



**XXI. MEZINÁRODNÍ KOLOKVIUM O REGIONÁLNÍCH VĚDÁCH. SBORNÍK PŘÍSPĚVKŮ.**

**21<sup>ST</sup> INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON REGIONAL SCIENCES. CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS.**

Place: Kurdějov (Czech Republic)  
June 13-15, 2018

Publisher: Masarykova univerzita, Brno

**Edited by:**

Viktorie KLÍMOVÁ

Vladimír ŽÍTEK

*(Masarykova univerzita / Masaryk University, Czech Republic)*

**Vzor citace / Citation example:**

AUTOR, A. Název článku. In Klímová, V., Žítek, V. (eds.) *XXI. mezinárodní kolokvium o regionálních vědách. Sborník příspěvků*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2018. s. 1–5. ISBN 978-80-210-8969-3.

AUTHOR, A. Title of paper. In Klímová, V., Žítek, V. (eds.) *21<sup>st</sup> International Colloquium on Regional Sciences. Conference Proceedings*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2018. pp. 1–5. ISBN 978-80-210-8969-3.

*Publikace neprošla jazykovou úpravou. / Publication is not a subject of language check.*

*Za správnost obsahu a originalitu výzkumu zodpovídají autoři. / Authors are fully responsible for the content and originality of the articles.*

© 2018 Masarykova univerzita

ISBN 978-80-210-8969-3

ISBN 978-80-210-8970-9 (online : pdf)

# FAMILY POLICY IN COMPARISON OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC

## Rodinná politika v komparácii Slovenskej republiky a Českej republiky

MARTIN VAVRUŠ

ANDREJ HRNČÁRIK

*Katedra sociálnych služieb a poradenstva* Department of Social Services and Counseling  
*Fakulta sociálnych vied* Faculty of Social Sciences  
*Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave* University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava  
✉ Bučianska 4/A, 917 01 Trnava, Slovak Republic  
E-mail: martin.vavrus.ucm@centrum.sk, andrej.hrncarik@gmail.com

### Annotation

*This contribution focuses on family policy in the context of social policy. It discusses definition of family as the key building block of each society. We deal with functions that fulfills the family, which represents a unique element of society. We identify risky types of families that require specific approach and increased support from the state. We present problems that current families often encounter and must resist to be successful in trying to maintain their harmonious functioning. We discuss the family policy on the example of two selected states of the European Union: the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic. We deal closer with the document named Concept of State Family Policy, which is the basis for the setting of family policy in the Slovak Republic and sets its goals. We provide information on the extent of financial support of families in mentioned states.*

### Key words

*family policy, social policy, family, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic.*

### Anotácia

*Predkladaný príspevok sa venuje rodinnej politike v kontexte sociálnej politiky. Pojednáva o vymedzení pojmu rodina ako o kľúčovej stavebnej jednotke každej spoločnosti. Hovoríme o funkciách, ktoré rodina plní, čo z nej robí jedinečný prvok spoločnosti. Identifikujeme rizikové typy rodín, ktoré si vyžadujú špecifický prístup a zvýšenú podporu zo strany štátu. Uvádzame problémy, s ktorými sa súčasné rodiny často stretávajú, a ktorým musia odolávať, aby boli úspešné pri snahe o zachovanie svojho harmonického fungovania. Rodinnú politiku bližšie rozoberáme na príklade dvoch vybraných štátov Európskej únie: Slovenskej republiky a Českej republiky. Bližšie sa zaoberáme dokumentom Konceptia štátnej rodinnej politiky, ktorý predstavuje východiská pre nastavenie rodinnej politiky na Slovensku a stanovuje jej ciele. Prinášame informácie o rozsahu finančnej podpory týchto štátov smerom k rodinám.*

### Kľúčové slová

*rodinná politika, sociálna politika, rodina, Česká republika, Slovenská republika*

**JEL classification:** G28, I38

## 1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to define the key concept of a family and its functions. We would also like to provide information on the current problems faced by families in the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic. At the same time, we want to identify the risky types of families whose harmonious functioning is in some way endangered and the state should address its help and support. We want to analyze the amount of financial assistance and support that selected states are targeting towards families. From methodological point of view, we apply method of study of documents and literature, method of description and analysis when defining the key concept of family and its functions. We also use these methods when searching for risky types of families and identifying

the extent and manner of support and assistance to families by the state in the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic. We apply comparative premises in subchapter 3.3, where we compare family policy in the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic.

## 2. Family as the basic functional unit of the society

A family that represents the oldest institution of humanity is considered for basic functional unit of each society. Duková (2013) defines family as: “*cohabitation of parents and children, a set of partners living and operating together, or at least one partner who raise at least one child*”. A broader, more conceived definition of family is stated by Matoušek (2003), who writes: “*In broader, newer assumption for family, a group of people, who as a family declares themselves on the basis of mutual affection and share a common household at least at some stage of their development.*” At the same time, family presents a space in which human personality is formed and human capital is created.

