to the Socialist system that remain largely in effect. Although the last ten years have witnessed several efforts to push forward with reforms – for instance intensive efforts to reform social work legislation (1994) and laws affecting social services (2002)<sup>35</sup> – no lasting success has been achieved until today. This situation places particularly non-profit providers and social NGOs in a very difficult situation, as no final arrangements have been made regarding either their legal position or funding for their institutions. It may therefore appear surprising that, in spite of these difficult conditions, there is a rather large network of non-profit providers of services in the Czech Republic. One important reason for this is that many organisations and federations operating in the social sector can look back on a long (church) tradition<sup>36</sup> that was reactivated when the transformation process began. Today, cooperation structures with Germany are based on shared traditions. Three fourths of the non-profit organisations/institutions who participated in the survey state that they have extensive relations with

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<sup>34</sup> The question as to whether cross-border social services/social work are offered is answered affirmatively by only one third of organisations/institutions (N=17).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Observatory Working Papers no. 12 and 13 on the legal framework and forms of organisation of social services, Prof. Tomeš and et al.

<sup>36</sup> For instance institutions of the Czech Diaconia and Caritas federations.

Diaconia or Caritas institutions. In addition, organisations/institutions based on church traditions are also members of the national and European federations relevant to their denomination. Cooperation with other EU Member States is not as prevalent here as in the other three accession countries. Statements regarding cooperation with other EU accession countries in the areas of exchange of information and of specialised knowledge/know-how and the direct offer of social services in border areas <sup>37</sup> largely refer to cooperation with neighbouring Slovakia.<sup>38</sup>

Although non-profit providers of social services play an important and indeed indispensable role in the Czech social welfare system, neither their institutional position nor funding for their services are adequately secure, and survey participants name these two points as the main difficulties they have to cope with. Looking at the answers to the question on main sources of funding, we see a very broad range of sources. In addition to subsidies or benefits received from national, regional or local authorities, social NGOs fund their work through subsidies from foreign organisations – on the basis of the religious cooperation structures already described – and from their own funds from the actual provision of their social services. In comparison with the other accession countries, we note a rather high proportion of funding provided by EU programmes, 14.1%, with most of this amount coming from PHARE and ACCESS. There is without a doubt a causal link between the answers to the question on main sources of funding and the question as to whether an organisation/institution has already applied for financial support from the EU. Far more than 80% of respondents answered affirmatively, and applications were successful in nearly all cases. On the whole, the results of the trend analysis also show a significant correlation between application for EU support and already existing cooperation structures with German providers of social services.

Nearly all respondents are interested in more intensive cooperation and concrete consultation with German providers of social services. Irrespective of type of provider<sup>39</sup>, the main demand for consultation was expressed in the areas of exchange of professional information and experience, training/education/qualification, EU funds/application procedures, and fundraising.

Although the Czech Republic is still in the process of establishing and consolidating the necessary legislation and financing regulations in the area of social services, it currently offers quite a broad range of services that is characterised by a high degree of flexibility, motivation, active involvement of volunteer workers and a relative broad variety of social NGOs.<sup>40</sup>

#### **2.1.4 Hungary**

From an economic point of view, Hungary – with its population of 10.2 million roughly comparable with EU Member States Belgium or Portugal – plays a leading role among the reform states of Central and Eastern Europe. But although the Hungarian economy grew by 4.2% in the first six months of 2001, it is a country characterised by regional imbalances.<sup>41</sup> There is still a great need for improvement in the area of social policy. This assessment also applies to the social security system – in particular social services –, where significant reform efforts are still necessary for Hungary to reach EU standards. Although Hungary, like Poland,

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<sup>37</sup> Here, 57.1% of surveyed organisations/institutions (irrespective of type of provider) state that they offer cross-border social services/social work!

<sup>38</sup> But to a somewhat lesser extent, cross-border social services/social work also means cooperation with the border regions of Germany and Austria.

<sup>39</sup> The proportion of interviews carried out with Czech providers of social services, 12%, is the lowest, so that there would be little sense in splitting the analysis according to types of providers.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Observatory Working Papers no. 12 and 13 on the legal framework and forms of organisation of social services, Prof. Tomeš et al.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Peter Michalzik in: „Wirtschaftliche Erfolge und sozialpartnerschaftliche Handikaps“, *Bundesarbeitsblatt* 2/2002, p. 15ff.

tried to get reforms started in the area of social services right from the very early days of the transformation process, it cannot be described as a true reform state from today's perspective, in contrast to Poland. In spite of a number of changes, the overall social services sector has developed slowly and the role of non-profit/social organisations has remained marginal. This can be attributed to a number of reasons – for instance, that these organisations in Hungary had little in the way of pre-Communist tradition to fall back on, as has been the case in the Czech Republic. Today's structures are based on a new social law that was passed in 1993<sup>42</sup> and that regulates the provision and funding of social services.<sup>43</sup> It states that social services can be provided by local public authorities as well as non-profit providers, and by religious as well as private commercial institutions. An important element of this law concerns arrangements for the concrete provision of social services. Under the terms of the law, the relevant local authorities<sup>44</sup> can commission both non-profit and private commercial organisations or companies as providers of social services on the basis of service contracts. A further central aspect of the new law is that it establishes the qualification rules for employees in the social work sector.

