

Civil Society and Demography
in Rural Central Europe
(the Czech, Hungarian and Polish cases)

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Series editor:
Mariann Kovács

Key words:
**knowledge, rural development, rural sociology, sustainability,
civil society, demography, NGOs**

ISBN 963 7372 32 6
ISSN 1788-1064



The CORASON Research Project
(A cognitive approach to rural sustainable development
– dynamics of expert and lay knowledges)
was funded by the EU 6th Framework Programme
www.corason.hu

Published by the Political Science Institute
of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
1014 Budapest, Országház u. 30.
Responsible for publishing: the Director of IPS HAS
Cover design and layout: Mariann Kovács

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Preface

Demographics and Civil Society

Věra Majerová

This anthology is the second volume of series which presents papers on Central European countries of European Union Framework 6 research project CORASON

Civil society is generally regarded as one of the most important factors of the stabilisation and functioning of democratic societies. It can be defined in many ways, for example as an active inclusion of citizens into common matters, "...as an independent self-organisation of the society, whose particular elements voluntarily join into the public matters in order to satisfy individual, group or public interests..." (Weigle-Butterfield 1993), "...as a crucial part of the public space between the state and the family..." (Marc Morjé Howard 2003), and by other definitions. The civil right is not represented only by free elections in which the citizens give their vote to political parties, but also as the control of their activities, fulfilment of the election promises and defending national interests of the population.

In a democratic society, every citizen has the right to express his/her opinions regarding common matters either as an individual or as a member of some interest group. The net of different associations, clubs, communities and societies that can influence all the important decisions of the state creates civil society. However, the citizens who are willing to interfere into the public matters by their attitudes and opinions also take over the responsibility for their managing.

The importance of civil society is strengthened in the periods of economic, political and social changes. It is not by chance that the totalitarian power systems suppress civic activities consistently and that the formation of civic society proceeds relatively slowly in the systems where there occurred the political transition from totality towards democracy.

The CORASON project includes research of civil society in the selected countries as a cognitive approach to rural sustainable development. The dynamics of the forming and sustaining the notion on the rights and obligations of citizens towards themselves as well as towards the environment they are living in (the material as well as non-material world) lays in their knowledge, abilities and real possibilities of their utilisation. In this understanding, civil society is a tool as well as the results of the process of sustainable development. The range of the followed elements is, naturally, much wider. It includes the national, regional as well as local viewpoints; it faces the individual actors, target groups as well as the local governance institutions. It takes into consideration human rights and obligations, social certainties as well as risks. However, the most important terms still are civic responsibility and public participation.

There exists a logical connection among the demographical characteristics of the individual countries, their historical development and the present state of civil society. Demographical characteristics form the background and testify on the socio-economic situation and the ongoing processes. They form the formal frame – the indicator of the state of the society (i.e. the number of habitants in the region, age structure, men/women, life expectancy, fertility/death rates, abortions, migration, divorce and marriage rates, illness, sterility etc.) as well as of its changes (migration balance, population increase/ decrease etc.).

The historical development of the countries followed in the frame of the CORASON project is very different. In the last century, their governments were in friendly as well as unfriendly relationships, they co-operated but also fought with each other, occupied and annexed the areas of each other. In a similar way, some of the governments behaved also towards their own population in past: there occurred de-population, re-population, persecution of certain groups of population, unfounded advantaging of other groups, suppression of civil rights and freedoms.

The stability of the common Europe is based on equal opportunities and co-operation of all its member states. It cannot be supposed, that a mere legal acts will remove forever all misunderstandings of the past. The historical memory of individuals, families, social groups and nations is the reality, which might be of positive as well as negative consequences. The influence of civil society is important namely in the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The discussion on its importance is gradually strengthening and it includes a still wider range of actors on the national and international level and tens of new topics.

The CORASON project is formed at three levels - national, regional rural areas (RRA), and local implemented areas (LIA). As the analytical units for the description of the state of the civil society (CS), there are used demographic indicators, forms of government, leadership and relationships, NGOs action effects and their character (including the number of NGOs, their field of interest, target groups, financial situation etc.), their position in localities, cooperation with other actors, characteristics of the used knowledge forms, identification of the main sources, access to knowledge, specific fields of the knowledge use, lacks of knowledge, impacts on rural development (including capacity building, empowerment, education, qualifications, skills). The methodological approach is based on the emphasis on the data collected through interviews with key actors who are linked to the projects/programmes, which follow the principles of civil society.

The criteria for the choice of indicators issue, on one hand, from the possibilities of the individual countries comparability (with regard to their size, geographical position and different historical development), on the other side they accept, however, the fact that those of them which already belong among the new EU member countries are already building the present civil society on the same basis as the original member states, namely owing to the demands of the pre-accession period. It is therefore possible to follow, on a relatively comparable level, the running projects/programmes with participation of NGOs, focused on the social excluded groups (e.g. Equal), included local representatives in the decision making process (e.g. Leader +), used different forms of knowledge (with respect to local/non-local, expert/everyday knowledge), had an ambition to implement new knowledge and innovations, deal with specific problems/social groups.

Certain problems are still caused by the non-adequately unified way of the statistical following of the individual elements connected with civil society. The national and regional levels are more easily comparable, since its institutions are subjected to the obligatory rules of data collecting. On the local level, there are in a more important way reflected the specifics of the individual countries. The methodological approach, based namely on the study of documents and interviews supplies a deeper and more detailed information, their interpretation is, however, more difficult and in the international comparison, there is the danger of not understanding a detail or the meaning. For example, as active actors we can without hesitation regard the actively participating persons in the civil society process through the projects/programmes, the social group of passive actors can, however, include a wide range of individuals, starting from the simple non-participation in the process (for personal, time and other reasons) up to the persons whose non-participation is caused by the inability or impossibility of participation and who can thus be included among the socially excluded

people. As well defining of the role of local authorities is, in consequence of the different historical development of their social role, rights, possibilities, experiences and competencies, very difficult. Among the ways of civil defence in the totalitarian systems, there belonged also ignoring and undervaluing of the public authorities. The change of the view on their role in the society and building of the trust of the fellow-citizens is created only gradually.

The CORASON project followed, with regard to the all above mentioned facts, in its part dedicated to the analysis of civil society and its role in the cognitive approach to rural sustainable development, the context of the main national demographic and civil society tendencies, identification of projects and programmes and their implementation. The main attention was focused namely on the issue how different actors and their knowledge forms are integrated into the policy formulation and programme design and how the endogenous rural development with its positive features and fall-outs is prompted.

There exists a whole range of theoretical approaches as well as practical manuals, which should act in a unified way in the different conditions of the old as well as new EU member states. However, just the topic of civil society is rather outside the frame of the easily formalised (standardised) instructions and procedures. In the basis of civil society itself, there are anchored active attitudes of the citizens, including their doubts, attempts at their own solutions, ways to agreement, understanding and co-operation. Therefore, functioning of civil society presupposes the space for interaction. Strengthening of the frame of administrative directives can easily be understood as a growth of the EU bureaucratic limitations. Similar ideas have already emerged in past and are the object of discussion also at present. Anyway, the benefit of European co-operation predominates.

Weigle, M. A. - Butterfield, J. (1993) *Civil Society in Reforming Communist Regimes*, Comparative Politics, 25, Nr. 2

Marc, Morjé, Howard (2003) *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

Demographics and Civil Society in the Czech Republic

Věra Majerová¹ – Klára Klečková² – Petr Hajný³

Introduction

Civil society is one of the most important fundaments of democratic society. This importance is strengthened particularly in the post-communist transitional countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The role of civil society actors gets increasingly important in this transition process to the developed Western-like countries.

This paper investigates the civil society actors and the forms of knowledge, which they use, along with the demographics situation serving as a background for the civil society understanding.

Demographics and Civil Society on the National Level

Before speaking about civil society (CS) on the national level, we will present the socio-demographic and socio-economic situation as a background of the CS functioning.

1.1. Socio–demographic and socio–economic situation on the national level

There are some demographic indicators discussed in this section, which allow us to see the population structure and main trends in its development such as the size of population, age structure, the natural balance, migration balance etc. All indicators are available in the following table.

Table 1: Demographic indicators

	1980	1990	2003
Mid -year population	10,292,717	10,364,124	10,211,455
Live births (per 1000 inhabitants)	14.9	12.6	9.2
Deaths (per 1000 inhabitants)	13.1	12.5	10.9
Natural increase/ decrease (per 1000 inhabitants)	1.8	0.1	-1.7
Population density (persons per square km)	130	131	129
Age structure			
0 – 14	2,411,514	2,223,269	1,571,249
15 – 54	5,543,053	5,777,641	5,945,943
55 -	2,372,225	2,361,830	2,684,459
Proportion of men (%)	48.5	48.6	48.7
Proportion of women (%)	51.5	51.4	51.3

(Source: CZSO)

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Table No. 1 shows that in the investigated period (1980 – 2003), the population has decreased continuously which was especially caused by fewer children born. Even if the rate of deaths per 1000 inhabitants has been reduced (a better health care, healthier the lifestyle etc.), the population continues declining. The population decrease is connected with lifestyle changes and family model changes. Women have their 1st babies when they are older (maternity age increase) than before, they have fewer children than before and there are fewer children in the family in general. Thus live births cannot balance the quite high mortality rate and a relatively short life expectancy any more even though these indicators became better (still worse than in the EU).

There are less children aged up to 14 years, but more people aged from 15 to 54 and also people of 55 and above. Thus, population is also getting older. This trend is the worst in some rural areas; however, the similar processes are increasing in the Western Europe as well.

In the investigated period, the Czech Republic experienced one of the important changes in its history. In 1989, the Velvet Revolution took place and has started the whole society transformation regarding the return of democracy. After 1989, especially in the nineties, all economic, political and cultural structure changed. However, the mentioned transition brought about many problems and so in the early nineties; the Czech Republic experienced the transformation crisis.

Table 2: Socio-economic statistics

	1980	1990	2003
Economically active	5,363,945	5,421,102	5,132,329
Unemployed*	N/A	N/A	399,147
Unemployment rate (%)	N/A	0.73	10.31
Structure of employment (%)			
- Agriculture and forestry	12.5	11.8	4.1
- Industry and construction	47.9	45.4	38.5
- Services	39.6	42.8	57.4

(Source: CZSO)

* The indicator has been measured since 1993

Respecting the socio-economic statistical, the most interesting thing is that there were no unemployed people before 1989, at least in the official statistics. The employment rate was kept on the insignificant level by the so-called “social employment”. It meant, among other, that to remove the bad workers from the job was very difficult. The Labour Code declared, especially for the manual workers, a very broad legal protection.

But during the transformation period, many enterprises (industrial as well as agricultural enterprises) had to economise their production (restructuralisation) to cope better with the emerging competitive environment, many enterprises were closed completely resulting in increasing of the unemployed people numbers. There were naturally some regional differences. The Ústecký Region and the Moravskoslezský Region were the most affected regions by the restructuralisation (naturally with the highest unemployment rate) of heavy industry and coal mining enterprises. On the contrary, the least affected was the capital Prague with the lowest long-term unemployment rate. The highest unemployment rate in the Czech Republic was in 2003. Fortunately it afterwards started declining to the present 8.92 % level (in 30/4/2005).

National economy experienced a significant change as well. Employment in the primary (agriculture and forestry) and secondary (industry and construction) sector has been

reduced and in the tertiary one (services) it has grown. Through this change, the Czech Republic came near to the Western European countries.

There are some differences in the socio-economic situation among regions and urban and rural areas in the Czech Republic. Living standards in urban areas are higher than in rural areas. There are many reasons of this and one of them we might see in the historical development. In the years before 1989, especially towns and urban areas were targeted for financial support, not rural areas. After the Velvet Revolution in 1989, rural areas could not be set as the priority for development because of the following economic recession and the lack of sources.

1.2. Civil society on the national level

The changes of the national policy regarding the non-profit sector

Civil society played an important role in the history of the country, for example during the creation of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, and the Velvet Revolution in 1989. The long tradition of civil society was suppressed and interrupted during the German occupation (1938 - 1945) and followed by the governance under the communist regime (1948 - 1989) with a short “warming” in the spring 1968.

After the year 1968, there began a period of “normalisation” and assembling of people was “allowed” only in the mass organisations. In fact, the membership in them was obligatory and by this way, people could compensate for the non-political involvement, membership in the Communist party. The civil organisations played a political role. People who did not want to join, for example the SSM (the Socialist Union of Youth), were perceived as demonstrating their deprecatory attitude towards the government.

Besides the official culture, there emerged an unofficial culture movement publishing writings of banned authors. The emigrants also played a significant role because they were supporting spreading of the independent culture.

Even in the socialistic country, there existed some forms of civil initiatives, which were focusing on the enforcement of human rights, freedom and other. These initiatives were from the beginning strongly suppressed. Since the mid-eighties, the civil activity in independent initiatives grew; and the civil associations differentiated their focus according to the different fields of interest of the civil society (e.g. ecology, international relations, human rights, peace organisations, etc.). The increasing and strengthening of the activity of citizens culminated in the year 1989 and it also to some extent led to the change of the political system. (Vaněk, 2001).

The communist regime had a huge impact on civil society in the Czech Republic, which influences also the presence: the paternalistic attitudes of the public, the prominent role of state, the absence of a strong middle class, the suspended traditions of giving and volunteering etc. (Vajdová, 2005)

For most Czechs, the experience of the post-communist transformation is characterised by a disillusion. A high level of mistrust in other people and in democratic institutions characterises the Czech Republic, slowing down the development of a strong civil society.

After the abolishment of the communist regime and its monopoly of power, the non-profit sector in the Czech Republic experiences it boom. (Frič, 2001)

The recent 15 years can be divided into four stages of the development of the non-profit sector (Vajdová, 2003):

1990 – 1992: The liberal state policy led to an extensive development of the non-profit sector.

1993 – 1996: The state formed its relation to the non-profit sector sceptically. The views of the non-profit sector were also influenced by the political discourse on the terms of “non-profit organisations” and “civil society”. The former Czech president Václav Havel and the Prime Minister Václav Klaus (the present president) presented their different views on the concept of the civil society and its importance. The state policy lagged behind the development of the non-profit sector; though the state support to the non-profit sector remained stable.

1997 – 2001: The relation between the state and the non-profit sector was more intensive and clearer. The new Act On Foundations, which came into force, led to the consolidation of the foundation sphere; new laws and specification of the funding rules of the ministries were prepared.

2002 – 2004: Two major changes appeared in this period. Firstly, the public administration reform, which brought about the establishment of the regions (NUTS3), significantly influenced the non-profit situation in the regions. Secondly, the EU entrance brought a challenge for the NGOs in creating partnerships and using the EU funds. Some NGOs might increase their impact; some might be weakened, leading to the downfall.

Characteristics of the Czech civil sector after 1990

Dynamics of the number of NGOs

The above mentioned legal act on foundations and foundation funds, which came into force, caused a significant decline the in numbers of foundations in 1998 (see table N.3). The reason is that this new law made more strict rules and clear conditions of the foundations existence.

Table 3: Statistics of the NGOs number in the years 1990 – 2004

	Civil associations	Foundations	Foundation funds	Generally beneficial societies
1990	3879			
1991	9366			
1992	15393	1551		
1993	21694	2768		
1994	24978	3800		
1995	26978	4253		
1996	27807	4392		1
1997	30297	5238		52
1998	36046	55	71	129
1999	38072	272	695	560
2000	42302	282	735	557
2001	47101	299	784	701
2002	49108	330	825	762
2003	50997	350	859	884
2004	53306	362	898	1038

Source: ICN, 2005

The majority of the NGOs are in the form of civil associations. The first reason is that civil associations were the first and even very liberal legal form enabling voluntary gathering of people on the non-profit base after 1989. The second reason is probably the fact that the number of civil associations is by one third over-stated in the present registers since the civil associations do not have an obligation of pulling out notification.

Overview of Czech citizens' participation in civil society

The term “civil society” is not known even by half of the Czech population. As the results from the research conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre (CVVM) show, only approximately 40% of the respondents know what the term “civil society” means, though around 80% people have encountered the term. Better known are the terms “volunteer” and “volunteer work”, which almost every person has come across and more than 80% of people know the meaning of it.

The survey Civil Society 2004, conducted by the STEM agency also showed that 47 % of the population are members of at least one NGO (with a gender difference: 53% men and 42% women are members of a civil association). It is also known that among the people who have not participated in the last parliament elections, there are less people who actively participate in any civil association⁴. The largest membership is found in sport organisations (16%) and trade unions (13%), followed by the organisations of gardeners and growers (6%), voluntary fire brigades (6%), faith-based organisations (6%) and fishermen organisations (5%). According to the survey, 32% of Czech citizens did some voluntary work during the last year.

In comparison with the other European countries Church does not play an important role in the Czech Republic since it is one of the most atheistic countries in the world with 58% of non-believers (CZSO 2001).

Concerning the people involvement in community action, the results of the above mentioned survey revealed that 15 to 30 % of citizens were involved either as a promoter, volunteer or organiser of various events in the municipality – such as social events, the protection of historical monuments, care for the environment, work with children, work brigades, sports events, cultural and educational establishments, and the assistance to ill, old and socially weak citizens. Most people participated in work brigades in the municipality (30 % of citizens). Fifty seven percent of citizens participated in at least one of these activities, which is a surprisingly high figure, given that we often hear arguments about the apathy of Czech citizens towards any collective activities. (Vajdová, 2005)

The distribution of NGOs around the country

NGOs exist throughout the Czech Republic, although they are concentrated in large cities, and mainly in Prague, as Table 4 shows. Most regions have between 400 and 500 civil associations per 100,000 citizens, with the CR average of 478 NGOs per 100,000 inhabitants. The significantly higher number of associations in Prague is partly due to the fact that the capital city is home to many national organisations.

⁴ The survey of the Sociological Institute AV CR and the CVVM

Table 4: Numbers of the selected types of NGOs according to regions (per 100 000 inhabitants)

Region	Civil associations		Generally beneficial societies		Foundations		Foundation funds	
	Index	Number	Index	Number	Index	Number	Index	Number
Prague	709	8237	14	164	13	146	18	213
Jihočeský region	470	2936	8	52	2	13	11	70
Ustí nad Labem	463	3794	6	53	1	11	3	21
Total CR	478	48804	6	609	3	322	8	799

Source: Vajdová, 2005; the Czech Statistical Office, 2003; own calculation

The Jihočeský and Ustí nad Labem regions (chosen as the RRA) have an average organisational density, compared to the CR average.

Table 5: Number of NGOs according to the ECNPO classification, 1995.

	Number of NGOs	Number of NGOs (%)	Number of members	Number of workers and volunteers	Number of workers and volunteers (%)
Culture and recreation	23 459	49	1 909 850	41 190	33
Education and research	4 331	9	46 500	12 184	10
Health	1 418	3	30 700	13 679	11
Social services	1 517	3	30 600	15 099	12
Environment	2 688	6	98 225	7 036	6
Development and housing	5 008	11	1 300 850	7 776	6
Law, advocacy and politics	1 457	3	346 500	4 084	3
Philanthropic intermediaries and voluntarism promotion	260	1	1 000	2 521	2
International	260	1	1 000	1 630	1
Religion	2 630	6	394 500	8 544	7
Business and professional associations, unions	1 250	3	2 500 000	9 857	8
Not elsewhere classified	3 585	8			0
Total	47 863	100	6 659 725	123 600	100

Source: Frič, 2001

The most significant number of NGOs functions in the field of Culture and Recreation (49 %), followed by the field of Development and housing (11 %), Education and Research (9 %). The largest member group is among the Business and Professional Associations, Unions (2,500,000 members); the second largest member group is in the field of Culture and Recreation (1,909,850), followed by the Development and Housing (1,300,850). Looking at the number of people working and volunteering for the particular NGOs, one third of all NGOs workers and volunteers is active in the field of Culture and Recreation, followed by Social Services (12 %), Health (11 %) and Education and Research (10 %).

Financing of the non-profit sector

The Czech state supports NGOs, but there is no complex quantitative information on the extent of the financial support. In 2003, the total amount of grants from all levels of the public budget to NGOs was CZK 5.4 billion. However, this amount represents only grants

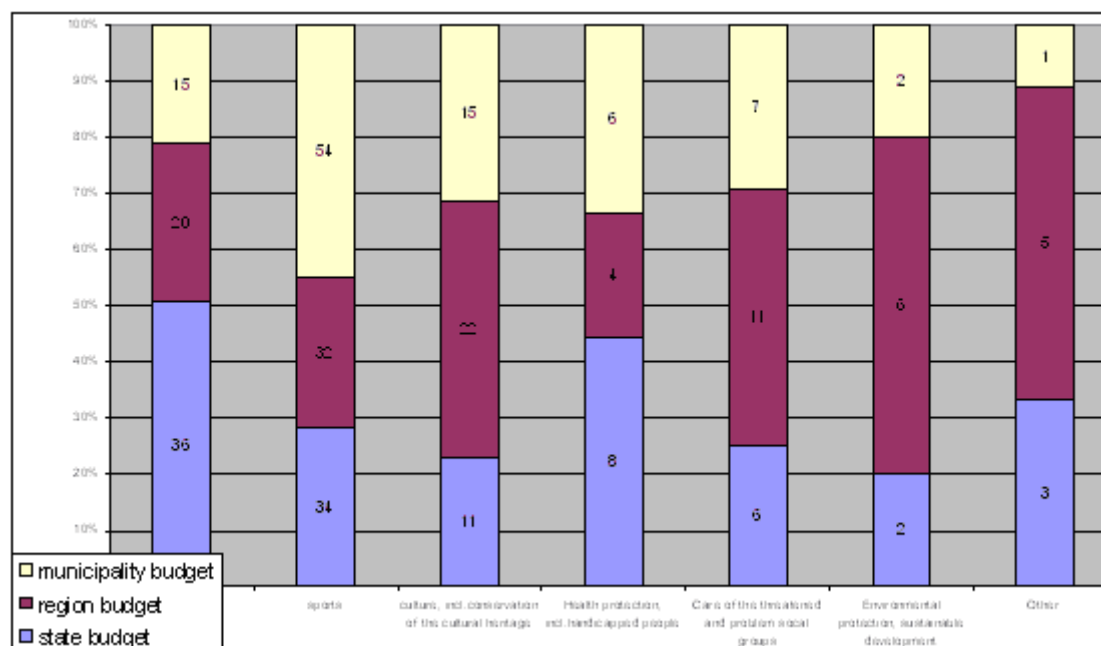
from the specific public budgets to certain types of NGOs. Up to the present, the support for NNO has been of a centralised character and financial resources from the state budget predominated. In 2003, the ministries provided CZK 3.3 billion, which means an annual increase of some 15% in comparison to the previous year. Over the last four years, the total amount provided by the ministries has increased by 75 %.

In 2003, NGOs received from the regional and municipal budgets only a half of what they received from the budgets of the ministries. However, the ongoing gradual decentralisation of public budgets to the regional level might change this proportion during the coming years. (Vajdová, 2005)

In 2002, foundations and foundation funds (including corporate ones) provided the total contribution of CZK 880 million, which is 16 % of the funds provided by public budgets. We do not have any information regarding the total amount of the individual donations, nor of the size of resources generated by membership fees and the sale of services. An older information from the research conducted by the Johns Hopkins University (Salomon, Anheier et al 1999; data from 1995) shows that membership fees and the income from the sale of services comprise the largest item, namely 47 % as compared to 39 % from public budgets and 14 % from philanthropy. (Vajdová, 2005)

The following Chart 1 shows the distribution of budgets (state, region and municipality) in the main fields of the NGOs projects.

Chart 1: Funding of the NGOs' projects from the public budgets in the main fields of the funding policy in 2003



Source: Vajdová, 2003

Grants by the ministries were mainly targeted towards the provision of social services (36 %), sports and physical training (34 %) and culture, including conservation of the cultural heritage (11 %). Together these three spheres receive 80 % of resources from the state budget. Funding from the region budgets puts more stress on the sport (32 %), culture (22 %) and then social services (20 %).

Although the contribution of the non-profit sector to GDP is relatively small (1.6 %), the sector has gained an important position in the economy and society. The non-profit sector has become an important employer. In 1995, it employed 1.7 % of the Czech workforce, a larger share than any single commercial company. It employed 3.4 % of the workforce engaged in the service sector (Frič/Goulli et al., 2001).

Political situation

Since 1948 – 1989, people were not allowed to vote freely since the totalitarian state with the leading position of Communist Party limited activities of other political subjects. In all elections, the Communist party thus obtained almost 100 % of votes. All elections were manipulated and all citizens were threatened with persecution if not voting, not voting for the Communist Party or trying to boycott the elections. In 1989, the communist regime fell down and people could participate in free and pluralist elections for the Chamber of Deputies. In June 1990, the voter turnout was 96.8 % with the winning civil aggregation called the “Občanské fórum” (the “Civil Forum” which was later transformed into a political party – the Civic Democratic Party). However, the voter turnout in the communal elections in the same year was lower (73.9 %).

In 1996, there were the first elections to the Senate, in 2000 into the Regional Councils and in 2004 to the European Parliament. There was also a referendum in 2003 about joining the EU.

Table 6: Development of the voter turnout to the Chamber of Deputies

Elections	1990	1992	1996	1998	2002
Voter turnout in %	96.8	85.1	76,4	74	58

Table 7: Development of the voter turnout in communal elections

Elections	1990	1994	1998	2002
Voter turnout in %	73.9	60.7	45	43.4

Table 8: Development of the voter turnout to the Regional Councils and voter turnout in the referendum (R) and elections to the European Parliament (EP)

Elections	2000	2004	2003 - R	2004 - EP
Voter turnout in %	33.6	29.6	55.2	28.3

Source: www.volby.cz, 2005

As the tables show, Czech voters are gradually still less interested in elections. Czech apathy towards politics can be well demonstrated by the peoples’ opinion about the politics. According to the survey (conducted by CVVM) in 1996, 65 % voters were satisfied with the political parties performance, in 1998 it was 45 % and after the elections in 2002, only 28 % voters were satisfied. In March 2005, only 27 % of people expressed trust in the government (in comparison, the trust to local authority was expressed by 60 % of people).

In the Czech Republic during the past 15 years, there has settled a clear political spectrum. There exist two major left oriented political parties: a more radical Communist Party (KSČM); the other rather oriented to the centre – the Czech Social Democratic Party - ČSSD), one political party of the centre (the Christian Democratic Union–Czechoslovak People’s Party - KDU-ČSL) and a right oriented political party (the Civic Democratic Party -

ODS). There is still a space for another right-oriented political party, which would fulfil the space between the KDU-CSL and the ODS (the former Čtyřkoalice- Four-Coalition).

