

**Illegal Economic and Transit Migration in the Czech Republic<sup>1</sup>**  
**(Intensive Study of Individual Migrants in Their Casual Contexts)**

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**Abstract:**

This contribution focuses upon describing and explaining the essential features of international migration and illegal working activities of migrants in CR, with a closer insight into the processes of trafficking and smuggling. The research is based on semistructured interviews performed with 63 illegal migrants from both countries of the former Soviet Union (mainly Ukraine) and developing countries in 2005 and 2006. The main result of the analysis is that the situation in the field of illegal labour and transit migration in CR is, in many terms, similar to how and what happens in the traditional more developed immigration countries.

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**Key words:**

Trafficking, smuggling, migrants' illegal economic activities, interviews, Czech Republic

## INTRODUCTION

Illegal migration is a phenomenon generally considered to be primarily negative, for it undermines the fundamentals of the democratic system of the developed target countries.<sup>2</sup> The illegal economic activities of the migrants exist both in the highly regulated economics (see e.g. European Union, EU), and in the more liberal, 'deregulated' countries (see e.g. the USA). According to Martin's (2003) estimates, the EU itself (in the old demarcation – before May 2004) gained over 0.5 million illegal immigrants a year, naturally not all going to settle down in Europe. Current estimates by the ILO (from 2005) put the minimum number of persons in forced labour at a given time as a result of trafficking at 2.45 million.<sup>3</sup> In fact, by 2003 an estimated 27 million people were held in some form of bondage worldwide, which indicates that trafficking in persons is, in terms of sheer numbers, greater today than in any other period of history (see Obuah 2006, pp.241 - 244). It is apparent that illegal migration (namely the organisation of the transfers) today is seen from the point of view of financial profit to the biggest businesses on a global scale (Salt 2000). According to ILO estimates, currently the yearly profit of the offenders is estimated about \$ 32 billion (Národní 2005, p. 7). Of course, besides (and, in fact, through) quantitative aspects, the illegal migration may affect many attributes of economic, social, cultural, geographical, psychological *etc.* spheres of destination countries.

There is relatively little knowledge about illegal migration available in CR, similar to the other post-communistic countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEEC), compared with other developed European Countries. There are several reasons, one being little experience with migration generally and another being relatively little interest in solving migration issues so far. On the other hand, there is no doubt that for example in CR, thanks to the relatively high level of living standards and the demand on the internal labour market (strong 'pull' factors) and also thanks to the rather liberally set legislative environment and practice of regulation of migration/integration

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<sup>2</sup> This naturally does not exclude that, in certain aspects, in certain circumstances and for certain segments in the immigration society, the illegal working migrant can have certain positive impacts.

<sup>3</sup> We operate with trafficking and smuggling: 'It has been argued that while smuggling is an intermediary function which facilitates the illegal crossing of borders, usually with the consent of those smuggled, trafficking is characterized by coercion and the subsequent exploitation of those trafficked. It is further argued that trafficking is an issue of migration with human rights implications as it involves the protection of individuals, whereas smuggling is an issue of crime and border control as it encompasses the protection of states' (Europol 2005, p. 8).

of foreigners, the number of illegal immigrants appears to be rather high. It is possible to base the estimates on data from the official statistics of the Foreigners' and Border Police (FBP) or on other studies focused on the given problem. According to FBP in 2006, 10,793 illegally migrating/nonresident foreigners were detained, of this figure 3,676 foreigners crossed the state borders in an illegal way, and with 7,117 foreigners, the breach of the residence regime inside the country was noted.<sup>4</sup> The total estimates of the numbers of foreigners who are present and in the territory of CR mostly economically active differ naturally. For example, Drbohlav (2003, pp. 209 - 210), for the year 2000 estimates between 295,000 and 335,000 illegal immigrants in the given territory, including 100,000 -140,000 transit migrants. Another study elaborated by Intermundia (Intermundia 2005, p. 6) states that in the territory of CR there are as many as 300,000 Ukrainians (on this issue see also e.g. Kroupa *et al.* 1997; Drbohlav 1997).

To obtain other more profound information about the process of illegal migration and about the illegal economic activities of the migrants, it is necessary to make use of sophisticated studies and surveys. In CR, there have been several studies published devoted to the client system (Nekorjak 2006; Intermundia 2005; Černík 2006) and to the problem of trafficking in people (Černík *et al.* 2005; Trávníčková *et al.* 2004; Hulíková-Kocourek 2005).<sup>5</sup> The results seem to show that the client system tends to evolve into more sophisticated structures, a kind of 'more cultivated form' in the form of legally established ethnic companies. Despite these research activities, still many questions remain unanswered in this field.

#### **MAIN GOALS, DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

In this contribution we try to describe in a complex way and to explain the essential features of international migration and illegal working activities of migrants in CR, with a closer insight into the processes of trafficking and smuggling. The basic research questions (beside others, also in harmony with the approach of critical realism – Sayer 1992) were as follows: What is the migration process at the end of which there is an illegally economically active foreigner in the host society or a foreigner who used the given country only as transit space? What mechanisms, wider also conditionalities, are there in the given context? How does it all work? What is the specific behaviour of an individual - migrant? In the comparative view it is important to verify if the situation in the field of illegal migration and illegal economic activities of migrants in CR are similar to those that have been typical of the developed classical immigration countries, especially the older member states of the EU.