The results of the trend analysis show that there is a larger discrepancy between the desire to implement reforms swiftly and actual day-to-day reality. Asked about their main difficulties as providers of social services, non-profit organisations most often name inadequate financial circumstances and the lack of uniform conditions applying to their service contracts with the relevant local public authorities. Most funding, they complain, is still based on personal contacts rather than on objective criteria. There are also relatively frequent complaints about the scarcity of qualified professional personnel, which means that the quality of social services is not adequately ensured. In this context, respondents also point out the gaps in legislation with regard to the formal prerequisites for qualified, professional social workers. An interesting comment was made by one local institution in Salgótarján that offers services in a variety of social work-related fields. It describes the very difficult position of social work in society, a situation that can partially be attributed to the fact that Hungarians perceive and assess social problems in very different manners.

The results of the trend analysis with regard to levels and structures of organisation show that social NGOs operating in the area of social services have not yet evolved particularly far. In comparison with the other three accession countries, only half of the surveyed organisations/institutions are members of a national umbrella organisation. Results regarding membership at a European level are even more clear-cut: in this case, 80% of respondents admit that they are not members of any European umbrella organisation. As in the case of the Hungarian Red Cross, the degree of organisation depends to a large extent on the size of the organisation/institution concerned. In spite of the main difficulties outlined above, it is amazing that nearly 60% of the surveyed social NGOs describe their relationship to the national public authority most relevant to them as generally good. But although social NGOs in Hungary do have the possibility of articulating their interests vis-à-vis national or local authorities, this exchange is based primarily on personal contacts within the scope of individual projects. Answers to the question regarding commitment and/or direct participation to current tasks and processes show that non-profit organisations in Hungary are highly interested in improving their social position and their position vis-à-vis legislators and political decision-makers. In this respect, more than one third of respondents mentioned social advocacy and lobbying in the field of social policy. This is followed by application for EU-funded programmes, at 23.7% the highest proportion among all accession countries. However, only one third of survey respondents have already received assistance from such programmes. This places Hungary far behind the other accession countries in terms of actual results. It is conspicuous that the surveyed Hungarian federations seldom take advantage of

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<sup>42</sup> Last amended in 2003.

<sup>43</sup> The law explicitly names social services in the area of elderly care/nursing care, services for the homeless, for people with disabilities, for the mentally ill, etc.

<sup>44</sup> The fact that this responsibility is in the hands of local authorities shows once again clearly to what extent the decentralisation process has already been implemented in Hungary!

the possibility of actively applying for European project funding.<sup>45</sup> If this is the case generally, it means that European cooperation partners play only a minor role.

Hungarian organisations/institutions see their main need for consultation in the area of exchange of professional information and experience in a broad range of areas of social work and – a particularly relevant aspect for the further development of social society structures – in funding. Other consultation needs mentioned are (social) management, the quality of social services, EU funding/application procedures and exchange/transfer of experience. Overall, the results of the trend analysis confirm the situation in Hungary, particularly for non-profit organisations/institutions. Several development and transformation processes were introduced in the 1990s, but so far there have not yet been resounding successes in the area of social services, so that there is still an urgent need for further reform efforts.

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<sup>45</sup> From a limited total of N=18, 61.1% of organisations/institutions said they had not done so.

## Appendix

### AI. Survey on the demand of co-operation and with providers of social services in EU-accession countries



Bundesministerium  
für Familie, Senioren, Frauen  
und Jugend



Deutscher Verein  
für öffentliche und  
private Fürsorge



Gemeinnütziger e.V.



Observatorium für die  
Entwicklung der sozialen  
Dienste in Europa

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Country

Interview-Nr.

#### **SURVEY ON THE DEMAND OF CO-OPERATION AND CONSULTATION WITH PROVIDER OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN EU-ACCESSION COUNTRIES**

In the context with the forthcoming accession of further countries into the European Union, the 'Observatory for the Development of Social Services in Europe' (*for more information about the Observatory, please find attached note*) is organising and co-ordinating this survey. The main objective of the questionnaire is to get information about the demand of co-operation and consultation from the perspective of social service providers in the accession countries Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Hungary. Furthermore, the survey will investigate into the possibilities for cross-border co-operation.

The survey (incl. interviews) is developed and co-ordinated in close co-operation with the Central German Associations of welfare organisations – i.e. the Arbeiterwohlfahrt, the German Caritas Association, German Red Cross, the Diakonisches Werk of the Protestant Church in Germany, the German Paritätische Wohlfahrtsverband and the Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle of the Jewish in Germany – and the local authorities.

