

## THE POLICY OF NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

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### Abstract

Definitions of the third sector by some authors active in the field. Roles of the third sector in the field of social services. The share of the organizations active in the third sector. Features of the organizations. Non-profit organizations in the field of social services in the city of Trenčín.

**Keywords:** the third sector, its definitions and roles, social services

We have been the witnesses to the period when a cliché is used to denote non-government organizations voluntary organizations, not-to-profit, non profit organizations or organizations in the third sector and then these organizations are discovered by politicians, media or other academic professionals. The grey community of the organizations standing on the periphery of the mental map in social-political domains has slowly become the centre of political attention. The re-discovery of NGOs can be reasoned by the disillusionment with the situation when a little or no attention is paid to people who are socially excluded or by some hesitation if the state is a welfare state offering the public service to meet the citizens' requirements and demands.

According to Barat et.al. (2000) the term "the third sector" indicates that there must also be the first and the second sector. Actually this means that the first sector is the public sector – the state, national one and governmental sector, the second sector represents businesses and industries and the third sector is represented by non-government organizations. The third sector is a part of each democratic society and its task is to fulfil an empty place at the market where the national government and businesses do not play their role and are not active at all.

The scientists (Berger, 1981, Lehbruch and Schmitter, 1982) in the field of political science have defined the third sector as the mediating zone between the market and the government and they have analyzed the way the NGOs are active as mediators among businesses at the market, at the labour market and among national agencies and their political interests. Within the political science the research is focused mainly on the mediating role of the third sector and its NGO. Very little attention is paid to analyzing services offered by the NGOs. Countries and their governments all over the world are interested in the activities and services offered by NGOs (Salamon et al, 1999). The quality and the types and number of NGOs activities and services differ from country to country and the differences are based on the history, tradition, ideology and national policy of countries. Also international institutions are interested in the third sector and NGOs. There have been many definitions of NGO, Salamon and Anheier (1997) have defined the third sector as the sector comprising officially established organizations that simultaneously:

- do not allocate their profit,
- do not depend on national governments,
- benefit on voluntarism and grants and donations.

In the USA the activities of NGOs bear six basic characteristics:

- they assist poor people and people who are socially excluded,
- they make religions more popular,
- they promote education and science,
- they fulfil the tasks of governmental institutions and they make their workload smaller,
- they promote health,
- they promote social care (available at [http://www.zary.sk/virtualna\\_kniha/k10-3sektor.html](http://www.zary.sk/virtualna_kniha/k10-3sektor.html)).

In line with the international standards the third sector in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has the smallest share within the health care (Salamon et al, 1999), that means that funds and other assistance come from the government-subsidized health care. The data available on the third sector indicate that NGOs have little share within the social care, if compared to the situation in other European countries (Kendall, 2000b). Due to the ideological antipathy towards making profit in the government-funded organizations for social

care (Badelt, 1997) the third sector is often considered to be a traditional source of services (the churches included) and a new form of social entrepreneurship (Evers and Svetlik, 1993; Defourny et al., 1999).

The WHO in its recommendations emphasizes the role of volunteering groups as a non-professional resource for offering health care.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have become essential players in the social field, particularly in the combat the poverty and social exclusion. They are engaged in regular dialogues with public authorities to ensure the better implementation of EU initiatives and policies in the EU countries.

The Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth sets up a new partnership between the EU institutions, national and regional governments and European stakeholders. The Commission has made it a priority to strengthen these partnerships at European level.

The EU Stakeholder Dialogue taking place in the framework of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion is vital to this partnership as it brings together:

- EU-level NGOs and social partners in the fields of employment, social affairs and inclusion
- representatives of EU Institutions and other international organisations
- representatives of national, regional and local authorities
- think-tanks and foundations for issues relating to social inclusion.