The basic approach applied in this contribution is the so-called intensive approach, on a more general level of the whole social science relatively unambiguously isolated from the so-called extensive, 'quantitative' approach, or

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<sup>4</sup> Available via [http://www.czso.cz/csu/cizinci.nsf/kapitola/ciz\\_nelegalni\\_migrace](http://www.czso.cz/csu/cizinci.nsf/kapitola/ciz_nelegalni_migrace), accessed August 2007.

<sup>5</sup> The client system is a specific model of controlling the migrant by a 'client' who organises the work and mostly other necessary services for the migrant in the target country. However, at the same time s/he gets the migrant into bondage, in which s/he exploits him/her in all possible ways. The model is closely connected to the underworld and criminal subcultures and their hierarchy and it has its traditions in the former Soviet Union (SU). The somewhat illogical name of the 'client' who actually is the mediator, comes from the fact that 'he is a real client in the context of organised crime' (Černík 2006, p. 25). This being an established term, we also accept this terminology in this contribution.

the extensive form of research (Sayer 1992). Intensive research uses mainly qualitative methods such as structural and casual analysis, participant observation and/or informal and interactive interviews (see also more in Sayer 1992, p. 244). What is necessary to be stressed here is the fact that the intensive approach is not a panacea, and as it is duly expressed by Sayer (1992, p. 250), ‘both methods (qualitative and quantitative) are needed in concrete research’. They are not competitive approaches, and, on the contrary, the two views enrich each other (see also e.g. Massey 1987; or Piore 2006).

In the developed immigration world, the qualitative approaches concerned are not a novelty in the study of the (illegal) migration issue, or as the case may be, of a widely determined integration problem (see, for example, in the USA - Gilbertson 2004; Stephen 2004; Pai 2004, 2006; Hess-Puckhaber 2004; Abrego 2006; Coll 2004; in Western Europe for example van der Leun-Kloostermann 2006; van Liempt 2007; and a collection of studies presented in Düvell 2006). Nevertheless, in the new EU member countries of CEE, such approaches have not yet been frequently used (see for example Kovács-Melegy 2001; Hamar-Szaló 2007).

In this contribution, the results of the intensive research are presented. The source of the knowledge results from the semistructured interviews performed with 63 illegal migrants altogether. The interview corresponded to the research questions, sometimes went beyond these limits and ‘less formal, less standardized and more interactive kind of interview was applied’ (Sayer 1992, p. 245).

The target group consisted of illegal migrants who were contacted in two different environments. In the first case, nine migrants were interviewed who had been performing illegal economic activities freely in CR, in the capital city Prague or in its’ surroundings. The interviewers were the members of the research team themselves while, for the purpose of this research, a reliable Ukrainian already integrated into the Czech society was hired as a mediator. The interviewees were economic migrants from the countries of the former SU (they make up the biggest legal and evidently also illegal migrant community in the country). Anonymity was guaranteed to them. The interviews were held in Prague from December 2005 to April 2006, mostly in Russian, seldom in Czech. The respondents were financially rewarded for their information and time spent (about one hour).

In the other case, migrants already detained by the police were contacted. These migrants had offended Czech law in a more serious way and were staying in one of the detention centres run by the Ministry of the Interior of CR (MI).<sup>6</sup> The members of the research team, in intensive cooperation with the relevant responsible organisations of MI, visited the detention centres, where they performed the semi-structured interviews.<sup>7</sup> The potential respondents from among the detained migrants were informed about the research, its’ aims and character by the researchers on the spot. The persons interested were assured about keeping their anonymity and also about the fact that their information would serve only for research purposes. The composition of the participating respondents in terms of citizenship was very diversified (e.g. China, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, India, Nigeria, Ghana, Iraq – see also Table 1). The interviews were held in Russian, English, French, and, with the

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<sup>6</sup> The issues were namely repeated breach of the residence regime, an attempt of illegal crossing of the State border, unknown identity of the foreigner and so on.

<sup>7</sup> Detention centres are located at Velké Přílepy, Bělá-Jezová, Poštorná and Frýdek-Místek.

help of translators, in Vietnamese and Chinese. For providing the information, the respondents were rewarded with some chosen delicacies and cigarettes. The interviews in the detention centres were held in two rounds – in the period of May and December 2006.

In summarization, the choice of respondents could not be other than of the purpose-oriented character. Besides the general problem of the lack of representativeness, which is taken into account in the intensive research (Sayer 1992), the research team had to face other obstacles caused by the fact that the interview was held with an illegally operating foreigner, who was either afraid of being given away and caught afterwards (foreigners still operating freely in the territory) or of the possibility that the facts revealed by him could somehow complicate his situation or the running administration procedure (foreigners forced to stay in the detention centres).<sup>8</sup>

Despite the mentioned methodological obstacles, the result of the interviews is relatively satisfactory and many of the responses can be ‘interpreted carefully’. At a macro analytical level we feel that at the given moment and under given circumstances - via N=63 and their responses and stories/narratives we reached, to large extent, the ‘saturation of knowledge’.<sup>9</sup>

#### **SOME SELECTED BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SET OF RESPONDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE RESEARCH**

In the whole set, two different groups of respondents are clearly differentiated according to the source countries and the character of the migration process: 1) migrants from Eastern Europe (economically conditioned and in CR intentionally) and 2) migrants from Asia and Africa (transit migration).