The central outcomes of the survey will result in an analyse-workshop in December 2003. One objective of the workshop is to elaborate concrete recommendations concerning possible assistance in the transformation process. Interested organisations/facilities, who are involved in this survey, do have the possibility to receive the final results.

We would be very honoured if you – as a provider of social services in one of the EU-accession countries – would participate voluntarily on that survey.

Thank you very much for your assistance!

#### **I. Information about your organisation/facility**

##### **1. Name and address (please complete!)**

Name (original language):.....

Name (corresp. translation into German/English):.....

Address: .....

Country: .....

Phone/fax: .....

Email: .....

Website: .....

**2. What kind of provider are you?**

Public (central-state, local)  (1)

Non-profit (NPO/NGO)  (2)

Private commercial  (3)

Other  (4)

↳ If other, what kind of provider? .....

.....

**3. How many persons are working in your organisation/facility? (Please fill in the number)**

(1)

**thereof,**

↳

1. Full-time:  (1.1)

2. Part-time:  (1.2)

3. Other form of employment:  (1.3)

4. Voluntary  (1.4)

**4. Which legal status does your organisation/facility have?**

1. Association (non-commercial)  (1)

2. Foundation  (2)

3. Cooperative  (3)

4. Public authority/legal entity of the public law  (4)

5. Commercial corporate entity  
(e.g. Ltd., stock corporation, limited partnership)  (5)

6. Other  (6)

↳ if other legal status, please specify: .....

.....

.....

**5. Organisation in umbrella organisations**

**A. Are you a member of any national umbrella organisation?**

yes  (1) no  (2)

**If yes,**

↳ affiliated to which umbrella organisation?  
(please fill in original name and corresp. translation into English or German)

.....

.....

↳ Does the umbrella organisation receive subsidies  
by the state? yes  (1.1) no  (1.2)

↳ Is this umbrella organisation independent from  
state bodies? yes  (1.3) no  (1.4)

**B. Are you a member of any trans-national or European umbrella organisation?**

yes  (1) no  (2)

**If yes,**

↳ in which umbrella organisation?.....

.....

**6. In which fields are you providing social services? (please tick as appropriate!)**

1. Child and youth welfare	<input type="checkbox"/>	(1)
2. Elderly care/Nursing care	<input type="checkbox"/>	(2)
3. Drug problems/Other types of addiction	<input type="checkbox"/>	(3)
4. Family assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	(4)
5. People with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	(5)
6. Social assistance/Basic assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	(6)
7. Adult education/Vocational training	<input type="checkbox"/>	(7)
8. Homeless people	<input type="checkbox"/>	(8)
9. Migration	<input type="checkbox"/>	(9)
10. Health services	<input type="checkbox"/>	(10)
11. Others	<input type="checkbox"/>	(11)

    ↳ which fields? .....

.....

.....

**7. What are your main sources of funding? (please tick as appropriate!)**

1. (Central-) state authority funding/subsidy/cost transfer	<input type="checkbox"/>	(1)
2. Local or regional authority funding/subsidy/cost transfer	<input type="checkbox"/>	(2)
3. Donation/Inheritance	<input type="checkbox"/>	(3)
4. Funding by international organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	(4)
5. Own resources (e.g. membership fees, publications, sponsorship)	<input type="checkbox"/>	(5)
↳ thereof		
5.1 Fees for the provision of services	<input type="checkbox"/>	(5.1)
5.2 Membership fees	<input type="checkbox"/>	(5.2)
5.3 Publications, income from financial or real estate capital	<input type="checkbox"/>	(5.3)
6. Funding as a result of the membership to foundations/associations	<input type="checkbox"/>	(6)
7. EU-funded programmes	<input type="checkbox"/>	(7)
8. Others	<input type="checkbox"/>	(8)

    ↳ what kind of funding?.....

.....

.....

.....

**II. The situation of social service providers in the transformation process**

**8. Please explain shortly from your perspective as a social service provider, where you did encounter the biggest problems in the different fields of social work and organisational areas (like financing, public legislation, lack of opinions in the society).**

.....

.....

.....

.....

**9. Do you have the opportunity to articulate your interests to (national) public authorities (e.g. by regular meeting with co-operation partners)?**      yes  (1)      no  (2)

**If yes,**

↳ which form? (please tick as appropriate!)

Consultation processes	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.1)
Hearings	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.2)
Membership/co-operation in committees	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.3)
Personal contact	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.4)
Other	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.5)

↳ on which levels? (please tick as appropriate!)

National	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.6)
Regional (districts, regions, areas)	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.7)
Local	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.8)

**If no,**

↳ would you like to develop a structured relationship to (national) public authorities?      yes  (2.1)      no  (2.2)

↳ if yes: what is your organisation/facility currently doing to improve the situation?

.....

.....

.....

**10. The relationship with (national) public authorities**

**A: Are there regular forms of exchanges (i.e. consultation processes, hearings, co-operation in committees) between your organisation/facility and (national) public authorities?**      yes  (1)      no  (2)

↳ **If yes,** how often?