In summary, half of the Czech citizens actively participate in civil society. There is no monitoring system, which would enable to track the amount of money, which is provided to the NGOs.

2. Context Analysis

The Jihočeský and Ústí nad Labem regions were chosen as the RRA.

2.1. Socio–demographic and socio–economic situation in the Jihočeský Region Summary

Table 9: The dynamics of the Jihočeský Region

	1980	1991	2001	2004 (1.1.)
Share of population in municipalities (%)				
Up to 199 inhabitants	0.1	3.5	4.4	
200-999	20.4	19.7	18.8	
1000-4999	28.8	24.4	24.5	
5000 and over	50.7	52.4	52.3	
Population density per km ²	61	61.9	62.2	62
Population total	613171	622889	625267	625541
Population according to age				
Up to 14	23.4	21.3	16.5	15.6
15-59	59.8	61.9	65.9	70.6
60+ inc. unidentified age	16.8	16.8	17.6	13.8
Average age	35.2	35.9	38.4	39.3

(Source: CZSO)

The Jihočeský Region has been generally viewed in the long term as an agricultural area with developed forestry and fish farming in ponds. Manufacturing took roots no earlier than during the last century. Geographically, the region is a relatively integral whole, the centre of which is formed by the South Bohemian valley. It is surrounded by the Šumava Mountains in the Southwest, Brdy foothills in the Northwest, Středočeská žulová vrchovina (the Central Bohemian Granite Highlands) in the North, Českomoravská vrchovina (the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands) in the East, and Novohradské hory (the Novohradské Mountains) in the Southeast. There are two basins stretching in the South Bohemian valley: Českobudějovická and Třeboňská.

The major part of the region's borderline is formed by the border with Austria and the Federal Republic of Germany (323 km in total). The Region also adjoins the Plzeňský, Středočeský, Vysočina and Jihomoravský Regions. Its position along the border creates favourable conditions for the effective cross-border co-operation in the field of manufacturing, services as well as tourism where there is utilised the overall attractiveness of the region that can offer an unspoilt countryside and many national heritage buildings and monuments.

The region's area is 10,057 km², which makes up 12.8 % of the CR area. Forestland covers one third of the region, while water surface areas amount to 4 %. The major part of the area is situated at the altitude of 400-600 m, which implies rather severe climatic conditions.

The area of the region falls under the basin of upper and middle sections of the Vltava River with several tributaries. In the past, more than 7,000 fish ponds were constructed there the total area of which currently covers more than 30,000 hectares. The following fish ponds rank among the largest in the region as well as in the CR: the Rožmberk (490 ha), the Bezdrev (450 ha) and the Horusický rybník (415 ha). In addition to those, large waterworks were erected: the Lipno (the largest water surface area in the CR with 4,870 ha), the Orlik (surrounded by large holiday areas) and the Římov (supplying drinking water to a major part of the region). Also, the reservoir Hněvkovice was built in connection with the construction of the nuclear power plant Temelín.

The Jihočeský Region is rich in neither raw nor energy producing materials. However, there are important natural resources of different kind in the region - vast forests of the Šumava and Novohradské hory, chiefly coniferous consisting of spruce and pine trees.

Regarding the environment, the region suffered a rather low environmental damage. Although the level of emissions is gradually decreasing, there are still a number of polluters, particularly in agriculture and industry. Despite a significant improvement of the quality of water observed since 1990, the Vltava River is classified as polluted over the prevalent length of its course. Eighty percent of forests are classified as not damaged at all and the remaining part as slightly damaged. A good environmental indicator is a rather clean atmosphere the quality, which is one of the best in the CR.

The area of the region has always been of a recreational rather than developed industrial character. The commitment to maintain the natural environment was manifested in the establishment of the Šumava National Park (comprising the area 685 km², including the part spreading in the Plzeňský Region), and many other protected landscape areas.

In the region, there are a number of historical centres, which have been designated urban conservation areas. In addition, a number of historic buildings and monuments can be found in the region. What is also an important part of the national heritage is the folk architecture in the region - particularly the style known as the "rustic baroque".

The countryside of the region - with its large forest coverage, water surface areas and a great number of national monuments (nearly 6,000) - is the place of leisure and recreation activities for people from all the CR as well as many foreigners.

Demographics

Brief area characteristics

The number of municipalities in the South Bohemian Region reached 623.45 of them have a status of town. The population density reaches 62.2 inhabitants per 1 km² 64.2 % of the population live in towns. (CZSO – 2004)

Population characteristics

The South Bohemian Region has the lowest population density in the CR. The highest density of population regarding the 7 districts of the region is in the České Budějovice district with about one quarter of the inhabitants living in this district. This fact is accounted for chiefly by the town of České Budějovice itself with more than 95,000 permanent residents. Other major towns include Tábor (36,300 inhabitants), Písek (29,800), Strakonice (23,500) and Jindřichův Hradec (22,800). The population of these five towns makes up more than one third of the region's inhabitants. On the other hand, the smallest municipalities under 200 inhabitants comprise 39.2 % of the total number of municipalities, but only 4.3% of the region's population. The smallest municipality is Vlkov (the České Budějovice district) with only 21 permanent residents. Currently, there are 623 self-governing municipalities in the region, with nearly 2,000 settlements.

When compared to the national average, the population of the region is younger (the average age 39.4). What is also lower is the death rate (10.3 deaths per 1,000 inhabitants), while the birth rate is higher (9.2 live births per 1,000 inhabitants). Recently, the population of the Tábor and Písek districts has been diminishing in number steadily, while a steady growth of population has been reported only from the České Budějovice and Český Krumlov districts.

Table 10: The dynamics of migration of population in the Jihočeský Region

Year	Marriages	Divorces	Live birth	Abortion	Deaths	Natural increase	Divorces	Net Migration	Balance of migration
			per 1000 people				per 100 marriages	per 1000 inhabitants of mean state	
1980	7.3	2.02	15.4	84	13.0	2.4	27.4	2.6	4.9
1989	7.8	2.67	12.7	12.4	12.5	0.3	34.1	2.6	2.9
1990	8.8	2.80	13.0	12.2	12.2	0.8	31.9	2.9	3.7
1991	6.7	2.65	12.9	12.0	11.8	1.1	39.3	1.3	2.4
2001	5.1	2.99	8.9	4.6	10.2	-1.3	58.5	0.2	-1.2
2004	4.8	2.9	9.5	3.9	10.3	-0.8	60.3	1.1	0.3

(Source: CZSO)

According to the results of the Population and Housing Census, as of March 1, 2001, the share of inhabitants with university education reached 7.8 % of the total number of persons over 15 years (in 1991, it was 6.3 %) and the share of persons with full secondary education (including professional) was 28.4 % (in 1991, it was 23.2 %). A higher share of persons with university education in the Czech Republic is only in the Capital of Prague, the Jihomoravský and Olomoucký Regions. Higher shares of persons with full secondary education were reported only in the Capital of Prague and the Královéhradecký Region. In the Census, 34.7 % of inhabitants declared that they were believers, which is slightly above the national average. (CZSO, 2005)

The life expectancy by birth for men was 72.48 years and for women 78.77 years in 2004.

The net migration indicator in the South Bohemian Region was +1.1 ‰ (1. 1. 2004). The balance of migration was +0.3‰ (1. 1. 2004).

Socio-economic situation

Gross domestic product of the region accounts for only 5.5 % of the total GDP of the CR, but when converted to GDP per inhabitant, it amounts to 89.0 % of the national average and ranks fourth in the CR (after the Capital of Prague and the Plzeňský and Jihomoravský Regions). The average monthly gross wage was 14,881 CZK (by 1. 1. 2004).

Regarding agriculture, crop production focuses on cereals, oleaginous and forage crops, with potatoes production playing a major role, too. Animal production focuses on raising cattle and pigs. In total, the region produces about 11 % of the CR gross agricultural output. Fish farming in ponds has had a long tradition in the region. Fish ponds cover the total area of about 25,000 hectares and produce one half of the CR output of fish. The share of the region in the output of waterfowl (ducks and geese) is also significant. Industrial production is concentrated mainly in the České Budějovice urban agglomeration. However, the region does not rank among the key industrial areas - its 2003 share in the sales of industrial enterprises accounted for 5.0 % of the CR total. Manufacturing (mainly manufacturing of food products and beverages, means of transport, machinery and equipment, and of textile and textile products) prevails over the other industries. The activities in construction are focusing on new construction, modernisation and reconstruction in the region, accounting for 5.0 % of the CR total construction output.

According to the labour force sample surveys, there is the total of about 300,000 employees in the region, one third of which accounts for the industry sector, more than 17 % for trade and repairs of personal and household goods, and 10 % for construction. The 2003 average gross mthly wage amounted to CZK 14,881 (per 1 natural person), falling, though, by CZK 2,039 below the national average - this fact is to a certain degree accounted for by the region's structure of economy.

There were 22,158 registered job applicants in the region at the end of 2003. The registered unemployment rate stood at 6.96 % at the end of December 2003, ranking the South Bohemian Region as the second best after the Capital of Prague.

In the statistical Business Register, more than 141,000 enterprises, organisations and entrepreneurs were registered at the end of 2003. The biggest part was comprised of entrepreneurs - natural persons not incorporated in the Companies Register (almost 101,000 entities) and independent farmers (8,600 entities).

In 2001, 7.7 % of the population in the South Bohemian region worked in the primary sectors (agriculture, forestry and fishery), which was by 3 % more than the CR average. 40 % worked in the secondary sector (industry) and 47.4 % worked in tertiary sector (services) of the national economy.

Gross fixed capital formation in the region amounted to CZK 29.9 in 2002 (4.6 % of the CR's total).

The network of educational establishments comprises 301 nursery schools, 241 basic schools, 24 grammar schools, 59 secondary technical schools, 42 secondary vocational schools, and 15 higher professional schools. Six faculties provide university education. More than 7,100 full-time students are receiving their university education in the region.

The education structure in 2001 was the following: the dominant group was the population with secondary education without the GCSE (38.8 %), the 2nd largest group was the population with basic (included not completed) education (23.5 %), the 3rd place was occupied by the part of population with secondary education with completed GCSE (28.4 %). Only 7.8 % of the population were university graduates.

2.2. Civil society in the Jihočeský Region

Numbers and characteristics of activities organised by the regional actors

The Development Program of the Jihočeský Region and the Regional Council of the Jihočeský Region play the key role in the civil society support. The main priorities of the Development Program are: economic growth, increase of economic efficiency and increase of competitiveness of the economic subjects with respect to sustainable development.

The Development Program is formulated through “7 problem areas”: 1 – Infrastructure (transport, water, energy, communication and information), 2 – Tourism, culture and foreign affairs, 3 – Support of investors to come to the region, 4 – Agriculture, forestry and fishery, 5 – Social sphere and health services, 6 - Environmental protection and use of mineral resources, 7 – Education, schools and science.

The Jihočeský Region belongs among Czech regions with the lowest population density. For rural areas, it means high costs needed for the building of infrastructure and maintenance. Also keeping the standard level of transport services and social facilities (e.g. shops, schools, health service, libraries, etc.) is very expensive for small municipalities. In municipalities up to 199 inhabitants (such municipalities represent 40 % of the total number of municipalities), there lives only 4.35 % of population and their average age is by 4 years higher than the average of the Jihočeský Region.

The focus on the 1st problem area - infrastructure - sets its goal to developing of the region's potential and fulfilling the needs of the citizens, visitors and the entrepreneurs. The 2nd problem area: Tourism, culture and foreign affairs- is targeting at the increase of the region's prosperity and using the advantage of a good geographical location and the natural, historical and cultural heritage, also of the local tradition, handcraft and the spas. The 3rd area – Support of incoming investors to the region – is focused on the positive entrepreneurial climate and the locally differentiated support for economic activities.

The area 4 – Agriculture, forestry and fishery – is focused on the rural infrastructure, the support of new economic activities in rural areas, which create stable workplaces for the locals. The aim is also the support of multifunctional agriculture, higher quality and the stabilisation of agricultural production.

The 5th area – Social sphere and health services - is aimed at the optimisation of the health and social nets in the region, education and prevention of social-pathological features, support of the co-operation between state and non-governmental organisations, the development of housing facilities, and the support of sport and recreational facilities with focus on the support of the citizen's clubs.

Problem area 6 - Environmental protection and use of mineral wealth – is focused on the participation support of all subjects which might improve the state and increase the level of the ecological knowledge and information. The prerequisite is to improve the environmental awareness among the citizens and their participation in the decision-making process.

Education, school and science (7th problem area) is aimed at creating equal living conditions and the focus on employment, education and the increase of the inhabitants' knowledge potential. .

Even though the identified “7 problem areas” of the Development Program are not directly focused on civil society, the programs have an important indirect impact it. The majority of such programs can be found in the 5th problem area – Social sphere and health services.

Regarding social problems, the region has the following features: a higher youth criminality rate than the CR average, a lack of the crisis-help centres, a non- sufficient offer of free-time activities and alternative programs for children and youth, an increasing number of social groups threatened by social exclusion: not-functioning families, long-term unemployed people (graduates, Romas, women), alcoholics, homeless people, etc. Specialised facilities for such endangered social groups are significantly lacking in the region.

The municipalities themselves are active and successful in submitting the projects (for all 7 key problem areas, 415 submitters requested nearly for 500 thousand EURO. The submitters – entrepreneurs – requested a smaller support (3.3 thousand EURO) for 19 projects. NGOs requested the support for 22 projects in the total amount of 7.5 thousand EURO.

There are several projects focused on problems:

- *Complex anti-drug prevention and repression in the Jihočeský Region*
- *Child crisis-help centre focused on endangered children*
- *Complex senior care*
- *Integration of the handicapped youth to the society*
- *Overview and analysis of voluntary work in the health and social services in the Jihočeský Region, training of volunteers and their placement on the target workplaces according to the need.*
- *Safe communities in connection with the program Healthy Cities*

Table 11: Programs of the Jihočeský Region

Programme name	Target area	Applicant
Program of favoured credits for small entrepreneurs in the Jihočeský Region	Small and medium enterprises	Company (0-24 employees)
Support of the spatial planning documentation preparation of the municipalities	Infrastructure	Municipality
Increased costs for the reconstruction of the cultural heritage and protected buildings	Culture	Co-operative
Movable cultural heritage	Culture	Co-operative
Immovable cultural heritage	Culture	Co-operative

NGO, NPO and other subjects' characteristics

According to the Database of Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations of the Jihočeský Region, there are 231 active subjects (NGO, NPO, associations etc.) in the Jihočeský Region.

Two of the largest ones are listed below:

- The South Bohemian Mothers' Association is one of the local associations, which is famous in the whole CR. It was founded in 1991 in České Budějovice as a non-political civil association the mission of which is to protect the nature and the countryside. The association endeavours to adjust man's consumer relationship towards the environment. Its main task is to put an end to risk technologies, especially the nuclear power plants. They support the enforcement of alternative energy production methods that are less of a burden to the environment and, above all, to limit the excessive consumption of energy seeking the ways of saving it.
- Czech Catholic Charity České Budějovice is a non-profit humanitarian association, which is one of the biggest non-governmental providers of social-health care services in the CR. It has more than local 350 branches and runs 500 projects (charity houses, home services, consulting and help centres etc.).

Basic overview of the political situation

There are four main political parties in the Jihočeský Region, which take the majority from the beginning of the 90s – the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), the Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD), the Communist Party (KSČM) and the Christian Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party (KDU-ČSL). Also a strong position, in the Regional Council Elections and the Local Governments, is kept by the Corporation of Independent Candidates (SNK).

Table 12: Overview of political situation in the Jihočeský Region

Political party	Chamber of Deputies, votes (%)			Region Council Elections, votes (%)		Local governments
	1996	1998	2002	2000	2004	2002
ČSSD	24.95	31.11	30.33	13.43	12.65	13.48
ODS	29.28	28.34	25.98	25.84	44.19	23.57
KSČM	11.16	11.5	18.25	19.44	19.1	13.80
KDU-ČSL	9.01	9.89	N/A	N/A	9.57	10.87
US	N/A	8.54	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Čtyřkoalice (4 -Coalition)	N/A	N/A	12.25	22.52	N/A	N/A
SNK	N/A	N/A	N/A	10.589	5.05	8.14
ODA	6.14	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Local corporation of SNK						13.62
SPR-RSČ	7.82	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Voter turnout	77.67	75.24	58.11	34.13	30.45	49.97

Source: www.volby.cz, 2005

The South-Bohemian Region is, compared to the national average, a slightly more oriented to the right (a slightly higher preference of the ODS than the average). The voter participation is also slightly above the average in comparison with other regions.

Looking at the local governments elections, there is a strong representation of the SNK and the Local Corporation of SNK (independent candidates), because in the local elections, political orientation is not as important as in the elections for the Chamber of Deputies and the Regional Council elections. This result of a high preference of the SNK is also above the average of the CR.

2.3. Socio–demographic and socio–economic situation in the Ústecký Region

Summary

Ústecký Region in 2004

- 1st place between the regions in the number of live births per 1000 inhabitants
- 1st place in the abortion rate and divorces
- 7th place in the Czech Republic regarding the average monthly gross wage
- the highest unemployment rate in the Czech Republic
- a crucial sector of the national economy – manufacturing industry
- 2nd place between regions in the industrial sales volume per one employee
- 7 % of all entities in the Czech Republic have their seats here

Table 13: The dynamics of the Ústecký Region

	1980	1991	2001	on 1.1.2004
Share of population in municipalities (%)				
up to 199 inhabitants	0.8	1	1.2	1.1
200-999	11.6	9.9	11	11.38
1000-4999	6.2	13.7	15.2	16
5000 and over	70.4	75.4	72.7	71.55
Population density per 1 km ²	156.1	154.5	153.7	153.9
Population total	832,695	824,461	820,219	820,868
Population according to age (%)				
0-14	24.8	21.6	16.9	16.1
15-64	64.4	67.5	71.1	71.6
65+ incl. unidentified age	10.8	10.9	12.2	12.2
Average age	N/A	35.4	37.8	38.5

(Source: CZSO)

Table 12: Migration dynamics of population in the Ústecký Region

Year	Marriages	Divorce	Live birth	Abortion	Deaths	Natural increase	Divorces per 100 marriages	Net Migration	Balance of migration
			per 1000 people					per 1000 inhabitants of the mean state	
1980	8.3	3.7	15.6	9.7	12.4	3.2	44.9	-1.3	1.9
1989	8.7	3.9	12.7	14.5	11.9	0.9	44.4	-1.8	-1
1990	9.7	4.22	12.8	14.8	12.2	0.6	43.5	-2.7	-2.1
1991	7.6	3.9	13	14.1	12.1	0.9	50.9	-1.3	-0.4
2001	5.4	3.98	9.6	6	10.8	-1.2	74.1	0	-1.1
2004	4.9	3.81	10.2	5.8	11.3	-1.1	76.5	2.5	1.4

(Source: CZSO)

The highest influence on the development of the Ústecký Region territory had probably the events after the WW II, when part of the German population which had had

collaborated with the Nazis was expatriated from the country. Then the territory was settled by the Czechs (displaced from this territory during the WW II by the Germans), Slovaks and Romanies (gypsies). A part of new-comers did not have any social and cultural relation to the region. The regional development was thus more complicated than in the other parts of Czechoslovakia.

After 1945, the level of historical settlement of the region has never been restored, many municipalities historical traditions disappeared, not only in consequence of the extensive mining and industrial activities, but also because of the fact that no one wanted to live in the locality. Further, more than 100 municipalities disappeared by the half of the 90s because of coal mining and the military purposes (municipalities lying on the boarder with Germany, the military areas Doupov, Nakléřov). The worst devastation of the region came in the period after 1968. In the framework of the state migration policy, the Western part of the former North Bohemia Region became the reception area of Romanies (gypsies) migrated from the Eastern Slovak Region. In the half of the 80s, the Communist bodies even administratively prevented the citizens migration from the coal basin areas to other areas of the state, especially by the economic tools.

The Ústecký Region is significant by its heterogeneity concerning both natural conditions and the economy structure, the settlement density and the state of environment. The economic importance of the region is historically given by its extensive mineral wealth, especially the extensive deposits of brown coal stored low under the surface. The brown coal basin is situated below the hillsides of the Krušné hory, from the town Ústí nad Labem up to Kadaň. In the region, there are also significant deposits of high quality glass and foundry sands and building stone. In the region, we can define four areas which are at variance with each other. The first one is the area with a highly developed industrial production which is concentrated mainly in the Podkrušnohoří area (the Chomutov, Most, Teplice and partially Ústí nad Labem districts). The most important industry branches are energetics, coal mining, engineering, chemical and glass industry. Other districts are the Litoměřice district and the Louny district which are important by their hop and vegetables production. The areas along the rivers Labe (Polabí) and Ohře (Poochří) are famous fruit-growing areas, called the Garden of Bohemia. The wines grown in the Litoměřice district also have a great reputation. In the recent years, even the Most district became a well-known wine-growing area, where the grapevine is grown mainly on the land reclaimed after the brown coal mining. The area of the Krušné hory is a very sparsely populated mountain range with limited economical activities, and finally the Děčín district is neither an area with a high concentration of heavy industry nor an agricultural area. Its Northern part called the Šluknovsko is a typically peripheral area because of its remoteness and the difficult accessibility from the central part of the region.

At the end of 2003, the Ústecký Region had 820 868 inhabitants which represents the 5th place from the national viewpoint. Population density (154 inhabitants per km²) is higher than the nation level (129 inhabitants per 1 km²) and the Ústecký Region is the 4th most populated area after the Capital of Prague, the Moravskoslezský Region and the Jihomoravský Region. The highest population density is in the brown coal basin below the Krušné hory (Podkrušnohorská hnědouhelná pánev), a lower population density can be found in the area of Krušné hory and in the Louny and Litoměřice districts where mainly small rural settlements are situated. The biggest municipality and also the seat of the region is the city of Ústí nad Labem with 94 105 inhabitants. A characteristic regional feature is the relatively young population, the average age is 38.5 years. The region occupies the 1st place in live births per 1 000 inhabitants (10.2) but it also is typical for one of the highest death rates in the Czech Republic (11.3 deaths per 1,000 inhabitants). The Ústecký Region occupies the 2nd place after the Karlovarský Region in divorces per 1 000 inhabitants (3.8) and the abortion rate per 100 new-borns (56.8) from the national viewpoint.

In 2002, the Ústecký Region contributed 6.4 % to the GDP of the Czech Republic. When we adjust it per one inhabitant, it then reaches 80.1 % of the national average and occupies the 10th position among the regions of the Czech Republic. The most important employers in the Ústecký Region are the Mostecká uhelná společnost, the Severočeské doly (coal mining companies), the Chemopetrol (a chemical industry company) and hospitals in the towns of Ústí nad Labem and Most.

According to the selective research of labour force, there are employed approx. 353 000 people in the region. Most of them work in the manufacturing industry (approx. 81 000 people). In 2003, the average monthly gross wage reached 15,313 CZK in the region (per one natural person), which was 1,607 CZK below the nation average and if we compare all regions, the Ústecký Region occupies the 5th place. The decline of coal mining, enterprise restructualisation, the production and agriculture inhibition resulted in the fact that there is in the long term the highest unemployment rate in the Czech Republic (17.94 %, the CR average was 10.31 % by 31. 12. 2003).

In the Statistical Register of Economic Subjects, there were registered more than 163 000 firms, organisations and entrepreneurs by the end of 2003. The biggest part is formed by entrepreneurs – physical persons not registered in the companies register (approx. 118 000). From the viewpoint of the sector classification of economical activities, there e the majority of subject were engaged in trade, repairs of motor vehicles and consumer goods.

(Source: http://www.czso.cz/xu/redakce.nsf/i/charakteristika_kraje)

Demographics

The number of municipalities in the Ústecký Region reached 354 (CZSO - 1. 1. 2004). 46 of them have the status of town (1. 1. 2004). The population density reaches 153.9 inhabitants per 1 square km (1. 1. 2004). 79.5 % of population lives in towns (1. 1. 2004).

There live 820 868 (1. 1. 2004) inhabitants in the Ústecký Region. The female population is slightly bigger – 418,383 (50.05 % by 1. 1. 2004) than the male population. The average age was 38.5 (1. 1. 2004). The age structure is as follows: up to the age of 14, there were 132,486 people (1. 1. 2004) (female population – 64,442, 48.6 %), between the age of 15 and 64, there were 588,058 (1. 1. 2004) (female population – 292,319, 49.7 %) and above the age of 65, there were 100,324 (1. 1. 2004) (female population – 62,088, 61.9 %). Similar to other regions, the population group aged between 15 and 64 years increases, on the contrary, the population group aged below 14 years decreases – the population in the region grows old.

In 2004, there were born 8 601 children in the region (live birth indicator makes 10.2 ‰). The Ústecký Region occupies the 1st place in the Czech Republic regarding the indicator of new-borns per 1 000 inhabitants. In the framework of the region, most of children were born (when we adjust it per 1000 inhabitants) in the Ústí nad Labem district which was the only district with a positive natural population increase. The Ústecký Region has higher indicators of live births, deaths (11.3 ‰ - 1. 1. 2004), divorces, marriages and abortion rate than the national average. The natural population increase is -1.1 ‰ (1. 1. 2004)

Migration indicators are as follows: immigrants (10.8 ‰ - 1. 1. 2004), emigrants (8.3 ‰ - 1. 1. 2004). The highest positive net migration was in the Teplice district (576 persons) and on the contrary, the lowest one was in the Ústí nad Labem district (58 persons). The net migration was +2.5 ‰ (1. 1. 2004)

The migration balance reached +1.4 ‰ (1. 1. 2004).

Gross domestic product at market prices was 155,320,000,000 CZK (1. 1. 2003), per one inhabitant it was 189,543 CZK (1. 1. 2003). Gross domestic product reached 80.1 % of the national average.

The average number of workers was 184,979 (1. 1. 2004).

The average monthly gross wage amounted to 15,313 CZK (1. 1. 2004). The highest average monthly gross wage was reached in the Most district (17,735 CZK), on the contrary, the lowest one was in the Louny district (14,848 CZK), but even so there was the 2nd highest growth of this indicator reached in this district, after the Děčín district (+ 7.3 %).

The number of people with the only one or the main full-time employment in the Ústecký Region was 356,100 people in 2004. Of them, 202,200 were men (56.8 %) and 153 900 were women (43.2 %). In parallel with their main employment, there worked 4,800 people in the 2nd and further employment. From the number of 10,000 people, there were 84 % of women part- time employed. The most of workers (28.3 %) were employed in industry.

