

Slovak Republic
Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
Managing Authority of the EQUAL Community Initiative in the Slovak Republic

Community Initiative Programme

EQUAL

Bratislava
April 2004

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1. Introduction

1.1 EQUAL Community Initiative

The European EQUAL Community Initiative, operating within the framework of European Employment Strategy forms one of Community's initiatives focusing on elimination and alleviation of all forms of discrimination and inequality on the labour market. Moreover, it provides the opportunity for development, verification and application of new integrated approaches, the results of which are to be incorporated into employment and inclusion policy formation of the Slovak Republic.

As part of the pre-accession negotiations, the Slovak Republic joined the EQUAL Community Initiative. Based on the Slovak Government's Resolution 1030/2002 the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family was delegated the task of operating as the Managing Authority of the EQUAL Community Initiative in the Slovak Republic.

The EQUAL Community Initiative complements the preceding ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT Community Initiatives. In line with the EC Council Regulation 1260/1999, it is being implemented in the 2000 – 2006 programme period. The contents of the EQUAL Community Initiative focuses on assistance provided to activities supporting the European Employment Strategy.

Its main objective is to create conditions and provide the opportunity for seeking, testing and applying new innovative approaches in resolving problems occurring while combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities on labour market. As part of this Initiative, all Member States have agreed on common thematic fields, on which they wish to cooperate, and to learn from one another. The Commission, in the Guidelines for EQUAL, also formulated principles, acceptance of which forms one of the basic conditions for participation in solutions within the EQUAL Community Initiative.

Co-operation between key stakeholders in inclusive labour market policies and actions forms the basis for the EQUAL Community Initiative establishing so called Development Partnerships. A wide range of institutions may join a Development Partnership such as: state and public sector organizations, local governments, business entities, NGOs, social partners, employers, training establishments, etc. Development partnerships will agree a joint working strategy to develop, test and validate innovative approaches while tackling issues of discrimination and inequality in the area of focus. The EQUAL Community Initiative will fund activities implemented by these strategic partnerships. The EQUAL partnerships will operate within the thematic fields and will be called Development Partnerships (DPs). They will bring together interested actors, committed to, or concerned with inclusive employment policies and practice, with relevant competence, who will cooperate to develop an integrated approach to multi – dimensional problems, to tackle problems linked to discrimination, inequalities or exclusion. The partners will work together to identify the factors leading to inequality and discrimination in connection with the labour market, within their chosen thematic field/s. They will pool their efforts and resources in pursuit of innovation solutions to jointly defined problems and common goals. DPs must have a core of partners from the outset. They should also ensure that additional relevant actors can become involved during the life of the partnership. At the point of application for EQUAL Community Initiative funding, each DP must have arrangements for ensuring that the administrative and financial responsibilities are handled by an organization which have the capacity to manage and account for public funding.

The EQUAL Community Initiative will test innovative approaches to policy development and delivery in the Slovak Republic. These may be completely new approaches, or the transfer of elements from elsewhere, which increase the effectiveness of policy delivery. There are 3 types of innovation:

- 1) process-oriented innovations will cover the development of new methods, tools or approaches as well as the improvement of existing methods
- 2) goal-oriented innovations will centre around the formulation of new objectives and innovation could include approaches to identify new and promising activities and the opening up of new areas of employment for the labour market
- 3) context-oriented innovations relate to political and institutional structures. Context-oriented innovations will be concerned with system development in connection with the labour market.

Another objective of the EQUAL Community Initiative is to enable a transnational exchange of experience developed, tested and applied on national level through new strategies and activities. The EQUAL Community Initiative will be based on the principle of transnational cooperation. Transnation-

ality is a dimension which can bring significant added – value to all actors participating in the Development Partnerships by sharing experience and working with others in similar situations. In addition, it shows that considerable policy innovation can be achieved through transnational cooperation. Transnationality will, therefore, be an essential element of the EQUAL Community Initiative.

The principle of empowerment will be central to each DP. In practice this will mean that those involved in the development of activities should also take part in the decision-making. The active participation of those targeted for assistance should be one of the selection criteria of DPs and the confirmation of selection for funding Action 2.

The EQUAL Community Initiative will fund the development of innovative solutions to the delivery of the policy priorities of the Slovak Republic as set out in the NAP of the Slovak Republic for Employment and Social inclusion. In order to obtain the maximum impact from the EQUAL Community Initiative, the results must be analysed, benchmarked and disseminated both within the Slovak Republic, and across the Union. It is important that policy makers in the Slovak Republic, in particular those in charge of the NAP, and those involved in the Objective 1, 2 and 3 Structural Fund Programmes, receive input from the EQUAL Community Initiative.

1.2 Importance of Programme Document

The Programme Document sets out the framework for assistance under the European Social Fund (ESF).

The document starts with an assessment of discrimination and inequalities in the Slovak labour market. On the basis of an assessment of its strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats, priority themes for the EQUAL Community Initiative, relevant for the Slovak Republic, are identified, as well as particular innovation areas within these thematic fields. Implementation provisions form a crucial part of the document, since they define responsibility of the Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Family for implementing this programme, and for transferring its results into policy and practice in the Slovak Republic. This programme document includes a financial plan, specifying the available budget by priority and year, as well as provisions for monitoring and evaluation.

1.3 Clarification of Programming Process and Process of Consulting

The Programme Document was developed in accordance with the recommendations and regulations of European Commission, notably the General Regulation for the Structural Funds (EC Council Regulation 1260/1999) and the EQUAL Community Initiative Guidelines (COM 2003/840) and the European Employment Strategy formed key starting points in developing Single Programme Document for the EQUAL Community Initiative.

The programming document for the EQUAL Community Initiative has taken the following documents into account:-

- Government's Programme Manifesto
- European Employment Strategy
- National Employment Action Plan 2003
- Labour Market Analysis in Terms of Discrimination and Inequality
- SOP Human Resources
- SPD NUTS II – Bratislava Objective 3
- Joint Assessment of Employment Priorities in the Slovak Republic (JAP)
- Joint Inclusion Memorandum in the Slovak Republic (JIM)

The activities that will be funded under the EQUAL Community Initiative in Slovakia will aim at achieving the objectives of the European Employment Strategy and Social Inclusion Process in a way that the EQUAL Community Initiative is based on i.e. finding new ways of tackling discrimination and inequality in the labour market with an active participation of all stakeholders in Slovakia.

The process of consulting formed the basis for developing the Programme Document, in order to define thematic fields and proposals of measures within the EQUAL Community Initiative.

Consultations have been carried on at national and at regional level.

At national level we have been in an intensive dialogue with all relevant ministries. Within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs we have been mainly consulting with the ESF Management Section in co-operation with the Social Inclusion Section – a Department for Equal Opportunities and Department of Employment Strategy.

Apart from other ministries the Managing Authority had an intensive exchange with the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic – Governmental Plenipotentiary for Roma Community and Parliamentary Committee for Human Rights and Minorities and Women's Position as well as the Commission for Equal Opportunities and Women's Position in a Society.

This issue was consulted with Department for Equal Opportunities and Antidiscrimination of MoLSAF of SR and relevant NGOs.

The Managing Authority established a dialogue with public institutions, universities, employers' and trade organisations, training establishments, NGO representatives, associations representing disadvantaged groups and other social partners.

At the regional level the process of consultations has been organised with all self-government regions. The representatives of the regions invited all relevant stakeholders at regional level to reflect the needs of regions and specific groups disadvantaged in the labour market.

The Managing Authority disseminated information to ensure that the Equal's Community Initiative objectives are understood. From January 2004 there will be a series of workshops organised by the self-government regions relating to technical issues in order to ensure that all interested parties have necessary information for submission of proposals.

The Managing Authority for the EQUAL Community Initiative in co-operation with the Section for the Strategy and Co-ordination has developed a database for those who are potentially interested in participating in the EQUAL Community Initiative.

As a result of consultations at national and regional levels, considering the output of the relevant documents and the analysis of the labour market in Slovakia, the emphasis will be put on the priorities presented below (see Chapter 4).

1.4 Previous PHARE activities

People with disabilities have been in the target of PHARE projects in the past. Although Slovak legislation and employment policy implements a strategy to promote the integration of disabled people into the labour market, there is evidence that the measures are not sufficient to eliminate the negative trends in the development of an unemployment rate of this group.

PHARE project „Improved Labour Protection System in Slovakia“, especially its fifth component has several sound outputs:

- Based on the analysis done – to propose the changes in the Slovak legislation in the domain of taxes and employment
- to establish the pilot rehabilitation centre in Bratislava providing services on vocational and social rehabilitation of the physically disabled people (after occupational diseases)
- to harmonize the assessment methods, technical and educational means for disabled people with the EU standards

As disabled people are the most threatened group at the labour market, it would be useful to spread the project results outside the Bratislava region.

At the instigation of the Slovak Managing Authority (former PHARE Department) several PHARE projects have been implemented containing activities of a similar nature as the Community Initiative EQUAL.

The results of PHARE projects has contributed to a number of proposals in the area of the Labour Protection System in the Slovak Republic and harmonization of the assessment system, technical and educational equipment for disabled people with the European Union standards. From the results of PHARE projects in the Slovak Republic, there was established a pilot rehabilitation centre in Bratislava providing the social and vocational rehabilitation of disabled people after occupational accidents.

The PHARE project **CONSENSUS III** consisted of three smaller projects focusing on employment. Its results were well implemented in practice, but within the EQUAL Community Initiative they could be supported more, having more positive impact on the equal opportunities for disabled people:

- A. Introduction of Standard Classification of Occupations/Preparation for Participation in EURES** – unification of the monitoring and information system on the labour market and employment laying stress upon the international cooperation and development of the information network, development of the best conditions for the participation at EURES.
- B. Promoting Employability of Disabled People** – development of the information system for disabled people, development of the institutional background for the education of professionals – vocational assistants, counselling, harmonization of the working environment according to the individual needs of disabled workers.
- C. Coordination of Social Security Schemes** – alignment of the Slovak legislation to the EU 4) social security legislation, analysis of bilateral agreements on social security and their application after accession, human resource training and development required for the implementation of EU system of coordination of social security.

Special Preparatory Programme – Priority B – Employment Development Action Plan at the Level of the Selected district and Three Regions that belong to it – action plans development and training of the professionals at district and regional level focusing on the cooperation in employability/ employment

Human Resources Development Grant Scheme 2000 – elimination and prevention of unemployment by HRD, social integration and more flexible labour market

Project MATRA 2001 – Equal Opportunities in Slovak Republic – Slovak – Dutch cooperation in enhancing institutional provision of gender issues focusing on social cohesion and social dialogue, monitoring groups of women that are at a special risk of poverty and social exclusion through the review of the result of measures set out in relevant national action plans, introduction of equal opportunities issues in the agenda of local and regional self-government.

The Roma minority represents a high percentage of the long-term unemployed in Slovakia. As detailed and precise data on this minority are missing, it is difficult to work out and implement systematically any long-term strategy to address this problem. Many of the programmes supporting the Roma's integration are carried out mainly by NGOs, but in most cases those projects are too small to have a visible impact at a national level. The Section on Human Rights and Minorities at the Office of the Government of SR has been responsible for a number of projects strengthening minority rights protection policies and institutions through fostering tolerance among majority population and minorities:

SK002 Improving the status of the Roma in Slovak Republic – 3, 8 MEUR

The main objective was to improve the existing Slovak Government policy for the Roma minority and group of measures to implement this strategy, to enhance mutual tolerance between Roma and non-Roma communities under the assistance of education of workers to be working in field and local Roma and non-Roma leaders, administrators in the field of minority issues and conflict solving techniques, to strengthen the pre-school education, to support elementary education by establishing preparatory classes, to strengthen training of children who left their schools before completing their obligatory ten-years school attendance.

SR103.01 Promoting the education of the Roma minority – 1, 7 MEUR

The programme has been focused on improvement of conditions to pass the elementary education of Romas through their re-integration into the educational process, accessibility of education, and has created the supportive conditions required to integrate this minority into the society. The other project objective was to improve the basic education of Romas provided by whole-day care and re-integrative methods in the educational process.

Although the PHARE projects carried out all of the planned objectives, the impact on policy concerned has not been very great. The means from the pre-accession aid has followed the activities stipulated in the project, but the sustainability of the results was of the same duration as the duration of the project. The results and outputs have been short-term with minimum impact to change the policy. The majority of the activities were implemented at the local level, influencing several individuals, so that the effect was not visible.

Evaluation of the previous PHARE activities reports the following:

- short-term – activities planned for the period of the project duration
- nationwide impact not visible
- failure to comply with the basic principles -> experience exchange -> better quality of the service
- missing linkage between outcomes achieved and Slovak legislation

Despite this fact, previous PHARE activities have led to an increase of the target group's awareness, the establishment of effective structures, mainly at the level of NGOs. PHARE has supported several pilot projects, the establishment of cooperative social partnerships, new institutions with re-trained staff, elaboration and testing of educational documentation. The most effective contribution within the PHARE project implementation has been provided by NGOs and active individuals, whose experience and potential could be used in testing and development of innovative approaches, established network could contribute within the EQUAL Community Initiative implementation and spreading of cooperation. The EQUAL Community Initiative is the new dimensions that provide the opportunity to create the base for next development of effective and long-term approaches and a system that could ensure sharing the results with the responsible policy makers.

1.5 Timeline and geographic definition of the programme

The Programme will start on January 1, 2004 and end on December 31, 2008. It falls within the territory of Objective 1 (Intervention rate – 75% from the European Social Fund) and Objective 3 (Bratislava region, Intervention rate – 50% from the European Social Fund).

2. Baseline of the chosen themes and focus of the Community Initiative EQUAL in Slovak Republic

Since the overall description of the labour market situation in the Slovak Republic forms part of National Employment Action Plan for 2003, which represents one of the principal documents for Single Programme Document for the EQUAL Community Initiative, the subsequent part contains only a short version taken from this document.

2.1 Characteristics of current labour market status in the Slovak Republic

A selection of data and characteristics of status is based on the requirements of the EQUAL Community Initiative:

Trend of GDP and Labour Productivity

In 2002 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) continued to grow while reaching a volume of Sk 1.073,6 milliard. Comparing to 2001, its real value (in fixed prices) increased by 4.4 % (in current prices by 8.5 %). The pace of GDP growth throughout 2002 speeded up from 3.9% in the 1st quarter to 5.4% in 4th quarter.

According to the prognosis of the statistical office, in 2003 the growth of GDP of 4,1% in fixed prices was accepted (state budget has expected the growth of 3,7%). The growth graduation was milder as in 2002 as a result of the regulation of prices, lower VAT, raise of consumption taxes that mitigate the growth of total household consumption. As the results of the consolidation of public finances the real consumption of the public sector will mitigate.

The analysis of economic growth expressed by GDP growth and growth in number of employees in SR implies that only minimum part of economic growth is reflected in job creation. The introduced fact may be explained by work productivity growth, which grew by 4.3% comparing to the previous year.

GDP generation in Slovakia does not reach even 50% of GDP average in 15 European Union member countries (in 1999 it was 48.1%).

Trend of Economic-Activity Rate

The overall labour market development in SR in 2001 and 2002 was considerably determined by the development of the number of economically active citizens. While in 2001, significant increase in the number of economically active citizens could have been recorded (their number increased by 44.3 thousands persons, i.e. by 1.7% comparing to the previous year), throughout 2002 their number decreased. In 2002, there was an average number of 2.628,2 thousands) economically active citizens, which means a decline by 24,3 thousands persons comparing to the average in 2001. Within the structure of average number of economically active citizens in 2002, the number of unemployed decreased by 4,2%, while employment increased just slightly.

Employment Trend

A development of employment in SR in 2001 and 2002 can be characterised by annual employment growth in 2001 (in average by 1 %) and gradual stagnation in 2002.

Employment growth in 2001 was recorded in case of both genders, more significantly in women's rate (by 1.4 %) than in men's, where this growth represented only 0.7 %. To the contrary, in 2002 only men recorded an annual employment growth by 1%, while women's employment rate dropped in that year by 0.8%. An average number of employed in 2002 increased by 0.2%.

According to the data provided by the Statistical Office of Slovak Republic from the results of „Selective work-force identification“ (hereinafter only referred to as „SWFI“) an average number of 2.127,0 thousands persons worked in SR in 2002, of that number 45.6% were women.

At the same time, various tendencies can be observed in the employment development in different regions. In 2001, employment growth was recorded in six regions (oscillating from 0.3 to 3.3%), while in 2002 five regions recorded increase in the number of employees (oscillating from 0.7 to 2.8%).

As far as work-force quality is concerned, it is a positive feature that process of constant improvements of the level of education of employees in Slovakia is continuing.

Despite that, the portion of work-force with post-secondary and tertiary education within economically active citizens lags behind the EU average. In 2001, just 11% of the total number of economically active population disposed of higher than secondary education, while only 40% acquired complete secondary education and 40% of them completed secondary education without school leaving exam. A portion of workforce with basic education and no education oscillated around 9%.

Employment by Sectors

As far as employment development in industrial branches is concerned, a tendency of gradual employment growth still prevailed in large number of tertiary sector branches, mainly in trade, banking, insurance business, commercial services, while employment in primary sector kept decreasing in agricultural sphere. In 2002, the introduced tendency stopped and employment growth in 2002 was recorded mainly in primary (in agriculture by 0.6 %) and secondary sectors, in average by 2.3%. To the contrary, within the tertiary sector, employment growth was recorded only in banking and insurance industry and private households.

Despite the fact that overall employment structure in terms of sectors approaches EU countries, the portion of employment in the 2nd sector is still relatively high comparing to EU values (in SR the portion of those working in industry in 2002 was 30.1%, while in EU-15 in 2000 it was 19.5% and in construction industry it was 8.3 comparing to 7.2% in EU-15), while the portion of employment in tertiary sector is still relatively low (portion of employed in services in SR in 2002 represented 55.4% and EU-15 in 2000 it was 68.9%).

On the other hand, it may be assumed that the portion of small- and medium -size enterprises in the Slovak Republic is comparable to the number in developed economies. Small and medium sized Enterprises represent about 99% of the total number of enterprises. In 2001, these companies (including entrepreneurs) employed 59.2% of the overall average number of employees in SR, by the year 2002 it has increased by 62.0%.

Employment by Education Attained

Table: Employment by Education Attained (in thousands)

Education Attained	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Elementary	238,8	211,9	168,9	146,1	133,5	119,1
Secondary apprentices with Certificate of Apprenticeship	690,5	729,1	753,5	737,5	764,3	775,5
Secondary education without GCE	171,7	153,1	104,7	86,9	58,5	50,0
Apprentices with GCE	101,2	106,5	102,1	97,2	103,2	105,1
Complete general secondary education	107,8	127,3	119,7	113,0	105,5	93,0
Complete secondary vocational education	632,5	610,3	629,5	661,9	678,5	701,0
Higher-level vocational education	19,3	13,1	10,1	15,0	15,3	14,1
BA-level	-	-	-	6,9	5,9	7,0
University (MA)	239,4	244,8	238,5	233,1	257,6	259,1
PhD or similar qualification	4,2	2,3	4,4	4,0	1,3	3,0
No school education	0,5	0,2	0,7	0,2	0,1	0,0
Total	2205,9	2198,6	2132,1	2101,7	2123,7	2127,0

Source: Statistical Office SR, National Development Plan

Employment by Groups at risk

The number of the registered long-term unemployed was 94.4 thousand people accounting thus for 36.3%-share of all registered unemployment in 1992. During the period of 10 years any approach intended for reduction has been of a short-term nature only being reflected in a decrease in one year recording, however, an increase of the long-term registered unemployment in the next year.

That means that the lowest share of the long-term unemployed (of all registered unemployed) at 32.2% was recorded in 1993; since that year the share has been always exceeding that threshold.

The highest share of the unemployed school graduates within the total number of unemployed has been reduced significantly at the end of 1995 from 14.6% to 4.4% at the end of 2001. The highest share of the total number of registered unemployed school graduates from secondary vocational school graduates in the year 2001 their number reached 33.5% of the total unemployed school graduates. Registered unemployed young people at the age of 15 to 29 years accounted for 41.2% of the total number of the registered unemployed as of the end-December 2001.

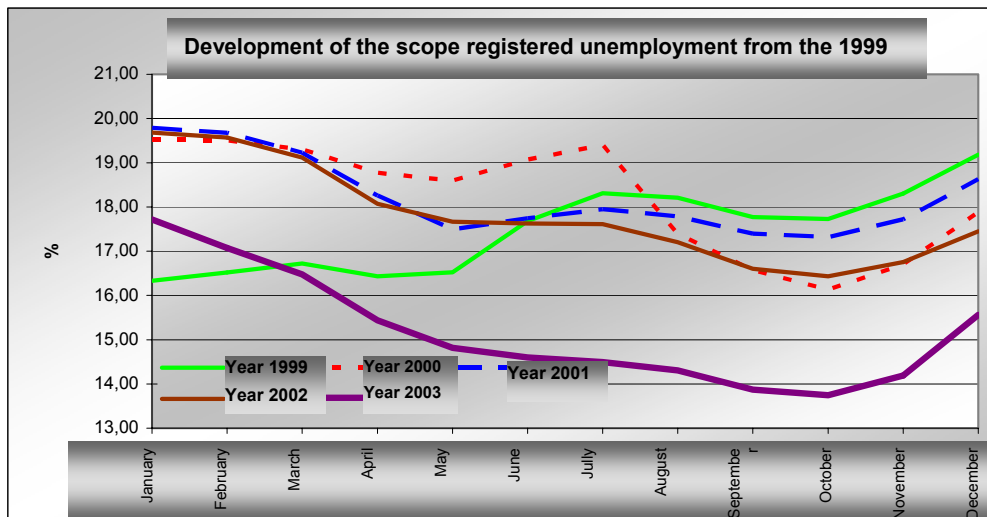
Out of the total average number of the population working in 2001 (which was 2,123.7 thousand people in total) 22.2 thousand were people with disabilities including people with more severe disabilities; people with more severe disabilities accounted for 8 thousand in that bracket. Compared to the year 2000 the number of people with disabilities including people with severe disabilities dropped down by 2.6 thousand people and share on total employment decreased from 1.2% to 1%.

Significant increase was recorded for the registered unemployed 50+. The number increased by 47 thousand persons in 2001 compared with the same period in 1995 reporting 74,3 thousand people of this age bracket.

Changes in the Unemployment Trend

After stabilization of unemployment in 2001 and in the 1st half of 2002, a development of unemployment, traditionally marked by seasonal character, was more positive.

Diagram: Unemployment Rate Trend in Slovakia, 1999-2003 years



Monthly average of the rate of registered unemployment in 2002 represented 17.82%, which is by 0.4% less than in 2001. The average number of registered unemployed in 2002 was 513.2 thousand persons, while in 2001 the number was 520.6 thousand persons. In the monitored period, inter-regional differences dropped from 19.1 percentage points in 2001 to 18.8 percentage points in 2002. The average of registered women's unemployment rate was lower than in case of registered unemployed men, being 16.52% (17.53% in 2001), which is by 2.5 percentage points less (by 1.3 percentage points in 2001) than the average rate of registered unemployed men.

Unemployment Trend by Regions

Table: Unemployment Trend by Regions

Region	As of Dec. 31, 1999	As of Dec. 31, 2000	As of Dec. 31, 2001	As of Dec. 31, 2002	As of Dec. 31, 2003
Bratislava	25 122	22 881	21 313	18 351	14 226
Trnava	45 935	44 102	46 357	40 229	34 224
Trenčín	44 437	40 624	40 931	36 743	32 524
Nitra	78 078	78 449	85 438	81 910	70 460
Žilina	64 637	61 349	60 512	55 261	48 731
Banská Bystrica	79 567	74 678	82 012	81 795	78 671
Prešov	100 084	90 897	97 597	93 409	83 759
Košice	97 351	93 517	99 492	96 379	89 629
Total SR	535 211	506 497	533 652	504 077	452 224

Source: Statistical Office SR, National Development Plan

Differences in the regional unemployment rate in Slovakia have occurred due to inequalities of production capacities, differences among regions regarding communication networks and the structure of education of population.

Table: Unemployment Rate Trend

Region	As of Dec. 31, 2000	As of Dec. 31, 2001	As of Dec. 31, 2002	As of Dec. 31, 2003
Bratislava	6,80%	6,21%	5,18%	3,97%
Trnava	15,70%	16,60%	12,99%	11,5%
Trenčín	14,93%	13,73%	10,91%	9,87%
Nitra	22,70%	24,32%	21,51%	19,7%
Žilina	17,75%	17,67%	14,74%	13,23%
Banská Bystrica	22,84%	24,84%	23,77%	22,75%
Prešov	23,18%	25,60%	23,00%	19,57%
Košice	25,53%	27,09%	24,26%	22,16%

Source: Statistical Office SR, National Development Plan

2.2 Labour market analysis in terms of nine thematic fields of the EQUAL Community Initiative

Submitted analysis of the Slovak labour market has been drafted in accordance with the thematic fields (see the Communication COM 2003/840) in the frame of the consulting process (see chapter 1.3.).

2.2.1 Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those having difficulty in being integrated and re-integrating to the labour market¹

Current status characteristics and its causes according to specific groups:

A) School graduates

As a part of the overall employment development, unemployment of secondary school and University graduates plays an important role. Each year, a large number of these graduates apply for job mediation with Labour Offices, since they are unable to penetrate into labour market on their own. One of the reasons for employers to be less interested in employing these young people is their lower performance rate in first months, which is closely linked with their lack of experience.

23 thousand graduates who failed to find a job within 1 year since graduation were registered with the Labour Offices (Job Centres) in 2002. The number has decreased on a year-by-year basis by 3 thousand, i.e. by 12.1%. Their share on the total unemployment was 4.5%.

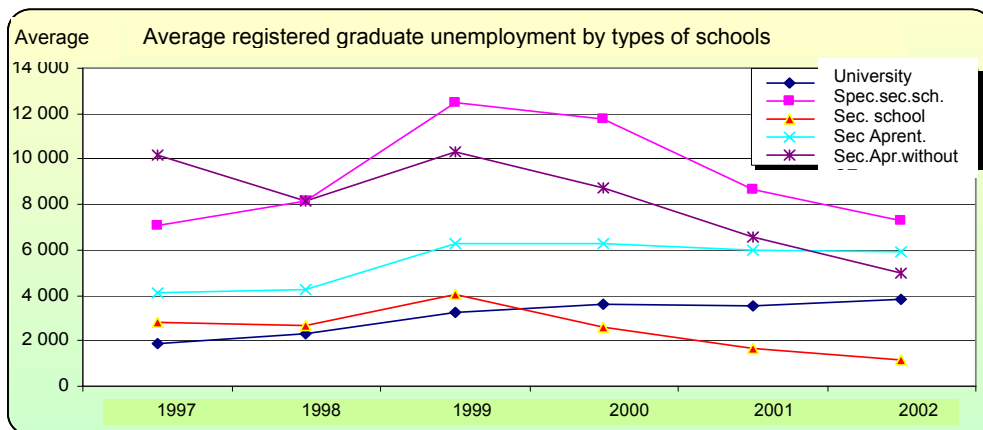
The highest share in graduate unemployment in 1997 was the one of the graduates who completed secondary education without gaining School Leaving Examination Certificate their share (out of total number of registered unemployed graduates) achieved 38.9% and the average year value was 10,153 thousands persons. Since 1998 a gradual decrease of such graduates has been recorded down to 21.4% (2002). At the same time, the average numbers of registered unemployed people with completed secondary education without School Leaving Examination Certificate (GCE) decreased by 5,184 thousands persons from 1997 to 2002, which was a double reduction of such numbers.

The most significant worsening of the situation was reported by secondary apprentice schools with GCE where the share increased up to 25.4%; the average number of the unemployed people of this bracket accounted for 5,886 thousands persons (average of 2002)

1) Miroslav Majtán, Miroslava Szarková: *Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those having difficulty in being integrated and re-integrating to the labour market*, NUP, 2003

As far as university graduates are concerned, their share on unemployment increased due to the double growth of the number. From 1997 to 2002 3,845 thousands persons university graduated were registered as unemployed, which represents 16,6% share on the total number of registered graduate unemployment. Most of the graduate unemployment in 2002 referred to graduates of secondary apprentice schools achieving the share of 31.5% (which is 7,304 thousands persons).

Diagram: Average registered graduate unemployment by types of schools



The issue of graduates' unemployment has been a long-term problem, a phenomenon regularly repeating year by year, accompanying by a big number of young people which registers with Labour Offices, especially in summer months.

B) Long-term unemployed

Currently, the most significant problem on labour market is a long-term unemployment. Fourth year in a row, the Slovak Republic has recorded the numbers of long-term unemployed exceeding a two-thousand-level.

Share of the long-term unemployment among registered unemployment dropped down from 43.6% (2000 year-end) to 41.2% (2001 year-end) and compared with the same period of the year 1995 the decrease accounted for 3.4 in percentage ; however an increase of an absolute number of the long-term unemployed by 71,023 thousand persons was recorded within the period from 1995 to 2001:

Table: Share of the long-term unemployed on total number of registered unemployed in 2001

as of Dec 31	Registered unemployed (in persons)			Share of total number of the registered unemployed (in %)		
	Total	of them long-term unemployed		Total	of them long-term unemployed	
		over 1 year	over 2 years		over 1 year	over 2 years
1995	333 291	148 690	93 498	100,0	44,6	28,1
1996	329 749	138 545	85 050	100,0	42,0	25,8
1997	347 753	131 724	76 803	100,0	37,9	22,1
1998	428 209	163 699	88 306	100,0	38,2	20,6
1999	535 211	231 233	117 402	100,0	43,2	21,9
2000	506 497	220 816	109 409	100,0	43,6	21,6

2001	533 652	219 713	110 136	100,0	41,2	20,6
2002	504 077	238 605	50 660	100,0	47,0	28,5

Source: NLO, National Development Plan

At the end of 2001 the average duration of registered unemployment shortened slightly from 13.7 months (in 2000) to 13.5 months.

A high portion of persons with lower qualification is typical for the structure of long-term unemployed (LTRU) and so is prevailing number of elderly. In 2002 163 thousand persons above 30 were LTRU, i.e. 68.2%. This tendency is expected to last.

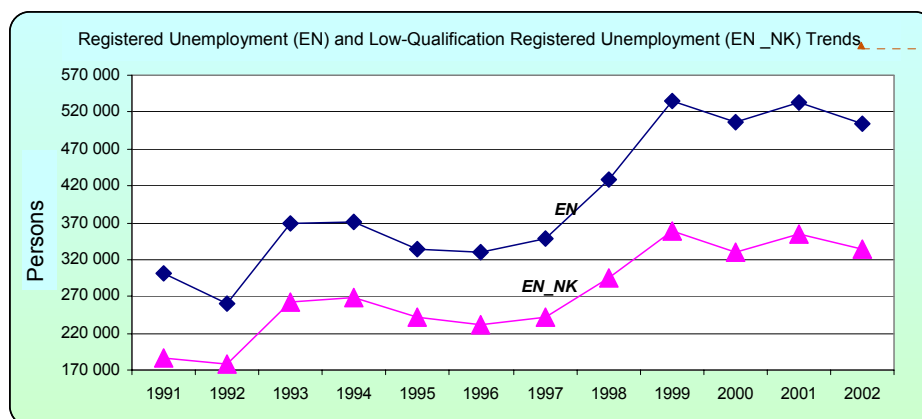
Another significant group among LTRU represent former employees whose abilities and skills do not match with the needs of the labour market in Slovakia. Throughout the past 3 years their average number reached almost 70 thousand persons, while their share of LTRU was more than 30%.

C) People with low qualification

The level of education is a factor which to a great extent determines citizens' position and potential to be included or acquire better position on the labour market, as well as in social life.

Educational level of the registered unemployed in 1991 to 2002 was significantly in favour of lower levels of education contrary to employment trend. That means that persons first to loose their jobs have been those with the lowest level of education (elementary and secondary education without School Leaving Examination) and most of them ended up as being registered with the Labour Offices as unemployed. Number of registered unemployment with lower level of education accounted for 274 thousand people in average for 1991 to 2002 with 68.2% (of all registered unemployment).

Diagram: Registered Unemployment (EN) and Low-Qualification Registered Unemployment (EN_NK) Trends



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Their trend as well as the trend of total unemployment was increasing with peak amounts being achieved in 1999. Number of Low-Qualification Registered Unemployment rocketed up from the lowest value of 178 thousand persons (1992) to the maximal value of 359 thousand persons (1999 year-end). Share of such persons (of total unemployment) accounted for 68.3% and 67.1% in 1992 and 1997, respectively. The value of 335 thousand persons was achieved in 2002 year-end accounting for 66.4% which are still high figures of persons concerned.

The number of employees with completed elementary education and without qualification reached 133.5 thousand in 2001; while in 1994 their number dropped by 114.1 thousand. Furthermore, a decrease was recorded in case of persons with completed secondary education without school-leaving exam by 101.9 thousand graduates, where the falling tendency was more moderate - by 17.7 thousand.

D) People with disabilities

Another group of citizens disadvantaged on the labour market mainly due to health condition, are citizens with disabilities. According to the Act on Employment, a citizen with disability is a person recognized as partially invalid or a person with significantly limited potential for constant job preparation due to long-lasting non-favourable health status.

Average monthly number of the registered unemployed with disabilities was 28,784 thousand persons which represents 5.5% of the total average monthly number of the registered unemployed in 2001. Though this share increased slightly by 0.2% compared with the previous year, however a decrease of 1.3% was recorded compared with the year 1995.

Table: Share of PWD (people with disabilities) on total number of the unemployed, years: 1995, 2000 and 2003

Indicator	Year	Average monthly number of the registered unemployed (in persons)	Share of monthly average of total registered unemployment (in %)
Number of the registered unemployed, total	1995	349 821	100,0
	2000	517 925	100,0
	2001	520 642	100,0
	2002	504 077	100,0
	2003	452 224	100,0
PWD	1995	23 759	6,8
	2000	27 237	5,3
	2001	28 747	5,5
	2002	29 157	5,7
	2003	23 816	5,4

Source: Statistical Office SR, National Development Plan

Majority of disabled persons has major difficulty finding the job after its loss. Thus, they remain unemployed much longer. At the end of 2002, the number of persons with disability registered with labour offices for more than a year reached 70%, i.e. 20 thousand. Therefore, majority of them become long-term unemployed.

E) Juveniles

For the purposes of the Act on Employment, juveniles are citizens who are eligible to work according to labour law up to the age of 18. After 1999, some amendments had been introduced in relation to this group, which are linked to prolonged compulsory school attendance up to the age of 16, which has been gradually reflected in unemployment development.

Table: Juvenile Unemployment

	The amount of the persons to 31.12.					
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Registered young unemployed with:	1523	14774	12067	9326	5471	3126
Finished high school	6219	5944	4331	1922	221	152
Finished or unfinished basic school	12304	8830	7736	7404	5250	2 974

By December 31, 2002 only 221 juveniles, i.e. 4% completed a secondary school (without School Leaving Examination). 75.5% (4,129 juveniles) were registered with the Labour Offices as those with only elementary school completed. At the same time (as of December 31, 2002), 1,121 thousand ju-

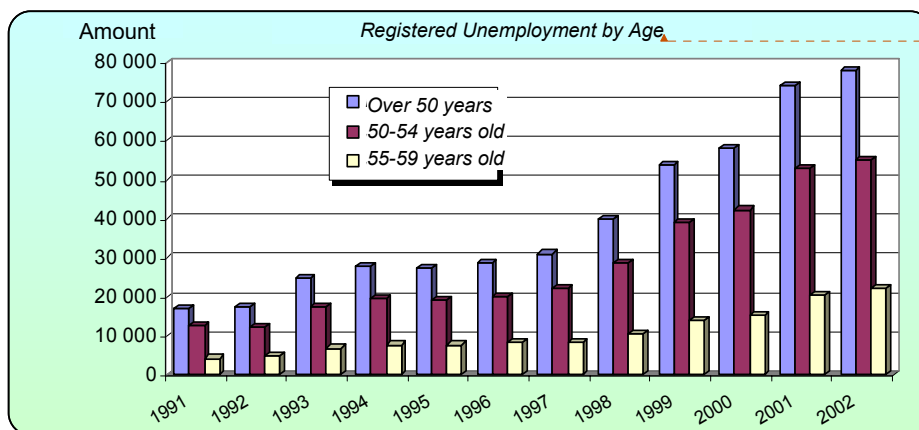
veniles (20.5%) did not complete even an elementary school. That means that most of such young people concerned contribute regularly to an increase of numbers of long-term unemployment.