1. Once a year	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.1)
2. Two times a year	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.2)
3. Once a month	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.3)
4. Depends on projects/tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.4)
5. Not clear or no regulations	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.5)
6. Others	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.6)

**B: How would you characterise the relationship between your organisation/facility and the (national) public authority most relevant for your work?**

Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)
Good	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/> (3)
Bad	<input type="checkbox"/> (4)
Very bad	<input type="checkbox"/> (5)

**11. On which processes or tasks is your organisation/facility currently participating? (please tick as appropriate!)**

- 1. Social advocacy/Lobbying in the field of social policy  (1)
- 2. Legislation (esp. in the field of social issues)  (2)
- 3. Legal position as provider of social services (incl. Charity law and regulation)  (3)
- 4. Application for EU-funded programmes  (4)
- 5. Demand planning  (5)
- 6. Quality standards  (6)
- 7. Training/Education standards  (7)
- 8. Other  (8)

↳ which processes or tasks?.....  
 .....

**III. Existing co-operations and cross-border social services (actual state)**

**12. Does your organisation/facility co-operate with other providers of social services within your country?**

yes  (1)      no  (2)

**If yes,**  
 ↳ which providers? -----  
 -----  
 -----

↳ in which form or on which basis?

- 1. Informal/formal exchange of information and experiences  (1.1)
- 2. Contract on co-operation/partnership  (1.2)

**13. Does your organisation/facility co-operate with German providers of social services (e.g. welfare organisations and/or local authorities/cities)?**

yes  (1)      no  (2)

**If yes,**  
 ↳ with which providers?-----  
 -----  
 -----

↳ the co-operation covers the following area(s)/field(s): (please tick as appropriate!)

- 1. (Specialised) Knowledge/Know How  (1.1)
- 2. Exchange of personal  (1.2)
- 3. Training/Education/Qualification  (1.3)
- 4. Exchange of information  (1.4)
- 5. Financial concerns and accountancy  (1.5)
- 6. Co-ordinated application for EU-funding  (1.6)
- 7. Other  (1.7)

↳ which ones?.....

**14. Do you have contacts/co-operations with organisations/facilities in other EU-member states?**

yes  (1)      no  (2)

**If yes,**  
 ↳ to which countries? -----  
 -----  
 -----

↳ the co-operation covers following area(s)/field(s): (please tick as appropriate!)

1. (Specialised) Knowledge/Know How	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.1)
2. Exchange of personal	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.2)
3. Training/Education/Qualification	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.3)
4. Exchange of information	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.4)
5. Financial concerns and accountancy	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.5)
6. Co-ordinated application for EU-funding	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.6)
7. Other	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.7)

↳ which ones?.....

**15. Do you co-operate with providers of social services in other EU-accession countries?**

yes  (1)      no  (2)

**If yes,**  
 ↳ provider from which countries?

Poland	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.1)
Czech Republic	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.2)
Slovakia	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.3)
Hungary	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.4)
Other	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.5)

↳ which countries?.....

↳ the co-operation covers the following area(s)/field(s): (please tick as appropriate!)

1. (Specialised) Knowledge/Know How	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.1)
2. Exchange of personal	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.2)
3. Training/Education/Qualification	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.3)
4. Exchange of information	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.4)
5. Financial concerns and accountancy	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.5)
6. Co-ordinated application for EU-funding	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.6)
7. Other	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.7)

↳ which ones?.....

**16. Cross-border (international) social services/social work: Does your organisation/facility co-operate with providers of social services trans-regional in cross-border projects or do you provide social services for users who have their residence outside your country?**

yes  (1)                      no  (2)

**If yes,**

↳ Do you provide social services in border regions?    yes  (1.1)                      no  (1.2)

↳ with providers from which countries are you co-operating trans-regional in cross-border projects? (please tick as appropriate!)

Germany	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.3)
Austria	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.4)
Poland	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.5)
Hungary	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.6)
Czech Republic	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.7)
Slovakia	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.8)
Other EU-accession countries	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.9)
Former CIS-states	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.10)
Other	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.11)
↳ which?.....	

**17. Do you currently receive or did you receive any financial support from EU-programmes?**

yes  (1)                      nein  (2)

**If yes,**

↳ which support programmes? (please tick as appropriate!)

1. PHARE	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.1)
2. INTERREG	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.2)
3. CONSENSUS	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.3)
4. ACCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.4)
5. LEONARDO DA VINCI	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.5)
6. European Social Fund (ESF)	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.6)
7. Other	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.7)
↳ which programmes?.....	
.....	

**18. Did your organisation/facility already apply for the support of specific projects in the context of programmes funded by the EU?**

yes  (1)                      no  (2)

**If yes,**

↳ For what kind of EU-funded programmes?  
 -----  
 -----  
 -----

↳ has the application been successful?                      yes  (1.1)                      no  (1.2)

↳ did you have any co-operation partners?                      yes  (1.3)                      no  (1.4)

    ↳ if yes, which ones?-----  
 -----  
 -----

**IV. Further demands for co-operation and consultation (target state)**

**19. Are you interested in a more intensive co-operation with organisations and providers of social services in Germany?**

yes  (1)                      no  (2)

**If yes,**  
 ↳ this should include the following area(s)/field(s):

.....

