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**Cities for Active Inclusion**

## The active inclusion of young people: Brno

**EUROCITIES NETWORK  
OF LOCAL AUTHORITY  
OBSERVATORIES ON  
ACTIVE INCLUSION**

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### **CITIES FOR ACTIVE INCLUSION**

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The EUROCITIES Network of Local Authority Observatories on Active Inclusion (EUROCITIES-NLAO) is a dynamic network of nine European cities - Birmingham, Bologna, Brno, Copenhagen, Krakow, Lille Métropole - Roubaix, Rotterdam, Sofia and Stockholm - each with a local authority observatory (LAO) within its administration.

Their aim is to share information, promote mutual learning and carry out research on the implementation of active inclusion strategies at the local level. The nine observatories are coordinated by EUROCITIES, the network of major cities in Europe, and supported through a partnership with the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion).

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 City context

The active inclusion of young people in the Czech Republic is a very broad concept. Young people aged 15-24 represent an important group of citizens that is very varied, with various requirements and needs. In the Czech Republic, the active inclusion of youth focuses specifically on young people who are disadvantaged in some way, for example, in terms of their physical abilities, economic situation, social issues, ethnic origin, or other factors.

The active inclusion of youth therefore requires a multidisciplinary approach. This includes key services such as education, healthcare and active or passive employment policies, as well as social benefits, social services and services related to living and housing. It also includes banking services such as special accounts and special types of loans, as well as leisure activities. Active inclusion is characterised by the importance of preventing social pathologies: this should start very early in childhood, and should include improving the financial literacy of young people to prevent them getting into debt.

In the Czech Republic, these services are covered by various different state bodies and authorities as well as NGOs and private organisations.

The Czech Republic has a population of some 11.7 million, and the city of Brno is the country's second largest city. Brno has some 400,000 inhabitants and is the capital of the South Moravian Region. In Brno, primary schools, kindergartens and other educational facilities that have been established by the municipality are run by the city's Department of Education, Youth and Sports<sup>1</sup>. This Department sets out the strategies for the development of the educational system, including sports and physical education, in co-operation with many educational institutions and NGOs. These include some 200 NGOs that provide leisure activities for children and young people in Brno.

Secondary schools in Brno that are within the public educational system are run by the Regional Authority, which also funds the municipal educational facilities. There are also private educational organisations, including private secondary schools and various private educational agencies<sup>2</sup>.

The universities in Brno are either run by the state or they are private institutions where studies are paid for.

Several other departments of the Brno Municipal Authority also participate in active youth inclusion policies. These include the Department of Social Care, which organises the distribution of social benefits and social services, the Department of Health, the Housing Department, the Department of Local Planning and Development, and the Office of Municipal Strategy.

Schemes for the active inclusion of youth that focus mainly on education and employment are mostly funded from public resources. However, in the past few years, these have also received additional funding from the EU.

Support for social inclusion is within the scope of the European Social Fund's (ESF) Human Resources and Employment programme and its Education for Competitiveness programme. The

<sup>1</sup> The city of Brno runs 66 elementary schools.

<sup>2</sup> There are 63 secondary schools in Brno (including music academies), of which 20 are run by private organisations, four by churches, and one by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports.



ESF Human Resources and Employment programme focuses on a number of related aspects: the reduction of unemployment through active labour market policy; vocational training; the re-integration of socially excluded citizens into society; increasing the quality of public services; and international co-operation in these areas<sup>3</sup>. The ESF's Education for Competitiveness programme focuses on supporting all forms of education, including lifelong education.

Under the Czech Republic's Employment Act<sup>4</sup>, active and passive employment policy programmes are implemented by the national Employment Authority and its regional branches. Employment policy in Brno is thus carried out mainly by the regional branch of the national Employment Authority and is financed from the national budget. For the last ten years, it has also been financed through the ESF<sup>5</sup>.

Normally, the Brno municipality is not involved in implementing general employment programmes: instead, the municipality participates in the success of the labour market by supporting businesses in the creation of work opportunities<sup>6</sup>. The municipality also focuses increasingly on youth social inclusion schemes, through the development of educational services and social and health services for young people, and by working with NGOs that successfully implement youth inclusion projects financed by the European Social Fund (ESF).