The labour office registered 5.5 thousand unemployed juveniles and a year later their number dropped by 3.9 thousand, i.e. 41.3%, despite the fact that comparing to other groups facing difficulties integrating into labour market, this is the smallest one, it is inevitable to emphasize that they remain as long-term registered unemployed with the labour office due to the almost complete lack of any qualification.

F) People aged above 50

Citizens above 50 are another group facing significant problems on the labour market. The biggest obstacle for these citizens is a lack of willingness to change existing occupational orientation through re-training, or complementary courses. Position of persons of 50+ years of age worsened significantly in 1991 to 2002 with the relevant number and share still increasing. Their share (of all unemployed people) accounted for 5.6% in 1991 year-end; yet the share concerned achieved 15.5% at the year end of 2002.

Diagram: Registered Unemployment by Age



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Due to extensive workforce offer, employers are not so willing to invest into support of this group of unemployed, thus majority of them remains dependent on support from labour office once they lose a job.

G) Other groups

Another group of unemployed facing significant problems integrating into the working process are persons who have just completed their compulsory military service, who served a sentence in prison, homeless people and Roma minority.

2.2.2 Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market²

National Minorities in Slovakia

According to a new census conducted in May 2001, the results of which were published at the end of the year, 520 528 people (9.7 per cent) declared themselves to be Hungarian, 89 920 (1.7 per cent) Roma, 44 620 (0.8 per cent) Czech, 24 201 (0.45 per cent) Ruthenian, and 10 814 (0.20 per cent)

2) Ivetta Radičová, Roman Eštočák, Magdaléna Feniková, Marek Harakal, Denisa Havrňová, Valentína Petrus: *Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market*, NUP, 2003

Ukrainian origin. Estimates put the Roma minority, however, at up to 10% of the overall population (see *Regular Report on Slovakia's Progress towards Accession, 2001*).

The Slovak Republic is a party to the Council of Europe Framework Convention on National Minorities. In November 2001, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe concluded that Slovakia had made valuable efforts to support national minorities and their cultures, and improvements had been achieved in recent years in inter-community relations in particular between the Hungarian minority and other parts of the population of Slovakia. Despite efforts by the Government, there remained problems in the implementation of the Framework Convention as concerns Roma, in particular discrimination encountered by persons belonging to this minority in various fields as well as their treatment by some law-enforcement officials and the extremely wide socio-economic differences between some of the Roma and the majority population.

According to the Regular Report on Slovakia's Progress towards Accession from 2002, the recognised minorities in Slovakia (numbering more than ten) are well integrated in Slovak society, with the exception of the Roma minority.

In the light of mentioned above, Roma, as a national minority, will be treated across all priority within the EQUAL Community Initiative.

Current status characteristics in SR:

Racism is a theory claiming inequality of human races as a cause for differentiation and inequality in historical, economic, social and cultural development of mankind. Xenophobia, on the other hand, means a fear of something alien and unknown. Therefore, if it is racism that, as a rule, demonstrates xenophobia and aggressive behaviour to the different ones, usually different race, then reasons for xenophobia, or even a behaviour that tends to be racist, do not necessarily have to be racist.

Thus, we need to be careful and avoid conclusions that interpret behaviour refusing differences as racist. Undoubtedly, Slovakia is a strongly xenophobic country, especially in relation to Roma population. It might be a cultural tradition in Slovakia, which induced a formula for behaviour generalizing negative stereotypes. However, these assumptions make no difference as far as emergency of measures to overcome racism and xenophobia are concerned, since relationships between Roma and non-Roma population in Slovakia are marked with phenomena, which in their outer features do not differ from racism-based elements.

Slovakia is one of the ethnically most diverse countries in Central and Eastern Europe. The population census in 1991 proved that representatives of 17 different nationalities and minorities live in Slovakia. After Hungarians, Roma population forms the second largest national minority in the country, while remaining the most risky ethnic group in terms of labour market.

Position of aliens in SR is legally covered in accordance with EU standards. Specific programmes for aliens' placement on the labour market have not been developed so far; moreover, no relevant survey on their position on labour market is accessible. It is mainly a result of their marginal occurrence, except for may be Vietnamese and Ukrainians. On the other hand, it is the position of Vietnamese and Ukrainians on the Slovak labour market, which could induce a survey of this kind. Nonetheless, in terms of xenophobia and racism in Slovakia, a position of Roma minority must be analyzed first.

Due to high Roma birth rate exceeding birth rate of any group of population, it may be anticipated that their portion will increase in years to come. Recently published demographic estimates assume that a number of Roma could increase gradually in the future.

Just very brief information on actual living conditions and prosperity of Roma living in Slovakia are available. The extent of quantitative as well as qualitative research of Roma communities in the country performed up to date is insufficient. It is so due to several reasons, the key ones being a general lack of surveys on poverty and prosperity of the Slovak population and the Act on Privacy Protection adopted in 1993 prohibiting collection of sociological data on ethnical basis.

A large part of Roma population in Slovakia is still living in communities on the edge of villages and towns, especially in poorer regions in eastern part of the country. Many of these communities were established as a consequence of political and administrative decisions adopted during the World War II. and early socialism, which forced Roma out of villages and towns. Since 1998 we register 591 Roma communities, which mean a significant increase comparing to 278 communities identified in 1988.

Segregation is typical for Roma community and so is the social dependence. Roma living in isolated and marginalized communities are trapped in a vicious circle of poverty characterized by limited opportunities for increasing mobility and restrained interaction with the rest of society. A lot of Roma are trying to find jobs in informal sector. The most common Roma activities in informal sector include collection and sale of used material, retail sale and auxiliary works in agriculture and construction industry. One of the most typical informal Roma activities is music playing.

Roma population has virtually zero access to loans from ordinary financial institutions and they tend to be indebted. Job migration among Roma population is low. Socially excluded Roma citizens have no access to basic information on labour market opportunities. Low level of education prevails, while Roma from segregated communities are mainly employed as low-skilled workforce, especially in seasonal works. Due to extensive occurrence of long-term unemployment, many Roma have surrendered to hopelessness and gave up their efforts to find the job completely. Many Roma are not quite aware of the direct relationship between education and employment, since large part of educated ones is unemployed, too.

2.2.3 Opening up the business creation to all by providing the tools required for setting up in successful entrepreneurship³

Current status characteristics in SR:

The creation of motivating conditions for entrepreneurs aiming at equality of opportunities while establishing new companies is a great challenge for Slovakia.

Prerequisites for transparent rules of a game for entrepreneurs applying the principle of equality of chances in SR are still not sufficient in Slovakia. Even though the amendment of the Act on Bankruptcy should have created more favourable conditions, the main problems (see below) in entrepreneurship have not been solved:

- a) insufficient motivating conditions to establish the enterprises, more flexible forms of work (small and medium enterprises)
- b) low ability level and will of economic subjects to create higher number of productive working places

In order to create new enterprises and new jobs in a more effective way and to solve overall problems of unemployment, opportunities for development of the most dynamic forms of entrepreneurship and employment, such as development of SMEs and independent free-lancers, play a key role. Adoption of legislative steps (such as amendment of Small-Business Act and amendment of the Act on Income Tax) contributed to a moderate increase in earning-gaining activities of SMEs, however, they did not provide for sufficient dynamics. Nonetheless, a certain growth in activities is reflected in rising portion of employment in SMEs on the overall added value in economics, export as well on total employment in Slovakia. SMEs (including Small-Business Licences) are currently contributing to overall employment by almost 60%.

The most threatened groups trying to start entrepreneur activities are represented by: long-term unemployed, aged persons, graduates and young people, Roma minority and women. Lack of knowledge and skills, absence of necessary funding, psychological barriers and lack of experience are often obstacles for the groups mentioned above to open own business.

The following table illustrates the Employment in Slovakia by type of undertaking from 1999 to 2002.

3) *Olga Reptová, Martin Valentovič, Peter Gonda, Ondrej Dostál, Dana Feketeová: Opening up the business creation to all by providing the tools required for setting up in successful entrepreneurship, NUP, 2003*

Table: Year-by-year Change and Weight of Employment by Undertakings; share on total employment

Employment by type of Undertaking	1999		2000		2001		2002	
	Year-by-year change (%)	share on total empl. (in %)	Year-by-year change (%)	share on total empl. (in %)	Year-by-year change (%)	Share on total empl. (in %)	Year-by-year change (%)	share on total empl. (in %)
Licensed persons	0,6	22,4	1,7	22,9	5,2	23,7	7,1	25,4
Small businesses	-7,1	14,3	17,1	16,9	12,2	12,1	1,7	12,3
Mid-size businesses	-6,7	19,3	-7,3	18,0	-0,9	23,3	4,5	24,2
Large businesses	0,3	44,0	-4,5	42,3	-2,0	40,9	-6,9	38,0
Total	-2,2	100	-0,6	100	1,5	100	0,1	100

Source: Statistical Office SR, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR, National Agency for SMEs, calculations made by the authors.

2.2.4 Strengthening the social economy, especially the services of interest to the community, for the focus on improving the quality of jobs⁴

Current status characteristics in SR:

Despite the fact that there is no precise legal definition of social economics, we may conclude that social economics is not based on capital, but a participative economics. Its aim is, therefore, not to generate profit, but to fulfil social objectives, mainly prevention and alleviation of social exclusion through support of mutual solidarity. It is expressed in organisational forms such as cooperatives, mutuals, associations and foundations.

Even though civil society in Slovakia is perceived as a powerful social force and viable element, comparing to the importance of non-for-profit sector in modern countries, which managed to take over many public utility tasks, the Slovak civil society has not succeeded in developing its activities to sufficient extent, since the state has not given up its role of public service provider (almost monopoly one) even after the revolution.

Not a single government has come up with the offer for non-for-profit organizations to take over public service provision, or with a definition of equal approach rule to public resources regardless of ownership relations between providers. As a result, there is a low portion of public resources from NGOs income and inadequate potential for further development. Fortification of civil society aimed at achieving its more significant role in including disadvantaged groups of citizens in labour market and society is therefore an important opportunity and challenge of the EQUAL Community Initiative for long-term development and sustainability of non-for-profit organizations in Slovakia.

4) Helena Woleková, Vladislav Matej, Marcela Meziánová, Martina Petijová: Strengthening the social economy, especially the services of interest to the community, for the focus on improving the quality of jobs, NUP, 2003

2.2.5 Promoting the life-long learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market⁵

Current status characteristics in SR:

Consulting process concerning Life-Long Learning Memorandum (LLL) was the first educational activity implemented in the Slovak Republic, which managed to transfer political issues from European level on the level of SR. Consulting process initiated extensive discussions between key LLL actors with important involvement of social partners, which led to following conclusions:

- It was confirmed that LLL is “basic strategy developing citizenship, social cohesion and employment” and conclusions from summits of European Council in Lisbon and Feire were fully supported;
- Inevitability of further activities to create positive environment for education in the Slovakia Republic was declared in order to:
 - make the importance of informal and non-institutional (informal) education transparent,
 - integrate proactive efforts of established formal education system with incentives for development of informal and non-institutional education;
- It was concluded that, despite the LLL significance being generally respected, SR is lacking strategy coherent with the system of measures supporting LLL for all, so far.

However, in practice, the role of LLL as further education is still being accentuated. The life-long learning system is more of a theoretically reflected vision and efforts for its establishment is driven mainly by dynamics of adult learning institutions, vocational training institutions and other specialized agencies. It is therefore, natural that support of life-long learning oriented on citizens in danger of discrimination and inequality in relation to labour market, has not been dealt with in a systemic way.

Introduction of regional educational centers focusing on concurrence between further education and counselling in the region would suitably complement activities of the labour office, especially in terms of individual and specific work with groups in danger of discrimination on labour market.

In Slovakia, the situation in the field of support of disadvantaged groups is really alarming. However, it needs to be emphasized that this issue will become even more burning and some disadvantaged groups will become even more marginalized. One of key reasons of such status is long-term supported culture of dependence on state and expectations of high solidarity level. Certain disadvantaged groups first need to change their attitude, especially responsibility for its own education and employment.

2.2.6 Support of adaptability of enterprises and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies⁶

Current status characteristics in SR:

Since the fall of centrally planned economy in 1989, Slovakia has gone through significant employment decline. Moreover, dropping number of jobs caused by existential problems of several traditional enterprises was accompanied by growing number of citizens in productive age, which led to gradually increasing unemployment rate in 90-ies from statistic zero to 20% (majority of them being long-term unemployed). It proves that neither companies, nor employees managed to adapt to these radical changes.

A negative development has had impact on whole range of factors. On one hand, it was the starting point for Slovakia with hardly diversified industry and high portion of employment in agriculture comparing the situation in the Czech Republic. Furthermore, political regime of former CSSR had been

5) Kolektív autorov: *Promoting the life-long learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market*, Asociácia inštitúcií vzdelávania dospelých SR, 2003

6) Ján Kovalčík, Pavol Suda, Michal Žilka: *Support of adaptability of enterprises and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies*, NUP, 2003

completely suppressing private entrepreneurship until 1989 (comparing to Hungary or Poland), which is still reflected in the feeble portion of small enterprises on job creation, let alone their share in GDP or export. Due to the weak position of small enterprises, labour market has not been able to absorb strong population waves, which is reflected also in high unemployment rate among young people up to 25. Slovakia is ranked among topmost OECD countries as far as this index is concerned.

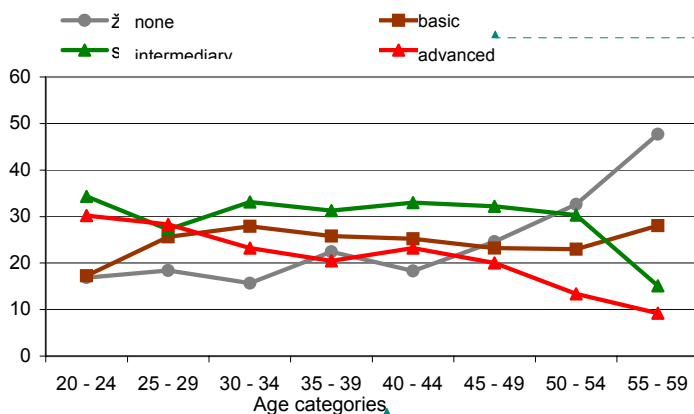
However, business environment, which provides no motivation, generous social system and non-flexible education system are still the most significant factors together with the portion of part-time workers.

It may be concluded that enterprises in Slovakia has not learned how to make use of part-time work, yet. It is obvious mainly in case of women – mothers – whose return back to job becomes a difficult issue. On the other hand, alternative ways of filling some non-managerial posts (secretaries, assistants, accountants, invoice-processing-officers) could bring more advantages to entrepreneurs themselves (replacement in case of sickness) than disadvantages (a need for inception training for another workforce).

Employment is very much affected by the achieved qualification. The lower the qualification, the harder it is to find a job. Really chasmy differences can be observed between age and educational brackets regarding language skills and computer literacy.

Diagram: Computer Literacy

Abilities to work with computers of those graduated the secondary schools and universities (%)

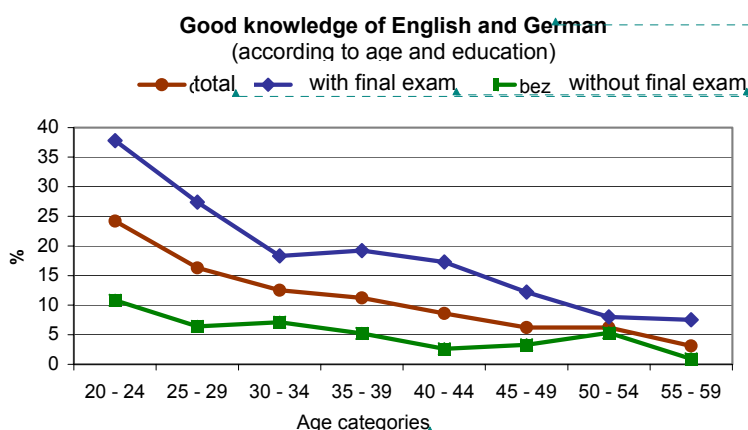


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Diagram: Language Skills



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Considering regional viewpoint, ever-increasing differences may be observed despite repeated efforts to save and revive old enterprises crucial for employment in some regions. Neither billions of Slovak crowns in form of Government injections used for this purpose in 90-ies, nor dozens of billions of crowns in form of state bank loans managed to preserve original level of employment or existence of ineffective companies. Softening of the terms by postponing efficiency of bankruptcy and price subsidies for energy inputs significantly slowed down the process of company adaptation to structural changes. Thus, many companies have only recently, especially as a result of foreign investments, started to eliminate notorious over-employment.

The same applies for the attitude of employees and employers to investment into education, which is changing only very slowly. Especially in the companies owned by Slovaks, investments into professional employees' growth are often regarded as bad use of money. Usually, this approach will become visible only in long-term perspective as one of hidden factors of company's lagging behind the competition. However, one can also find some domestic companies devoting equal attention to increased qualification as international corporations.

Significant increase in computer literacy of citizens in productive age bears large significance, too. Although, companies are frequently making use of information technology, education system is still providing insufficient conditions for flat provision of at least basic computer literacy for students, let alone complementary training for middle generation.

2.2.7 Reconciliation of family and professional life – re-integration of men and women who have left the labour market by creating flexible work organization forms⁷

Current status characteristics in SR:

Equal opportunities from the point of view of gender is one of the priorities within European Employment Strategy

The EQUAL Community Initiative is taking gender mainstreaming into consideration in all 9 thematic fields, which means a gender consideration while creating, implementing and evaluating measures focusing on various disadvantaged groups. The disadvantaged groups listed below will be aim at in frame of the EQUAL Community Initiative:

7) Sylvia Porubánová, Erika Kvapilová : Reconciliation of family and professional life – re-integration of men and women who have left the labour market by creating flexible work organization forms NUP, 2003

- employed and/or studying parents with small children,
- men and women who take care (either day-long or partial) of their dependent family members (sick, elderly, disabled or small children),
- men and women returning back to labour market after a longer interruption (especially after a period of taking care for children or some other dependent family member).

Flexible forms of work organization

Slovakia is a country with the lowest flexibility of work organisation forms and working hours in Europe, which in other EU countries is recognized as an important tool assisting employed parents with small children and other dependent family members.

Enabling flexible work organisation and forms of labour relationships – e.g. flexible working hours or part-time work and telework create conditions for actual reconciliation of family and professional duties of employed parents. A possibility and ability to combine paid work with family life is important for employed men and women mainly with regard to care for small children.

The need to better and more effectively reconcile professional and family life comes out as inevitable as regards the amount of economic and demographic changes and challenges to be handled by EU member and candidate countries, including Slovakia. The crucial point is free choice: men and women need to be able to fulfil the role of parents as well as earn money.

In line with the Guidelines for Employment Policies in the EU strengthened policy for equality of men and women requires achievement of three basic objectives:

- implementation of gender mainstreaming into employment field,
- elimination of gender restraints in employment, and
- reconciliation of professional and family life.

Guidelines show the need for “family-oriented” policies such as interrupted carriers, parents’ leave, home care leave or part-time work combined with home care services (institutions providing care for children and elderly) to provide to employed men and women with option best suiting to their individual needs, or particular situation.

Flexible work forms (especially for parents with small children) are still remaining on the level of intents in Slovakia. Subjective reasons of female and male employees are mainly economic and based on inevitability to bring two incomes into a household, while absencing knowledge of legislative and other conditions may play an important role, too.

Employers prefer traditional models, emphasis laid on specified course and organization of work to consideration of final result of work. It should also be mentioned that problem of family and professional life reconciliation, subsequent demands and consequences have traditionally tackled only women. Conflict of job versus family is considered to be a female problem not only by public opinion and employers, but frequently even by women themselves who are striving with “their own weapons” as the only actors, to reconcile their family and professional lives. It is related to predominating gender stereotypes and traditional understanding of family roles.

Weak support of gender equality is on one hand based on Slovakia being country relying on traditions, and on the other hand on absence or lack of services for families with small children, prevailing family care vested to women as well as time constraints. It is necessary to consider stereotypes, insufficient appreciation of women and therefore, their lacking vigorousness, lower self-esteem and self-confidence.

Day-care institutions for children in pre-school age

This issue is crucial especially in relation to employed parents with small children (as of six months up to 2-3 years of age, as well as for children of age 3 to pre-school age).

Contribution on services for family with children, according to the Act No. 5/2004 on employment services, can not overcome the total of 1.200SKK per month/per child and 900 SKK for other children/per month during the period when the parent-unemployed applicant participates the preparatory courses to find the employment.

It is this very group of male and female employees who is facing largest difficulty reconciling family and professional life and maintaining their position on labour market; the main reason for it being the

fact that pre-school institutions providing an important service for this group, are not operating sufficiently and quality of provided services sometimes causes problems, too. Public nurseries are disappearing, leaving just very tiny network, while being replaced by expensive private services unaffordable for average employed family.

Parents' leave

Parents' leave is a relatively new tool aimed mainly at assisting employed parents in reconciling their professional and family life, while preventing them, especially women, from losing contacts with labour market for a long time, and still taking sufficient care of their small children.

Act No. 280/2002 on contribution for parents created the equal conditions in providing this care for both parents, supports the possibility to use the parallel care of both parents of the child during the period of one month and possibility to get the contribution though the parents have their income. The Act contains the system changes on provision of contribution for parents – defines the care, offers the choice of form of the support that is, for parents, the most comfortable during the childcare period until the child is 3 years old.

This Act lets the parents to receive the reduced contribution though they have an income, so it is not necessary to leave the employment. The "parents leave" lets the parents to keep their employment, keep contacts with the labour market and take care of child in the same time.

Parents' leave in Slovakia lacks these characteristics: in fact, in more than 98% instances, it is a woman who makes use of it, while staying at home without interruption for quite a long time and losing contact with labour market. That makes it also difficult for them to go back to work. Moreover, they become economically dependent on men due the amount of parent's benefit. Such construction of parents' leave is therefore, disadvantageous for women and contradicts policy aimed at equality of labour market opportunities for men and women.

Telework – new form of work organisation

A typical example of new employment form is telework, an electronic form of work performed at home (or outside regular workplace), which enables the employee to maintain contacts with the company through state-of-art technology. Telework represents a work organization form, which might make a significant contribution to reconciliation of parent's and professional role, to their integration without necessity to leave family territory and that is important mainly for parents of small children.

There are several advantages of Telework: employment available for those who have to take care of children, flexibility, elimination of difficulties to travel to work, reduction of expenditures.

More massive development of telework in the Slovak conditions is hindered first by employers' worries (risk of lost control, difficulty providing further training, personal involvement of employee), secondly, by fears of employees themselves related to counter-productiveness (social isolation, lack of motivation, loss of working rhythm, risk of merged working and family environment with subsequent loss of privacy).

2.2.8 Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation⁸

Current Situation in SR:

Demographic development of the Slovak population is marked by a long-term birth-rate decline and its gradual shift towards higher age: average age of mothers upon delivery has increased in case of women giving birth for the first time to 24.1 and in total the average age is 26.5. Subsequently, natural population growth decreases, while in 2001 it reached negative values for the first time. With declining share of total number of born children, the portion of children born out of wedlock is increasing (19.8% of all born children).

8) Jana Cviková, Jarmila Filadelfiová, Jana Juráňová, Katarína Paľková, Olga Gyarfášová, Bernardína Bodnárová, Lívia Biziková, Henrieta Kollárová: *Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation*, NUP, 2003

Earning-gaining activity of Women and Men

Rate of earning-gaining activity is in average lower for women than for men. This statement can be backed by data on earning-gaining activity rate for women and men in 1997 to 2002:

Table: Earning-gaining activity Rate (in %) in the Slovak Republic in 1997 to 2002

Gender	Year				
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Men	68,9	68,7	68,6	69,2	68,5
Women	51,5	52,0	52,6	53,0	52,6

Source: Labour Force Sample Survey (1994-2001), Statistical Office, 2003.

One of the main reasons for lower earning-gaining activity of women versus men is a lower retirement age for women (higher share of women on post-production-age population) than for men. For instance, number of retired women was 666.1 thousand compared to just 390.5 thousand of men in 2001. However, the situation shall be changed in this respect as the new law on social insurance scheme has been adopted assuming that by 2019 retirement age of women will increase gradually up to the retirement age of men. Some of other reasons include substantial higher representation of women as the household persons (86.8 thousand in 2001) compared to men (1.4 thousand in 2001). Women do prevail also in the group of persons on a parental leave accounting for 54.1 thousand (2001) with 0.8 thousand men (2001). Gender stereotypes are still preserved.

Similarly to earning-gaining activity figures, women's employment rate is also lower compared to the one of men. Following table provides an overview of the years 1997 to 2002:

Table: Employment Rate (in %) in the Slovak Republic in 1997 to 2002

Gender	Year				
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Men	59,3	56,5	54,7	54,7	55,2
Women	44,7	43,4	42,9	43,1	42,7

Source: Labour Force Sample Survey (1994-2001), Statistical Office, 2002.

Reasons for lower employment rate are rooted in lower earning-gaining activities of women compared to those of men in our country. Compared with the EU Member States women's employment rates, our one is lower. For instance, according to the „Community Labour Force Survey 2000“ (Source: Euro stat) women's employment rate was 53.8% (average of EU 15) in 2000. One of the major reasons of lower women's employment rate compared to the one in EU is the lower earning-gaining activity of women compared to the one of men due to the difference in men's and women's retirement ages and in EU.

Educational structure and gender segregation in education

As regards education, composition of men and women in SR has been relatively balanced for several decades. Share of University education in case of men and women has been almost equal. Women take greater share of secondary education with school leaving exam, while men tend to take over in secondary education without school leaving exam. Once again, women take lead in completed primary education.

Even though the population structure of men and women is quite balanced in SR, in terms of study field or type of education, there are significant gender differences. Gender-based segregation in education is obvious in secondary schools, already. Girls tend to attend pedagogical, medical and library school (80% and more) as well as economic schools (70%); while boys dominate in forestry schools (90%) and technical schools (70%); on the other hand, agricultural schools, secondary arts schools and secondary grammar schools are attended by more or less balanced gender structure.

According to the level of education, women and men in SR take equal educational potential, in fact women may be considered as having a higher one, while significant differences can only be seen in division according to the study field. Distribution of men and women in various study fields is strongly reflected in job segregation.

Women's and men's unemployment

More unemployed men tend to occur among younger age categories, while the share of unemployed women grows among middle-aged. Apart from reasons related to women's maternal and parental duties, this fact is probably also related to women's decreasing adaptability with ascending age, which is a gender (as well as individually determined) characteristics. This is linked not only with seemingly lower flexibility while mastering new knowledge (e.g. work with PC), but also with the fact that women at work are expected (more so than men) to perform any kind of work irrespective of their qualification and practice.

Table: Trend of Registered Unemployment and Registered Unemployment Rate as of the year end of 1997 to 2002.

Year	Registered Unemployment (RU)		Share of Women on RU (in %)	Registered Unemployment Rate (in %)		Share of RU (in %) with over 2 years of being registered on total RU	
	Men	Women		Men	Women	Men	Women
1997	170 860	176 893	50,9	12,32	14,57	18,9	25,1
1998	227 580	200 629	46,9	16,38	16,48	17,7	23,9
1999	299 094	236 117	44,1	20,95	19,12	19,7	24,8
2000	274 992	231 505	45,7	18,91	18,66	19,2	24,5
2001	294 988	238 664	44,7	20,42	19,06	17,4	24,7
2002	277264	226 813		19,71	17,47		

Source: Report on Social Situation of Population in Slovakia in 2000. MOLSAF SR, Bratislava 2001, Report on Social Situation of Population in Slovakia in 2001. MOLSAF SR, Bratislava 2002, + calculations done by Ing. Barošová.

Registered unemployment rate both, for men and women, was of a growing nature during the whole period of 1997 to 2001 accounting to 4.49% for women in 2001 compared with 1997 and 8.1% for men for the same time period.

Income inequality between men and women

Gender-based employment segregation has significant impact on wage differences between men and women; however this reason is not the only one. A lower wage in SR is typical mainly for those industries and professions, where women dominate. In feminized industries, wages oscillate around the level or slightly under the average wage level in SR. While average monthly wage in 2001 was Sk 12,365, it did reach even Sk 10,000 in feminized branches (health care, social care, education), in three branches it was even lower than Sk 9,000. In total figure, average women's wage formed 75% of men's average wage in recent years (particularly in 2001 it was 74.2%). This gender-based wage disproportion is of more permanent type in SR, while remaining almost unchanged throughout 90-ies. Difference in average monthly women's and men's wage exceeded Sk 3,000 in recent years and in 2001 it reached Sk 3,709.

There are still significant wage differences between average wages of men and women in Slovakia as described by the following table:

Table: Trend of Average Monthly Wage of Men and Women (1996 to 2002) in Slovakia

Year	Average monthly wage in Sk	Average monthly wage in SKK Men in Sk	Average monthly wage in SKK Women in Sk	Share of average wage of women on average wage of men (in %)	Difference between average wage of men and women in Sk
1996	9 016	9 946	7 411	74,5	2 535
1997	10 086	11 202	8 793	78,5	2 409
1998	10 117	11 356	8 747	77,0	2 609
1999	10 593	12 066	9 050	75,0	3 016
2000	11 638	13 267	9 952	75,0	3 315
2001	12 542	14 332	10 623	74,1	3 709
2002	14 597	16 899	12 125	71,7	4 774

Source: Analysis of a Structure of Employees' Wages, years 1997, 1998 and 1999, Statistical Office SR 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002. Structure of Employees' Wages in SR, 2000, Statistical Office SR, November 2001 + calculations done by Ing. Barošová.

Thus the level of an average monthly wage of women in Slovakia was lower during the whole period concerned compared with the average monthly wage of men with the difference increasing from year to year. The difference was 2,463 SKK (1997) up to 3,315 SKK (2001) [increase by 852 SKK]. Wage differences are usually highest between men and women in younger age brackets (up to 20 years, 20 to 24 years). Other age brackets usually record a decrease with the increasing age. There are wage differences between men and women also in terms of comparable education and occupation (job) as well as within sectors or regions. There are several reasons for such differences, one of them being a different representation of men and women within particular occupations and working regimes (working conditions). However, it is often a case of different approach of valuing men and women for the same work load or for the work of the same value.

Employment policy and equality of opportunities for women and men

Active labour market policy implemented by National Labour Office and regional labour offices (since January 2004 Headquarters of Labour, Social Affairs and Family) contains the partial measures focused especially on women. It doesn't focuses on the participation of men and women on the concrete programs. Its statistics shows only the participation of women at re-qualification courses, where the long-term rate of women is higher (around 70%). Headquarters advisory programs do not define the specific approach on the needs on employment of men and women. Programs on creation and sustainability of jobs can not be assessed from the gender view. All the measures could be applied for both, men and women and are not divided in those two categories – from the view of the gender approach.

National Labour Office has supported the projects focused on working conditions for women that differs at regional levels. This area was covered by the program of Individual Employment Service that is part of National Employment Action Plan. In 2002, 8 projects with this objective were implemented in Slovakia, including 649 unemployed women in evidence.

Active labour market policy is financed from the basic fund with the Central agency for social affairs and employment services (CASAES). It forms part of District Authority competencies, therefore it varies according to the approach of particular authority. In general, the authority neither pays any focused attention to the policy enforcing equality of men's and women's opportunities, nor it applies any specific measures oriented on women. Participation of men and women within individual active labour market policy programme is not being monitored. Statistics only show women's participation in re-training courses, which is traditionally higher (around 70%). Counselling programmes provided by CASAES have not defined an approach tailored to the needs of women's and men's employment. It is not possible to assess programmes supporting job creation and maintenance or entrepreneurship on

gender basis. All defined active labour market policy tools may apply equally to both men and women, but statistics show no gender-based differentiation.

Employers' approach to equality of men's and women's opportunities

Majority of organizations pay greater attention to policy oriented on employment than the one focusing on men's and women's job promotion. Very few organizations are trying to change informal internal culture, which may maintain an atmosphere unfavourable for equality of opportunities. The organization must not only change behaviour, but also attitudes.

The approach of organizations/employers concerning equality of men's and women's opportunities in SR has not been analyzed at all. It has not been formulated in an explicit form (except for occasional exceptions, such as Whirlpool Slovakia, s.r.o.). Companies are more focusing on definitions of social, or family policy, but not a specific policy for equality of opportunities.

Social audit "Family and profession" represents one of the first attempts to implement a policy accommodating favourable approach to family and equality of opportunities on employers' level. This audit has been going on since 2000, however, this aspect forms a topic of partial study 7 dealing with equality of opportunities for men and women.

2.2.9 Asylum seekers⁹

The EQUAL Community Initiative provides a good opportunity for Slovakia to work with the existing Member States with a view to identifying good practice in relation to the social and vocational integration of Asylum Seekers. Whilst for the moment the actual number of Asylum Seekers in Slovakia is relatively low, the position could well change after accession. In Slovakia, the Asylum Seekers thematic activity will focus on some activities which:

- 1) help to develop the capacity of the NGO sector, and enable it to work effectively in partnership with the relevant authorities
- 2) help to develop networks to share information between the NGO sector
- 3) improve the social integration of Asylum Seekers.

The EQUAL Community Initiative benefits from the adoption of the Directives related to the Common Asylum Seekers Policy which allows greater focussing of activities on Asylum Seekers as defined, rather than those benefiting from other forms of protection. This also facilitates the clarification of the relationship and complementarity between the EQUAL Community Initiative and the European Refugee Fund at a national level. As both funding sources are likely to work with the same type of organisations and fund quite similar activities for different groups of people, the Managing Authority for the Community Initiative EQUAL in Slovak Republic will ensure that activities financed by EQUAL will not be financed by any other EU funds in accordance with Art. 111 of the Financial Regulation.

Current status characteristics in SR:

Migration is a global problem tackling Slovakia, too. The basis for migration policy dwells in Slovak Government's "Principles of Migration Policy in SR". The Slovak Republic recognizes that the right for life, freedom and personal safety, the right to leave any country and return to this country as well as the right for asylum represent fundamental human rights. The Slovak Republic is thoroughly observing basic international documents; on its establishment – 1993, it automatically decided to adhere to Geneva Convention on Refugee Status from 1951 and a New York Protocol from 1967. In its efforts to meet European standards on protection of applicants for refugee asylum, the Slovak Parliament adopted a new Act No. 480/2002 Coll. on Asylum. From 1992 until the end of 2002, 23 018 persons applied for asylum in Slovakia, while asylum was positive in 479 cases.

Following agencies are currently in charge of issues related to applicants for asylum and asylum seekers:

9) *Lucia Heffyová, Alexandra Staňová, Iveta Liberková, Hamid Omed, Andrej Stančák, Zuzana Peťovská: Asylum Seekers, NUP, 2003*

- Migration Authority of the Ministry of Interior SR
- Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR
- Office of UN High Commissioner for refugees (UNHCR)
- NGOs

Starting point for contemplation on this topic is the fact that the access of asylum-seekers to labour markets in Member States is either banned in entirety or restricted. According to the Article of Council Directive 2003/9/EC of 27 January 2003 laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers:

- a) Member State (MS) shall determine a period of time, starting from the date on which an application for asylum was lodged, during which an applicant shall not have access to the labour market.
- b) If a decision at first instance has not been within one year of the presentation of an application for asylum and this delay cannot be attributed to the applicant, MS shall decide the conditions for granting access to the labour market for the applicant.

