

## **Kucharova, Vera: Relation between demand and supply of day care provisions for children and its determinants in the Czech Republic**

High employment of women in developed countries is a supported goal of EU employment policy and most women's concern; on the other hand, it deeply influences family life and living conditions of children and parents. It concerns, among others, reconciliation of work and family with special features in case of very young children's mothers. While both feminist and economists' approach asserts (early) return of mothers to employment after parental leave and therefore positive benefits of the day care for children, paediatricians and psychologists appeal to provide early care of children by mothers. According to researches carried out in the Czech Republic in recent years the public opinion is closer to the latter approach. On the other hand, tradition in women's employment, relatively high educational level of women, often necessity of dual-earner family arrangement and inequality in care-giving responsibilities of mothers and fathers, all that encourage employment of young children's mothers. To some extent it has brought about a discrepancy (mostly structural) between demand and supply of day care provisions in last years of growing fertility in the Czech Republic.

Differentiated interests necessitate flexible and as generous as possible system of child care provisions. At the same time a participation of different subject is inevitable, namely of public and private sectors as well as of NGOs.

In the Czech Republic there has been a long tradition in the public system of day care provisions. However, it has to some extent collapsed in the 1990s concerning services for children below three years of age. At the same time the desired new types of the day care services has been only developing so far and have met some barriers and problems while being introduced.

The development and improvement of the Czech system of day care services for children is determined by a set of mutually dependent factors and influences. The proposed contribution should summarise and evaluate them. It deals with demographic and women's employment issues, subjective determinants and private choices as well as institutional, legal and financial contexts of the day care services provision.