With the transit migrants, Asia (N=22, mainly Vietnam, China, Sri Lanka and India) as the source region dominates Africa (N=4, Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast). (Females represented 35% of the Asian and African migrants). The composition of the economic migrants (N=37, mostly Ukrainians (27), followed by Russians (4) and Moldovans (2) ... females represented 30%) in terms of age and family status in the investigated set is more homogenous than with the transit migrants where young (under 30) and single people prevail. The proclaimed higher education is related unambiguously to the economic migrants. In terms of education, secondary education prevails with the economic migrants, whereas with the transit ones it is only basic education.

#### **ANALYSIS OF THE PERFORMED INTERVIEWS**

The evaluation of all 63 performed interviews indicated that the given migrants/respondents, depending on the character of their behaviour and migration and integration strategies used, cluster into several basic types. The key differentiation factors in creating the given typology of migration/integration models were the following

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<sup>8</sup> In the first case, the mediating person, the Ukrainian, was of great help, and was able to inspire confidence. In the detention centres, it was the social workers present who were of help. Admittedly, the financial or material reward might have stimulated participation in the research to a certain measure.

<sup>9</sup> The point of saturation refers to validity in the sense that the information received is relevant to the problem of interest and no new information is coming up in the form of controversies or things hitherto unknown to the researcher from the field (see Agozino 2000).

important circumstances: 1) if the migrant aims at working or running a business in CR either on a long-term or permanent basis, or perhaps at permanent settlement versus transition across CR; 2) the way in which the migrant is economically active here – above all if s/he is in bondage of a client (who obtains and organises work for them for a reward) or if they seek and arrange work by themselves or if there is a combination of both models – they started working under a client and then they got out of his/her bondage and started organizing everything by themselves. In our opinion, it is these two circumstances – the decision about the target country and the fact in what ‘free microenvironment’ the migrant organises their economic activity that in many aspects predetermine the nature and character of the whole stay (and many other aspects of their life) in the territory of the host country, *i.e.* CR.

Based on the knowledge of the character of the given facts, four basic types of migrants could be specified:

- A) Heading for the country on purpose, economically active, in bondage of the clients;
- B) heading for the country on purpose, economically active, organizing their work and life by themselves;
- C) heading for the country on purpose, economically active, in bondage of the client at the beginning, then leaving the client and organizing the work and life by themselves;
- D) they do not aim to stay in the country, only in transit on their way to a richer country of the EU.

In the frame of the typology, the representatives of the source countries created specific groups depending on nationality. While the types A - C are represented above all by migrants from the countries of the former SU – mainly the Ukraine, but partially also from other countries from the European part of the former SU (see Table 1), type D is represented by the citizens of typical developing and more geographically distant countries (e.g. India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, China, Nigeria).

In this contribution we make use citations of 26 respondents, whose closer specification is given in Table 1.

In the following chapters we will introduce the main features – mechanisms and conditionalities and characteristics of the particular types of migration and integration behaviour of the migrants investigated (N=63), while using a number of extracts from 26 interviews.

### **Basic migratory types I**

#### **Type A – Bondsmen/women**

There are many adventures that these migrants have to face. The key importance belongs to the position of submission and dependence on the mediators of work (clients who exploit their bondsmen/women) and from the bondage of whom these migrants have not freed themselves for various reasons. The asylum regime is misused as a ‘cover up’, under which illegal work flourishes.<sup>10</sup> It is rather through a limited measure that the migrants

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<sup>10</sup> The current Czech legislation enables the applicants for asylum to work legally only after the expiration of one year from submission of the application for asylum.

establish stronger human relationships. Even their link to their fellow-countrymen/women's communities, not to mention the link to the Czech institutions, is rather of a marginal character. The economic situation of no escape is often accompanied by the failure of other relationships (both personal and 'institutional'), by pessimism and by unclear strategies for future behaviour.

### **Typ B – Independent and with support from friends**

The hard life of a migrant in illegality is demonstrated, nevertheless it is considerably different from the story of the Type A in the fact that the migrant is, mostly thanks to his/her courage and ability but also to the assistance of social links (often of family members, countrymen/women, and sometimes of friends from the Czech society), able to organise his/her work and life on his/her own, without the controlling role of the mediators/clients who often exploit the migrants heartlessly. Also the future outlook into future is clearer and more optimistic, often with the goals of settling down in CR, for representatives of Type B.

### **Type C – Those who have learnt a lesson and the courageous ones**

'The story' is an apposite to another type whose characteristic feature is that the migrant, once dependent on the mediator/client gets out of his/her bondage after a certain time and starts organizing his/her own economic activities and life. This type represents a kind of a transition model.

### **Elaboration on basic migratory types I**

#### ***Motivation for leaving the source country/or motivation for coming to CR***

The motivations for migration of nearly all respondents were dominantly economic factors, but there are additional factors in play. The extracts given below confirm some of the following factors: the importance of the cultural propinquity of the source and target countries (post-Soviet space *vis-à-vis* CR), 'family reasons', possibly consolidation or completing the family in CR, health problems in the family, crime and contacts with the uncompromising mafia, religious intolerance, aversion to the military service and different political opinions. As another possible reason entering into play the aspect of 'administrative and bureaucratic burden' can be noticed, which is the price and time necessary for arranging the documents needed for entering and staying in the potential target country.