According to the Art. 12 of the above Directive Member States may allow asylum seekers access to vocational training irrespective of whether they have access to the labour market.

Approach defined in the Directive above will fully respected also by the EQUAL Community Initiative in SR.

Asylum policy in the Slovak Republic has been harmonised already with the EU communautaire in terms of standards of treatment of asylum-seekers.

Access to labour market

According to the Act No. 480/2002 Coll. on Asylum, asylum seekers must not enter into labour relations or similar labour relations, or start their own business until the decision granting asylum becomes valid.

On the other hand, refugees (asylum seekers, who have been granted asylum) have access to the labour market without having to acquire work permission. Such persons may apply for job mediation with the respective labour office, thus they may be included in the registration of unemployed. Based on the basic small-business license granted by the respective District Authority according to the permanent address on the territory of SR, asylum seekers may undertake business activities.

Social provision

During the course of the asylum procedure, asylum applicant on the territory of the Slovak Republic is not eligible to apply for social benefits from the Department of Social Affairs. Migration Authority with the Ministry of Interior SR will provide them with three meals a day, hygienic kit and pocket money amounting to Sk 12 per day and free-of-charge Slovak language teaching.

Asylum seekers may apply with the Department of Social Affairs for social benefit to provide for their basic living conditions.

Refugees may apply with the Department of Social Affairs for social benefit. These benefits are being granted to them on the same basis as to the regular Slovak citizens with regard to valid legal regulations.

Health Care provision

Asylum seekers in the Slovak Republic are not insured and health care is provided to them as part of basic health care, which means that in case of emergencies requiring higher level of medical care or hospitalization of applicant for asylum, all the cost related to such medical care will be reimbursed by the Migration Authority with the MI SR from its own budget.

Refugees are legally obliged to have medical insurance. The state pays for the medical insurance of refugees registered with the labour office not benefiting from material provision and of those who are granted social benefits. Equally, the state pays for the medical insurance of infants, women on maternity leave and retired persons. The insurance of employed refugees is paid by the employer through salary deduction. In case the asylum seeker is undertaking his/her own business activities, he/she will pay for the insurance himself/herself according to the medical insurance company's instructions.

Approach to education.

Through the course of asylum procedure, all asylum seekers within the territory of the Slovak Republic have access to free-of-charge Slovak language course. Children of asylum seekers are provided with education and training in primary and secondary schools based on conditions identical with the ones for Slovak residents. They have a chance to attend kindergarten, primary or secondary school adequate to their specific age and level of knowledge. Asylum seekers may not study at Universities, since the Act on Universities requires permission for stay within the territory of SR, which asylum seekers are not able to satisfy. Refugees may study at Universities, provided that they meet all the requirements set for acceptance for University study.

2.3 SWOT analysis of selected thematic fields

Each of the nine thematic fields is described in a detailed SWOT analysis – weaknesses and strengths, potential and dangers. This SWOT analysis forms an annex to the Programme Document.

3. Policy Context for Selection of Topics and direction of the EQUAL Community Initiative

The starting points as defined by expert teams following analysis of the current situation of the labour market in the Slovak Republic reported in the previous Chapter signpost the recommendations to be confronted with EU political intentions and goals and political decision-makers in Slovakia.

3.1 European political context

Council Regulation No. 1260/1999 and Commission Communication COM 2003/840 setting the goals and intentions of the EQUAL Community Initiative as an independent form of ESF assistance constitute a basis for selection of priorities and formulation of intentions of the EQUAL Community Initiative in the Slovak Republic in relation to the European Union. Other documents have been considered, namely those regulating conditions for drawing resources from the EU Structural Funds and specifying the scope of activities where the ESF support is targeted to. (Commission Regulation 1780/1999, Commission Regulation 1159/2000, Commission Regulation 1685/2000, Commission Regulation 438/2001 etc.).

Following the European Council meeting in Lisbon in March 2000, a new strategic goal for the EU was stipulated for decades to come – to develop competitive and dynamic economies based on knowledge, with greater social coherence and higher employment levels. This Lisbon strategy followed up the Union's processes and policies commenced in the preceding period – the European Employment Strategy (adopted in November 1997 in Luxembourg) and macroeconomic reform adopted in Cologne (1999). The Luxembourg summit on jobs initiated implementation of a new open co-ordination method and approved the first Principles of Employment Policy in a 4-pillar form: 1st pillar – Improved Employment, 2nd pillar – Business Development, 3rd pillar – Supporting Adaptability of Enterprises and their Employees and 4th pillar – Enhanced Equal Opportunity Policies. Principles of EU Employment Policy represent a general form of macroeconomic, social and educational policy of EU member countries, while at the same time, they are presented as a result of their experience with efficiency of former active labour market policy measures and labour market policy.

The European Employment Strategy is aimed at achieving a higher employment level of all labour market groups.

In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to enhance skills and employability of those who are usually outside the labour market as well as upgrading the skills of those who are currently at work and provide incentives for life-long learning and upgrade their skills and knowledge.

3.2 Context of National Programming Documents, Strategies and Policies

Basic priorities of the Slovak Republic in the field of human resource development and addressing issues of the labour market have been formed by Governmental Manifesto, rules of labour market

operation regulated by legislation and strategic documents adopted by the Government for this particular field, namely the National Action Plan for Employment for 2003 and the National Development Plan.

Within all Slovak documents of a programming nature and considering the closeness of its accession to EU, relevant priorities have been constituted in accordance with the EU documents and priorities. Other parts contain basic links between the most crucial programming documents for the HR development and topics of the EQUAL Community Initiative. The following chapter includes an assessment of the opportunity to implement basic intentions and goals set by the said documents through an appropriate selection of topics to be addressed and forming and intention of the EQUAL Community initiative in the Slovak Republic.

3.2.1 Policy Statement of the Government of the Slovak Republic

Basic policy priorities of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the period specified includes a growth of productive employment rate based on economic growth and economy restriction, which considers the requirement to create new job opportunities and conditions to decrease the unemployment rate gradually. Strategic goal of the EQUAL Community Initiative in the conditions of the Slovak Republic is defined as followed – support of the effective tools, methods and approaches to solve the problems of the discrimination and inequalities at the labour market through the innovative approaches and its influence. This goal is in accordance with the priorities of the government in this area that forms the supportive solutions vis a vis this goal.

Concrete linkages between the SR Policy Statement priorities and the EQUAL Community Initiative measures are described in the table below:

Table: Links between the SR Policy Statement priorities and the EQUAL Community Initiative measures

SR Policy Statement priorities	EQUAL Community Initiative measures
<p>In cooperation with Slovak partners Government supports on employment increase, solves and prevents the long-term unemployment of those, who have difficulties to integrate their selves into the labour market because of disabilities, age or other factors.</p>	<p>Measure No. 1.1: <i>Creating a system supporting the introduction of long-term unemployed, low-skilled and other disadvantaged groups into the labour market</i></p> <p>Measure No. 1.2: <i>Creating an environment supporting the development and creation of effective solutions combating all forms of labour market-related discrimination, racism and xenophobia</i></p> <p>Measure No. 2.1: <i>Strengthening the capacity of NGOs as actors to help eliminate inequalities in the labour market (especially NGOs providing community service)</i></p>
<p>To support the flexibility of the work force towards the labour market, Government will support the better conditions for the local mobility of work force through flexible forms of re-trainings, or other forms of education and availability of the part-time jobs.</p>	<p>Measure No. 1.1: <i>Creating a system supporting the introduction of long-term unemployed, low-skilled and other disadvantaged groups into the labour market</i></p> <p>Measure No. 3.1: <i>Support the creation of an environment stimulating human resources development and providing their adaptability in the process of structural changes and coming of new technologies</i></p>
<p>Government will focus its interest on the creations of tools to ensure the respect of men and women equal opportunities rule.</p>	<p>Measure No. 4.1: <i>Gender awareness-raising activities – gender studies, gender audit, gender awareness as the means for labour market equality between men</i></p>

	and women
Government will discuss the insurance system for unemployed so that they are motivated to search for new job, re-trainings or other additional education.	<p>Measure No.1.1: <i>Creating a system supporting the introduction of long-term unemployed, low-skilled and other disadvantaged groups into the labour market</i></p> <p>Measure No.1.2: <i>Creating an environment supporting the development and creation of effective solutions combating all forms of labour market-related discrimination, racism and xenophobia</i></p> <p>Measure No. 2.1: <i>Strengthening the capacity of NGOs as actors to help eliminate inequalities in the labour market (especially NGOs providing community service)</i></p>

The overview between the SR Policy Statement priorities and the EQUAL Community Initiative measures states that the EQUAL Community Initiative is in accordance with particular priorities of the Slovak Government for the period of 2002 – 2005 in the area of the human resources development that will contribute to fulfil the Policy Statement of the Government of the Slovak Republic intentions.

3.2.2 European Employment Strategy and Joint Assessment of Employment Priorities in the Slovak Republic (JAP)

The Government of the Slovak Republic has prepared with the European Commission, Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs, a *Joint Assessment of Slovakia's short-term employment and labour market policy priorities*. This document presents an agreed set of employment and labour market objectives necessary to advance the country's labour market transformation, to make progress in adapting the employment system so as to be able to implement the *Employment Strategy*.

Employment and labour market policies must operate in the context of the overall economic development challenges facing Slovakia. This overall context is set out in detail in the *Joint Assessment of Medium-term Economic Policy Priorities* developed by Slovakia and the European Commission and approved by the Slovak Government in February 2000.

The document set a medium-term goal to create systematic conditions for accelerating economic growth 3 to 4 percent in 2001 and 4 to 6 percent annually in the following period. Achievement of this objective would make it possible to reach an economic standard of approx. 50-55 percent of the EU average by the time of Slovakia's accession to the Union.

Slovakia, moving towards more favourable medium-term trajectory required a decisive programme of short term reforms, to which the government was committed. It is essential that employment policies should be supportive of these overall reform efforts.

The *Joint Assessment of employment priorities* constitutes an important preparatory document for developing a national and regional strategy for assistance by the European structural funds.

3.2.3 European Employment Strategy and Joint Inclusion Memorandum in the Slovak Republic (JIM)

The transformation processes that have been taking place in Slovakia's economic, political and social sphere have had a significant impact upon the standard of living and living conditions of citizens. The impacts of globalisation, economic internationalism and modernisation of the social protection system have resulted in the increased marginalisation of some groups.

In SR there continues to be a lack of factual information and statistical data on the poverty state and trends. The recent data available, which come close to the EU definitions, is evaluated in the World Bank Reports on Slovakia on the basis of the Microcensus 1996.

Even though the work content of the MoLSAF SR has always been concerned with the affected groups of population, the JIM is the first integrated programme, with which the Government of the SR officially promulgates and engages in the fight against poverty and exclusion not only at national but also supranational level. Mainstreaming and integrating social inclusion policies at national and local levels draw on the common objectives approved by the EU in Nice. At the same time they also rely on particular national programmes, action plans and measures continually elaborated at the MoLSAF SR in line with the strategic and conceptual goals in order to ensure the inclusion of different disadvantaged groups, which have been explicitly referred to in the previous sections of this chapter.

Solving the problems of poverty and social exclusion is determined by the political acceptance of these phenomena as priority issues for the Slovak society. Mainstreaming of poverty and social exclusion is a crucial impulse to raise the quality of cooperation at horizontal level (between sectoral ministries), at vertical level (between individual tiers of state administration and self-government), as well as at inter-sectoral level (between the Government institutions, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector). Integration of social inclusion policies will require strengthening the responsibility and motivation of individual stakeholders to take part in the solution of these problems. This requirement is also connected with the need to continue strengthening the competencies of self-government authorities (cities and communities), which are closest to the place where poverty and social exclusion arise and spread.

3.2.4 Supporting gender equality in all measures adopted within the Community Initiative EQUAL

Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is a tool which will be applied in the Slovakia EQUAL Programme to achieve equality between women and men which goes beyond promoting equality through the implementation of specific measures to help women, and mobilises all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality by actively and openly taking into account, at the planning stage, their possible effects on the respective situation of men and women (gender perspective). This means systematically examining measures and policies and taking into account such possible effects when defining and implementing them (COM (96)67final: Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities).

The Slovak EQUAL Programme supports both specific measures to improve women's access to and participation in the labour market, as well as gender impact assessment in order to take into account, within all measures, equal opportunities for women and men as part of the mainstreaming approach.

The Managing Authority for the Community Initiative EQUAL in Slovakia will take steps to ensure that gender perspective and promotion of equal opportunities will be taken into consideration when planning, selecting, implementing and evaluating the DPs, as well as when good practice will be mainstreamed. National expertise on gender mainstreaming will provide guidance for example to DPs, the selection committee, Managing Authority, NSS and evaluators when implementing gender mainstreaming. DPs will be advised that they must take gender perspective into account in their work plans. In the selection process, DPs contributing to gender equality will be given priority under all themes. Gender balance will be sought in the composition of the Monitoring committee, and other supporting structures to EQUAL. Indicators used to evaluate the impact of the interventions will be split by gender. When mainstreaming the results, special attention will be paid to good practices promoting gender equality. The support of gender equality in Slovakia is provided for in relevant legislation and institutionally ensured at Government level through the Department of Equal Opportunities and Anti-discrimination of the MoLSAF SR and the Expert Committee for Gender Equality. At Parliamentary level, there is a Subcommittee for Equal Opportunities and the Position of Women in the Society, working with the Committee of the National Council of the SR (=Parliament) for Human Rights, National Minorities and the Position of Women.

Gender issues and equal opportunities are important aspects of the approach to addressing problems of discrimination and social exclusion, gender mainstreaming being at its core.

Within the efforts to support gender equality, in 1997, the Government of the SR approved the *National Action Plan for Women (NAP)* and in 2001 *the Concept of Equal Opportunities of Women and Men (CoEOWaM)*. These documents constitute fundamental schemes also for designing special

measures for the elimination of discrimination from gender aspects. In NAP for women this area is covered under priority VII, *Creating conditions for personal development and employment of women with smaller development chances (women living in rural areas, women of the Roma ethnic group, unemployed women, women not adequately prepared for their motherly role, women with disabilities, etc.)* and in CoEOoWaM – *Supporting DPs to enhance the position of rural women and men and women and men with smaller development chances*. In April 2003 the Government adopted a resolution, by which it assigned the MoLSAF SR to elaborate measures specifically aimed at equalising opportunities for Roma women (*Government resolution on the evaluation of the Priorities of the Government of the SR related to Roma communities for 2002 and the Strategy of the Government of the SR for the solution of problems of the Roma community for 2001 and basic rationale for the policy concept of the Government of the SR in the integration of Roma communities*). The SR Government have monitored the issues of poverty and social exclusion through the prism of gender equality also by means of other Government materials, which have been discussed in the foregoing chapters.

Measures targeting the elimination of gender poverty gaps listed in JIM are supported also by the EQUAL Community Initiative.

With regard to gender equality in the area of employment and income distribution it is crucial to eliminate long-term unemployment of women, increase attractiveness of women with children as labour force, purposefully adapt job positions to different flexible forms of work (flexible working time, split positions, part-time jobs, teleworking, home workers etc.), reduce unequal remuneration of women and men, prevent gender segregation in the labour market, with women significantly overrepresented in lower paid sectors (health, education, public administration, light industries, etc.), ensure equalisation in the amount of pensions, thus eliminating the risk of feminisation of old age and poverty. In the forthcoming period programmes will be designed aiming to promote employability of women at increased risk of social exclusion. This involves in particular long-term unemployed women, women of the Roma ethnic group, women with disabilities, older women, women with problems of social integration (women ex-prisoners, homeless women, women addicted to alcohol and drugs), families with greater number of children, and single parents with dependent children, youth raised in disadvantaged social and family environments, girls with unfinished primary education, special school leavers, migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Measures to eliminate the existing situation are difficult to implement and call for increased performance of the economy and the change in gender stereotypes in society, particularly among employers.

Gender equality in access to education, retraining and training – women's relatively high level of education creates relatively a satisfactory starting point for employment. Family duties which are attributed chiefly to women as a result of stereotyped views create a barrier for entry into the labour market after the family-raising phase. Despite this, women show greater interest in retraining and training.

For women training after the family-raising phase is given increased attention in the active employment measures and DP's. It is typical of the female labour force that women are more ready to take up even lower quality jobs compared to their education for the sake of family responsibilities. The prevailing orientation of women in education to the humanities reduces the attractiveness of women

3.2.5 European Employment Strategy and National Employment Action Plan

In April 2003, The Slovak Republic (SR) signed an Agreement on Accession of SR into the EU, while fully respecting decisions made by EU bodies in all areas relevant for the SR as a future member. The area of employment is one of the key parts.

In accordance with EU Council decisions, SR (being still an EU candidate country) agreed to join the implementation of the European Employment Strategy especially in relation to Council's conclusions from Essen, Luxembourg, Amsterdam and Lisbon. In line with these conclusions, a Strategy of Employment Policy up to 2002 had been developed in 1999 containing framework contents of National Employment Plan as a main political Government's document in the field of employment.

The SR Government's Programme Manifesto, Strategy Supporting Employment Growth through changes in social system and labour market as well as Joint Assessment of Employment Priorities in SR and Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources formed basis for translation of EU Principles of Employment Policy into priorities, objectives and tools of their implementation.

The period of the implementation of National Action Employment Plans could be characterised as:

- higher number of new jobs leading to employment increase in 2001(22.000) and 2002 (33.000)
- gradually decreasing unemployment rate
- increasing number of available working posts in all of the Slovak regions
- GDP growth
- decreasing number of gainfully employed – both men and women

The National Employment Action Plan for 2003 contains translation of horizontal objectives forming part of Principles of Employment Policy approved by the Council for 2002 (letters A to F) as adapted to the Slovak conditions. Its structure complies with four main pillars of the EU Employment Principles broken down to 18 principles within these pillars.

The first pillar of the National Employment Action Plan for 2003 may be characterized by three principal action lines defined according to the group characteristics and their particular situation in relation to the labour market:

- a) preventive steps – encompass a set of steps focusing on groups in the transitional phase or groups already placed on the labour market, emphasizing vocational training of young people and continuous adult education,
- b) early steps – encompass a set of steps representing early intervention in unemployment aimed at fast return into the labour market in order to prevent long-term unemployment
- c) reviving steps – encompass a set of steps focusing on social and professional inclusion of groups facing specific difficulty including into the labour market.

Translation of five principles into 22 priorities focusing on business development forms part of the 2nd pillar. These objectives and tools focus mainly on alleviation of administrative barriers in entrepreneurship, safeguarding enforcement of law, increased stability and transparency of legislation, enhanced motivation of individuals to start up a business, improved education of entrepreneurs as well as combating illegal work.

Implementation of all three principles of 3rd pillar – supporting adaptability of companies and their employees, is depending on activity and co-operation of social partners especially while enforcing all forms of work organization modernization and support for adaptability of companies as an element of life-long learning.

The principles of the 3rd pillar are translated into eight priorities which may be defined as a support of collective bargaining on all respective levels concerning modernization of work organization and flexible work conditions, limitation of obstacles hindering employment growth by simplified employment conditions, adaptation of labour market to structural changes in economy, continuous safety improvement and health protection, working conditions, working environment, reducing the number of occupational accidents and diseases and improved situation on the field of life-long learning provided for employees while stressing information and communication technology literacy.

The 4th pillar – The issue of policies enforcing equal opportunities is covered in the entire National Employment Action Plan for 2003 on cross-sectional basis striving to introduce gender balance in all stipulated priorities and objectives of respective principles contained in SR conditions. The principle of equality between women and men is regarded as key, in order to make up for women's disadvantageous position concerning their entry and participation on the labour market and men's disadvantage in family life.

Urgency of the need to address the issues identified by principles in the National Action Plan for Employment for 2003 and declared in priorities and objectives set has become one of the most crucial criteria for selection of topics and intentions within the EQUAL Community Initiative. In the context of the mission of the EQUAL Community Initiative an update-nature of the need for development of new approaches and solutions and orientation on approaching all types of discrimination at labour market in a given area has been an important aspect and assumption for selection.

Map of the links among principles of the National Action Plan for Employment and selected topics of the EQUAL Community Initiative can be found in the table below:

Table: Links between Measures of CIP EQUAL and Principles of the National Action Plan for Employment 2003 (NAPZ 2003)

Links between Measures of CIP EQUAL and Principles of the National Action Plan for Employment 2003 (NAPZ 2003)	
<i>Principles NAPZ 2003</i>	<i>Measures CIP EQUAL</i>
<p>1st pillar Improvement of employability</p>	<p>Theme No. 1.1: <i>Facilitating access to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated and re-integrated into labour market</i></p> <p>Theme No. 1.2: <i>Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market</i></p>
<p>Principle No. 1 Solution of the unemployment of young people and the prevention of long-term unemployment</p> <p><i>Slovak Priorities in a Given Field:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Solution of the unemployment of young people; – Prevention and fight against long-term unemployment by the improvement of the employability of the registered unemployed, especially upon re-qualification and the development of their skills and; – Enhancement of the motivation of young people and adults, especially the long-term unemployed, to find and maintain employment; – Strong enhancement of the role of the employment services in the prevention of long-term unemployment and a targeted approach to the unemployed; – Solution of the unemployment of disabled groups of the registered unemployed within the groups handicapped in the labour market, through the instruments of the active labour market policy, programmes and DPs; – Improvement of the employability of target groups of the registered unemployed within the groups handicapped in the labour market, through counselling activities and specialist preparation increasing abilities, skills and providing new knowledge; 	<p>Measure No. 1.1: <i>Creating a system supporting the introduction of long-term unemployed, low-skilled and other disadvantaged groups into the labour market</i></p> <p>Measure No. 2.1: <i>Strengthening the capacity of NGOs as actors to help eliminate inequalities in the labour market (especially NGOs providing community service)</i></p> <p>Measure No. 3.1: <i>Support the creation of an environment stimulating human resources development and providing their adaptability in the process of structural changes and coming of new technologies</i></p>
<p>Principle No. 2 Approach more inclined to employment: system of benefits, taxes and specialist preparation</p> <p><i>Slovak Priorities in a Given Field :</i></p>	<p>Measure No. 1.1: <i>Creating a system supporting the introduction of long-term unemployed, low-skilled and other disadvantaged groups into the labour market</i></p> <p>Measure No. 3.1:</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Preparation of a reform concerning the system of benefits, taxes and contributions and a clear division of the area that, in regard to the protection of the social situation of citizens, is ensured on a solidarity principle from the area created by the insurance principle; – Elimination of discrimination of the so-called medium sphere, where this discrimination exists (i.e., where the biggest disproportion is between the payments of taxes and the contribution of individuals and their families and their work incomes and family allowances); – Transition from the sanction model of the evaluation of the attitude of the citizen, to the solution of his income situation by his own active exertion, or the tendency to passively approach towards the mode of promotion and remuneration for activity; – Enhancement of the efficiency of the active labour market policy; – Development of the skills of the registered unemployed and making their access to the labour market easier; 	<p><i>Support the creation of an environment stimulating human resources development and providing their adaptability in the process of structural changes and coming of new technologies</i></p>
<p>Principle No. 3 Development of an active aging policy</p> <p><i>Slovak Priorities in a Given Field :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Promotion of the employment of men over 50 years of age and of women over 45 years of age; – Development of the lifetime education system with special emphasis on the maintenance of the work habits and skills of labour, specifically of men over 50 years of age and women over 45 years of age; – Decrease of the demotivation impacts of the tax burden and a system of benefits supporting the maintenance of elderly employees in the labour market; 	<p>Measure No. 1.1: <i>Creating a system supporting the introduction of long-term unemployed, low-skilled and other disadvantaged groups into the labour market</i></p> <p>Measure No. 3.1: <i>Support the creation of an environment stimulating human resources development and providing their adaptability in the process of structural changes and coming of new technologies</i></p>
<p>Principle No. 4 Development of skills for the new labour market in conjunction with lifetime education</p> <p><i>Slovak Priorities in a Given Field :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improvement of the quality of the system of education and specialist preparation and the studying and teaching curriculum; – Creation of necessary assumptions in the system of specialist education and preparation intended for the enhancement of its interface with the requirements of the labour market; 	<p>Measure No. 1.1: <i>Creating a system supporting the introduction of long-term unemployed, low-skilled and other disadvantaged groups into the labour market</i></p> <p>Measure No. 3.1: <i>Support the creation of an environment stimulating human resources development and providing their adaptability in the process of structural changes and coming of new technologies</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of the necessary assumptions intended for the reduction of the proportion of young people untimely aborting the educational system; - Completion of classrooms in all of the secondary schools and equipping them with a good quality computer and information technology; - Continuation in the rationalization of the secondary school network and innovation of studying and educational specializations according to the social order, intended for an easier engagement of school graduates into the labour market; - Increased attention paid to young people with health impairment, leavers from children's homes and educational facilities by the creation of conditions in regard to their engagement in the work process. With respect to young people with multiple health impairments, support is needed for the creation of protected workshops; - Generation of systemic elements and mechanisms in the area of further education as an integral part of lifetime education with the view of helping people to gain and renew their skills; - Development of counselling in the area of initial and lifetime education; 	
<p>Principle No. 5 <i>The member states will orient towards development of the electronic education of all of their citizens. The member states will mainly carry on their effort to provide access to Internet and multi-media sources to all schools and provide that, until the end of 2003, all of the necessary teachers are trained in using these technologies, so as to be able to provide the pupils with a wide digital literacy.</i></p>	<p>Measure No. 3.1: <i>Support the creation of an environment stimulating human resources development and providing their adaptability in the process of structural changes and coming of new technologies</i></p>
<p>Principle No. 6 <i>Execution of active policies intended for the generation of suitable jobs, prevention and suppression of reasons of too close specializations in relation to the new European labour market</i></p> <p><i>Slovak Priorities in a Given Field :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase of harmony between supply and demand in the labour market; - Improvement of information for persons and employers concerning the possibilities of employment and specialist education and preparation; - Promotion of professional and territorial mobility; - Legalization of employment relations; 	<p>Measure No. 1.1: <i>Creating a system supporting the introduction of long-term unemployed, low-skilled and other disadvantaged groups into the labour market</i></p> <p>Measure No. 3.1: <i>Support the creation of an environment stimulating human resources development and providing their adaptability in the process of structural changes and coming of new technologies</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Establishment and improvement of databases of jobs and the possibilities of education, creation of capacities for specialist education for the needs of foreign investors; 	
<p>Principle No. 7 Suppression of discrimination and the support of social inclusion through the approach to employment</p> <p><i>Slovak Priorities in a Given Field :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identification and suppression of all of discrimination in accession to the labour market, to education and to specialist preparation; – Decrease of the number of persons endangered by social exclusion, through the improvement of their approach to formal, as well as informal, education and employment; – Creation of a system of preventive measures and measures of the active labour market policy intended to support the inclusion of at-risk or handicapped groups and individuals in the labour market; – Promotion and integration, especially, of young people into social and voluntary activities; 	<p>Measure No. 1.1: <i>Creating a system supporting the introduction of long-term unemployed, low-skilled and other disadvantaged groups into the labour market</i></p> <p>Measure No. 1.2: <i>Creating an environment supporting the development and creation of effective solutions combating all forms of labour market-related discrimination, racism and xenophobia</i></p> <p>Measure No. 2.1: <i>Strengthening the capacity of NGOs as actors to help eliminate inequalities in the labour market (especially NGOs providing community service)</i></p> <p>Measure No. 3.1: <i>Support the creation of an environment stimulating human resources development and providing their adaptability in the process of structural changes and coming of new technologies</i></p> <p>Measure No. 5.1: <i>Supporting the social and vocational integration of Asylum Seekers</i></p>
<p>2nd pillar Development of business activities</p>	<p>Theme No. 2 <i>Strengthening the social economy (the third sector) in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs</i></p>
<p>Principle No. 8 Assistance in the commencement and operation of business activities</p> <p><i>Slovak Priorities in a Given Field :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Elimination of administrative barriers in the registration of companies, the assignment of premises in cadastral offices and in gaining residents permits for foreign investors; – Provision of the enforceability of the law, the speeding up of legal proceedings, the strengthening of the rights of minority shareholders and a higher efficiency of the Act on bankruptcy; – Increase of stability and transparency of legislation for business subjects; 	
<p>Principle No. 9 The member states will support the commencement of business activities</p> <p><i>Slovak Priorities in a Given Field :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Elimination of restrictions restraining 	<p>Measure No. 3.1: <i>Support the creation of an environment stimulating human resources development and providing their adaptability in the process of structural changes and coming of new technologies</i></p>

<p>the commencement of self-independent gainful activities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Enhancement of the motivation of individuals to commence a business activity, through the improvement of conditions, including the legislative conditions, for business operation; – Increase in the businessmen's interest in doing business in the field of combined transport; – Establishment of assumptions for the use of resources from EU structural funds; – Improvement of the education of businessmen; – Fight against illegal work; 	
<p>Principle No. 10 New employment opportunities in a society based on knowledge and in services</p> <p><i>Slovak Priorities in a Given Field :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Support of the development of information and communication technologies as potential sources for the creation of qualitative jobs, with high demands on knowledge; – Preparation of a new Act on telecommunications; – Support of the ability of small and medium-size enterprises to become subcontractors of services and product components for large companies, especially of the range of foreign investors; – Prevention of the creation of administrative barriers for business in the legal regulations related with the execution of geological works, e.g., in the field of environmental protection, health care and agriculture; – Support of the foundation of Cooperative Development Centres in the interest of the establishment of new cooperatives, especially in the provision of social and health care services; – Creation of new types of cooperatives, especially within a wide spectrum of various services with the help of Cooperative Development Centres and mainly in regions with a high unemployment rate; 	<p>Measure No. 3.1: <i>Support the creation of an environment stimulating human resources development and providing their adaptability in the process of structural changes and coming of new technologies</i></p>
<p>Principle No. 11 Regional and local steps intended to support employment</p> <p><i>Slovak Priorities in a Given Field :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Development of regional employment strategies; 	<p>Measure No. 2.1: <i>Strengthening the capacity of NGOs as actors to help eliminate inequalities in the labour market (especially NGOs providing community service)</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support of higher territorial units, regional state administration, local self-government and local state administration in the creation of regional employment strategies, in order to use the opportunities, which are offered upon the creation of jobs at a regional level as well as at a local level; - Support of the cooperation between all of the participants, including non-governmental organisations; - Development of social economy capacities for the creation of jobs intended for the production of goods and the provision of services related to needs not produced by the business sphere, because they do not bring sufficient profit; - Maintenance of rural settlement; - Execution of radical changes in the institutional structure and content of activities performed by public employment services with their interface to the organization of local state administration in the social sphere; 	
<p>Principle No. 12 Tax reforms in regard to employment and specialist preparation</p> <p><i>Slovak Priorities in a Given Field :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of tax reform, which results from the fact that, in regard to the actual conditions in society, it is most efficient to tax profit, property and consumption; the tax reform is based on the main principles applied in the EU countries, i.e., on the principles of equality, justice and equality in taxation for all of the business subjects, so as to create an equally competitive business environment for all of the business subjects and thereby the conditions for the development of employment; - Decrease of the financial burden on business activities through the following measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With respect to taxes: consistent reappraisal of tax legislation, especially in order to eliminate many currently existing discriminations against business subjects according to their size, legal form or line of business, as well as in order for a more fair distribution of the tax burden; - With respect to contributions: a radical decrease of the contribution liability of the business sphere, 	

<p>which overcharges the cost of labour and the level of which currently represents one of the major reasons putting employers off from the creation of new jobs. The specified measure must be carried out, even at the expense of a drop in the incomes of social security funds, which will need to be covered from tax revenues;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With respect to fees: discontinuance of the extension of fee liabilities specified by law, i.e., to not allow the approval of new legal fees to happen and, at the same time, reevaluate and maximally reduce the range of the currently existing fee liabilities; - Development of the supply side of the economy; - Optimization of tax system; 	
<p>3rd pillar Support of the adaptability of enterprises and their employees</p>	<p>Theme No. 3 <i>Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies</i></p>
<p>Principle No. 13 Modernization of work organisation</p> <p><i>Slovak Priorities in a Given Field :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support of collective bargaining at all of the relevant levels about the modernization of work organization and flexible working conditions; - Increase in the flexibility of the organization of working hours as an instrument directed towards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support of employment; - Enhancement of the quality of jobs; - Increase in the efficiency of work processes; - Enhancement of the quality of life; - Enhancement of protection of health and safety at work; - Creation of conditions intended for the enhancement of information of social partners about innovative trends in the organization of work and working hours and in the improvement of their cooperation in the increase in flexibility of work organization and the organization of working hours; 	<p>Measure No. 3.1: <i>Support the creation of an environment stimulating human resources development and providing their adaptability in the process of structural changes and coming of new technologies</i></p>
<p>Principle No. 14</p> <p><i>Slovak Priorities in a Given Field :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prevention of barriers to the growth of employment by the simplification of the conditions necessary for employment; 	<p>Measure No. 1.1: <i>Creating a system supporting the introduction of long-term unemployed, low-skilled and other disadvantaged groups into the labour market</i></p> <p>Measure No. 2.1:</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Adaptation of the labour market to structural changes occurring in the economy; – Reform of the participation of employees (parallel operation of labour unions and staff boards at employers), – Permanent improvement of the protection of health and safety at work, working conditions, work environment and the reduction of industrial accidents and occupational diseases; 	<p><i>Strengthening the capacity of NGOs as actors to help eliminate inequalities in the labour market (especially NGOs providing community service)</i></p> <p>Measure No. 3.1: <i>Support the creation of an environment stimulating human resources development and providing their adaptability in the process of structural changes and coming of new technologies</i></p>
<p>Principle No. 15 Support of the adaptability of enterprises as a part of lifetime education</p> <p>The social partners are called upon, at all of the relevant levels, to make agreements on lifetime (further) education, where applicable, in order to simplify adaptability and renewal, especially in regard to information and communication technologies. In this conjunction, the conditions should be determined that will insure the provision of opportunities to all employees, so that they achieve literacy in the field of information society, by the year 2003.</p>	<p>Measure No. 3.1: <i>Support the creation of an environment stimulating human resources development and providing their adaptability in the process of structural changes and coming of new technologies</i></p>
<p>4th pillar Strengthening of equal opportunity policies</p>	<p>Theme No. 4 Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation</p>
<p>Principle No. 16 Approach to the general application of the equal opportunity principle</p> <p><i>Slovak Priorities in a Given Field :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Development of a draft for a system evaluating the performance of the National Employment Action Plan according to indicators specified by the EC, including the analysis of the existing databases and its accessibility and a draft for the creation of a new information databases necessary for evaluation; – Provision of the evaluation of individual principles of the National Employment Action Plan in relation to the application of generic aspects; – Consistent use of the principle of equal opportunities of men and women in the execution of all of the principles of the National Employment Action Plan; 	<p>Measure No. 2.1: <i>Strengthening the capacity of NGOs as actors to help eliminate inequalities in the labour market (especially NGOs providing community service)</i></p> <p>Measure No. 4.1: <i>Gender awareness-raising activities – gender studies, gender audit, gender awareness as the means for labour market equality between men and women</i></p>
<p>Principle No. 17 Solution of differences in the representation of men and women</p> <p><i>Slovak Priorities in a Given Field :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Execution of programmes, controlling 	<p>Measure No. 2.1: <i>Strengthening the capacity of NGOs as actors to help eliminate inequalities in the labour market (especially NGOs providing community service)</i></p>

<p>mechanisms and the practical application of sanctions intended for the elimination of badges of discrimination in the labour market and in remuneration due to sex;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in the level of further education with respect to the issue concerning the equality of opportunities of men and women; - Improvement of the access of unemployed women to employment, especially through the support of their employment in professions that are considerably marked with an unequal approach according to sex; 	<p>Measure No. 4.1: <i>Gender awareness-raising activities – gender studies, gender audit, gender awareness as the means for labour market equality between men and women</i></p>
<p>Principle No.18 Harmonisation of work and family lives</p> <p><i>Slovak Priorities in a Given Field :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of a growth in harmony between work and family obligations by a reduction of the barriers that prevent employed women and men caring for children or other persons dependent on their care, equivalently apply in the labour market; - Support of the operation of services intended for employed parents with infant children and services intended for persons dependent on the care of employed persons (elderly persons, handicapped persons); 	<p>Measure No. 4.1: <i>Gender awareness-raising activities – gender studies, gender audit, gender awareness as the means for labour market equality between men and women</i></p>
	<p>Theme No.5 Asylum seekers</p>
	<p>Measure No. 5.1: Supporting the social and vocational integration of Asylum Seekers</p>

The above overview of links between the National Action Plan for Employment and selected topics of the EQUAL Community Initiative demonstrate that the EQUAL Community Initiative will address most of the problems identified by the National Action Plan for Employment for 2003 by developing new and innovative approaches to them.