## 1.2 Employment in Brno

The most important way to promote the active inclusion of youth, is to ensure they find an appropriate job. This also applies to other socially excluded groups. The situation in Brno's labour market is influenced by many factors. Brno has a relatively large potential labour force; and thanks to a high quality network of secondary schools and universities<sup>7</sup> there is a large qualified workforce, as well as an opportunity to capitalise on the extensive science and research potential of the city. The labour market also benefits from the presence of large and well-equipped industrial development zones in the city.

However, there are a number of labour market weaknesses. For example, the city has an adverse social demographic structure, with a relatively large proportion of citizens over 60, and a relatively smaller group of citizens under 15 years, compared with the average for the Czech Republic as a whole. In addition, there has been insufficient development of a lifelong education system, there is insufficient utilisation of flexible forms of working, and there is a high concentration of people at risk of social exclusion.

Employment in Brno is distributed across many different disciplines, none of which dominate the labour market. The biggest employers in the city are mainly involved in the tertiary services sector, such as hospitals, universities, and transportation. A high number of workers are employed in public services such as the local authority, law courts, police, healthcare, education, and social services<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> The EU funds for the ESF Human Resources and Employment programme in the Czech Republic have provided a total of €1.84 billion for the programming period 2007-2013, which represents approximately 6.8% of total EU funds for the Czech Republic. Czech public funding should increase the financing of this programme by €0.32 billion.

<sup>4</sup> Act No 435/2004 Coll. on Employment.

<sup>5</sup> ESF funding supports projects organised by the regional branch of the Employment Authority in Brno: e.g. 'Back to the labour market in the South Moravian Region', 'Return of parents to the labour market in the South Moravian Region', 'Active fifties in the South Moravian Region', 'A bridge to education in the South Moravian Region', and 'The key to independence'.

<sup>6</sup> According to the Employment Act, companies must report the number of vacancies to the Employment Authority.

<sup>7</sup> There are five public city universities and one state university with a total of 34 faculties and almost 84,000 students in full-time study; there are also seven private universities with over 5,700 students.

<sup>8</sup> See Report on the labour market situation in the City of Brno district in 2010.



As a result of the global economic crises, unemployment in the city of Brno increased from 5.8% in 2008 to 8.2% in 2009. However, in the following year, the unemployment rate stabilised somewhat<sup>9</sup>, only growing to 8.6% in 2010. During that year, 2010, Brno's Employment Authority figures show that 11.5% of unemployed people were registered with a physical disability: this represents a total of 2,270 people, 101 of whom were aged under 30 years<sup>10</sup>.

### 1.3 Youth unemployment in Brno

For 2010, unemployment data by age group show that young people among 20 to 29 year olds represented almost one quarter (24.6%) of the overall number of unemployed. This group of young unemployed people consists mainly of three sub-groups: those with low or no qualifications; school leavers; and young people with physical disabilities.

In terms of youth unemployment, the regional Employment Authority mainly monitors unemployment for school leavers and teenagers in Brno.

At the end of 2010, there were only 887 unemployed school leavers and teenagers applying for jobs, just 17 more than the previous year. This represented only 4.5% of the total job applicants in Brno. This figure was below the average regional and national rates for unemployed school leavers and teenagers, which were both around 6%.

On a long-term basis, the largest group of unemployed school leavers and teenagers in Brno is represented by high school graduates: pupils leaving school aged 18 or 19 years old. At the end of September 2010, there were 328 people in this group: 44% of the total unemployed school leavers and teenagers. On the other hand, the smallest group is represented by school leavers with just a basic elementary education (21.7%): this group of young people has the most difficulty of all the groups in finding a job. However, in 2010 the number of job vacancies available for this group increased to 170: an 80.9% increase on the previous year. Therefore, the number of school leaver applicants per job vacancy improved from 9.3 in 2009, to 5.2 in 2010.

In general, the Employment Authority reports show that for many years, school leavers and teenagers have not been among the difficult-to-place groups in Brno's labour market. A major contributing factor is the practical work experience that is organised for school leavers, and which is financed through the national Active Employment Policy and also from EU funds<sup>11</sup>. As a result of taking part in this type of work experience, school leavers gain valuable experience which makes it easier for them to find a job.

In Brno, the low numbers of school leavers without a job is also the result of the increasing number of corporations in the city that are now specialising in providing strategic services. They often recruit applicants with no practical experience, to work in administrative roles or as phone operators or programmers, as long as they have relevant language skills<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> The data on unemployment in Brno is collected, registered and processed by the Brno's regional branch of the Employment Authority of the Czech Republic, which issues regular reports about the labour market situation in the City of Brno.

