



LIGA
LIDSKÝCH PRÁV

[Annual Report 2004]

League of Human Rights



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Edited by Gwendolyn Albert

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Vision

The vision of the League of Human Rights is that the Czech Republic will become a society in which all people understand their rights and are able to exercise them while at the same time recognizing the rights of others and the principle of equal opportunity. Human rights should form a natural part of everyday life.

Mission

- To professionally monitor and analyze the human rights situation in Czech society.
- To inform the general public, professionals, domestic and international institutions about the Czech human rights situation, the League's activities and its experiences.
- To lobby for human rights protections, for systemic improvements and to propose legislative and regulatory measures.
- To provide professional assistance to those whose human rights have been violated.
- To educate professionals, students, and the general public about human rights.
- In selected cases, to take direct legal action.

MANAGEMENT CHANGES IN 2004

August 2004 saw the second anniversary of the League as an independent organization and the institution of new management positions. The "direct democracy" model was replaced by that of a Director who reports to the Members' Assembly. The Members' Assembly elected League member Gwendolyn Albert to this position, which she assumed part-time in August 2004 and full-time in October 2004. The Director has an obligation to run the organization democratically, respecting the input of all Leaguers, including volunteers.

New statutes for the League were filed with the Interior Ministry and approved on 10 January 2005. The new statutes institute the positions of Director and Secretary as statutory representatives of the League.

1. Statutory Representatives

Director - Gwendolyn Albert
Secretary - Jan Vodak

2. Members' Assembly

This assembly is the decision-making body of the League. The Statutory Representatives report to the Members' Assembly. It currently has six members:

- Gwendolyn Albert (Director)
- Radka Dohnalova (Attorney)
- Jiri Kopal (Legal Development)
- Jan Moravek (Fundraising Assistant)
- Jan Vodak (Financial Director)
- Hana Langhansova (Lawyer, Counseling Center for Women in Crisis)

The Members' Assembly meets every 3 months. Non-member employees and volunteers also may participate in these meetings (they may not vote, but they may participate in the discussion of the issues).

3. Supervisory Board

This Board is being slowly expanded to include professionals from different areas with a strong interest in supporting the work of the League. The members meet once every four months to give their opinion on strategic questions. The members are:

- John Crane, educator, human rights activist
- Ladka Ceskova, Roma rights activist
- Gail Whitmore, human rights activist with experience in crisis counseling

4. Advisory Board

This Board provides ad hoc advice as needed to the League primarily in questions concerning international-level work:

- Professor Harold Scheu, Law Faculty, Charles University, Prague
- Professor Mahulena Hoffman, International Law, Max Planck Institute, University of Heidelberg, Germany
- Philip Kalfyan, Secretary-General, International Human Rights Federation (FIDH), Paris, France
- Rosa Logar, director, Vienna Intervention Center, Vienna, Austria

5. Offices

The League continues to share its office spaces in Brno and Prague with the Environmental Law Service (EPS). The contact information is:

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THE PROGRAMS

The Counseling Center for Women in Crisis

This program provides professional pro bono legal, psychological and social work aid to domestic violence victims in Brno and the South Moravian region. It is the only organization providing a range of services to domestic violence victims in the region. During 2004 the CCWC handled a total of 80 new clients, who contacted the CCWC through its help line, through the Internet, and through other nonprofit organizations and various state actors such as the police, social workers, or municipal authorities.

Throughout the year the CCWC staff also participated as instructors in various training sessions on domestic violence in Brno for the Czech Police Academy and the National Center for Nursing. The CCWC Coordinator also participated in the sessions of the Czech Government Human Rights Council's Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Through the CCWC, the League became one of only a handful of Czech NGOs to successfully apply for a European Commission DAPHNE grant during 2004. As a result, in September 2005 the CCWC will organize an international conference on "Treatment of Batterers in the Czech Republic" in Brno with DAPHNE funding.

The Center for the Legal Protection of Children

This League program, based in Prague, provides children and their guardians with professional pro bono legal, psychological, and social work assistance in the area of children's rights protection. During 2004 the CLPC took on 35 long-term clients to whom it provided assistance and handled one-time requests for advice from hundreds more. The CLPC also continued to strengthen the Center's cooperation with other Czech NGOs providing social services to at-risk children and families (e.g. DOM, FOCUS, STŘEP, NATAMA, Fond ohrožených dětí, Nadace Naše dítě, Organization for Aid to Refugees, Šance), providing legal services both to clients of these organizations and to the organizations themselves. The CLPC's reputation also grew in the state sector: Approximately 1/3 of its clients were recommended by social workers working for the Czech child welfare authority or by police officers.