There were 76 499 (1. 1. 2004) registered job applicants (the female part – 38038, 49.7 %) and only 2,745 (1. 1. 2004) vacancies.

The registered unemployment rate was 17.9% (1. 1. 2004). The Ústecký Region belongs among the areas by most affected by unemployment since 1990. The unemployment rate in the region was higher than the national average for almost the whole period from 1990 till 2003 (with the exception of 1990), the biggest difference compared to the national average was in 2003 (+7.63 points) because then the unemployment rate in the Ústecký Region made 17.94 % whereas the national average was 10.31 %. Furthermore, from 1995 the Ústecký Region shows constantly the highest unemployment rate considering all regions of the Czech Republic. With rate of 22.71% it occupies the last place in the district comparison considering the Czech Republic. Almost 40% of the unemployed people (25 500) were aged form 15 to 29 years.

In the Ústecký region, 3.4 % of the population work in the primary sector (agriculture), 40 % work in the secondary sector (industry) and 56.5 % work in the tertiary sector (services) of the national economy.

From the viewpoint of education structure, in 2003 the dominant group was the population with secondary education without the GCE (41.8 %), the 2nd biggest one was the population with none and basic education (27.2 %), the 3rd place was occupied by the population with secondary education with the GCE (26 %). Only 4.9 % of the population were university graduates.

2.4. Civil society in the Ústecký Region

In the Ústecký Region, there are many actors on numerous levels with various fields of interests, range and importance who actively contribute to the CS development.

The first one is the state represented by the Ministry of Regional Development (MMR). At present, three programs exist of this ministry which are focused on this region: 1) the Regional support program of industrial enterprises development in the NUTS2 areas Northwest, the Moravskoslezský Region and other regions; 2) the Regional support program of the development of the Northwest Bohemia and the Moravskoslezský Region and 3) the Regional support program of development of the economically weak and structurally affected regions. These programs are a part of state structural policy which aims at the reduction of regional differences and the development of less developed regions in the Czech Republic. Because the Ústecký Region is marked as a structurally affected region due to the restructuralisation of heavy industry and coal mining enterprises, the state support can be obtained from these programs. The programs focus especially on the unemployment reduction, small and medium enterprises infrastructure development and tourism development.

The next most important actor is the Regional Authority of the Ústecký Region and its contributory organizations. At present, the Regional Authority presents six support programs.

Table 15: Programs of the Ústecký Region

Programme	Target area	Applicant
Negative effects prevention connected with social exclusion	Human Resources	NGOs
Preventive programs realised by schools, school facilities and NGOs in 2005	Human Resources	NGOs
Support of non-governmental non-profit organisations at the regional level which provide social work for seniors and disabled people	NGOs	NGOs
Program of the development support of municipalities in 2/2005	All	Municipality
Program of the architectonical heritage protection in 2006	Culture	Not set
Regeneration program of the urban relics preservations and urban relics zones in 2005	Culture	Not set

The programs of the Ústecký Region focus especially on human resources development, social work support and cultural heritage protection.

Number and characteristics of activities organised by the regional actors

Development Program of the Ústecký Region (direct impact)

The key role in the region, from the viewpoint of civil society support, is played by the Regional Council of the Ústecký Region and its Development Program of the Ústecký Region (by 20. 11. 2001, there were 426 projects). This program sets 5 priorities: Priority 1 – Economic development (176 projects), Priority 2 – Development of human resources, welfare and labour market (45), Priority 3 – Revitalisation, nature protection and infrastructure development (188), Priority 4 – Development of agriculture and rural areas (9), Priority 5 – Support of the activities of institutions in the region and their co-operation (8).

The Ústecký Region wants to achieve active and co-operative institutions in the region, therefore this aim was set as the 5th priority of Development Program of the Ústecký Region, as above mentioned.

The institutional environment of the Ústecký Region is rich in the numbers and kinds of subjects. However, the co-operation among institutions is usually limited and just formal. There are not available either informal contacts or formal co-operation which would support the creation and implementation of common programs/actions. The mutual or systematic exchange of information and searching for common interests among various subjects are not very frequent.

Many organisations (both of public and private sector and especially of the non-profit sector) are relatively weak in the ability to implement their own goals individually. Functioning towards their clients – target groups - or towards their interest groups is of a low efficiency. The real importance, especially of the non-profit organisations (except for clubs of interest and e.g. sport clubs focused on their own members) concerning the influence of the life in the Ústecký Region, is minor. In the region, there is the lack of the so-called “community” projects (a “community” project is characterised by the fact that the project was created by an interest association, a non-profit or non-governmental organisation for its „clients“/recipients which are not the members of the organisation). One of the significant consequences of the above mentioned facts is the low absorption capacity of the region which means a low ability to create and implement projects with the external sources support (pre-accession funds of the EU, state programs).

The 5th priority supported by the actions is as follows: Action 5.1. - Technical assistance and training (2 projects), Action 5.2. - Information systems and information access (1), Action 5.3. – Non-profit sector activities (5).

(Source: Development Program of the Ústecký Region)

The Development Program of the Ústecký Region with its 5th priority has a direct impact on the civil society. The following programs have an indirect impact on the civil society which means that these programs support activities of the mentioned organisations, not their functioning, co-operation and development.

Program – “Support for non-governmental non-profit organisations at the regional level which provide social work for seniors and disabled people”

The Regional Council of the Ústecký Region established this program for the period from 20. 11. 2004 till 31. 12. 2005 to support the above mentioned organisations which provide personal assistance, day-care service, protected and supported housing, workshops, transitional and supported jobs, consulting centres etc.

Program – “Negative effects prevention connected with social exclusion”

The Regional Council of the Ústecký Region established this program for the period from March 2005 till 31. 12. 2005 to support organisations (not only NGOs, NPOs) which provide consulting, educational and rehabilitation services focused on people threatened by social exclusion (people living in less favourable social environment, people living for a long period in the state care or leaving the state care, homeless people and ethnic minorities).

Program for the preservation and renewal cultural relics of the Ústecký Region

This program is established annually to support the organisations (not only NGOs, NPOs) which devote their activities to the seriously threatened valuable architectonic and historical cultural relics or significant regional dominant points, support investments of cultural relics owners etc.

Program for the support of regional cultural and theatre activities in 2005

This program supports cultural and educational programs, exhibitions, concerts and competitions in art fields like theatre, dance, music, visual arts, photography, film, workshops etc. of the regional, national and international character.

The most important contributory organisation in the region is the Regional Development Agency of the Ústecký Region. It performs special services on the contractual basis for the state, regional and municipal administrations and other organisations. The idea is to utilise efficiently public incentives and grants in the Ústecký Region and the Cohesion Region NUTS2 Northwest Bohemia (the statistical unit in accordance with the EU standards, which integrates the Ústecký and Karlovy Vary Region). This service deals with the preparation, co-ordination, administration and implementation of development programs.

NGO, NPO and other subjects characteristics

According to the Database of Non-governmental Non-Profit Organizations of the Ústecký Region⁵, there are 236 active subjects (NGO, NPO, associations etc.) in the Ústecký Region. Some of them are noted below:

⁵ <http://www.volny.cz/anouk/>

- The Asociace neziskových organizací Ústeckého kraje (<http://www.volny.cz/anouk/>) – a civic association which associates the non-profit sector subjects with the goals: to defend the interests of the non-profit sector (NPS) in the region, to co-ordinate the activities of the NPS, to initialise the mutual communication and co-operation among non-profit organisations, etc.
- The Dobrovolnické centrum Ústeckého kraje (<http://www.dcul.cz/index.htm>) – a civic association which initialises and supports establishing of new volunteer activities; organises enrolling, training and further education of volunteers, realises lectures about voluntarism, its own volunteer programs in the fields of children care, senior care etc.

Basic overview of the political situation

The political situation before 1989 was characterised by the totalitarian system with the leading position of the Communist Party and limited activities of other political subjects and all other unofficial activities. In all elections, the Communist Party obtained almost 100 % of the votes. All elections were manipulated and all citizens were threatened with persecution if not voting, not voting for the Communist Party or trying to boycott the elections.

There are three main political parties in the Ústecký Region which take the political majority from the beginning of 90s – the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), the Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD) and the Communist Party (KSCM).

Table 15: Overview of the political situation in Ústecký Region

Deputy of Chambers		Regional councils			Local governments	
Political parties	2002	Political parties	2000	2004	Political parties	2002
CSSD	29.18	ODS	26.75	39.62	ODS	23.92
KSCM	25.08	CSSD	17.24	15.29	KSCM	20.75
ODS	24.21	KSCM	28.22	25.26	CSSD	16.42
Koalice KDU-ČSL, US-DEU	7.81	Ctyrkoalice	13.73		SNK	7.99
Voter turnout	50.65	Voter turnout	29.68	25.37	Voter turnout	37.7

(Source: CZSO)

In all elections, the left orientation of the Ústecký Region population can be noticed. In the long term (1996 – 2002), regarding the Chamber of Deputies elections, the Czech Social Democratic Party is the strongest political party in the region. During the discussed period, the position of the left-oriented political subjects was strengthened by the Communist Party which had the best election results in the Ústecký Region compared to other regions. On the contrary, the voter participation of the population is the lowest there in comparison with other regions. A similar situation can be seen with regard to the Regional Councils elections (both the results and the voter participation).

Considering the Local Governments' elections, the position of the left-oriented parties is relatively weakened because the first place is occupied by the Civic Democratic Party. However, this result must be considered with the knowledge that on this level (Local Governments' elections), the political orientation is less important compared to the Chamber of Deputies elections and the Regional Council elections. On the local level, the voters especially vote for individualities and "big names" (professions like medical doctors, teachers, lawyers etc.).

3. LIA Analysis

The aim of this chapter is to describe and analyse the civil society situation and development in the context with the demographic situation.

3.1. The Most District

Summary

The Most District with its area of 467 km² is the second smallest district in the Ústecký Region. At the Northern side, it is protected by the wall of the Krušné hory, from the West, South and East it borders with the Chomutov, Louny and Teplice Districts. By 1.1.2004, 116,731 inhabitants lived in the district. The district has only 26 municipalities; there are only four towns within it. The main feature of the district is its high population density per 1 km² (250) and the largest number of urban population (89 %) in comparison with the other seven districts of the Ústecký Region.

The vast mineral wealth completely predetermined the character and economic importance of the district. At the times of the building of Socialism, when the Czechoslovakia was oriented at the energetically demanding heavy industry, the brown coal became a crucial part of the fuel-energetic base. During the 40 years after the WWII, there were closed 130 industrial objects in the open-cast mining area, but also more than 80 municipalities disappeared completely. At time when the historical town of Most had to make place for the mining area, there were no doubts about the mining and energetics perspective in further years. The result of this orientation is the highest unemployment rate in the Czech Republic at present. Mining inhibition resulted in the workers redundancy. Labour force retraining and an industrial zone construction might help to solve the situation. Industrial zones are supposed to attract investors who would be able to produce new jobs.

The mineral wealth in the area influenced also negatively agriculture. Agricultural land makes only 30% of the total district area and this is the smallest proportion in comparison with the other districts of the Ústecký Region.

The prerequisite of the economic and also social development of the area is the modernisation of the existing and building of new routes not only among the economic centres but above all the routes, which would enable a high quality and fast connection with the neighbouring Germany.

The highly intensive growth of mining and development of district economy in the last century brought about also a negative impact of the industrial activity on environment. It is necessary to accentuate that the inhibition of manufacturing and new investments input into nature protection brought about improvement of the situation. The Most District achieves relatively favourable results in some of the environment indicators in comparison with the other districts of the Ústecký Region. There were measured only high levels of solid emissions (1.7 t/km²) and the carbon monoxide as a constant result of the coal layers uncovering. In 1991 the environmental limits of mining were set to support regional development.

Open-cast mining has still an unfavourable impact on the population life in the coal basin areas and also on the face of the landscape. Statutory regulations concerning land protection and the reclamation after mining activity are well-known for along time in Bohemia, but the relevant legal acts and amendments were not consistently observed, therefore agricultural land was heavily devastated. The biggest part of land reclamations are agricultural land reclamations, the 2nd place is occupied by forest reclamations, one tenth of the coal basin should be covered with water reclamations and the remaining part will be the habitable and manufacturing space and technical infrastructure. There are many devastated

areas which are successfully returned to agricultural production. The evidence of this fact can be found in the Chrámce vineyards and fruit orchards, forests, meadows and water surfaces for recreation near Most.

The Most District was the most affected area regarding the municipality liquidation for mining purposes. However, even here we can find many remarkable cultural relicts, which can support tourism. The most disastrous decision was to demolish the whole old part of the town Most and to build a new one. Time did not confirm the rightness of the decision and even several tens of millions tons of high quality coal could not recompense for the historical losses. From the old Most, a town with the tradition of more than seven hundred years, only a gothic church and the remainders of the castle on the Hněvín hill remained preserved. The relocation of the church in 30 days on 51 special hydraulic carriages was a world-wide curiosity in 1975. The importance of the whole area in past is documented by the other sights located in the district. The municipality of Horní Jiřetín (Jorenthal, first records dating from the 13th century) was an important wayfarer seat on the business road to Saxony. The emperor Franz Josef I. promoted Horní Jiřetín even to the town status and granted the town its own heraldry. In Horní Jiřetín, there is a baroque church of the Ascension of the Holy Virgin and a baroque vicarage. Near the municipality, there is the Jezeří chateau, which was built on the location of the original gothic castle. The House of Lobkowitz owns the chateau from the time of the White Mountain Battle in the 17th century. In 19th century, the chateau became an important cultural centre visited especially by musicians and composers.

Demographics

Brief area characterisation

The number of municipalities in the Most District reached 26 (CZSO - 1.1.2004), which is the 2nd lowest result in the Ústecký Region. 4 of them have the status of town (1. 1. 2004). The population density makes 250 inhabitants per 1 square km (1. 1. 2004, the 3rd highest result in the region). 88.7 % of the population lives in towns (1. 1. 2004, the highest result in the district).

Population characterisation

116 685 (1. 1. 2004) inhabitants live in the Most District. The average age was 38.3 (1. 1. 2004). The age structure is as follows: up to the age of 14, there were 16.1 % (1. 1. 2004), between the age of 15 and 64, there were 72.1 (1. 1. 2004, the 2nd highest result in the district) and above the age of 65, there were 11.8 % of the population (1. 1. 2004, the 2nd lowest result in the district). Like in other districts, the population group aged between 15 and 64 years increases, on the contrary, the population group aged below 14 years decreases – the population in the district grows old.

In 2004, there were born 11.1 ‰ (live birth indicator) children in the district. The Most District occupies the last place in the Ústecký Region regarding the indicator of new-borns per 1 000 inhabitants. The Most District reached 11.3 ‰ in the indicator of deaths (1. 1. 2004). Natural population increase makes –1.8 ‰ (1. 1. 2004, the 3rd highest in the region).

Migration indicators: immigrants (13.7 ‰ - 1. 1. 2004), emigrants (12.4 ‰ - 1. 1. 2004). Net migration was +1.3 ‰ (1. 1. 2004). The balance of migration was –0.5 ‰ (1. 1. 2004)

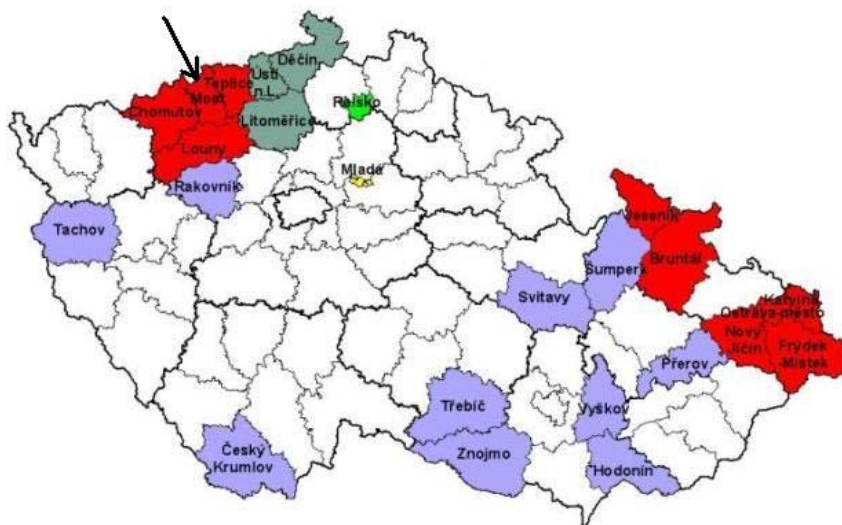
Socio-economic situation

The industrial activity sales made in the Most District reached 80,629,000,000 CZK (1. 1. 2004, the highest result in the region, the 2nd highest was 22,580 mill. in the Teplice District).

The average number of workers was 32 886 (1. 1. 2004, the highest result in the region). The average monthly gross wage amounted to 17 982 CZK (1. 1. 2004, the highest result in the region). There were 14 749 (1. 1. 2004, the highest result in the region) registered job applicants (the female part – 7 392, 50.1 %). The registered unemployment rate was 22.71 % (1.1.2004, the highest result in the region and in the CR). From the viewpoint of the education structure, in 2001 the dominant group was the population with secondary education without the GCE (39.2 % - the total region: 41.8 %), the 2nd biggest group was the population with none and basic education (28.5 % - the total region: 27,2 %), the 3rd place was occupied by the population with secondary education with the GCE (21.5 % - region: 26 %). Only 5,2 % (the total region: 4.9 %) of the population were university graduates.

3.2. Civil society in the Most District

There are many actors in the Most District whose activities have a certain impact on civil society. These are mainly local residents (local elites), local authorities, micro-regional municipality associations, but also the state because the Most District with the highest unemployment rate in the Czech Republic was marked as the “region with the concentrated state support – a structurally affected region (red)” (see the following picture). These “red” regions are mainly affected by a high unemployment due to the previous restructuring of the former heavy and coal mining industry and the long-term closing and the technological crisis of the traditional branches (textile, shoemaking, glass etc.).



(Source: MMR, 2005)

In this framework, the state prepares development programs for the subjects from the affected regions to restructure their economical basis, to increase their performance etc.

Among the next most active actors that are very important for development of civil society in the district, we may count the micro-regional municipality associations. The activities of these subjects vary from the economic and human resources development to the social and cultural development. For instance, the Northern Bohemia Municipality Association (www.seso.cz) devotes its activities to or participates in the regional and local development documents, waste treatment, environmental education of local authorities' members and also to people activation concerning the natural and municipality quiet protection. The association at present fights against the construction of the “Kubačka” tunnel

which might have a serious damage effect on the landscape and the surrounding natural environment.

Also the regional or national NGOs (e.g. the Rainbow Association – “Hnutí Duha”) can be found as active in the district. They are involved mainly in the nature protection because of the vast landscape and nature destruction of the coal mining industry. They organise various protests against the governmental intentions to cancel the coal mining limits protecting villages from destruction.

The municipalities (local governments) and people living in them are also very important actors creating and developing the civil society. Local governments prepare programs and grants to support activities focused on the local economy and services development, cultural and sport actions. For example, the local government in the village Horní Jiřetín supplied the grant for the local castle warden to arrange a bugaboo afternoon in the Jezeří castle or to arrange a local fair with the demonstration of old crafts (coinage, wood carving etc.). The local government also organised bus transport of the local residents to protest against the government of the Czech Republic intention to cancel the coal mining limits that at present protect the whole village from the destruction (the village spreads above vast deposits of brown coal).

However, in single the localities the most important actors are the local elites and local clubs and associations as indicated above. In the mentioned village of Horní Jiřetín, the most important local elites are: the mayor, the member of the local government and the local castle warden; and the most important local association are: the Czech Fisherman Union, the Czech Breeder Union, voluntary firemen, the senior club and sport clubs (football, volleyball).

The local mayor is one of the important local elites in the village. For instance, he made local residents to clean the local fire reservoir to serve as the local swimming pool. He could rent a firm to clean the reservoir but he found it very expensive so he made a poster where he appealed to the local residents to help with the work on it. About 30 people came to help with preparations for swimming. The mayor arranged the installation of slide for children there. Also the local voluntary firemen helped with the work on it. They cleaned out the old dirty water and filled the reservoir up with the fresh water.

The above mentioned member of the local government is the next most active personality in the investigated village. He is very active in solving the problems connected with the intention of some interest groups to destroy the village and to mine the coal deposits below it. He negotiates with the Regional Government, the Czech Coal Board, the Government of the Czech Republic and other governmental and non-governmental institutions. He participated also in organising of the bus transport for the local residents to Prague. He is not only active externally, but also in the village itself. He organises there concerts of chamber music, vocal music etc.

The local castle warden is the third most important person for the village life. She organised the protest petition against the village destruction intention when almost all visitors of the Jezeří castle signed it. She is active especially in the cultural area. She organises the “Children Day”, the “Enlivening Bugaboos”, the “Open Door Day” in the castle, exhibitions and concerts.

As mentioned above, also the local associations are very important for the cultural and sport life in the village. The local organisations of the Czech Fisherman Union, the Czech Breeder Union and the voluntary firemen organise various dancing balls, the Czech Breeder Union organises an annual animal exhibition and the voluntary firemen organise competitions in fire-fighting.

As we interviewed one of the local residents, she told us that before 1989, there had been more activities, clubs and associations. These clubs and associations were connected

with the Socialist Pioneers organisation or the Union of Socialist Youth. There was also a tourist club or a local organisation of the Czechoslovak Union of Women.

3.3. The České Budějovice District

Summary

The České Budějovice district with its 1625 km² is the second largest district of the Jihočeský Region and the tenth largest in the Czech Republic.

The typical feature of the district is a large number of water surfaces. In the past, there were built approximately 300 ponds. From the South to the North, the river Vltava intersects the district with two main affluents (the rivers Malše and Lužnice). Most of the water streams are categorised as polluted, though the river Malše belongs to the cleaner ones. The district environment may be characterised as a slightly damaged. Even though the situation has improved during the past 10 years, the České Budějovice District belongs to the most polluted districts within the Jihočeský Region.

In the České Budějovice district, there are 107 municipalities, which have more than 300 parts. In this district, there is also the Czech second smallest village with 24 inhabitants. 10 villages have less than 100 inhabitants. The district is typical, as already stated by a large number of water surfaces.

The České Budějovice district is well equipped by the transport infrastructure (both the railways and roads) but unfortunately without any connection to the international communication network, which partially presents the weaknesses for the development of the entrepreneurial activities.

In the district, there are many important cultural, natural and artistic heritages. This district is therefore visited by many Czech citizens from the whole country as well as by many foreign tourists.

Demographics

Brief area and population characteristics

The population density is 110 inhabitants per 1 km², which is highly above the region average. Most (three quarters) of the district population lives in cities, namely in the city České Budějovice, where there lives 55 % of the district population. In the long-term development (since 1961), there is an increasing number of inhabitants, mainly due to the positive migration. The natural migration had been increasing till 1995. In the past ten years, 2,045 people moved in, 1,558 moved out, 1,700 children were borne and 1,784 persons died. The average age of the district population is 38.4, which is about the regional average. (CZSO, 2004)

Table 16: The population dynamics of the České Budějovice District (2004)

Share of the population in municipalities (%)	
up to 499	8.6
500-1999	15.5
2000-9999	22.6
10000 or more	53.2
Population density per 1 km ²	110
Population total	178,320
Population according to age (%)	
0-14	15
15-64	71
65+	13
Average age	39.3

Source: CZSO, 2004

In the long term, the population number is increasing in the district, mainly due to the positive effect of the migration.

Table 17: The dynamics of the population migration in the České Budějovice District

Year	Marriages	Divorces	Live births	Abortions	Deaths	Natural increase	Divorces	Net migration	Balance of migration
	per 1000 people						per 100 marriages	per 1000 inhabitants of the mean state	
1980	7.3	2.30	14.6	8.6	12.5	2.0	31.5	8.0	10.0
1989	8.0	2.81	12.8	12.6	12.1	0.7	35.0	7.7	8.4
1990	8.7	3.14	13.2	12.8	11.8	1.4	36.1	7.2	8.6
2000	5.9	2.92	9.2	5.2	9.6	-0.4	49.3	1.7	1.4
2004	5.1	3.09	9.6	4.2	9.5	0.2	60.2	1.7	1.8

Source: CZSO, 2005

Socio-economic situation

The district České Budějovice is an industrial-agriculture district. From the total number of 92.6 thousand economically active persons, there is 25.5 % employed in the industry, 11.7 % in services, 11.4 % in education, health and social care, and 10.8 % in the construction. The economic structure, rich travel industry, good transport infrastructure and a higher level of private entrepreneurs positively influence the unemployment rate, which was 4.86 % (the lowest in the region, and eighth in the country – the CR average was 8.1 % by 1. 1. 2004). There were 4,314 (1. 1. 2004) registered job applicants.

In 2004, the average monthly gross wage was 16 330 CZK in 2004 (the highest result in the region, 15th highest in the Czech Republic).

Looking at the education structure in 2001, in the group of 15 years and older, the largest group was the population with secondary education without the GCSE (36.1 %, compared to the region: 38.7 %), the second one was the population with secondary education with the GCSE (27.5 %, compared to the region: 25.1 %), followed by the population with none or basic education (20.9 %, compared to the region: 23.5 %). 10.2 % of the population

had university education (the region as a whole: 7.8 %). The level of education in the region can be characterised as a rather high.

3.4. Civil society in the České Budějovice District

The civil society is influenced by many actors acting in the České Budějovice District. Among them, there belong: local residents, local elites, local authorities, non-local inhabitants, micro-regional municipality associations, universities, and the state.

As an important actor, which influences the development of civil society in the České Budějovice District, we can namely mention the micro-regional municipality associations – micro-regions. For example, the micro-region Pomalší consists of 19 municipalities (from the České Budějovice District and the Český Krumlov District, which lies on the river Malše). The aim of this association is solving of the impacts on the municipal economy in connection with the presence of the river Malše in the following areas:

- Environment protection (Refuse and storage of the household wastes, water supply, cleaning of sewage water, agriculture and forestry, support of travel industry in the region, using environmentally- friendly fuels)
- Administration, services and maintenance of the facilities serving for fulfilling the citizens needs
- Education, social and health care, and culture.

Another important actor is the micro-region “Sdružení Růže”, which focuses on the support of small and medium enterprises, the development and improvement of the travel industry, the flexibility of labour force and education, the improvement of life in the countryside and the development of modern civil society, sustainable development, the development of cross-border co-operation and organisational support with connection to the regional and national structures.