.....

.....

.....

**20. Are you interested in consulting services or other forms of support by German organisations and providers of social services?**

yes  (1)                      no  (2)

**If yes,**  
 ↳ In which area(s)/field(s) do you see any necessity for consulting?  
 (please tick **max. 3** boxes!)

1. Development of infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.1)
2. Training/Education/Qualification	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.2)
3. Information and communication technology	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.3)
4. (Social-) Management	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.4)
5. Financing	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.5)
6. Business management/administration	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.6)
7. Quality of social services	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.7)
8. EU-institutions (structure, function)	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.8)
9. EU-law/Services of general interest	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.9)
10. EU-funds/tender procedure	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.10)
11. Exchange of information and experience in the fields of social work	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.11)
12. Exchange and transfer of experiences	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.12)
13. Social advocacy/lobbying in the field of social policy	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.13)
14. Fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.14)
15. Networking with national provider	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.15)
16. Networking with EU-institutions	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.16)
17. Networking with German provider	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.17)
18. Other	<input type="checkbox"/> (1.18)

↳ which areas? .....

.....

**Final question:** Are you interested in receiving the analysis of this survey?

yes                       no

**Thank you very much for your assistance!**

**Table 1: Polled organisations**

		Country				Total	
		Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland	Slovakia	Number	Percent
Provider, number	Public	2	5	11	4	22	18,3
	Non-profit	12	18	55	13	98	81,7
Total	Number	14	23	66	17	120	-
	Percent	11,7	19,1	55,0	14,2	-	100

**Table 2: The social services provided by the organisations, differentiated by sector (multiple answers possible)**

	Providers	
	Number	Proportion of all polled organisations (%)
People with disabilities	83	69,2
Child and youth welfare	79	65,8
Family assistance	73	60,8
Social/basic assistance	72	60,0
Elderly/nursing care	70	58,3
Homeless people	47	39,2
Health services	46	38,3
Drug problems	43	35,8
Adult education/vocational training	33	27,5
Migration	28	23,3
Others	48	40,0

**Table 3: Number of employees (without volunteers)**

Number of employees in the organisation	<10	10 - 20	21 - 50	51-100	101-200	201-500	>500	n.r.	Total
Percentage of polled organisations	26,7 %	16,7 %	9,2 %	8,3 %	10,8 %	10,8 %	7,5 %	10 %	100,0 %

*n.r. = no response*
**Table 4: Main sources of funding (multiple answers possible)**

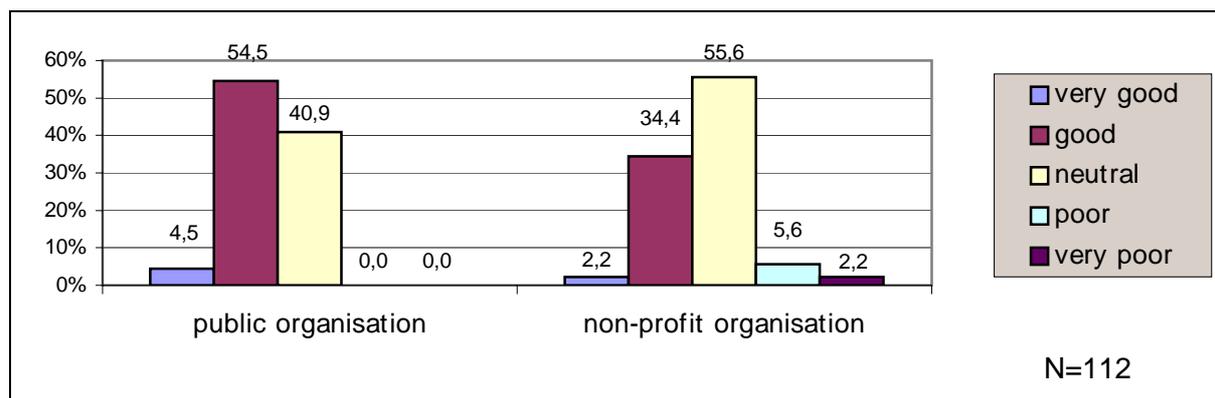
		Organisations	
		Number	Proportion of all polled organisations (%)
Local or regional authority funding/subsidy/cost transfer		86	71,7
Own resources		84	70,0
thereof	Fees for the provision of services	49	40,8
	Membership fees	44	36,7
	Publications, income from financial or real estate capital	13	10,8
(Central-) state authority funding/subsidy/cost transfer		79	65,8
Donation/inheritance		74	61,7
Funding by international organisations		56	46,7
EU-funded programmes		41	34,2
Funding as a result of the membership in foundations/associations		5	4,2
Others		20	16,7

