THE ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

Action Plan of the Alliance of Civilizations in the Czech Republic for 2009 - 2010

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1 Preamble¹

The idea that all people have equal and inalienable rights, that man is born free and that his dignity must be respected under all circumstances was formed on European soil and is today one of the fundamental values of the European political order. This idea was then taken up and significantly developed by the United States of America, to later become the property of all humanity and incorporated into the documents of the United Nations.

The set of fundamental human rights is also contained in the documents of the European Union, of which the Czech Republic is a member, forms its spiritual basis and at the same time gives sense and ethos to its expansion and deepening.

But of course rights can be respected only against a background of man's shared responsibility for the world and his basic solidarity with others. Today this is significantly strengthened by the fact that humanity is living for the first time in a single global, globally connected civilization and people's fates are thus linked into a single fate.

The Czech Republic and the whole of the European Union confirms the validity of these principle and their strong determination of act in the spirit of them. Neither the European Union nor the Czech Republic has any desire whatever to conquer the world with its culture or to follow on in this way darker traditions against the will or feelings of the recipients. What we cannot and must not give way on, is the emphasis on the universality of fundamental human and civic rights and on the common task of defending them, regardless of how powerful any violator of them may be.

Václav Havel

¹ This extract from a hitherto unpublished work by Václav Havel is used here with the author's permission.

2 The history and aims of the Alliance of Civilizations

The Alliance of Civilizations is an international platform for dialogue between cultures, established in 2005 at the initiative of Spain and Turkey. The United Nations later took the platform under its patronage. The principal motive for the creation of the Alliance of Civilizations was the effort to support understanding and respect between differing societies, or more precisely civilizations, particularly between the so-called Western and Muslim worlds, thus contributing to a reduction in tension in many regions of the world. Consultations of a group of states and organisations with UN permanent observer status on the Alliance of Civilizations. The Group of Friends is made up of more than 80 UN member states, including all the member states of the European Union, and international organisations. The Group arranges for application of the recommendations of a High Level Group through the international community as a whole, as well as the application of an Action Plan proposed by the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, Jorge Sampaio.

Under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, a Group of 20 High Level persons was formed in 2005. In November 2006 the Group presented in Istanbul a report analysing the roots of polarisation between communities and cultures, and proposing a practical action programme to resolve these problems, in which it identified four areas with an important role in reducing tension between various cultures: Education, Young People, the Media and Migration.

In April 2007 UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed former President of Portugal Jorge Sampaio as High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations. Jorge Sampaio called on the member states of the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations (which meets annually in New York at ministerial level and twice a year at ambassadorial level) to create national plans in the spirit of the values and aims of the Alliance and to appoint a national coordinator who will be responsible for this area.

The Czech Republic began to participate actively in the activities of the Alliance of Civilizations in January 2008, when it became a member of the Group of Friends.

3 The Alliance of Civilizations in the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is linked to the aims of the Alliance of Civilizations by its experience of a multi-denominational environment and the traditions of pre-war Czechoslovakia, which was established as a liberal democratic state. In spite of difficulties with the acceptance of some minorities in its territory, the Czechoslovak state was exceptional for its day in its religious and ethnic tolerance and was resolute in its refusal of antisemitism. Thanks to the absence of any anti-Jewish restrictions it became a sanctuary for Jewish students and intellectuals from neighbouring countries. Thanks also to its democratic tendencies it was also an emigration destination for those fleeing communist terror in Eastern Europe. So before the Second World War this last island of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe was a haven for masses of Jewish and other refugees.

An active stance against the suppression of religious and political rights in the world, as well as support for freedom of speech, the media and civic society, is a fundamental characteristic of Czech diplomacy since the establishment of the Czech Republic. In 1997, at the instigation of Czech President Václav Havel, and under his patronage, the Forum 2000 was established, to foster intercultural and inter-faith dialogue. The Forum receives financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At unique annual meetings of the Forum 2000 there are presentations from important global personalities from the areas of politics, religion and science.

Jewish cultural heritage and the contemporary Jewish community enjoy the respect and active interest of Czech society, with only a few exceptions. In spite of the fact that over the whole of the existence of an independent republic the number of Muslims has also grown, tension from the Middle East has not occurred in a violent form in our country. Indeed on the contrary the number of Muslim asylum seekers for example from the former Soviet Union or from Bosnia and Herzegovina shows the unaggressive and accessible face of our society towards Islam. It is precisely the absence of any significant number of fundamentalist Muslims which gives the Czech Republic the opportunity to learn from the situation in other European states and to establish early dialogue and preventative steps towards an understanding of the Muslim world.