As an example, we can mention a village which is a member of both micro-regions, the Svatý Jan nad Malší. In this village, there live 465 inhabitants (in 2005, compared to 365 inhabitants in year 1997, which is an increase by 27 %). The population increase might be influenced by the local municipal policy, which aimed at bringing young families into the village by providing opportunities of housing and by the sufficient level of facilities and services. The municipal corporation makes use of the local traditions and return to the activities, which have its tradition in the village (it used to be a pilgrimage village, as there is a famous pilgrim church there, and as the mayor of the Svatý Jan nad Malší, Josef Jan, said, they did not want to create something new but wanted to build on the traditions).

In December 1996, there was approved the Plan of the Spatial Development, which was designed by an architect in co-operation with the municipality and the inhabitants. The coloured design of house facades was proposed and the municipality repaired the parsonage, the church, the tower clocks, the fire-fighting arsenal etc. The inhabitants were also motivated to reconstruct their houses' facades with the financial contribution (aprox. EURO 180) provided by the municipality. This project was quite successful and the people got actively involved in the reconstruction of the village.

Further, the village Svatý Jan nad Malší had been preparing for the contest “The village of the year” and in 1997 it succeeded in winning the competition on the national level.

(This contest is supported by the ministries – the Ministry for Regional Development and the Ministry of Environment Protection, the Society for the Countryside Rehabilitation, and the Union of Towns and Municipalities in the Czech Republic). For the following year, the mayor of the winning village was appointed the director of the next years' competition. Since the mayor had travelled around the Czech Republic, he had the opportunity to collect, as he said, new ideas and to get inspiration from other villages.

In 2002, Svatý Jan nad Malší won the national competition "Green Ferret" (which is the prize awarded for an extraordinary care of the greenery and public places). In 2003, the village placed as the second in the European contest "ENTENTE FLORALE 2003", mainly due to the quality care of the landscape, scenery and the look of the village with respect to the understanding and development of the traditional local specifics and the sensitive approach to the environment (the use of the alternative sources of energy – the central heating on biomass in the nursery, school, municipality, pub, shop, post office and other public buildings).

The local mayor is one of the important local elites in the village, who uses his natural knowledge of human psychology. For the local seniors, there are occasionally organised excursions, which the mayor also joins to be in contact with them. As he said, when he was with them on one of the excursions, he told them about some necessary tasks and the village needs (such as cleaning of the dead leaves at the village green) and the seniors offered to help and were happy that they could contribute to the village in return.

Also, the mayor informally talks with people and asks them about their opinion on things, which should be done in the village. For example, a footpath was built in a different way than the original proposal when the peoples' opinions were found out.

The village has a rich variety of local associations, e.g.: gardeners; the Hunters Association; the young hunters; the community of environment protection; the children's community for bee-keeping; an art, sports and theatre association; summer school of modern dance and ballet; a singing choir; the religious association; sport associations, and, last but not least, three fire-fighting associations.

For example, a young man who moved into the village came to the mayor and asked him whether he could lead a children club where he would teach them about nature protection. The municipality agreed and supported it by providing free material. Another example, a local young woman came up with an idea of organising a dance association for children, which was also partially subsidised by the local municipality.

Concerning NGOs, a regional ecological association ROSA played an important role in the project focused on environment protection. The ROSA representatives came to the village with an offer of joining an environmental project and the municipality joined the project.

Another actor involved in the locality are the Universities. There was undertaken a study by the regional university in České Budějovice (JCU), which focused on the calculation of effectiveness analysis of the ecological central heating system. This study was provided for free, since it was a topic of a student diploma thesis. Another study by the Technical University Prague was also without any charge for the village and was aimed at an architectural design of houses in the village, which was used and put into practice.

An actor, who is non-local but involved in the local development process, is for example a man who has his summer cottage in the Svatý Jan nad Malší. He offered to the municipality that he could make a layout of the coat-of-arms and a flag of the village for free.

The natives of the village form another group of important actors. These people were born in village and at present they live in Prague or in other cities. Most of them help to the village development by any means possible (the activities are resulting from their position - for example, an organiser of art exhibitions working and living in Prague enabled an opening of art exhibition in the village).

As discovered, there is a “healthy core” of the village, which is behind most of the local activities, mainly natives or people who live there for a long time. The civil society before and 1989 according to interviewed people is considered as equal.

As could be found out from the above mentioned, the mayor follows his clear vision of sustainable development in the village.

4. Comparative Analysis

This chapter aims to summarise the findings we made in the investigated areas. We will discuss the significant actors, their knowledge and the fields of their knowledge implementation.

The forms of the used knowledge are as presented below:

Political knowledge – this term expresses the experience in lobbying, the knowledge of the institutional/ legislative environment, the knowledge of the political environment and its networks, the access to the relevant political institutions and sources of their information, the knowledge how to influence and persuade other actors.

Managerial knowledge is expressed by the experience in planning, co-ordinating, managing, organisation, monitoring and controlling of the projects and joint and other actions.

Scientific knowledge – this term expresses the experience in research activities and orientation in the theoretical background

Expert knowledge – experience in project writing and orientation in solving of practical problems

Local civil knowledge – the inherited habit-based ways of problem solving and the experience of orientation in the local community network (the knowledge of key persons and their relations)

The main characteristics and differences of the civil society in the Czech Republic:

Actors

- The largest extend of activities – national and regional NGOs (foundations...)
- The most important actors in locality – local elites and local associations, clubs

Fields of activity

- Local clubs and associations focus on cultural, sports activities and hobbies
- National and regional focus mainly on social and health care

Knowledge forms

- Local associations and clubs – basic managerial knowledge, local civil knowledge
- National and regional – political, managerial and expert knowledge

The following tables show the actors, knowledge forms, and their fields of implementation:

Table 18: Knowledge forms of actors in the fields of implementation in the Horní Jiřetín (the Most District)

Actors	Particular actors	Knowledge forms	Fields of implementation
Local Government		Managerial knowledge	Financial support, institutional environment, preparation and submission of development projects, planning and monitoring
		Political knowledge	Lobbying in the regional and national government
Regional NGOs		Managerial knowledge	Protest and public education organisation
		Political knowledge	Lobbying in the regional and national government
		Expert knowledge	Project writing
Local Elites	mayor, member of local government	Managerial knowledge	People activation, organisation of fairs, concerts, exhibitions)
		Local civil knowledge	Motivation of people
Micro-region Development Association		Political knowledge	Lobbying in the regional and national government
		Managerial knowledge	Protest and public education organisation
Community Activities (clubs, associations, etc.)	Voluntary firemen, Czech Union of breeders, Czech Union of Fishermen, sports clubs, senior clubs etc.	Managerial knowledge	Balls, exhibitions, competitions organisation

Table 19: Knowledge forms of actors in the fields of implementation in the Svatý Jan nad Malší (the České Budějovice District)

Actors	Particular actors	Knowledge forms	Fields of implementation
Local Government		Managerial knowledge	Financial support, institutional environment, preparation and submission of development projects, planning and monitoring
		Political knowledge	Lobbying in the regional and national government
Universities	University of South Bohemia (JCU)	Scientific knowledge	Calculation of effectiveness analysis of ecological central heating system
	Technical University Prague	Scientific knowledge	Architectural design of houses in the village
Regional NGO	NGO ROSA	Managerial knowledge	Environmentally focused project implementation
		Expert knowledge	Project writing
Local Elites	Mayor, member of local government	Managerial knowledge	Motivation of people, organisation of fairs, contests, exhibitions. Supporting local citizens in their activities
		Local civil knowledge	Keeping the local traditions and supporting them
Micro-region Development Association	Micro-region Pomalší	Managerial / Political knowledge	Environment protection, education, social and health care
	Micro-region “Sdružení Růže”	Managerial / Political knowledge	Support of SMEs, travel industry, flexibility of labour force and education
Non-locals	Non-local, but having a cottage in the village	Expert knowledge	Creation of a layout of the coat-of-arms and the flag of the village
		Managerial knowledge	Organising and all necessary administration connected with that
Natives of the village		Managerial knowledge	Organising of art exhibition
Community Activities (clubs, associations, etc.)	Gardeners; Hunters Association; young hunters; community of environment protection; children’s community for bee-keeping, arts, sports and theatre association; summer school of modern dance and ballet; singing choir; religious association; sport associations	Managerial knowledge	Organisation of balls, exhibitions, contests, competitions, sport activities, camps for children etc.

The investigated areas differ in the economic, social and political sphere. The Most District represents the underdeveloped district (the Most District – influence of the historical events, the highest unemployment rate, chemical and heavy industry, vast areas devastated by the open-cast coal mining, many villages destroyed due to coal mining, a low level of education) while the České Budějovice District represents a developed district (the České Budějovice District – a low unemployment rate, an agricultural and industrial area, a tourism area, rich in cultural and natural heritage, a high level of education, and the growth of population).

The investigated areas differ in the number of actors working within the civil society. In both selected areas, we can find the relevant actors such as: local governments, regional NGOs, micro-regions, local elites, and community activities. On the top of it, in the České Budějovice district, there can be further found the following actors: non-locals, natives of the village, and universities.

The local governments are equipped with managerial and political knowledge. These actors are able to orient in the internal personal relations of the political network, to obtain and provide the relevant information from the other political institutions, to contribute by the project financial support, preparation and submission of the development projects.

Both regional NGOs working in the districts are environmentally focused. In the Most District, the NGO “Hnutí Duha” possesses the managerial, political and expert knowledge. This NGO organises protests, demonstrations and public education concerning environmental protection, namely the environmental problems connected with the open-cast coal mining. It has the possibilities of contacts with the regional and national government members to lobby for their goals. They also participate in project writing. In the České Budějovice District, the NGO “ROSA” possesses the managerial and expert knowledge. In this case, there was not found a political knowledge, because in comparison with the Hnutí Duha, this NGO is characterised only by the local up to the sub-regional reach of its activities.

The micro-regions dispose of the political and managerial knowledge. The Horní Jiřetín (the Most District) is a member of one micro-regional municipal association, which is focused on participating in the regional and local development documents (lobbying for its interests by the regional council), waste treatment and nature protection. The Svatý Jan nad Malší (the České Budějovice District) is a member of two micro-regional municipal associations. One of them is focused rather on the economic issues (support of SMEs, travel industry, flexibility of labour force and education, etc.) the other one is oriented more on the social sphere (environment protection, education, social and health care, etc.).

The local elites dispose of the managerial and local civil knowledge. Into both areas, there belong the mayors of the villages, which are ones of the most important actors in the locality. On the top of it, in the Horní Jiřetín (the Most District) there are other important members of the local elite, such as the castle warden and one member of the local government. We consider that the local civil knowledge is crucial for the motivation within the successful village development activities.

Community activities in both investigated areas were numerous and played an important role in the process of civil society development. These activities are devoted mainly to sports, culture and hobby activities. The community activities use mainly the basic managerial knowledge.

In the Svatý Jan nad Malší (the České Budějovice District), there are found these actors: non-locals, natives of the village, and universities.

In the Svatý Jan nad Malší, there was identified a non-local actor, who is not a local resident but has his cottage in the village. This man came to the mayor and offered him that he would create a layout of the coat-of-arms and the flag of the village, due to his profession; and he arranged for everything necessary. Therefore, we defined this knowledge as the expert and managerial knowledge.

The natives of the village (born in the village but moved to Prague or other cities where they live and work) also contribute to the village activities. For example, one man organised an art exhibition in the village museum, which can be characterised as the managerial knowledge.

Universities possess of the scientific knowledge. There were identified two projects undertaken in the village.

To summarise it, there were discovered various forms of knowledge, which were contributing to the development of civil society.

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Demographics and Civil Society in Hungary

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Introduction

Voluntary organisations have a more and more important role in co-operating networks of rural and agricultural development in the developed as well as developing countries (Bruckmeier, 1998). This trend can be recognised in Hungary as well; however existing Hungarian NGOs, in fact the evolution of the whole civil sector looks back upon a relatively short history. Thus it is not surprising, that after the capitalist transformation the new social movements first focused on general issues of democracy and hardly dealt with rural development – it took time to realize the importance of local development.

In this paper we shall discuss the present state of the Hungarian civil society and its evolution based on the socio-demographic and socio-economic situation. The main focus of the analysis will be on the improvement of civil society and the related governmental policy on a national level. We will examine two case studies as well:

- the Tiszafüred and Mezőtúr micro region – in Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok county (one of our RRAs);
- and the Keszthely micro region in Zala county (the other RRA of the research).

Thus we have the opportunity to compare the most significant factors and tendencies of change on a national, regional and local level. Moreover, the case studies of the two LIAs give us a chance to analyse the similarities and differences of local development projects in micro regions belonging to the same county and to other regions of the country.

The first chapter of the paper presents the demographic situation and civil society on a national level and focuses on three main questions: important statistics on the socio-demographic and socio-economic situation, changes in policy-making related to civil society and the development of Hungarian civil sphere. In the second section we analyse the two RRAs emphasising the character of civil society. The third part includes the case studies in which we focus on local development programs related to the civil sphere. The following chapter will provide an evaluation of the former three levels of analysis and aims to compare the most significant factors and tendencies of change in the development of civil society. The paper will briefly assess the impact of implemented projects on civil society and the potential forms of integrating different actors in national and local policy-making.

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1. Demography and Civil Society – A National Overview

In this section first the socio-demographic and socio-economic situation in Hungary between 1980 and the present will be presented. Based on background knowledge that main trends and indicators provide, we shall examine the improvement of the Hungarian civil society:

- changes in the objectives and strategies of national policy regarding civil society;
- their impact on the characteristics of civil society.

Despite the rapid improvement of civil society after the fall of the communist system, there were and still are a lot of problems and difficulties concerning the third sector's development – we hope to shed light on these in our analyses.

1.1. Some important statistics on the demographic and socio-economic situation

The main demographic indicators we analyse here show general trends regarding the population, age structure and natural growth. As seen in Table 1, the population has constantly decreased during the examined period due to the changing proportion of live birth and death.

Table 1: Demographic indicators

	National level		
	1980	1990	2003
Population	10,709,463	10,374,823	10,116,742
Live births (<i>per 1000 inhabitants</i>)	16.3	12.2	9.3
Deaths (<i>per 1000 inhabitants</i>)	12.4	13.6	13.3
Natural growth (<i>per 1000 inhabitants</i>)	3.9	-1.3	-4.0
Population density (<i>persons per km²</i>)	115	111	109
Population of towns		6,932,156	6,554,282
Population of villages		3,442,667	3,562,460
Age structure (%)			
0 - 14	21.9	20.5	16.6
15 - 39	35.7	35.6	35.0
40 - 59	25.3	25.1	27.9
60 -	17.1	18.8	20.4
Proportion of men (%)	48.4	48.0	47.6
Proportion of women (%)	51.6	52.0	52.3

Data source: HCSO

The decline relates to changes in lifestyle and family model. The number of marriages has fallen while the rate of divorces has increased. This results in giving birth at an older age and thus, the declining number of children in a family that contributes to the decrease of the population. High mortality rates and a relatively short life expectancy – especially among males – can be no longer balanced by live births. However, in Table 1 one can observe certain differences between trends of rural and urban population: the population of villages decreases to a lesser extent than the population of towns. This phenomenon can be partly explained by internal migration from towns to villages; primarily in agglomerated areas the population of villages has grown in the past few years while the number of urban dwellers has decreased. Consistent with the decline of the population, population density has fallen as well, and the proportion of people over 60 years has increased while the number of children has decreased. Although the table does not include this information, it is important to note that some rural areas in Hungary are struggling with becoming deserted: villages with less than 500

inhabitants (usually people of older age) can be found mainly in Southwest Transdanubia and Northeast Hungary.

Regarding the socio-economic statistics one must not forget that during the researched period Hungary went through one of the greatest transformations in its history. In 1989-90 the political structure of the country changed completely, people looked toward the transition to democracy with high hopes and trust, however in the early '90s the country was faced with transformation crisis.

Table 2: Socio-economic data

	National level		
	1980	1990	2003
Employed	5,069,000	4,527,157	3,690,269
Unemployed	-	126,227	416,210
Inactive earners	2,202,000	2,658,255	3,305,541
Dependants	3,438,000	3,063,184	2,786,295
Unemployment rate (%)	-	1.7	5.5
Structure of employment (%)			
- agriculture and forestry	18.9	15.4	5.5
- industry and construction	42.1	38.1	32.9
- services	39.0	46.5	61.6

Data source: HCSO

As we can see in Table 2, before 1990 unemployment was officially an unknown category, albeit hidden unemployment was high. After the transformation – due to the pressure on enterprises to economize and the cessation of farmers' agricultural co-operatives – a great number of people lost their jobs. The unemployment rate shows significant regional differences: the more developed western and central regions of the country (which were more easily accessible) attracted foreign capital investments and in place of socialist factories multinational companies settled down there, while in the Eastern regions unemployment rate stayed permanently high. The unemployment rate culminated in 1993-94 at 13.9% and afterwards started to decline to the present relatively low level. Although the rate does not take into account those who have already left the labour market, because they consider their chances of finding a job so unfavourable that they do not even make an effort, we can see that their proportion is growing from the increasing number of inactive earners.

During the researched period the structure of employment has also changed significantly. The formerly high proportion of agriculture and forestry fell, as did (to a certain extent) the percentage of industry and construction, while services gained ground considerably. This realignment may somewhat explain regional differences regarding the unemployment rate. In the regions where formerly large state farms or state-owned companies operated, but were closed down after 1990 (mainly in Eastern and Northeastern Hungary) a lot of jobs in the area of agriculture and industry were terminated, thus the rate of employment in these two sectors decreased and unemployment rose.

Nowadays territorial differences in the socio-economic context exist both between eastern and western regions and between rural and urban areas. Later on, when analysing the situation on a regional level, we shall study inequalities between different regions in greater detail, but differences between villages and towns, especially the main problems of rural areas must be elaborated a little bit more in this section. Already in the socialist era the main focus of financial support for development had been the towns and not the countryside. In the early '90s, due to economic recession, the development of rural areas could not become a top priority. The regions with better infrastructure and situated near the western border could started developing with the help of foreign capital, while the regions situated far from the

West had to rely on their own resources. The villages – independently of their geographical location – had insufficient financial resources, thus if there were not enough job opportunities nearby, hardly any help could be provided for the unemployed. After months or years of unemployment, people lost the will and ability to look for a job and finally left the labour market to find themselves on the peripheries of society. In fact, the aim of rural development policy is to help villages catch up, but the social base of the process itself (hopeless people who do not have convertible social, economic or any other type of capital) is in need of strengthening. That is why the civil sector's role in rural development is so important – they can take over public functions to a certain extent and improve local communities as well.

1.2. The changes of the national policy regarding the civil sector

The traditions of Hungarian civil society reach back to the 1840s. Even at that time the role of voluntary organisations in the economic and social life was recognised as follows: “Over here (...) the common interests of the motherland and the nation also need the help of the associations' activity.” (Lukács, 1847). The longitudinal data of Table 3 show that between the late 1800s and the early 1900s there was a great increase in the number of civil associations indicating the civil society's high activity. However, the table also illustrates that after the Second World War – during the socialist era – the number of voluntary organisations (VOs) fell.

Table 3: Number of Hungarian Voluntary Organisations

	1862	1878	1932	1970	1982	1989
Number of VOs	319	1,917	14,365	8,886	6,570	8,396

Data source: HCSO

The socialist system's main feature was inter alia the limited publicity, thus the non-governmental organisations also worked under the supervision of the state. The state-party exerted absolute power over economic and organisational life, therefore VOs were quasi dependent, created in a top-down system and controlled from above. Moreover, the society was atomized, making the emergence of horizontal relations increasingly difficult. By means of voluntary fire-fighter associations, sport clubs and a few folklore associations, the state was able to demobilise the real self-organising processes of the society (Laskai, 1997).

At the end of the 1980s more and more VOs were established, gradually becoming the primary agents of transformation. In the final years before the collapse of the socialist regime, the party recognised the need to develop new strategies because its power had become illegitimate and devoid of any social basis (naturally the untenable economic situation also contributed to this recognition). Thus, the state-party became more compliant towards the civil sector and more open towards the Opposition Round Table, this way the party could remain a legal political actor after the transformation as well. As a result, the civil sphere of the late eighties played a historic role in the change of system, producing the future leaders of the institutions of the plural political structure (Kondorosi, 1998).

The 1989 law on associations was the first step towards a legislation that would provide a much wider scope of action and a supportive institutional background for NGOs. In the early nineties a number of related government regulations and laws followed concerning the foundation, operation, taxation etc. of civil organisations. After the transformation the government's aim was to strengthen civil society, but the civil sector's role was eventually somewhat limited by strong prime ministerial power and the bureaucratisation of formerly major VOs as parties. Thus, voluntary organisations turned towards cultural, educational and social activities instead of politics (Kondorosi, 1998).

The first occasion on which the government acknowledged the civil sector's role in providing public functions was the 1997 law on "organisations of public benefit" (generally called the "non-profit law"). By means of this regulation the Parliament aimed to "preserve non-Hungarian traditions of voluntary organisations; increase their social significance; make their operation and management easier to survey; encourage their activities in the field of public tasks; and outline the resources available to them from the state budget." (Act CLVI/1997). In order to increase the presence of NGOs in the field of public tasks (with the parallel purpose of reducing those of the local governments), the law defined several types of tax benefit with regard to "organisations of public benefit", a new category of VOs satisfying social and individual needs through their activity in the field of health care, social and scientific activities, education, environment protection etc. However, the right of NGOs to participate in or express their opinion on the legislation remained obscure.

Five years later, in 2002, the Civil Office was established within the Parliament, assigned to facilitate the co-operation between VOs and the Parliament. The basic principles of the organisation are co-operation, initiation, partnership and openness – all of them well-known values of the EU, referring to the roots of the Civil Office's foundation. Partially due to the activity of the Office, in 2003 the Civil Strategy of the Government was conceived. In this document the government declares that: "The civil society is one of the bases on which the government's activity is built."

Moreover, the document accentuates the need for governmental policies that consider civil control over local and governmental power indispensable and the division of labour among the public, market and civil sector fundamental. Accordingly, the government formulates nineteen principals and three main elements of the strategy – the latter are as follows:

1. The government makes the laws that determine the operation and management of the civil organisations in a more obvious, consistent and simpler way.
2. The government perceptibly increases financial support provided for VOs.
3. VOs will become participants and active contributors in the decision-making process determining the future of the country.

Soon after the creation of the Civil Strategy, the last two from the above three points were partly realised: in 2003 the bill on the National Civil Program was passed and in 2004 a governmental regulation was put forth regarding the civil sector's involvement in regional development. The former aims to create a framework for subsidising NGOs from the state budget. According to the law, the National Civil Program provides central budget funded grants supporting the operation of Hungarian civil organisations with activities of public benefit, international relations etc. The financial resources of the Program constitute one percent of the annually paid personal income tax, donations, budgetary tied subsidies and other revenues, while the jurisdiction of the Council and seven regional Colleges take a decision on the circle of subsidised organisations. The members of the Council and the Colleges are elected indirectly by national and regional NGOs. During the codification process the National Civil Program got a lot of criticism from VOs, nevertheless the most important issue is not the program's social reception but its functionality – more exactly whether its financial resources are sufficient and accessible.

The governmental regulation no. 284/2004 – similarly to the initiative of the National Civil Representation of Interests⁹ – promotes the participation of NGOs in the decision-making processes of regional development. In accordance with the regulation a council of development was established in each micro region to which civil organisations can delegate

⁹ The National Civil Representation of Interests is an organisation under construction. The aim of its establishment is to provide a conciliatory forum between the civil sphere and the Parliament according to the Civil Strategy. The structure of the organisation is outlined by the Civil Co-operation Program.

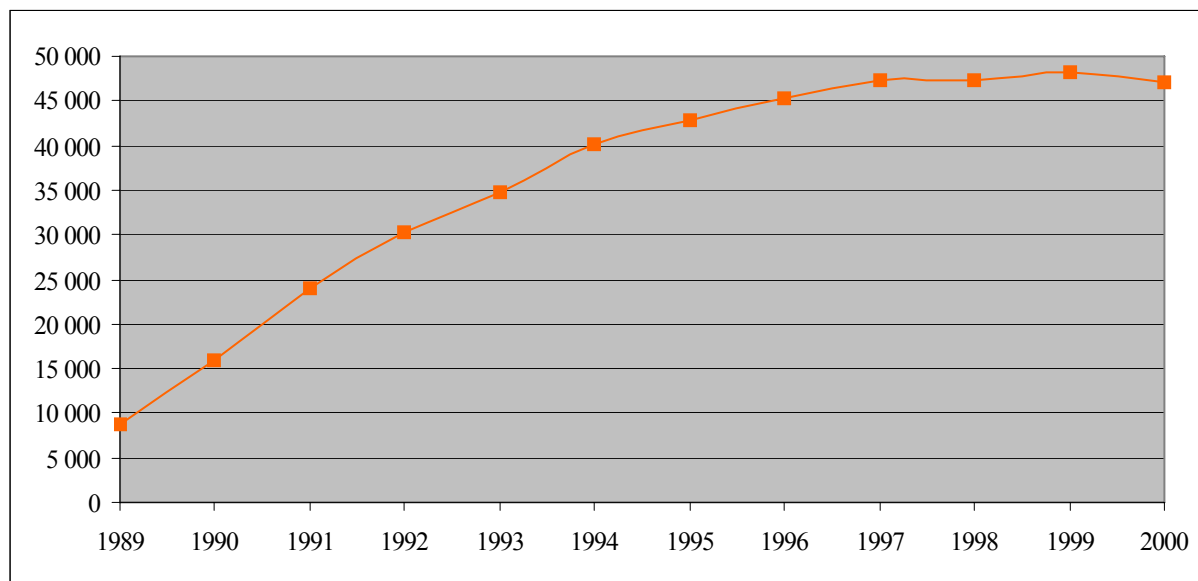
members through civil forums. The only drawback is that civil delegates do not have the right to vote, only to discuss and give their opinion.

In summary, national policy regarding the civil sector has gone through significant transformation in the past decade. On the level of political rhetorics, prevailing governments have acknowledged the importance of the civil sphere's participation in the field of public functions and (with some reluctance) in the arena of decision-making as well. However, most of the changes in governmental policy were initiated by requirements and guidelines put forth by the EU. The debate on the civil representation of interests and on substituting direct participation with a representative system questions the government's real intention of involving the civil sector in the decision-making. After the analysis of political change, let us examine its impact on the civil sector's improvement.