**Table 5: Co-operation/Membership**

		Yes	No	n.r.	Total
<b>Membership in an umbrella organisation</b>	<b>National</b>	60,8 %	38,3 %	0,8 %	100,0 %
	<b>Transnational/European</b>	32,5 %	59,2 %	8,3 %	100,0 %
<b>Co-operation with other organisations</b>	<b>within the same country</b>	84,2 %	14,2 %	1,7%	100,0 %
	<b>in other EU-accession countries</b>	40,8 %	56,7 %	2,5 %	100,0 %
	<b>in other EU-member states</b>	52,5 %	45,0 %	2,5 %	100,0 %
	<b>in Germany</b>	49,2 %	48,3 %	2,5 %	100,0 %

*n.r. = no response*

**Figure 1: Relationship with the most relevant national public authority**



**Table 6: Demand for consultation (multiple answers possible)**

Area of consultation wished for	Country				Provider		Total
	Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland	Slovakia	Public	Non-profit	
	Proportion of polled organisations in each country (%)				Prop. of each polled type of provider (%)		Prop. of all polled org. (%)
Development of infrastructure	35,7	8,7	28,8	11,8	13,6	25,5	23,3
Training/education/qualification	64,3	26,1	53,0	35,3	27,6	51,0	46,7
Information and communication technology	35,7	4,3	15,2	-	9,1	14,3	13,3
(Social-) management	28,6	34,8	21,2	29,4	22,7	26,5	25,8
Financing	42,9	17,4	45,5	41,2	36,4	39,8	39,2
Business management/administration	28,6	-	6,1	5,9	-	9,2	7,5
Quality of social services	42,9	34,8	34,8	41,2	36,4	36,7	36,7
EU-institutions (structure, function)	35,7	17,4	16,7	5,9	18,2	17,3	17,5
EU-law/Services of general interest	35,7	17,4	16,7	23,5	13,6	21,4	20,0
EU-funds/tender procedure	57,1	34,8	48,5	35,3	54,5	42,9	45,0
Exchange of information and experience in the field of social work	85,7	65,2	47,0	41,2	59,1	53,1	54,2
Exchange and transfer of experiences	42,9	34,8	33,3	17,6	27,6	33,7	32,5
Social advocacy/lobbying in the field of social policy	35,7	26,1	19,7	11,8	13,6	23,5	21,7
Fundraising	50,0	34,8	21,2	17,6	9,1	30,6	26,7
Networking with national providers	21,4	4,3	13,6	11,8	4,5	14,3	12,5
Networking with EU-institutions	35,7	30,4	33,3	35,3	40,9	31,6	33,3
Networking with German providers	28,6	8,7	31,8	17,6	9,1	28,6	25,0
Other areas	-	4,3	3,0	-	-	3,1	2,5

### **AIII. Qualitative Analysis<sup>46</sup>**

The qualitative analysis is based on the open-ended survey questions and on the additional details provided by some respondents in the answer category “Other(s)”. The following section will present the main results of the qualitative analysis.

#### **AIII.a Situational analysis – Main difficulties encountered in the transformation process**

In question eight of the survey, participating organisations/institutions were asked what fields of social work or what organisational areas had been the source of the biggest problems they, as providers of social services, had encountered.

Nearly all respondent organisations/institutions – regardless of provider type or country of activity – named **financing** as their central problem. The primary concern expressed in their answers is that government funding for social services is neither clearly nor consistently regulated. Either the actual costs of providing the services are not fully covered by the government grants allocated to the organisation/institution concerned, or quality standards cannot be maintained. Indeed, many institutions even have to struggle for their bare existence, with funds often not sufficient to pay water, heating and electricity bills. Social NGOs are particularly affected by inconsistent, uncertain or non-existent arrangements with regard to funding. Apart from Poland, where a new law now provides clear guidelines for the financial compensation of social services on the basis of performance contracts, non-profit organisations/institutions receive no regular state subsidies. This means that many social NGOs face a permanent threat of institutional collapse. If organisations/institutions do receive financial support from the governments of their countries, this support is often earmarked for a specified purpose or project, and – according to one of the answers received from an institution run by a local public authority – the funds received cannot be used flexibly within the scope of independent budgets. A Hungarian institution expressed the problem in a nutshell: a funding system based on short-term planning (particularly as a result of project financing) makes it impossible for organisations to do any long-term planning.