<sup>10</sup> See Report on the labour market situation in the City of Brno district in 2010.

<sup>11</sup> For instance, ESF supports projects 'Education-practice-education' and 'From practice to perspective career', which are designated for grammar school and university graduates.

<sup>12</sup> See Report on the situation on the labour market in the City of Brno district in 2010.



## 2. Programmes for the active inclusion of young people

### 2.1 Young people with disabilities and with social disadvantages

Municipal programmes for the active inclusion of young people focus mainly on two key groups: firstly, young people who are socially disadvantaged, in particular, young Romani people and young people from socially underprivileged families; and secondly, young people with disabilities. Both groups are varied and diverse; and both are at risk of unemployment and social exclusion, which in turn can lead to further problems of social disadvantage and disability.

The rest of this report focuses on young people who are at risk of social exclusion due to disabilities. The report considers the active inclusion of these young people through employment policies and through the development of high quality social services.

### 2.2 Children and young people with disabilities

Children and young people with different types of disability form a heterogeneous group, where people with different types and degrees of disability have varying needs and requirements. For the purpose of planning social services for various target groups, Brno differentiates between three groups:

- people with a physical disability such as people who are sight-affected and hearing-affected;
- people with a mental disability such as autism; and
- people with a mental illness.

This differentiation is just indicative: each group is internally sub-divided by the type and degree of disability. The groups can also, of course, be sub-divided by age, as in different stages of life a disabled person may have different specific needs for basic care as well as for other active inclusion measures such as social care, health care, education, access to different locations, and employment.

According to expert estimates, approximately 10% of the population in Brno has some type of physical disability. The population of Brno is around 400,000 people. Therefore the number of physically disabled people in Brno is likely to be around 40,000 people. Furthermore, a study carried out by Jitka Navrátilová of Masaryk University's Faculty of Social Studies, which also focused on disabled people in Brno, estimates that 50,000 people in the city have a disability: about a quarter of these are people with mental illness, and another quarter are people with physical disability, while the remaining half have a mental disability<sup>13</sup>. This estimate, however, is really just indicative. In addition, there are more and more people with a combination of different types of physical and mental disabilities.

<sup>13</sup> See Jitka Navrátilová: Physically disabled people and their situation in Brno, FSS MU, Brno 2000, baseline study for Concept of social support development in the City of Brno for the period of 2001-2004.



## 2.3 Education of children and teenagers with physical or mental disabilities

In the sphere of education, the priorities for Brno include the provision of equal access to education regardless of the type of disadvantage: whether it is health-related, disability-related, economic, social, ethnic, or gender-related. Ensuring equal access to education also covers the prevention of social and health-related problems, referred to as socially pathological phenomena, in schools. It also includes the care of children and young people in their leisure time, especially to support hobbies or sports training using school facilities<sup>14</sup>.

One of the means of providing equal access to education is inclusive education. This supports pupils with special educational needs: those who have physical and mental disabilities, health disabilities, or social disadvantages<sup>15</sup>. In the Czech Republic, a National Action Plan for Inclusive Education was set up for the period 2010-2013. The main aim is to increase the degree of inclusiveness in the Czech educational system, as well as increasing preventive action against social exclusion, both of individuals and of entire social groups<sup>16</sup>.

In the case of children and teenagers with disabilities, inclusive special education is arranged in several ways<sup>17</sup>. In mainstream schools, integration is achieved individually, by including physically and mentally disabled pupils in classes. These pupils are educated in line with their individual study plans. They may also be educated through group integration. This may involve education in specially established classes for disabled pupils; education at schools established specifically for pupils with special educational needs; or a combination of both these methods<sup>18</sup>.

The process of integration in mainstream schools is becoming more and more dynamic, and the demand for this type of inclusion is increasing. The South Moravian Region and the city of Brno both support the integration of all physically and mentally disabled pupils into mainstream schools, as long as teachers with the right qualifications and professional competences are provided i.e. specialist pedagogues who are able to educate these pupils at mainstream schools<sup>19</sup>.

The offer of educational facilities for children and teenagers with physical and mental disabilities is relatively widespread in Brno. In addition to the possibility of attending a mainstream school, there are eight special schools for children and teenagers with different physical and mental disabilities. These schools for children with special educational needs include kindergartens as well as elementary and secondary schools.

