

DELEGATION OF „THE ALLIANCE“ MEETS THE COMMISSIONER FOR EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MR. VLADIMIR ŠPIDLA

On the 15th of June "The Alliance" met Commissioner Špidla on the premises of the European Parliament in Strasbourg to discuss

- problems of coherence of the European Funds in regard to migration and asylum
- problems of funding the planned conference on changing patterns of migration in September 2007

The EU has included in the EQUAL programme the target group asylum seekers. The development partnerships from the Netherlands, Czech Republic and Germany have collected experience with qualifying asylum seekers, refugees and migrants for the labour market in the EU or in their country of origin. EQUAL is planned to be a programme to identify and test new, innovative approaches for easing access to the labour market for discriminated groups of persons. "The Alliance" expressed their concern regarding the following topics:



- Asylum seekers have to be oriented and trained under a double perspective – either a future in an EU country, if their asylum request is granted, or a future in their country of origin, in case they are rejected and have to return.
- This double perspective requires activities within the EU and in/or with countries of origin. This is considerably hampered because EQUAL funds can not be used for activities outside the EU.
- One of the many results of EQUAL experiences is an insight that a sustainable return of rejected asylum seekers or others who want to return, requires what is called a CCM approach: the management of individual cases by a chain of interrelated institutions in the EU and the countries of origin.
- The CCM approach can provide different services to an individual in the EU such as orientation to the conditions of the labour market, training, assisting in job mediation or setting up one's own business. It can be by channelling the person to institutions in the country of origin to combine these services with additional services in the country of origin like familiarity with the labour market, assistance in job mediation, providing work place oriented training, seminars and funds for self-employment.



- The management of the CCM approach and the implementation of the different activities are cross-cutting in different ways:
 - Ministerial mandates: On the European Level the DG Justice, Freedom and Security as well as DG Employment, Social Affairs and DG Development and Humanitarian Aid have mandates and offer special funds. The same is true on the national or regional levels of the national member states of the EU and also in the countries of origin
 - **Funding:** The different parties named above have funds at their disposal which could be used for the target group, **but they are not coherent to follow different time rules and different administrative regulations.**
- If the CCM approach should be tested as a pilot project, to see if this can be the permanent structure to ease the back flow of refugees and migrants to the countries of origin, administrative adjustments are required.

In the second phase of the meeting "The Alliance" delegation pointed out its problems regarding the financing of the conference in September 2007. In phase I of EQUAL the Commission could use funds for dissemination and mainstreaming activities. At the end of that phase it was decided, that in phase II only governments of member states could make a request for these funds. The initiative of "The Alliance" concerning the conference has been welcomed by many, but up to now no national government has accepted the work load connected to such a request. They have either other priorities and the theme migration and asylum does not belong to these priorities or they do not have the means to shoulder the work load connected with such a request.

Commissioner Špidla asked the delegation to prepare memos on the two subjects, which will allow him to see what changes are required and what could be done to improve the situation.