

R E P O R T
ON THE ANALYSIS OF WORKING ENGAGEMENT OF THE USERS OF SOCIAL
AID BY THE CENTERS ON SOCIAL WORK FOR THE PERIOD OF
01.01.2006 – 30.09.2007

In the frame of the competences stated in the Article 28 and 29 of the Law on the Ombudsman and according to the Ombudsman Rulebook the Ombudsman monitors situations in regard of provision, respect and protection of constitutional and legal rights of citizens through investigations on submitted complaints, by proceedings on the own initiatives, analysis of concrete issues and similar after which submits recommendations, opinions and critics to the organs under the Ombudsman competencies.

From the number and content of the submitted complaints in the field of social care and protection almost in every annual report the Ombudsman stresses that beside of the great funds determined by the State for social support of families, social and economic situations of the citizens are not improved and the monetary aid which citizens get can't satisfy their elementary needs for existence or in other words the social aid can't ensure realization of constitutional guarantees for social security and social justice.

From the proceeding on the complaints in this field among the other we can conclude that social aid is not always obtained by persons who had real need for it. For overcoming of those problems and considering that funds available for this purpose should be used promptly and efficiently, which may decrease the number of the users of social care, the Ombudsman thinks that beside increasing of the employment by more often working engagement of the users of social monetary aid funds that state determines for this purpose will decrease and persons who really need social aid will get adequate sum for covering of their minimum needs for existence. Because of that and according to the Ombudsman there is a need to be find possibilities for working engagement of bigger number of users of social monetary aid. By working engagement the users of social monetary aid wouldn't get social monetary aid and it will result with bigger funds for other persons who had real need to get this type of aid. From the other side by working engagement the users of social monetary aid are felt useful for the society and money which they get are result of their work not of the "mercy" of the state.

With aim to analyze situation of working engagement of the users of social aid by the Centers for Social Work the Ombudsman submitted a questionnaire to all centers for Social Work in the Republic of Macedonia.

The aim of the analysis was achieving of the real number of working engaged users of social care. In that regard the Ombudsman asked:

- Do the Centers for Social Care practice this possibility?

- What is the response of the users of social care?
- What measures do centers take to implement this measure? and
- Do centers take legally foreseen measures against persons who unjustifiably refuse working engagement?

Shortly, the aim of the questionnaire was the Ombudsman to get real picture regarding objectivity citizen to obtain social aid.

For more concrete information and data regarding working engagement of the users of social aid the Ombudsman sent the questionnaire to the Centers for Social Work in: Berovo, Bitola, Veles, Gevgelija, Gostivar, Delcevo, Kavadarci, Kicevo, Kratovo, Kriva Palanka, Krusevo, Kocani, Kumanovo, Makedonski Brod, Negotino, Ohrid, Prilep, Radovish, Resen, Sveti Nikole, Skopje, Struga, Strumica, Tetovo and Stip.

Centers for Social Work submitted filled Questionnaire timely on which the Ombudsman express great gratitude except to the Center for Social Work in Tetovo which didn't submitted filled Questionnaire back to the Ombudsman Office.

From the data in the questionnaires the Ombudsman concluded that regardless is the working engagement made for a longer period of time or only for five days in a month, as it is stated in the newest amendments and supplements of the Law on Social Protection (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 40/06) engaged to work can be users of social monetary aid who are unemployed and capable to work. According to the answers by some of the abovementioned centers mostly engaged to work were younger users of social aid who had elementary and secondary education.

According to the legal regulations and data submitted by the Centers for Social Work the users of social monetary aid are mostly called by majors, public enterprises and public agencies for seasonal and other temporary work.

For the period from 01.01.2006 to 30.09.2007 which was the subject of the analysis on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia generally engaged to work were less than 10% of the total number of social care users. Also there were no work engagements of social aid users in some cities in the State. Submitted data to the Ombudsman Office shows that in some cities social aid users shows bigger interest for working engagement comparing with jobs which are offering. In the cities where the need for working engagement was arisen almost 95% of invited users of social aid had accepted offered job and some of them signed agreements with some enterprises to work in a longer period of time. Thus those persons didn't get social monetary aid for the period of working engagement and this right is continuing after the cessation of their working engagement.

Approximately 5% of the social aid users refused to work but according to the received data most of them had justified their refusals. In most cases reasons for refusals of work were health problems of the users of social aid. But it can be also concluded that refusals of working engagement often were result of inadequate submission of invitations for work engagement. This without more detailed clearance by the Centers of Social Work does the invitations were submitted correctly result by cancellation of the right on social monetary aid. Because of that citizens are forced to

start proceedings for persuasion that they didn't receive any invitation to work so they don't get monetary aid in a longer period of time until proceedings are finished and usually they can't prove that they were right.

Although most of the social monetary aid users justified their refusals of offered jobs, from the received data can be concluded that some of them didn't justified their refusals of the offered jobs or they submitted incorrect proofs. Because of that the Centers for Social Work took adequate legal measures such is repeal of the right on social monetary aid for the period defined by the Law on Social Protection.

Last amendments and supplements of the Law on Social Protection brought new regulation by which the users of social monetary aid who are capable to work but social unprotected can be called for public, seasonal or other periodical work up to 5 working days in a month without stoppage of their right on social monetary aid.