A further concern is **legislation**, an area which has not yet stabilised in the course of the transformation process. Legal provisions in all the Visegrád countries have undergone extensive change since the end of Communism. It is only the speed of this change that varies strongly from country to country – as impressively demonstrated in a report on “The role of social services in the transformation process – legal framework and forms of organisation” drawn up by Prof. Igor Tomeš and co-authors in four EU accession countries (cf. Observatory for the Development of Social Services in Europe, Working Papers 12 and 13). According to Prof. Tomeš, the Czech Republic lags behind the other three EU newcomers in terms of its legal framework for social services, while Poland is leading the way. Legal uncertainty and the frequent amending of laws pose a particular problem for social NGOs, who often have to face major challenges in their efforts to establish consistent and sustainable social services at a high level of quality. Respondents also complained that government authorities are often arbitrary in their interpretation of existing laws: either institutions run by local public authorities are given preferential treatment in certain projects, or non-profit organisations<sup>47</sup> do not receive equal funding for equivalent services. Furthermore, laws regulating non-profit status per se – in terms of tax privileges or regulations applying to associations (including regulations on volunteer work or civic commitment) – are either inadequate or altogether lacking. In this regard, respondents also pointed out that a legal foundation has yet to be put in place for systematic cooperation between social NGOs

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<sup>46</sup> Translation of Annex AIII “Qualitative Analysis” into English by Nicole Gentz, Berlin

<sup>47</sup> This is particularly true of the Czech Republic and Hungary.

and local public authorities to be possible. On the whole, many respondents – regardless of type of provider or accession country – feel that there is no continuity in social legislation.

**Public opinion** is a further element of the main difficulties encountered, and it has various effects on providers of social services. On the one hand, certain segments of the population (particularly among the older generation) have high expectations and want to see secure and affordable or indeed free social services retained, while people espousing more neo-liberal tendencies question social work as a whole and have a different assessment of social problems. This latter trend has a particularly strong effect on the work of social NGOs, as these organisations then find themselves under constant pressure to justify their work and are ultimately forced to fight for a positive social image.

Another major problem sketched by survey participants is the lack of sufficiently qualified **professional personnel**, a factor that significantly impairs the quality of social services. Under-qualified social workers can hardly be expected to adequately meet the challenges of the transformation process in the social field. In addition, the prerequisites for paid, professional social work have not yet been definitively formalised by government authorities, so that social NGOs in particular are forced to depend to a large extent on the commitment of volunteer (unpaid) helpers.

Although more than 86% of respondents among non-profit providers conceded that they have the possibility of articulating their interests vis-à-vis national public authorities, many comments in the open-ended question criticised the lack or low quality of **cooperation** with central government institutions and local public authorities.<sup>48</sup> It is therefore hardly surprising that some respondents, in connection with the main difficulties already mentioned, would like to see a distinct improvement in their relations with public authorities and express their conviction that such an improvement can only be achieved through regular and active cooperation.<sup>49</sup> In the current situation, social NGOs in particular feel that they are not viewed as equal partners. But lack of cooperation and communication is not limited to the situation between providers and funding sources and/or legal authorities: it also describes the situation between providers and users of social services. In this context, adequate democratic participation of users of social services in the accession countries covered by the study is still no more than a marginal topic. Other suggestions made by respondents include better interprofessional cooperative structures as a way of improving the overall quality of social services.

A final point refers to the **lack of information** regarding funding available within the scope of EU assistance programmes (institution run by local public authorities) on the one hand and national legislation on the other. In this context, many respondents also remarked that there is not enough exchange of information among the various providers of social services at local level. One non-profit organisation proposed the establishment of local information centres.

### **AIII.b Membership in national and European umbrella organisations**

To complement question five of the survey – whether the surveyed organisations/institutions are members of national or European umbrella organisations – the qualitative analysis has focused on the concrete memberships. Only one third of the institutions run by local public authorities are members of a national umbrella organisation. Most of these are municipal or local bodies such as self-management groups, or associations linking individual welfare offices, the bodies generally responsible for social services. At national level, institutions run by local public authorities are also members of bodies that either concentrate on special fields of social work – such as the National Association of Family Assistance and the National Association of Social Workers in Hungary – or, like the Association of Towns and

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<sup>48</sup> Another aspect often mentioned is the lack of cooperation among the various providers of social services and/or the various sectors of social work.

<sup>49</sup> In the words of one non-profit provider, this cooperation should, however, also be based on trust.

Communities in the Czech Republic, national associations of local authorities.<sup>50</sup> For non-profit providers, there are national umbrella organisations equivalent to the federal structures found in Germany particularly for interdenominational and/or secular institutions – in Poland, for instance, this is the Working Community of Associations of Social Organisations (WRZOS), which corresponds roughly to Germany's Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband – as well as for the Red Cross and the churches. There are other groupings of social NGOs based on special areas and problems, such as the National Alliance of the Disabled People's Associations (MEOSZ) in Hungary, or on common interests, such as the Krakow Forum of Social Organisations (KraFOS) in Poland or the NGO Platform in Slovakia.

Membership in European umbrella organisations does not yet loom large for institutions run by local public authorities. Only one institution in the Czech Republic is a member of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR). One must remember, however, that membership in a European body would presume membership in a national organisation. Things look different for non-profit providers: here, some 40% of respondent organisations/institutions are members of a European umbrella organisation. For religious institutions, Caritas Europe/Caritas International and Eurodiaconia are the relevant umbrella bodies, and for the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. As in the case of membership in national bodies, several non-profit respondents also belong to other European bodies involved in special areas of social work, such as the European Disability Forum (EDF). Only a few of the surveyed NGOs stated that they were also members of the Platform of European Social NGOs.

