

PROJECT MEETING 2 – ATHENS

18th - 21st February 2010

LEARNER'S DIARY by Lucie Gižová

Meeting in Athens referred to the issue of good practice examples and institutions providing any kind of help to immigrants. At the beginning of the meeting, discussion appeared on what all should be the issue of the project: process of setting up a company – also legal framework, psychological aspects such as motivation, concentration on the target (so-called “fire”)? After this discussion we could go forward with our project. Presentations and inputs of other project partners showed their experiences in the system of immigration policy and structures for business counseling and coaching. On the other hand, the Czech Republic misses the longtime practice in the phenomenon of immigration and also coaching for entrepreneurs is not so well-developed.

Concerning the hosting organization, meeting was very well-planned and organized and with interesting program. In the first part of the meeting, partners from Greece presented the situation of immigration and immigrants' businesses in their country. There are 12 mil. people in Greece – 1 mil. of them come from other countries. The biggest boom of immigration in Greece has started about 10-20 years ago. Immigrants in Greece come from various countries – there are about 220 countries of origin. We can find here both legal immigrants and illegal ones – mostly from the Post-Soviet countries. Refugees coming to Greece are generally just transmitting and leave Greece sooner or later. This is very similar to situation in the Czech Republic although number of immigrants is almost a half. At the end of the day, we participated at the “field study tour” in the immigrants' town with typical small-business shops with various kinds of handcrafts.

As for the project procedure, some difficulties appeared as the result of the previous meeting – the need to define some of the key terms of the project: counseling and coaching. Since the meaning of these terms is different in each partner country, it is important to find the agreement on use of these terms. At the end of the meeting, all project partners agreed on the program of the following meeting that will take place in Corsica and on the tasks to be done by the meeting.