1.3. The characteristics of the Hungarian civil sector after 1990

In the previous chapter we have already discussed the great impact of the transition on policy-making concerning civil society. In Graph 1 this can be seen quite clearly. From 1989 to 1990 the number of VOs had nearly doubled and this rapid growth continued during the first years of the nineties – according to the graph the initial tendency to increase started to slow down in 1992-93 and culminated in 1999. Surprisingly, the “non-profit law” in 1997 did not raise the number of NGOs significantly, although it guaranteed a lot of advantages for them – the reason may be the lack of financial resources that could not be relieved by tax benefits.

Graph 1: The dynamics of the number of VOs

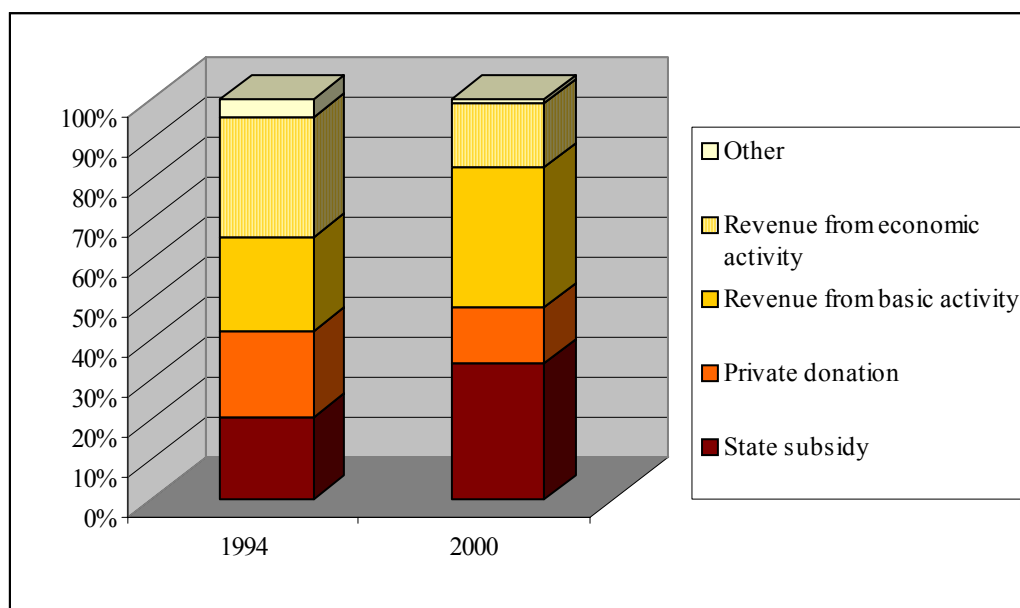


Data source: HCSO

The third sector's huge expansion in the beginning of the decade shows that society had always had a significant need to self-organise. However it was not only the favourable changes in the institutional environment that lead to establishing NGOs, but significant financial support from foreign foundations and EU resources (e.g. the Phare and especially its Democracy and Partnership Program) also proved to be a powerful incentive. After the transformation mainly green organisations tried to participate in the legislation (concerning the debate on the Slovakian-Hungarian waterpower station on the Danube), but nationwide networks of civil organisations also appeared, such as the Non-profit Information and Training Centre in 1993.

The financial support of NGOs' was a crucial issue not only in the early nineties, but also around 2000. As we can see in Graph 2, the financial resources were considerably rearranged between 1994 and 2000. The rate of state subsidy resulted more than one and a half times higher, similarly to the proportion of the revenue from basic activities, while the part of private donation and revenue from economic activity fell by a third. State subsidy in spite of its growing tendency lags behind the EU average, whereas the private donation's early data was significantly higher than in EU countries. Its radical decline can be explained on one hand, by the increase of other types of resources, on the other hand by the decrease of society's willingness or ability to pay donations. The latter shows the possible decline of the society's civil activity, also indicated by changes in the elections' participation ratio – this is one more reason to examine the political situation as well.

Graph 2: The proportion of different sources of revenue



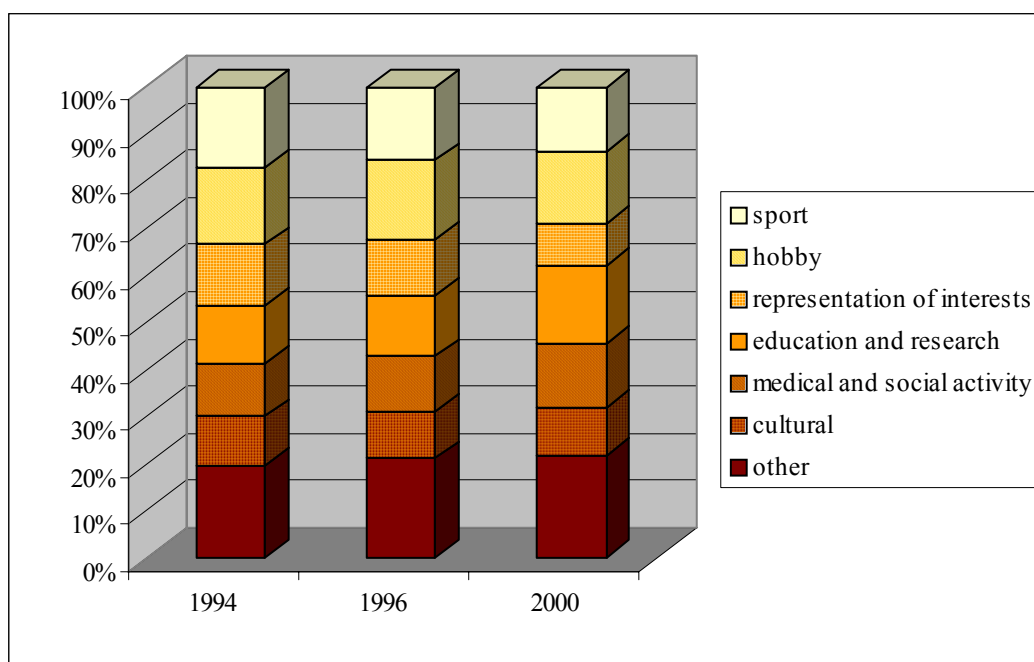
Source: HCSO

A general overview of NGOs also entails the analysis of the varying proportion of activities designated as the main activities of the organisation – Graph 3 shows us changes in this regard. A slight increase can be observed in the field of education and research, as well as medical and social activity, indicating that the VOs' role in providing public services has become more accentuated. However, sport and hobby organisations have kept their first place during the researched period, suggesting that there are still a lot of NGOs primarily satisfying individual claims rather than public necessities. The declining ratio of the representation of economic and professional interests is also worth noting, because it refers to the decreasing influence of VOs on decision-making processes.

Although Graph 3 contains the following data aggregated in the "other" category, the proportion of NGOs in the field of local development is still interesting, especially because it has stayed at a relatively low level, approximately 5%. In line with the improvement of national policy on rural and regional development and the accessibility of financial resources from the EU, this activity would be expected to show considerable growth. This phenomenon can be explained partly by the huge difference between rural and urban VOs. Regional inequality has divided the third sector, manifested not only in the smaller number of rural organisations, but in their more difficult financial situation as well. For example in 1995 more than 60 % of the income generated by NGOs was concentrated in the capital, with just 5% in

villages. Kondorosi (1998) draws the following conclusion based on the above: “The relative weakness of the civil sphere does not derive from the lack of social solidarity, but from the insufficient system of state subsidy.” Although social solidarity indicated by the proportion of private donation seems to have decreased slightly, while state financing has grown more significant between 1990 and 2000, regional differences had not been reduced by the distribution of subsidies. Those areas receive the least financial support that would need it the most, therefore NGOs aiming to develop the local community or infrastructure cannot settle down there.

Graph 3: The proportion of different activities as main activity



Data source: HCSO

We have not yet mentioned the networks and relationships within the civil sector and between the civil sector and other actors. The first nationwide VOs, joining small local organisations in regional and later on, national networks, started to appear in the early nineties. NGOs initiated dialogue and co-operation within the civil sector, building channels and media for the flux of information e.g. portals, press, regular conferences etc. However, they remained rivals to a certain extent due to the scarce financial resources. The past fifteen years proved long enough to produce a circle of consultants specialised in the field of non-profit organisations, providing assistance with problems of management, marketing, and organisation development etc., although in general small VOs operating in rural areas still cannot afford to hire a trainer or an economic consultant. Thus, these small organisations are usually in need of management expertise. Co-operation between the third sector and the public sphere has been one-sided for a long time, meaning that NGOs have taken over a wide range of public services from education to caring for aged people, but state financing has not increased to the same extent. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the government’s real intention of involving the civil sphere in the decision-making process remains questionable. However, the new legislation accepted recently, regarding the third sector and the Civil Strategy of the Government, seem to encourage a dialogue between the two spheres.

In Hungary rural population is primarily the power base of right-wing parties, as they are in agreement with the nationalist ideology of these parties. However, some regional differences

can be observed regarding the political orientation of different counties: generally there are more right-wing supporters in western regions while eastern counties tend to be more left-wing. With regard to participation in national elections we can point out that participation ratios in the four parliamentary elections have been significantly higher than in the case of referendums. When comparing participation in the first and second round of parliamentary elections (see Table 4), an explicit tendency cannot be defined: in 1990 and 1994 the participation ratio was much lower in the second round than in the first, while in 1998 and 2002 the situation was the reverse. Nor can we find an increasing or decreasing trend of general participation: the ratio slightly grew from 1990 to 1994, fell significantly from 1994 to 1998 and increased again in 2002.

Table 4: The change of participation ratio in parliamentary elections

	Participation ratio on general elections (%)							
	1990		1994		1998		2002	
	1. round	2. round	1. round	2. round	1. round	2. round	1. round	2. round
National level	65,11	45,54	68,92	55,12	56,26	57,1	70,53	73,51

Thus changes in the participation ratio do not confirm the moderation in civil activity noted above, concerning the decrease of society's willingness or ability to pay donations.

In summary of the above overview of civil society, we can conclude that there has been significant qualitative and quantitative development in line with the improvement of policy-making regarding the civil sphere. The growing number of VOs and the increasing proportion of their activities related to the public sphere show that the civil sector has found its place in the society. However, the presence of NGOs in local or regional development is still not significant. More exactly, they participate in development processes and in many cases they are the main actors or initiators of different projects, but usually they do not have sufficient financial resources to assure the continuous and balanced operation of the development programs.

In conclusion, the gradual process of decentralisation and partnership is still in an early phase in Hungary. The system of redistribution is not transparent and there is no democratic control. The sharing of knowledge forms, the monitoring system and practice do not work. There is no strong and independent civil sector, most of the civil associations belong to local or national governments. All the development projects depend on political decisions.

2. Regional level

To outline a regional context for the analysis of civil society, first we briefly examine the county level (RRA) demographic data of the study areas.

Table 5: Demographic indicators on RRA level

	Regional level (RRAs)					
	Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County			Zala County		
	1980	1990	2003	1980	1990	2003
Population	446,708	426,491	413,174	317,298	306,398	296,705
Population density	80	76	74	84	81	78
Population of towns	258,404	283,189	271,026	151,771	168,848	165,369
Population of villages	188,304	142,394	142,148	165,527	137,550	131,336
Age structure(%)						
0 - 14	22.9	21.6	17.7	21.6	20.6	15.8
15 - 39	34.3	34.3	33.5	28.7	35.2	34.1
40 - 59	25.7	25.0	27.6	34.9	24.4	28.8
60 -	17.7	19.1	21.3	14.8	19.8	21.4
Proportion of men (%)	48.7	48.4	48.3	48.3	48.1	47.8
Proportion of women (%)	51.3	51.6	51.7	51.7	51.9	52.2
Live births	16.7	13.0	9.4	16.1	12.2	7.9
Deaths	12.6	13.6	14.4	13.2	13.7	13.5
Natural growth	4.2	-0.6	-5.0	2.9	-1.6	-5.6
Internal net migration	-3.1	-3.9	-2.6	1.4	-1.9	1.1

Data source: HCSO

In both counties – like all over Hungary - a slow population decrease characterises the past twenty years (Table 5). Especially the population of villages has decreased, although in Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok (JNSz) county this tendency comes to a halt between 1990 and 2003. The population of the towns increased in both counties in the first ten years, but after 1990 a natural decrease also overcame the urbanisation process. Parallel to the decrease, population has also become older. The age structure of the two RRAs is quite similar to the national average, though the number of children is a bit higher in JNSz county. Not surprisingly, natural growth is extremely negative in both RRAs. However, in the migration component of population dynamics, differences can be observed. The low point of migration was in 1990 in both counties. Since then in Zala county, population decrease has been moderated by a positive migration balance, while in JNSz county out migration still dominates.

Table 6: Socio-economic data on RRA level (data source: HCSO)

	Regional level (RRAs)					
	Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County			Zala County		
	1980	1990	2003	1980	1990	2003
Employed	208,887	181,307	133,519	150,423	135,665	117,614
Unemployed	-	4,591	22,056	-	2,533	10,117
Inactive earners	85,903	105,436	143,444	64,057	76,335	91,953
Dependents	153,834	134,249	116,898	102,818	91,865	77,720
Unemployment rate (%)	-	1.5	6.8	-	1.1	5.1
Structure of employment (%)						
- agriculture and forestry	34.6	21.8	8.5	24.0	16.7	5.5
- industry and construction	37.8	36.8	36.3	40.4	39.6	38.9
- services	27.6	41.4	55.2	35.6	43.7	55.7
Average net income per month			77,029			78,917
Number of enterprises			32,842			37,002
Number of enterprises per 1000 inhabitants			62			87

Socio-economic data (Table 6) show that Zala County – in compliance with its western location – is more developed than JNSz, though it is not quite like the really dynamic north-western region of Hungary. Unemployment rates clearly point to the historical change in the economy: while in the socialist era no data were provided on unemployment, the actual rate was about 1 percent, as measured in 1990. By 2003 the dramatic employment crisis was already over and the rates have been stabilised. Now the employment situation is better in Zala, than in JNSz county. Longitudinal data in both RRAs mirror the sectorial change in Hungarian economy: the decline of agriculture and the rise of the tertiary sector. Nevertheless, in JNSz County the rate of agricultural employment is above the national average (8.5% to 5.5%). As for services, both RRAs are rather underdeveloped (55% to the average 62%). Average net income and the number of enterprises also show the differences in favour of Zala county.

According to official statistics, 3.6 NGOs/1000 inhabitants can be found in Zala county and 3.8 NGOs/1000 inhabitants in JNSz county, though many of them are inactive. In the rows of Table 7 the most common forms of subsidy that local governments offer NGOs are listed. In JNSz County the local governments' lack of resources can be observed: there are 1.5 times more NGOs, than in Zala, but local governments can only support less. The number of registrations in the National Civil Program shows higher NGO activity in Zala county.

Table 7: NGOs on RRA level (data source: HCSO)

	Regional level (RRAs) (2000)	
	Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County	Zala County
Number of NGOs	1,571	1,071
Number of NGOs founded by local governments	134	181
Number of NGOs subsidized by local governments	735	862
Number of NGOs using buildings of local governments	192	211
Number of NGOs registered in the National Civil Program	59	67

According to an earlier report from Zala county (Nadrainé, 1999), in the villages the number of NGOs had doubled between 1990 and 1997, while in the towns their number grew to 3.5 times as many. Presently one third of the NGOs are located in the county capital, one third in other towns and one third in the 250 villages of the county. In the villages, the most important NGOs are sport clubs, fire brigades, and civil guards, though cultural/educational foundations are present as well. Non-official societies like folk circles, pensioners' clubs, religious communities are also important. There is an average number of 2.5 NGOs per settlement.

The number of countywide organisations had multiplied by ten. Among these, professional associations, trade unions and NGOs from the cultural, health and social field are the most significant. In Zala a countywide development organisation "For the Villages of Zala" also exists, undertaking social care tasks.

In the area of development, a private rural development company organizes different courses on green farming and integrated rural development programmes on a RRA level. They provide entrepreneurs and different institutions with expertise on how to manage projects and proposals within the framework of the European Union. They offer consulting to municipalities, development organizations and other institutions interested in development. They also provide information on managing projects and grant opportunities. In summary, their main activity is human resources training. Their relations and cooperation with foreign regional organizations (Austria) also helps further development.

In JNSz County only 15 percent of the NGOs are registered in the county capital, these are mainly city- and countywide organisations. Similarly to Zala, towns are better provided with NGOs, 6 per 1000 inhabitants can be found in the major city. Five years after the first wave of founding NGOs in the beginning of the nineties, the demand for NGOs increased again due to economic crisis. The increase was most significant in the field of culture, education, sports, leisure activities, economic and employment development. After 2000, the number of NGOs was stabilised, even decreasing a bit. On the county level a non-governmental Agrarian and Rural Development Strategic Program exists in order to protect the local social and professional communities and to develop professional education on a local level.

Most important actors in both RRAs are the micro-regional development associations, though these are only quasi-NGOs formed by local governments. The representatives of municipalities, regional NGOs, employers' and employees' organisations form a Development Council on the county level. Civil actors have a right to consult with the council, but this is only more or less used. In Zala County, many more NGOs take part in this regional development forum than in JNSz County.

Local governments also have to co-operate with NGOs in applications for state and EU funds, but these opportunities are underdeveloped and unexploited, as the involvement of NGOs is considered necessary, but uncomfortable. Nevertheless, municipalities try to subsidise NGOs, but their financial resources are limited. Moreover, they do not necessarily use the knowledge of the civil sphere they could build on properly. They spend most of the money on sports clubs. NGOs have better financial background in towns. Half of them also gain subsidies from abroad, although their share in the villages is only around 5 percent.

3. Case Studies

In this chapter we shall describe and analyze development programs targeting the local civil society in the two studied LIAs. In order to understand these projects (their aims, target groups, participants, forms of knowledge used etc.) properly, we will provide a brief overview of the main demographic trends in each micro region before presenting the selected development programs.

3.1. The Tiszafüred and the Mezőtúr micro region in Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok county

Data in Table 8 show that Tiszafüred micro region struggles with demographic and economic problems that are more serious than the country average. The decrease of the population started in the 1980s, however the internal migration balance does not show significant emigration from the LIA (probably because the lack of convertible social, economic, etc. knowledge capital makes people immobile). Thus, the decline of the population can be seen in the decrease of live births and the considerable increase of death rate (in 2003 the number of deaths per 1000 inhabitants was 15.8, much higher than the national average). The demographic situation is linked to economic data, especially the high unemployment rate. The data in Table 8 shows that the proportion of unemployed people is much higher in this micro region than the country average, however it does not include those doing public work – according to one of our interviewees in Kunhegyes (the second biggest town in the LIA) this corrected rate would almost reach 25%.

Table 8: Demographic situation in the Tiszafüred micro region

	1980	1990	2003
Population	45,289	42,464	40,499
Population density	53.5	50.1	48
Natural growth	-0.5	-1.6	-6.1
Internal migration balance	-2.3	-0.1	-0,4
Employed	20,385	17,017	10,162
Unemployed	-	664	3,407
Inactive earners	8,707	10,603	15,263
Dependents	16,196	14,180	11,922
Unemployment rate (%)	-	2.3	12.5

The difficult situation of the micro region has already merited the interest of Hungarian sociologists, especially László Laki, who linked the economic problems and social difficulties of the area in his essay (Laki, 2004). According to him, “poverty consciousness” is a fundamental term regarding local society’s general condition, and the daily bread-and-butter worries, health problems, educational difficulties and family crises have a great impact on individual self-esteem and future prospects.

Due to the grave economic and social situation, both local authorities and NGOs try to help and improve local communities. When compared to the size of the population, the number of VOs (157 in 2000) does not indicate strong self-organizing processes, not very surprising, knowing the difficulties of the micro region. However, in recent years more and more NGOs were established in order to provide public services and alleviate social problems. Despite of insufficient financial sources, local governments deal prominently with the civil sphere: on one hand they provide financial and material support (50 NGOs receive subsidy and an additional 27 use the buildings of local authorities), on the other hand they involve VOs to a certain extent in local decision-making. It is also worth mentioning that 33 of the micro region’s 157 NGOs were founded by local governments. This phenomenon reflects the interpenetration of the civil and public sector and to a certain extent, the dependency of VOs on the power of local authorities. This can be attributed to the following two factors: on one hand the civil sector is not strong enough to undertake public functions (and maybe it does not have relevant expertise either), on the other hand local authorities try to obtain additional financial resources through this “back door”.

Focusing on civil organizations, the development programs of the Rural Development Foundation of the Central-Tisza area must be mentioned. This VO, located in Kunhegyes, deals with the question of employment, the development of local civil initiatives and the improvement of relations between the civil and public sphere. The target groups of its projects are people on the peripheries of society (unemployed, marginalized inhabitants, often members of the Gypsy minority), although through its community development programs it also has a more widespread impact on local society. In order to realize its projects, the Foundation has organized an extensive network of cooperation in which local governments, public institutions, NGOs and experts participate.

One of the projects in progress hopes to provide three or four new job opportunities in the field of social services in participating villages. The project includes all the 12 settlements of the micro region plus three other villages and is based on the cooperation of NGOs, local authorities and inhabitants. Within the scope of the program permanently unemployed people would be employed as social assistants; they would provide social services (e.g. daily care, snow shovelling etc.) for the elderly or people in need. The wage of the assistants would be covered by the financial contribution of local authorities, state subsidies and the price the assisted person pays for the services (which he/she would also pay today, only as part of the black economy). Thus, the target group of the project is twofold: people who are permanently unemployed and people who are in need. In this program local knowledge has an important role: the necessities of the both the people in need and the permanently unemployed must be known to the initiators of the project, as well as to each other. However, in the training of future social assistants mainly non-local forms of knowledge will be used, making the cooperation of training centres (public institutions) and local inhabitants necessary. As the initiator and coordinator of the project, the Foundation is the principal actor, although thanks to their financial support and institutional environment, local authorities also play an important role with regard to the success of the initiative. Conflicts of interest are not expected, because the project has a number of advantages for all actors. The further development of the program primarily depends on sufficient financial resources and relevant managerial knowledge, since – according to our interviewee (the leader of the Foundation) – local NGOs hardly have any economic experience and managerial skills.

The Mezőtúr micro region used to belong to the Törökszentmiklós area, but became independent in 2003. The region consists of only five settlements: two towns and three villages. Although the economic situation of this small, recently established micro region is a little bit more favourable than the Tiszafüred area discussed above, the demographic data shows the same difficulties.

In Table 6 we can see that population is decreasing for two reasons: the natural decline on one hand and the significant rate of emigration on the other. The negative internal migration balance can be linked to the lack of job opportunities indicated by the relatively high unemployment rate and also to the proximity of Szolnok, a dynamic county centre that attracts people looking for a job and better social infrastructure.

Table 9: Demographic situation in the Mezőtúr micro region

	1980	1990	2003
Population	36,215	33,625	31,026
Population density	50	46	43
Natural growth	-0.2	-1.6	-5.4
Internal migration balance	-2.3	-2.8	-5,1
Employed	16,543	14,249	9,317
Unemployed	-	380	1,845
Inactive earners	6,723	8,207	10,992
Dependents	12,949	10,789	9,229
Unemployment rate (%)	-	1.5	6.4

Due to the recent creation of the region, as well as its small size, there are hardly any development projects related exclusively to the micro region. Although in 2003 an overall strategic development plan was elaborated thanks to the financial support of the county's council for regional development, its implementation has not started yet. The priorities of the strategic program correspond to the chapters of the National Development Plan and try to cover all subsidized development activities. Thus, one priority of the micro region's strategic program is the improvement of human resources, including the development of social infrastructure, more cooperation between the civil and the public sphere and especially the enhancement of the quality of local education. Although the program does not deal with civil society in detail, local authorities support NGOs: 56 from the micro region's 111 civil organizations are subsidized by local governments and 61 use the buildings of local authorities. However, the number of NGOs founded by local governments is much lower than in the Tiszafüred micro region which indicates the greater independence of the sector.

According to one of our interviewees, programs in the micro region rarely target the improvement of civil society or development projects including local representatives in the decision-making process (like Leader), nevertheless civil activity is quite significant, as shown by the relatively high number of NGOs compared to the number of inhabitants. Civil organizations operate mainly in the field of environment protection and education – the former refers to the high natural value of the area and the close relationship between VOs and the two neighbouring national parks, while the latter shows the large proportion of public services undertaken by the civil sphere. However, the ratio of NGOs dealing with local development or social activities is a bit lower and there is a need for more fruitful cooperation with actors of the civil sphere.

During the research we found only a few VOs which – at least in their choice of name – deal with civil society's improvement, and only one of them was available to talk with us. The Beklen Foundation, located in Túrkeve (one of the towns in the Mezőtúr micro region), is the member of a regional NGO and among others focuses on accelerating the civil sphere's development. It has a local program called Civil Workshop that offers technical assistance to inhabitants and civil organizations, provides information on policy changes with regard to civil society, organizes communication and management trainings and supports interactions between the civil, the public and the private sector. Through these activities the Foundation is able to create a supportive and cooperative atmosphere for other VOs, but according to our interviewee, local organizations must cope with further difficulties. The lack of financial resources and managerial/application skills are problems that strengthen each other: NGOs usually do not have enough capital to cover the retention in EU programs, nor do they have relevant knowledge and experience to obtain it from other sources (e.g. state subsidies – albeit

the availability of state subsidies for retention is excessively regulated, so they cannot be easily used for cross-financing).

Concluding the analysis of Mezőtúr micro region, we shall sum up the possible reasons why no effective cooperation or initiative concerning the development of civil society could be found in the area. As the micro region was formerly part of a larger regional unit (the Törökszentmiklós micro region), the relationships of local NGOs were established with actors from a wider environment. This is underlined by the fact that most of the VOs have existing and well-functioning relations extending over the boundaries of the LIA and sometimes over the county's borders as well (e.g. the earlier mentioned program in the Tiszafüred micro region has a member organisation from Túrkeve). The micro region's less than 2 years old history is not sufficient to create and implement a coherent and viable development project regarding civil society, especially because NGOs participate in other programs based on wider territorial cooperation and do not really know each other.

3.2. The Keszthely micro region

The Keszthely micro region is located in West-Transdanubia, near the Lake Balaton. Due to its geographic position, demographic and social problems are not as severe as in the former two research areas. The population of the LIA is growing, in spite of the natural decline, thanks to the positive internal migration balance. However, the high rate of immigration can be attributed to elderly people coming to settle down in the area, attracted by the micro region's remedial thermal springs, especially Hévíz (one of the towns in the LIA) and not to young families wishing to settle down, identify with the local community and participate in its improvement.

