

## **EUDA organized a seminar in Prague about cooperation of social enterprises and local authorities**

On July, 16th 2014 under the project “Current trends and social innovations in long-term and direct care” financed from the European Social Fund, the European Development Agency organized a disseminating seminar on the topic of “Social enterprises and their benefits for the local community: cooperation with local authorities”.

The seminar was held in Prague in the House of National Minorities in Prague 2, catering for the event was provided by social enterprise called Bílá vrána. The seminar was attended by representatives of social enterprises and representatives of local authorities. The goal was to inform the participants about experiences of social enterprises in other regions, specifically about the possibilities of cooperation and ways of communication with local authorities. The seminar further discussed new ways of assigning public tenders.

The seminar was opened by the project coordinator Kateřina Svobodová who introduced the program and the whole project to the participants. After the introduction, the lecture by Vendula Gojová from the Faculty of Social Studies from Ostrava university followed. The lecture was in the form of two workshops, where the participants of the seminar had the possibility to exchange their opinions and experience in the communication between the local authorities and social enterprises. Ms. Gojová also introduced the participants the current point of view of the society on social enterprises and the benefits of the community work to the society. Simultaneously she highlighted the importance of providing support to the local economy where socially endangered people can find their place on the job market as the resources gained from the state are not enough to cover all social expenses of the regions.

After the coffee break Jitka Mertlíková from the NGO Trutnovská zeleň talked about her personal experiences with social enterprise providing employment to disadvantaged people and about positive impact of similar enterprises on the environment. She highlighted the necessity of cooperation of social enterprises and local authorities and also the necessity of donating such enterprises because disadvantaged people are not capable of delivering such work outputs as non-disadvantaged people. After that, Martin Synkule from European Development Agency introduced the participants the possibilities of gaining external grants and establishing international cooperation and Kateřina Svobodová mentioned project experience of EUDA with Scottish program called Reshaping Care for Older People. The program motivated seniors to remain in their homes and not to leave to institutional facilities. Moreover, the program has simultaneously created jobs for young people by providing them job offers in the program. The program, initially subsidized by local



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government, has proven successful and is now completely independent providing paid services to the older people.

After the lunch break Petra Kubálková from the association cats2cats started another seminar section. Her contribution was devoted to microfinancing or small loans being provided especially to small entrepreneurs. Czech Republic is the only country in EU where these loans are not provided, yet all over the Europe it is possible to acquire such loans up to 25 000 EUR. The main benefit of this service is the economical responsibility – it is better for the people to start their own business than to be on unemployment benefits.

Kateřina Hrozová from the NGO Rozlet spoke about her personal experiences of the social enterprise Café Bazaar which employs socially disadvantaged people and about her experiences with getting the support from Prague 2 and other local authorities. She focused especially on donations and job opportunities.

The last section was devoted to the public tenders and their socially beneficial character. Alena Zieglerová from the Agency for Social Integration focused on the definition of such tenders and provided the participants of the seminar with the information about possible ways of proclamation of such tenders. The main idea is that the tender must include an adjustment, so called social clause - the obligation of a company to employ at least 10% of long-term unemployed people for the duration of the demanded contract. Moreover, she also talked about the necessity of defining social enterprises in Czech legislation and about the prepared law which is about to be discussed in the parliament next year.

Pavla Brožková from the department of regional development and planning from the city of Kolín built on the contribution of Ms. Zieglerová and presented the experience of her city with this kind of public tenders. The city of Kolín has successfully implemented the public tenders and is about to proclaim more of them in the future.

The participants of the seminar had the opportunity to discuss with each other the concept of social entrepreneurship, its advantages and disadvantages and the legislative conditions in the Czech Republic. Participants also had the opportunity to compare current Czech practice with the situation abroad and acquire the international experience.