*R15A I came because I could not find a job back home in the Ukraine. Earlier I worked as an agronomist in a cooperative farm. After liberating the Ukraine' the cooperative farms went bankrupt, and there were 700 agronomists like me without work in the given region. I wanted to be a farmer but there were no loans available. Simply it was not possible. ...Then, my son was getting married. I borrowed money for the wedding – \$ 1,500. I had to pay it off, and I also wanted to contribute to my grandchildren ....*

*R17A In Belorussia I worked on a computer as a production technician. But the factory paid little, so my husband and I wanted to go abroad. In Belorussia there are various professional companies offering visas for abroad. My husband left for France this way and now our son has followed him there. I did not want to go at all, because of the language. ...Then a woman friend who worked in CR told me I could make myself understood in CR and that it was possible to earn quite a lot of money there. And she also promised to help me.*

*R12A I left because I simply wanted to try it. In CR I had had my mother-in-law for about 1.5 years.*

*R16A I came to CR because we are all Slavs.*

*R20A I come from a village in the Charkiw region in the Ukraine. I have a secondary education with an electrowelder specialisation. I have three children aged 10 to 17, and my wife died of cancer at the age of 30. Because of her treatment we are very indebted; she underwent two operations in Germany. I borrowed EUR 10,000 and \$ 10,000. Now I need money to pay the debts.*

*R19B I had to escape from the Ukraine. I had problems with the mafia. In the elections I voted for one president who wanted to make an economic zone in the Sub-Carpathian Ukraine, so in fact I was helping him, and then I paid dear. I had to get out of the way. And moreover, during my military service I made a lot of enemies ....*

*R22B In the Ukraine we had problems with religion – my wife is Korean – Buddhist and I am Catholic. In the Ukraine it meant trouble for us.*

*R18B In the Ukraine I heard that CR was a good country to live and work in, so I wanted to move here. I also heard about Prague as a beautiful city. So I sold my flat in the Ukraine and came to Prague.*

### **Forms of arrival in CR**

Most of the migrants arrive in CR legally with valid tourist visas with different lengths of validity (most often from two weeks to half a year). To obtain the visa, migrants very often pay the mediating organisation, and sometimes relatives or friends are of help. The visa does not allow the individual to work and, moreover, its validity expires soon and the migrants get into an illegal position due to their economic activity. The cases of illegal, ‘wild’ crossing of the ‘green’ state border do not seem to be so frequent with this type at all, although they do exist (see for example R25A).<sup>11</sup> The statement of R10C indicates that getting all necessary documents arranged in the source country may get the migrant a higher probability into the position of a bondsman.

*R15A I came on July 24<sup>th</sup> 2004 to CR with a two-week tourist visa. But it expired and since then I have stayed here illegally.*

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<sup>11</sup> R26C also spoke about the way of illegally crossing the state border: My brother’s friend advised me in Uzhgorod and organised the journey to CR. We went 4 – me, 2 Ukrainians (I did not know them) and 1 guide (a friend of that acquaintance, also an Ukrainian). In Uzhgorod and nearby villages there are a lot of guides, it is not difficult to find that. Those two paid \$ 1, 000, it was cheaper for me because it was through a friend – for \$ 300 in cash, paid on the spot. We crossed the Ukrainian-Slovak border on foot crossing the woods (over the Lysá mountain), the guide knew the way well. We came to a village where a minibus was waiting for us. That took us over Slovakia and we even crossed the Slovak-Czech border in it - we drove along a forest road. Then we arrived.

*R17A To the mediating company from our town I paid EUR 180 for the tourist visa, and I bought a ticket for the coach to Prague from a travel agency.*

*R13A I came in 2003. My brother had already been working here for 4 years and helped me with money and the visa. I came with a trade license and a one-year visa. I arrived by coach. I had arranged everything at the consulate in Romania... .*

*R25A My friend gave me a contact who takes people to Poland. I paid \$ 250 to him (100 in Kiev and the rest after crossing the border). I traveled at the back of the truck with three other people I did not know. After crossing the border, the driver stopped and we paid the rest to him and he took us to Warsaw. I spent 3 days in Warsaw, and I paid zloty 20 a night for accommodations. There I also met a Kyrgyzstani who had already applied for asylum in CR and wanted to get back there, so I decided to go with him. He knew a contact who could show us where to cross the border to CR. When we arrived by train in Klodzko at 9 in the morning, we called him (he was Czech), and he waited for us at the post office and drove to the border and showed us which way to go, and he promised to wait for us at the Vietnamese stands across the border in CR. And he really waited for us there and drove to Prague. For that service he wanted EUR 160. We were crossing the border on Sunday at 10 o' clock. Right after arriving I applied for asylum at Frýdek -Místek.*

*R10C ... There are two possibilities of gaining the documents. One possibility is to gain the documents in the Ukraine but is problematic because it takes longer and you are then dependent for a longer time on the 'client' in CR until the money is paid back to him (it takes about 2 months). The other possibility is to travel with a tourist visa, in that case you work right on your own and you try to arrange the documents later....*

### ***Circumstances of the performed economic activity***

The presented facts indicate how much the client system is exploited, whether it is the low payment for work or no payment at all, or the working conditions and length of working hours. The migrants get involved in the system in the source country or in CR. It is often a well organised activity (one client in the source country with links to the other in the target country). Sometimes a certain role is played by relatives or friends. The clients differ in their inhumane practices. Whereas some of them are more than cruel, others use milder and 'more human' forms of exploitation, and they arrange several things for the migrant. It is evident that many migrants exchange the client in the course of the stay, in connection with his/her behaviour.