Taking into consideration that this regulation entered in force at the beginning of April 2007 and that the Ombudsman Analysis was made in the period from 01.01.2006 to 30.09.2007 from the data received by the Centers for Social Work arises that the number of users of social monetary aid who are engaged to work five days in a month is smaller. Although some of the Centers stated that working engagement is mostly up to five working days in a month sometimes the users of social monetary aid are called to work up to five working days several times in one month.

According to the received data users of social aid are mostly called to work on maintenance of institutions, seasonal work in municipalities or in the public enterprises.

Above mentioned data and conclusions can be seen in the Table which is part of the Ombudsman Report:

Table of data received by the Centers for Social Work on the Ombudsman Questionnaire

Centers on Social Work by cities	Total number of users of social monetary aid	Categories of users of social protection engaged to work		Total number of users of social monetary aid engaged to work in period from 01.01/06 to 30.09/07	Users of social monetary aid				Number of users who are called to work up to 5 days in a month
		Users of social monetary aid	Users of social monetary aid (younger)		Accepted working engagement	Users who refused working engagement		Refused working engagement - persons against whom legal measures were taken	
						Justified refusals	Unjustified refusal		
Skopje	13706	Yes		56	47	5	/	4	56
Gostivar	3668		yes	300	270	30	/	/	No stated number
Delcevo	714	Yes		115	107	8	/	/	23
Kavadarci	820	Yes		/	/	/	/	/	No working engaged persons
Prilep	5103	Yes		2720	2672	/	48	48	Working engaged mostly the users of social monetary aid
Resen	443	Yes		10	8	2	/	/	/
Radovish	-	Yes		11	10	/	1		No stated number
Veles	2241	Yes		500	475		25	25	Working engaged mostly the users of social monetary aid
Shtip	827	Yes		/	/	/	/	/	/
Kocani	1901	Yes		27	27	/	/	/	No stated number
St.Nikole	-	Yes		99	96	3	/	/	No stated number
Gevgelija	-	Yes		57	44	13	/	/	No stated number
Kicevo	1478	Yes		16	16	/	/	/	No stated number
Kriva Palanka	1050	Yes		295	295	/	/	/	848
Strumica	2374	Yes		361	313	42	/	6	/
Berovo	536	Yes		6	36	/	/	/	80
Kumanovo	-	Yes		3000	2700	/	/	31	No stated number

Ohrid	-	Yes		33	33	/	/	/	No stated number
Struga	1223	Yes		/	/	/	/	/	/
Makedonski Brod	-	Yes		42	42	/	/		/
Negotino	713	Yes		30	30	/	/	/	No stated number
Bitola	2804	Yes		/		/	/	/	/
Krushevo	-	Yes		500	475	25	/	/	800 persons per year
Kratovo	282	Yes		25	25	/	/	/	30

Note: the Center for Social Work in Tetovo didn't submit filled questionnaire

CONCLUSIONS:

After analyzed filled Questionnaire the Ombudsman concluded that:

- The number of the users of social monetary aid who are engaged to work is considerably small or approximately 10% of the total number of users of social monetary aid in the Republic of Macedonia;
- No measures are taken for finding of possibilities for working engagement of the bigger number of users of social monetary aid although there are many jobs (especially on a local level) for which the users of social monetary aid could be engaged from time to time;
- Some of the Centers for Social Work or some of the bigger Centers for Social Work (Bitola, Kavadarci, Struga, Stip) didn't engaged any users of social aid because allegedly "there were no such need" or they didn't stated any reason in the questionnaire;
- Some of the Centers for Social Work inform the public enterprisers and other public institutions about the users of social monetary aid and send requests for their working engagement. Some Centers for Social Work had signed contracts with the municipalities for working engagement of those persons but according to the responses in the Questionnaire this was done only by small number of Centers for Social Work.
- In most of the cases users of social monetary aid accepts working engagement and shows interest to work which is good sign and points on the need for finding of all possible ways for more often working engagement of bigger number of users of social monetary aid. On that way bigger funds will be available which will create possibility for increasing of the amount of social monetary aid. This from the other hand will be in special interest of persons who can't be engaged to work because of the care for their children, health or other problems but don't have other resources for existence. On that way the state could fulfill its constitutional function as a social state responsible to take care for social security and justice.

RECCOMENDATIONS:

For situation improvement the Ombudsman recommends:

- Competent organs and agencies which are authorized by law to engage users of social monetary aid to work more often with aim for improvement of their social status and re-socialization.
- Centers for Social Work to establish closer cooperation with the local self-government, public and other agencies and services which work in their area and to make agreements for more often working engagement of the users of social monetary aid. More concretely: the Centers for Social Work and local government should show bigger self initiative for working engagement of those persons and for working engagements of bigger number of users of social aid especially for work which need workers but without possibilities for employment.
- By frequent working engagements of the users of social aid possibilities should be find for their permanent employment if their professional and working qualifications are in accordance with working needs of the agencies, other institutions or public enterprises especially for persons who showed quality and successful performance of working tasks. This also because

according to the Law on Social Protection other measures for employment should be taken with aim of stoppage of the social risk.

With aim of taking measures for employment increase and reduce of the number of the users of social monetary aid the Ombudsman suggested serious approach to this problem and consideration of the data especially his conclusions and recommendations. Therefore the Ombudsman request the Government of the Republic of Macedonia in the frame of valid legal regulations or by it's amendments to find different ways and possibilities for working engagement of the users of social monetary aid.