Although the Czech Republic is a country which accepts hundreds of thousands of migrants, which gives broad scope to the media, does not restrict freedom of expression and is reforming and modernising its school system to increase tolerance and reduce racism, there is still room here for improvement. In particular, growing xenophobia and extremist attitudes aimed at the Roma call for a more active approach on the part of politicians and public administrators. Even though the question of dialogue with the Muslim world is not underestimated in the Czech Republic, the main priorities, as in many of the states from the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations, include issues of multi-cultural co-existence at the national and regional level, and the Roma issue in particular. In general at the same time the same principles and methods are maintained as in the case of the rapprochement between the Western and Muslim worlds.

Thanks to its involvement in the Alliance of Civilizations the Czech Republic can not only contribute with its experience to the global debate on inter-faith and inter-cultural coexistence, but can also support or introduce new programmes, which will help to improve the overall climate in Czech society. This direction is already reflected in a number of government papers, such as the Concept for Foreigner Integration, the Concept for Roma Integration, the Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Czech Republic and the Report on the State of Human Rights, but a fundamental step along this path is the creation of the action plan which is presented here. The ideas, activities and goals which are presented in it, should secure the successful continuation of the Czech Republic in the Alliance of Civilizations initiative.

A specific theme of the Alliance of Civilizations in the Czech Republic is Czech-German relations. These appear here as an instrument serving to form the younger generation, and which can serve indirectly the dialogue between "Western" and "Muslim" cultures.

4 Action Plan of the Alliance of Civilizations in the Czech Republic

4.1 **Priority areas**

The Czech Republic considers the Alliance of Civilizations as a perspective multi-cultural project with the aim of strengthening dialogue between cultures and religions, thus moderating extremism and overcoming mistrust, fear and barriers, primarily between the Western and Muslim worlds. The Action Plan for the Alliance of Civilizations in the Czech Republic (hereinafter the APAC) is based on its specific needs, having regard to the Report of the Alliance of Civilizations High Level Group. This was published on 13th November 2006 and defined four main fields of action for the Alliance. The priorities in the context of the needs of the Czech Republic are as follows:

- \rightarrow The media² to encourage the media not to create stereotypes and stir up conflict and misunderstanding, and to express support for media projects enhancing dialogue and showing tolerance to minorities, while unconditionally retaining freedom of expression
- \rightarrow Migration: to support a concept of migration policy with regard to the limits of the Czech economy and with linked integration programmes which will facilitate migrants' access to civic rights at the price of respect for liberal democratic values.
- \rightarrow Young People: offer young people opportunities to meet, acquaint themselves with other cultures and learn to cooperate at various levels.
- \rightarrow Education: arrange for people to obtain the right impression of other cultures so that they can react to the demagogy of pernicious ideologies.

4.2 General aims and the main instruments for achieving them

The general aims of the APAC can be defined as follows:

- Support for intercultural dialogue as a process within which everyone can improve their ability to come to terms with a more open, and more complex cultural environment, in which in various countries, as well as within individual states various cultural identities and creeds exist alongside each other, under the condition that the traditions and democratic principles of the host country are also accepted by the minorities.
- Emphasis on intercultural dialogue as an opportunity to contribute to a varied and dynamic society and to make use of its advantages, not only in Europe, but throughout the world
- Increasing the awareness of everyone, but of young people in particular, of the importance of developing an active European citizenship, open to the world, respectful of cultural diversity and based on common values within the EU
- Emphasis on the benefits of different cultures and expressions of cultural diversity for cultural heritage and lifestyle in member states.

It wishes to achieve these goals mainly using instruments and activity in the following direction:

² Mainly through the Working Group for national minority television broadcasting which operates as part of the Government Council for National Minorities.

To take steps to form a **Standing Expert Panel against Racism and Violence and on Questions of Inter-Cultural and Inter-Faith Dialogue (in Czech: SOPPRAN)** as a group of advisors for the Minister for Human Rights. This panel will discuss issues relating to Alliance of Civilizations topics, focussing on Czech priorities.

As part of this conference **topic working groups** will also be formed as needed, to debate specific areas.

The standing conference will by its content follow on from the results of many years of work by **Forum 2000**, which under the auspices of President Václav Havel deals with topics which are close to the Alliance of Civilizations. The Forum 2000 Foundation aims to identify the key problems facing our civilization. It explores ways in which to prevent the escalation of conflicts whose main elements are religion, culture or ethnicity. It provides a platform for open discussion of these important topics and supports global dialogue. Through these activities it also aims to support democracy in non-democratic states and the development of civic society, respect for human rights, as well as religious, cultural and ethnic tolerance in newly-emerging democracies. It organises the annual Forum 2000 conference, which is a meeting place for important figures from the worlds of politics, culture and business with spiritual leaders, for discussion on these topics. A regular part of this is also inter-faith dialogue and a multi-denominational gathering at which participants aim to improve their collective understanding of global issues, explore the contemporary role of religion and seek way of improving cooperation and mutual understanding. As far as its scope will allow, the standing conference will work together with the annual Forum 2000 meeting.