It seems that among the frequent practices of organising the illegal, or quasi-legal work and stay of the migrants in CR is arranging false documents or their unauthorized prolongation (this happening outside the standard approving procedures). The detention and detection of the illegality of the stay and/or work by the Czech police is often solved by the migrant's application for asylum.

Even a cruel economic environment is often present in Type B. Unlike type A, however, the life of the migrants of Type B is 'relieved' due to the belief in their own strength and abilities, which enables them to act in a relatively independent way and many times due to a strong network of friends and acquaintances. From some responses you can feel a mutual, really strong human relationship established between the migrant and some countrymen/women or representatives of the majority society (e.g. R18B). Such relationships then in many ways

relieve the ‘unbearability of being’ in illegality. It was also evident, however, that the non-existence of the mediator/client does not necessarily mean the end of the usual exploitation. This negative role can sometimes be taken on by the employer (see R19B).

The extracts from the interviews document in what way and under what conditions the relationships between the migrant and the mediator/client works and how some of the migrants broke this link and launched out on their own in terms of ‘organisation’. Although the responses do not signal any ‘dramas’, getting out of the bondage of the mediators surely is not simple for the migrant and it is the personal courage, often supported by the existing strong social links that is of great help here.

*R9A I work illegally but I have a permit to stay. In the morning I get up at 5 o’clock, I commute to work for half an hour; in winter I work for 10 hours, in summer for 12 hours, I have normal lunch breaks. In CR I met a client who issues invoices for my work. I have the documents arranged by another person. The first arrangement cost Czech crowns (CZK) 7,000, the second year was free and the third year cost CZK 7,000 again. I earn CZK 10,000 – 15,000 a month (CZK 70/hour, earlier CZK 49/hour).<sup>12</sup> The client invoices CZK 85 ... . It happened once that the client did not pay CZK 10,000 to me. It is normal to happen. I have to be careful who gets the documents ready for me because they collect \$ 1,000 and then they give you false documents.*

*R11A I have been here for one year already. I started working immediately in a restaurant in the centre... . A woman friend arranged the work for me. I do all that is necessary, mostly chinaware, but I also peel garlic, potatoes, and onions. My hands are chapped a lot; I always have to hide them. I get a monthly wage. A female Ukrainian client pays it to me. I work 11 – 13 hours daily, also on Saturdays and Sundays.*

*R12A In CR I started working for the first two weeks for a private businessman at Čelákovice near Prague (my boss was my mother-in-law). I got CZK 75 an hour net. We made the roof on the building, balconies on the houses and so on. However, this good work came to an end in a short time. My present client takes good care of me – for example now, with the frosts (as low as – 20° C) it is warm at the construction site, the building is heated inside and I appreciate it a lot ...*

*R13A Last year I worked 4 months for a construction company. Now I am working for a Vietnamese, he is an engineer and set up a shop and I do the construction work in his shop. I do not always prepare an invoice. I have people who prolong my visa every year for me – it costs me CZK 6,000 - 8,000.*

*R19B After arriving I started running a business, but under a borrowed name. I worked mainly for Ukrainian businessmen, still under a borrowed name. The beginning was hard. Mainly my friends helped me. First I got paid CZK 35 an hour. In the end I got paid CZK 50 an hour. On average I worked 12 or more hours, so I had CZK 500 a day, but the employer deducted money for food and accommodation, so often there was only about CZK 200 left. I was not paid at all several times.*

*R18B Through my friends I got a job and accommodation with an old couple (they were both over 80). The gentleman is a reputable fruit-grower – he has a large orchard in Prague, so I stayed with them, and from*

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<sup>12</sup> \$ 1 was about 21 CZK (as of July 2007).

*spring to autumn I helped him in the orchard, and in winter I helped them with the house and maintenance. I also took meals with them, and I was given a small wage. I had trouble with my stomach and the landlord even got the medicine for me. I like both of them very much. I was staying there till I was arrested – 2.5 years altogether.*

*R10C After a week of washing the dishes I got an allergy from the detergent and I had to stop. I called the client but he refused to pay me for the week I worked, and he did not change the type of work either. I was promised to get 40 crowns an hour. Then I found a job myself with a Czech. I worked 15 hours a day for about CZK 450 but I had free meals and accommodation.*

### ***Life conditions***

It was found that the housing of migrants in CR is in disparate forms and quality: from 'homelessness' to lodging-houses to renting flats. There are cases of living in demeaning conditions of overcrowded and scarcely equipped spaces, and also of relatively good quality of living in terms both of the number of roommates and the level of equipment. Quality of the housing depends upon the possibility and willingness of the migrants to pay the rent, where the prices differ in a relatively considerable way. Housing of lower quality is often paid in the framework of the so-called client system.