Through the PROGRESS programme, the Commission helps to increase the involvement of several European umbrella NGO networks in the following fields:

**a) Promoting social inclusion:**

- Caritas Europa
- COFACE (Confederation of family organisations in the European Union)
- Dynamo International-Street Workers Network
- EAPN (European Anti Poverty Network)
- EMN (European Microfinance Network)
- ENSIE (European Network for Social Integration Enterprises)
- ESN (European Social Network)
- Eurochild
- Eurocities
- Eurodiaconia
- EuroHealthNet
- FEANTSA (European Federation of national organisations working with the homeless)
- MHE (Mental health Europe)
- PICUM (Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants)

**b) Promoting gender equality:**

- European Women's Lobby

**c) Representing and defending the rights of people exposed to discrimination:**

- AGE Platform Europe
- ENAR (European Network Against Racism)
- EDF (European Disability Forum)
- ILGA Europe (International Lesbian and Gay Association – Europe)
- ERIO (European Roma Information Office)

The Commission also financially supports smaller networks on the social integration of disabled people. What is the situation like in Slovakia after the year 1989? Has the third sector with its NGOs found its own position in the new democracy? In 1990 a new law was passed ensuring the Slovak citizens to form and join organizations, unions, etc. and enabling and authorizing other subjects, either individuals or legal entities to offer social services. The third sector in Slovakia tends to be active in the social care, has no affiliation with the church and any political parties.

Slovak NGOs have a formal structure, are not administered by the government, their goal is not to make profit, they are not dependant on the national government, they are based on voluntarism. According to the International Classification of Non-profit Organization the Slovak organizations operate in the following domains:

- culture, sports and relaxation,
- education and research,
- health care services and institutions,
- social services,
- environment,
- development and housing,
- defending rights of groups and individuals,

- philanthropic organizations,
- international organizations,
- churches and religious groups,
- unions of businessmen and professionals,
- other types of organizations.

In line with the data offered by the Slovak Office for Statistics the Slovak non-government organizations belonging to the group of social services and health care have reported the lowest growth if compared to the institutions in the group “culture and relaxation”.

**Table 1**

Field, domain	1996	%	2002	%
Culture and relaxation	5,414	30.4	8,516	28.2
Social services	198	1.1	599	2.0

Resource: Mydlíková, E. 1966, Sociálna práca v neziskovom sektore, p.66

Private institutions offering social services in line with the Act 195/1998 had to be registered in the Register of Social Services providers at the appropriate Self-governing Region. The law defines the NGO as non-government institutions.

The author Mydlíková discusses the law and the role of non-profit organizations, all the organizations that are not funded by the government and are operating in the field of social legal protection

Nowadays the non-profit organizations work with different social groups such as abandoned and abused children, children and young adults with behavioural disorders, dysfunctional families, unemployed people, abused adults, inmates and people socially excluded, people with mental or physical handicap, people involved in trafficking, emigrants, people living under the poverty line, homeless people, drug addicts, people in the terminal state of disease.

Being involved in the given topic we can ask never ending questions. What should non-profit organizations look like what structure should they have? Are NGOs the groups of volunteers who operate with no funds? They are expected to be active in the domains the government does not operate in. The best solution found would be if the government, the sector of businesses and industries and the third sector share their social responsibility.

The city of Trenčín like other Slovak cities and towns has been facing the lack of funds. Due to this fact there are some organizations that operate in the field of social services:

- Asociácia zväzov zdravotne postihnutých – Association for handicapped people who are socially rehabilitated.
- DIS-občianske združenie – assisting children with a dysfunctional brain disorder.- K.U.K.O. občianske združenie
- organization offering services in the field of integration, education, active relaxation for handicapped children and adults.
- „Srdiečko“ centre for mothers on maternity leave and taking care of small children. The centre holds lectures and offers training and counselling for the mothers.
- “DOTYK” Slovak crisis centre based in Beckov – offering assistance to victims of trafficking and abuse.
- Iskierka nádeje n.o.- Non-government organization aims at senior citizens and at offering social services. The organization has opened a new nursing home.
- Maltese Cross Corps – volunteers provide meals, they work with homeless people.
- Senior citizens’ centre – civic association with a few activities. The municipality is interested in attracting a private entity to offer social services in this domain.

Democratic societies are obliged to take care of lessen people who are not able to take care about themselves. The national social policy in each country is expected to create conditions so that all people who are in need are offered a chance to live lives above the poverty line, to retain their dignity and to live lives in welfare states.

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