In view of the low level of awareness of the Alliance of Civilizations in the Czech Republic, a focus on *public relations*, increased awareness and information overall, is fundamental. For this reason a **web page** Alliance of Civilizations in the Czech Republic will be set as part of the government web portal; this will provide information about the aims of the Alliance of Civilizations and APAC, on activities which will take place under it, and will offer those who are interested the chance to become involved in the Alliance of Civilizations.

As part of introducing the Alliance of Civilizations to the wider expert and lay public **seminars, conferences, discussions and presentations** will be made on current topics related to the Alliance of Civilizations at international and domestic level.³

In particular there will be presentations of **examples of best practice** (e.g. in the projects for Roma integration, employment and education) to civil service and local authority employees (e.g. at the session of the Union of Cities and Communities, in the Public Administration periodical, et al), to non-profit organisations, young persons organisations, and teachers.

The media will receive an international **list of experts to be used for informed publication in the media** on Alliance of Civilizations topics on http://www.globalexpertfinder.org

In cooperation with the Ministry of Education teachers will receive a public **database which is part of the Alliance of Civilizations project entitled Clearinghouse on Education about Religions and Beliefs and Media Literacy Education Clearinghouse** located on the <u>http://www.aocerb.org</u> and <u>http://www.aocmedialiteracy.org</u> websites.

The associated thematic **government advisory bodies** and (particularly in locations outside Prague) **national minorities committees** will serve as the basic platform for these activities.⁴

 $^{^{3}}$ The first such event, which took place on 19^{th} May 2009 was a seminar financed by the Office of the Government and conducted by GAC s.r.o. under the title "Do the Czech media help the growth of the influence of extremism?"

As part of APAC the Czech Republic has as its aim support for a change in legislation to permit the full development of the work of the Agency for Social Inclusion in Roma localities.

On this aim and others it will work with the **Ombudsman**, who will also receive an offer of broader cooperation within the area of the Alliance of Civilizations.

As an expression of support for persons, non-profit organisations, media or communities speaking out courageously against manifestations of racism and xenophobia a **Minister for Human Rights Prize** will be established, to be awarded bi-annually. A representative of the winning organisation will be able to take part in a session of the Alliance of Civilizations as part of the government delegation.

In conjunction with the Minister for Human Rights Prize a young persons' competition will be announced for the **best video on the topic of human rights, migration, the fight against racism and xenophobia** (max. length 5 mins). The competition winners will also be nominated for the Youth-Produced Video Contest on Migration (festival Plural+).⁵

At the international level the Czech Republic will be involved in all **meetings and conferences of the Alliance of Civilizations** and will maintain **regular contact with the Alliance of Civilizations secretariat** in New York.

During the validity of the APAC the Czech Republic will also consider the possibilities for **presenting and applying particular Alliance of Civilizations programmes in the conditions of the Czech Republic** (and in particular the Rapid Response Media Mechanism a Clearinghouse) using the Alliance of Civilizations secretariat in New York, as well as **involvement in the Voluntary Trust Fund** and use of this fund.

Development of this APAC included the **Government Council for National Minorities** and through it, the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, the **Ministry of Education**, and the **Ministry of Culture**.

It implementation will be arranged by the Human Rights section of the Minister for Human Rights (Office of the Government) headed up by the National Coordinator for the Alliance of Civilization, who will monitor implementation of the APAC and the UN Committee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Except for the foregoing the Czech Republic will not create any of its own new programmes as part of the Alliance of Civilizations, but within its current possibilities will, through the Human Rights section of the Minister for Human Rights (Office of the Government) headed up by the National Coordinator for the Alliance of Civilization, **help to adapt, innovate and expand existing activities** (see below) which match the aims of the Alliance of Civilizations, which are under the control of individual public administration bodies, educational institutions and the non-profit sector. This, then, is the identification, sharing and support for best practice, the discovery of new approaches and the establishment of cooperation between different sectors.

In view of the ongoing financial and economic crisis, no new finances have been released for APAC implementation from the state budget. Any costs arising from the aforementioned initiatives within the Human Rights Section of the Czech Office of the Government will not exceed the scope of finances allocated to this Section's activities.

⁴ The first event of this type took place on 19th March 2008 and was a round table on the topic "modern-day slavery", on the problems associated with employing foreigners, organised by the City of Chomutov Committee for National Minorities.

⁵ http://www.unaoc.org/content/view/346/257/lang,en/

The plan as presented is designed for **2009** and **2010** and matches the development options for the Czech Republic in relation to the aims of the Alliance of Civilizations. At the half-way point of the plan period (January 2010) the plan will be **assessed** and changed as needed. In **January 2011** the Minister for Human Rights will submit to the government a **assessment report on the completion of the Action Plan for the Alliance of Civilizations in the Czech Republic**.