*R20A I lived with a group of Czech homeless people; we supported each other. We stayed in the deserted spaces of a house in Prague 8 on Sklenářská Street, close to the iron scrap yard. The police caught me when they were checking my documents three days ago, and I applied for asylum yesterday.*

*R13A I have been staying at a lodging-house for three years, and my brother lives with his wife in another room. I pay CZK 2,650 monthly. I share the room with a friend. We bought a television and a fridge. I live in the lodging-house also because it is near my work....*

*R15A I lived in Prague with 7 - 8 other workers, actually there were 14 of us in two rooms. The cooking was rather complicated, and we all had 40 liters of hot water for bathing.*

*R2C In Prague I lived in the dormitory at Dejvice where there was a kitchen, a shower and 4 people in a room. There were two buildings in the dormitory, one was 'Slovak ' and the other 'Ukrainian and Russian'. Perhaps 150 people lived in each of them....*

*R10C I lived in a flat with 12 women (3 rooms with 4 women each, 1 toilet, 1 bath, clean bed-clothes, 'everything OK'). It was a flat in the attic of a five-story house. The Ukrainians and Czechs lived on the first floor....*

### ***Links to the environment***

The social links with the illegally active migrants are logically minimalized, and they are realized (although again rather to a limited measure) mostly only in the frame of the working collective or at the place of accommodation. As the extracts exemplify, blackmailing gangs functioning on an ethnic basis probably also

exist. The willingness to be bribed and sometimes even demanding bribes by the representatives of the state institutions (mainly police) are mentioned by some of the respondents. On the contrary, other migrants have never met these phenomena.

As already mentioned, the migrants in the Type B are more self-confident, and this may also be the reason for their indicated relatively increased involvement in the life of the majority society. Rather rare visits to the source country then correspond with the danger impending the illegal migrant at every crossing of the State border. Confirmed also was the (expected) sending of remittances to the source country and the exploiting practices of some banks.

*R9A Once I was mugged at Národní třída. They were Ukrainians who heard me speaking Ukrainian, and threatening me with a knife, they demanded my mobile phone which I gave to them to save myself.*

*R15A I have never met with bribes.*

*R14B I send home about \$ 100 perhaps once every 2 to 3 months. I use the services of a Russian bank. Their interest is only 3.9% unlike Western Union that charges 14% interest... . I also paid \$ 100 once in Prague when I was caught by the police patrol. They wanted 3, 000 CZK and then they let me go.*

*RIC I have my own experience with corruption. Once we were carried in a minibus – a vehicle full of illegal foreigners – and we were caught by the police. The client paid CZK 100,000 and they let us go. This was some time in 2004. I myself gave several one-hundred crown banknotes in the underground where the city police caught me. Then they let me go immediately.*

*I am not homesick so much. I call my mother about once a month, and I have a sister in Moscow. I am also in touch with her. I have not been home for about 8 years because of the problem with my documents. I send as much as \$ to my mother about once every 2 months through Western Union. I have a lot of friends, Czechs, Ukrainians, and I lead quite a fancy life here – I go swimming , I help out unofficially in the association of voluntary firemen etc.*

*R4C At the Czech border I gave a bribe of \$ 500 and yet they wrote in my passport - undesirable for 2 years.*

## **Basic migratory types II**

### **Type D – Desperate, confused and naive**

The basic difference of Type D, represented by migrants from distant developing countries from the ‘post-Soviet’ types A, B, C, lies in the fact that these migrants do not target at CR on purpose and primarily they do not want work or perhaps live here on a long-term basis. Their aim is to leave CR as soon as possible and to reach one of the desired more developed EU countries. ‘The desperation’ often results from the really critical situation in their source countries, ‘the confusion and naivety’ then from the way in which they realize their journey to the desired aim: they are often in bondage of the guides (traffickers), they are helpless, not oriented and not informed about the life in Europe or the administrative mechanisms that logically affect them and determine their life stories in a considerable way.

## **Elaboration on basic migratory types II**

### ***Motivations for leaving the source country/motivations for coming to CR***

The samples of the outlined motivations for leaving most typically developing and geographically distant source countries signal a very diversified mosaic of reasons. There are heterogeneous motives based on the ethnic-religious conflicts, unaccepted political orientation, discrimination of women, (tradition of the agreed upon marriages), debts, possible criminal delinquencies, and the simple fulfillment of one of the secondary needs of man - the desire to learn something new, to experience adventure. It is unambiguously shown that in the case of these migrants, CR is not the intended target country in their plans but just a space for transit by means of which they want to get farther to the West – especially to Italy, or to Germany or France where established immigration communities of their ethnic groups exist. They often aim to reach their relatives or friends and the motive of consolidating the family penetrates the reasons for both leaving and coming (both ‘push’ and ‘pull’ migration factors). They sometimes seem to have appeared in CR by a sort of accident and, in their disorientation and under the pressure of the events, they do not fully refuse the idea of a potential, more permanent stay in this country. A possible reason of the transit through CR is sometimes the relatively easy access to the Czech visa in their motherland. It is as if the economic conditionality of their arrival had disappeared from their motivations, which can be indirectly deduced from their responses. Not emphasizing the economic motives by the given migrants is quite logical, with respect to their participation in the asylum procedure because this admission would clearly disqualify them in the procedure.

