

In my essay I focused especially on the new Act on Social Services, which came into force on January 1, 2007 and replaced a regulation coming even from the time of communism. For a long time the previous regulation wasn't corresponding to the development of contemporary society, its needs and trends in social services, which were brought along with the revolutionary year 1989. A new law was called after by professional public, and also by the very beneficiaries of social services.

The new law has been awaited for a very long time, probably longer than it had originally been expected. For a long period a way which the new regulation should take, couldn't be found; adoption process was also complicated due to the political situation. Many discussions took place about a new law. Themes that can be included in the area of social services are now more up-to-date than ever before. It is a topic that touches many of us, sometimes even more than we would like. For this reason I chose this issue for my thesis.

At the beginning of my essay I am dealing with historical development of social services. Namely, from the first references to them in the antiquity, through their concept in the Middle Ages to the first efforts for comprehensive legal regulation. Only in the context of and with the knowledge of historical continuity we can correctly understand the whole issue of social services in a given territory.

To be able to compare I devoted one chapter to individual systems of social services in selected European countries, specifically Germany, France, Great Britain and Denmark. Then it is also devoted to how the issue of social services is modified in the European Union. It is interesting to see how the systems of social services in various countries differ from each other, but at the same time they are very similar.

In a great deal of my essay I focused on a detailed analysis of a newly established benefit, called care allowance. This benefit replaced similar benefits paid until then. Specifically, I was dealing with the issue of granting the care allowance, control of its use, social investigation which precedes a release of decision on care allowance.

In a part of my essay I also followed the description of the situation in the field of social services as they operate in the city I live in. I focused on what the situation is in their provision in Poděbrady, especially on how many people receive the care allowance, on its proceedings and on how the use of this allowance is controlled.

One chapter is devoted to non-state non-profit organizations and their role in social services. These organizations are currently the largest provider of social services in our country, therefore I couldn't ignore them in my work. New act on social services is accepted by them rather with hesitation, many of them don't have a specific judgement on it yet. Problems are mainly in a new financial system, which was supposed to ensure providers with enough funds for the development of services; however, the situation is rather worse and many non-state non-profit organizations have currently no sufficient funds to continue their activities.

At the end of my essay I tried to review what the aim of adopting the new law on social services was, what was expected from this law and what the conditions of its impact were. However, because the reality is after all different, I tried to outline what the situation is today, two years after the new law became effective