4.3 Further examples of public administration activities

The Czech Republic will within its current possibilities (see Chapter 4.2 General aims and the main instruments for achieving them), through the Human Rights section of the Minister for Human Rights (Office of the Government) headed up by the National Coordinator for the Alliance of Civilization, provide support for activities and topics which are under the control of individual public administration bodies. Examples of these activities and topics which form the core of this action plan, affect across the board all four areas defined in the report of the High Level Group dated November 2006⁶, and which play an important part in reducing tension between individual cultures and which build bridges between various communities: **Education, the young, the media and migration.**

4.3.1 Activities under the control of the Minister for Human Rights

Government advisory bodies which are directly linked to Alliance of Civilizations topics, in particular the Government Council for National Minorities, the Czech Government Council for Roma Community Affairs, the Czech Government Human Rights Council and the latter's Foreigners' Rights Committee.

Campaign against racism. This grant-aided programme is aimed at educational and information activities in the area of Roma integration into society, the removal of barriers caused by the cultural, social and ethnic inclusiveness of society and support for equal access for members of Roma communities, educational and information activities in the area of the Holocaust, including the Roma Holocaust, cultural activities with an anti-racist subtext.

Programming aimed at national and ethnic minorities which makes up a permanent part of the programme offering of Czech Television and Czech Radio.

The "Dosta!" information campaign on breaking down prejudices and stereotypes: Dosta! in Romani means "That's enough!", or figuratively speaking, overcome your prejudices and learn something about the Roma. Dosta! is a campaign financed by the Council of Europe and the European Commission. Roma culture is part of the European cultural heritage and this campaign attempts to acknowledge the contribution of Roma culture to enriching European societies.

An educational programme in Hodonín u Kunštátu and the organisation of commemoration ceremonies for the Roma Holocaust both here and at Lety u Písku.

The activities of the **Government Representative for Human Rights** in relation to the aims of the Alliance of Civilizations. In conjunction with the Office of the Government's Committee for Human Rights, the Representative will assess in inter-departmental commentary proceedings material of a legislative and non-legislative nature which deals with human rights and the position of Roma communities. The Representative will also, inter alia work with and communicate intensively with public administration bodies (central and local

⁶ The report is available at: http://www.unaoc.org/content/view/64/94/lang,english/.

authorities), with non-governmental non-profit organisations and with experts on the issue of the protection of human rights and the integration of Roma communities into society.

4.3.2 Activities under the control of the Ministry of Education

The Strategy for the Fight against Extremism⁷, in which the Ministry of Education meets long-term goals, e.g. further training of teaching staff, inclusion of the issues in curriculum documents. In addition it arranges analyses of further training for teaching staff, updating of teaching instructions for the prevention of violence or the teaching instructions for training against manifestations of racism, xenophobia and intolerance.

Working Groups for Multiculturalism and Foreigner Education, the members of which are experts on the issue of multiculturalism and foreigner education, representatives of non-profit organisations and organisations run directly by the Ministry, the Czech Schools Inspectorate, asylum facilities and teaching workers. This group deals with the current issue of multiculturalism in education and the education of foreigners.

The programme entitle **Support for the Integration of Foreigners**, which provides grants for projects focussed on teaching Czech as a foreign language, multicultural teaching, training of teaching staff for work with foreign pupils, as well as pre-defined studies and research. Finances are provided to the Ministry of Education from the Ministry of the Interior.

The principle of **respect for diversity** in framework and school education programmes mainly in the across the board topic of multi-cultural training, setting up the principle of socially inclusive values also in the creation of methodological materials and textbooks.

Curricular reform which is currently taking place and also has great impact on the education and upbringing of children and students in the multicultural area (inter-cultural training), since it changes the overall approach to education: it focuses it on the acquisition of key competences and gives schools greater autonomy. In support of curricular reform a number of activities are taking place which also concern multicultural education. One of these is the methodological portal **rvp.cz** which is maintained by the Pedagogical Research Institute (PRI), which is an organisation run directly by the Ministry. The project is jointly financed by the European Social Fund and the state budget of the Czech Republic.

Increasing the **inclusiveness of the educational system**, especially in relation to children from socially and culturally different backgrounds.

Preparation of a **National Action Plan for Inclusive Education**, in which special attention will be devoted to the upbringing and education of Roma children from socially excluded localities and the creation of inclusive mechanisms directed at children with special educational needs.

Transformation of the **advisory system** - setting up of a process of socioculturally sensitive advice, diagnosis and intervention care aimed in particular at identifying special educational needs.

Setting up of a method of **activity of advisory centres** aimed at increasing their mobility, flexibility and a multidisciplinary approach to work. A new definition of standards in advisory services and setting up a functional, independent system of reviews of the results of advisory investigations.

Support for teaching staff in using appropriate equalisation measures, instruments and methods.

⁷ See government decree No. dated 4th May 2009

Creation of a **discussion for teachers** and other elementary school staff with larger numbers of student-foreigners from third countries, which would permit joint meetings and discussions between teachers, improved grasp of the issue of foreigner-students and exchange of experience and examples of best practice in the preparation of students in the Czech language.