More broadly conceived, family definitions include co-existence of partners who have not made legally binding matrimony or do not raise a child. It is primarily about young couples who do not reflect the traditionalist concept of marriage as an essential part of life with a partner of the opposite sex. Such couples are characterized by liberal thinking, their main priorities include job, career, self-education, traveling, etc. A separate chapter of professional and lay debates is the topic of co-existence of same-sex partners, their registered partnerships, or lawful marriages in other countries as a further form of family. „*Same-sex couples have been the subject of intense media and political debate in recent years, primarily in relation to formal rights to marry and raise children.*” (Perales, Baxter, 2018). Registered partnerships are part of the legal order in several European countries, e.g.: Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, Croatia, Estonia, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, and Andorra. Homosexual marriages can be made by couples of the same sex in the following countries of Europe: Spain, France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Finland, Portugal, Luxembourg, Austria, and Ireland.

Beblavý (2009) notes that industrialization and urbanization have changed the traditional family and social ties between family members and indicates these changes:

- family structure has changed, family has lost the ability to cover social risks;
- because society has begun to grow rich, it has acquired the ability to take on some of these social risks;
- new forms of social risk are emerging, with the old system of social relations unable to deal with them;
- urbanization - different social groups cannot promote their interests.

Family performs several functions in every society. These are given by Žumárová and Balogová (2009):

- biological-reproductive function - aims at conception and subsequent upbringing of offspring by parents;
- economic function - availability of financial resources is a key prerequisite for meeting the necessary needs of the child and the family and at the same time represents the possibility of improving their lives and universal development;
- emotional function - is an important part of a healthy psychological development of the child, parents should give the child love, feelings of safety, security, protection, support, etc. .;
- socialization – the family is expected to create the conditions for smooth and simple integration of the child into society, help the child to learn social standards, values, attitudes and forms of social behavior .

## 3. Family policy

November 1989 brought major and extensive changes that affected families life as well. The author Mihálik (2015) states that: „Artificially maintained employment ended and some negative phenomena have arisen, such as e.g. unemployment or homelessness, extremism, which became everyday part of the life of the society.“ Family policy is a natural part of the wider concept of social policy. Bočáková (2015a) correctly states that: “Relationship of state and family is specified within the family policy of that state.” A family is a key phenomenon of family policy of each state. We understand family policy as a set of support arrangements that are provided to families under the social policy system (Mandys, Mojžíšová, Korovchenko, 2016). There are currently several risky types of families that require specific approach and support from the state:

- young families - their main problems include inadequate income, housing problems, ineffective loan system, inadequate conditions for parenting, insufficient range of services for young families;
- incomplete families - inadequate or absent economic and social support from the state;
- retirement families - require a specific approach, as they are still fully-fledged members of our society and have merit for shaping it at working age;

- multi-child families – are facing little parental support, it is necessary to improve the conditions for parents who have chosen to take care of children and families, including parents who have adopted a child or have been given a minor child into foster care.
- families with a disabled member - it is necessary to create conditions that ensure full life of a family with a disabled member (Bočáková 2015a).

Kubíčková and Bočáková (2017) characterize problems faced by the present family:

- missing expectation of lasting relationship,
- focusing on the interests and needs of a person as an individual rather than a family,
- deferring parenthood to a higher age,
- reducing stability of a family associated with increased divorce rate,
- emphasis of young people on material values and material security,
- weakening intergenerational relationships in families,
- suppressing the uniqueness and specificity of women's and men's roles, emphasizing gender equality in all aspects of life,
- unsatisfactory sexual and intimate partner life as a cause of partner estrangement,
- weakened relationships between children and parents who have to work outside their place of residence,
- roma families living in social exclusion,
- executing and gombeen,
- increased influence of globalization, secularization and the media.

### 3.1 Family policy of the Slovak republic

Concept of state family policy is considered for a basic document of family policy. This document was adopted on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1996. The concept defines content and scope of family policy in the Slovak Republic, is regularly evaluated and was updated in 2004. This concept includes long-term goals:

- addressing the demographic challenge of aging,
- reducing the risk of family poverty,
- creating the basis for long-term competitive ability in human resource development dimensions

Social doctrine in the Slovak Republic is based on certain values. These values include: humanism, freedom and responsibility, equality, solidarity, social justice (Botek, 2009). Bočáková (2015b) states: “*The social doctrine is based on citizens’ rights declared in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and citizens’ freedoms. Basic human rights are the right to life, to human dignity, to equal treatment without discrimination and the right to liberty. This is the minimum of every social doctrine.*” The importance of family policy is also reflected in a number of political parties whose electoral program also touches proposals to raise birth rates, how to help families with children, the role of the state in family policy, the extent to which it affects family life, etc. Family policy is part of a social policy, which is one of the pillars of electoral programs of most political parties in the Slovak republic (Bočáková, Kubíčková, Vavruš, 2016).