Table 10: Demographic situation in the Keszthely LIA

	1980	1990	2003
Population	48,144	46,440	47,866
Population density	95.3	92	95
Natural growth	-0.7	-2.3	-3.4
Internal migration balance	-0.9	3.4	4.2
Employed	22,312	20,216	18,560
Unemployed	-	449	1,487
Inactive earners	10,133	11,810	14,631
Dependents	15,699	13,965	12,883
Unemployment rate (%)	-	1.3	5.0

Thanks to its geographic location, the main source of livelihood near Hévíz and the shore of Lake Balaton is tourism, while farther away from the lake agriculture is the dominant sector of economy. As Table 10 shows, the unemployment rate is lower than the country average, albeit the growing proportion of inactive earners suggests a less favourable situation regarding employment. Moreover, the low average unemployment rate does not mean that the proportion of unemployed people is roughly similar: in villages farther from the Balaton and Hévíz where people mainly live off agricultural activity, the rate is much higher, while near the lake the seasonal character of tourism gives rise to difficulties.

The civil activity in the micro region is significant: there are 305 VOs, a much higher number both relatively and absolutely than in the other two LIAs. 31 NGOs from the 305 were founded by local authorities, 130 are financially supported by local governments and 52

organizations use their buildings. All of this indicates a strong cooperation between the civil and the public sector.

Related to the VOs' participation in rural development, three different associations were merged in 2003. The regional development associations of "Tátika", "Kis-Balaton" and "Keszthely-Hévíz" dealt with three different regions of the LIA and targeted the development of rural areas. Before their fusion they mainly dealt with improving co-operation, learning regional management through a trial and error process of obtaining financial resources, developing their technical and human infrastructure. However, in 2003 the united organization initiates the framing of the micro region's development strategy focusing on agriculture and rural development. The initial step of strategy-making was the national Sapard program, although later on it was upgraded and extended. Although the implementation of the strategic plan has not been started yet, it is worth mentioning it in present study, because the planning procedure already had an impact on civil society.

The program has a row of declared objectives that are primarily based on obtainable state subsidies and the activities of their focus. As a result, it also has a chapter on the improvement of the civil sector and human resources that aims to combat and alleviate unemployment and social exclusion, develop local educational opportunities (higher education, vocational education and training) and improve social infrastructure. Thus the target group of the program includes almost all segments of society – unemployed people, members of local minorities, children, adults etc.

It is worth mentioning that in this region local entrepreneurs have strong power. There is a stable network of local governance, rural developers, civil society and local entrepreneurs, leading all the projects and activities concerning rural development. As a result of this network and the different forms of knowledge joined by it, a new institutional system was created here. The actors of the network are: local entrepreneurs, civil associations of local entrepreneurs, local governances, rural development project offices (like the Rural Development Department of the University of Keszthely), rural development managers, tourism offices, environmental institutions, and other civil associations.

The strategic program on rural development is based on the extensive participation and cooperation of these actors, namely local governments, NGOs and local inhabitants. It makes use of a great variety of different types of knowledge: managerial knowledge is provided by the micro region's central organization (the association); professional expertise comes from collaborating enterprises from the private sector (e.g. in the field of financial planning or organizational development); scientific knowledge stems from the cooperation with the University in Keszthely and with the National Park; and there is a significant need of local knowledge as well which is mainly provided by local governments and VOs. The implementation of the program is based on the active participation of local inhabitants. There have already been workshops in which people could brainstorm, express their opinion, shape the program in line with their own ideas, etc. Last but not least, these workshops proved a great occasion to develop local community, especially because besides the inhabitants, all main actors (NGOs, local governments) were represented there, thus a creative cooperation could form between them. The most powerful actor is one one hand, the micro region's central association, because it is the initiator, the managing organization of the project, as well as the coordinator between other actors. On the other hand, local governments and public authorities also play an important role, because they are the ones who support the implementation of the program financially and they also constitute the institutional background, so they can significantly hinder or help the realisation process. The role of new settlers in the program is not yet clear. They are also important actors, although their involvement will probably be a difficult task, as usually they do not settle down to become

active members of the local community. Nevertheless they are also interested in development to a certain extent, as it will ensure a more favourable environment.

In summary of existing experiences of the program, we can conclude that there are still many questions left unanswered, mainly related to the active participation of local inhabitants and financial issues. As our interviewee said, the program uses a number of new concepts and categories e.g. sustainable development, not known to inhabitants thus they are still a little bit aloof and suspicious.

In addition to the cooperation of local actors, the crucial strategy of putting theory into practice is not only developed within the micro region, but also by the Regional Enterprise Development Foundation. This foundation collects information on national applications and provides information for entrepreneurs on how and for what they can apply. It is mostly the Foundation that writes project plans and encourages the entrepreneurs to cooperate. This organisation has strong connections with rural development managers and rural development project offices.

In a cultural context the non-profit sector's initiatives are also interesting. The „Women for the Lake Balaton” association tries to focus on local society and community work during the whole year, organising different exhibitions and concerts. The members of this NGO usually have high social status and cultural capital that they can use to reach the local and sometimes the national TV and press to promote local cultural events.

4. Comparative Analysis

In a previous paper (Kováč 1998) the general characteristics of rural civil associations have been dealt with in detail. As a step towards comparing the different actors and knowledge types of the study areas, we cite the significant features of rural voluntary associations in order to designate a specific social and economic context as well as activities, actors and knowledge types.

In the second half of the nineties:

- The financial resources of rural civil associations were mainly from state and local government budgets and not from private society or economy.
- Rural voluntary associations had a dual character: they contributed to the re-emergence of autonomy and the rise of civil society on one hand, and assisted the formation of a local elite on the other, preserving and legitimating their social, political and economic status.
- In the time of transformational crisis - after the fall of the communist regime and before European integration - local elite had autonomy and political power to run voluntary associations.
- Laws and acts concerning civil associations are rather uneven. The monetarist and restrictive state and local policy retains the right to intervene in the financial affairs of foundations and other voluntary associations.

The European integration, starting with a territorial and rural development act in 1997 that formally decentralized decision-making over development resources, resulted in the introduction of an application system and together with the strengthening market economy and higher education reforms contributed to making civil associations more active in rural development. Despite new initiatives, the rural development system is still hierarchical, dominated by local power holders and most of all the State. Civil control is ineffective, economic and administrative elites exert direct control over the distribution of resources and

the competition for development funds. The introduction of an application system in rural development (underlining the importance of intellectual capital and culture economy), together with neo-bureaucratization stimulates the rise of a project class that becomes a key actor of rural development. The members of the project class often establish commercial firms or civil institutions and contribute to the slowly emerging role of civil associations. They can be representatives of civil society and legitimate their social position by the activity of voluntary associations. The extent, power and structure of civil society and the activity of voluntary associations mirror varying dimensions of these general conditions in the research areas.

The study areas represent economic, social and political/power differences of a standard Hungarian micro-region (Tiszafüred/Mezőtúr - with greater importance of agricultural and structural problems such as unemployment, pluriactivity, lower income level, out-migration) and a developed micro-region (Keszthely micro-region with strong service sector, lower unemployment, higher income level and immigration). The main difference is that while Keszthely and its vicinity could accumulate some financial, infrastructural and intellectual capital during the socialist decades to manage post-transitional crisis and could successfully improve and re-open local economy by tourism, education and related services; the management of transformational crisis is much less successful and led to the sporadic reorganization of the economy (as in the case of water tourism around Tisza – lake) in the eastern study region and that micro-region is still struggling with problems of structural modernization and economic decline. In theory, civil institutions can take part in managing rapid economic development, as well as reducing backwardness.

The comparative chapter sought to review the experience of voluntary associations in terms of their contribution to local development. The central issue is what kind of knowledge they use in territorial development. First we need to stress that economic and cultural backwardness does not put the activity of civil institutions at an advantage. It is relevant that in less developed regions and within the regions, in less developed rural settlements the voluntary associations are also less active or entirely missing. In the most underdeveloped villages, it is mainly outsider associations representing the non-governmental sector, if any. The actors' network of local development and the kinds of knowledge they use present a rather complex situation (Table 11 and 12) in which:

- Cooperation between the public and civil sector is more developed than between the civil and private sector.
- Relationships between NGOs and national parks/experts are usually good, however they often have different interests and approaches.
- Development programs (esp. in the Tiszafüred/Mezőtúr LIA) primarily focus on creating job opportunities or providing alternative means of livelihood in response to unemployment, the key socio-economic problem. Expected results usually include the decrease of inequality within the society, the improvement of life quality, the increase of job opportunities and the slow change of attitudes (e.g. related to sustainable development).
- However the orientation of development is often defined by the national development plan, governmental strategies and policies – development objectives are shaped by financial resources that is the lack or accessibility of these resources
- A main initiator/coordinator is necessary who would become the most powerful actor – without his programs do not started even be under planning (the base of his power is his knowledge and networks of relationships), but local authorities are important as well, cooperation with them is of crucial importance, since their formal power is much greater than the NGOs' during the implementation process

- The intermediate project class institutions are in many cases key actors of development projects.

Knowledge types:

Table 11: Knowledge types in Tiszafüred/Mezőtúr LIA

Actors	Knowledge forms	Participation in development projects
Local governments	Political knowledge Managerial knowledge	Financial support, institutional/legislative environment Preparation and submission of development projects, Planning and monitoring Management of development projects
Local NGOs	Local civil knowledge	Environmental projects
Regional NGO (Beklen Foundation)	Managerial knowledge	Providing infrastructure for local NGOs, civil development, Civil Forum
Regional Rural Development Foundation	Expert and managerial knowledge	Organising cooperation among actors, improvement of civil/public relations, employment creation projects
National Park	Scientific knowledge Managerial knowledge	Nature conservation projects
High School (four year long higher education institute)	Scientific knowledge	Agricultural development projects Rural development projects Nature conservation

Table 12: Knowledge types in Keszthely LIA

Actors	Knowledge types	Participation in development projects
Micro regional Development Association (quasi-NGO)	Political/managerial knowledge	Initiation, managing and coordination of projects
Local governments	Political knowledge Managerial knowledge	Financial support, institutional/legislative environment Preparation and submission of development projects, Planning and monitoring Management of development projects
Private enterprises	Expert knowledge	Financial planning, organisational development,
University of Keszthely	Scientific knowledge	Research activity, participation in project writing
Local NGOs	Local civil knowledge	Consultation, sharing opinions, cultural projects
Regional Development Foundation	Expert and managerial knowledge	Information on applications, education, preparation of project, coordination
National Park	Scientific knowledge	Research activity Nature protection

Political knowledge includes different dimensions, such as experience in lobbying, orientation within the politicians' informal network, knowledge of stereotypes, slogans and viability of local images, ability to obtain relevant information from political institutions, talent in debates, knowledge of legitimisation and persuasion. In the eastern city of Mezőtúr or in the village of Gyenesdiás in the much more developed western study region, the local government is the number one actor of local development projects and political, managerial and expert knowledge are combined in the activity of local governments. In Mezőtúr the local government prepares, submits and manages almost all local projects. The mayor left a prosperous small industrial business and converted his managerial experience into political

capital and knowledge. The local government works as a well-organised enterprise and political knowledge is effectively combined with managerial and expert knowledge. In Gyenesdiás the mayor and the local government staff technically use of the same managerial knowledge, but since a booming private economy exists with flourishing voluntary associations, local political knowledge is focused on how to achieve consensus and co-operation in the process of planning and managing development projects. The representatives of local power holders are also actors of political networks and they can be successful only if they have skills in political networking.

Managerial knowledge is essential, but on a local level it usually cannot be found in its purest form, especially in the Tiszafüred/Mezőtúr micro regions where there is no functioning development association of municipalities. The local governments often look towards professional civil institutions to provide managerial knowledge. Local actors have to resort to the help of outsiders that can prove dangerous with regard to power relations. Other forms of knowledge are generally more accessible through fruitful cooperation between actors. However the lack of managerial knowledge has a great impact on implementation (obtaining financial support, exhausting scarce resources, fulfilling the terms of supporting contracts, managing the team and a wide range of actors etc.)

Expert knowledge is also important, provided mainly by the same NGOs and business actors who provide managerial knowledge, but more available on a local level.

Scientific knowledge is well provided in the studied LIAs thanks to the local presence of universities. Though when comparing the two regions, the involved academic knowledge and scientific capital, as well as the participation in development is considerably higher in the case of Keszthely University.

Local (civil) knowledge is in one of the main focuses of our analysis. Local NGOs participate to a greater extent in the strategic planning and application processes in the Keszthely region, though their special knowledge is not used enough by the local government. However, the knowledge and participation of ordinary local people – the local community in general – is higher in Tiszafüred and Mezőtúr. Here development projects answer to deep social problems and their aim to help is unambiguous for local people, while in the Keszthely micro region people do not really perceive the importance of the programs, because they are in a better economic and social situation.

In conclusion, the knowledge types used in territorial development in the Hungarian study areas are extremely varied, widespread and complex. Main concerns are the still centralized, politically dominated and sometimes chaotic development system, the mixing of different roles and knowledge types between actors, the rise of the project class instead of the voluntary associations.

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Demographics and Civil Society in Poland

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Introduction

1. General Information on National Level

Considering the general characteristics of demographic changes in Poland let us start with the fact that on December 31, 2003 Poland had slightly over 38 million inhabitants. However, it should be stressed that in the last six years Poland has experienced two important phenomena, namely: the declining birth-rate as well as the negative net result of out-country migration. Some basic data for the period between 1980 and 2003 are presented in tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1: Population of Poland

Year	Total	% of women	Urban	% of urban	Rural
1980	35,735,000	51.6	20,979,000	58.7	14,756,000
1990	38,183,000	51.3	23,614,000	61.8	14,569,000
2000	38,254,000	51.,5	23,670,000	61.8	14,584,000
2003	38,191,000	51.6	23,514,000	61.5	14,677,000

Source: Central Statistical Office (GUS)

Table 2: Balance of population in Poland

Year	Births (in thousand)	Births per 1000 people	Decease (in thousand)	Decease per 1000 people	Net birth rate (in thousand)	Net birth rate per 1000 people
1980	695.8	19.5	353.2	9.9	342.6	9.6
1990	547.7	14.3	390.3	10.2	157.4	4.1
2000	378.3	9.9	368.0	9.6	10.3	0.3
2003	351.1	9.2	365.2	9.6	-14.1	-0.4

Source: Central Statistical Office (GUS)

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As data contained in the table presented above show, the major breakthrough in the changes of the population in Poland occurred in the 1990s. In the previous decade i.e. in the years of 1981 – 1990 the number of population has increased by 2,511,000. However, in the next decade (1991 – 2000) which might be referred to as the “first decade of the post-communist transformation” such an increase has been limited to 461,000. That means that the rate of increase in the second decade has been roughly 4-5 times lower than in the first one.

Let us also point out some important differences in the the dynamics of the rural and urban populations. In 2003 the urbanisation rate for Poland was at the level of 61.5%. This shows a slight decrease compared to the previous years. In the first decade under consideration, one might observe stable growth of the urban population. However, this trend reversed in the following decade. In the last few years a slight decrease in the urban population has become visible. In the case of rural areas the situation seems to be entirely the opposite. In the years between 1981 and 1990, one might observe a relatively stable decrease in the rural population. In the last decade (1991 – 2000) the stabilisation of the rural population became observable. And finally, in the year 2000, for the first time in the history of Poland after World War II, the balance of rural-urban migration was positive for rural areas. Again, “the first decade of the post-communist transformation,” and especially its later period, might be considered as the phase of reversal of demographic tendencies in urban and rural areas.

Table 3: Life expectancy in Poland (in years)

Year	Urban		Rural	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
1980	65.8	74.2	66.1	74.7
1990	66.4	75.1	66.5	76.0
2000	69.9	77.7	69.3	78.4
2003	70.8	78.7	70.0	79.1

Source: Central Statistical Office (GUS)

Table 3 (presented above) might be treated as a source providing us with additional information concerning differences between urban and rural areas in Poland that are observable from the perspectives of demographic processes. Life expectancy might be used as a health condition indicator resulting from living conditions in both types of environment. As one can see, life expectancy increased in the analysed period among men and women in both types of areas. However, again, contradictory tendencies in rural and urban areas might be observed. In the case of rural women, life expectancy has been above that of urban women. But in the case of men, the situation seems to be different. While in 1980 life expectancy among rural men was higher than that among rural men, in 2000, as well as in 2003, it was lower. One might argue that such a tendency reflects, to some extent, the more serious character of transformation trauma (see: Sztompka, 2000) in rural areas, resulting from worsening living conditions as well as a decrease in income, especially when compared to the situation of urban inhabitants (see Table 4).

Table 4.**Average rural household income to average national household income ratio (I)****Average rural household income to average urban household income ratio (II)**

Ratio	1993	1998
I	84.9	79.4
II	77.4	70.2

Source: National Human Development Report. Rural Development, 2000, Warsaw: UNDP, p. 51

Unemployment seems to be the most sensitive component of labour market changes in Poland. In 1995 - the year of the lowest registered unemployment rate during the post-communist transformation period – it dropped to 14.9%. Unfortunately, later it increased to 20.0% in 2000, and despite some fluctuations in the following years it remained at the same level in the fourth quarter of the year 2003.

Let us also point out the more general changes in the labour market in Poland during the last two decades. Looking at table 5, one should bear in mind that these are two very different decades. The first, the period 1978 – 1988, might be considered the “last decade of Communism,” while the second period of 1990 – 2000, following 1989, the year major change, has already been referred to in this report as the “first decade of post-Communist transformation”. As one can observe, even under late Communism there had been a decline in the working force from the primary and secondary sectors. At the same time, there was an increase in the labour force in the tertiary sector. A temporary increase in the primary sector occurred immediately, as a result of the breakdown and the subsequent collapse of many businesses in the secondary and tertiary sectors. Firstly, we have to remember that a large portion of people from peasant families who were working in nearby towns in manufacturing and construction, as well as service businesses (the so-called “peasant-worker” category), were fired in the first wave. They were considered by the management of collapsing plants to be “the least sensitive” category of employee because of their available alternative of returning to their small family farms. However, we might see that since 1990, after the introduction of the economic reforms plan, the “natural tendencies” of the growing tertiary sector, as well as the decreasing primary and secondary ones, were back in work.

Table 5: Labour market in Poland (in %)

Year	Primary sector	Secondary sector	Tertiary sector
1978	30.2	37.9	31.9
1988	28.1	36.7	35.2
1990	30.1	33.3	33.6
2000	28.5	26.0	45.5

Source: Central Statistical Office (GUS)

Returning to the demographic context of the development of civil society in Poland let us consider a few issues that might have a direct impact on this process. Let us start with the changes concerning the educational attainment levels among the Polish population. While in the year 1988 (the “last year of Communism”) only 11.9% of urban Poles had a college degree, in 2002 that number had reached 16%. However, rural inhabitants are still behind

their urban counterparts. In 1988 only 2% of rural Poles had a college degree, while in 2002 this number had increased to 4.4%. Women in Poland are slightly better educated than men. In 2000 9.3% of women had a college degree compared to 8.9% of men.

The problem with international migrations seems to have also an impact on the situation in Poland. In every year since 1960 (!) Poland has had a negative net international migration, with the greatest loss in the 1980s. It is estimated that more than one million Poles definitively left their home country in this period. A significant portion of them had a college degree, which might lead to a conclusion about a negative brain drain from Poland, first of all as a result of worsening economic conditions under “late Communism,” as well as the hopeless political situation. The same tendency could be observed at the beginning of the 1990s, immediately after the major political breakthrough, primarily because of unstable economic situation. These were highly qualified people, (Kurcz, Podkanski, 1991) moving mainly to the “traditional” countries of Polish emigration, namely: Germany, United States and Canada. However in the mid-1990s one could observe the growing rate of so-called “temporary migration,” (see for example Okolski, 2002) with emigrants aiming especially for European Union countries and working there illegally in many cases. In 1990 one could also notice a quite new phenomenon, namely: the slow increase in people migrating to Poland, especially from countries such as: Germany (32% of such immigrants in 2003), United States (17%) as well as Ukraine (6%). A significant portion of them possess university degrees. So it could be said that since the mid-1990s Poland has started to experience a “brain gain” as well. Only some of these could be called re-emigrants i.e. those Polish citizens who left Poland mainly in the 1980s. However, at the same time, one should take into account the growing influx of immigrants from poor countries of Asia and Africa, mostly having an unregulated status.

Poland, like many other countries of the European Union, has experienced a problem with its ageing society in the last two decades. For example, minors (those under the age of 18) composed 30% of the Polish population in 1990. However, by 2002 this had dropped to the 22%. The average age (median) in Poland has also increased since 1990, from 32.5 to 36.2 years in 2003. The percentage of the population of the so-called “productive age” i.e. in the cohorts between 18 and 64 years of age, has grown in Poland during the period 1990 – 2003, from 57.5% to 63%. However, at the same time, the percentage of inhabitants in the so-called “post-productive age” i.e. in the cohorts over 64 years of age, has been growing as well, from 13% in 1990 to 15% in 2003. The last change has been most salient among the rural population, rising from 14.5% in 1990 to 15.5% in 2003. According to demographic prognoses, the percentage of the population at the productive age will peak in Poland by the year 2010.

All of these tendencies have resulted from major economic, as well as socio-cultural, changes in Polish society that were accelerated especially during the first decade of post-Communist transformation. They have been reflected in the demographic phenomena, namely: the decrease in the total fertility rate of Poland, from 2.27 in 1980 to 2.03 in 1990 to 1.36 in 2000 and, finally, to 1.22 in 2003, as well as an unstable family situation, reflected in the growing divorce rate (see table 5).

Table 5. Divorces in Poland

Year	Total	Urban	Rural	Urban (in %)	Number of divorces per 1000 marriages
1980	39,833	33,868	5,862	85.0	4.6
1990	42,436	34,299	7,287	80.8	4.6
2000	42,436	36,040	6,654	84.2	4.7
2003	48,632	40,876	7,669	84.0	5.4

Source: Central Statistical Office (GUS)

The ageing of Polish society, despite its relatively unadvanced status when compared to Western European societies, has gained attention from many public institutions such as the government and the church. A national discussion focusing on efforts to increase the birth-rate can be observed. It has been reflected in the last document issued by the Ministry of Social Policy formulating the National Strategy of Social Integration for Poland (Narodowa Strategia Integracji dla Polski, 2004). It contains four major aims, namely: 1) equal access to work, assets, rights, goods and services to all men and women able to work, 2) elimination and prevention of social exclusion, 3) support for the most sensitive categories, 4) mobilisation of all actors (public and private, state agencies, self-government agencies, NGO's, etc.) from economic political and social spheres in order to co-ordinate activities for national integration and social cohesion in Poland.

Characteristics of Civil Society at the National Level

Civil society manifests itself in the conscious involvement of citizens in public life and in the key part of indirect structures in the processes of social self-organisation.

One of the measures of civil society is political participation. In Poland, since 1989, interest in politics and participation in political elections has been decreasing at the national level but participation in local elections has remained steady. Electoral turnout in the first (1989) democratic municipal government elections was 42.3% of eligible voters, whereas in recent elections it was 44.2% (2002). In the first democratic Parliamentary elections (1991) the participation rate was 62% whereas in the recent one (2001) it was 46.29% of eligible voters.

In the first presidential elections (1990) 68% of voters participated but in the recent one (2000) this had declined to 54.56 %.

The Polish political scene consists of several registered political parties representing different political options. Most of them are characterized by an inconsistency between their ideological and economic programmes. The most coherent programmes are the ones of the liberal formations. Rightist and leftist formations differ mainly in their social origin and attitude to ideology. Paradoxically, some rightist formations of nationalist and populist orientation are more leftist in their economic programmes than the Democratic Left Alliance – the party of leftist origin, with a clearly liberal economic programme. Another feature of the Polish political scene is its instability. Once victorious, formations usually lose in the next elections. The main consequence of this changeability of political tastes of voters is the tendency of political parties and formations to internal divisions and changing names before the next elections.

Currently, the minority government formed by the Democratic Left Alliance rules in Poland, the party originating from the leftist traditions of the previous political and social system. The influences of the peasant parties originating from the former political system (the Polish People's Party) as well as of the populist Self-defence Party that emerged as a reaction to the liberal transformations in the Polish economy at the beginning of the nineties are both

clearly decreasing. However, the influences of the national-Catholic parties with anti-liberal orientation are growing (the League of Polish Families as well as the Law and Justice party). The Catholic Church is also an influential institution in Polish politics. Yet, the role of social organisations and associations is small. None of the Parliament members represents a social organization. All of them are representatives of political parties.

Citizens' trust in politics and politicians has fallen systematically. Very negative are citizens' attitudes towards the government and the central authorities' institution. Only 8-12% of the total number of respondents declares support for the government. Political attitudes and orientations are strongly diversified in regional arrangements. In the southern and eastern parts of the country, the national-Catholic option clearly prevails. In the central part of Poland the leftist orientation prevails, and in the north and west a rather liberal one dominates.

The number of non-governmental organisations is systematically growing in Poland. By the end of 1994, 29 000 organizations were registered; 32000 in 1997; and 58 000 by 2005. One should note that political parties, trade unions and the Catholic Church are not classified as NGOs. The basic types of non-governmental organisations are associations with a long tradition. Frequently, these were established before World War I. The most important ones in rural areas are Voluntary Fire Brigades, the Union of Rural Clubs and Organisations, Rural Housewives' Clubs.

Most registered organizations' activity is in the sphere of education and childcare; this accounts for 41% of the groups, health protection accounts for 34%, and social assistance – accounts for 24%. Problems of the countryside (2.8%), transport (2%), and security (1.4%) involve the fewest organizations.

This quantitative growth of NGOs is accompanied by a drop in the number of people participating in the activity of said organisations and associations. Surveys from 1998 showed systematic involvement in the activity of organisations by about 18-20% of Poland's total population. Currently, this rate is estimated to have fallen to 10-15%. "Studies conducted by the KLON / JAWOR foundation reveal that the number of voluntary workers active in these organisations has dropped from 87% in 1997 to 47% in 2003. At present, 80% of organizations do not conduct a constant recruitment for voluntary workers. About 60% of organisations declare that volunteers are professionally active people, and 42% of volunteers are pupils and students" (Gliński 2004)

Other studies conducted by the foundation show that 58% of a total of 58 000 registered organisations do not have any activity at all.

The basic sources of income for these organizations are membership fees, donations from persons or firms, as well as government subsidies. The largest financial sums are acquired by organisations that manage economic activity or those organisations which have access to foreign firms and organisations' grants or grants from the state budget. About 67% of the non - governmental organizations in Poland have a maximum yearly income of 50,000 zloty (12,500 euro). Another 25.7% of organisations have an income between 50,001 – 500,000 per year, while 3.3 % of the organisations have an annual income of over 5 million zloty. It is clear that a large majority of organisations struggle with financial problems, and a very small number have superb financial conditions for their operation.