The national CPIV project - **Centre for the Support of Inclusive Education.** As part of it, expert teams will be built up, to operate in all Czech regions. They will provide methodological support to teaching workers at all levels of the education system, focused on the specifics of pedagogical work with children with special educational needs, the strengthening of regional sources, the creation of a network of experts, the creation of multidisciplinary teams offering support to teaching workers, pupils and their families. Roma children are a major target group for the project under preparation. The project was started up in July 2009.

Inclusion of **chapters on Roma history and culture** in schools programmes. The aim of the measure is to create the conditions for strengthening the cultural identity of Roma pupils and to improve awareness in their area.

Support for **students with special educational needs at university level.** Financial grants to universities to support socially disadvantaged students support the motivation of universities to help overcome those barriers to study which are specific to Roma students and to students who are members of national minorities.

A programme of **integration of socially disadvantaged** (**members of the Roma community**). Projects can be focused on artistic, cultural educational and training activities, the study of Roma culture and traditions, documentary and publishing activities, the creation and distribution of artistic films contributing to the integration of the Roma community and on multi-ethnic cultural events.

A programme of **support for education in the national minority languages and multicultural training**. Projects can be focused on the creation and implementation of educational programmes and teaching and methodological materials, on integration projects within education, on the education of children and young people in the national minority languages and so on.

A programme for the support of schools which implement inclusive education and the education of children and students with sociocultural disadvantages. The programme provides an increase in the optional elements of pay and bonuses for teaching staff in regional education, having regard to the quality of their work.

The setting up of a **Centre for Civic Education**, which will be a coordination centre for activities and projects securing professional standards in the area of civic education and formulating expert standpoints for political steps in area of training and education for democratic citizenship. The Centre for Civic Education will deal with topics of modern mass democracy and media literacy, training for democracy and active citizenship, reflection on the past, social communication and cohesion.

The House of Foreign Services of the Ministry of Education. The House of Foreign Services arranges the activities of the CEEPUS, Aktion and other programmes. Part of the House of Foreign Services is the Academic Information Agency (AIA) which gathers, processes and disseminates information on the options for education of Czech citizens (in particular university students, postgraduates and teachers) abroad. Another part of the House of Foreign Services is the National Agency for European Education Programmes (NAEP) which coordinates international cooperation educational programmes such as Comenius, Erasmus, Gruntwig, and so on. The project Youth in Action, supported by the ESF offers youth

exchanges, voluntary service work, support for the local community, involved in democratic projects, training and seminars for youth workers, cooperation with EU partner countries and other interesting activities.

The Joint Czech-German Working Group for History Textbooks is working on closer cooperation on both Czech and German sides in education on Czech-German relations. The working group provides an opinion on current issues, prepares educational materials, arranges for regular textbook exchanges so that individual titles in Czech and German can be assessed and thus contributes to higher quality textbooks and through these to better teaching in both countries. Recently the group has focused on preparing a Czech-German reader, which will gather together materials from the key periods of joint history from both countries.

A Concept of State Policy for Children and Young People for 2007 - 2013, in particular the thematic areas of Young People from National Minorities, Young Migrants, refugees and Young People, Socio-Pathological Phenomena and Social Prevention, Social Integration.

4.3.3 Activities under the control of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs project Selection of Trained Foreign Workers As part of this project the Czech Republic offers selected trained workers the option to apply for permanent residence after a reduced period of 1.5 years (for highly qualified workers) or 2.5 years (workers with standard qualifications). Immediate family of project participants can also obtain permanent residence.

Cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior on updating the <u>www.cizinci.cz</u> website. This site serves as an information source for central and local authority workers, non-governmental non-profit organisations, the academic community, foreigners themselves and the public.

A programme Support for activities aimed at easing access for foreigners with permanent or long-term residence to, and staying in (work opportunities), the labour market, and for activities targeted at supporting the employers' awareness of foreigners. The themes of the programme are, inter alia, Czech language courses, courses of socio-cultural basics, help for foreigners in dealing with public offices, in dealing with administrative matters linked to social security or access to the labour market (recognition of diplomas), help with complicated and personal or family situations, support for employers' awareness of the conditions and issues in employing foreigners in the Czech Republic (information campaigns and materials).

A programme of **support for activities aimed at the social inclusion of vulnerable groups of immigrants, in particular women and children.** The programme is aimed at young people (leisure activities, remedial teaching), at projects improving awareness of relations between men and women and the status of women in Czech society, at promoting the equality of men and women, at family co-existence with increased attention paid to women without family support and women coming from countries with a different socio-cultural background.

A programme of **support for the development of relations between foreigners and members of the majority population as part of their social inclusion.** The programme is aimed at supporting the development of relations and mutual understanding between foreigners and the majority population in the Czech Republic, at support for awareness on the part of the majority about the conditions and issues of foreigners' lives in the Czech Republic.