Students with physical and mental disabilities are also supported by the universities. For example, at Brno's Masaryk University, the Teiresias centre offers help to students with special educational needs. This centre aims to make sure that study courses accredited by the university are accessible to all students with a hearing impairment, a sight impairment, a mobility disability or specific learning disabilities.

<sup>14</sup> See Long-term concept of education and the educational system JMK 2008.

<sup>15</sup> Health disadvantages include long-term disease, or physical debilitation. Social disadvantages may include a family environment with low socio-economic status; status as an asylum seeker or refugee; or the mandated institutional upbringing of a child.

<sup>16</sup> See the proposal for the National action plan of inclusive education for 2010-2013, which was developed by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports: this material has not passed the approval procedure yet.

<sup>17</sup> See Act No 561/2004 Coll. In pre-school, elementary, grammar, higher, and other education, under this Act pupils with physical disabilities are entitled to receive education where the content and form of methods conforms to their needs and possibilities.

<sup>18</sup> The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports runs a development programme supporting the equipping of schools with compensatory and rehabilitation aids to enhance their approach to the education of pupils with physical, mental, sight, and hearing impairment, speech disorders, autism, multiple disorders, and specific learning disorders at elementary schools and special elementary schools.

<sup>19</sup> See Long-term plan for education and for the development of the educational system JMK 2008.



## 2.4 Employment of young people with disabilities

Young graduates with health disabilities can seek assistance and information from the employment authorities and the municipal authorities, as well as from NGOs that provide advice and social services to disabled people.

The employment of disabled people in the Czech Republic is relatively well addressed by legislation. The Employment Act defines the obligations of employers to employ disabled people and to provide appropriate conditions for them<sup>20</sup>. Under this Act, the employment authorities hold extensive responsibilities in terms of ensuring employment for disabled people and are obliged to seek work opportunities for disabled people in the labour market.

One of the most important means of supporting employment for disabled people is the active employment policy, carried out by Brno's regional branch of the national Employment Authority. Their tools include support for retraining; the setting up of training centres; the creation of socially beneficial jobs such as community service jobs; and supporting protected workshops and workplaces.

In the case of socially beneficial jobs, the aim is to support those applicants with multiple disadvantages, such as disabilities, adverse living conditions, low or no qualifications, and being in a higher age group. The Employment Authority supports employers who accept job applicants who would otherwise be unable to secure employment, and where a financial incentive is necessary in order for an employer to allocate a job to the person, or to create a job for them<sup>21</sup>. However, it is very difficult to identify young people in the 15 to 24 year age group within the employment authority's statistics.

NGOs that are specialised in providing services and assistance to disabled citizens also run programmes and projects for employing disabled people. These NGOs work with the national employment authority as well as with Brno's municipal authorities. The city supports these NGOs financially, under its grant funding schemes, and also collaborates in the process of community social services planning. In addition, some NGOs run programmes that are supported by the European Social Fund (ESF).

<sup>20</sup> The Employment Act sets out the obligation for employers with more than 25 employees to employ at least 4% of disabled people in the total number of workers. If this obligation is not met, the employer has to either buy products and services in a defined volume from employers employing more than 50% of disabled people, or to make a compulsory payment to the national budget. Employers with less than 25 employees do not have this obligation, but are motivated to employ disabled people through tax discounts and other benefits.

<sup>21</sup> A total of 415 applicants were placed in socially beneficial positions in Brno in 2010. A total of €10.2 million (245 million CZK) was spent on supporting employers predominantly employing disabled people, which was €1.2m (29.9 m) more than in the previous year.



### 3. Key challenges

In Brno, there are relatively good educational services for disabled children and young people. However, disabled young people, together with their parents, face the biggest challenge after they complete their education. At the moment, when disabled young graduates leave school or university and enter normal adult life, they often face totally new situations that they are not familiar with, having come from the protected environment of school. After graduating they have to cope with reality: many want a job, so that they can become at least partially independent; they may also need to find a GP and perhaps other specialists, near their home. Some of them wish to find their own flat and choose their own leisure activities; and some need special types of social services and other support.

The opportunities for employing disabled young people have also been discussed by Brno's social services community planning steering groups. Most of the disabled young service users in these steering groups, together with their parents, believe that there are very few suitable work opportunities for disabled young people in Brno. However, for disabled young people, the opportunity to be independent and to integrate into normal society is very important. This is also confirmed by research into the needs of social service users in Brno. Almost all the target sub-groups from among people with health disabilities reported difficulties related to the lack of work opportunities, and the impossibility of finding a job in the protected labour market<sup>22</sup>.