The level of involvement in team actions organized spontaneously does not usually exceed 3% of Poland's total adult population. Social initiatives aiming at dismissal of negatively evaluated local authorities do not have binding consequences because rarely is the legal requirement of 30% public participation met in various kinds of public referenda. The results of the referenda on Poland's accession to the EU as well as on the new constitution were positive exceptions.

Realization of civil projects occurs mainly through the Local Democracy Development Foundation and the Batory Foundation. The main projects are "Against Corruption,"

"Laboratory," "The Transparent Municipality," "Leader Plus," "Supporting Local Pacts for Employment," "Life Activation of the Countryside, Counteracting Marginalization," "Partnership for the Third Sector," "Citizens and Local Government," and "the DIALOGUE programme." Many of these programmes are carried out with cooperation from the Polish-American Freedom Foundation, which is one of the main sponsors of implemented programmes. In general, systematic civil activity is not a common phenomenon in Poland. It is conducted by a few large mass organisations that have functioned for many years and by new foundations having large financial support from abroad.

2. Context Analysis

Regional Research Area (I) – *Malopolska Region*

In 2003, 3 252 949 people lived in Malopolska. It was 8.5% of the total population of Poland. Ranked by population, Malopolska is fourth among the sixteen regions of Poland.

Malopolska's urbanisation rate is among the lowest in Poland. Only 50.1% of Malopolska populations live in urban areas. In recent years, i.e. between 2000 and 2003, the number of rural inhabitants has even increased by 36,500 persons (2.3%).

The birth-rate in Malopolska has been among the highest in Poland. In 2003 it reached the level of 9.9 births per 1000 persons (8.7 in urban and 11.0 in rural areas, respectively). The net birth-rate had a positive balance, i.e. 1 per 1000 persons, mainly because of its level in rural areas (2.2). The situation in urban areas was entirely different. The rate reached the level of -0.3. Malopolska has been the region of more dynamic population development than the average for Poland. The total fertility rate reached the level of 1.297 (1.19 in urban areas and 1.848 in rural areas). However, as is the case for the whole country, such rates are below population replacement level.

When considering the issue of life expectancy, Malopolska again seems to be a peculiar area. Male life expectancy reached 72 years in 2003. It was the highest among all the regions in Poland. For women the same measure rose to 80 years (second position from the top in Poland among all sixteen regions).

Malopolska families seem to be more stable (judging by the divorce rate) than families in Poland overall. In 2003 the divorce rate reached the level of 0.8 per 1000 of existing marriages. Moreover, one can observe a slight decrease from the 1990 level of 0.9. That rate has remained almost unchanged even when comparing it with the earlier period, since 1980. In 2003 Malopolska had the lowest (with the only exception being the Swietorzyskie region) divorce rate in Poland and has been one of the three regions (along with Swietkorzyskie and Lodzkie) that has experienced a declining number of divorces. However, at the same time one might notice the growing number of separations resulting from the introduction of the new family law introduced in Poland with the strong support of the Roman Catholic Church.

Despite the low number of separations (only 224 cases in 2003) it should be stressed that the number has doubled since 2000.

Like the rest of Poland, Malopolska has experienced the ageing of its population in recent decades. However, this process is not so advanced in the region. In 2003 the portion of inhabitants of the so-called “pre-productive age” was 23% (22% in Poland overall), of the “productive age” 62 (63 in Poland) and of the “post-productive age” 15 (the same in Poland). The average age of Malopolska inhabitants has been 34.7 (36.2 in Poland).

Under the post-communist transformation Malopolska has always belonged to the group of regions that have been characterised by the lowest rates of unemployment (Kwiatkowski, 2003). However, in the last years the rate of unemployment has increased from 12.2% in 2000 to 16% in 2003. It should be stressed that this rise in unemployment has been experienced especially by men. In 2000 women constituted 56% of all unemployed in Malopolska, while in 2003 that percentage dropped to the level of 51.6%. Looking at the rate of unemployment, the whole region of Malopolska has varied widely. In the city of Krakow (the capital city of the region) the rate of unemployment reached 8.3% in 2003, while the southeastern rural area of the region saw 20.3% in the same year.

Table 6: Labour Market Division in Malopolska (by % age)

Year	Primary sector	Secondary sector	Tertiary sector
2000	42.9	21.7	35.3
2003	23.5	27.0	49.5

Source: Central Statistical Office (GUS)

Such different rates of unemployment have been partly a result of the significant and rapid changes in the labour market (see: table 6). Between the years 2000 and 2003, the percentage of the labour force working in the primary sector has dropped dramatically due to changes in agricultural economy. Malopolska agriculture, dominated by a significant number of very small and traditional farms, has experienced severe crisis and massive withdrawal from farming. At the same time, due to the peculiar environmental conditions of Malopolska, one might observe the rapid growth of people working in services (tourism, retail sector, etc.).

Civil Society in Malopolska

According to the Klon/Jawor Association there are about four thousand non-governmental organizations (NGOs) registered in Malopolska. In Malopolska, just as in all of Poland, an increase in the third sector – very intense in the nineties - has slowed down, however, we are still experiencing a progressive tendency. Comparing all regions of Poland, Malopolska has the third highest concentration of NGOs (measured as the number of NGOs per 10 000 inhabitants) According to GUS, the highest concentration within Malopolska is in Nowy Sącz (26) and in Kraków (21.1). The western part of Malopolska is much more developed considering its density of NGOs. It is also worth noting, that half of the population of Malopolska (50.1%) inhabits rural areas which are characterized by small numbers of registered organizations. High density of NGOs is typical for urban areas, especially for cities. However, one mustn't forget about the many informal forms of associating and civic activity

of rural inhabitants. There are many civic committees, parish councils, school groups, informal sport clubs, associations of housekeepers, and Voluntary Fire Brigades (OSP) that organise public life in rural areas. Taking into account these types of organisations and local activities civil society in rural areas seems to be much stronger than it is shown in official data.

The social base for civil society in Poland consists mainly of managers and intellectuals (according to CBOS 62% of the members of this category belong to at least one NGO), farmers (53%), skilled workers (49%), people working on their own outside of agriculture (47%) and – to a lesser degree – pupils and students (43%). In general, the following personal features favour the possibility for commitment to the local community: higher education, a good financial situation, professional activity, young or middle age, being a man, religiousness and clear political views. The lowest number of community workers can be found in the weakest social groups (unemployed, housewives, old and poor people). These tendencies concern the entire country as well as Malopolska.

The main areas of NGO activity in the region are: sports and recreation, culture, and social services. There are very strong sports organizations which run many types of teams, clubs, and gymnastic associations. There are also many cultural organizations working to preserve cultural heritage, traditions and monuments. They include associations of enthusiasts for towns and villages, organisations connected with Malopolska's theatres, musical and dance organizations, science associations and artist associations. Nowadays, the strongest organisations are those that provide social services. This is a very large and strong group of organizations which takes over many of the local governments' tasks. Also, unions and associations of national minorities are strong in terms of finances and human resources. Other significant groups of organisations are the ecological and humanitarian ones. Not all groups are this strong, as organisations supporting civil initiatives are relatively weak and underdeveloped.

Activity of NGOs in Malopolska plays a significant role in the development of the communities in the whole region and is appreciated by the local governments. Local NGOs take over many of the local government's tasks. At this point, it is worth stressing the unusual effectiveness of informal groups and committees (e.g., committees in favour of building a school, water supply or road, etc.) functioning in rural areas. They are jointly responsible for the civilisation progress which has been taking place in Malopolska in recent years.

According to ISP UJ research, 75% of Malopolska's NGOs use volunteer work and 35% of them employ or cooperate with experts. 60% of NGOs declare possessing fixed assets (computers, telephones, faxes). However, the research also shows that 83% of interviewed organizations do not possess any relevant property. There are very few organisations that possess land (8%), means of transport, accommodation or buildings (8%). However, some progressive tendency in this area can be observed.

Gaining funds to support their activity is one of the biggest problems for regional NGOs. According to Klon/Jawor data, the budget of half of the organisations is lower than 19 thousand PLN. 15% of NGOs have a budget of 50 to 100 thousand PLN. It should be noted that, according to Polish law it is forbidden for NGOs to accumulate capital. This is why local NGOs have difficulties accumulating financial means for participation in international programmes. NGO's income can be divided into three sources: (1) income from all kinds of charges, (2) income from public institutions, and (3) income from the private sector (philanthropy). NGOs in Malopolska have very diversified sources of income. 57% of them charge membership fees or dues, 51% accept donations from individual persons, 40% accept donations from companies, and 42.2% benefit from governmental subsidies. A high percentage of organisations (31%) declare income from their economic activities. Also, a relatively high percentage of NGOs (18%) use public funds from UE (grants from different

kinds of UE programmes). However, the main sources of income in terms of budget share are membership charges (13.6% of budget), economic activity (11%), governmental subsidies (10.1%), and donations from individual persons and companies (in both cases 8.8%).

According to The Public Advantage Activity and Volunteer Act, which came into effect on April 24, 2003, local governments are obliged to cooperate with NGOs. According to Jagiellonian University's research, 91% of interviewed local governments cooperated with NGOs before that law came into force. The main form of cooperation was financial support for activities undertaken by NGOs (54%). The percentage of other forms of support for NGOs such as training, consultations and making office equipment accessible is also relatively large. Moreover, the act obliges local governments to elaborate annual programmes of cooperation with NGOs. In October 2004 this obligatory programme was detailed by 57% of interviewed local governments. 8% of governments were working on it and 35% of them hadn't even begun. The cooperation between local governments and local NGOs is being developed mainly in the fields linked to local governments' tasks. They include sport (74%), culture (62%), social care (49%), addiction prevention (46%) and education (32%). 76% of local governments state that they include NGOs in decision-making processes.

Governments point to two main barriers in developing cooperation with NGOs: (1) lack of sufficient financial means, and (2) weakness of local NGOs (poor factual knowledge, internal competition holding up cooperation, lack of proper representation for the sector). Local governments complain of frequently changing regulations and bureaucracy as well. NGOs, on the other hand, accuse local governments of a lack of transparent rules and standards, poor factual knowledge of officials, and the politicisation of cooperation. NGOs state that the poor relations between sectors – beside lack of funds, office equipment and accommodations – are the main barriers in development of the third sector in Poland.

Regional Research Area (II) – Lodzkie Region

The Lodzkie region lies in central Poland. It is the 6th most populous (2.6 million inhabitants) province in Poland and the 9th largest among the 16 provinces in terms of total area (18,219 sq. Km.). It is one of the most densely populated provinces. There are 146 persons per sq. km., while the national average is 123 persons. It has one of the highest urbanisation rates. The average monthly gross pay is 1498 PLN, 88.3% of the average in Poland; this places the Lodzkie region in the 11th position among the 16 Polish provinces.

The rate of registered unemployment is 18% which is a little higher than the Polish average. Also high, in comparison to other provinces, are the expenditures on education and research per inhabitant (99.9 PLN); this places Lodzkie Province in the 3rd place in the country.

As of December 31, 2002 the population of Łódź was 2,607.4 thousand. There was a slight drop of 2.7% when compared to the 1996 population which accounted for 2,680.4 thousand people. In the studied period no major change was noted in the female-to-male ratio. In 1996 women constituted 52.1% of the total population (1 396,1 thousand) and in 2002, although their number decreased by 32.5 thousand (i.e. by 2.3%), their share of the population of the Łódź region was 52.3%, which means it was 0.2 percentage points higher. In 2000 there were 109 women per 100 men. By 2002 the rate increased to 110.

In the period 1996-2002 the structure of the population living in urban and rural areas did not change. Nearly 65% of the population lived in urban areas and more than every third person in rural areas. However, substantial changes occurred regarding economic age groups. From 1996 to 2002 the number of people of working age rose by 3.2 percentage points (from

59.2% to 62.4%), but this was a bit lower in rural areas (2.7 percentage points) and a bit higher in urban areas (3.4 percentage points).

As for population age structure in 2002, 62.4% of the people were of working age, 20.4% were of pre-working age and 17.1% were of post-working age, whereas in 1996 people of working age made up 59.2% of the total population, and those of pre-working age and post-working age comprised 24.3% and 16.5% of the population, respectively. In 2002 there were 60 persons of pre-working age per 100 persons of working age whereas in 1996 their number amounted to 69.

In this period some disturbing changes occurred in the demographic structure of the population due to an increase in the number of people of post-working age and a decline in the percentage of people of pre-working age. It needs to be stressed, however, that despite a drop in the total population of 2.7%, the number of people of working age and post-working age increased by 2.5% and 0.5%, respectively, between 1996 and 2002. A major drop was recorded in the group of people of pre-working age, as their number fell by 17.7%. However the decline in this group's share was greater in urban (by 21.1%) than in rural areas (by 12%). The share of inhabitants of post-working age decreased slightly in rural areas (by 0.2 percentage points) and increased in towns and cities (by 1 percentage point). A 0.5% decline in the number of people of post-working age in the region results from a decline of their number by 3.7% in rural areas and an increase of their population by 3.2% in urban areas.

The birth rate has been falling gradually in the Łódź region for several years. In 2002 the number of births amounted to 22.2 thousand and in comparison with the year 2000 the number declined by 5.6%. At the same time in Łódź region a negative population growth is observed. It has exceeded the level of 8.4 thousand annually for several years now. In 2000-2002 the relative population growth rate did not change, and amounted to -3.2 per 1000 inhabitants. What did change, however, was its values for urban and rural areas. In 2000 population growth rate in rural areas was -2.1 per 1000 inhabitants and by 2002 it dropped to -2.6 per 1000 inhabitants. In urban areas an opposite tendency can be noted. In 2000 the population growth rate was at the level of -3.8 and in 2002 rose to -3.6 per 1000 inhabitants. The National Population and Housing Census carried out in 2002 allowed for evaluation of the level of education among the inhabitants of the region. It covered people aged 13 and above who amounted to 2 253.4 thousand. The results indicated that 9.2% (208.1 thousand) had a university degree, 31.7% (713.6 thousand) had completed secondary and post-secondary education, 21% (473.6 thousand) had secondary vocational education and 32.3% (727.0 thousand) declared completing primary education.

Women's share among people with higher, post-secondary, secondary and primary education is bigger and accounts for 57.3%, 75.0%, 56.7% and 54.0%, respectively.

In the Łódź region there are considerable differences in the educational level between rural and urban areas. Every third person over 13 years of age lives in a rural area, whereas 66.1% of people live in town and cities. 86.3% of people with higher education degree, 80.8% with post-secondary education, and 77.8% with secondary education are city dwellers. According to the National Population Census 17.5% of Łódź region inhabitants aged 13 and over (394.4 thousand persons) are still learning. Their share is a bit higher in urban areas and they account for 18.4%, whereas in urban areas they account for 15.7%. 12.0% of people with a higher education degree are continuing their education but their share is higher in rural areas (17.4%, 5.0 thousand persons) than in urban areas (11.1%, 20.0 thousand persons). As for people with secondary education, those who are continuing to learn constitute 17.6% (15.9% in rural and 18.1% in urban areas).

In the period 2000-2002 the number of workers dropped from 1066,0 thousand to 1039,6 thousand persons. In this period there was a slightly bigger number of employed men

than women, who constituted 49% of all workers. Throughout this period the number of working persons fell from 403 to 399 per 1000 persons. Nearly three fourths of the population work in the private sector and from 2000 to 2002 their share rose from 75.5% to 77.4%. As for the structure of workers in 2002, the dominating sectors were services (41.6%), agriculture, hunting and forestry (33.2%) and industry and construction (25.2%). In comparison with the year 2000 there was a slight increase in persons working in agriculture, hunting, forestry and services (by 0.7% in each sector), and a slight drop in those employed in industry and construction (by 1.5%).

In 2002 the activity rate was 55.8%, which meant it had decreased from 2000 by 1.4 percentage points. The rate indicated diversity between urban and rural areas as it was higher for rural areas where, over two years, it rose from 58.0 to 58.6 (whereas in the case of urban areas it dropped from 56.8 to 54.4).

In 2000-2002, the employment rate in urban areas dropped from 46.4 to 42.6 and slightly rose in rural areas from 49.5 to 50.2%. Throughout the years 2000-2002 the number of the unemployed registered in labour offices increased. In 2000, there were 208.1 thousand registered unemployed people and in 2002 their number rose to 234.9 thousand. The sex structure of the unemployed changed as women's share decreased from 52.3% to 49.5% which was accompanied by a simultaneous increase in the number of men.

The number of unemployed young people below 24 years of age fell from 28.3% in 2000 to 25.9 % in 2002. At the same time, the number of the long-term unemployed increased from 47.6% to 54.2%. The percentage of people not entitled to unemployment benefits increased from 78.8% in 2000 to 82.8% in 2002.

The registered unemployment rate increased from 16.3% in 2000 to 18.4% in 2002. In 2002 persons with lower secondary and primary education constituted the largest group of unemployed (35.7%), whereas the smallest group consisted of people with higher education (4.4%). However, the number of unemployed with a higher education degree increased most from the year 2000 (by 1.6 percentage points). In 2002, the highest unemployment rates were recorded in the districts of Zgierz (24.7%), Kutno (24.4%) and Tomaszów (24.1%) and the lowest in Skierniewice district (9.4%).

With regard to civil participation the Lodzkie Province is one of the most passive regions of Poland. The rates of participation in the latest presidential, parliamentary and local government elections are lower than the national average – 61% turnout in the presidential elections (2000), 46.59% turnout in the parliamentary elections (2001) and 41.8% turnout in the local elections at the municipality level (2002). One should be aware of a very high level of differentiation of the citizens' electoral activity. The lowest rates of participation occur in the largest cities of the region: Lodz, Pabianice and Zgierz (respectively, local elections in 2002 in Lodz – 25.1%, Pabianice – 31.5 %, Zgierz – 33.1 %), and the highest rates occur in rural municipalities (Kleszczów 88.8 % and Paradyz 71%), i.e. in areas where large and effectively functioning industrial enterprises are located. It should be pointed out that the Belchatow electric plant is situated in the Kleszczow municipality and that there is a large ceramic tiles factory in the Paradyz municipality. Generally, the population of rural municipalities manifests higher electoral activity than the population living in urban municipalities.

The characteristic feature of the regional political scene is the relative equilibrium between the left-wing parties (the Democratic Left Alliance and the Union of Labour – 8 members for every 36 in the regional parliament) and the populist parties of rural origin such as Self Defence (8 members) or nationalist origin such as the League of Polish Families' (6 members). The Polish People's Party also plays an important role. Civic Platform in turn, as

well as the rest of the parties plays a small part in the present arrangement. Currently the province is run by a coalition of three parties – The League of Polish Families, SelfDefence and The Polish People's Party, as well as the Club of Non-United Councillors.

In the Lodzkie Province in 1997 there were in total 1547 non-governmental organisations registered, the total number in the country being 32,000. In 2003 the number grew to 2,235 in Lodzkie Province and to 58,565 in Poland. This constituted only 5% of the total NGOs operating in Poland. Of the total number of organisations mentioned, foundations made up only 14%. As studies conducted by KLON / JAWOR revealed, about 25% of registered organisations did not show any activity at all in 1997. The data from 2002 show that the rate of inactive organizations has increased to about 45% of the total number of registered organisations.

The main areas of activity for NGOs in the Lodzkie Province are: 1) Education and Childcare (45% of organizations indicate this type of activity), 2) Science and technology (27%), 3) Health protection (25%), and 4) Charity and self-help (19%). The activity of solving the problems of rural areas occupies a very low position (3%), and so does the activity of regional and local development (9%).

According to the declarations of the representatives of non-governmental organisations, the basic sources of income are membership fees (50%-70% of indicated sources), donations from persons and firms (55-65% of indications), the government budget (20-30%) and the municipality budget (15-25%). The number of people employed by NGOs in Lodzkie province does not exceed 1% of the total number of employed persons. However, according to surveys, about 10-12% of the total adult population of the region declare participation in an NGO activity.

In the Lodzkie Province four programmes connected with the development of civil society are carried out: the "Against Corruption" programme organized by The Batory Foundation, "Transparent Municipality" organized by The Polish-American Freedom Foundation and The Batory Foundation, the "Laboratory" programme organized by the Local Democracy Development Foundation, and the "Leader Plus". Only four municipalities of the Lodzkie Province take part in these programmes.

Residents of the Lodzkie province also participated in the nationwide charity fundraising campaign for public aims, called "The Great Orchestra of Holiday's Help". During this campaign, 1,300,000 zloty was collected in the province.

Residents of Lodzkie Province evaluate the activity of the government and other authorities in the country much more negatively than residents of other provinces. The percentage of negative responses (data from 2002) in reference to the government was 71%, while the national average is 63%, and in reference to the Sejm (the lower chamber of Parliament) it was 69%, with the national average being 64%, and in reference to the president it was 16.8%, with the average being 16.1 %. Respective data for the Malopolska Province are as follows: negative attitude towards the government - 58%, to the Sejm - 62%, to the president -24%. 55% of Lodzkie residents supported Poland's integration to the EU, which was a slightly lower percentage than the 58% who supported it nationwide. 27% of Lodzkie residents opposed the EU integration at a rate very slightly higher than the 26% nationwide.

3. Case Studies – Analysis of LIAs

LIA I: Nowy Targ Gmina – Malopolska Region

Gmina Nowy Targ is situated in the southern part of Malopolska voivodship, in the Podhale sub-region. It covers 207.62 sq km and contains 20 villages. The gmina has a typically mountainous character with a well-developed tourism industry. A basic feature of the local community is the important role of tradition and a strong local identity. The specific highlander's culture (kultura góralska) is the key factor, shaping the condition of local civil society.

Here is a basic overview of the demographic background of Nowy Targ gmina: In 2004 there were over 22 000 inhabitants, of which 51% were females. Population density is 104 persons /sq. km. The working age indicator (non-working age population per 100 persons of working age) was 71.

The vital statistics in 2003 were as follows (all data per 1000 inhabitants): natural increase – 5.84, marriages – 4.33, live births – 12.44, deaths – 6.96.

In 2003, 807 employed¹⁵ persons were recorded in Nowy Targ gmina, of which over 55% (447) were women. In the public sector, the number of employed persons was 445, whereas in the private sector it was 362. The breakdown according to functional division was as follows: There were eight persons employed in the agriculture and forestry sector, 220 in the industry and construction sector, and 579 in services (199 in market and 380 in non-market services). 954 people were officially unemployed, of which the majority were men (500 persons).

The structure of migrations in 2003 was as follows: internal net migration was +55 persons, and international net migration was +2. The total influx into the gmina was 170 persons, of which 92 were from urban areas, 63 from rural areas and 15 persons from abroad. The total outflow in the same period was 113 persons, of which 40 persons moved into urban areas, 60 into rural areas and 13 went abroad. However, it needs to be stressed that these are the official statistics and do not reflect the actual scale of migrations. It is due to the fact that most of the migrations to the USA (a traditional destination for those leaving the region) are illegal, hence they are not being recorded.

There is also another aspect of these migrations that is not shown in the official statistics. In recent years a negative balance of migrations among young people has been occurring in the gmina. Firstly, many young people, after graduating from high school are leaving the Nowy Targ area to study in academic cities (mostly in Krakow). After completing their education only a very small percentage of them return to Podhale.

Secondly, due to the high unemployment rate in the area and the lack of job opportunities, young people are effectively forced to move away in search of a job. These are mainly international migrations, predominantly to the USA (permanently or for a long-term stay) or to Western Europe.

As a result, a kind of “negative selection” takes place, as the most ambitious, talented and active young people tend to leave LIA1; it need not be pointed out that such a situation has a very negative influence on the condition of local civil society.

In terms of civil society, the Nowy Targ community (gmina) is to a large extent representative of the whole Podhale sub-region. The main feature that determines the structure

¹⁵ According to the actual workplace, excluding economic entities employing up to 9 persons, including budget sphere entities irrespective of the number of employees (excluding Ministry of home Affairs and National Defence as well as clergy, foundations and other organisations) excluding private farms in agriculture.

of civil society is the domination of traditional institutional patterns. As the mayor of the community put it, “our rural communities keep to the traditional types of organizations. People do not like the novelties”. This is why local citizens’ activity is focused almost exclusively on the organizations that are deeply-rooted in peasant traditions. The main pillars of local civil society in LIA1 are The Voluntary Fire Brigades (Ochotnicze Straże Pożarne), the Associations of the Rural Housekeepers (Kola Gospodyn Wiejskich) and The Folk Sport Clubs/Associations (Ludowe Kluby/ Zespoły Sportowe). In addition, there is also very significant movement focused on the local highlander’s culture, represented by the Association of Podhale People (Zwiazek Podhalan).

The first three types of organisation are widespread in most rural areas in Poland and constitute the main frame of social activities. The Voluntary Fire Brigades do not only protect local communities in case of fire and help them in case of emergency, but also uses their organisational resources to support the social life. The local VFB building is in most cases the centre for public meetings and hosts both community gatherings as well as traditional dance events.

The Associations of Rural Housekeepers are organisations of rural women, focused mainly on preserving local folk habits. They also carry out training sessions on household activities and support folk groups. Having such great organisational potential these associations are involved in most public events in rural areas.

The Folk Sport Clubs/Associations are more deeply examined further in the text as a case study. However, it is worth emphasizing at this point that these are multifunctional organisations which do not deal exclusively with sport activities. What is also important is that they are based not so much on general local identity, but rather on the identities of particular villages. This can even create conflicts, as is the case with the distribution of financial grants from gmina. Local authorities must balance their support, to avoid accusations of injustice, as in the favouring of a certain village over others.

The Association of Podhale People is a very specific organisation for the Podhale area. It carries out many social activities, trying to promote the local cultural heritage. Unlike the first type of organisations it is not clearly gender-oriented (there are both men and women involved). The association possesses real social power in the region, having members who are gmina’s councillors, governmental officials, teachers and local leaders. Nowy Targ gmina has one of the oldest and most active divisions of the APP. It is involved in the organisation of the traditional cultural events, such as The Highlander’s Harvest Festival, The Highlander’s Horse Races and The Competition of the Religious Poetry. Certainly it is one of the most important elements of the gmina’s social network.

All of these organisations are based on the local lay knowledge and became a part of the local peasant tradition. They are managed by the local people and their activities are shaped according to the local needs and conditions.

To complete the description of the main features of civil society in Nowy Targ gmina, one has to mention the important role of the Catholic organisations, established by the local parish. Religion is a very significant element of social life in the Podhale area and churches are natural centres of public activities in each village.