4.3.4 Activities under the control of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Adaptation of the values of the Alliance of Civilizations for the **Central European Initiative**, **V4**, the **EU Eastern Partnership** and in particular the **Regional Partnership**, which deals for example with the Balkans, and thus extends into countries with Muslim populations.

Support for the dialogue of cultures and religions at the **Forum 2000** platform, both through transformation cooperation projects and through a grant-aided programme for foreign policy priorities for the Czech Republic.

Implementation of joint EU programmes within the Alliance of Civilizations.

Arranging **participation in individual activities of the Alliance of Civilizations,** such as the annual forum, the ministerial meeting of the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations (as part of a session of the UN General Assembly in New York), meetings of national coordinators.

Cross-border cooperation with neighbouring states at the Ministry representative level. Assessment of cooperation to date, including border region cooperation and planning joint projects for upcoming periods. A good example of this might be the Czech-Bavarian or Czech-Saxony mixed commissions. Ministerial and local authority representatives also meet regularly as part of the Czech-Polish mixed commission for cross-border cooperation.

A programme of **Transformational Cooperation**, within the framework of which priority countries implement projects which in their scope match the aims of the Alliance of Civilizations, i.e. projects devoted to supporting independent media, work with young people or training and transfer of Czech experience to representatives of public administration and civic society in partner countries.⁸

Cooperation with the **International Committee for Education, Commemoration and Research of the Holocaust** (an inter-governmental, international body sitting in the form of an inter-governmental conference). Support for domestic implementation of the political obligations arising from the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust in 2001. Support for activities and cooperation with non-governmental organisations in education, commemoration and research on the Holocaust.

4.3.5 Activities under the control of the Ministry of the Interior⁹

State Integration Programme This programme is aimed at help for asylum seekers in three basic areas: Securing accommodation, study of the Czech language free of charge, and help with gaining access to the labour market.

The institution of **Assistant of the Czech Police for work in socially excluded localities.** The task of a police assistant is help in stabilising the situation in socially excluded communities by improving relations between the police and the inhabitants of these localities and to contribute to

⁸ This is for example the People in Need project which strives to reduce ethnic tension in the Crimea through work with local representatives, teachers and journalists and the activities of the Organisation to Help Refugees, through which long-term support is provided to organisations working with South Ossetian refugees, striving for their easier integration into Georgian society.

In Georgia and in the Ukraine, as part of the Transition programme training is taking place for teachers and students of secondary schools and universities, aimed at argument skills, civic participation and human rights. Objective journalism and independent media are supported in Belarus, Georgia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Part of the project was also an offer of study in the Czech Republic (for Burma, Iraq, Belarus).

⁹ In its activities related to the aims of the Alliance of Civilizations the Ministry also takes into account government decrees on the problem of terrorism (government decree No. 129 dated 11th February 2008 on the National Action Plan for the fight against terrorism: Updated text for 2007-2009) and extremism (government decree No. 572 dated 4th May 2009, on a Strategy for the fight against extremism).

the creation of such conditions as will give people living in a socially deprived environment easier access to services and help from the Czech Police.

Training of police officers in issue of minorities, human rights, minority rights and antidiscriminatory approaches.

Employment of members of minorities in the Czech Police (using recruitment campaigns and educational activities within police training).

A national strategy for the work of the Czech Police in relation to minorities. The main aim of this is to help the successful adaptation of the Czech Police to conditions of growing social diversity and to equip police officers with the corresponding social skills so as to be able to work effectively in relation to minorities, including foreigners.

The use of **contact officers for national minorities**.

4.3.6 Activities under the control of the Ministry of Culture

A programme to **support the cultural activities of members of national minorities** living in the Czech Republic. Under this grant-aided programme projects may be submitted which are focused on artistic activities (theatres, museums, galleries, libraries, concerts, shows, festivals), cultural educational and training activities (e.g. seminars, lectures, discussion groups), scientific research into Roma culture, traditions and history, documentation of Roma culture, study and analyses of Roma culture and traditions, editing activities (non-periodicals publication), multi-ethnic cultural events (aimed inter alia at combating negative manifestations of extremism, racial and national intolerance and xenophobia).

Support for multi-ethnic events in professional art, the purpose of which is to support cultural dialogue and mutual understanding of differing cultures.

In accordance with the **Concept for Library Development** for 2004-2010 to improve the accessibility of libraries and their services, the remove barriers to their use, expansion of library services for members of national minorities.

A programme aimed at **disseminating and receiving information in the languages of national minorities** largely in the languages of national minorities.

The Museum of Roma Culture in Brno. In addition to its permanent exhibits the museum offers the public a wide range of shorter exhibitions. It also organises a number of other public events - lectures, open days, launches of books and musical recordings (not only) of its own making, videoprojections, parades using its own textile collections and so on.