As mentioned earlier, active employment policy in the Czech Republic is implemented by the national employment authorities and is financed from the national budget. Active employment tools are designated mainly for groups of job applicants who are disadvantaged in the labour market. A challenge for the future is how to achieve closer contact between Brno's municipal authorities and Brno's regional branch of the national Employment Authority, to maximise the impact of active employment schemes.

For instance, a study on unemployment in Brno, which was one of the baseline documents for setting up the Concept of Social Support in Brno for 2001-2004, highlighted the absence of a comprehensive local labour market policy for the city. The municipality should play a much more active role in this area, as it controls the public tender process for awarding municipal contracts, and it is also an important employer itself. The municipality therefore has the appropriate tools to formulate a suitable strategy for local employment policy and its co-ordination<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> See Analysis of the needs of social service users in Brno, Augur Consulting s.r.o., December 2010.

<sup>23</sup> See Tomáš Sirovátka: Labour market, unemployed, and socially disadvantaged in Brno, FSS MU, Brno 2000, baseline study for the Concept of developing social assistance in Brno for the period of 2001-2004.



## 4. Good practice examples

There are many municipal and non-governmental organisations providing social services for the active inclusion of young disabled citizens in Brno. The municipal organisations focus more on providing residential facilities for disabled young people, while NGOs specialise more in providing advice to various target groups and also in offering social services that the municipality does not provide.

**In terms of employing disabled young people and other disabled citizens, NGOs in Brno offer** protected workshops, social rehabilitation, social therapeutic workshops, protected housing, support for independent living, interpreting services for deaf people, and active social inclusion services for people with health disabilities.

NGOs also run a supported education agency, and various advice sessions for the disabled. The municipality regularly supports these organisations from the city budget, and also collaborates with them in community social services development and planning<sup>24</sup>. The community planning steering groups meet in order to exchange experience and good practice examples. Some NGOs implement schemes that are supported by the ESF through its Human Resources and Employment programmes and its Education for Competitiveness programmes<sup>25</sup>.

Some examples of good practice are listed below:

### AGAPO

AGAPO is a not-for-profit civic association that runs a supported employment agency in Brno. The aim is to assist disabled people and socially disadvantaged people in their efforts to find work in Brno and in the nearby area, in order to increase their independence and allow them to live a normal life.

As part of its service, AGAPO regularly holds free Job Clubs. These provide free motivating and educational courses for disabled people and socially disadvantaged people. Job applicants learn how to seek job offers; how to apply to job advertisements including how to write the accompanying letter; how to create an effective CV; how to communicate with employers; and many other practical tips. The course also covers legal aspects and obligations related to employment.

Other AGAPO programmes include transition schemes that help pupils move from school to work. These are focused on young people with disabilities who attend special schools. The aim is to allow the pupils and students to try working in a normal work environment. This helps them to gain the necessary social and work skills, to enhance their independence, and to get ready for a job after leaving school. The AGAPO staff select suitable positions for practical work experience training. They then help their clients to negotiate the conditions at the workplace, and also help them acquire work skills and social skills directly from their new job. This service is provided to each client for two years.

<sup>24</sup> See report made for LAO project Active Inclusion Programmes focussing on the 'Quality of Social Services in Brno'. Available from [www.brno.cz/sprava-mesta/magistrat-mesta-brna/usek-socialne-kulturni/odbor-socialni-pece/](http://www.brno.cz/sprava-mesta/magistrat-mesta-brna/usek-socialne-kulturni/odbor-socialni-pece/).

<sup>25</sup> For example: the Union of the Deaf in Brno runs a project financed by the ESF called 'Minimisation of communication barriers when entering the labour market'; the organisation for sight-impaired people, Tyflocentrum, runs a project called 'How to be successful in the labour market'; and the organisation for autistic people, Apla, runs a project called 'Employing people with autism'.



Other programmes of supported employment cover situations where co-workers offer support and assistance directly in the workplace. A necessary part of the AGAPO association's activities is basic social counselling and social rehabilitation, aimed at gaining the necessary skills and training of behaviour patterns, so that clients feel more confident in different situations in everyday life.

For employers, the AGAPO association offers consulting services related to employing disadvantaged people; assistance during the training and induction of new employees according to the employer's specific requirements; and work assistance that provides support directly at the workplace if the situation requires it. All these services are provided free of charge to both the clients and the employers.