Strategic objectives of family policy include:

- creating optimal conditions for self-reproduction of the society;
- the success of families in realization of their functions;
- achieving maximal possible economic independence of families;
- stability and social quality of marital and parental relationships;
- adoption of actions that will enable the choice or compatibility of parental decision-making between parental or job roles.

It is in the interest of the state that the conditions for families must be as favorable as possible to increase birth rates and maternity, making it attractive to women. Long-term goals of state family policy according to Bočáková (2015a) include:

- legal protection of the family and its members,
- socio-economic family security,
- education of children and youth,
- preparation for marriage and parenthood,
- health protection of individual family members.

The state pays several contributions in the form of financial assistance to families:

- child birth allowance: € 829.86 if it is a child from the first to third birth of the mother, and the child must live for at least 28 days; amounting to 151.37€ in the case of a child from the fourth, fifth and further confinement allowance is paid once;

- allowance for more than one child born at once: 110.36€ payable once if three or more children are born at the same time, or if at least two children have been born to mother during two years;
- child allowance: 23.68€ is paid once a month for a dependent child up to age of 25 years;
- child benefit allowance: 11.10€ provided with the dependent child's child allowance if the parent is a recipient of a retirement pension, early retirement pension, disability pension (with a 70% decrease in ability to carry on a gainful activity) of the retirement pension according to a special regulation, after reaching the retirement age for the old-age pension according to a special regulation;
- parental allowance: 214.70€ per child if entitled person provides proper care for two or more births, allowance is increased by 25% for each child born at the same time, this social benefit is paid to entitled person to ensure proper childcare up to three years of age or up to six years of age if the child has a long-term adverse health condition.
- child care allowance: 280€ is paid each month, allowance is provided up to three years of age or up to six years of age of a child with a long-term adverse health condition (MPSVaR SR, 2018).

### 3.2 Family policy of the Czech Republic

A key tool for family policy support is state social support. It enables direct family support in creating the conditions for an individual solution of social situations of families in which decisive initiative includes the family and the state organizes social solidarity as one of dominant principles of social policy for families. Krebs (2010) points out that: *“The basis for determining the level of the most significant benefits from the point of view of enhancing family income was the level of subsistence minimum, which is revalued in accordance with the Minimum Life Act, depending on the increase in the cost of living.”* The Czech Republic, irrespective of the amount of income, provides four benefits: parental allowance, foster care, maternity, funeral and school allowance. The other three benefits: child allowance, social allowance and housing allowance represent a set of qualitatively quantified benefits, which is a break counter to long-term practice of using only flat-rate cash benefits in the family support system in the Czech Republic (Krebs, 2010).

The state pays child allowance of 800 CZK per child under the age of 6, of 910 CZK per child from 6 to 15 years and of 1,000 CZK per dependent child aged 15-26. Parental allowance can be in the total amount of 220 000 CZK, can be paid for four years and is intended for the parent who takes care of the child personally throughout the calendar month. Housing allowance is paid to persons whose income of 30% of the total household income does not cover the cost of housing, in Prague it is 35%. Relevant regulatory costs are regulated by law. Birth allowance is paid for the first child in the amount of 13 000 CZK and the second child in the amount of 10 000 CZK, condition for the payment is the birth of living child and family income for previous quarter must be lower than 2.7 times the subsistence minimum of the family. Family support also includes funeral allowance, which is paid to the parent of a dependent child who died and the parent provided him/her a funeral. The amount of this allowance is CZK 5,000 (MoLSA CR, 2018)

### 3.3 Comparison of family policy of the Slovak republic and the Czech Republic

Both the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic are marked by pan-European trends such as population aging, low birth rates, changing lifestyle and citizens' life priorities, or low marriage rate. All of this negatively affects demographic developments in both countries. The goal of both countries' family policies is to support births and young families, but problem remains in high demand for public finances. For further development of demographic indicators in both countries, it will be crucial to ensure that public finances are available to families and how they can manage handling with these resources so that they can be spent the most effectively.

**Tab. 1: State support after the birth of a child in selected EU countries**

state	paid maternity leave	paid paternity leave	unpaid maternity leave
Austria	16 weeks 100% salary		
Germany	14 weeks 100% salary	12/14 months 67% salary, not more than 1800€	3 years
Hungary	24 weeks 100 % salary	5 days	
Poland	16-18 weeks 100% salary		
Slovenia	12 months 100% salary	11 days	

Source: Moss, 2007

In terms of financial support for families, both states are limited by their wealth and performance of their economy. The fact remains that, by contributing to the child, by giving birth allowance and other financial contributions, these states are trying to support families with children and create the best possible conditions for young families, while encouraging couples to have more than one or two children. In order to illustrate state support after the birth of the first child, which contains information about maternity leave in surrounding countries.