In addition, the overview presented above shows that all selected topics within the EQUAL Community Initiative will deal with one or more principles of the National Section Plan for Employment for 2003 responding thus to a need to approach actual issues of the Slovak labour market.

3.2.6 Complementarity and Compatibility with Community Policies

Complementarity with the Operational Programme Human Resources – the Slovak Republic

As the Community Initiative of the European Social Fund, EQUAL is the learning platform that finds new ways of achieving the policy objectives of the European Employment Strategy and Social Inclusion Process. EQUAL differs from the mainstream European Social Fund programmes in that it is a laboratory to develop new ways of tackling discrimination and inequality in the labour market. Thus the selected EQUAL themes complement the ESF measures while looking for new approaches and ways to fight discrimination on all grounds.

Within the selection of the priorities for EQUAL emphasis has been placed on avoiding overlaps with the Operational Programme Human Resources.

The following table illustrates that there is no overlapping between both programmes.

Table: Complementarity of priorities SOP HR – CIP EQUAL / SLOVAKIA

SOP Human Resources	CIP EQUAL
Priority 1: Development of Active Labour Market Policy	Theme No. 1
Measure 1.1: <i>Modernisation, extension and improvement of employment services and development of activation programmes for job seekers</i>	Measure No. 1.1.: <i>Creating a system supporting the introduction of long-term unemployed, low-skilled and other disadvantaged groups into the labour market</i>
Measure 1.2: <i>Facilitation of the integration and reintegration into the labour market of the job seekers with special emphasis on the disadvantaged job seekers through support of job creation and self employment</i>	
Measure 1.3: <i>Development of training and retraining of job seekers in order to improve their prospects on the labour market</i>	
	Measure No. 1.2: <i>Creating an environment supporting the development and creation of effective solutions combating all forms of labour market-related discrimination, racism and xenophobia</i>
Priority 2: Reinforcement of social inclusion and equal opportunities on the labour market	Theme No. 1
Measure 2.1: <i>Improving employability of groups at risk of social exclusion</i>	Measure No.1.1: <i>Creating a system supporting the introduction of long-term unemployed, low-skilled and other disadvantaged groups into the labour market</i>
Measure 2.2: <i>Elimination of barriers which prevent equality of men and women on the labour market with emphasis on the reconciliation of work and family life</i>	Theme No. 4
	Measure No. 4.1.: <i>Gender awareness-raising activities – gender studies, gender audit, gender awareness as the means for labour market equality between men and women</i>
Priority 3: Improved qualifications and adaptability of workforce and those entering the labour market	Theme No. 3

Measure 3.1: <i>Adaptation of vocational training and education to the needs of the knowledge-based society</i>	
Measure 3.2: <i>Development of further education with emphasis on improving qualification and adaptability of labour force via improved and more extensive provision thereof</i>	
Measure 3.3: <i>Development of career guidance and systems for anticipating changes of qualification needs on the labour market</i>	
	Theme No. 3.1:: <i>Support the creation of an environment stimulating HR development and ensuring their adaptability in the process of structural changes and use of new technologies</i>
	Theme No. 2
	Measure No. 2.1: <i>Strengthening the capacity of NGOs as actor to help eliminate inequalities in the labour market (with emphasis on NGOs offering public services to population)</i>
	Theme No. 5
	Measure No. 5.1:: <i>Supporting the social and vocational integration of Asylum Seekers</i>
Technical Assistance	Technical Assistance
Technical Assistance Measure	Technical Assistance Measure
Technical Assistance Measure	Technical Assistance Measure

Compatibility with Community policies

The choice of the priorities for the EQUAL Community Initiative Programme in the Slovak Republic is based on the needs of the labour market situation in the Slovak Republic and is in the line with the objectives of the European Employment Strategy (full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, strengthening social cohesion and inclusion). At the same time it takes an account of the Employment Guidelines of 2003. They are in-line with the "knowledge-based Europe capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion orientation and the conclusions of the Lisbon European Council of 2000.

There are certain commonalities between EQUAL and other European programmes, instruments and measures, which reach beyond the field of labour market. EQUAL however puts the main emphasis on labour market and social inclusion what makes it complementary to the following initiatives:

- Community Initiative INTERREG III
- Programme LEONARDO
- European Refugee Fund

Special attention will be placed on harmonisation and complementarity with the listed programmes in the process of selection of applicants, monitoring and evaluation of DPs. The Managing Authority will ensure that there is no overlapping and double financing with other programmes.

Within the Priority Nr. 5 *Asylum Seekers* will be ensured that there is no overlapping with the activities financed under European Refugee Fund.

To prevent possible overlapping, activities implemented within EQUAL will be the subject of consultation with the Representation of the International Organization for Migration, Slovakia.

During the selection process, the body responsible for the DPs selection will control the possible overlapping and double financing. The mainstream ESF Managing Authority will receive on the results regularly, and the regular meeting of the Monitoring Committees, of each programming document at national and transnational level, will ensure the exchange of information and clarification.

4. Priorities and Strategy for the EQUAL Community Initiative

The selection of the priorities for the EQUAL Community Initiative in the Slovak Republic has been based on conclusions drawn from the labour market analysis in Slovakia especially from the point of view of disadvantaged groups (see Chapter 2) and input of all stakeholders participating in the consultation process (see Chapter 1.3)

Equally reflects the selection of the priorities the content of all relevant documents (see Chapter 1.3) and that of the Communication from the Commission (COM 2003/840).

4.1 Global Goal of the EQUAL Community Initiative in Slovakia

The Labour - market related strategic objective of the Slovak Government is to stabilise employment, to increase it gradually and decrease unemployment gradually. This is an economic-based and social-based objective consistent with strategic objectives of the "European Employment Strategy".

Within its implementation Slovakia focuses primarily on:

- enhanced role of re-training, provision of re-training programmes for a broad spectrum of registered unemployed, especially for disadvantaged labour market participants and on improved targeting and directness of re-training programmes
- active policy tools oriented on regions with the highest rates of unemployment with the aim of eliminating regional disparities
- application of preventive measures and activities supporting registered unemployed while seeking jobs and entering into job
- application of individualised forms of work with registered unemployed
- re-integration of long-term unemployed into the labour market

Within the overall context of the above objectives and intentions, the strategic goal for the EQUAL Community Initiative in Slovakia have been set as to **enhance efficiency of the tools, methods and procedures for addressing the challenges in the field of discrimination and inequalities at labour market through searching for innovative solutions of their operation.**

Within the global goal for the EQUAL Community Initiative, specific objectives representing targets of particular measures selected have been identified below:

- Reduced unemployment of marginal groups and promoting their integration in the labour market.
- Enhanced conditions for minorities for seeking for the opportunities to find a job at labour market
- Strengthening the role of the NGO sector in the field of provision of public services
- Support the establishment of an environment which motivates the HR development
- Strengthening the equal principle regarding opportunities within the labour market
- Assistance provision to asylum-seekers in their social and vocational integration
- Ensuring conditions for a successful implementation of the EQUAL Community Initiative in Slovakia

4.2 Selection of themes

Based on facts mentioned above, a strategy was selected with special regard to the following problem areas:

- those, for which, the EQUAL Community Initiative would be most suitable due to the character and nature of its solutions as well as recommendations within the consultation process (problem concerning strengthening of social economies – third sector)
- those, in which the need for new innovative approaches is the most relevant (the issue of simplified access and return to labour market concerning those who have difficulty integrating and re-integrating into the labour market and issue of support provided to adaptability of companies and employees to structural economic changes and information and other new technologies)

In order to find new ways of achieving the policy objectives of the European Employment Strategy the activities which will be carried out through EQUAL will focus on testing new ways of solving the problems identified in Chapter 2.

The applicants interested in participating in EQUAL have to be aware that their activities need to focus on problematic areas of labour market from the point of view of discrimination.

Within that it is important to realise that EQUAL is a laboratory which tests new way of fighting discrimination, therefore a great emphasis will be put on innovation and experiments. It is necessary to avoid any kind of overlap with the Operational Programme Human Resources as well as with the Single Programming Document for Human Resources within the territory of Bratislava.

Six priorities have been chosen, including technical assistance. Two measures have been assigned within Priority No. 1 (see the table, Chapter 3.2.6.1) otherwise there is one measure for each priority.

Within each measure there is:

- a description of the rationale for the selection of the theme (see *Justification*)
- the definition of the objective (see *Objective*)
- the content of the scope for experimentation which will be provided for the applicants in the call for proposals (see *Activities*)

4.2.1 Priority 1 (Theme 1.1)

Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated and re-integrated into labour market

Measure No. 1.1:

Creating a system supporting the introduction of long-term unemployed, low-skilled and other disadvantaged groups into the labour market

Justification:

As shown by the results of the Labour Market Analysis within the background study¹⁰ one of the main economic and social issues of Slovakia is its enduring high unemployment rate. The labour market shows a lot of structural characteristics, especially high level of long-term unemployed, very high rate of unemployment in case of persons with low qualification and severe disability, unemployed young persons, considerable regional disparities in terms of unemployment and extremely high Roma minority unemployment. In the light of above-mentioned, it is inevitable to work out a whole range of innovative solutions and systemic changes to significantly influence employment growth in case of disadvantaged groups and their integration into labour market.

A lot of problems within the integration in the labour market occur among ethnic groups, mainly Roma

10) Miroslav Majtán, Miroslava Szarková: *Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those having difficulty in being integrated and re-integrating to the labour market*, NLO, 2003

minority, the most numerous minority in Slovakia. The low educational level causes low level of their integration in the labour market. Roma minority, having the high percentage among the long-term unemployed have been stuck around in the vicious circle of poverty, which is characterised by limited increasing mobility and limited interactions with the society.

On the other hand, it is necessary to mention the low perception of the majority in society towards other cultures that is the result of insufficient multicultural education, and stereotypical attitudes.

Objective:

Reduced unemployment of marginal groups, education of the majority in society to accept the ethnic groups and promoting their integration in the labour market.

Activities:

- Promoting methods of individual work with the client, motivating and re-training courses respecting specifics of the target groups; development of training programmes and trainers' training programmes;
- Distant education forms and programmes for experts in given area (tutors, counsellors, etc.); establishment of specialised workshops for temporary placement;
- Methods of seeking, testing and diagnosing these target groups; innovative and integrated forms of co-operation between stakeholders (schools, counselling centres, labour offices, social agencies, NGOs, local government, etc.); system of seeking adequate professions and flexible jobs;
- Forms of motivation and incentives for employers, including support for employers concerning education of adolescents – future employees
- innovative forms supporting placement in the open market using the services of the Support Employment Agencies and professional training of its employees, changes in legislation, development of IT
- innovative and new forms and counselling procedures and training programmes, formation of the employers' attitudes towards marginal groups, programmes on tolerance for young and for society
- Extended service of the Support Employment Agencies towards the employment of the ethnic groups

4.2.2 Priority 1 (Theme 1.2)

Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market

Measure No. 1.2:

Creating an environment supporting the development and creation of effective solutions combating all forms of labour market-related discrimination, racism and xenophobia

Justification:

Results of the analysis within the background study¹¹ show that some Slovak inhabitants have adopted certain xenophobic attitudes and opinions especially related to Roma minority. With regard to xenophobia and racism in SR, it is firstly important to study the status of this minority. A lot of sociological surveys confirmed a high degree of social distance between Roma and non-Roma communities in the country, including negative stereotypes and lack of confidence. A typical feature of Roma perception is a direct link with their social exclusion. According to several experts, declining social status of Roma, their increasing unemployment rate and rising dependence on social allowances result in ever-worsening relationships between Roma and non-Roma citizens. Also, very low level of education has negative impact on position of Roma on labour market. Ethnic Roma population,

11) *Iveta Radičová, Roman Eštočák, Magdaléna Feniková, Marek Harakal, Denisa Havrlová, Valentina Petrus: Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market, NLO, 2003*

which forms high portion of long-term unemployed as well as discouraged ones, is trapped in the vicious circle of poverty characterised by limited opportunities for rising mobility and slim chances for interaction with the rest of society. On the other hand, it has to be admitted that majority citizens lack sensitivity towards other cultures as a result of insignificant multicultural education and stereotype attitudes in society.

Objective:

Finding effective solutions in combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination, especially through education, information and engagement of entire civil society on local and national level and use of transnational knowledge and experience.

Activities:

- Support of programmes leading to mutual respect and recognition of common values while preserving mutual specifics and distinctions;
- Elimination of prejudices and stereotypes insensitively presented and supported by media, which lead to fear and rejection of Roma population and other minorities;
- Regarding expected increase in the number of migrants on the territory of the Slovak Republic after accession into EU and support programmes leading to tolerance and respect of multicultural society values; supporting innovative programmes – targeted education, consulting and training programmes; influencing employers' attitudes to marginal groups.
- Training and education programmes focusing on tolerance for children, youth, lay and professional public;
- Monitoring through practical application of laws with emphasis on anti-discriminatory legislation and equality of opportunities;
- Support of partner co-operation of public administration bodies, police and prosecution with organisations rooted in communities and respected by marginal groups potentially threatened by racism and discrimination on labour market;
- Support of activities seeking innovative forms combating discrimination with regard to labour market;
- Inclusion of Roma history and culture as well as history and culture of other minorities into school curricula and educational programmes; media information campaigns; creating local partnerships focusing on racism monitoring incorporating marginal citizens as well as police, law courts, social workers, etc.

4.2.3 Priority 2 (Theme 2)

Strengthening the social economy (third sector) in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs

Measure 2.1:

Strengthening the capacity of NGOs and other social economy organisations as actors to help eliminate inequalities in the labour market (especially social economy organisations providing community service)

Justification:

In the results of the Labour Market Analysis the authors¹² state that socially disadvantaged groups, having need of stronger support of the social service, have not been in the centre of interest of the development strategies. One of the ways to eliminate the inequalities at the local and regional labour markets should to support the extension and diversification of the public social services.

12) Helena Woleková, Vladislav Matej, Marcela Meziánová, Martina Petijová: *Strengthening the social economy, especially the services of interest to the community, for the focus on improving the quality of jobs*, NLO, 2003

NGOs providing public social services (employment service, education and health care service) have the ability to create the institutional, organisational, personal and economic conditions for providing such a service. The services they provide shows high level of the innovative, individual, and effective approach, especially in comparison to state service organisations. Previous experience confirms the NGOs and other social economy organisations are effective, far more flexible and available, compensating for -the weaknesses of the public and private service delivery. It is the reason to support these organisations – capacity building (premises, personnel, finance, skills, partnerships, support structures etc.)

Objective:

Decentralisation of services according to the needs of regions and towns, provision of services for increased employment, stronger initiative of marginal groups towards the support of social sector, easier creation of social economy organisations.

Activities:

- Analysis, involving civil society and third sector organisations, of needs of citizens in danger of social exclusion at local and regional level, development of community and regional service planning, planning carried out by centres of co-ordinated community-based services,
- Activities focused on transformation and modernisation of services provided in organisations of low service quality
- Preparation and implementation of training for employees providing service, social counsellors, supervisors and inspectors, verification of the co-operative models in creation and running of regional educational centres, management training on the preparation and implementation of projects on the service restructure.
- Development and updating of the database for information and counselling centres, creating co-operative networks of counselling services
- Motivational and social programmes for long-term unemployed based on individual plans, modification of the programmes according to the local and regional needs.
- Training of management staff of NGOs, -other social economy organisations and the public sector on working in partnership between public with voluntary bodies, with voluntary bodies, planning, economy and work planning with voluntary bodies
- Improved systems of evaluating the social added value of service delivery by the social economy,
- Improving the availability and quality of advice and support for the creation and development of social economy organisations
- Improving the availability of investment capital for social economy organisations

4.2.4 Priority 3 (Theme 3)

Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies

Measure No. 3.1:

Support the creation of an environment stimulating human resources development and providing their adaptability in the process of structural changes and coming of new technologies

Justification:

Within the conclusions of a background study¹³ the authors state that in the context of changes that society has had to deal with since year 1989, the most important field of interest should be focused on the support of enterprises and human resources to accept structural changes and new technologies.

Rapid increase of the unemployment level in the early nineties was the result of an inability to handle new conditions. Evaluation of the foreign investors and results of the survey shows insufficient self-confidence, passivity, conservative attitudes, low level of ability to work with IT, lack of foreign language skills in the majority of those entering the labour market

Objective:

Creating of conditions for provision of adaptability of human resources in the context of structural changes and introduction of new technologies

Activities:

- Educational programmes ensuring the development and maintenance of human resources of good quality corresponding to the changes in working conditions
- Development of the conditions for the transformation of present educational system to the system of lifelong learning process
- Psychological preparation of employees to accept the process of permanent changes in working conditions
- Development of systems on dealing with new forms of work organisation, working methods, working habits and skills
- Development of systems on revitalisation and broadening of working habits and skills of long-term unemployed
- Developing progressive approaches to handle modern technologies, IT
- Investigate r effective methods of increase language abilities
- Development of the conditions to encourage worker mobility

13) Ján Kovalčík, Pavol Sud'a, Michal Žilka: Support of adaptability of enterprises and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies, NLO, 2003

4.2.5 Priority 4 (Theme 4)

Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation

Measure No. 4.1:

Gender awareness-raising activities – gender studies, gender audit, gender awareness as the means for labour market equality between men and women

Justification:

The authors of the background study¹⁴ state that gender segregation in industries or professions, which crucially affects women's position on the labour market in SR is reflected in women's weaker representation in better paid professions, lower women's participation in decision-making positions and women's complete absence in some types of jobs. The main reasons of gender-specific professional segregation being: sustaining stereotypes on primary women's role in household, gender-stereotyped socialisation; gender-segregated fields of education; combining responsibility for children and household with the role of woman; surviving stereotypes on typically male and female works/professions; job description and character of some types of work (work perceived as inadequate for women). Employers in SR have not adapted to the policy of equality of opportunities, thus it is necessary to focus mainly on changing gender-related attitudes.

Moreover, the source of the data is important for the assessment of the gender equality. The issue of equality between men and women has become discussed in Slovakia. However, methods of effecting policy have been absent, which is why the gender approach to data collection is required. Although it is possible to work out gender analysis, there is insufficient data on gender differences (they are either not gathered or hidden because of the lack of gender perceptiveness). It is important to initiate monitoring of the equality of men and women at the labour market

Objective:

Raising the awareness of employers to the policy of enforcing equality of opportunities and potential profit generated by proper use of men's and women's potential as well as support of gender-sensitive education as a tool targeted at gender equality on labour market

Activities:

- Gender training for employers, activities aimed to open areas traditionally dominated by men and new types of industries to women; designing new counselling models for selection of profession and study field as well as further education to be focused specifically at girls and boys, or men and women, while emphasising non - gender-traditional professions;
- Gender training of the staff responsible for education with a focus on gender awareness, training based on the concept of managing gender and diversity using the productive ability of women and men – testing
- Development of a database on equal opportunities of men and women, development of time series survey
- Development of tools on auditing the gender equality policies in companies, research on inequality in pay and gender segregation in professions
- Development of measurable indicators of promotion in different areas (professions, sectors, businesses), research on the awareness of gender mainstreaming in different sectors of the labour market, analysis of the experience to develop the conditions for these sectors

14) Jana Cviková, Jarmila Filadelfiová , Jana Juráňová , Katarína Paňková , Olga Gyarfášová , Bernardína Bodnárová , Livia Biziková, Henrieta Kollárová: *Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation*, NLO, 2003

4.2.6 Priority 5 (Theme 5)**Asylum seekers****Measure No 5.1:
Supporting the social and vocational integration of Asylum Seekers****Justification :**

The analysis (see the report¹⁵) has shown that, the problem of migration is becoming serious. Urgency of this issue will gradually increase with Slovakia's entry into European Union, since we may anticipate that the Slovak Republic will not remain only a transit country, as it has been so far.

Thus, it is important to adopt new measures as soon as possible and introduce innovative approaches, creating more favourable conditions and services for asylum seekers. In spite of the fact that the present Slovak legislation has been harmonised with the principal international documents and meets European standards for protection of asylum seekers and refugees, the present situation in fact is not suitable. After they leave camps and integration centres, the disadvantaged group is not ready to enter into the labour market, mainly due to language barriers and absence of re-training courses. Such courses should be undertaken already in camps and integration centres; instead they are artificially shifted to the period following the transfer from camps and integration centres. If neglected, these problems may lead to growing unemployment of refugees, subsequently to long-term dependence on social support and finally to more difficult integration into society.

In line with the Directive on Common Minimum Conditions for Reception of Asylum Seekers, adopted by the Council January 2003, the main emphasis therefore should be put on prevention social exclusion of asylum seekers. Implementation of new approaches for the disadvantaged groups, and influencing public opinion and attitudes of majority towards asylum-seekers within the EQUAL Community Initiative is a challenge and at the same time a tool for achieving positive changes.

Objective :

Helping the integration of asylum seekers into Slovak society

Assistance through the development of skills of asylum seekers needed not only in the labour market of Slovakia

Activities :

- Organisation of awareness courses on Slovak society aimed at facilitating social integration of asylum seekers
- Improvement of skills of staff dealing with asylum seekers at respective institutions
- Dissemination of information about asylum seekers aiming at establishing good relationship with and within local communities
- Development of mechanisms for recognition of qualifications of asylum seekers
- Provision of training for asylum seekers tailored to their individual needs
- Provision of language training courses for asylum seekers in order to overcome the language barrier while integrating into the Slovak society
- Development of NGO sector in the field of Asylum Seekers
- Development of networks of the NGOs in the field of Asylum Seekers

15) Commission Regulation (EC) No. 69/2001 of 12 January 2001 on the application of the Articles 87 and 88 EC Treaty on "de-minimis"-State aid

4.2.7 Technical Assistance**Justification :**

Technical Assistance will be used in order to provide professional services both to the MA and to the DPs. It is an important resource for effective delivery of the Programme, which requires adequate administration and support.

Based on the Communication from the Commission COM 2003/840, including the updated EQUAL Guidelines, the Technical Assistance in the Slovak Republic will be available to support two Measures as described below:

(for further details concerning the financial breakdown at measure level see Chapter 5.4)

Global objective :

Support the implementation of EQUAL in the Slovak Republic

Measure No.6.1:

Activities in line with the rule 11.2 of the Regulation 1685/2000 amended by Reg.448/2004 regarding eligibility of expenditure

- Expenditure relating to the preparation, selection, appraisal and monitoring of the assistance and of operations (but excluding expenditure on the acquisition and installation of computerised systems for management, monitoring and evaluation)
- expenditure on meetings of monitoring committees and sub-committees relating to the implementation of assistance. This expenditure may also include the costs of experts and other participants in these committees and sub-committees relating to the implementation of assistance. This expenditure may also include the costs of experts and other participants in these committees, including third-country participants, where the chairperson of such committees considers their presence essential to the effective implementation of the assistance
- expenditure relating to audits and on-the-spot checks of operations

Measure No. 6.2

Activities in line with the rule 11.3 of the Regulation 1685/2000 amended by Reg. 448/2004 regarding eligibility of expenditure

- studies, seminars, information actions, the collection, editing and dissemination of the experience and results
- support to thematic networking, dissemination activities and the setting up of mechanisms for policy impact
- co-operation in European networking and ensuring the sharing of all relevant information with other Member States and the Commission
- evaluation
- the acquisition and installation of computerised systems for management, monitoring and evaluation

4.3 Financial Allocations

The decision on the financial allocations at measure level has been made based on the results of inter-service consultation. The ESF contribution is 22,226,351 EUR. The national contribution, which will be ensured by the Managing Authority for the EQUAL Community Initiative in SR within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is 9,872,009 EUR. (For further details see Annex 1, financial plan).

5. Implementation of the EQUAL Community Initiative Program Document

In accordance with the Council Regulation No 1260/1999 (EC) providing general provisions of Structural Funds, Regulation No 1784/1999 (EC) of the European Parliament and the Council concerning the European Social Fund and the Communication from the Commission COM 2003/840, including the updated EQUAL Guidelines a scheme for the administration of the European Community Initiative EQUAL was drafted and described.

The assistance from the EQUAL Initiative is further developed in the programming complement. The Programming Complement is a document in which the procedures and conditions for implementation will be described in more detail as compared with the CIP without interfering with its contents. It will be drawn up according to the EC regulation 1260/99 (Article 9). The document is to be approved by the Monitoring Committee and the Commission is to be informed of the content.

5.1 Managing Authority

In line with the Article 18, Para 2, letter d) of the General Regulation, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR was designated as a Managing Authority for the EQUAL Community Initiative Programme Document based on the resolution of SR Government No. 133/2002.

The Managing Authority is accountable for effectiveness, correctness of management and provision of assistance in line with the European Union regulations as well as with institutional, legal and financial systems of the Slovak Republic; moreover the Managing Authority bears overall responsibility for effective implementation of the Initiative in SR.

The Department of the EQUAL Community Initiative Managing Authority within the Section of Administration of the ESF Co-ordination is in charge of activities carried out by the EQUAL Initiative Managing Authority. In line with General Regulation, the Managing Authority is in the charge of all activities and tasks listed under Article 34 of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999:

- facilitating development of policy for implementation of the Initiative within the territory of SR;
- setting up a system to gather reliable financial and statistical information on implementation for monitoring and evaluation needs,
- adjustment and the implementation of the programme complement in line with the programme document,
- drawing up and, after obtaining the approval of the Monitoring Committee, submitting to the Commission the annual implementation report,
- organising, in cooperation with the Commission and the Member State, the on-going evaluation,
- ensuring all activities within the CIP are performed in line with the Regulations and other legal provisions,
- selecting development partnerships,
- taking part in the search for transnational partners by DPs,
- supervising expenditures within the programme,
- ensuring that those bodies taking part in the management and implementation of the assistance maintain either a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code for all transactions relating to the assistance,
- ensuring the correctness of operations financed under the assistance, particularly by implementing internal controls in keeping with the principles of sound financial management and

- acting in response to any observations or requests for corrective measures adopted or recommendations for adjustment,
- submitting payment requests to the Paying Authority,
 - ensuring that adequate publicity is given to the Initiative and in particular by informing: a) potential Development Partnerships, trade and professional bodies, the economic and social partners, bodies promoting equality between men and women and the relevant non-governmental organisations about the opportunities afforded by the assistance, b) the general public about the role played by the European Union in the assistance concerned and its results
 - ensure compliance with the obligations concerning information and publicity referred to the Regulation 1159/2000
 - acting in full compliance with the institutional, legal and financial systems of the Slovak Republic
 - every year, when the annual implementation report referred to in Article 37 of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 is submitted, the Commission and the Managing Authority for EQUAL in the Slovak Republic will review the main outcomes of the previous year, in accordance with arrangements defined by agreement with Slovakia and the Managing Authority
 - if the Commission makes some recommendations to Slovakia and the Managing Authority for EQUAL aimed at improving the effectiveness of the monitoring or management arrangements for the assistance, the Managing Authority will demonstrate the steps taken to improve the monitoring or management arrangements or it will explain why it has not taken any.
 - assure the complementarity between EQUAL and mainstream ESF measures, in order to assert that there is not double financing;
 - draft a mainstreaming strategy specifying the framework and mechanisms for validating the results of EQUAL and transferring it into policy and practice, and for ensuring that EQUAL meets relevant policy needs.
 - plan and administer the European Community Initiative EQUAL Technical Assistance measures and, in this context, define the objectives of the National Support Structure, approve its annual work plan and supervise the quality and final delivery of its work;
 - setting up a sound system for monitoring and sharing of data in accordance with arrangements agreed between the Member State and the Commission;

5.2 National Support Structure

The role of the National Support Structure is to assist the Managing Authority with the tasks connected with the implementation of EQUAL in the Slovak Republic. On the basis of the Ministerial Decision from February 24th 2004, the role of the National Support Structure is delegated to the contributory organization - Social Development Fund. In accordance with the needs within EQUAL implementation, MA will ask to augment the number of NSS staff. Additional changes will be further updated in the Program Complement.

The National Support Structure should carry out the activities (except evaluation) of technical assistance as described in the section 5.2.

In order to carry out the tasks (see section 5.3), the following measures will be taken:

- establishment of EQUAL support mechanisms to provide comprehensive advice, guidance and support to potential partners participating in the EQUAL programme.
- In close co-operation between the MA and NSS EQUAL their task is to ensure to respect the principles and methodology of EQUAL, in particular the thematic priorities, the partnership approach and transnational co-operation.
- support mechanisms will also facilitate the dissemination of results and mainstreaming,
- implementation of the EQUAL communication plan measures
- undertaking EQUAL related studies
- delivery of EQUAL seminars
- establishment of a quality management system for technical assistance services

Duties of the NSS in terms of the financial management are further described in chapter 6.1.2.

The National Support Structure will provide support (provide the information needed for the monitoring of implementation of EQUAL) to enable the best possible mainstreaming efficiency. The NSS working tasks and the role of each NSS person will be described in details in the "working agreement" prepared by MA and signed by MA and NSS representative.

The specific ESF eligibility rules for Technical Assistance are regulated in Commission regulations No 1685/2000 and 1145/2003, notably in rule No 11 of the annex. – Eligibility Rules.

The National Support Structure will base its activities on a rolling annual work plan, endorsed by the Monitoring Committee. It will ensure sound implementation of its task, ensuring competence and quality.

National Support Structure will carry out the following tasks:

- organises and deliver seminars and informative events;
- prepares and distributes application forms;
- organising the Call for Proposals for DPs;
- assessing applications;
- notifies all applicants of the outcome of selection;
- assesses Development Partnership Agreements;
- co-ordinates and manages the national Thematic groups (NTGs);
- produces good practice guides;
- shares collection of data on Development Partnerships activities.

In order to carry out these tasks, the National Support Structure will:

- establish EQUAL support mechanisms to provide comprehensive advice, guidance and support to potential partners participating in the EQUAL programme, to DPs and their networks;
- develop and support the implementation of a national mainstreaming strategy;
- develop and implement the EQUAL communication plan;
- commission EQUAL related studies, and organise EQUAL events;
- establish a quality management system for technical assistance services.

The task mentioned above as well as the relation between the MA EQUAL and Fund of the Social Development (institution delegated to provide the tasks of the NSS) will be further précised in the internal agreement elaborated and signed by the MA and NSS.

However, Managing Authority remains fully responsible for overall management.

The specific features of EQUAL reflected in its principles (transnationality, innovation, mainstreaming, empowerment, partnership) and thematic approach require a broad range of skills and competencies for the staff in charge of administering the EQUAL Programme, including:

- Generic skills and competencies related to the roles and tasks of a support structure, enabling staff members to conduct negotiations and group moderation, to handle public administration procedures, to liaise with mainstream policy actors and delivery mechanisms, and to manage communications with other Member States;
- Specific skills and competencies related to the administration of the ESF, which will include carrying out financial procedures, monitoring and controls in compliance with EU legislation, notably the Structural Funds regulations (eligibility rules, payment procedures, audit trail) as well as the rules for public procurement and state aid;
- EQUAL specific skills related to the administration and capitalisation of an experimental programme, such as assisting in transnational cooperation, assisting in developing effective partnerships, communicating and mainstreaming results and policy messages, or managing calls for proposals and organising thematic networks.

The National Support Structure will base its activities on a rolling annual work plan, endorsed by the Managing Authority after consulting of the Monitoring Committee. It will ensure sound implementation of its task, ensuring competence and quality. It will implement a sound system to document and to verify real costs/expenditure actually paid, in line with the provisions of Art. 32 of Regulation 1260/1999.

The Managing Authority will ensure that the NSS is operational by the end of the first quarter of 2004.

In order to ensure the delivery of professional services, the National Support Structure will assign staff with the required skills and experience, organise an on-going training, and promote training visits/short-term secondments to other National Support Structures notably in the fields listed in the introduction to chapter 7 above. It will agree, with the Managing Authority, on a quality control system for the services rendered.

5.2.1 Selection of the provider of Technical Assistance Services

In view of:

- the purpose for which the *Fund for the Social Development* established by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family as a contributory institution
- the competence and experience which this Fund acquires via specialised trainings through the Twinning arrangements,

this Fund has been entrusted with the task of providing the services of a National Support Structure, carrying out the technical assistance functions described above.

In compliance with Art. 6 of Council Directive 92-50, and on the basis of the ministerial decision from February 24th 2004 the *Fund for the Social Development* was established as National Support Structure, which has been given an exclusive right to carry out specific activities related to Technical Assistance as described above, except programme external evaluation, pursuant to an administrative provision compatible with the Treaty.

If technical assistance services need to be carried out by other experts or organisations, under sub-contract from the National Support Structure, the rules for public procurement will be applied.

5.3 Provision of Technical assistance

Technical assistance will be available to support the implementation of the CIP EQUAL and will be used particularly for the following activities:

- to advise on and facilitate the consolidation of partnerships and the search for suitable transnational co-operation partners (Action 1),
- to collect, edit and disseminate the experience and results, including annual reports of the Development Partnerships (Action 2),
- to support the thematic networking, the horizontal dissemination activities and the setting up of mechanisms for policy impact (Action 3),
- for co-operation in European networking and to ensure the sharing of all relevant information with the other Member States and the Commission (Actions at European level).

The two categories of activities mentioned below and funded within the Technical Assistance ("TA") Priority of the EQUAL Community Initiative Programme shall mean the two independent measures with indicative budget allocation of the Programme TA between these two measures being related to the Rules 11.2 and 11.3 of the Commission regulation (EC) No. 1685/2000, amended by Commission Regulation (EC) No 1145/2003.

Categories of expenditure and types of activities under Technical Assistance are presented in the table below. All activities listed in the table will include all categories of costs, where appropriate (salaries, travel, running costs, low-value assets, costs for external services, office and telecommunications costs, depreciation and overheads).

The procurement of goods and services will be carried out in line with national and European legislation.

