

European Population Forum 2004
Statement by Dagmar Ratajová
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
of the Czech Republic
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Dear Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my contribution to the discussion on the theme of international migration I would like to inform you briefly about the Pilot Project of the Active Selection of Qualified Foreign Workers approved by the Czech Government in summer 2002 (Government Decision No. 720 of July 10, 2002) and launched a year later in summer 2003.

The aim of the project is to enable qualified foreign workers to settle and work in the Czech Republic and to integrate them fully into society. The project is the first pilot part of the new Czech approach towards an active migration policy and the first such project among the Central and Eastern European countries.

The active control of migration is not a new idea, however it has only been actively applied by a few states. The objective of the Czech concept is to change over from the passive approach to the existing migration to the active management of one of the segments of the economically motivated migration. Its aim is not to solve demands of labour force through labour migration based on short-term employments, but to attract qualified immigrants and their families to reside in the country. These persons – thanks to their qualification, further knowledge (e.g. knowledge of the Czech language) and motivation – are supposed to get qualified jobs of a permanent character, and their integration into the Czech society seems to be relatively smooth.

The launched project is of a pilot nature, especially in its first year of implementation when the set-up of a new system will be tested on a small number and range of people. Foreigners of three target countries, namely Bulgaria, Croatia and Kazakhstan, working in certain professions and meeting the specific needs of the labour market in the Czech Republic, are admitted to enter the project. The project was started with a quota of only 300 experts from the above-mentioned countries for 2003. 150 persons were allowed to apply in the CR and 150 persons in Sofia, Zagreb and Alma-Ata. Up to now, 114 people from the above-mentioned countries have been selected in two selective procedures from 126 applicants, who submitted their applications at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic. The third selective procedure is planned in early March 2004. The quota for the second year will be higher, and the ratio for groups entering from the CR territory and abroad will result from the evaluation of the implementation of the project during the first year.

After the so-called trial period lasting two and a half years (which is a further phase of the selective procedure), selected applicants who will successfully integrate themselves into the Czech society will be allowed to apply for a permanent residence permit (it should be mentioned here that the normal procedure of getting permanent residence permit in the Czech Republic lasts ten years).

The five-year pilot project is viewed as a project that will be regularly evaluated and re-evaluated so that the state administration is perfectly prepared for the future expansion of the policy implementation. The expansion will be considered in terms of the number of states the nationals of which will be able to enter the preferential selective procedure, and of other professions (e.g. business persons).

The more detailed information on the project can be found at www.mpsv.cz.