One of the largest obstacles to children's rights protection in the Czech Republic is a lack of cooperation between individual components of the child welfare system, as well as a lack of social workers willing to serve as information channels connecting all of the institutions involved. During 2004 the CLPC held two seminars for social workers from both state institutions and NGOs who represent children as their legal guardians before the courts and in other proceedings. Participants in these seminars evaluated them positively, particularly with regard to the up-to-date nature of the seminar topic, the materials, and the interactive approach of the lecturers, which focused on practical examples and offered the opportunity for discussion. Approximately 35 people from Prague and the Central Bohemian Region attended the seminars out of a total of 120 who applied. Given this demonstration of demand, the League applied to the U. S. Embassy Democracy Commission small grants program for funds to continue these seminars in all 13 regions

of the Czech Republic and was awarded a grant to continue this work in 2005.

In March 2004 the International NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child asked the CLPC to participate in research by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the effect of the Concluding Recommendations of the Committee to the Czech Republic. We translated the UN questionnaire and distributed it to other NGOs. In June 2004, through the support of the U. S. Embassy Democracy Commission's Small Grants Program, the CLPC also published a handbook for NGOs on how to write shadow reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, including the League's own shadow report from 2001 as an example.

Lastly, together with the Czech NGOs Acorus, Rosa, Růžová linka, Fond ohrožených dětí and Profem, the CLPC issued a declaration on the so-called "father's rights" cases which have been filed by some Czech citizens at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg in order to demand redress for the fact that the Czech courts have forbidden them contact with their children. In the declaration, (<http://www.llp.cz/eng/index.php?art=show&id=107>) the CLPC calls on the Czech authorities to make a distinction between cases where a child refuses contact with one parent as a result of having been emotionally manipulated by the other parent, and cases where the child has objective reasons for refusing contact with a parent -- for example, if the child has witnessed one parent commit violence against the other.

Civic Legal Observers (OPH)

This program, located in both Brno and Prague, provides legal aid to victims of police brutality and incompetence in the Czech Republic, particularly victims who are from socially marginalized groups such as foreigners, the Roma minority, homeless people, demonstrators, and drug users, as well as to anyone whose physical integrity is violated by state actors. Legal aid was provided to several clients, primarily foreigners and Roma, who were victims of police brutality throughout the Czech Republic during the year. During 2004 the program expanded its scope to include more legislative activity in addition to legal aid, and the OPH Coordinator continued to sit on several subcommittees of the Czech Government Human Rights Council.

Czech legislation on registering nonprofit organizations, free legal aid, and access of outside observers to places of detention in the Czech Republic have all been undergoing revision as part of accession to the EU on 1 May 2004. The law on observing places of detention in particular is a focus of OPH's ongoing campaign for the institution of monitoring mechanisms through which the public can be assured that the police are not exceeding their authority. In February 2004 OPH co-sponsored an international conference on the Optional Protocol on the Prevention of Torture with Charles University in Prague, and in October 2004 OPH held a seminar at the Senate on the new law on the Ombudsman, at which it once again lobbied for the importance of independent monitoring of places of detention.

On the issue of registering nonprofit organizations and other changes to the new Civil Code affecting the NGO sector, the League set up an email discussion list and web page (www.verejnaprospesnost.ecn.cz) through which the NGO sector was able to discuss the proposed amend-

ments. The Institute for Social and Economic Analysis, the People in Need foundation, and the Donor's Forum assisted in the outreach during 2004, and OPH lawyers will draft commentary on the existing legislation based on the results of the public discussion during 2005. A seminar on the topic was also held in July 2004 in both Prague and Ostrava.

The OPH program also conducted sociological research on the relationship between the Czech Aliens Police and foreigners in the Czech Republic, drawing on interviews with foreigners, the police, and members of the state and nonprofit sectors who work with immigration issues. The results of the research will be used to make legislative recommendations in 2005 and will be presented at various seminars.