Categories of expenditures	Type of activities ¹⁶	Indicative budget
<p>Activities supporting sound programme implementation according to Regulation 1145/2003/CE; rule11.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – expenditure relating to the preparation, selection, appraisal and monitoring of the assistance and of operations (but excluding expenditure on the acquisition and installation of computerized systems for management, monitoring and evaluation); – expenditure on meetings of monitoring committees and sub-committees relating to the implementation of assistance. – expenditure relating to advice and support of individual DPs in technical, methodological and thematic matters; – expenditure relating to audits and on-the-spot checks of operations. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) establishment of a monitoring system for EQUAL 2) Organisation of meetings of the Monitoring Committee and of Evaluation steering group within the Monitoring Committee, their secretariat and expertise 3) Support in handling proposals, assessment of proposals, and support of the work of Project the Selection Committee (secretary and expertise) 4) training of DPs related to management and implementation of their work programme 5) Preparation of methodological tools for DP's related to management, implementation, monitoring, mainstreaming, and transnational cooperation 6) guidance to DPs in setting up partnerships, and achieving the milestones of their work plans 7) support to DPs in establishing transnational partnerships, and in effective transnational co-operation 8) support to DPs in strategy development, planning, monitoring and self-assessment of their activities and achievements 9) support to DPs in organisational and financial aspects 10) support to DPs in horizontal and vertical mainstreaming 11) verification of payment claims 12) audits and on the spot checks 13) preparation of call (s) for tenders for external service providers 14) preparation of annual reports to the Commission 15) collecting information requests by the Commission or national administration 	5%
<p>Other activities of technical assistance according to Regulation 1145/2003/CE; rule11.3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – studies, seminars, information actions, the collection, editing and dissemination of the experience and results; – support to thematic networking, dissemination activities and the setting up of mechanisms for policy impact; 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1)preparation and dissemination of general information about EQUAL activities through seminars, publications, media; according to the EQUAL strategy for information and publicity 2)development of guidelines and support materials for DPs 3)support to develop, monitor and implement a national mainstreaming strategy 4)organisation of seminars, workshops 	3%

16) ¹⁶ list not exhaustive

Categories of expenditures	Type of activities ¹⁶	Indicative budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – co-operation in European networking and ensuring the sharing of all relevant information with other Member States and the Commission – evaluation, – the acquisition and installation of computerised systems for management, monitoring and evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and conferences related to the identification, validation and dissemination of good practices 5) support to establishing and running national thematic networks 6) organisation of conferences related to mainstreaming activities 7) participation in European meetings 8) organisation of information and exchange visits at national and transnational level 9) support in comparative assessment of results; organisation of peer reviews, support in benchmarking 10) external programme evaluation (tender) 11) acquisition and installation of computer software and hardware necessary for management, monitoring and evaluation 	

5.4 Monitoring Committee

Monitoring Committee will be set up by the Managing Authority for EQUAL according to Article 35 of Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 immediately after the decision on ESF contribution is taken.

The Monitoring Committee will be formed by the representatives of all EQUAL relevant organisations according to the chosen thematic fields. The stakeholders from public and private sector, including other national public authorities as governmental organisations and academic institutions, employer's organisations and trade unions, local and regional authorities and non-governmental organisations, including those representing people who face discrimination and inequality in the labour market will be invited to become members of the Monitoring Committee.

As members of the Monitoring Committee may be involved in Development Partnerships in EQUAL, it is essential that the role of the Monitoring Committee be clearly set out. Therefore the Monitoring Committee will establish the criteria for evaluation and selection of Development Partnerships, Monitoring Committee members representing organisations participating in a Development Partnership will not be implicated in the selection process in order to avoid any conflict of interest.

The Monitoring Committee acts within the power and jurisdiction of the Slovak Republic, on the basis of regulation 1260/1999. The European Commission will have the status of observer to attend MC's meetings.

The Monitoring Committee for the EQUAL Initiative is responsible for supervision of Programme implementation. The Managing Authority will provide all relevant information and reports to the Monitoring Committee.

The following organisations and institutions will be members of the Monitoring Committee:

- Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of Slovak republic ("SR")
- National Council of SR – Committee of the National Council for Human Rights, Minorities and Women's Position
- Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic – Governmental Plenipotentiary for Roma Community
- Ministry of Education SR – Leonardo da Vinci Office
- Ministry of Interior SR
- Ministry of Finance SR

- Headquarter of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
- Association of Cities and Municipalities
- Confederation of Trade Unions, SR
- Association of Employers' Unions, SR
- NGO Board
- Institute for Public Affairs
- Slovak Governance Institute
- Slovak Humanitarian Council
- Socio forum (mainly the members which dealing with gender equality issue will be invited)

The main task of Monitoring Committee is to regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Programme.

Other tasks to be performed by MC in line with the Council Regulation 1260/1999, Art.35. Additional tasks of the MC are:

- approval of the Programme Complement
- approval and revision of criteria for selection of Development Partnerships
- ongoing survey of the progress and the achievements of the stipulated objectives
- supervision of the ongoing evaluation
- revision and approval of the annual and final report produced by Managing Authority prior to its sending to the EC
- provides Managing Authority with proposals for potential increase in quality of EQUAL Initiative implementation in Slovakia
- informing public on results of activities performed by the Committee and development of situation regarding ESF use
- in co-operation with Managing Authority, the Monitoring Committee develops a plan for Programme monitoring
- approves and follows the communication action plan
- monitoring of the mainstreaming strategy
- approval of the annual work plan of the National Support Structure

Detailed tasks will be defined in the Monitoring Committee's Terms of Reference to be adopted on the first MC meeting in compliance with the Article 35 of Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999

Documents governing MC activities – mainly Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure will be approved by MC based on consensus with Managing Authority. The MC Secretariat will be established with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR. The Section for Co-ordination of ESF will be in charge this task. The rules of procedures will be included in the Programming Complement.

5.5 Development Partnerships

The partnership process forms a key principle of the EQUAL Initiative Programme development. The EQUAL Initiative Programme Document was publicized on the internet page of MoLSAF SR and submitted for inter-sectoral commenting to central authorities, National Labour Office, public and other NGOs. IN this way, one of the principles of European Union's structural policies had been fulfilled, i.e. partnership principle which lays emphasis on co-operation of other partners on programme creation.

The basic drivers of the EQUAL Initiative are key stakeholders in a given region or sector, so called "Development Partnerships" forming a strategic alliance around an agreed strategy to develop and test new ways to combat discrimination. The Slovak Government implemented this principle right from the beginning and supported the participation of a whole range of institutions, NGOs and voluntary organizations, trade unions, associations of employers, social partners, educational institutions and business sector while drafting the Programme Document.

Development Partnerships operate within the context of thematic fields (for more information see item 4. of the Programme Document). Institutions showing interest in being part of a specific thematic field will form development partnerships.

Based on the mapping of the situation on the level of Slovak regions and preliminary organisations' interest to take part in the EQUAL Community Initiative, Slovakia estimates an establishment of 10 – 25 development partnerships.

5.5.1 Setting up Development Partnerships, developing a joint strategy and action plan, agreeing a work plan for transnational cooperation (Action 1)

EQUAL Initiative Action 1 covers a period of creating sustainable and effective Development Partnerships, while also developing transnational co-operation. The time period available for this will be determined by the quality and speed at which each Development Partnership achieves agreement will all partners on the draft Development Partnership Agreement. The draft Development Partnership Agreement should immediately be submitted to the Managing Authority. Action 1 will end with the two basic strategic documents being approved – Development Partnership Agreement and Transnational Co-operation Agreement.

Within the framework of Action 1, Development Partnerships are expected to develop an individual work programme as well as transnational model of activities by means of submitted Partnership Development Agreement and Transnational Co-operation Agreement.

The draft Development Partnership Agreement documents the consensus of the partners and presents their common strategy in a structured, concise and coherent way, and identifies the main factors for success of the Development Partnership. Therefore it will contain:

- a diagnosis and an assessment of the specific problems in relation to labour market exclusion, discrimination and inequality, to be tackled;
- a stakeholder analysis; identifying and discussing the interest and expectations of people, groups, or organisations that may influence or be influenced by the solution to be developed and tested, and a description of the roles of relevant stakeholders in the work of the Development Partnership;
- objectives and the strategy to attain them, reflecting learning from the first round of EQUAL and any other relevant action;
- a description of the assumptions, risks and flexibility requirements;
- a detailed work programme accompanied by a realistic budget, both broken down by national and transnational activities/costs;
- a clear identification of the role of each partner, including the arrangements for steering and managing the partnership and administering the financial support preferably using a commonly agreed system

The Transnational Co-operation Agreement specifies the common interests, the added value of the transnational activities, and the transnational work plan and budget. The contributions and roles of each transnational partner, the methods of decision-making and the organisational arrangements for implementing the common work programme as well as the methodologies for monitoring and assessment of joint activities should be set out. This Transnational Co-operation Agreement must be presented on the basis of the common format described in the Guide on Transnationality and must be entered into the common database 'EQUAL transnational co-operation internet module' (ETCIM). A paper version of the database entry should be annexed to the draft Development Partnership Agreement and shall contain:

- the methodology and mechanism for on-going assessment of activities and achievements, including a description of verifiable indicators which demonstrate how the objectives, outputs and results will be measured and assessed ;
- the corresponding methodology and mechanisms for monitoring and assessment of joint activities in the transnational co-operation;
- the commitment of the Development Partnership including their transnational partners to collaborate on mainstreaming activities at national and European levels;
- the strategy and mechanisms for implementing a gender mainstreaming approach.

The draft Development Partnership Agreement must also demonstrate that the Development Partnership fulfils the following conditions:

- Financial viability: the availability of the necessary co-financing.
- Transparency: Public access to the results obtained (products, instruments, methods, etc.).
- Capacity building and empowerment: The Development Partnership has the capacity to mobilise and enable different actors to work together effectively around their common strategy. Particular attention will be given to the arrangements for ensuring that all relevant actors, such as: public authorities; the public employment service; NGOs; the business sector (in particular

small and medium sized enterprises); and the social partners, can become involved during the life of the partnership. The Development Partnership must show that all partners have fully participated in the planning and development of the Development Partnership Agreement.

- Learning spirit: the capacity and willingness to learn from others, and to actively co-operate in networking, dissemination and mainstreaming activities at both national and European level.

The Development Partnership work programme would normally operate for a period of up to 3 years.

The Slovak Managing Authority will provide sufficient support to enable Development Partnerships to conclude their draft Development Partnership Agreement as quickly as possible. Failure to submit a draft Development Partnership Agreement will lead to de-selection, after which expenditure will no longer be eligible.

Upon receipt of the draft Development Partnership Agreement, the Slovak Managing Authority will confirm, normally within 8 weeks, the initial selection of the Development Partnership, including the multi annual budget available to implement the work programme (*action 2*).

The review of the implementation of the work programme as set out in the Development Partnership Agreement will be also completed. Where there is a financial consequence to the non-performance of activities, the Slovak Managing Authority may realign the budget accordingly. These reviews will be conducted regularly, at least at 12-month intervals.

5.5.2 Selection of development partnerships

A. Call for proposals

The call for proposals is a key challenge, which may allow prospective members of development partnerships to apply for participation in EQUAL Initiative.

The Managing Authority in conjunction with the Monitoring Committee announces a call for proposals. The application form for participation in EQUAL will be available on the Ministry's Internet page.

Throughout the course of Action 1, selected development partnerships will prepare everything that is needed for operation within the EQUAL Initiative – managing, communication structures, specification of measures within selected thematic field, project design.

B. Selection of development partnerships

The procedures for selecting Development Partnerships fall within the competence of the Managing Authority. The selection criteria will reflect the general principles of EQUAL as well as the requirements listed in the section 5.6. The Slovak Managing Authorities will ensure that there is no conflict of interest in the selection procedure. Unsuccessful applicants should be given reasons for their non-selection and be informed of the appeal procedures.

There will be a single selection procedure for funding under the second round of EQUAL. It will be based upon an application submitted jointly by a number of organisations (Development Partnership initiators). The application should identify;

- the partners to be involved in the Development Partnership at the outset; the arrangements for ensuring that all relevant stakeholders can become involved during the life of the partnership including, in particular, appropriate small organisations
- arrangements for handling the administrative and financial responsibilities;
- an outline of the rationale for the partnership, a diagnosis of the problem to be addressed, and an outline of the objectives of the partnership;
- an assessment of the relevance of the problem addressed and of the solution to be tested
- an explanation of how discrimination and inequality will be tackled, and an outline of how the results could be disseminated and transferred to policy and practice;
- the expectations from transnational co-operation;
- an outline of the activities foreseen for developing and testing the innovative approach for the entire period, including an indicative budget (estimate);
- a detailed work plan, methodology and management tools for developing and finalising the Development Partnership Agreement, including budget

The Slovak Managing Authority will be responsible for the calls for proposals and selection procedures and the completion of the EQUAL Common Data Base (ECDB). Data on Development Partnerships will be entered into the ECDB before January 1, 2005, so that when the "transnationality window" is opened all Development Partnerships have an equal chance to find transnational partners and finalise their Development Partnership Agreement.

The Managing Authority makes the selection for funding under EQUAL based on the appraisal of the selection committee which includes the representatives (experts) from various institutions (Public, NGOs, enterprises).

Once selected, Development Partnerships will be required to achieve milestones in the operating of their work programmes. The achievement of milestones will be monitored and assessed by the National Support Structure, to be validated by the Managing Authority. Failure to meet the initial milestones will lead to de-selection, after which expenditure will no longer be eligible.

Subsequent milestones relate to a review of the implementation of the work programme as set out in the Development Partnership Agreement. Where there is a financial consequence to the non-performance of activities, the Lithuanian Managing Authority may realign the budget accordingly. These reviews will be conducted regularly by the National Support Structure, at least at 12 month intervals.

C Selection procedure and criteria

The selection procedure will follow the orientation given at the NSS seminar on March 25/26 2004. More specifically, the following **principles** will be applied to the whole appraisal process, in order to ensure that the integrity of the process is clear and visible. Details will be provided in the Programme Complement.

Appraisal process

Sound planning and a clear timetable

The selection process will be underpinned by a well planned work programme and timetable, clearly communicated to all stakeholders in the process. It will be ensured that key staff are available to undertake the duties allocated to them within the agreed timeframe

Transparency:

The whole application process will be clearly documented and communicated to all interested actors, through information days, handbooks, application forms, guidance to applicants, conferences, seminars, workshops, helpline, , and so on.

Fairness:

The selection process will ensure equal treatment for all applicants, and will allow sufficient time at least 2 months for applicants to plan and prepare.

High quality feedback to all applicants:

A detailed written feedback will be provided to applicants at the end of the process.

Opportunity to appeal against decision:

Unsuccessful applicants will be given the right to appeal against their non-selection. The grounds for appeal, and the procedure, will be clearly stated.

Independence of assessors

Throughout the application process, provisions will be made for excluding conflicts of interests, or interventions by third parties.

Quality control

The managing Authority will ensure quality control (involving a sound documentation of the procedures applied and results agreed) at all stages of the assessment process, as well as provisions to identify and correct a bias.

Selection criteria

The following **principles** will be applied;

- The process will be based upon the Community Initiative Programme (CIP) and the criteria will be clearly linked to the policy priorities set out in the CIP, to ensure targeted applications,
- The criteria will reflect the general principles of EQUAL and cover the requirements stated in the Commission's Guidelines. These will also ensure that the proposal explains the relevance of the problem(s) to be tackled, and outlines the methodology by which evidence of the innovation will be demonstrated.
- The criteria (as few criteria as possible, but as many as necessary) will to be clearly communicated to applicants in advance,
- The selection criteria, including their weighting, will be approved by the Monitoring Committee.

5.6 Implementing the work program of the Development Partnership (Action 2)

Action 2 represents a period when implementation of work programme developed by individual development partnerships is taking place. It is the period of time lasting two to three years. Depending on the conditions of DPA and its accompanying work programme, key work activities of development partnerships will include following areas:

- analysis of discrimination and inequality on labour market
- increasing awareness on causes and consequences of discrimination
- development of materials, organization of courses and training assisting improvement of employment rate
- job creating, maintaining and mediating
- improvement of employment services
- testing new approaches and delivery mechanisms
- demonstrating the value added of good practice

5.7 Thematic networking, dissemination of good practice and making an impact on national policy (Action 3)

Action 3 is a significant part of the EQUAL Community Initiative Programme (CIP). It aims to inform, influence and change labour market and employment policy and practice. This impact is achieved through networking, dissemination and mainstreaming.

The Slovak Managing Authority will co-ordinate Action 3 activities to make sure that they provide a substantial contribution to the development of local, regional, national and European policy. This requires the active involvement of a wide range of organisations in order to be effective, and will include: policy makers; public employment services; non-governmental organisations; the community and voluntary sector; and the social partners.

Networking is an essential part of Action 3 in order to bring people together to meet and exchange ideas, information and knowledge. It involves DPs and other organisations concerned with the development and delivery of employment and labour market policy but not involved in EQUAL (non-programme players).

Two types of network form the backbone of Action 3: National Thematic Groups (NTGs) and European Thematic Groups (ETGs). These aim to co-ordinate Action 3 activity at the national and European level respectively to make sure that DPs' results and experiences influence policy making at the highest level.

Dissemination is the spreading of information to individuals and organisations, aiming to provide knowledge about the context, design, development, delivery and impact of activities so that others can learn about, and build on, the experience gained through EQUAL.

The Slovak Managing Authority, National Support Structure and DPs are the main groups responsible for dissemination under EQUAL. Their efforts will be planned to be effective when dissemination is targeted at a specific audience for a clear reason and is provided in an accessible format.

Mainstreaming is a complex process that will aim to use the experiences and results of DPs to inform, influence and change wider policy and practice, and may occur in two different ways - either horizontally or vertically or both.

Horizontal mainstreaming occurs between similar types of organisations – ‘peers’ working on a shared problem; while vertical mainstreaming happens when a DP transfers their results and experiences to policy or decision-makers.

A concerted strategy will link DP activity with policy developments to achieve vertical mainstreaming. The formal mainstreaming mechanism of National Thematic Groups (NTGs) will become an effective way to bring DPs and policy makers together at the very start of EQUAL. Such a mechanism will ensure that there is a clear link between policy needs and the planned activities, while helping to build relationships to assist policy makers to understand the context in which innovation is developed.

Action 3 will be organised under the responsibility of the Slovak Managing Authority, through a Mainstreaming Plan, as outlined under Action 3 above, to be endorsed by the Monitoring Committee, updated on an annual basis, on the basis of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the DPs and of their networks.

The Slovak Managing Authority is committed to commencing Action 3 at the same time as Action 2 is launched. The call for proposals will define the condition for each DP to save 15% of their total budget for Action 3.

The Managing Authority will draft a mainstreaming strategy, submit it to the Monitoring Committee for approval, implement it and monitor its activities and achievements. It will be assisted by the National Support Structure.

5.8 Provision of technical assistance

Technical assistance will serve to support implementation of EQUAL Programme Document and may provide support before the commencement of Development Partnerships activities. For further details see Chapter 5.3.

5.9 Facilitating compatibility with European Union law

In line with the Art. 34, Para 1, letter g) of the General Regulation, CIP EQUAL Managing Authority will safeguard that operations co-financed from ESF will be performed in full accordance with provisions of the Treaty, with tools adopted within its framework as well as in line with policies and activities of Community including rules on economic competition, on assignment of public orders, on environmental protection and improvement and elimination of inequality and support of equality between men and women.

Compatibility with European Union law was safeguarded even upon development of CIP EQUAL, the content of which is in line with Art. 2 of the Commission Regulation 99/1784/EC on European Social Fund and Communication from the Commission to Member States 127/02, specifying activities eligible for ESF support. Implementation of operations co-financed from ESF will be performed in accordance with other regulations and guidelines related to the use of structural funds resources.

5.10 Compliance with State aid legislation

General framework

Within the EQUAL Initiative, Development Partnerships (DP) carries out activities, which are done through consortia, or by legal entities consisting of several partners that might also include private undertakings, or by the individual partners of a DP. In the framework of the Structural Funds, the Development Partnerships are final beneficiaries in the meaning of Regulation 1260/1999.

Article 87 of the EC Treaty prohibits any aid granted by a Member State or through State resources in any form whatsoever which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favouring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods. The EC Treaty, however, allows exceptions to the ban on State aid where the proposed aid schemes may have a beneficial impact in overall Union terms.

Therefore, pursuant to Articles 12, 17.1 and 19.2 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999, the Managing Authority will hold the overall responsibility for ensuring the compliance of all operations financed under this EQUAL CIP with the provisions of the Treaty as regards State aid.

By and large, grants awarded to undertakings under EQUAL do not constitute any State aid within the meaning of Art. 87.1 of the Treaty, because most of them involve only smaller amounts (and therefore will fall under the "de-minimis" rule¹⁷). Where they constitute State aid, as they are intended to facilitate access to work, or reducing risky employment situations for disadvantaged people, they would mostly fall under the block exemption for aid to SMEs¹⁸, Employment aid¹⁹ or training aid²⁰.

Compliance with Community policies will be checked on five levels:

- 1) All undertakings participating financially in EQUAL keep track of all respective public funding they have received, and of its respective justification. They are therefore aware of checking compliance with the "de-minimis" rule, if needed.
- 2) For each Development Partnership, the body in charge of administering the public funds will identify if undertakings are intended to receive financial support under EQUAL, collect the relevant information from them, make a first check of compliance with State aid rules (block exemptions) and include a justification for the envisaged grant(s) in any financial proposal made to the Managing Authority.
- 3) The Managing Authority, as required under Article 34(1)(g) of Council Regulation No. 1260/1999, will ensure that grants to Development Partnerships are only issued if
 - a) all relevant information needed for a compliance check has been submitted by the Development Partnership as part of its proposals for funding, or for any modification of the grant under EQUAL;
 - b) the conditions under which the grant is awarded to an undertaking qualify for the block exemptions for employment aid, aid to SMEs, or training aid, or if they comply with the provisions of the "de-minimis"-rule, or if the grant has been formally approved under the Interim Mechanism laid down in Annex IV.3 of the Accession Treaty where applicable or by the Commission as laid down in Article 88 EC and Regulation 659/1999, and
 - c) in case the "de minimis" rule needs to be applied, the individual undertaking has been informed, before issuing the grant letter, that the support is of a "de minimis" nature and, if the firm has verified and confirmed that all other "de minimis" aid received by them will remain within the threshold and where the Managing Authority has checked that this will not raise the total amount of *de minimis* aid received during the relevant period of three years to above the threshold set out in the *de minimis* threshold or where a central register has been set up, it has been verified that the threshold has not been exceeded.
- 4) The Slovak Managing Authority will, as part of its monitoring system, collect all information as regards grants to enterprises for checking compliance with the "de-minimis" rule and the block exemptions. In case the latter cannot be applied, i.e. if individual grants represent aid in accordance with Art. 87(1) the EC, such funding will need to be notified as State aid and submitted to the European Commission for approval.

17) Commission Regulation (EC) No. 69/2001 of 12 January 2001 on the application of the Articles 87 and 88 EC Treaty on "de-minimis"-State aid

18) Commission Regulation (EC) No.70/2001 of 12 January 2001 on the application of the Articles 87 and 88 EC Treaty on State subsidies to small and medium-sized enterprises and as amended by the Commission Regulation (EC) No 364/2004 of 25 February 2004

19) Commission Regulation (EC) 2204/2002 of 5 December 2002 on the application of Articles 87 and 88 of the EC Treaty to State aid for employment

20) Commission Regulation (EC) No. 68/2001 of 12 January 2001 on the application of the Articles 87 and 88 of the EC Treaty on training aid as amended by the Commission Regulation (EC) No 363/2004 of 25 February 2004

- 5) The Managing Authority will, in addition, establish a formal consultation mechanism with Ministry of Finance of SR, which is the designated national authority for State aid control, and which has established the adequate mechanisms for control of the commutation of State aid.

Funding under EQUAL granted to undertakings not covered by an exemption regulation or Commission approval is illegal and subject to the consequences set out in the procedural regulation for State aid, and its part-financing would be treated as an irregularity within the meaning of Articles 38 and 39 of Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999.

Consequently, the Commission will not accept requests for interim and final payments under Article 32 of the Regulation for measures being part-financed with new or altered aid, as defined in the procedural regulation for State aid, granted under aid schemes or in individual cases, until such aid has been notified to and formally approved by the Commission.

Block exemption	Company characteristics	Scope and EQUAL specific activities exempted	Maximum aid intensity for EQUAL in the Slovak Republic exempted	Maximum amount of aid exempted	Further conditions for exemption
"De minimis" rule	All companies, but does not apply to the transport sector and the production, processing or marketing of certain agricultural and fisheries products	no restrictions	100%	€ 100,000 over a rolling 3-year period	No need for notification to the Commission. The Slovak Republic set up a register of de minimis aid, or to companies of aid and whether an addition does not raise the amount above the ceiling
Training aid	All companies	training activities, which favour firms by reducing costs of training of their employees for acquiring new skills. Costs covered: trainers' personnel costs, travel costs or trainers and trainees, other current expense (material, supplies, etc.), depreciation of tools and equipment used exclusively for mentioned training, guidance and counselling and trainees' personnel costs	Specific training: 30%* for Bratislava region and 35%** for the rest of the country.* (*25% + 5% (Art. 87 (3) (c) regional increase) and **25% + 10% (Art. 87 (3) (a) regional increase) Further increases for: SME : 10% Disadvantaged workers: 10% General training: 55%* for Bratislava region (*50% + 5% - Art.87(3) (c) regional increase) 60%** for the rest of the country (**50% + 10% - Art. 87 (3) (a) regional increase Further increases for: SME: 20% Disadvantaged workers: 10%	€ 1,000,000	Commission needs to be informed within 20 working days
Aid for employment	All companies	Creation of jobs, recruitment of disadvantaged or disabled people, employing disabled people (additional costs only). Disadvantaged people include young persons below 25 or within 2 years from completing full-time education, migrant workers, members of ethnic minorities, long-term unemployed, unskilled and under-educated, elderly, women absent from working life or ex-prisoners. For conditions include net increase in no of jobs, maximum duration of aid	Job creation: Regional aid ceiling Recruitment of disadvantaged people: 50% Recruitment of disabled people: 60% Aid for additional costs of employing disabled people: 100%	€ 15,000,000 over 3 years for a single enterprise	Commission needs to be informed within 20 working days. Other types of job support are not excluded (aid for job sharing, other types of disadvantaged workers.)
The aid for small and medium-sized enterprises	SMEs with less than 250 employees	Tangible (land, buildings, plant/machinery) and intangible investment (expenditure entailed by technology transfer) and soft aid in SMEs. The costs of services provided by outside consultants and the costs of the first participation of an enterprise in a fair or exhibition are also eligible.	Services by outside consultants and participation in fairs: up to 50% Investment: Regional aid ceiling + 15%; Regional aid ceiling + 10% for Bratislava region Maximum aid intensity: 75% Maximum aid intensity: for Bratislava region: 30%		Commission needs to be informed within 20 working days

Measure	Block exemptions			Other cases	
	Aid for employment	Aid for training	Small and medium -sized enterprises	De minimis Rule	Ad hoc notification
1.1. Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market which must be open to all	Aid for employment	Aid for training	Small and medium -sized enterprises	De minimis Rule	Ad hoc notification
1.2. Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market	Aid for employment	Aid for training	Small and medium -sized enterprises	De minimis Rule	Ad hoc notification
2.1. Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs	Aid for employment	Aid for training	Small and medium -sized enterprises	De minimis Rule	Ad hoc notification
3.1. Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies	Aid for employment	Aid for training	Small and medium -sized enterprises	De minimis Rule	Ad hoc notification
4.1. Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation	Aid for employment	Aid for training	Small and medium -sized enterprises	De minimis Rule	Ad hoc notification
5.1. Supporting the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers.	Aid for employment	Aid for training	Small and medium -sized enterprises	De minimis Rule	Ad hoc notification

Assignment of Public procurement

While implementing operation within CIP EQUAL, media will publish calls for proposals mainly in national, regional and local press.

Assignment of public procurement for services, goods and work will be performed based on results of public competitions of tenders, while the entire process will be governed by the Council Directive 92-50 and the relevant Slovak legislation (523/2003 act on public procurement) on Public Procurement.

Rules of environmental protection and improvement

Implementation of operations within CIP EQUAL will have no direct impact on the environment. Within the framework of operations, educational activities will be carried out in the field of environmental education as part of life-long learning. Preparation and selection of operations will be carried out with regard to the principles of environmental protection and improvement.

Rules for elimination of inequality and support of equality between men and women

Gender issues and equal opportunities are important aspects of the approach to addressing problems of social exclusion, gender-mainstreaming being at its core. Entrenched stereotypes continue to persist in this area. Their elimination is of significance also for the solution of the issue of social exclusion.

The support of gender equality is provided for in relevant legislation and institutionally ensured at Government level through the Department of Equal Opportunities and Anti-discrimination of the MoL-SAF SR and the Expert Committee for Gender Equality. At Parliamentary level, there is a Subcommittee for Equal Opportunities and the Position of Women in the Society, working with the Committee of the National Council of the SR (=Parliament) for Human Rights, National Minorities and the Position of Women.

While implementing operation within CIP EQUAL, principles of equality between men and women will be maintained. Enforcement of this principle is confirmed by measures adopted to safeguard equality of labour market opportunities for men and women. Activities in this field will be based on Strategy of Equality of Opportunities.

Throughout the course of implementation, Council information adopted by means of Resolution 94/C 231/01 and (96) C 386/01 on support of equal opportunities for men and women through structural funds operation and on gender mainstreaming in structural funds as well as other guidelines concerning gender mainstreaming will be considered.

Within the efforts to support gender equality, in 1997, the Government of the SR approved the *National Action Plan for Women (NAP)* and in 2001 the *Concept of Equal Opportunities of Women and Men (CoEOoWaM)*. These documents constitute fundamental schemes also for designing special measures for the elimination of poverty from gender aspects. In NAP for women this area is covered under priority III, *Creating conditions for the elimination of economic disadvantages which may result in women's material distress* and VII, *Creating conditions for personal development and employment of women with smaller development chances (women living in rural areas, women of the Roma ethnic group, unemployed women, women not adequately prepared for their motherly role, women with disabilities, etc.)* and in CoEOoWaM – *Supporting DPs to enhance the position of rural women and men and women and men with smaller development chances*. In April 2003 the Government adopted a resolution, by which it assigned the MoLSAF SR to elaborate measures specifically aimed at equalizing opportunities for Roma women (*Government resolution on the evaluation of the Priorities of the Government of the SR related to Roma communities for 2002 and the Strategy of the Government of the SR for the solution of problems of the Roma community for 2001 and basic rationale for the policy concept of the Government of the SR in the integration of Roma communities*). The SR Government has monitored the issues social exclusion through the prism of gender equality also by means of other Government materials, which have been discussed in the foregoing chapters.

Enforcement of this support as well as impacts of completed operations will be subject to monitoring and evaluation on on-going basis and final evaluation, too.

5.11 Information and publicity

A basic document facilitating information and publicity relating to the Programme implementation is the Council Regulation 1159/2000/EC of May 30, 2000 on Measures for Information and Publicity to be performed by member states in relation to assistance from structural funds. Simultaneously, it will be based on several other European Commission's recommendations, too.

The aim of information actions is to provide for increased awareness of the Slovak citizens on potential assistance under EQUAL, as well as transparency and effectiveness of the use of these resources.

In order to facilitate activities in this area, measures will be adopted in form of communication action plan for EQUAL programme. As part of this plan, measures will be adopted with following objectives:

- a) to provide DPs with information on opportunities offered by EU and SR joint assistance to safeguard transparency of such assistance. Information will be conveyed to potential final beneficiaries, regional and local authorities, other respective public bodies, commercial organizations and business entities, economic and social partner, NGOs, especially those supporting equal opportunities for men and women.
- b) to inform the broad public about the role that EU plays in co-operation with SR in assistance provided from EQUAL Initiative and its results.

Communication action plan will be introduced in the Programme Complement according to Art. 18 (3) (d) of The General Regulation, after approval by the Monitoring Committee.

In line with General Regulation, the Managing Authority is responsible for information and publicity. Information and publicity concerning assistance from EQUAL Initiative will be performed on national, regional and local levels. MoLSAF SR as Managing Authority will be responsible for performance of national information action, while National Support Structure will be involved in activities related to publication and information on regional and local levels.

Various media, brochures, advertisements, posters, seminars, promotion material will be employed to facilitate information campaign. At the same time, information on EQUAL Initiative will be accessible by means of Internet page.

Cost incurred from publication and information activities will be partially reimbursed within technical assistance for EQUAL Initiative, in line with Regulation 1685/2000 amended by Regulation 1145/2003.

5.12 Approach for the EQUAL Community Initiative Principles Implementation

The EQUAL Community Initiative is based on six basic principles:

- thematic approach
- partnership approach
- innovation
- transnational co-operation
- empowerment
- integrating the results into policy and practice
- gender mainstreaming

Thematic approach

Within the EQUAL Community Initiative, the European Commission stated 8 thematic areas, the 9th theme focused on the promoting the integration of the asylum seekers. Based on the analysis, Slovakia participates on five themes. As the participation in the Asylum Seekers Theme is obligatory for all the participating countries, this theme is covered by the measure 6. Themes suggested by the EC are the subject of the chapter 2. Themes selected by the Slovak Republic are described in the chapter 4.

Partnership approach and Empowerment

One of the main principles of EQUAL is bringing together actors who cooperate in Development Partnerships and work on innovative solutions of jointly defined problems. Partnerships bring together very disparate groups under active participation of people exposed to discrimination due to inequalities.

EQUAL has integrated essential features good governance as it addresses crosscutting policy issues, and works across and beyond institutional boundaries. As an innovative programme, EQUAL questions established ways of dealing with situations and encourages new and creative ideas. Good governance requires the active participation of all interested stakeholders, not only to increase effectiveness of policy development and implementation, but also to enhance and improve governance of the process, thereby contributing to a better mainstreaming of the outputs of EQUAL into policy at national and European level.

Innovation

The concept of Innovation is not a new one either and is based on results from the evaluation of the EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT initiatives. The EQUAL Community Initiative provides a support for innovative solutions of inequality and discrimination in the labour market. Innovation can also mean a brand new approach to the issues in Slovakia. Matters related to Innovation result from the Commission Communication to the Member States from 31/12/2003 as described below:

EQUAL will test innovative approaches to policy delivery. These may be completely new approaches, or the transfer of elements from elsewhere increasing thus the effectiveness of policy delivery.

In the calls of proposals it is necessary to specify innovation needs addressing relevant or emerging issues of the labour market. Apart from that a redesign of interfaces between institutions or public policies and actions should be indicated within the calls for proposals.

Member States should also articulate policy demand and encourage Development Partnerships to experiment more in areas of protection against unemployment, quality of employment and direct job creation.

Transnational co-operation

Application of transnational co-operation principle in the frame of EQUAL also results from the experience collected upon implementation of previous initiatives: ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT. Transnational co-operation is a significant element contributing to innovative solutions for a given topic. Transnational co-operation of DPs in Slovakia with a range of EU Member States is feasible also due to joint topics being declared for the EQUAL Initiative in all EU Member States. The Transnational Co-operation Agreement ensures the transnational co-operation principle. Any of the Development Partnerships has to conclude a Transnational Co-operation Agreement with at least one Development Partnership from another EU Member State. Matters related to the transnational co-operation result from the Communication from the Commission COM 2003/840as described below:

Co-operation across Member States is a fundamental aspect of EQUAL and the experience gained under the previous programmes as well as the first round of EQUAL shows that considerable policy innovation can be achieved through transnational collaboration. Transnational co-operation under EQUAL is working well, and has already delivered

- a better insight into the nature and forms of discrimination, inequality, and labour market
- exclusion
- improved strategies and actions in the light of experience in other Member States (at national as well as at Development Partnership level)
- benchmark strategies and actions across several Member States
- credibility to the work carried out by Development Partnership as far as opinion leaders and decision-makers are concerned

The main challenge within the transnational co-operation between Development Partnerships is finding suitable partners in other Member States. The previous experience has shown the absolute necessity of setting up a "transnationality window" i.e. a commonly agreed date by which all Managing Authorities – having completed the single selection procedure – would complete the EQUAL Common Data Base (ECDB) with data on Development Partnerships, in order to give all Development Partnerships an equal chance to find transnational partners.

As transnational co-operation is an integral part of the activity of the Development Partnership, the work programme cannot be complete without this element. This is why, in the first round, the draft Development Partnership Agreement and the Transnational Co-operation Agreement each had to be submitted at the end of *action 1*.