## Conclusion

Family is a unique element of every society. Nowadays, families have to face several problems. If the family cannot help itself, or if it is in the public interest of the state, which can result, for example, in increased birth rates, it is necessary to invest funds into a family policy that is demanding for public resources. Family policy presents full range of possibilities for help and support for families when they find themselves in crisis situations. The scope of this aid and support is limited by public budgets. However, it is necessary to look for the tools to make family policy more effective and to extend its scope to effectively help families who find themselves in a disadvantageous situation and to help them to fully integrate into society and to acquire the skills needed to fully fulfill their functions.

We consider it necessary to intensify the professional discussion on topics such as how to streamline the family policy of the state, how to increase the motivation of young people to start a family and to look for tools to increase their birth rates. These topics will require extensive expert discussion, with the governments of both countries, not just current but also future ones taking a decision.

## Literature

- [1] BEBLAVÝ, M., (2009). *Sociálna politika*. Bratislava: Adin, s.r.o. ISBN 978-80-89244-47-8.
- [2] BOČÁKOVÁ, O., (2015a). *Sociálna politika a sociálne zabezpečenie*. Brno: Tribun EU. ISBN 978-80-263-0938-3.
- [3] BOČÁKOVÁ, O., (2015b). Sociálna doktrína v kontexte sociálnej politiky v SR. In Bočáková, O., Rehuš, A. (eds.) *Sociálne zabezpečenie ako súčasť sociálnej politiky*. Brno: Tribun EU, pp. 7–15. ISBN 978-80-263-0886-7.
- [4] BOČÁKOVÁ, O., KUBIČKOVÁ, D., VAVRUŠ, M., (2016). *Sociálna politika vo volebných programoch vybraných politických strán na Slovensku*. Brno: Tribun EU. ISBN 978-80-263-1099-0.
- [5] BOTEK, O., (2009). *Sociálna politika pre sociálnych pracovníkov*. Piešťany: PNprint. ISBN 978-80-970240-0-0.
- [6] DUKOVÁ, I., DUKA, M., KOHOUTOVÁ, I., (2013). *Sociálna politika*. Praha: Grada Publishing, a.s. ISBN 978-80-247-3880-2.
- [7] KREBS, V. a kol., (2010). *Sociálna politika*. Praha: Wolters Kluwer ČR. ISBN 978-80-7357-585-4.
- [8] KUBIČKOVÁ, D., BOČÁKOVÁ, O., (2017). *Rodinná politika v kontexte sociálnej politiky Slovenskej republiky*. Nemšová: Tlačiareň J+K. ISBN 978-80-89788-25-5.
- [9] MANDYS, J., MOJŽÍŠOVÁ, M., KOROVCHENKO, T., (2016). Assessment of social policies as one of the key areas of life in the municipality. In *XIX. mezinárodní kolokvium o regionálních vědách. Sborník příspěvků* Brno: Masarykova univerzita, pp. 482-488. ISBN 978-80-210-8273-1. DOI: 10.5817/CZ.MUNI.P210-8273-2016-62.
- [10] MATOUŠEK, O. a kol., (2003). *Metody a řízení sociální práce*. Praha: Portál. ISBN 80-7178-584-2.
- [11] MIHÁLIK, J., (2015). The support for radicalism and extremism among young people in Slovakia. In *International multidisciplinary scientific conference on social sciences and arts SGEM 2015*. Albena: STEF92 Technology Ltd., pp. 435-442. ISBN 978-619-7105-46-9.
- [12] MOSS, P., (2007). *International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research*. Lisbon: University of Lisbon. ISBN 978-0-85605-702-1.
- [13] MPSVaR SR, (2018). *Podpora rodín s deťmi*. [on-line]. [cit. 2018-03-05]. Available at: <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/rodina-socialna-pomoc/podpora-rodinam-detmi/>.
- [14] MPSV ČR, (2018). *Státní sociální podpora*. [on-line]. [cit. 2018-03-05]. Available at: <https://www.mpsv.cz/cs/2#dsp>.
- [15] PERALES, F., BAXTER, J., (2018). Sexual Identity and Relationship Quality in Australia and the United Kingdom. In *Family relations*, vol. 67, no. 1, pp. 55-69. ISSN 0197-6664. DOI: 10.1111/fare.12293.
- [16] ŽUMÁROVÁ, M., BALOGOVÁ, B., (2009). *Medzigeneračné mosty*. Prešov: Menta Media. ISBN 978-80-89392-08-7.