The OPH Coordinator participated in several domestic training sessions on the police and made presentations at international conferences. The trainings were primarily for Roma organizations in Moravia and the conferences were the "Europe Together: For Diversity, Against Discrimination" conference in Riga, Latvia and a series of workshops in Vienna on racism run by the League's partner organization in the FIDH network, the Oesterreichische Liga fuer Menschenrechte.

The OPH program also initiated cooperation with the European Roma Rights Center in Budapest on the issue of sterilizations of Roma women without their informed consent. After coordinating meetings with stakeholders in Prague and Brno in early 2004, OPH successfully applied to the Open Society Institute for support to further research and litigate cases of sterilization during 2005.

DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS ●

Public Interest Lawyers Association

Together with the Environmental Law Service, the League aims to increase the number of Czech lawyers involved in public interest law, as well as to improve the quality of their education and their work. Both organizations promote the public interest law approach to the justice system through the Public Interest Lawyers Association (PILA - www.pila.w.cz).

One day of the Public Interest Law Conference organized by PILA in April 2004 was focused on the problem of insufficient investigative and judicial mechanisms for the protection of victims of police brutality in the Czech Republic.

The legal and public interest law bulletin of EPS and the League "Via Iuris" was edited by the League's OPH Coordinator, Jiří Kopal, during 2004. League staff also gave lectures during the Public Interest Law clinic course at the Faculty of Law of Palacky University in Olomouc in the Fall of 2004.

Finally, the annual Human Rights Summer School is a PILA project which celebrated its sixth anniversary in 2004. The HRS is a significant source of volunteers and staff for all of the League programs.

KOORDONA

Through its Counseling Center for Women in Crisis, during 2004 the League joined the newly founded KOORDONA coalition of 12 Czech organizations concerned with women's rights, domestic violence, and violence against women. The CCWC lawyer drafted the statutes for the coalition to officially register with the Interior Ministry and is a key participant in the coalition, which organized a "Week Against Violence Against Women" in commemoration of the International Day Against Violence Against Women November 25.

Children Belong in the Family

Through its Center for the Legal Protection of Children the League belongs to the NGO coalition "Children Belong in the Family." The CLPC also helped draft an official finding on institutional care for the Czech Human Rights Council, which was submitted directly to the Cabinet. On the basis its casework the CLPC also participated in preparing a draft official finding for the Czech Human Rights Council, which was subsequently submitted directly to the Czech Cabinet for approval.

International Human Rights Federation (FIDH)

The International Federation for Human Rights (Fédération Internationale des ligues des Droits de l'Homme - FIDH) unanimously decided on March 7, 2004 at its 35th Congress in Quito, Ecuador to accept the League of Human Rights as a correspondent member. FIDH is the oldest international organization for human rights protection in the world, founded in Paris in 1922; today 142 organizations from every continent on earth are associated under the FIDH umbrella.

AWARDS

In December 2004 the Embassy of the United States of America in the Czech Republic awarded its newly created **Alice Masaryk Award** to Jiri Kopal in recognition of his seminal role in founding the League of Human Rights. Alice Masaryk was the founder of the Czechoslovak branch of the International Red Cross.

SPONSORS

Support for the League was provided during 2004 by:

- American Joint Jewish Distribution Committee
- Bluebird
- CEE Trust
- Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
- City of Brno
- Embassy of Canada
- Gay and Lesbian League
- International School of Prague
- International Women's Association of Prague
- Mama Cash
- Nadace VIA
- NROS
- Open Society Fund Praha
- Open Society Institute - Budapest
- Prague TV

- Royal Netherlands Embassy MATRA program
- Unitaria Praha
- US Embassy SEED program

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Financial statement of League of Human Rights in 2004 (in Kč)

COSTS	
communications	261 255
operational overheads	193 715
office rent	135 534
publications and PR	184 063
travel	129 982
legal services and fees	103 209
professional services (psychologist, financial manager)	229 145
translations and interpreting	86 040
equipment purchase	44 730
salaries	2 315 970
seminars, workshops	7 400
banking fees/exchange rate losses	11 990
one-time costs (moving, renovation, etc.)	211 889
total	3 914 921

INCOME	
own products	90 880
state subsidies	30 000
foundation grants	3 779 013
gifts from individuals and organizations	79 850
interest, exchange rate gains	2 767
total	3 982 510

Year-end result (assets)

67 589