In order to facilitate this process, an internet based database "EQUAL transnational co-operation internet module" (ETCIM) has been established which allows all authorities to view and notify their approval of Transnational Co-operation Agreements through the internet.

In order to avoid bottlenecks, Member States will process submission for the initial selection of the Development Partnership, including the multi annual budget available to implement the work programme (*action 2*) would normally be given within 8 weeks.

As part of commitment to transnationality and as an integral part of their work programme, Development Partnerships participate and contribute to thematic networks and events (for which participation costs, travel and subsistence, are considered as eligible expenses).

Mainstreaming

One of the objectives of the Community Initiative EQUAL is to act as a testing ground for developing innovative policy approaches. The successful ideas and methods should be integrated into policy and practice. When we speak about *Mainstreaming* we talk about the integration and incorporation of new ideas and approaches into policy and practice.

It is important to view the mainstreaming on one hand from the point of view of good practice dissemination through Development Partnerships (operating either at a territorial or issue level), Member State (at national level) and Commission (at European level); on the other hand it is also the integration of innovative new approaches into policy and practice.

Apart from that, it is necessary to emphasise the transnational dimension of EQUAL which should also provide scope for mainstreaming new policy approaches / good practices. Good practices from other countries will be possible to use in Slovak context and vice versa.

In order to obtain the maximum impact from EQUAL, results must be analysed, benchmarked and disseminated in order to have an impact both within Slovakia and across the Union.

In the frame of ensuring the management of mainstreaming in Slovakia, the Managing Authority will be responsible for thematic networking, the dissemination, and information functions and mainstreaming.

The Managing Authority will involve social partners in each of these activities.

The role of the Monitoring Committee will be to determine and approve the mainstreaming strategy both at a horizontal level (i.e. amongst organisations operating in similar thematic fields) and vertically (at national, regional and local policy level).

The National Support Structure will support the development, update and implementation of the mainstreaming strategy agreed by the Monitoring Committee.

The mainstreaming strategy will be based on:

- identifying factors leading to inequality and discrimination and monitoring and analysing the impact or potential impact of the Development Partnerships on the policy priorities set out in the NAP and on the different groups subject to discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market
- identifying and assessing the factors leading to good practice and benchmarking their performance
- disseminating good practice

Gender Mainstreaming

The awareness of gender equality issues is rather inadequate in Slovakia. The low level of awareness of gender equality was conditioned, firstly, by the ways in which the issue was approached under the communist regime. During the process of democratization and transition, due to many political and economic problems, gender equality was not identified as a priority either by society at large or by decision-makers.

The discussions and studies tackling the issue of gender equality have identified several gaps in the existing capacity of the Slovak public and local authorities to implement the principles of gender mainstreaming among them. Therefore it is necessary to:

- to raise the knowledge about gender equality and the integration of gender equality concerns into regular policy work on all levels
- to improve the skills to ensure that all general measures and operations take into account their effects on the respective situations of women and men during planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- to raise the understanding of what the mainstreaming commitment entails for the management and staff of public and local authorities
- to prepare and the training framework to equip civil servants and local government officials with relevant knowledge and skills.

However, the gender mainstreaming receives the attention in the Slovak Republic. Department of the Equal Opportunities and Antidiscrimination of the Ministry of Labour provides the information and education to the representatives of the public sector on the current trends in gender mainstreaming strategies.

There are two basic Governmental documents dealing with the gender issues:

1. *National Action Plan for Women*, that is the main document to ensure the better position of women in the Slovak Republic, designated by the Governmental decision No. 650/1997. The document settles the priorities and strategies to prevent the discrimination of men and women.

2. *Concept on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men* – designated by the Governmental decision No. 232/2001 that entrusts the Slovak Government to eliminate the discrimination in the areas affected the most. Concept's measures are implemented by the public bodies, self-governments, NGOs, social partners, research institutions. Department of the Equal Opportunities and Antidiscrimination of the Ministry of Labour is responsible to up to date and monitor this document and annually submit the report to the Government.

In 2002 there was established the Commission on Equal Opportunities and Position of Women in the Society (at the governmental level under the National Council Committee). At the level of the Trade Union Confederation there is the Commission for Women fully operational.

Department of the Equal Opportunities and Antidiscrimination of the Ministry of Labour is spreading the gender mainstreaming principle through:

- education – seminars and workshops for the representatives of the Ministries and other public institutions, self-governments, research institutions to understand and further implement this principle
- project "Implementation of the Gender mainstreaming into the Agenda of the Regional and Local Self-governments" to raise the awareness of the gender mainstreaming and get acquainted with the practice of the Office for Women in Vienna/Austria.

The EQUAL programme is first of all expected to contribute to wider acknowledgement and understanding of the importance of gender equality and the essence of gender mainstreaming. In addition, the work of the Development Partnerships is expected to increase the level of information and knowledge concerning the actual situation on the labour market, the gender-specific influence of different factors and the gender-specific influence of specific measures tested by the Development Partnerships. The recent and forthcoming developments in the field of gender mainstreaming are likely to facilitate the take-up of lessons and validated results from the EQUAL programme.

6. Financial issues

6.1 Paying Authority

According to the Article 9 of the General Regulation, Ministry of Finance SR was designated as the only **Paying Authority** for European Union's structural funds based on the resolution of SR Government No. 617/2002.

The Paying Authority for EQUAL is the **Ministry of Finance SR** – Department of Paying Authority for Structural Funds.

The Paying Authority is responsible in particular for the following tasks:

- coordination of the preparation of all working and accounting procedures related to the receipt of the payment on account, interim payments and payment of the final balance from the European Commission, and of the execution of these activities;
- preparation and forwarding of applications for interim payments to the European Commission for CIP EQUAL
- preparation and forwarding of application for payment of the final balance to the European Commission for CIP EQUAL;
- preparation, certification and submission of the statements of expenditure to the European Commission, based on the DPs' statements of expenditure and monthly lists of effected payments submitted by the Paying Unit after verification by the Managing Authority and NSS;
- verification, prior to the certification, of procedure used by the Managing Authority, NSS and Paying Unit, to ensure that the statement of expenditure only comprises eligible and actual expenditure effected within the eligibility period (Commission Regulation No 2004/448/EC laying down detailed rules for implementation of the Council Regulation No 99/1260/EC as regards eligibility of expenditure of operations co-financed by the structural funds), that the controls of delivery of the co-financed constructions, goods and services and of reality of claimed expenditure have been made, that applicable EC regulations are complied with, that supporting documentation is available, and that the audit trail has been maintained and respected;
- receipt of ESF funds at the special off-budget account of the Ministry of Finance SR;
- transfer of the ESF funds from the special off-budget account of the Ministry of Finance SR to the revenue account of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family on the basis of summary request for payment from the Paying Unit;
- preparation and submission to the European Commission of estimate of drawing of expected expenditure in the applicable year and in the following year based on documentation provided by the Managing Authority by 30 April each year;

- return of payments unduly used or unused, including interest on late payment, to the European Commission;
- collection of data for the report on identified irregularities and forwarding the documentation to OLAF Central Contact Point for SR at the Government Office SR;
- introduction of the uniform accounting system for the Paying Authority and the Paying Unit, including the delivery of uniform information system for the accounting for the Paying Unit;
- maintenance of accounting, reporting and archiving of documents in compliance with EC regulations and SR law;
- keeping of a debtors ledger;
- participation of its representative in execution of minimum 5 % controls organized by the Control Section of the Ministry of Finance SR;
- participation of its representative in the selection committee, that will select DPs, as an observer,.

6.2 Paying Unit

The Paying Unit for EQUAL is Financial Department of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR.

The primary task of the Paying Unit is, in compliance with Act No 303/1995 Coll. on Budgetary Rules as amended, to ensure the transfer of means of EU and of national co-financing from the state budget from the expenditure account of the respective ministry or budgetary organisation to the account of the DP, based on execution of ex-ante financial control in accordance with Act No 502/2001 Coll. on Financial Control and Internal Audit as amended.

The Paying Unit in relation to financial management of EQUAL ensures:

- submission of internal procedures, including any changes, to the Paying Authority;
- execution of ex-ante financial control prior to disbursement in line with § 9 of Act No 502/2001 Coll. on Financial Control and Internal Audit as amended, comprising formal control of documents submitted by the Managing Authority, check of requests match with project financial plan and budget limit for the given priority and measure;
- issuance of request for execution of payment to the State Treasury for transfer of EU means to DP in line with § 55f of Act No 303/1995 Coll. on Budgetary Rules as amended no later than three working days after their credit to the revenue account;
- transfer of means for co-financing from the state budget to the DP in the form of providing the advance payment (in case of DP from the public sector) or refunding;
- completion and submission of the summary requests for payment and partial statements of expenditure to the Paying Authority;
- maintenance of accounting, reporting and archiving of documents in compliance with EC regulations and SR law;
- keeping of a partial debtor ledger;
- submission of the list of effected payments from its expenditure account to the Paying Authority for the respective month structured according to ESF sources and national co-financing sources from the state budget together with a copy of the expenditure account statement no later than the fifth day of the following month;
- preparation and submission of report on identified irregularity to the Paying Authority in case of its detection on the basis of ex-ante control;
- submission of reports on internal audit findings on the Paying Unit and report on external audit findings on the Paying Unit performed by the European Court of Auditors or respective Directorate General of the European Commission, to the Paying Authority.

6.3 Duties of the Managing Authority in terms of financial management system

The Managing Authority (MA), the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, is responsible for effectiveness and accuracy of assistance management and implementation, in accordance with the Article 34 of the Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 and institutional, legal and financial systems of the Slovak Republic.

In accordance with the General Regulation the Managing Authority is primarily responsible for:

- co-financing of CIP EQUAL from the state budget, for the respective priorities;
- conclusion of contracts with the respective DP, including provisions enabling sanctioning in case of failure to meet the specified conditions, and if necessary, issuance of consents with commencement of work;
- verification of co-financing of individual projects from the sources of the DP and from other national sources;
- formal check of requests of the DP for payment;
- control of the physical implementation of selected DPs (on-the-spot control);
- ex-ante verification of reality, eligibility, accuracy, topicality and lack of overlapping of expenditure claimed by the DP;
- verification of the DP's request for payment compliance with state aid scheme in the case the DP's activities are part of state aid scheme;
- verification whether the expenditure claimed by DP match with financial tables in the contract with the DP;
- preparation and forwarding of the declaration of verification to the Paying Unit;
- approving and submitting the requests of DP for payment to the Paying Unit;
- preparation and submission to the Paying Authority of report on identified irregularity in case of its detection on the basis of ex-ante control.
- submitting internal procedures including any changes to Paying Authority;
- drawing up and submission of forecast of expected expenditure drawings to the Paying Authority till March 30 of the respective year;
- submitting reports on results of the Managing Authority internal audit and external audit to Paying Authority;
- following and respecting internal procedures including audit trail at each management level;
- archiving of all documents related to expenditures and control of ESF assistance at least for 10 years from conclusion of the project;

Following the request of the Monitoring Committee or upon its own initiative, the Managing Authority may amend the Programme Complement, without changing the total contribution allocated by ESF for individual priorities or their specific objectives. After the Monitoring Committee approves the amendments, the Managing Authority has to inform the Commission about the amendments within a month. Every amendment to the decision on ESF contribution has to be approved by the Commission, after reaching an agreement with the Slovak Republic first, within four months after it receives the approval of the Monitoring Committee.

6.4 Duties of National Support Structure under Managing Authority in terms of financial management

The role of the National Support Structure is to assist the Managing Authority with the tasks connected with the implementation of EQUAL in the Slovak Republic. On the basis of the Ministerial Decision from February 24th 2004, the role of the National Support Structure is delegated to the contributory organization of MLSAF SR - Social Development Fund. In accordance with the needs within EQUAL implementation, MA will ask to augment the number of NSS staff. Additional changes will be further updated in the Program Complement. The overall responsibility for CIP EQUAL management remains with the Managing Authority.

- NSS in relation to financial management ensures:
- submission of internal procedures, including any changes, to the Paying Authority;
- formal check of requests of the final beneficiaries for payment;
- control of the physical implementation of chosen projects (on-the-spot control);
- preliminary ex-ante verification of reality, eligibility, accuracy, topicality and lack of overlapping of expenditure claimed by the DP;
- preliminary verification whether the claimed expenditure of the DP match with financial tables in the contract with the DP;
- submission of reports on internal audit findings on NSS and of reports on external audit findings on NSS to the Paying Authority;
- keeping and observing of internal procedures, including the audit trail, at each level of management;

- keeping of all documentation related to the expenditure and control of EC assistance for a minimum of 10 years from the conclusion of the project.

6.5 System of financial flows (payments) within Programme Document

Funds for the Slovak EQUAL Community Initiative will be provided by ESF and the state budget. The payments of ESF resources from the European Commission are transferred to a special account of the Ministry of Finance SR in the State Treasury for the commitments approved by the European Commission. Certified applications for interim payment and payment of the final balance are submitted by the Paying Authority to the European Commission on the basis of documentation provided by the Paying Unit.

The interests generated from ESF means on the special account of MF SR are allocated by the Paying Authority to the same purpose of assistance.

The State Treasury transfers ESF means from the MF SR special account in the State Treasury to the revenue account of the Paying Unit three times a month at the amount of approved payments to the DP, on the basis of the request from the Paying Authority for execution of payment.

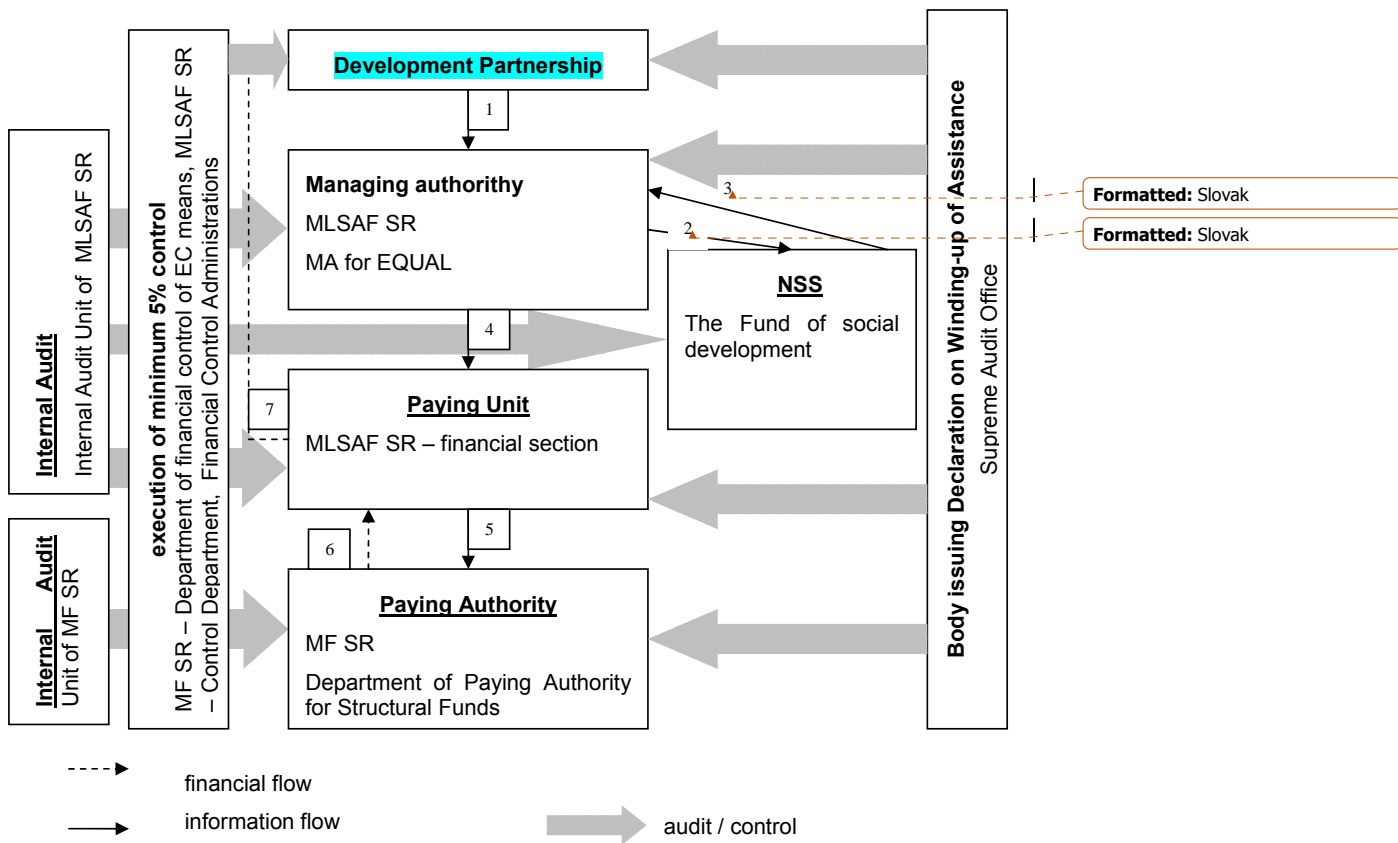
Payments of both ESF and national co-financing resources to DPs are carried out by the State Treasury on the basis of the request from the Paying Unit for execution of payment from the expenditure account of this body. The request for execution of payment for transfer of state budget means from co-financing from MLSAF SR expenditure account will be issued concurrently with the request for execution of payment for transfer of EC means.

Payments from the national budget to DPs will not be dependant on the reimbursement from the Commission. PA will ensure that DPs will receive payment in full (including the parts corresponding both to the ESF contribution and to the national public co-financing) and as quickly as possible.

For the DPs from the public sector, the system of providing the advance payment from the state budget resources for co-financing is applied. Non public sector DPs will not receive any advance payment.

More detailed information on financial arrangements will be provided in the document according to Art. 5 of Regulation 438/2001 of 2 March 2001 (amended by Regulation 2355/2002 regarding Management and Control Systems), and in the Programme Complement.

Information and financial flows circulation scheme for EQUAL



- 1) Request of the final beneficiary for payment sent to MA EQUAL
- 2) Sending of the financial documentation from MA EQUAL to NSS (National support structure)
- 3) Declaring consent with procedure of the NSS
- 4) Declaring consent with procedure of the MA EQUAL
- 5) Summary request for payment
- 6) Payment of ESF means from the Paying Authority's account
- 7) Payment of ESF and state budget means to the final beneficiaries

6.6 Financial Control of Programme implementation

Financial control of ESF funding within the EQUAL Community Initiative is based on European Union and national legislation.

In accordance with the Act No. 502/2001 Coll. on Financial Control and Internal Audit and amendment of some acts, the Ministry of Finance SR as central state administration body for financial control and internal audit, shall provide methodological guidance and co-ordinate financial control performance in

public administration, including control of finances from structural funds and Cohesion Fund provided to the Slovak Republic based on international agreements.

The levels of controlling can be described as follows:

Control of physical project implementation in line with Art. 4 of the Council Regulation 438/2001 EC are performed by:

1. DP

DP is obliged to perform physical and formal control of each invoice prior to the transfer of finances. A checklist containing details as instructed by CSF Managing Authority is used for the control purposes.

2. Managing Authority

Managing Authority will issue detail instructions for performance of physical project implementation check. Separation of control department from other duties will form part of the instructions.

Control Section of the Ministry of Finance SR

Control Section of the Ministry of Finance SR is the body responsible for coordination of planning and executing the sample checks on projects (minimum 5 % control of total eligible expenditure of programme). Within the Control Section, it is the Department of Financial Control of EC means that ensures the tasks mentioned below.

Control Section of the Ministry of Finance SR is in relation to EQUAL responsible in particular for:

- coordination of planning and executing the minimum 5 % controls, collection of their findings and their submission to the Paying Authority;
- preparation of the plan of minimum 5 % controls of total eligible expenditure for EQUAL on the basis of partial plans of Control Department of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR, and their submission to the Paying Authority and European Commission;
- ensuring the minimum 5 % control of total eligible expenditure of EQUAL before winding-up of the assistance in line with the plan of minimum 5 % controls or from own initiative through the Department of Financial Control of EC Means, respective Financial Control Administration, Control Department of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR
- adjudication in the administration proceedings in cases of breach of budgetary discipline on the basis of completed controls.

Financial Control Administrations

Financial Control Administrations are budgetary organisations of the Ministry of Finance SR with the headquarters in Bratislava, Zvolen and Košice, having territorial competencies in the individual SR regions.

Financial Controls Administrations in relation to EQUAL perform in particular the following tasks:

- execution of minimum 5 % control of total eligible expenditure of EQUAL before winding-up of the assistance in line with plan of minimum 5 % controls approved by Control Section of the Ministry of Finance SR;
- imposing of levies and penalties for unduly use or retention of ESF and state budget means in compliance with Act No 303/1995 Coll. on Budgetary Rules as amended;
- enforcement of levies and penalties imposed for unduly use or retention of ESF and state budget means in compliance with Act No 440/2000 Coll. on Financial Control Administrations as amended.

Minimum 5 % control of total eligible expenditure

Control Section MF SR is responsible for arranging for minimum 5 % control of total eligible expenditure of respective programming document before winding-up of the assistance.

Minimum 5 % control of structural funds is performed by Control Section MF SR through the Department of financial control of EC means, Control Department of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR and territorially respective Financial Control Administrations.

Body performing minimum 5 % control of operations and projects must be organisationally separated from the Managing Authority, Intermediate Body under Managing Authority, Paying Units and payments execution at the Paying Authority.

Controls are organized and coordinated in such a manner so as to ensure even spread of controls implementation over the whole period of drawing the means. Performance of risks analysis and following selection of samples is ensured by Control Section MF SR when drawing-up the plan of controls for the respective period and on the basis of information obtained from the Control Department of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR and Financial Control Administrations, as well.

OLAF Central Contact Point for SR

The role of OLAF Central Contact Point for SR is performed by the Control Section of the Government Office SR. This body is responsible in particular for preparation of the report on irregularities on the basis of documentation provided by the Paying Authority and its submission to OLAF at the European Commission.

6.7 Independence of internal audit

In line with the requirement of adequate separation of functions within management system and control of expenditures for operations co-financed from EU resources, the authorized department of internal audit on each level of cascade – NSS – Managing Authority – Intermediate Body under Paying Authority – Paying Authority shall be in charge of internal audit performance.

The internal audit of Managing Authority, Intermediate Body under Managing Authority and Paying Units is performed by Internal Audit Units of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR.

The internal audit of the Paying Authority is performed by Internal Audit Unit of the Ministry of Finance SR.

Internal auditor / internal audit unit is responsible in particular for the following tasks:

- collecting and analyzing the information related to activities of audited body with a focus on attaining the internal audit purpose and objectives;
- preparing the annual plan of activities on the basis of objective assessment of risks resulting from audited bodies' activities with taking into account the proposals of the respective minister, and its forwarding to the Department of Financial Control and Internal Audit Methodology of the Ministry of Finance SR;
- performance of internal audit of all activities of the audited body, primarily those which are considered to be linked to risk in their character, extent and method of implementation;
- preparation of reports on internal audit findings after the performance of internal audit which contain in particular the subject of internal audit, shortcomings identified by internal audit and recommendations to audited body for remedy of identified shortcomings;
- submission of reports on internal audit findings to the head of audited body and the respective minister. If the internal audit findings establish grounds for legal proceedings or their solution belongs to the actions of bodies relevant according to particular regulations, the internal auditor must deliver report on the internal audit findings also to the body concerned with legal proceedings or body responsible for particular regulations.

6.8 Reports on irregularities

In accordance with Article 38 of the General Regulation and Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1681/1994 the reports on irregularities will be submitted to the Commission. The Paying Authority – the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic - is responsible for collecting information, which is necessary for submitting these reports. These reports are then submitted to the European Commission Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) via Central Contact Unit of OLAF of the Government of the Slovak Republic.

The urgent reports on irregularities and the reports on irregularities shall be submitted to the Commission. The urgent reports on irregularities are presented immediately after irregularities are identified. All bodies that participate in management and implementation of the assistance are obliged to inform immediately the Paying Authority about this fact. The report on irregularities is presented four times a year to EC, within the two subsequent months following the end of each quarter.

Information on irregularities (not exceeding the amount of EUR 4.000) is presented by Central Contact Unit of OLAF at the Government Office of the Slovak Republic to the OLAF on the Commission exclusively upon its request.

6.9 Declaration on winding-up of assistance

Supreme Audit Office SR is the body issuing the Declaration on Winding-up of the Assistance. It is its responsibility to prepare a Declaration on Winding-up of the Assistance for EQUAL which is the prerequisite for submission of application for payment of the final balance from the European Commission.

Principles of preparing the Declaration on Winding-up of the Assistance are based on Articles 15, 16 and 17 of Commission Regulation No 2001/438/EC.

6.10 Use of EUR

The use of the euro is governed by the Commission Regulation No 2000/643/EC on provisions for the use of euro for the structural funds purposes.

Financial plan of EQUAL is prepared in EUR. Contracts with the final beneficiary are concluded in SKK.

The Paying Authority receives EU funds at MF SR special account for the respective program, held in SKK. The transfers from this account to the account of Paying Unit for EU resources are carried out in SKK. Converting the means from EUR to SKK, the exchange rate of the National Bank of Slovakia is applied, valid at the date of crediting the EU means to the MF SR special account.

The applications for interim payment and payment of the final balance from the European Commission must be submitted to the European Commission in EUR.

The statement of expenditure attached to the respective application for interim payment or payment of the final balance from European Commission must be prepared in EUR.

Eligible expenditure already effected by the final beneficiaries and converted from SKK to EUR when preparing the statement of expenditure, are converted using the exchange rate of the European Central Bank valid on the last but one EC working day of month prior to the month when the transaction (i.e. transfer of EU means to the final beneficiary's account) was recorded at the Paying Unit.

The exchange rate variances generated by the difference between the European Central Bank and National Bank of Slovakia exchange rates, are becoming expenditure (ECB rate EUR/SKK > NBS rate EUR/SKK) or revenue (NBS rate EUR/SKK > ECB rate EUR/SKK) for the state budget. The Paying Authority shall account for exchange rate variances.

6.11 Financial plan

For details concerning financial plan for the EQUAL Community Initiative implementation in Slovakia within the framework of selected thematic fields, see Annex A. Justification on the expenditure share distribution between Objective 1 and 3 is provided below will be specified in the Programme Completion.

6.12 Co-financing

The financing of the measures of the Initiative EQUAL will be covered according to Objective 1 and 3 rules partially by ESF (Objective 1 – up to 75%, Objective 3 – up to 50%) and partially by national budget (Objective 1 – up to 25%, Objective 3 – up to 50%) For more details see the financial table, Annex A. The other structural funds - ERDF, EAGGF and FIG will not be used for financing of Initiative EQUAL.

The Managing Authority for EQUAL within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs ensures co-financing at the level of the programme from national budget.

6.13 Intervention rates

The territory of the Slovak Republic consists of regions covered by Objective 1, and the Bratislava area covered by Objective 3 as defined in Art. 1 of Regulation 1260/1999.

In order to respect the ceilings for the ESF contributions as stipulated in Art. 29 of Regulation 1260/1999, each of the 6 themes selected for the Slovak EQUAL CIP will be implemented through one measure relating to the Objective 1 regions, and a complementary measure relating to the Objective 3 area.

Although the Objective 3 area has a population of 425 533 (8%), and the Objective 1 regions a population of 4 954 520 (92%), the Slovak EQUAL CIP will allocate 85 % of the ESF contribution to measures for Objective 1 regions, and 15 % to measures for the Objective 3 area. This allocation is justified by the nature and scale of the labour market and social inclusion problems in the Objective 1 regions.

More specifically, the allocation between Objective 1 and Objective 3 deviates from the average allocation for the measures on "social economy" (75% and 25%); "adaptability" (90% and 10%), "gender gaps" (90% and 10%); and "asylum seekers" (100% for Objective 1).

At the level of individual Development Partnerships, the intervention rates will be specified as follows:

- Individual Development Partnerships operating only in Objective 1 regions, or only in the Objective 3 area, can benefit from a single ESF intervention rate up to the ceilings specified in Art. 29 of regulation 1260/1999 (Objective 1 regions: up to 75%; Objective 3 area: up to 50%).
- Individual Development Partnerships operating both in Objective 1 regions, and in the Objective 3 area, will be subject to different intervention rates. They have to specify, for each activity or sub-project, the main target area/implementation area. In this case, the different activities of a Development partnership will be co-financed according to the intervention rates applicable to the area/region where the main part of the respective activities are carried out. Overhead costs at DP level (such as expenditure for coordination and management, accounting and financial management, on-going assessment etc) will be allocated pro rata to the respective Objective 1 and Objective 3 measure.

7. Monitoring

Monitoring composes of regular checks of gradual intervention implementation. The Managing Authority is accountable for introduction of a system for collection of reliable financial and statistical information on assistance performance, for selection of monitoring and evaluation indices.

Within the Programme Document, monitoring is a continuous process monitoring intervention and expenditure development. Evaluation linked with ongoing monitoring process is performed in stipulated phases throughout the course of programming period. Information of financial and physical monitoring will be systemically computerized. Electronic information transfer is required by the Art. 18 of the General Regulation.

General Regulation stipulates that indicators must be relative to specific objectives, must reflect actual status achieved according to the physical outputs, results and impacts and must depict achieved development in relation to the financial plan. Indicators must take into account the fact that various regions receive various degrees of support and if necessary, it must be possible to differentiate between these indicators according to the type and size of end companies.

7.1 Data collection at the national level

One of the first tasks of the national Support Structure will be to establish a framework for monitoring for the Slovak EQUAL programme. This framework will be based on the Commission's Guidelines for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Human Resources Initiative EQUAL 2000-2006 from July 2000, and on the requirements of the Slovak "IT structural Funds Monitoring System" (ITSFMS) managed by the Data Centrum. The monitoring system will ensure that the minimum input and output indicators will be collated that are needed for a sound management of the CIP. It will also provide guidance to Development partnerships on best ways to monitor their activities, achievements and results. The national

monitoring system will also include the collection of data that are to be shared at European level, as described in the following section.

Further details will be specified in the Programme Complement.

Programming process

This process contains:

- preparation and approval of the programming documents, with the structured information for managing authorities that supports the preparation of the documents, programme complements and all changes done in the programme documents.
- Programme complements
- Allocations and budgetary limits: to ensure this IT monitoring system will provide the automatic process to keep the data, in order the managing authorities could elaborate the financial framework
- Modification of the programme complements and transfer of the resources
- Information to public – informative window. To provide the publicity, IT monitoring system will ensure the structured information supporting the preparation of the project proposals followed by the presentation of the monitoring effectiveness
- Project selection and approval – IT monitoring system will make it possible to work out the comparative analysis of the project proposals, based on the principles of financial and physical indicators

Monitoring process

In order IT system is able to monitor the SF assistance:

- Physical and financial indicators
- Process of ex-ante and ex-post evaluation. The analysis will cover the financial and physical indicators, basic indicators, context indicators and indicators on the level of inputs, outputs, results and impact and planned/current SF interventions
- Additionality – where possible, it provides the control that the additionality conditions are fulfilled
- Overview of the project implementation, financial tables and financial control
- Monitoring and announcing mechanism for the physical control, financial control, sample checks and overview on the finalization of the assistance at the level of managing authorities, monitoring committees, paying authorities and European Commission
- Irregularity reports, debtor book and claim for resources

Process of the financial management:

This process has the functions of the financial management as follows:

- Financial control based on the financial management functions
- Estimation of the expenditures
- Payment requests
- Certification of the expenditures
- Payments
- Return of the financial resources

IT SF monitoring system will generate out the files completely in line with "file interface description" forming the Annex 5 of the regulation 01/438/EC and specified in the document Electronic Data Exchange between Member States and European Commission.

The selection of indicators will take into account mainly methodology and list of samples of indicators issues by Commission, as well as categorization of intervention areas according to the Commission Regulation 01/438/EC, Annex No. 4, item 2. Classification of intervention areas. At the same time, indicators will be based on Working Document 3 "Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators: Methodology of Indicators", issued by General Directorate for Regional Policy and Cohesion and Working Document of the GR for Employment, Occupational Relationships and Social Affairs, Monitoring and Evaluating Unit "Guidelines for Monitoring and Evaluation of ESF Assistance in 200 – 2006.

Ministry of Construction and Regional Development SR (MA for CSF) in co-operation with Ministry of Finance SR (Paying Authority) shall be in charge of design of IT monitoring system for structural funds

as well as design of manuals containing internal contents and methods of IT monitoring system process management.

7.2 Sharing of data at an European level

Slovakia will share specific monitoring data by participating in the common electronic system of data collection set up by the Commission for the specific management of the EQUAL Initiative called: "EQUAL Common Database" (ECDB). The objective of this database is to facilitate the transnational co-operation of the DPs, to stimulate thematic co-operation between key actors at European level and to indicate results and achievements.

Based on agreements between the Commission and the Member States, specific fields were identified. Set out in Annex X, they constitute the exhaustive²¹ list of the common quantitative data to be transmitted at the European level. In addition to monitoring data shared at European level, the DPs are required to transmit further monitoring data needed for programme management at the national level, as described in section 7.1 Sharing of Monitoring Data. The set of data shared at EQUAL level is summarised in the Annex X.

The Managing Authority will make the necessary provisions in order that the open fields (text fields) are translated at least into English.

The Managing Authority will collect the physical data from the Development Partnerships on the basis of Slovakian methods of data collection. It will transfer the data concerning the Development Partnerships as well as those collected at the level of the programme to the ECDB on the basis of the technical protocols defined by the Commission. These data will be updated continuously by the Managing Authority and will be transferred to the Commission at least once per week.

The Managing Authority will transmit the data relating to the CIP annual report at least once a year and at the latest on 30 June following the reference year.

The Commission, by means of suitable IT system, will make available on the Internet the information²² transmitted by the Member States.

7.2.1 Annual implementation report (Article 37 of Regulation 1260/99)

Certain homogeneity in the annual reports of the various Member States is desirable for the good monitoring of the overall implementation of the Initiative and to co-ordinate the networking efforts at national and European levels.

The quantitative minimum common data concerning implementation, to be transmitted at the time of the annual report, will be covered by the transmission to the ECDB (Annex X). The other relevant indicators of situation result or impact, as anticipated by this CIP, will also be communicated, by means of the annual report.

Insofar as the implementation of EQUAL will be progressive, a common format cannot be determined in advance. Each year, in good time, a common structure for the annual reports will be determined in close co-operation between the Commission and the representatives of the Managing Authorities. This common structure by no means prevents the Managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee from adding to it any element that it will judge relevant.

7.2.2 Annual examination of results

Each year, after submission of annual report on implementation, as introduced in the Art. 37, Commission and Managing Authority shall perform examination of the main results of preceding year in line with mechanisms determined in agreement with the Slovak Republic and Managing Authority.

After such examination, Commission may submit comments to the member country and Managing Authority. A member country shall inform Commission about the way it responded to the comment. In

21) Except financial information included in the "Vademecum for the Plans and Programming documents of the Structural Funds" which will be collected by the SFC database.

22) On the basis of decisions taken in a concerted way, access to certain fields could be restricted.

duly justified cases and in case Commission regards adopted measures as inadequate, it may send to the member country and Managing Authority a recommendation for changes focusing on improved efficiency of mechanisms for monitoring or management of assistance together with reasoning of these recommendations. Should Managing Authority receive any such recommendations, it will subsequently submit a list of steps taken to improve monitoring and managing mechanisms, or explain why no steps had been taken.

7.2.3 Final report

The Final report shall be submitted to the Commission no later than six months after the deadline for eligible expenditures.

8. Evaluation

According to the General Regulation, in order to determine efficiency of individual types of structural funds assistance, to define its impact on individual target areas and to analyze effects of programmes on specific structural issues, three types of evaluation are in place. Prior to the programme commencement *ex-ante* evaluation has been performed, during the course of programme *ongoing evaluation* is taking place, and *final evaluation* will take place after winding-up of assistance.