*R21D We started having debts back home with my husband. That was one reason why I left. I was not sure about the target country. I had some awareness about Europe ...that it is possible to earn more money there.*

*R3D We had terrorists back home in our village. My friend told me that in Europe they treat the foreigners well. So I was thinking about Europe... .*

*R7D I come from a village in Nigeria. I left it because of family problems. It happened that my parents died, and my grandparents wanted me to marry my father’ s brother. So I sold the land I had from my parents and bought the airline ticket to Prague where I got the tourist visa.*

*R8D I arrived in Prague by air in December 2005 with intermediate landing in some African town and then also in Europe. I got the visa for CR. Back home I worked at a construction site; I had work. I left because of political problems; I was a member of the political opposition. I was afraid to stay in Pakistan.*

*R23D It is not possible to live in Iraq. It is terrible there - street fighting, killing, hundreds of people lose their lives daily... .*

*R24D I only have a brother in Sri Lanka; my parents were lost in the tsunami. I have several relatives in Europe. My uncle, 3 aunts and grandmother have lived for about 15 years in London; they have settled there. My sister lives in Paris, France; she gained asylum there and is looking for work. I wanted to get to her in France. I left Sri Lanka because there are a lot of problems there, mainly there are permanent fights.*

### ***Forms of coming to CR/leaving CR***

The information found about the arrival to CR/leaving CR indicates that many arrivals of these migrants, an overwhelming majority by air (or perhaps in combination with a truck), are organised by mediators. The migrants of this type very often use the visa regime where the role of mediators seems to be important. After reaching the target country, CR, the migrants very often make use of the possibility of applying for asylum. The naivety and certain confusion of the migrants results from the fact that many of them will leave CR illegally and will apply for asylum in another EU country – mainly in Austria or Germany, without realizing that this doubling the application will be detected, and they will be sent back to CR. One of the respondents (R21D) confirms the important fact, namely that the ‘waiting houses’ in which a great number of illegal transit migrants secretly stay and wait for a suitable opportunity as long as for several weeks or months, also exist in Central Europe.

*R3D I got the visa for entering CR from an agent. I contacted him through a friend in Punjab. He recommended CR because he heard it was easy to get asylum there, and he took EUR 7,000. I arrived by air by myself, following the route of India – Dubai – Prague (with a tourist visa) and while in the transit space I applied for asylum. Later I left the camp (the asylum centre where he applied for asylum in CR) by myself. There were bad relations with other Indians. They caught me at the Austrian border when I wanted to cross. A taxi drove me to the border at about 10 o'clock in the evening. I found the taxi-driver in a 'night club'.*

*R8D ... I applied for asylum at CR (Vyšné Lhoty), and I was given a negative reply, so I wanted to go to Austria and to apply for asylum there. I traveled with another friend to Austria by train (without documents), and we got across the border and applied for asylum. They took my fingerprints and after a few days they sent me back to CR to detention.*

*R7D I arrived by air in March 2006. I flew to Egypt and from there to Prague. I came by myself; I did not know anybody here. They detained me at the airport because I did not have a passport. I applied for asylum in CR.*

*R21D There (probably in Poland – on the way from China to Austria – via CR) they picked us up at the airport – a Chinese and a European – and took us to a house where there were a lot of Chinese people. We were not allowed to leave the house. They took the passports away from us. There were about 5 rooms, they made the food for us, and we slept on the floor. We stayed there for about two months. Then we set off for the journey in a personal car.*

### ***Future strategies of the behaviour***

The models of the future behaviour of the given migrants are diversified. Many of them still long for reaching the more developed EU countries, others have probably conceded the fact that they will return home, others would be grateful even for the possibility of staying in CR.

*R5D My expulsion is written for a borrowed name. Next time I will try to come legally.*

*R6D In detention I applied with IOM (the International Organization for Migration) for support to return voluntarily. I will wait until IOM gives me money for the air ticket to return home.*

### **Basic migratory types III**

#### **Type E - Special types**

In framing the migrant typology independently of the migrants citizenship, or of the fact if of intention, mostly economically conditioned, or only transit through CR, there appear two specific, less numerous, but still important types: the first type is characteristic of migrants who come to CR illegally from an already developed EU country (in our set from Italy, France, the Netherlands, or Germany). As the migrants said, their motive is both the very restrictive environment in the core countries of the EU (for example, it is very difficult to gain asylum) and the easier way of finding a job in CR. The other type is specific in the fact that the main actors have certain characteristic qualities, or they have been through some events that have determined their lives in a very significant way and that have modified their life stories to such a measure that they have departed from any 'average stories' – these may be reaching the retirement age, pregnancy, following childbirth and serious health complications.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

This contribution evaluates the results of the semi-structured interviews held in the years 2005 and 2006 with 63 illegal migrants in CR, both with those who are illegally economically active and operate in the country freely and with those who have been detained by the police and stay in the detention centres. In terms of methodology the survey is inspired by the principles of critical realism characterized by Sayer (e.g. Sayer 1992) where the character of illegal migration, way of life and working activities in illegality with migrants in CR is analysed by applying the so-called intensive approach (in a way equivalent to qualitative approaches), stressing the recognition of the causalities, conditionalities and functionalities of the mechanisms. The investigation is done based on the analysis of migrants' life stories (or rather of their selected segments).