4.4 Other activities of the non-profit sector and universities

The Czech Republic will within its current possibilities (see Chapter 4.2 General aims and the main instruments for achieving them) provide support also for bodies from the non-profit sector which are developing activities in accordance with the aims of the Alliance of Civilizations. Examples of bodies and their activities in the direction indicated could be:

THE MEDIA

The **Media 007 c**ivic association. The basis of its activity is principally the ongoing monitoring of the public broadcasting media scene and analyse of unbalanced or discriminatory media products. The activities of the Media 007 association have as their aim the cultivation of both the Czech public and private media scene. Other aims include information, education, advisory and publication activities and support for contacts and cooperation between similarly oriented organisations and individuals.

Information portal and server **Romea.cz** This server provides information on current questions concerning ethnic minorities in the Czech Republic, and Roma in particular. It also monitors manifestations of racism and xenophobia and the activities of public administration to improve multi-cultural coexistence in the Czech Republic. It also operates the <u>http://www.romea.tv</u> video database.

YOUNG PEOPLE

The TANDEM coordination centre for Czech-German youth exchanges This association focuses on exchanges of mainly Czech and German young people, but also on general Czech-German cooperation between young people; it supports teachers and youth workers who are interested in contacts with the neighbouring country; initiates exchange projects and helps interested institutions (schools, associations, youth initiatives and other organisations) in deepening and mediating contacts; Provides advisory services and supports institutions and organisations which implement Czech-German youth exchanges. The TANDEM association operates throughout the Czech Republic.

Students Against Racism civic association This student association from Charles University tries to act using non-violent methods against racist organisations and the atmosphere of passive racism in society as a whole. In the first instance this is action for the public using public stands, discussions at secondary schools and universities, university seminars and concerts and festivals. They also focus on organising public contra-actions at racist demonstrations. The aim of the organisation is to create a broad movement against racism and xenophobia.

The non-profit organisation **People in Need** and their **One World in Schools** programme The programme makes use of the special potential of documentary films and other audio-visual means to address young people. Documentary films and other audio-visual means, together with disseminating didactic materials, help teachers to effectively complement teaching with an attractive means of facilitating work with a whole series of current topics. The aim of the programme is to teach young people tolerant inter-cultural communications, to educate them in the defence of human rights and development help, all using projection of documentary films and other audio-visual materials, follow-up discussions, accompanying publications, simulations and interactive methods. Using documentary films, the programme presents pupils with evidence and information on the violation of human rights in history and the present day, contributes to the elimination of prejudices, racial and national intolerance and xenophobia, strengthens their ability to adopt a critical view of everyday media activities and develops in them the ability to uncover naturally the manipulative tendencies to which they have been, are, and will be exposed every day.

The Association for International Affairs and its project for a student Model of the European Union This project offers students the opportunity to test out the roles of heads of diplomacy of EU member states. The basis of the Model is a simulation of a session of the Council of the EU, at which participants perform in the roles of Foreign Ministers of individual EU countries. Thanks to the European Union Model students gain the opportunity to learn more about the topics which the EU currently deals with, but also to perfect their performance skills, improve their presentation abilities and to learn to develop an argument.

The Association for International Affairs and its **Prague Model of the United Nations** project. This is a prestige educational programme for secondary school pupils from the whole of the Czech Republic. It offers participants the opportunity to become acquainted with the world of diplomacy and the current problems that the international community deals with. As representatives of various UN member states, students defend the views of "their" countries in

selected organs of the organisation. The main aim is to contribute to an open and informed civic society by means of the education of young people. Students in the roles of diplomats represent member states and simulate a meeting of the UN. In the Prague Model there is a session of the Security Council, and of the General Assembly covering security, economic and social themes, the Commission for Sustainable Development, the World Health Organisation and the World Trade Organisation. The specialist and organisational aspects of the project are arranged by a team of university students. The organiser of the project, the Association for International Affairs, is a non-governmental organisation founded with the aim of education and research in the area of international relations.

MIGRATION

Migration Online specialised website The <u>http://www.migraceonline.cz</u> website (est. 2003) is focused on developing the status of various groups of foreigners in the Czech Republic and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe. This internet page systematically maps research concerning migration, the development of legislation in the area of migration and asylum policies and the activity of government and non-governmental organisations and institutions. It is read primarily by specialists and other interested parties from the academic world, public administration, non-governmental organisations, the media and the public.

The Bridge for Human Rights organisation and its information server (mostlp.org) and the Immigration Friendly Mark project.

The **SLOVO 21** (**WORD 21**) organisation. The WORD 21 civic association was founded in Prague in 1999 and currently implements educational, cultural and media projects and projects dealing with increasing public awareness etc., in particular Roma projects and projects dealing with the integration of foreigners living in the Czech Republic. The basic aims of the association are in particular the fight against racism and xenophobia, the defence of human rights, the building of tolerance towards minorities, support for the education and integration of minorities.