To provide for efficiency and independence of evaluation, an Evaluation Steering Group will be established as a partner body co-responsible for evaluation:

- it is a technical group constituted of people responsible for evaluation representing partners (e.g. ministries, regions, departments for evaluation of policy and Commission) and independent evaluators;
- it designs selection of evaluators, their mandates, provides standpoints to evaluation reports. Accompanies the work, drafts decisions on evidencing, on distribution and publication of reports;
- it co-ordinates requirements for evaluation and performance of monitoring systems, proposes improvements of monitoring system quality and if necessary, it requests additional data collection should more information be needed;
- it also fulfils its role while co-coordinating evaluation in case of evaluation mechanisms consisting of several layers;
- it makes sure that evaluation reminds persons responsible for various parts of program about useful discussion points and recommendations;
- it proposes topics to be studied in more detail such as synergy between funds, horizontal application of several principles or any feature, which may be of specific interest;
- it convenes regular meetings.

Evaluation of the impact of EQUAL is crucial, and it will be implemented at all three levels of action:

- All Development Partnerships will be required to present verifiable evidence of their results, in order to generate a basis for benchmarking
- Slovakia will carry out an independent evaluation at national level and present an (updated) mid-term review in 2005. The evaluation of EQUAL needs to reflect its experimental approach and will therefore not only cover the classical evaluation dimension as relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, utility and sustainability, but will focus the evaluation activities also on the processes, on support structures and on policy delivery systems.

Managing Committee for evaluation works according to the procedures to be elaborated in close co-operation with Managing Authority. Conclusions of Managing Committee for evaluation will have a character of recommendation in relation to Managing Authority. At the same time, Managing Committee for evaluation will co-operate with Monitoring Committee for Programme Document, while Managing Authority will be in charge of relevant data collection in order to gain credible picture of assistance efficiency. Information concerning results of evaluation is publicly accessible.

Ex-ante evaluation

PD Managing Authority is fully responsible for ex-ante evaluation. PD ex-ante evaluation has been performed to provide information for designing development plans, preparing assistance and Pro-

programme Complement forming part of it. It verifies financial flows, their efficiency, efficiency of assistance in particular regions as well as accordance of selected strategy and objectives with anticipated impact in areas designated to benefit from assistance. Last, but not least, it contains analysis of strengths and weaknesses of all entities and mechanisms involved in the entire assistance implementation process.

Ex-ante evaluation forms part of Programme Document creation. Compared with final evaluation, the approach of evaluation experts during ex-ante evaluation is of a consulting nature.

Ongoing evaluation

Articles 40-43 of Regulation (EC) 1260/1999 set out the requirements for evaluating the Slovak Republic Community Initiative Programme.

The evaluation of the Slovak Republic EQUAL CIP needs to reflect the experimental approach of this Community Initiative and therefore covers not only the classical evaluation dimensions such as relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, utility and sustainability, but also focuses on the processes, support structures and policy delivery systems.

In order to effectively extract the good practice generated and tested under EQUAL and mainstream it, it is essential to maintain an evaluation function in all actions of EQUAL, and an observatory function to integrate experience and evidence generated elsewhere.

The Slovak Republic will therefore

- request that all DPs develop a methodology and apply appropriate mechanisms for on-going assessment of their activities and achievements, including a description of verifiable indicators which demonstrate how the objectives, outputs and results will be measured and assessed, as well as the corresponding methodology and mechanisms for monitoring and assessment of joint activities in the transnational co-operation;
- carry out an independent on-going evaluation at CIP level, beyond the formal requirements of the Regulation, with a focus on identifying factors contributing to the success (or failure) of innovation, the mainstreaming of results, and sustainability.

EQUAL is about learning. With EQUAL, the Slovak Republic will be entering new ground in terms of governance, policy issues and policy development. An ongoing evaluation will facilitate learning processes amongst all national stakeholders involved, and contribute to capacity building within the public sector. In an innovative, transnational programme like EQUAL it is important to make use of the 2004-2006 period to build and develop capacity to carry out evaluation of the programmes and to draw lessons for the 2007-2013 programming period.

The Managing Authority will therefore design and carry out an on-going evaluation for the whole period, focussing on the lessons learnt for capacity building, networking, gender mainstreaming, inclusion of minorities, and transnational cooperation. Details will be described in the programming Complement.

In defining the terms of reference for the on-going evaluation, the Management Authority will apply the Guidelines for monitoring and evaluating EQUAL²³, synchronise delivery dates, follow a common methodological approach, and focus on common issues in order to exploit synergies between national and EU evaluations.

The evaluation should look both at the policy side, notably the impact of the programme on the labour market context, its policies and practices and the effectiveness of the implementation mechanism in the country. The results from the Development Partnerships evaluation are an important source of information for evaluation.

23) *Guidelines for systems of monitoring and evaluation for the Human Resources Initiative EQUAL in the period 2000 – 2006*. DG Employment and Social affairs, July 2000;
Updated version of key issues for the mid-term evaluation of EQUAL CIP in the Member States, DG Employment and Social Affairs 03/09/2001,

The first step of the on-going evaluation at CIP level will update the baseline audit presented in this Programming Document. The evaluation will focus on management systems, programme implementation dynamics, monitoring systems, selection procedures and implementation of *Action 1*. A report on these should be foreseen by the end of 2005. The fact that Member States participating in the first round have already carried out an evaluation of the first round could provide some useful lessons for the Slovak Republic to follow. A particular focus on the initial phase of the on-going evaluation will be providing lessons for the future programming period.

The Slovak Republic's evaluation system for EQUAL will ensure that the results from the EQUAL programme will be developed to ensure a continuous feed-back to programme implementation and as a vehicle to contribute to the validation experiences and results from the EQUAL DPs, and to their transfer to the relevant stakeholders and decision-makers.

The on-going evaluation will be trusted to independent external experts. These will be selected in compliance with national and EU rules for public procurement. The Managing Authority will issue the call for tender for the on-going evaluation at national level immediately after the adoption of the CIP by the Commission and the adoption of the Programming Complement.

The Managing Authority will also be responsible for collecting of data from DPs for actions 1, 2 and 3, and will make these data available to the evaluators.

The Managing Authority will establish an Evaluation Steering Group to monitor the evaluation process and results at national level. This Steering Group will be composed of representatives of the Managing Authority and the key stakeholders/ members of the Monitoring Committee, and will also include leading national labour market and social inclusion experts. The European Commission will also participate in this Steering Group in the spirit of partnership.

The mandate and composition of this Steering Group will be described in the Programming Complement, as well as the thematic focus, milestones, reporting dates, and the interfaces and linkages between evaluation activities at the level of DPs, and of the EU.

Final evaluation

Managing Authority and Monitoring Committee in co-operation with Commission will be in charge of final evaluation.

Final evaluation assess success of implementation and project efficiency and effectiveness. Final evaluation must be made no later than within 3 years after completion of programming period. It strives to summarize factors of failure to perform as well as achieved objective and results quantifying efficiency and effectiveness of provided assistance.

9. Development of Programme Complement

The Programme Complement is being drafted in line with Art. 18, item 3 of the General Regulation in order to provide detail Programme Document on the level of measures. The Programme Complement contains more details on:

- respective monitoring indicators for measures
- designation of National Support Structure, its role in implementation of operations
- specific activities
- financial plan specifying ESF co-financing, and national resources at measure level criteria for selection of DPs
- description of communication plan
- classification of intervention areas and conversion bridge between EU categorization and national classification.

The Programme Complement is developed by Managing Authority together with NSS and involvement of other partners no later than within three months from Commission's approval of Programme Document. Managing Authority submits Programme Complement to the Commission as informative document.

ANNEX **A**
FINANCIAL ALLOCATION

Community Initiative Programme																Indicative financial table for the EQUAL Initiative in Slovak republic - according to priorities and years Slovak Republic															
Theme/year	The field of	Total costs	Public expenditures													Private (Corporate body, nature body)	Cohesion fund	Other financial instrument	EIB loans												
			Total	European union contribution				National contribution																							
				ERDF	ESF (Equal)	EAGGF	FIFG	Total	Central	Regional	Local	Others																			
1=2+13+14+15+16	2=3+8	3=4+5+6+7	4	5	6	7	8=9+10+11+12	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16																
Priority No. 1 EMPLOYABILITY																															
Theme No. 1.1 Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated and re-integrated into labour market																															
Measure No. 1.1.1 Creating a system supporting the introduction of long-term unemployed, low-skilled and other disadvantaged groups into the labour market																															
2004		1 519 215	1 519 215	1 059 918	0	1 059 918	0	0	459 298	459 298	0	0	0	0	0	0															
2005	21; 23	2 130 699	2 130 699	1 486 534	0	1 486 534	0	0	644 165	644 165	0	0	0	0	0																
2006		2 733 106	2 733 106	1 906 818	0	1 906 818	0	0	826 288	826 288	0	0	0	0	0																
Total (2004-2006)		6 383 021	6 383 021	4 453 270	0	4 453 270	0	0	1 929 750	1 929 750	0	0	0	0	0																
Share %		20.90%																													
Theme No. 1.2 Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market																															
Measure No. 1.2.2 Creating an environment supporting the development and creation of effective solutions combating all forms of labour market-related discrimination, racism and xenophobia																															
2004		987 490	987 490	688 948	0	688 948	0	0	298 543	298 543	0	0	0	0	0																
2005	22	1 384 955	1 384 955	966 247	0	966 247	0	0	418 707	418 707	0	0	0	0	0																
2006		1 776 519	1 776 519	1 239 432	0	1 239 432	0	0	537 087	537 087	0	0	0	0	0																
Total (2004-2006)		4 148 963	4 148 963	2 894 626	0	2 894 626	0	0	1 254 338	1 254 338	0	0	0	0	0																
Share %		14.95%																													
Priority No. 2 ENTREPRENEURSHIP																															
Theme No. 2 Strengthening the social economy (third sector) in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs																															
Measure No. 2.1 Strengthening the capacity of NGOs as actors to help eliminate inequalities in the labour market (especially NGOs providing community service)																															
2004		1 828 358	1 828 358	1 218 905	0	1 218 905	0	0	609 453	609 453	0	0	0	0	0																
2005	22; 23	2 564 272	2 564 272	1 709 515	0	1 709 515	0	0	854 757	854 757	0	0	0	0	0																
2006		3 289 261	3 289 261	2 192 841	0	2 192 841	0	0	1 096 420	1 096 420	0	0	0	0	0																
Total (2004-2006)		7 681 891	7 681 891	5 121 261	0	5 121 261	0	0	2 560 630	2 560 630	0	0	0	0	0																
Share %		33.80%																													
Priority No. 3 ADAPTABILITY																															
Theme No. 3 Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies																															
Measure No. 3.1 Support the creation of an environment stimulating human resources development and providing their adaptability in the process of structural changes and coming of new technologies																															
2004		1 558 079	1 558 079	1 112 913	0	1 112 913	0	0	445 165	445 165	0	0	0	0	0																
2005	24	2 185 206	2 185 206	1 560 861	0	1 560 861	0	0	624 344	624 344	0	0	0	0	0																
2006		2 803 023	2 803 023	2 002 159	0	2 002 159	0	0	800 864	800 864	0	0	0	0	0																
Total (2004-2006)		6 546 307	6 546 307	4 675 934	0	4 675 934	0	0	1 870 373	1 870 373	0	0	0	0	0																
Share %		31.90%																													
Priority No. 4 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES																															
Theme No. 4 Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation																															
Measure No. 4.1 Gender awareness-raising activities – gender studies, gender audit, gender awareness as the means for labour market equality between men and women																															
2004		890 331	890 331	635 951	0	635 951	0	0	254 380	254 380	0	0	0	0	0																
2005	25	1 248 689	1 248 689	891 921	0	891 921	0	0	356 768	356 768	0	0	0	0	0																
2006		1 601 727	1 601 727	1 144 091	0	1 144 091	0	0	457 636	457 636	0	0	0	0	0																
Total (2004-2006)		3 740 747	3 740 747	2 671 962	0	2 671 962	0	0	1 068 785	1 068 785	0	0	0	0	0																
Share %		13.85%																													
Theme No. 5 Asylum seekers																															
Measure No. 5.1 Supporting the social and vocational integration of Asylum Seekers																															
2004		211 984	211 984	158 988	0	158 988	0	0	52 996	52 996	0	0	0	0	0																
2005	22; 23	297 307	297 307	222 980	0	222 980	0	0	74 327	74 327	0	0	0	0	0																
2006		381 364	381 364	286 023	0	286 023	0	0	95 341	95 341	0	0	0	0	0																
Total (2004-2006)		890 654	890 654	667 991	0	667 991	0	0	222 664	222 664	0	0	0	0	0																
Share %		3.90%																													
Community Initiative EQUAL - priorities																															
2004		6 995 456	6 995 456	4 875 621	0	4 875 621	0	0	2 119 835	2 119 835	0	0	0	0	0																
2005		9 811 127	9 811 127	6 838 058	0	6 838 058	0	0	2 973 069	2 973 069	0	0	0	0	0																
2006		12 585 000	12 585 000	8 771 364	0	8 771 364	0	0	3 813 636	3 813 636	0	0	0	0	0																
Total (2004-2006)		29 391 583	29 391 583	20 485 043	0	20 485 043	0	0	8 906 540	8 906 540	0	0	0	0	0																
Theme No. 5 Technical assistance																															
Measure No. 6.1 Categories of management, implementation, monitoring and control expenditure																															
Measure No. 6.2 Other Eligible TA Activities																															
2004		608 301	608 301	423 967	0	423 967	0	0	184 333	184 333	0	0	0	0	0																
2005		853 141	853 141	594 614	0	594 614	0	0	258 528	258 528	0	0	0	0	0																
2006		1 094 348	1 094 348	762 727	0	762 727	0	0	331 621	331 621	0	0	0	0	0																
Total (2004-2006)		2 555 790	2 555 790	1 781 308	0	1 781 308	0	0	774 482	774 482	0	0	0	0	0																
Share %		8.90%																													
EQUAL Total		31 947 373	31 947 373	22 266 351	0	22 266 351	0	0	9 681 022	9 681 022	0	0	0	0	0																
Share %		100.00%																													
Total expenditures for Community Initiative EQUAL in division for years																															
2004		7 603 757	7 603 757	5 299 588	0	5 299 588	0	0	2 304 169	2 304 169	0	0	0	0	0																
2005		10 664 269	10 664 269	7 432 672	0	7 432 672	0	0	3 231 597	3 231 597	0	0	0	0	0																
2006		13 679 348	13 679 348	9 534 091	0	9 534 091	0	0	4 145 257	4 145 257	0	0	0	0	0																
Total (2004-2006)		31 947 373	31 947 373	22 266 351	0	22 266 351	0	0	9 681 022	9 681 022	0	0	0	0	0																

ANNEX **B**
DATA TO BE COLLECTED FOR THE ECDB

Annex B: Data shared through the Equal common database (ECDB)

A. General information (ongoing information)

FIELDS	Type of data / Items...
A1.	<p>Id Codes</p> <p>European = Country + national ID</p> <p><i>Each DP receives a unique code at European level. It is made up of a maximum of 4 letters identifying the Member State and x characters as decided by the Member State.</i></p>
A2.	<p>Status of the application</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Indicate the status of the application in MS</i></p> <p>Multiple choice</p> <p>1.in selection process 2.selected 3.transnational cooperation completed 4.DP ended</p>

B. Set up of the Development partnership (action 1 - ongoing information)

B1.	<p>Dates</p> <p>5. Application date : date field 6. Selection date : date field</p>
B2.	<p>Title of the DP</p> <p>National language</p> <p>Text field – max 80 characters</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Simple & short</i></p>
B3.	<p>Title of the DP</p> <p>International characters</p> <p>Text field – max 80 characters</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Latin alphabet without accented letters...</i></p>
B4.	<p>Applicant partners</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>For each Item, click in the list of the members</i></p> <p>Concerns DP initiators</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partner 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Partner 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Partner ...n</p>
B5.	<p>DP managing organisation</p> <p>One choice in the table of the partners</p> <p><i>Concerns the partner who has administrative and financial responsibility within the DP. If the DP has its own legal constitution, that structure will be identified in the list of partners.</i></p>

		<i>Click in the list of the members</i>
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B6.	Other responsibilities	<i>For each item, click in the list of the members</i>
		<input type="checkbox"/> Design of the DP strategy and planning <input type="checkbox"/> Co-ordination of experimental activities <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, data collection <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Coordination of Transnational partnership

B7.	EQUAL Theme – Measure	Max 1 choice
		<input type="checkbox"/> Employability - Access to the labour market <input type="checkbox"/> Employability - Combating racism <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurship - Business creation <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurship - Social economy <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptability - Life long learning <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptability - Information technology <input type="checkbox"/> Equal opportunities – Reconciling family and professional life <input type="checkbox"/> Equal opportunities - Reducing gender gaps <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum seekers

B9.	Geographical/sectoral	Max 1 choice
		<i>Size of the geographical area linked with a Nuts table</i>
	If geographical	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural area <input type="checkbox"/> Urban area <input type="checkbox"/> Other geographical
	If sectoral	Max 1 choice
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic sector : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Services • <input type="checkbox"/> Specific discrimination and inequality problems

B10.	DP status	Max 1 choice
	Legal form	<input type="checkbox"/> Association without legal form <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit making organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Consortium <input type="checkbox"/> ...

B10b	Pre-existing partnership	Max 1 choice
		<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes ≤ 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> Yes > 2 years
		Text field : explanation of the pre-existing partnership

B11.	DP linguistic skills	4 Scroll down menus
		1° Choice : es/cs/da/de/et/el/en/fr/it/lv/lt/hu/mt/nl/pl/pt/sk/sl/fi/sv 2° Choice : es/cs/da/de/et/el/en/fr/it/lv/lt/hu/mt/nl/pl/pt/sk/sl/fi/sv 3° Choice : es/cs/da/de/et/el/en/fr/it/lv/lt/hu/mt/nl/pl/pt/sk/sl/fi/sv

		4° Choice : es/cs/da/de/et/el/en/fr/it/lv/lt/hu/mt/nl/pl/pt/sk/sl/fi/sv
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B12.	DP background in CI	Max 1 choice
		<input type="checkbox"/> One partner involved in ADAPT/EMPLOYMENT/EQUAL 1 st Round <input type="checkbox"/> Two and more partners involved in A/E/E <input type="checkbox"/> Nobody involved in A/E/E

B13.	Rationale for the DP	Rationale for the partnership, assessment of the relevance of the problem addressed, of the solution to be tested.
		Text field:..
		Text field: Translation in English and optionally in other(s) language(s) (provided by DP or Member state).

B14.	Objectives of the DP	Response to the rationale; objectives of the partnership
		Text field :
		Text field: Translation in English and optionally in other(s) language(s) (provided by DP or Member state).

B15.	Nature of the experimental activities	Multiple choices.				
			+	++	++	++
					+	++
	<input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to persons					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Guidance and counselling					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Training					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Training on work place					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Work placement					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Job rotation and job sharing					
	<input type="checkbox"/> employment aids (+ for self-employment)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Integrated measures (pathway to integration)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to structure and systems and accompanying measures					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Employment creation and support					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Training of teachers, trainers and staff					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Improvement of employment services – Recruitment structures					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Conception for training programmes - certification					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Anticipation of technical changes					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Work organisation, improvement of access to work place					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Guidance and social services					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Awareness raising, information, publicity					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Studies and analysis of discrimination features					

B16.	Innovation	Multiple choice				
			+	++	++	++

	<input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum <input type="checkbox"/> Disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Gender discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Low qualification <input type="checkbox"/> Racial discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Religion <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Support to entrepreneurship <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment				
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B18.	Empowerment	
	1° National partners	Text field: Text field: optionally, translation in English
	2° Participants - Stakeholders	Multiple choice <input type="checkbox"/> Promoting individual empowerment <input type="checkbox"/> Developing collective responsibility and capacity for action <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in the DP design <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in running and evaluating activities <input type="checkbox"/> Changing attitudes and behaviour of key actors
		Text field:
		Text field: optionally, translation in English

B19.	ESF budget	Max. one choice
		Total budget for the duration of the DP (ESF + national) <input type="checkbox"/> < 250 000 € <input type="checkbox"/> 250 000 – 500 000 € <input type="checkbox"/> 500 000 – 1 000 000 € <input type="checkbox"/> 1 000 000 – 1 500 000 € <input type="checkbox"/> 1 500 000 – 2 000 000 € <input type="checkbox"/> 2 000 000 – 5 000 000 € <input type="checkbox"/> > 5 000 000 €
		% of total budget for transnational activities

B21.	Transnational co-operation intended or searched	Multiple choice	+	+	+	+
		- Exchange of information and experiences - Parallel development of innovative approaches - Import, export or adoption of new approaches - Joint development - Exchange of trainees/trainers/staff		+	+	+
		Text field				
		Text field: Translation in English and optionally in other(s) language(s) (provided by DP or Member state).				

B22.	Transnational co-operation – Preferences	Multiple choice
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	<input type="checkbox"/> BEfr <input type="checkbox"/> BEnl <input type="checkbox"/> CZ <input type="checkbox"/> DK <input type="checkbox"/> DE <input type="checkbox"/> EE <input type="checkbox"/> EL <input type="checkbox"/> ES <input type="checkbox"/> FR <input type="checkbox"/> IE <input type="checkbox"/> IT <input type="checkbox"/> CY <input type="checkbox"/> LV <input type="checkbox"/> LT <input type="checkbox"/> LU <input type="checkbox"/> HU <input type="checkbox"/> MT <input type="checkbox"/> NL <input type="checkbox"/> AT <input type="checkbox"/> PL <input type="checkbox"/> PT <input type="checkbox"/> SI <input type="checkbox"/> SK <input type="checkbox"/> FI <input type="checkbox"/> SE <input type="checkbox"/> UKgb <input type="checkbox"/> UKni <input type="checkbox"/> no preferences
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B23.	Last update	7. Date field
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C. Members of the DP (ongoing information)

C1.	Name	Text field
C2.	Acronym	(not compulsory) Text field
C3.	Address	Text field <i>link with postcode (nuts) and country</i>
C4.	Tel	Text field
C5.	Fax	Text field
C6.	Email	Text field
C7.	Web site	Text field

C8.	Type of organisation	Max one choice
		8. Public authority (national, regional, local) 9. Enterprise 10. Employers' organisation 11. Trade Union 12. Financial institution 13. Chamber of commerce/industry/crafts 14. Organisation providing support and guidance for disadvantaged groups 15. Employment services 16. Social economy enterprise 17. Social services 18. Education / training organisation 19. University / Research organisation 20. Consortium created for managing the DP <input type="checkbox"/> Other

C8b	Type of organisation	Description who the national partners are, what they do, their clients, the aim of the partner organisations, methodologies used etc... (not compulsory)
		Text field
		Text field: Translation in English and optionally in other(s) language(s) (provided by DP or Member state).

C9.	Legal status	Max one choice
		<input type="checkbox"/> Public organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit private organisation (including NGO...) <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-public organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Union, Confederation... <input type="checkbox"/> Co-operative <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Without legal status

C10.	Contact person	Responsibility	Name	Email	Tel

C11.	Size of the organisation	Max one choice <i>Permanent staff</i>
		16) staff < 10 17) staff 10 – 50 18) staff 50 – 250 19) > 250
C12.	Date of joining DP	Date field
C13.	Date of leaving DP	Date field
C14.	Last update on the DP's member	Date field

D. Implementation of the work programme (transnational cooperation completed) (action2 - ongoing information)

D1.	Dates	21. Date of transnational cooperation completed
D2.	Title of the DP	
D3.	Title of the DP (international)	
D4.	Partners involved	<i>For each item, click in the list of the members</i>
		DP members <input type="checkbox"/> Partner 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Partner 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Partner ...n
D5.	DP managing organisation	
D6.	Other responsibilities	See B
D7.	EQUAL Theme – Measure	See B
D8.	Sub-themes	See B
D9.	Geographical/sectoral	See B
D10.	DP status	See B
D11.	DP linguistic skills	See B
D12.	DP's background in CI	See B
D13.	Rationale for the DP	See B
D14.	Objectives of the DP	See B
D15.	Nature of the experimental activities to be implemented	See B
D16.	Innovation	See B
D17.	Discriminated groups and fields of discrimination	See B
D18.	Empowerment	See B
D19.	Budget	See B
D25.	DP Agreement	Text field: Summary of the DP agreement and, optionally, DP agree-

		ment in annexe.
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D25 A	Transnational partners	Multiple choice
		<i>Click in the list of the Development partnerships (cf. Id Code)</i>
		<input type="checkbox"/> Transnational partner 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Transnational partner 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Transnational partner ...n

G. Other information for monitoring at DP level (annually consolidated information)

G1.	Discriminated groups and fields of discrimination	Total number of beneficiaries during the year in "person * year" equivalent (1 day=7 hours, 1 week = 5 days, 1 month = 4 weeks, 1 year = 12 month)				
		Multiple choice in each section				
		<i>In percentage</i>				
		<input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to persons	M	F		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> Employed <input type="checkbox"/> Others (without status, social beneficiaries...)			100	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Migrants, ethnic minorities, ... <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum seekers <input type="checkbox"/> Population not migrant and not asylum seeker			100	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Physical Impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Illness <input type="checkbox"/> Population not suffering from a disability			100	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Substance abusers <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless <input type="checkbox"/> (Ex-)prisoners <input type="checkbox"/> Other discriminated (religion, sexual orientation) <input type="checkbox"/> Without such specific discriminations			100	
<input type="checkbox"/> < 25 year <input type="checkbox"/> 25 – 50 year <input type="checkbox"/> > 50 year			100			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to structure and systems and accompanying measures	+	+	+	+	
		+	+	+	+	
		+	+	+	+	
		+	+	+	+	

		<input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum <input type="checkbox"/> Disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Gender discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Low qualification <input type="checkbox"/> Racial discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Religion <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Support to entrepreneurship <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment				
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G2.	Expenditures	Evaluation by the DP of the total amount (ESF and national) spent during the year (rounded 1 000 €): Alphanumeric field
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G3.	Breakdown of expenditures by experimental activities	<i>Percentage</i>
		<p>I. National activities</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance and counselling <input type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/> Training on work place <input type="checkbox"/> Work placement <input type="checkbox"/> Job rotation and job sharing <input type="checkbox"/> employment aids (+ for self-employment) <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated measures (pathway to integration) <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to structure and systems and accompanying measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Employment creation and support <input type="checkbox"/> Training of teachers, trainers and staff <input type="checkbox"/> Improvement of employment services – Recruitment structures <input type="checkbox"/> Conception for training programmes - certification <input type="checkbox"/> Anticipation of technical changes <input type="checkbox"/> Work organisation, improvement of access to work place <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance and social services <input type="checkbox"/> Awareness raising, information, publicity <input type="checkbox"/> Studies and analysis of discrimination features <p>II. Transnational activities</p>

		<input type="checkbox"/> Exchange of information and experiences <input type="checkbox"/> Parallel development of innovative approaches <input type="checkbox"/> Import, export or adoption of new approaches <input type="checkbox"/> Joint development <input type="checkbox"/> Exchange of trainees/trainers/staff	
		Total	100 %

G5.	National and transnational work	Text field
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G6.	National and European level networking	Text field
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ANNEX **C**
EX-ANTE EVALUATION
of the EQUAL Community Initiative
Single Programme Document

Evaluator:

Pavol Ochotnický
University of Economy, Bratislava

1. Assessment of results of previous evaluation

In line with preparation of European Social Fund's institutional structures on both national and regional levels in the Slovak Republic (also along with preparations for Slovakia's participation in communitarian programmes and initiatives), as well as on basis of recommendations made by the European Commission in Slovakia and subsequent discussion with representatives of general directorates for expansion, employment and social affairs, the Preparatory Committee for EU Structural Funds in SR reached agreement about Slovakia's entry into EQUAL Community Initiative. With regard to financial connection to ESF this issue forms part of the agenda of the MoLSAF SR.

The European Commission's guidelines stipulate that an inevitable part of preparations for inclusion into this initiative of European Community is ex-ante evaluation. Key principles of evaluation are based on above-mentioned guidelines as well as on experience of member countries. The basic evaluating documents were taken into consideration, however some aspects were modified so that they harmonise with Slovak conditions. The conditions in EU member countries were different than in Slovakia, since these countries already had experience with similar programmes. Slovakia lacks such experience, thus attention of evaluation focused on background of national programmes, measures and EQUAL-relevant grant schemes implemented so far.

It concerns mainly an implementation of conclusions of Joint Evaluation of Employment Priorities, priorities and objectives of the National Action Plan of Employment as well as PHARE projects. In the area of the PHARE following projects could be mentioned:

- **Improvement of Labour Protection System Slovakia** - proposals for legislative changes in the area of taxes and employment, establishment of the pilot rehabilitation centre in Bratislava providing services of social and vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons (after occupational accidents), adapting the evaluating methods, technical and educational aids for disabled to the EU standards.
- 1) **Phare projects – CONSENSUS** - three projects focusing on employment, the results of which were comparatively well applied in practice, but in connection with EQUAL Community Initiative it would be possible to extent them and this way support equal opportunities for disabled persons:
- 2) **Improvement of information tools in compliance with line of European Employment Services** - unification of information and monitoring system on the labour market and employment emphasising the international cooperation and development of information network to connect with the EURES network;
- 3) **Promoting employability of disabled persons** - development of the information system for disabled persons, development of institutional background for professional training of specialists - vocational assistants, counselling on optimal working environment from the viewpoint of individual needs of disabled;
- 4) **Coordination of social security systems** - alignment of the Slovak legislation to the EU social security legislation, creation of conditions required for the implementation of EU coordination of social security systems in SR;
- **Special preparatory program - Priority - B** - development of employment action plans in chosen region and its three districts - working out of action plans and training of professionals on district and regional levels on cooperation in the area of employment;
- 5) **Grant scheme on development of human resources 2000 and 2001** - elimination and prevention of unemployment through the human resources development, social integration and creation of more flexible labour market;
- **MATRA project 2001** - cooperation with Netherlands in the framework of institutional provision of equal opportunities with the stress on social cohesion and a social dialogue, monitoring of groups of women who are suffering from poverty and social exclusion, through review of outputs and measures of relevant national action plans; introduction of equal opportunities issues into programmes of local and regional self-governments.

Experience from the implementation of these projects confirms enhancement of awareness of the target groups, but effects of implemented policies are low. Therefore CIP EQUAL creates exactly the

space for development and implementation of further innovative techniques and methodologies. This way it would be possible in conditions of the SR not only to proceed with already realised activities, but through specific approach to these issues to bring increased effects. Due to existing overlapping and mutual relation of problems we recommend to prefer complex, systemic, integrated and multidisciplinary approach of innovative nature with the maximum utilisation of foreign experiences.

Regarding the fact that the Slovak Republic enters into respective Initiative with a slight delay, a certain time pressure occurred in preparatory works. This pressure is also responsible for less attention being paid to quantity, while focusing on more narrow selection of topics and measures correlating with conditions, needs and potential of the Slovak Republic, and prevention of potential duplication or contradiction with existing programmes. Ex-ante evaluation concentrated mainly on argument support and justification of priority topics' and measures' selection.

Ex-ante evaluation forms part of EQUAL Community Initiative's Single Programme Document elaborated by MoLSAF SR in cooperation with the National Labour Office. NLO guaranteed and coordinated works related to labour market analysis within the framework of individual topics, which resulted into a study synthesis forming background for EQUAL Community Initiative's Single Programme Document. Individual partial studies as well as their synthesis took the background situation into consideration from generic as well as from regional viewpoint and according to target groups. Past measures applied while enforcing gender equality, together with topics' and measures' selection, proposals for institutional and expert background as well as anticipated international co-operation. Along with that, a questionnaire survey and consulting were performed.

A part of ex-ante evaluation is a quantification of indices and key indicators as inevitable element for monitoring and co-ordination. Based on results of preceding evaluation, recommendations were formulated, which deal with individual cross-sections such as programming, management, partnership and evaluation. Ex-ante evaluation was performed in accordance with methodological documents of the European Commission.

2. Evaluation of strengths and weaknesses and development potential within the sector

Background documents for the SWOT analysis were based on socioeconomic partial studies according to the individual themes, enquiry research, which results were synthesized. The themes, measures, target groups and examples of outputs were worked out on basis of this synthesis. Further the institutional basis was proposed, including possibilities of international cooperation and pool of experts. In the framework of consulting process these results were elaborated and the final variant was proposed. More detailed SWOT analyses under particular topics are listed in the Annex A of the CIP EQUAL. That is why only the shortened synthetic versions of SWOT analyses are presented in this chapter. Further there were identified crucial disparities of economic development of the SR, their reasons as well as development factors. BA 3.