The AGAPO civic association collaborates with the City of Brno under the process of community planning of social services. It also works with the regional branch of the employment authority, the employers in the region, and the regional economic chamber of South Moravia, as well as with Brno's universities, specifically the Pedagogical Faculty of Masaryk University. The City of Brno has provided financial support for AGAPO in recent years. However, currently the AGAPO programmes are financed from the European Social Fund, through the Human Resources and Employment programme and the national budget of the Czech Republic, under the project entitled: Provision of selected social services in the South Moravian region.

### Café Práh

The Práh civic association supports people from Brno and the surrounding area who have chronic psychiatric illnesses in their efforts to live normal life. The Práh association provides social services such as social rehabilitation, social therapeutic workshops, protected housing, and support for independent living. Práh also runs protected workshops, and offers various leisure activities.

An interesting Práh project is the training initiative, Café Práh, which offers work therapy to clients in conditions that mimic the free labour market. It offers training positions for the professions of waiter/waitress, cook, and cleaner. In total, the capacity is eight training positions. Clients are helped by three assistants who are employees of the association. The aim is to actively support mentally disabled people from Brno and nearby, while they improve or learn basic working skills and routines to meet their individual needs. The project supports their independence. This in turn can help them find a protected job or a job on the open labour market, and thus helps them to live a normal life.

Café Práh is a non-smoking café with reserved spaces for children; for business meetings with internet connection; and for a small shop selling the products of protected workshops. The café also runs an art gallery where previews are held, as well as other cultural events. The fact that the café is open to the public also helps in mitigating existing prejudices and making a positive impact on the views of society towards people with a mental illness.

The Café Práh project was launched thanks to financing from EU funds, through the Common Regional Programme. Café Práh has cooperated with several local organisations, including the Brno municipality, the psychiatric hospital, the employment authority, and other NGOs.

When EU funding for the project ended, at the end of the first Common Regional Programme period, Café Práh was supported with various resources, including its own financial reserves and also public funding from national, regional and municipal budgets. Currently, under the



second Common Regional Programme period, the Café is also being supported from ESF funds, through the Human Resources and Employment programme, and also through the national Czech Republic budget, under the project entitled: Provision of selected social services in the South Moravian region. The municipal social care department, as well as other departments of the municipal authority, use the services of Café Práh when organising events. Various NGOs and other organisations also use the Café, by renting the café spaces and using the café's catering services, which are of a very good quality.

### Socio information centre and website

Research shows<sup>26</sup> that there is still an insufficient level of knowledge among young disabled people and their parents about the possibilities of employment after leaving school, or about the availability of other active social inclusion services. In this respect an important achievement has been the establishment of the Socio information centre by the Brno Municipal Authority, as well as the launching of a website that covers all the social care services in Brno<sup>27</sup>. This website also provides links to the websites of other organisations: mainly NGOs that provide social services in Brno. For example, a very well-structured and extensive website is that of the Wheelchair League in Brno: this is an NGO with a long tradition of providing social services to disabled people and defending their rights<sup>28</sup>.

## 5. Plans for the future

In the current conditions, when public expenditure is restricted due to the financial crisis, it is difficult to forecast future developments. At the moment a substantial reorganisation is taking place across the state authorities in the Czech Republic, and social service reforms are being planned, ready to be presented to Parliament. Once these reforms have been put in place, the system of financial benefits for people in material distress will be unified, along with the state social support benefits for families with children, and benefits for people with health disabilities. Disabled people, in particular, are worried about these changes and have protested against them, despite repeated assurances from the government that the money available for disability benefits will not change.

In any case, the provision of quality services for disabled people remains the task of the community where disabled people live. The main priority of the City of Brno is to maintain and improve the existing varied network of social services for disabled citizens, including young people with disabilities, in accordance with Brno's Community Plan of Social Services for 2010-2013.

In addition, a key priority for the city is to continue to support activities that remove the barriers to social inclusion for disabled people, such as communication, information, or architectural barriers<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> See Analysis of the needs of social service users in Brno, Augur Consulting s.r.o., December 2010.

<sup>27</sup> [www.socialnipecce.brno.cz](http://www.socialnipecce.brno.cz).

<sup>28</sup> [www.ligavozic.cz](http://www.ligavozic.cz).

<sup>29</sup> See Community Plan of Social Services in Brno for the period 2010-2013, Brno 2009.