The evaluation of the life stories of the illegally present and/or illegally economically active migrants in CR resulted in creating a simple typology. The key differentiation factors were as follows: 1) If the migrant aims at either long-term or permanent working or running a business, or settling down in CR permanently versus transition through CR, and 2) if the migrant in CR is economically active in the bondage of a client, without a client or if they have rid themselves of the client in the course of time. Based on this, four basic types of migrants could be distinguished in the investigated sample:

- A) Heading for the country on purpose, economically active, in bondage of the clients;
- B) heading for the country on purpose, economically active, organising their work and life by themselves;
- C) heading for the country on purpose, economically active, in bondage of the client at the beginning, then leaving the client and organising their work and life by themselves;
- D) they do not aim at staying in the country, only in transit on their way to a richer country of the EU.

Economically conditioned arrival of the Type A, B and C migrants to CR is typical namely of the citizens of the former countries of SU, especially the Ukraine. Besides the dominating purely economic reasons, the importance of some other factors is confirmed with this migration: the cultural closeness of the source and target country (post-Soviet space vis-à-vis CR), family reasons, consolidation or completing the family in CR, health problems in the family, crime, involvement with the mafia in the source country, religious intolerance, refusing the military service in the source country, and different political views. Another possible reason appears also: the aspect of the 'administrative and bureaucratic burden', namely, the lower price of the visa and shorter time needed to arrange the documents necessary for entering the country and staying there.

Most of the migrants arrive in the country legally with valid tourist visa that costs EUR 100 - 200. However, the visa does not allow them to work and subsequently they break the given regime either immediately or after a certain time when they begin with their economic activity. The cases of illegally crossing the 'green' state border appear to be less frequent, the most frequent illegal entering of CR with the given sample seems to be the zone of the Czech-Polish state border. The illegal position and participation in the 'client system' results in an easy exploitation on the part of the clients or direct employers. The presented facts also indicate how exploiting the client system is, whether it is the low wages for work or no payment at all, working conditions or length of working hours. Among the frequent practices of the illegal or quasi-legal work also belongs the arrangement of false documents or their unauthorized prolongation (corruption of the police is indicated by some respondents). To get out of the bondage of the mediators is not easy for the migrant (the client system often affects not only the working sphere but many times it also includes their services necessary for living). Those who are independent of the clients from the very beginning seem to be by far freer in the organisation of their life and work and they proclaim greater involvement in the life of the Czech society. They are often supported by the strong social links to representatives of the majority or to chosen members of their own ethnic group.

Otherwise, the necessity of 'hiding themselves' from the police, the efforts to save 'as much money as possible' and the great fatigue due to working strongly influence the involvement which is generally rather very small of the illegal migrants into the life of the Czech community. Even the link to their countrymen/women community, not to speak about the Czech institutions, seems to be rather of a marginal character. A longer stay in the target country without family and children is often the cause of disrupted family (or possibly partners) relationships, leading to the divorce of the parents or a weakening of the family relationships when the children are raised by their grandparents. Also, the rather rare visits to the source country correspond with the danger the illegal migrants have to face whenever they cross the state borders. Sending remittances back to the source country is common, however, the exploiting practices of some of the banks is common as well.

In cases where the illegal operation of the migrants is detected by the police, a rough and ready solution is applying for asylum. After spending the necessary time in the refugee center, the expectants waiting for the decision about the granting/not granting of the asylum are allowed to stay outside these centres, which is again used for working activities. Due to the changing of their residence, the problems of non-delivery of the asylum

decision occur. When the migrant is checked by the police, they get into the detention centre and their stay in the country is mostly finished by expulsion.

The Type D migrants symbolize the transit migrants detained for various reasons in CR. This group is made up of immigrants from Asia and Africa (in our case most frequently Vietnam, China, Sri Lanka and India) with whom the motive of the mere transit into the 'third' countries prevails. Very often a way out of a precarious personal situation is sought (in the subcontext economic reasons are also detectable), or this could possibly be a reflexion of very diversified instability and lack of freedom in the source country. In addition, a certain 'break-away for adventure' can be the reason. A relatively frequent reason is the desire to join their relatives who are already living in one of the older EU member countries. These migrants are often in the bondage of traffickers who, due to the migrants' ignorance, naivety and disorientation in the new environment of Europe, often negatively affect their lives. For the traffickers it is relatively easy to manipulate the migrants and to cheat them without fulfilling the desired and difficult task of taking them safely to one of the older EU member countries; therefore, they often finish their journey in CR.

In our sample, as opposed to the above-given types, young and single migrants with low education were more frequently represented among Type D migrants. Unlike the migrants from the former SU, they have to pay for mediating the journey ahead.

The facts found in the comparative investigation indicate that besides many other migration and integration aspects (see Drbohlav 2002), also the situation in the field of illegal working and transit migration in CR is, in many terms, similar to how and what happens in the traditional more developed immigration countries (see, for example, parallels in Düvell 2006; Alt 2005; van der Leun; Kloosterman 2006; Pai 2006; regarding the specific issue of payments for the migration see Petros 2005; or Futo-Jandl 2006).

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