2.1. SWOT analysis of individual topics.

2.1.1. *Simplifying access to the labour market for those have difficulty integrating and re-integrating into labour market*

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - institutionalised and functioning public employment service system covering the entire territory of the Slovak Republic - started up social system and labour market reforms - use of financial programme including foreign ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - development and support of regional employment programmes and projects - modernisation, standardisation and client-orientation of public employment services - harmonisation of educational system with labour market requirements - development of flexible work organisation forms - integrated information system, introduction of modern information technologies

Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - high accumulation of unemployment among marginalised groups of citizens (long-term unemployed, young people, low-skilled citizens, citizens with disabilities, Roma minority, etc.) - high level of regional disparity - persisting influence of paternalism - limited access to financial capital - low level of orientation on the labour market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sustaining paternalistic approach - imbalanced tendencies on the labour market with regional polarisation - deepening disparity between education system and labour market needs - decline in living standard, increasing risk of social exclusion

2.1.2. Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - continuing process of Slovak legislation's harmonisation with EU legislation - activation of Roma issues stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - support of prevention and multi-cultural activities (media promotion, education, projects, including international ones) - preparation and development outreach services
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reserves in the level of coordination and communication of stakeholders in the field - absence of multi-cultural education - insufficient research focusing on target groups' priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - risk of growing racist culture influence - declining citizens' standard of living, their non-preparedness for anticipated frequent confrontation with different cultures - low level of stakeholders' co-operation

2.1.3. Process enhancing enterprise establishment through provision of adequate tools and identification and use of new opportunities for development of municipal and rural settlements

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased level of transparency and support of competitive business environment creation - institutionalisation of SME's support - influence of the active labour market policy tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - equality of opportunities and transparency of business environment - decreasing tax and levy burden - elimination of legislative and administrative barriers - simplifying access to financial capital - development of regional business support system, consulting, marketing, information
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - low labour demand - regional disparities - high tax and levy burden - large influence of legislative and administrative barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pressure from international competition - discrepancy between employment policy and labour market policy - Government's budget limitations - absence of regional policy - decreasing standard of living

2.1.4. Strengthening social economics (of the third sector), especially socially beneficial jobs focusing on increased job quality

Strengths	Opportunities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - completed network of NGOs - human potential and activation of NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - de-monopolisation of public services - support and development of partnerships, support of regional and local projects joined by NGOs - strengthening position of social economics in general
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of capital within the third sector - insufficient cooperation between stakeholders in the field - low level of outreach social and medical services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sustaining monopoly in the respective area - administrative barriers - low level of coordination and communication between stakeholders

2.1.5. Life-long learning

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - broad network of educational facilities - human potential - growing citizens' interest in education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - creating a complex system of life-long learning - building up a complex, integrated information system - motivating social partners for education - development of quality monitoring system - increased technical equipment and introduction of modern educational systems
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - imbalance between educational system and labour market needs - absence of complex life-long learning system - absence of complex quality monitoring system - low level of social partners' involvement in education process - low level of technical equipment - absence of integrated information system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of finances in education system - lack of concept and complexity within the school reform - absence of feed-back information flows

2.1.6. Support of adaptability of enterprises and employees to structural changes and use of information technology

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - relatively high workforce qualification - public employment service system, including active labour market policy - increasing inflow of foreign investments - existence of the institute supporting SMEs' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - support of the transfer of research results - complex programmes together with structural changes - effective information system - support of direct foreign investments - participation of all social partners - adapting education system to new labour market requirements
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sustaining structural deficit of the Slovak economy - insufficient inter-connection between educa- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - absence of effective transfer of new technologies - low level of motivation and adaptability of

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tional system and labour market needs - low level of people's adaptability from regional viewpoint - low level of language skills and information skills - absence of adequate information support - administrative and legislative barriers - low research support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - marginalised groups, low level of orientation on the labour market - concentration of marginalised groups in danger of social exclusion - lack of finances - separation of educational system from labour market
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2.1.7. Reconciliation of family and professional life – creating flexible work organisation forms

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - started up reform process supporting labour market flexibility - institutionalisation of research within respective field - pre-school facility network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - completion of social system and labour market reforms - effectiveness of performed measures within National employment action plan - strengthened tri-party character of problem resolution
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - low use of flexible work organisation forms - sustaining gender barriers - absence of quality day care services - lack of finances and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - absence of concept and complexity in the approach - sustaining gender stereotypes in respective areas

2.1.8. Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation

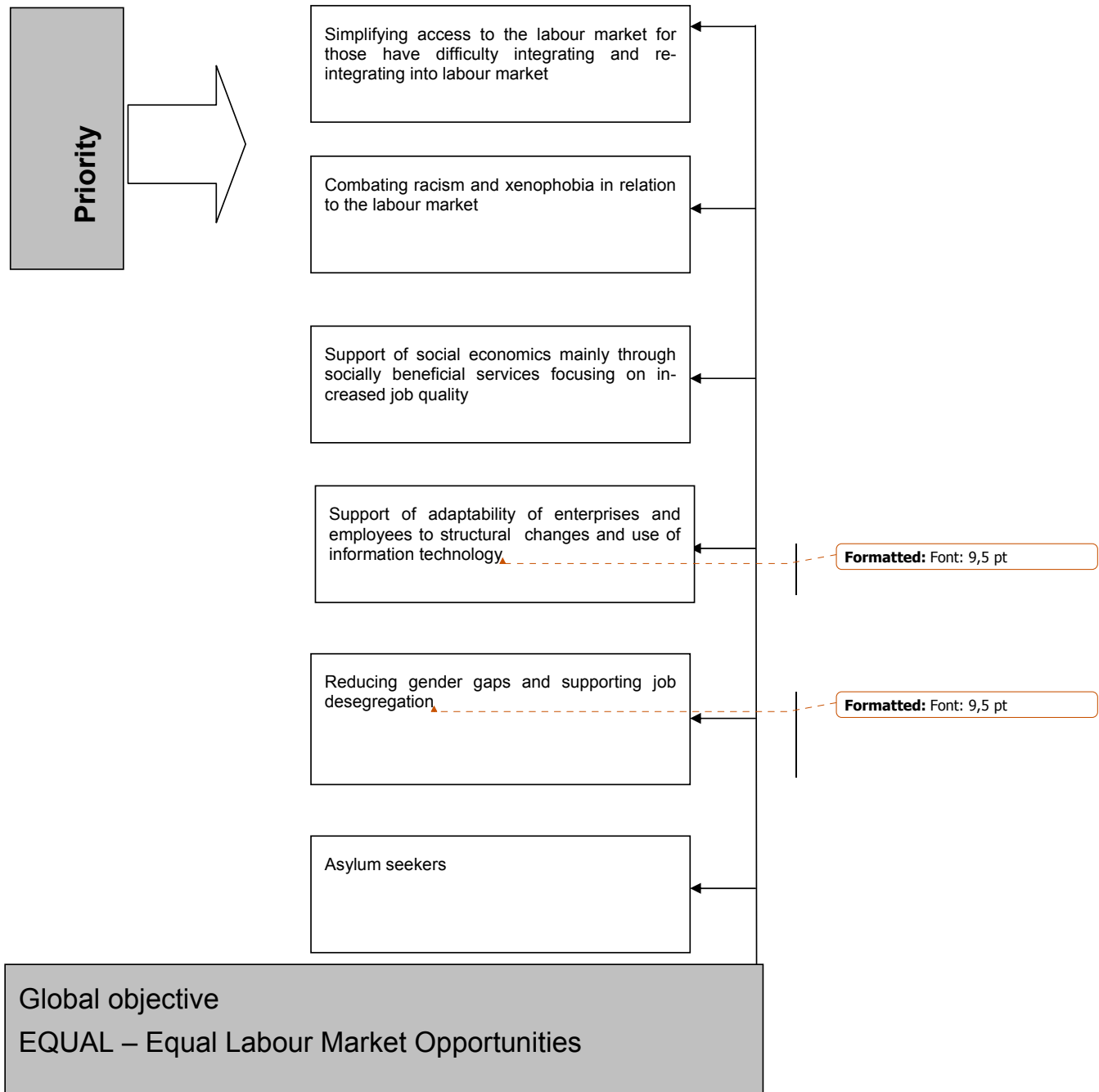
Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - process harmonising Slovak legislation with legislation of EU - programmes supporting women's employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - support of programmes and projects focusing on respective area - elimination of wage stereotypes - support of flexible work organisation forms - enforcement of partner family model - effective gender equality monitoring
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sustaining stereotypes - gender discrimination in wage distribution - sustaining vertical and horizontal segregation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sustaining stereotypes - absence of cohesive political strategy in respective area

2.1.9. Asylum seekers

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - harmonisation with EU legislation - institutional umbrella bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - strengthening capacity and education of social workers - higher level of cooperation between stakeholders - support fortifying positive public opinion
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of staff - prevailing negative approach of citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rapid growth of asylum-seekers - lack of finances

	- negative approach of citizens
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Based on SWOT analysis a programme document defined following topics as priorities relevant for the Slovak conditions:



Implementation of the EQUAL objectives will be determined significantly by the framework of public policy in particular areas. Its SWOT analysis follows:

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – existence of basic concepts and documents for implementation of European employment strategy – existence of process of harmonisation of legal norms with the EU legislation – existence of institutional background – relatively high level of social and political acceptance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – finalising of system of implementation of European legislation and European employment strategy building – finalising structures (institutional and personnel) for the effective cooperation with ESF – elaboration and implementation of procedures compatible with EU practice – creation of the effective system of monitoring and evaluation – continuation of the process of introducing of modern information technologies
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – low level of information – isolated approach – low level of mutual cooperation of subjects concerned – absence of positive and model roles – absence of complex and institutional personnel and background – absence of complex system of monitoring, evaluation of policies – non-corresponding level of modern information technologies implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – deceleration of the process of compatibility of the legal framework and its implementation – conservation of existing institutional and personal supporting background – stagnancy or deceleration of started reforms – noncomplex and incompatible information system – budgetary limits of the Government and overall financial undersize – isolation and low level of mutual informing of the involved subjects – high level of centralisation and of the social dialogue violating – subjects are not prepared for effective use of ESF funds – non-existing complex and mutually binding concepts and policies in this area – depression of social and political acceptance

2.1.10. Key disparities, their reasons and factors of development

Key disparities

- a.1 Relatively higher economic growth with current labour offer growth provides insufficient incentive for job creation
- a.2 High portion of regional and social polarisation
- a.3 High portion of marginalised groups of citizens and persons in danger of social exclusion among unemployed
- a.4 Low level of workforce adaptability, flexibility and mobility

Key reasons

- b.1 Low economic efficiency, aftermath of transformation and economic restructuring
- b.2 Lower level of sector policy implementation in SR and effectiveness of their tools as a result of Government's spending restrictions and consolidation of public finances
- b.3 Insufficiently developed basic infrastructure

b.4 Late introduction of reforms, especially in the field of health care, labour market and social system

Table: Mutual relations between key disparities and their reasons

Key disparities	Key reasons ¹⁾			
	b.1	b.2	b.3	b.4
Relatively higher economic growth with current labour offer growth provides insufficient incentive for job creation	b.1	b.2	b.3	b.4
High level of regional and social polarisation	b.1	b.2	b.3	b.4
High portion of marginalised groups of citizens and persons in danger of social exclusion among unemployed	b.1			b.4
Low level of workforce adaptability, flexibility and mobility	b.1		b.3	b.4

1) ¹⁾ According to the designation introduced above

The main development factors

- c.1 De-monopolisation, standardisation and existing network of public services.
- c.2 Existing network of social services.
- c.3 Accessibility, developed capacities and density of educational institutions and facilities.
- c.4 Continuing decentralisation process within public administration.
- c.5 Continuing integration of SR into EU and EMU.

3. Evaluation of strategy's relevance and coherence

Evaluation of strategy's relevance enshrined in the EQUAL Community Initiative's Single Programme Document relies on identification of key disparities and main development factors and justifies selection of topics, stipulation of measures, objectives and activities. At the same time, it assesses their connection to horizontal national policies, contents of which are the most relevant to the EQUAL Community Initiative. It mainly means the National Employment Action Plan and Sector Operational Plan Human Resources (draft) and Single Programme Document BA 3.

3.1. Evaluation of selection of topics, measures, objective stipulation and activities

Table: Mutual relationship between topics' objectives and development factors

Key objectives ¹⁾	Development factors ²⁾				
	c.1	c.2	c.3	c.4	c.5
Topic's objective 4.1.1	c.1	c.2	c.3	c.4	c.5
Topic's objective 4.1.2	c.1	c.2	c.3	c.4	c.5
Topic's objective 4.1.3	c.1			c.4	c.5
Topic's objective 4.1.4	c.1		c.3	c.4	c.5
Topic's objective 4.1.5		c.2	c.3		c.5
Topic's objective 4.1.6		c.2	c.3		c.5

¹⁾ Designation according to the programme document

²⁾ According to the designation of part 2.2

Table: Evaluation of programme measures' relevance to key disparities

Measures – theme ¹⁾	Disparities ²⁾			
	a.1	a.2	a.3	a.4
Topic's measures 4.1.1	a.1	a.2	a.3	a.4

Topic's measures 4.1.2	a.1	a.2	a.3	a.4
Topic's measures 4.1.3	a.1			a.4
Topic's measures 4.1.4	a.1		a.3	a.4
Topic's measures 4.1.5		a.2	a.3	a.4
Topic's measures 4.1.6				a.4

¹⁾ Designation according to the programme document

²⁾ According to the designation of part 2.2

Table: Evaluation of the measures' coherence with EU policy objectives

Objectives	Measures					
	4.1.1.	4.1.2.	4.1.3.	4.1.4.	4.1.5.	4.1.6.
Development and support of active labour market policies	2	1	2	1	1	0
Support of equal labour market opportunities	2	2	1	1	1	1
Support and improvement of vocational training, education and consulting as part of life-long learning policy	1	1	1	1	2	0
Support of job mobility	1	0	0	0	1	0
Total	6	4	4	3	5	1

0-no influence, 1-no significant influence, or indirect influence, 2-significant direct influence

Table: Evaluation of measures' coherence with objectives of NEAP

NEAP	Measures					
	4.1.1.	4.1.2.	4.1.3.	4.1.4.	4.1.5.	4.1.6.
Pillar – Improved employability	2	1	2	1	1	0
Pillar – Development of entrepreneurship	1	0	0	1	1	0
Pillar – Supporting adaptability of companies and their employees	0	0	0	1	0	0
Pillar – Strengthening equal opportunity policies	2	2	1	1	2	2
Total	5	3	3	4	4	2

Table: Evaluation of measures' coherence with SOP HR priorities

SOP HR	Measures					
	4.1.1.	4.1.2.	4.1.3.	4.1.4.	4.1.5.	4.1.6.
Development of active labour market policy	2	1	2	1	0	0
Strengthening social inclusion and equal labour market opportunities	2	2	2	1	2	1
Increasing qualification and workforce adaptability	2	1	1	2	0	0
Total	6	4	5	4	2	1

In connection with the SPD BA 3 it is possible to note the high level of influence concerning the priority 1 Development of active labour market policy and social integration as well as follow up measures of EQUAL

Concerning the connection of CIP EQUAL with the documents JIM and JAP it is possible to say that these documents are mutually complement. In the framework of the document **Joint evaluation of employment priorities in the SR** complementary fields involves mainly:

- System of vocational education and training
- Equal access to education and social cohesion
- Gender opportunities
- Active labour market policy and development of employment services

In the framework of the document **Joint memorandum on inclusion** complementary fields involves mainly:

- in area of crucial challenges:
 - building of inclusive labour market and support of employment as the right and possibilities for all, especially for unemployed
 - removal of negatives in educational system
 - guarantee of equal access to quality social and health care services and development of their offer and way of providing
 - combating discrimination, ensuring of equal opportunities and protection of human rights
 - activation of areas with accumulated disadvantages
 - restoration of statistical systems and indicators on poverty and exclusion
- in the area of political measures on:
 - support of employment of young people
 - support of employment of vulnerable groups of population
 - education
 - social services
 - social precaution
 - assistance to the most vulnerable
 - support of access to information and communication technologies
 - handicapped persons
 - other disadvantageous groups
 - integration of policies of social inclusion on the national and local levels
 - mobilisation of all actors
 - support of the participation of excluded
 - support of gender equality

It is necessary to stress that the implementation of proposed measures in the framework of CIP EQUAL and referred concrete projects will contribute significantly to **more complex solving of chosen thematic fields as well as to enforcement of specific approaches to the target groups.**

However, in relation to the above-mentioned, it may be stated that overall selection of topics, measures and objectives as well as their financial coverage were highly relevant.

3.2. Evaluation of gender issue

Since the Slovak Republic lacks independently defined equal opportunity policy, there is a need to overcome rooted gender stereotypes. Selected topics and their activities **fully respect gender mainstreaming**. Coordination of relevant activities in this area covers MoLSAF SR. However, most government departments do not consider as necessary to treat gender equality by specific approach. Also area of education and training of civil servants in methodology of assurance of equal treatment is insufficient and formal.

The gradual correction of legislative as well as the implementation this issue to the basic documents of employment policy (e.g. National Action Plan for Employment) appears as a positive development. However, these measures are cumulated mostly in area of labour-legal relations at the expense of practical measures improving conditions, which would relieve attendance to work, family care, availability of education, and increase flexibility, enforce modern forms of work organisation, etc.

In the framework of active policy of labour market there is few measures oriented specific at women. Programmes improving availability of supporting services are little developed. It is necessary to extend variability of social services and assure individual approach in the framework of local self-governments activities, social and non-profit sector.

4. Quantification of objectives and selection of indicators

Preliminary quantification of objectives in this part aims at creation of basis for relatively reliable quantification of the programmes and their impacts, as well as their monitoring.

As far as methodology is concerned, it has to be stated that: (i) the overall volume of resources expected to be annually spent as part of EQUAL Community Initiative in SR forms approximately 0.27 per mille of GDP. Thus, quantification of objectives expressed in macroeconomic indicators may not serve as effective tool for programme planning, monitoring and management. Two indicators introduced in the part 5. (ii) form exception (impact on job creation and GDP generation), while in other areas quantification of objectives and disparities use microeconomic simulation models, expertise and accessible partial analysis.

4.1. Selected indicators:

(i) Rate of unemployment (including gender-related) (ii) Share of low-skilled workforce, (iii) Qualification structure of employees and unemployed, (iv) Rate of long-term unemployment, (v) Rate of very long-term unemployment, (vi) Number of marginal and unprivileged groups.

Table: Relevant labour market indicators – expected scenario

Indicator	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Unemployment rate (in %)	13,4	16,4	20,1	18,8	18,8
Unemployment rate men (in %)	12,3	16,4	20,9	18,9	20,4
Unemployment rate women (in %)	14,6	16,5	19,1	18,7	19,1
Share of low-skilled workforce in register of LO (in %)	63,5	65,4	64,2	64,2	67,6
Share of low-skilled workforce in register of LO with basic and no education (in %)	37,4	35,2	30,8	29,6	31,7
Share of low-skilled workforce in employment (in %)	42,2	42,8	43,3	42,1	43,7
Share of low-skilled workforce in employment with basic and no education (in %)	10,8	9,6	7,9	7,0	6,3
Long-term unemployment rate over 12 months (in %)	37,9	38,2	43,2	43,6	41,2
Rate of very long-term unemployment over 24 months (in %)	22,1	20,6	21,9	21,6	20,6

Indicator	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Unemployment rate (in %)	18,6	15,9	14,9	14,5	14,0
Unemployment rate men (in %)	19,7	13,2	12,9	12,8	12,6
Unemployment rate women (in %)	17,5	12,9	12,5	12,4	12,3
Share of low-skilled workforce in register of LO (in %)	68,6	69,1	68,2	68,1	67,8

Share of low-skilled workforce in register of LO with basic and no education (in %)	33,0	32,5	31,7	31,1	29,8
Share of low-skilled workforce in employment (in %)	43,8	44,2	43,8	43,2	42,8
Share of low-skilled workforce in employment with basic and no education (in %)	5,9	5,4	5,1	4,7	4,2
Long-term unemployment rate over 12 months (in %)	47,3	46,8	46,1	45,8	45,1
Rate of very long-term unemployment over 24 months (in %)	23,7	23,8	23,4	23,1	22,8

Note: Indicators refer to the status at the end of the period. Persons with basic or no education are ranked among low-skilled workforce and employment from resources of SO SR. Estimates and forecasts apply for the years 2003 to 2006 and are provided by the NLO. Unemployment from resources of NLO

Table: Other unprivileged groups on the labour market

Indicator	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Graduates	25,1	30,9	37,0	31,3	23,7	37,2	35,0
Persons with disabilities	21,1	24,1	26,6	27,5	29,4	28,6	25,0
Juveniles	17,3	18,5	14,8	12,1	9,9	5,5	5,0
Persons over 50	31,1	40,0	53,9	58,1	74,3	78,2	79,8
Persons after military service	5,5	5,4	11,2	13,8	13,9	13,3	12,5
Persons after serving of a sentence	4,1	4,2	4,8	4,7	4,9	4,7	4,3
persons after maternity leave	18,5	18,3	21,4	22,8	23,5	23,1	20,1

Note: Indicators are provided by NLO and refer to the status at the end of the year

Table: Entrepreneurs and small-size enterprises

Indicator	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Entrepreneurs	244,4	263,7	266,9	269,3	279,6	274,6	290,0
Free lancers	12,2	12,9	11,2	11,6	12,2	12,4	12,4
Independent farmers	20,6	19,1	17,6	15,6	11,7	11,8	11,5
Small-size companies(0-19)*	46,9	53,1	51,0	54,3	56,6	53,5	55,8

Note: Indicators refer to the status at the end of the year. Resources on behalf of 1997-2000 publication of SO SR Statistic annual book of regions years 2001-2002 SO SR – Selected data on regions. Estimate for 2003 NLO.

* includes also companies with non-identified number of employees

Table: Qualification structure of employed in %

Year	basic	qualified	secondary	qualify. with A-level	secondary general	complete secondary	University
1997	10,8	31,3	7,8	4,6	4,9	28,7	11,9
1998	9,6	33,2	7,0	4,8	5,8	27,8	11,8
1999	8,0	35,3	4,9	4,8	5,6	29,5	11,9

2000	7,0	35,1	4,1	4,6	5,4	31,5	12,3
2001	6,3	36,0	2,8	4,9	5,0	31,9	13,2
2002	5,6	36,5	2,4	4,9	4,4	33,0	13,3
2003	5,1	35,6	2,1	5,2	4,6	33,9	13,5

Note: Data are provided by SO SR resources. Structure is inv % of all employed.

Table: Qualification structure of unemployed in %

Year	basic	qualified	secondary	qualify. with A- level	secondary general	complete secondary	University
1997	37,4	26,1	9,3	7,4	4,2	13,4	2,2
1998	35,2	30,3	6,6	7,4	4,1	14,1	2,3
1999	30,8	33,4	5,3	8,0	4,1	15,4	2,9
2000	29,6	34,6	3,7	8,6	4,2	16,3	3,1
2001	31,7	35,8	2,1	8,5	3,6	15,3	3,0
2002	33,0	35,6	1,3	8,7	3,4	14,8	3,2
2003	33,2	35,3	1,5	8,6	3,3	14,7	3,4

Note: The resource of data is NLO, the status refers to the end of the year. Structure is in % of all registered.

Table: Rate of unemployed persons without basic education in %

Indicator	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Unemployment rate	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,6

Note: Unemployment rate = share of registered unemployed without completed basic education compared to economically active citizens in total. The data concerning unemployed are taken from NLO resources, whereas the number of economically active citizens is taken from SO SR

4.2. Specific disparity indicators

Insufficiently stimulated employment growth vs. growing long-term unemployment

Despite the fact that unemployment rate is slightly increasing (and in the years to come, it will probably remain unchanged), a development of long-term unemployment (over 12 months) has reverse tendency. In 2004, this tendency is likely to continue especially among very long-term unemployed (over 24 months). To a large extent, a gradual concentration of low-skilled or non-skilled workforce among unemployed is a consequence of low level of existing adaptation mechanisms, low level of mobility and insufficient labour market flexibility.

Due to reasons mentioned above, an optimistic scenario may expect stabilization of long-term unemployment in 2005 and its gradual slow decrease starting in 2006.

Table: Structure of unemployed in terms of length of registration with District Labour Office in %

Year	within 6 months	6 - 12 months	over 12 months	over 24 months	over 48 months
1997	44,3	17,8	37,9	22,1	0,0
1998	42,3	19,5	38,2	20,6	9,5
1999	35,1	21,7	43,2	21,9	8,6

2000	37,8	18,6	43,6	21,6	7,8
2001	36,8	22,0	41,2	20,6	7,4
2002	35,7	16,9	47,3	23,7	8,8
2003	32,2	15,8	48,8	24,0	9,0

Source of data: NLO (status at the end of the year). Share of the total number of unemployed

High portion of unprivileged groups among unemployed

As a result of persisting slow decrease of unemployment, when predominantly short-term unemployed with relatively higher qualification and skills tend to leave the registers of unemployed, clusters of various disadvantaged groups are being created among unemployed. That applies mainly to ethnical Roma minority, elderly (50+), especially women, persons with disabilities as well as other marginalised groups (persons who served their sentences, drug users, persons who have not worked yet, women after maternity leave, etc.). These groups are gradually concentrated in a so called group of long-term unemployed (over 24 months). Even though a gradual improvement of situation may be expected in case of some of them, it certainly will not apply for all of them and for some groups the situation will even worsen in the years to come.

Table: Very long-term unemployed – according to the gender in %

Year	over 24 months	over 36 months	over 48 months
men			
1998	17,7	11,0	8,1
1999	19,7	11,0	7,0
2000	19,2	10,2	6,2
2001	17,4	9,8	5,7
2002	20,6	11,1	7,1
2003	19,8	11,3	7,3
women			
1998	23,9	15,7	11,2
1999	24,8	15,4	10,5
2000	24,5	14,6	9,6
2001	24,7	14,8	9,4
2002	27,6	16,7	10,9
2003	28,0	16,8	11,1
total			
1998	20,6	13,2	9,5
1999	21,9	12,9	8,6
2000	21,6	12,2	7,8
2001	20,6	12,0	7,4
2002	23,7	13,6	8,8
2003	24,0	13,3	9,0

Note: Data are provided from NLO sources and refer to the status at the end of the period. The year 2003 - NLO estimate.

Social exclusion – social cohesion

Ever-increasing social exclusion a related inadequate polarisation in society (resulting in growing share of social and pathological phenomena) is a direct consequence of unemployment concentrating in groups, which have practically no long-term perspective of penetrating into labour market without some external intervention. These are groups of citizens without basic education (concentrated mainly within Roma minority). The problem may not be expected to be solved shortly. Without better-functioning active labour market policy measures, without increased competencies of local governments and synergy of several targeted department policies, improvements cannot be expected even in long run.

Adaptability of school system to labour market needs and flexibility

In this area, significant disparities have been persisting for a long while, which results mainly in high portion of fresh graduates - unemployed.

Table: Inflow of graduates to labour office registers (in thous.)

Indicator	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Graduates	102,9	100,9	101,2	98,1	93,2	80,9	80,2
of them a share of unemployed in %	52,2	58,8	68,8	62,5	56,1	63,1	62,3

Note: Data concerning graduates are provided by sources of the Institute of information and forecasts of the and data on unemployed derive from NLO sources. Year 2003 – NLO estimate.

Labour market, forms of work, industry mobility, etc. have been long characterized in conditions of Slovak economic environment more by rigidity than flexibility.

4.3. Global indicators

Basic indicators of impacts within the main objective of equal opportunities
Overall increase of employed among unprivileged groups
Growth of income among unprivileged groups
Basic indicators in the field of Programmes' impacts
Reduction of "gender wedges"
Share of entrepreneurs and small-size businesses among unprivileged groups
"Wage wedge" of unprivileged groups

4.4. Reliability of quantification and database selection

Indicators used for ex-ante evaluation were taken from following resources:

- data published by the Statistical Office SR
- data published by the National Labour Office
- data taken from partial studies dealing with equal opportunity issue

The first two resources and the fourth one were used for aggregate social economic analysis and a forecast enabling quantification of development with regard to SPD objectives and priorities. Reliability of forecasts and quantification of future estimates is so strongly determined by model assumptions on conservation of behaviour typical for individual economic entities (including problematic groups of citizens) during analysed period, as well as by expert corrections of this behaviour taken into consideration in individual forecasts.

As far as possible selection of database or programme monitoring for evaluation is concerned, it will be inevitable to facilitate construction of specific database for some relevant indicators.

4.5. Degree of monitoring and extent of evaluation

Degree of monitoring and extent of completed ex-ante evaluation	Evaluation of social economic development on macroeconomic level	Evaluation of outputs, results and impacts on the programme level	Evaluation of effectiveness of inputs on the project level	Monitoring of efficiency
Priorities	-	N	N	N
Disparities	Y	-	N	N
Objectives of equal opportunities	Y	Y	N	N
Specific objectives	-	N	N	N
Measures	-	N	N	N

4.6. Units of measurement and specific procedures for the fields in which, quantification is problematic

Identified fields with problematic quantification are contained in the following table

Disparity		Specific procedures, units of measurement
Social exclusion of minorities	In the field of social exclusion of minorities, there is no relevant statistic basis.	Collection and analysis from "ad hoc" resources and sample survey

4.7. Monitoring framework

Monitoring framework has to have its complex institutional background, delegated competences, technical, organisational, administrative and personal aspects, which are absent at the present time and are not clearly defined.

Monitoring schemes should contain primarily:

- monitoring of progress of implementation of particular projects, which were provided a grant on a basis of defined monitoring criteria,
- to provide monitoring committee regular reports on progress, a final evaluating report, as well as reports based on contracts of technical assistance.

Monitoring has to be done at a level of each particular project. The coordinator of the scheme has to collect relevant information and provide regular reports to the monitoring committee.

The monitoring committee has to primarily monitor technical and financial implementation of projects which were provided a grant within a framework scheme

- to monitor eventual problems related to the implementation structure and mechanism and formulate recommendations for corrective measures,
- evaluate regularly progress related to achieving specific scheme objectives based on monitoring reports and regular reports about projects during their implementations,
- make decisions on corrective measures whenever it will be needed,
- approve regular reports on progress, a final closing report, as well as reports presented within the contract of a technical assistance.

As was mentioned earlier it is not clear what is the structure and competences of a Monitoring Committee.

Indicators of success have to be suggested so they can help the applicant to describe expected fulfilment of project objectives, as well as the objectives achieved. These indicators have to correspond with objectively controllable indicators in a logistic planning matrix.

Presented indicators have to be divided into two groups: **general indicators** – applicable to all the measures and **specific groups of indicators**, which correspond with an individual measure.

Specific indicators:

Has to be divided into three groups which enable to evaluate a project in its different stages of implementation:

- **Indicators of outcome** – monitor fulfilment of individual DP's activities (immediate results);
- **Indicators of results** – evaluate achieved results at the time of its fulfilment
- **Indicators of impact** – evaluate long-term effect of the finished project (6 months after the project's accomplishment)

General indicators can be for example the following:

- allocated funds
- number of beneficiaries
- number of people which were given support and their structure (in %) according to the sex, age groups*, and their share in labour market**;
- number of people which started education/incentive, consulting programme or other activating measure;
- number of positive outcomes at the end of a project***.

**) age groups: 15 - 24, 25 - 29, 30 - 34, 35 - 39, 40 - 44, 45 - 54, 55+*

****) position at the labour market: unemployed less than 6 months, long-term unemployed (more than 12 months),*

*****) "positive outcome" contain the following possibilities – obtaining employment, self employment, another professional training, and others.*

Monitoring indicators can relate for example to:

Outcomes:

- number of people in danger of social exclusion, who participated in consulting services or education according to the identified needs (separately for women, youths, young unemployed, handicapped);
- number of created individual action plans;
- number of people who took part in activation measures;
- number of those who started additional education or other type of training to improve their skills after they finished activation or motivation programmes;

Results:

- number of positive outcomes at the end of a project;
- number of developed motivation or activation projects;
- number of placed people as a result of a preventive or motivation programme;
- number of elaborated methodologies, computer or audiovisual programmes etc.;
- number of assisted jobs for individual target groups;

Impacts:

- number (%) of positive outcomes – 6 months after the end of a project;
- number (%) of those who started educational courses or other type of education after 6 months since the end of a project;
- number (%) of employed – 6 months after the end of motivation programs;
- number (%) of placed handicapped people – 6 months after the end of a project;

A reporting about the scheme should:

- provide Monitoring Committee regular reports on a progress, Final evaluation report on technical implementation of a scheme as well as reports presented within a contract of technical assistance,
- provide Monitoring Committee monthly reports on progress, as well as the Final evaluation report on scheme's administration,
- provide monthly reports on actual bank statements indicating expenditures from the account of a national co-financing.

5. Expected impact and policy justification.

5.1. Estimated impact of the programme on GDP of the Slovak Republic.

The estimate of the overall programme's impact on GDP of the Slovak Republic as well as in particular years of programme implementation is based on assumption that a total amount of available finances for the programme amounting to EUR 28.71 mil. will be spent. Despite objections concerning timing of spending, the construction of estimate is interconnected with planned spending in line with document proposal. The estimate of *programme's impact on GDP of the Slovak Republic in 2004-2006 may be quantified to an interval of EUR 30.533 to 38.166 mil.*

Introduced estimate is based on calculation of the impact of programme expenditures – as component of Government's expenditures – on GDP of the Slovak Republic. The estimate is based on econometric macro-model of IS-LM¹⁾ type in two scenarios.

Scenario 1 and scenario 2 differ in the portion of expenditures invested as part of development partnership on the territory of the Slovak Republic. *Scenario 1 reckons a 60 % share of the programme expenditures invested in the Slovak Republic, a higher scenario – scenario 2 reckons higher share up to 75 %.* In line with objectives of Slovak Government's financial policy formulated in Pre-accession economic programme of the Slovak Republic from 2003, both scenarios reckon *gradual decline of the portion of Government's expenditures on GDP of the Slovak Republic.*

Table: Prognosis of the EQUAL programme impact on GDP of the Slovak Republic

(in mil.EUR)

Period	2004	2005	2006	2004-2006
Total cost ²⁾	7,710	10,273	12,550	30,533
Impact on GDP in SR				
Scenario 1	6,425	8,561	10,458	25,444
Impact on GDP in SR				
Scenario 2	9,638	12,841	15,687	38,166

1) Calculation is based on modified macro-model of the type: Hall, R., E. – Taylor, J., B.: *Macroeconomics*. W-W Norton and Company, New York 1988.

2) Sum of public ESF expenditures and central government, including private expenditures and technical assistance.

5.2. Estimated impact of the programme on job creation.

Estimated impact of the EQUAL Programme on job creation is based on estimated workforce demand induced by: (i) anticipated gross domestic product generated as a result of EQUAL programme implementation in SR, (ii) anticipated labour productivity development in SR.

The estimate is based on above-mentioned scenarios of programme's impact on GDP. Furthermore, it is based on assumed 1.4% annual labour productivity growth as a result of neutral technical progress. With introduced labour productivity development in SR, GDP generated as a result of EQUAL Programme implementation would stimulate demand for 3 268 to 4 108 new employees.

Table: Prognosis of the EQUAL programme impact on employment in SR

(number of jobs)

Period	2004	2005	2006	2004-2006
Number of jobs				
Scenario 1	843	1108	1337	3288
Topic 4.1.1	183	241	291	715
Topic 4.1.2	119	157	189	465
Topic 4.1.3	211	277	334	822

Topic 4.1.4	192	253	305	751
Topic 4.1.5	110	145	174	429
Topic 4.1.6	28	36	44	107
Number of jobs Scenario 2	1053	1385	1670	4108
Topic 4.1.1	229	301	363	893
Topic 4.1.2	149	196	236	580
Topic 4.1.3	263	346	418	1027
Topic 4.1.4	240	316	381	938
Topic 4.1.5	137	181	218	536
Topic 4.1.6	34	45	54	134

Period	2004	2005	2006	2004-2006
Number of jobs Scenario 1	843	1108	1337	3268
Number of jobs Scenario 2	1053	1385	1670	4108

6. Evaluation of implementation and monitoring measures' quality

6.1. Identification of inevitable improvements

In terms of successful connection with respective EQUAL Community Initiative and its implementation in the Slovak conditions, the following steps mainly need to:

- 1) intensify work on development of programme documents necessary for implementation in line with EU regulations (instructions for national co-operation, instructions for evaluation, partner selection criteria, a complex project documentation, etc.)
- 20) to build implementing structures and intensify co-operation between individual parts
- 21) to increase the level of information on EQUAL Community Initiative – e.g. through EQUAL Initiative communication strategy,
- 22) to rapidly build a monitoring system for evaluation and financial management
- 23) to develop criteria for selection and training of assessors

6.2. Degree of clarity in responsibilities and evaluation of suitability of implementing institutions' organisation

Currently, the Managing Authority (ESF Coordinating Section within the MoLSAF SR) is the only existing structure; it is problematic to judge a degree of clarity in responsibilities. As far as Intermediate Body under Managing Authority is concerned (national support structure), we recommend to consider enforcement of higher level of its independence. Its proposed position (within the frame of the Centre of social affairs and employment) bears certain risks deriving from its direct subordination to MoLSAF SR as well as from broad scope of activities assigned to this newly-created centre.

Risks in implementation system could be seen mainly in:

- non-complex institutional, technical-administrative and personal background, including the uncertainty about the position of the National Support Structure and about establishing and developing of future partnerships.
- absence of a complex integrated monitoring system, evaluation and information about the results from the point of view of its substance, technical and organisational aspects and personnel

- time pressure during system's development

Proposed organisation of implementing institutions through ***development partnerships fully complies with CIP EQUAL criteria as well as with needs of its implementation in Slovak conditions.***

Proposed organisation of implementing institutions through ***development partnerships fully complies with EQUAL Community Initiative criteria as well as with needs of its implementation in Slovak conditions.***

6.3. Effective financial flows and control mechanisms

The basic features of financial system are defined. We recommend that its detail elaboration is completed as fast as possible, including organisation, personnel and information provision

6.4. Competitive procedures and selection criteria strengthening efficiency of project selection

With regard to the current status of this matter, it is not possible to judge this area.

6.5. Possible administrative and financial elements, which might cause delay in implementation

A success of the implementation is determined mainly by fast construction and subsequent functioning of national support structure within the entire complex.

6.6. Specific steps for innovative measures

We recommend an immediate inclusion and implementation of a complex system of programme/project management into organisational and coordinating structures. In all management elements, we recommend an application of process approach and implementation of strategic planning. With regard to expected introduction of State Treasury as off January 1, 2004 and anticipated implementing of evaluating and monitoring system within the framework of programme budgeting, it will be necessary to provide for mutual inter-connection between evaluating and monitoring system of EQUAL Community Initiative and introduced elements of public finance management system.