As LIA1 lies in a borderland, there are also some aspects of civil society concerning the ethnic minorities and cross-border cooperation. A quite large Slovak community lives in Nowy Targ, and it is well organised and has its own schools and associations. Its relations with the surrounding Polish majority are friendly and intensive. This is additionally supported by the Euroregion Tatry – the organisation for Polish–Slovak cooperation. The Euroregion Tatry was established on 26 August, 1994, by common agreement of Polish and Slovak local governments. It is a voluntary association of gminas and powiats from both countries, willing

to intensify their mutual cooperation. There are 18 gminas from Malopolska Region (including Nowy Targ gmina) on the Polish side, with a total area of 1,952 sq. km., where 245,000 people live. On the Slovak side there are 9 powiats with a total area of 6,572 sq. km. and 223,000 inhabitants.

The main goal of the organisation is to create better conditions towards cross border cooperation in the areas of culture, nature protection and tourism. Euroregion supports itself from the participants' fees (a certain sum per each inhabitant).

In 1998, the Small Project Fund, managed by Euroregion Tatry, was established within the framework of the Integrated Programme for the Polish Eastern Border. The total budget of EUR 600,000 at the Fund's disposal was divided into five equal shares of 120,000 each, managed by five euroregions. It was their first opportunity to use the Union funds, at the same time being an excellent exercise in the field of goal-setting, selecting the most effective means of attaining them, careful planning and learning how to examine the results of such actions. The realisation of the Programme intensified the cross border cooperation in the Podhale area, ensuring the necessary financial means. Many different initiatives were supported including youth exchanges, folk festivals, international sport events or creation of new tourist routes in the Tatra Mountains. Currently the Euroregion Tatry is the coordination unit for several EU programs and the Polish-Slovak relations in the region are constantly being developed.

Far more problematic is the situation of the Romany minority. Around 3-3,5 thousand Romany (which is around 20% of their population in Poland) live in the southern part of Malopolska. They belong to the so-called Bergitka Roma group (Mountain or Carpathian Romany). The situation of this group is the worst of all Romany in the country, as the overwhelming majority struggles with poverty and very poor living conditions. In Nowy Targ gmina there are several settlements of Romany minority, spread in a few villages. All Romany communities are endangered by social exclusion and this constitutes one of the most burning issues of the gmina's social policy.

Case Studies – Nowy Targ Gmina

1. “Through Sport to stronger Civil Society”

Ensuring financial means for local sport organisations in Nowy Targ gmina does not have the frames of the typical program. It is rather a specific approach to the issue of building strong local communities. The gmina's authorities supported several sport organisations throughout the 1990s but this had a rather irregular and provisional character. Only recently did that support become a significant element of the government's policy. In 2001 an official procedure was introduced in order to create more open and fair rules for awarding grants to particular sport organisations. Now such decisions are made as a result of project competitions. The amounts of money dedicated to local sport have also increased significantly.

Promoters of the program/project: There are two main promoters of the program. The first one is the local government, with special involvement of the current mayor. Local authorities, including the gmina's council, decided to dedicate more funds to the development of sport NGOs. That decision was strongly influenced by these organisations. They constitute the second key promoter of the program. The Folk Sport Clubs/Associations (FSC/A) are to extend their activity and carry out the initiatives that are beneficial for the local society.

Target group: The program is addressed to the gmina's community in general. It is the recognition of the fact that these organisations play a very special role in the local rural

communities. They deal not only with sport activities but also organise the social life and reinforce local identity. Special benefits are expected to be achieved for the young people.

Financial issues: There are no data available about the precise budget. The structure of the financial support to FSC/A is as follows: 90% of money is from the local government, the rest comes from the individual sponsors and the economic activities of the respective NGOs.

Social history of the program: As it was mentioned earlier, there are no specific time limits for that program (e.g. starting point, designed length or milestones). It is to be a permanent element of the local government's policy. But at this point, it should be emphasized that the activity of the Folk Sport Clubs/Associations have a very long tradition. Most of them were established in the particular villages of the gmina in 1950s. Since then, they became a crucial element of the local social systems (along with Voluntary Fire Brigades and Associations of Rural Housekeepers). However, after the transitions in 1989 the financial crisis and lack of governmental support seriously threatened their existence (several Clubs were forced to suspend their activities). Since the mid-1990s the Folk Sport movement has begun to revive but it is still suffering from a lack of funds.

Objectives: There are several expected results of the program. Firstly it is aimed to develop the civic activity of local people. As the specific conditions of rural communities make the introduction of the new type of organisations very difficult ("people do not like novelties"), local governments decided to reinforce the existing structures. The Folk Sport Clubs/Associations are to mobilise the social energy in their local environment. They also should develop local identity and create emotional connections with the village. A strong FSC/A will be able to become the centre of the social life, the efficient organiser of public events. Another important goal is to create attractive possibilities for the rural youth.

Realisation team: The program is implemented exclusively on the basis of the local organisational resources. The assumption is to revitalize the tradition of FSC/A, and they are given the financial means.

Forms of knowledge used: The program is designed and implemented on the basis of local lay knowledge. As it was mentioned earlier in the text, the FSC/A are deeply rooted in local tradition and are run by the local people. However, there is also an element of managerial knowledge since the local government is awarding grants according to the bureaucratic procedures. This ensures transparency and fairness on the one hand, but on the other causes problems for some FSC/A (they are not used to the "complicated paperwork").

Impact, Contribution to RSD: The first results of the program are already visible. Local FSC/A having stable financial support are able to intensify their multifunctional activity. They attract and train young people, which is especially important when there are very few other possibilities addressed to rural youth. The FSC/A also causes local people to identify more with their villages. This helps to mobilise the social energy and to initiate common activities in other fields. Such development of local identity is one of the major conditions of successful building of civil society.

Stronger FSC/A have better resources to organise social life. They became major actors in organising public events (the football stadium is in many cases the only place where such events can be take place in the village). The important position of FSC/a in the local environment allow them to developed intensive cooperation with the other NGOs. Traditionally they cooperate with Associations of Rural Housekeepers and Voluntary Fire Brigades. But there are also examples of common initiatives, organised together with Association of Podhale People or the religious movements. This is a significant contribution to the creation of strong social networks in rural areas.

Future main plans: The program is to be continued in the coming years. As local sport activist got used to the new procedures, there were no major problems or conflicts at this

field. The only serious threat is the lack of funds that could force local government to suspend their support for Folk sport Clubs/Associations.

2. “The Governmental Pilot Program for the Romany Minority”.

Promoters of the program/Project: The second case study program concerns the very specific problem of ethnic minorities. The Nowy Targ gmina is one of the several areas in the southern Malopolska region that is inhabited by the Romany minority. Small settlements of the Romany are located in several villages in LIA 1, namely Ostrowsko, Szaflary, Czarny Dunajec. Because in the case of this minority the accumulation of the social problems caused very serious problems that could not have been solved at the local level, the program was designed and coordinated by the Polish government. However, during the process of implementation the local governments at the voivodship and gmina level played the most important roles. In addition, several NGOs that deal with Romany's problems were also involved. Finally, representatives of the minority itself took part in the program as well. As a result, the list of promoters in the Nowy Targ gmina includes: The Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Malopolska voivodship's authorities, the gmina's government and the local Romany community representatives.

Target Group: The program was addressed mainly to the Romany community in the gmina. This social group suffers from poverty and social exclusion. It is caused by an extremely high level of unemployment, lack of education, a high crime rate and poor living conditions. The program was designed to overcome these problems, prevent social exclusion, and integrate Romany with the rest of local community. In that sense, the whole population of the gmina constitutes the target group, however the non-Romany inhabitants are rather passive actors.

Financial issues: The program is funded jointly by the State government, local governments (voivodship and gmina) and the EU programs. Its total budget in 2001 was 500 000 PLN, in 2002 2.5 million PLN and in 2003 2.6 million PLN, but only part of this money was designated to Nowy Targ gmina.

Social history of the Program: The program was initiated in 2001 and has no definitive end date. The first, three-year phase ended in 2003 and currently the second phase is ongoing. In the next few years, the program is planned to be expanded to the whole territory of Poland.

Objectives: The main objective is to improve the Romany's situation in the long term. It means that the priority is given to the instruments that help to include Romany in the local community and enable them to function in its economic realities. Hence, the core element is the promotion of education among Romany, both school children and adults. Financial help is given to pay for the school equipment and fees. Teachers are paid to organise the additional classes for Romany pupils. And most importantly, the special Romany education assistants are hired with the aim to influence their own community.

Another objective is to improve the living conditions of Romany by financing infra-structural investments. Finally, the money is being spent on educational actions, exhibitions, festivals and lectures that are designed to change the negative stereotypes occurring in the rest of society.

Realisation team: In Nowy Targ the gmina program is implemented by governmental officials, social workers, teachers and Romany assistants (one for each Romany community).

Forms of knowledge used: The program is designed and implemented mainly on the basis of expert and managerial knowledge. The major assumptions were formulated by the external specialist, but involvement of the local government brings elements of local knowledge, as well (however managerial and expert type as well).

Because the Romany representatives were also included in the project's implementation, some elements of local lay knowledge are present in it. This is, however, a rather modest share.

Such a ratio of knowledge input does not seem to be optimal for successful realisation of the program's objectives. One significant conclusion after the first phase was that the modest share of local (Romany's) lay knowledge should be increased in the future.

Impact, contribution to RSD: As the main objective of the program is to reduce social exclusion and include Romany into the wider gmina community, it contributes to the social aspect of overall sustainability. Limitation of poverty in Romany families and promotion of education will increase the well-being of the Romany minority but also that of the entire gmina's population. After four years of implementation, the first effects are already visible. The most effective was without a doubt the educational element of the program, especially the institution of Romany classroom assistants, which turned out to be very successful. As the interviewed Romany said, more children are attending school classes and they have better results. This is a very promising outcome.

Another positive effect is the revitalisation of the Romany's civil activities. For purposes of the program, the regional Association of Romany in Limanowa was chosen as a main agent. It helped to strengthen the structures and give the Romany's local leaders the necessary experience. Currently they not only participate in the annual consultations about the program, but also act on a daily basis to solve the problems of their communities.

Future main plans: The program is to be continued in the coming years. The main challenge is to ensure funding to support the initiatives that are underway and implement the new ones. An important goal is also to increase the involvement of Romany representatives in planning and implementation activities. That would allow the program to adapt to the specific needs of the minority in the local realities.

Potential constraints could result from the lack of coordination at different levels of administration (in recent years the funds were not always transferred on time).

LIA II : Nowosolna Gmina – Lodzkie Region

Nowosolna is a rural community located in Eastern Łódź district that constitutes 10.8% of the district area, i.e. 54 sq.km.

As of 31 December, 2003 the community population amounted to 3,439 inhabitants (i.e. 5.4% of the total Eastern Łódź district population), with men accounting for 48.9%. In comparison with the previous year, the number of people increased by 4.3% (the increase in the number of men was 1.3 percentage points greater than that of women and accounted for 4.9%). In 2003 a negative population growth at the level of -1.5 per 1000 inhabitants was noted in Nowosolna community (in 2002 it was -5.5). The feminisation rate was 104 which means that the female to male ratio was 104 per 100.

As for the 2003 structure of the community population by economic age groups, people of working age accounted for 62.1%, with 51.6% being men, people of pre-working age and post-working age accounted for 23.1% (406 men and 387 women) and 14.8% (174 men and 336 women), respectively. In 2003 there were 61 people of non-working age for every 100 people of working age. The ratio for women (70) was higher than for men (53).

The National Population and Housing Census of 2002 indicates that among the community inhabitants aged 13 and over 931 people, i.e. 34.4%, had completed primary education (of which females accounted for 51%), 598 people, i.e. 22.1%, had completed secondary education (of which females accounted for 56.9%), 591 people, i.e. 21.9%, had completed basic vocational education (of which females accounted for 39.9%) and 257 people, i.e. 9.5%, had earned a higher education degree.

In 2003 in Nowosolna commune 381 employed persons¹⁶ were recorded, more than half of whom were men (54.4%), with nearly 81% working in the private sector. 63% of the total number of the employed worked in industry and construction sectors and 35.7% in services – 18.1% in market services sectors and 17.6% in non-market service sectors. The majority of people employed in market services sector were men – 71.6% whereas women constituted the biggest share of employees in the non-market services sector - 85.5%.

In 2003 there were 267 registered economic entities (excluding private farms in agriculture) registered in the commune Regon register, 264 of which were in the private sector. As for the structure of entities recorded in the Regon register the biggest number operated in the trade and repair (33.4%), industrial processing (19.1%) and construction (13.1%) sectors.

The results of the National Population and Housing Census of 2002 showed that the economically active population in the community amounted to 1 535 persons, more than half being men (54.7%), whereas the economically passive population included 1,048 persons, with women accounting for 59.5%. According to the National Population Census there were 68 economically passive to every 100 economically active persons. The rate for women was 90, higher than for men (there were 50 economically passive men to 100 economically active men).

As the results of the Census 2002 indicate, the total employment rate (defined as the share of employed persons in the total number of people of a given category) was 51.2%. The employment rate for men was 56.6% and it was higher than the employment rate for women by 1.6 percentage points. People with higher education constituted the largest group of the employed and the employment rate for them was 81.1%, whereas the smallest group, i.e. 28.9%, included people with completed and incomplete primary education or without school education.

Census 2002 indicates that the unemployment rate in Nowosolna community was 13.4% (men accounted for 14.9% and women for 12.7%). People with higher education were least threatened with unemployment (with an unemployment rate at 2.8%) whereas people with completed and incomplete primary education or without school education were most liable to become unemployed (19.1%).

Case Study: Transparent Municipality Project (Nowosolna gmina)

The “Transparent Municipality” project was prepared by the Polish-American Freedom Foundation, Batory Foundation, Gazeta Wyborcza (a national daily newspaper), Civil Education Center, the World Bank and the Local Democracy Development Foundation. The representatives of organizations listed make up the program board. Apart from this board there is also a support board consisting of: the Civil Rights Spokesman of the Republic of Poland, the Local Democracy Foundation Chairman, the Constitutional Tribunal and a professor of law.

The objective of the program is promoting and popularizing the local communities’ efforts to improve the standard of public life in municipalities, stimulate civil activity, and counteract corruption.

The program is addressed to local governments which, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, want to make manifest the following principles:

¹⁶ According to the actual workplace, excluding economic entities employing up to 9 persons, including budget sphere entities irrespective of the number of employees (excluding Ministry of home Affairs and National Defence as well as clergy, foundations and other organisations) excluding private farms in agriculture.

- transparency of local authorities' actions,
- zero tolerance for corruption,
- social participation,
- predictability,
- professionalism,
- responsibility.

The transparency principle means precise informing of the local community about local authorities' actions. The principle of no tolerance boils down to the situations of corruption and keeping constant control over the administration civil servants in the municipality. The principle of social participation means initiating and contributing to the creation of social associations and social support networks. The predictability principle refers to adapting municipality socio-economic strategies to changing environmental conditions. Professionalism assumes populating public administration positions with people selected via competitive evaluation. Lastly, the principle of responsibility means monitoring the realization of tasks by local government workers.

It is a nationwide program being undertaken in 16 municipalities (gminas). Each municipality represents a different province of the country. In the long-term perspective the dissemination of the experiences of all 16 municipalities in other areas of Poland is planned.

The program is funded by The Local Democracy Development Foundation, the Polish-American Freedom Foundation, Batory Foundation and the World Bank. At present we do not have any information about the financial means devoted to the realization of the program.

The basic actors of the program are the local government authorities and non-governmental organizations from a given municipality. Eight external experts cooperate with the program. Each of the experts supervises 2 municipalities participating in the program.

The Nowosolna municipality is one of sixteen municipalities which applied to the program. The municipality is located in the Lodzkie province territory.

The decision about the access of Nowosolna municipality to the program was taken by the mayor of the municipality after consulting the municipality council. The decision followed the invitation from the Local Democracy Development Foundation.

Selecting Nowosolna municipality was the consequence of a high estimation of the municipality's civil participation. NGOs such as the Association of Rural Housekeepers, Voluntary Fire Brigades, the Rural Youth Club, Folk Sport Clubs, the Association of Rural Clubs and Organizations, the Municipality Women's Council as well as the Association for the Development of Nowosolna Municipality operate actively in the territory. The large majority of active organizations are groups with a long tradition. The municipality has also participated in the 4th EU Framework Program "LERNing". The municipality mayor actively participates in the national association of rural municipalities.

The level of occupants' participation in the local elections is also high. In the first elections in 1989 48% of eligible voters participated, while the national average was 42.3%. In the last municipality government election (in 2002), when the national average voter turnout was 46.2% and the province's average turnout was 44.6%, Nowosolna saw 64.2% of eligible voters participating. In the municipality under study the participation rate in presidential elections was higher than the rate for the province. However, at the same time, the participation rate for parliamentary elections is consistently low in Nowosolna, at 40.3%, with the national average being 46.2%.

One specific feature of the municipality is the division between the population rooted in the municipality for many generations and the newcomers who settled down just several years ago. The old inhabitants are usually farmers with little education while newcomers represent the intellectual and economic elites of the Lodz metropolis. Both populations have

different civil cultures. The Association for the Development of Nowosolna Municipality is led by a Lodz Technical University professor yet it attracts not only newcomers but the original population as well. In the municipality there is space for different types of knowledge and social cognition forms. The Association issues a local newspaper "On the Hills" featuring the basic problems of the local milieu.

The implementation of the "Transparent Municipality" program in Nowosolna municipality consisted of two parts. The first part was carried out in 2003 and mainly involved monthly meetings of the NGO leaders with the local government representatives and external experts who presented the principles of transparent functioning of local government as well as their expertise in self-organization and social cooperation. These were experts from the Local Democracy Development Foundation and academics: psychologists, sociologists and specialists in organization and management. 24 people participated in this phase of the program: 3 local authorities' representatives, 9 NGO representatives and 12 heads of villages, representing particular communities of gmina. The most active were the local authorities' representatives and NGO leaders. Trainings took place on the premises of the municipality office.

The second phase of the project involved enacting concrete initiatives for implementing the principles of transparency and social participation. The first of the realised tasks was designed to eliminate the opportunities for corruption among municipality officials and to properly inform the residents about the actions undertaken by the local authorities. The beneficiary of this action was the whole local community, particularly that part of it which runs an economic activity.

For the purpose of enhancing public information, the decision was made to publish the municipality budget in the local magazine "On the Hills".

The mayor also decided to create a special computer information desk at the municipality office. Instead of asking the officials, residents gained access to information through the Internet. This limitation of the need for direct contact with officials is to limit the possibilities leading to corruption. A new position was established for distributing official information on all important matters referring to the functioning of the municipality office and the local government. A separate desk was also organised where information about all auctions organized by the municipality office was available. In order to obtain opinions about the functioning of the government and the needs of the local community, a questionnaire survey was conducted in the gmina, entitled "Municipality Authorities and Problems". It was designed and realised by members of non-governmental organizations.

The initiatives undertaken caused a wide range of reactions in the local community. The publication of the municipality budget in the local magazine gained positive opinions, yet its impact was limited due to the fact that the magazine reaches only a portion of the gmina's inhabitants. The evaluation questionnaire about the local authorities was received positively in the local environment. The most negative opinions were expressed in reference to the new ways of giving information at the municipality office. On the one hand, it was an effect of the farmers' limited skills in using modern technologies (some people did not know how to use the Internet). On the other hand, negative opinions surfaced because people were used to the traditional forms of contact with an official.

In the patterns existing hitherto, the "principle of openness" was understood as an official's direct contact with the constituent. The official was obliged to talk to the constituent about his problems. Direct listening was treated as the basis for public trust. The introduction of electronic means of communication, and thus limiting direct contacts, triggered the widespread opinion that the authorities were isolating themselves from the citizens. Some people got an impression that the authorities did not want to hear about the problems of average citizens, and that, in establishing this method for contact; they manifest a sense of

superiority toward the residents. With an aim to limit these negative consequences, the municipality mayor decided to organise more public meetings outside the municipality office, (e.g. at public gatherings).

Actions relating to integration of the gmina's community were the other initiatives undertaken. These were especially important since the Nowosolna municipality office is located in the territory of the other administrative unit. These initiatives aiming to reinforce the local identity were, for example, local festivals (that are to be organised annually, in September) or a competition for the most attractive farm.

61% of the area farms participated in the last competition despite the fact that the winner received only symbolic prizes such as flowers' seeds or insecticides.

To sum up, social participation in Nowosolna gmina seems to be organised according to a top-down pattern. The local community is steered by the groups of leaders; it does not undertake any spontaneous initiatives. The sole exception was the protest action against the siting of the dumping ground on the LIA territory.

4. Evaluating Analysis / Conclusions

In recent years, Poland has experienced two important demographic phenomena; namely, the declining birth-rate and the negative net result of out-country migration.

In general population growth has slowed down rapidly. The rate of population increase in the 1990s was roughly 4-5 times lower than in the 1980s. For the next decade, demographers foresee a decrease in the total population of Poland. At this point, it is necessary to emphasise the differences between urban and rural areas. In the last few years the slight decrease in the urban population has become visible, whereas in the case of rural areas the situation seems to be entirely the opposite. Since the year 2000 when, for the first time in the post-World War II history of Poland, the balance of rural-urban migration was positive for rural areas, with the number of people living in the countryside constantly increasing.

Another significant tendency is the increasing level of education among the population of Poland. While in 1988 only 11.9% of urban Poles had a college degree, in 2002 that rate reached 16%. However, rural inhabitants are still behind their urban counterparts. In 1988 only 2% of rural Poles had a college degree, while in 2002 this number increased to 4.4%.

Finally, the demographic factor of the greatest importance is the dramatic rise of unemployment. With the rate currently reaching 18% of the working-age population, this phenomenon remains one of the most burning social problems in Poland.

The examples of the programs/projects presented in this report are quite different to each other. Significant differences are also visible in the case of the two selected LIAs. The analysis of these differences, as well as the identification of major success/failure factors, can provide very important information about the process of building civil society in rural areas.

The "Transparent Municipality" project (LIA II) was based predominantly on expert knowledge (mostly external), with very limited involvement of local managerial expertise. There was no significant element of local lay knowledge included. One could argue that it was because of this lack of lay knowledge that the program failed in several respects. The external experts did not foresee that local people will treat the new impersonal ways of contact with the gmina's office as dysfunctional. The traditional model of "face to face"

meetings with officials turned out to be strongly rooted in the local people's mentality. In addition, a large portion of inhabitants simply do not have the necessary skills to use the Internet help desk. This is a good example of how important it is to take local realities under consideration. A program that was intended to improve the public image of the gmina's office, triggered suspicions and distrust instead. Although it was designed by specialists, according to their best knowledge, it failed to some extent because they did not include the lay knowledge. If that local knowledge had been used in the planning phase and during implementation, there is the great probability that most of the mistakes could have been avoided.

Another important conclusion from the analysis of that program is the significance of the social integration within the gmina's community. As Nowosolna has a suburban location and remains a very attractive territory for residential investments, there is a large and constantly growing number of inhabitants who are former city dwellers. This group of "newcomers" is significantly different from the "old population" in terms of social characteristics. These differences create a kind of social split in the community. As the newly arrived intellectuals and businessmen were the main initiators of the Association for the Development of Nowosolna Municipality, local farmers felt that their gmina was dominated or even taken over by external elites. That is why it was so important to include the representatives of the "old inhabitants" in the activities of the association. The commonly organised events and initiatives will help to overcome the differences and to build mutual trust. If Nowosolna gmina is to have a strong civil society, the internal integration of the community is a necessary condition.

The Program for the Romany Minority (LIA I) is in one way similar to the one described above. It was also predominantly based on the external expert and managerial knowledge. However, the important difference is that such construction of the program was forced by the lack of suitable local lay knowledge that could have been utilized. Neither local government had successful experiences in solving the problems of the minority, nor were the Romany themselves able to provide tested solutions. It was the joint resources of the state government, local authorities (at both the voivodship and gmina levels), NGOs and Romany leaders that allowed creation of the comprehensive program. It is worth stressing that one of the main assumptions was the involvement of the Romany in the design and implementation phases to the largest possible extent. From the outset, the minority was to take over a large part of the responsibility as it developed the necessary structures and capabilities.

As the first effects have shown, most of the Romany communities found competent and active leaders who not only helped to implement the program but also influenced its shape. However, the complicated organisational structure and still rather modest use of local lay knowledge in the program caused some problems to arise. Due to the poor coordination, the funds are sometimes transferred to the gmina level with some delay. This distorts many initiatives or even forces some of them to be suspended. Also the choice of certain measures for program implementation is in some cases questioned by the Romany, who would prefer to make some amendments. As the interviewed leader said "the authorities do not always listen to the Romany's opinion."

Despite these bottlenecks, the program in general has to be evaluated positively. It seems that the further increase of the lay knowledge use and the better coordination will lead to the accumulation of social benefits.

The third program examined is an example of the appreciation of significance of lay knowledge. The government of the Nowy Targ gmina chose to make use of the great potential of sport NGOs that are deeply rooted in local tradition. It was the recognition of the fact that

local rural communities are quite resistant to “novelties” and that the most efficient means is the support of existing structures. Organisations that gained the public’s trust and have proven to be suitable for the local realities can successfully achieve many ambitious objectives. In this case, the Folk Sport Clubs/Associations were to create attractive possibilities for the rural youth, reinforce local identity and intensify public life in the villages in which they act.

Our analysis shows that they realised these tasks quite effectively. Due to the lack of sufficient offerings in the villages, young people from the gmina tended to go to the town of Nowy Targ in search of entertainment. When they spent most of their free time away from their home village, their emotional linkages with the local community are weakened. The Folk Sport Clubs/Associations provide the training sessions in several sport disciplines for free, on the grounds located in the village. This attracts many youths and makes them stay in the local neighbourhood. In addition, the games of the village’s football team are very popular public events, creating a kind of “local patriotism”. Supporting their home football team is one of the most significant manifestations of the community spirit in many villages.

What is also important, the FSC/A are very effective in cooperating with the other rural NGOs in LIA I. They organise common events with the Associations of Rural Housekeepers, Voluntary Fire Brigades, Association of Podhale People and many other organisations. The local football stadium is in most cases the centre of the village’s public life.

The success of that program demonstrates the power of local lay knowledge. One can draw the conclusion that in the process of building the civil society in rural areas more attention should be given to the use of existing organisational structures. Many programs/projects seem to underestimate their abilities and prefer to promote the establishment of the “modern” ones. Taking into consideration the phenomenon of “organisational conservatism” of rural communities, we would argue that, with the right support, the traditional types of NGOs are very effective agents of controlled social change.