### **All.c National, German and European cooperation partners**

The majority of surveyed organisations/institutions cooperate with other providers within their own countries. The existing cooperation structures do not only focus on specific fields of activity: they also differ considerably according to the type of provider concerned. The scope of the present report does not allow a more detailed explanation at this point. With regard to German cooperation partners, respondents mention the German Association for Public and Private Welfare and a certain number of municipal twinning partnerships as cooperation structures for institutions run by local public authorities, and, for social NGOs, the relevant German federations of non-governmental social welfare organisations. However, it must be remembered that the survey was conducted on the basis of existing cooperation structures with the German federations, and that these bodies were actively involved in carrying out the survey. But there are also extensive links beyond those with umbrella organisations – for instance with bodies in the various German states, particularly individual local institutions. In some cases, the existence of these networks is directly connected with the application for EU project funding. With regard to contacts or cooperation structures with providers in other EU Member States, Polish and Hungarian institutions run by local public authorities have relatively weak structures. Only two respondents in this category named countries with which such cooperation structures already exist.<sup>51</sup> In contrast, there are quite a few cooperation structures among non-profit providers: 60% in Poland and Hungary, and even 76% in Slovakia. Only the Czech Republic, with just over 40%, shows somewhat lower results in this regard. Evaluation of the qualitative question regarding countries with which the respondent organisations/institutions were already cooperating shows interesting results. In Slovakia – the country where the most cooperation structures were reported – relations are strongest with Austrian providers. In Poland, on the other hand, cooperation structures are more widely spread: in addition to Sweden and Denmark, it is surprising to see that there are many contacts with Great Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium and France. These contacts focus on the exchange of information, specialised knowledge/know-how, training/education/

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<sup>50</sup> Equivalent to Germany's "Städte- und Gemeindebund".

<sup>51</sup> One Hungarian institution run by a local public authority has contacts with Portugal and Italy, one in Poland with Switzerland.

qualification measures and above all joint application for project subsidies within the scope of EU programmes, as the following section will show. It would be interesting in this context to see why exchanges are relatively frequent with these specific EU Member States. However, the survey does not provide conclusive answers to this question. We can only assume that cooperation is based on national and/or European funding programmes, for instance in the form of exchanges of personnel organised at European level, social policy conferences financed by EU funds or direct financial assistance. Distribution is similar in Hungary, where surveyed NGOs primarily named cooperation structures with Great Britain, the Netherlands and Belgium as well as with Hungary's direct neighbour, Austria.

#### **All.d Application for EU assistance programmes and cooperation partners**

Surveyed organisations/institutions who have already applied for project support within the scope of EU assistance programmes have done so mostly via the PHARE and ACCESS programmes. While the PHARE programme<sup>52</sup> focuses on helping candidate countries prepare for accession (including assumption of the *acquis communautaire*) and on strengthening economic and social cohesion – with so-called twinning projects involving the help of national, multi-national and cross-border programmes as well as with community initiatives and project financing –, the ACCESS programme concentrates on providing support for civil society players and marginal social groups. It is accessible exclusively to non-profit organisations and to NGOs. There are fewer applications for other programmes, such as LEONARDO DA VINCI, SOCRATES, EQUAL and YOUTH (of Europe). As shown in the previous section, there is a certain correlation between the existence of cooperation structures and joint applications under EU assistance programmes. This is not always the case, however, and some of the surveyed organisations/institutions name other partners such as the relevant national government ministries and other social NGOs.<sup>53</sup>

#### **All.e Cooperation: areas of need**

Nearly all of the surveyed organisations/institutions said that they were interested in more intensive cooperation with German providers of social services. Individual needs focused on two different levels: surveyed providers either wish to expand cooperation in areas of social work – the areas named include child and youth welfare, help for drug abusers, families, the elderly, the disabled, the homeless, the unemployed, etc. – or respondents defined concrete areas of desired cooperation (mostly parallel to the suggested answers of question 20). The following needs were expressed (in order of frequency):

1. exchange of professional information and experience
2. training/education/qualification
3. exchange of specialised knowledge/know-how
4. personnel exchanges
5. EU funding/applications
6. financing

On the whole, these priorities resemble the needs expressed in reply to question 20 of the survey.

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<sup>52</sup> Accession partnerships involving public authorities and institutions.

<sup>53</sup> Although they confirm that application for EU funds was submitted with the help of cooperation partners, some of the surveyed organisations/institutions give no further information about the partners involved.

## Impressum

Die vorliegende Publikation erscheint in der **Reihe der vom Observatorium für die Entwicklung der sozialen Dienste in Europa veröffentlichten Arbeitspapiere**. Das Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, D – 11018 Berlin, fördert das Observatorium als Projekt. Träger sind der Deutsche Verein für öffentliche und private Fürsorge e.V. und das Institut für Sozialarbeit und Sozialpädagogik e.V..

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