The Czech Helsinki Committee non-governmental, non-profit organisation. The principal mission of the Czech Helsinki Committee is mainly to monitor legislative activity concerning human and civic rights, providing comments on draft legislation and the submission of alternative proposals where these relate to the protection of human rights, the monitoring of the state of human rights in the Czech Republic with particular emphasis on selected areas, regular preparation of reports on the state of human rights in the Czech Republic, monitoring also the situation of population groups where the defence of human rights requires particular attention, free-of-charge legal advice to individuals whose human rights have been violated, litigation, training on human rights, the organising of discussions and seminars on this topic, training programmes for professional groups and the workers and activists of nongovernmental organisations, publication work, information and documentary work, library services. One of its main areas of activity is the fight against racism and intolerance.

EDUCATION

The **Multi-cultural Centre in Prague** non-governmental, non-profit organisation. This association deals with questions linked to the co-existence of people from different cultures in the Czech Republic and in other parts of the world. Since its establishment in 1999 it has offered educational, cultural and information activities. For children, students, teachers, librarians and for the general public, it prepares workshops, courses, international seminars, discussions, film and literary evenings, internet pages on migration and on multi-cultural librarianship. A public library is open for those interested in multi-cultural topics.

The **Organisation to S0upport the Integration of Minorities** civic association. The mission of the association is to broaden awareness of human rights and to help Czech citizens and minorities living in the Czech Republic, by means of educational and information programmes and social activities, to know their rights and obtain them. The Organisation offers training courses in human rights at several levels and integration programmes against prejudices.

The non-profit organisation **People in Need.** The non-profit organisation People in Need was established as a humanitarian organisation with the aim of helping in crisis areas and supporting the maintenance of human rights in the world. In addition to crisis help and development cooperation in many areas of the world, the organisation undertakes widescale projects in the Czech Republic as well, particularly field social work aimed at resolving the situation of the ever-growing Czech "social ghettoes". By introducing inter-cultural education into the Czech education system the People in Need organisation also strives to increase the awareness of the Czech public of the situation in countries affected by wars or totalitarian regimes and of the global problems of the contemporary world. For this reason it works closely with the Czech media and since 1999 has organised an annual **One World international festival of documentary films about human rights**.

The **Variants** (http://www.varianty.cz) project of the People in Need non-profit organisation. The Variants programme hopes to contribute to the development of a free and responsible individual who can find his bearings in the contemporary world, takes a critical stance towards information and opinions and influences in a positive manner the life of society and the environment in which he lives. The Variants educational programme of the People in Need organisation therefore supports on a broad front the introduction of inter-cultural education and global development education into Czech schools.

The **Collegium Bohemicum** non-governmental, non-profit organisation, which was established with the aim of becoming an independent, open and interactive institution of countrywide significance, focused on cultural heritage created jointly in the Czech lands by the German-speaking population. In the future it is to contain a museum, archive, library, scientific and educational offices and should be a place for the acquaintance, meeting and dialogue of those interested from specialist and lay circles in the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria and other countries. The Collegium Bohemicum has as a task in cooperation with other institutions and specialists in the Czech Republic and abroad to study in depth and present to the public the results of research on Czech-German co-existence in various forms: exhibitions, lectures, conferences, a library and accompanying programmes.

The Educational and Cultural Centre of the Jewish Museum in Prague The Jewish Museum in Prague takes as one of its principal aims to inform the general public about Jewish history, culture, traditions and customs, particularly in Bohemia and Moravia, and thus contribute to an improvement in the atmosphere of tolerance towards differences. The Educational and Cultural Centre offers educational and cultural shows and programmes, combined shows, workshops and cycles intended not only for interested Jewish pupils, students and researchers but also for the general public.

The **Vanished Neighbours** project of the Educational and Cultural Centre of the Jewish Museum in Prague. This project encourages young people (from the ages of 12 to 18) to look for neighbours who have disappeared from their immediate neighbourhood mainly during the 2^{nd} World War. This is an independent literary documentation project, officially announced in 1999 by the Ministry of Education under the auspices of the Office of the President of the

Republic, as part of the Holocaust Phenomenon Conference. Implementation of the project was undertaken with the support of the Czech Ministry of Culture.

The non-governmental, non-profit organisation **The Czech-Arab Society** The main task of the Society is to acquaint the Czech public with the culture, nature, history and lives of the inhabitants of the Arab world. The Society works closely with its sister **Society of the Friends of Africa**, which maps in the same way the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Both societies organise various lectures, discussion groups with travellers, cultural evenings and celebrate the state holidays of various African countries. They also work with Arab representative offices in the Czech Republic.

A number of exemplary activities are also developed by research and teaching bodies, particularly the universities.¹⁰ As far as its possibilities allow, the Czech Republic will support the completion of the curricula of secondary schools and universities, particularly those with a humanities focus, with subjects developing **multi-cultural training** as one of the means for creating a social atmosphere of tolerance.

¹⁰ For example, the Institute for the Middle East and Africa at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague, the Oriental Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic.