



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

**NATIONAL ROMA INCLUSION STRATEGY
FROM 2013 TO 2020**

ZAGREB, NOVEMBER 2012



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

Pursuant to Article 31(3) of the Croatian Government Act (as published in the official journal of the Republic of Croatia, *Narodne novine*, no. 150/2011), the Government of the Republic of Croatia, at its session held on 29 November 2012, has adopted this

CONCLUSION

1. The National Roma Inclusion Strategy is hereby issued to cover the period from 2013 to 2020, in the text submitted by the Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities, by decree, class: 004-01/12-01/09, ref. no. 50450-12-43, of 26 November 2012.

2. Upon commencement of implementation of the National Strategy specified in paragraph 1 of this Conclusion, the National Roma Programme, adopted by the Government of Republic of Croatia in its Conclusion, class: 016-02/02-03/02, ref. no. 5030108-03-01, of 16 October 2003, and the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Action Plan, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia in its Conclusion, class: 016-02/04-01/06, ref. no. 5030108-05-1, of 31 March 2005 shall no longer be applied.

3. The Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities shall be charged with the submission of the English-language translation of the National Strategy specified in paragraph 1 of this Conclusion to the European Commission.

4. The Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities shall be obliged to notify the Croatian Parliament's Committee on Human and National Minority Rights of this Conclusion in the appropriate fashion.

5. The Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities shall be obliged to send notification of this Conclusion to the relevant authorities charged with the measures contained in the National Strategy specified in paragraph 1 of this Conclusion.

Class: 016-02/12-01/14

Ref. no.: 50301-04/12-12-2

Zagreb, 29 November 2012

PRIME MINISTER

Zoran Milanović

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Acronyms

B-H – Bosnia-Herzegovina
CB – Central Budget CERD – UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CES – Croatian Employment Service
CGNGOCO – Croatian Government NGO Cooperation Office
CHII – Croatian Health Insurance Institute
CHIS – Central Health Information System of the Republic of Croatia
CHR – UN Committee on Human Rights
CPHI – Croatian Public Health Institute
CPPI – Croatian Pension Insurance Institute
DRIAP – Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Action Plan
ECRI – European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
ERDF – European Regional Development Fund
ESF – European Social Fund
ETTA – Education and Teacher Training Agency
EU – European Union
GAB – Government administrative bodies
IPA – European Union Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
LSGU – Local self-government units
L/RSGU – Local and regional self-government units
MESB – Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Small Business
MFEA – Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs
MLPS – Ministry of Labour and the Pension System
MoE – Ministry of the Economy
MoF – Ministry of Finance
MoI – Ministry of the Interior
MSES – Ministry of Science, Education and Sports
MSPY – Ministry of Social Policy and Youth
NCEEE – National Centre for External Evaluation of Education
NGO – Non-governmental organisation
NPR – National Roma Programme
OSI – Open Society Institute (Open Society Foundations)
PHARE – EU pre-accession instrument for assistance in restructuring the economies of pre-accession countries
PP – Physical plans
PR/SR – People's Republic/Socialist Republic
REF – Roma Education Fund
RoC – Republic of Croatia
RoCCB – Central Budget of the Republic of Croatia
RNM – Roma national minority
RSGU – Regional self-government units
SDF – Strategic Development Framework
SFRY – Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
GOHRRNM – Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR – Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

I. Framework for the adoption of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy of the Republic of Croatia from 2013 to 2020

Like in many other countries where they live, the Roma residing in the Republic of Croatia are, due to their meagre education, non-participation in formal employment, specific living style and other traits, more or less marginalised: economically, physically, culturally and politically. Recognising the status of Roma communities as more difficult than that of other minority groups in Europe, the Council of Europe and the European Union have – since 1993 and, in particular, over the past ten years – accorded special attention to the concerns of Roma people as the most sizeable national minority in Europe, encouraging the Member States and other countries in the region to address the problems of their Roma communities in a systematic manner so as to overcome the inherited gap as soon as possible and improve the living conditions for the Roma. To that effect, their resolutions and recommendations call for a multidisciplinary and systematic approach to addressing challenges in all areas, with special focus on the efforts to achieve the rights of children and women, enable access to education, ensure health care, social welfare and adequate housing, and eradicate discrimination and segregation on any grounds, including race, religion and gender. Special attention is paid to the position of the Roma in transition countries because the economic and social problems these countries are faced with additionally aggravate their situation.

The position of the Roma (both men and women)¹ and their living conditions have been on the margins of public interest for years, as a result of which the quality of their life lags far behind the average quality of life among the majority population. This pertains to their social status, access to education, health care and social welfare, opportunities to preserve their national identity, resolution of status-related issues, employment, media presentation, political representation, etc.

Holding that the Roma cannot overcome the existing gap on their own and striving to change the existing situation in order to achieve the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the legal system of the Republic of Croatia and to eliminate all forms of discrimination, the Croatian Government adopted the National Roma Programme in 2003. In 2005, the Republic of Croatia, together with a number of other European countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, Serbia and Montenegro), joined the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 – an initiative launched by the World Bank and the Open Society Institute in cooperation with a number of other key international players – and, accordingly, prepared its national Roma Inclusion Action Plan 2005-2015, setting a series of goals in the fields of education, health, employment and housing to be achieved by 2015. On 1 July 2012, the Republic of Croatia took over the Presidency of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015.

Recognising that its implementation of the Decade is still inconsistent in many fields and that, in order to improve the socio-economic situation of the Roma, it should set specific goals for each area of their concern and develop appropriate indicators and basic benchmarks to monitor progress over time, the Republic of Croatia set to prepare its national Roma Inclusion Strategy

¹ Note: All terms used in this document equally and without any discrimination refer to both men and women. For easier reading, when it refers to the community as a whole, the Strategy uses the word “Roma” rather than the words “Roma men/women”. The term “Roma” in this context pertains to both genders. In its sections that expressly pertain to and describe the specific situation of women and/or men, the Strategy uses the appropriate wording.

from 2013 to 2020 (hereinafter the “Strategy”).² The Strategy builds upon the National Roma Programme, redefining national priorities, implementation methods and specific measures to be taken in view of the evolving social and political environment, the progress achieved and further challenges in the process of including the Roma and enhancing their socio-economic situation. At the same time, the Strategy is an effort by the Republic of Croatia to align its fundamental policy paper on the integration of persons belonging to the Roma national minority with the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. The Strategy also relies on the provisions of international instruments on human and national minority rights, to which the Republic of Croatia is a party. In the process of its preparation, major input came from the experiences of other countries that systematically address Roma issues, especially within the framework of the Decade of Roma Inclusion.

The Strategy has been aligned with the identified needs and challenges related to Roma inclusion at all levels: local, regional, national and EU-wide. It contains goals and targets set as guidelines for making public policies aimed at the socio-economic inclusion of Roma communities up to 2020.

The National Roma Inclusion Strategy from 2013 to 2020 will be periodically revised in view of the fact that it needs to be updated with the missing information and baseline values, and in line with the identified requirements and changes related to the position of the Roma minority in general, as well as that of particularly marginalised groups within the Roma community (women, children, children with special needs, persons with disabilities, elderly persons, marginalised Roma communities, etc.) in the Republic of Croatia.

Important updates to the Strategy are also expected in terms of its alignment with other national documents developed as part of preparations for accession to the EU and, in particular, the objectives stemming from the Europe 2020 strategy and the budget programming period 2014-2020.

By the end of 2012, the Strategy will be supplemented with an Action Plan containing measures aimed at achieving the goals defined by the Strategy for the period from 2013 to 2015.

² This Strategy has been prepared as a collaborative effort of the Government's Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities, other governmental agencies and national institutions, local and regional self-government representatives, the Association of Municipalities and the Association of Cities, Roma community representatives from among the members of Roma national minority councils and Roma non-governmental organisations, and independent experts. Its preparation also involved participation by representatives from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-Croatia, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Office for Croatia, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Agency in Croatia and the Roma Education Fund (REF). Special support was also provided under the Open Society Foundation (OSF) MtM Programme. The Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat and the UNDP ensured access to strategies and strategy reviews of certain EU Member States, among which the Strategy of the Slovak Republic proved to be particularly rewarding in terms of enhancing the approach to the development of this Strategy.

The bulk of this Strategy, including its Chapter IV, stems from efforts made by working groups composed of representatives and experts from different sectors, who - with assistance from Milena Babić, Srđan Dvornik, Biserka Tomljenović and Diana Topčić-Rosenberg - provided major inputs by their analyses of the position of the Roma in Croatia. The analyses of the situation of the Roma community in Croatia were made on the basis of the available analyses, reports and studies prepared by local and international agencies and experts.

The working draft of the Strategy was subject to a public debate, including a series of consultative meetings held with key stakeholders, in particular, representatives of the Roma national minority and the relevant bodies of local and regional self-government units inhabited by Roma communities. Consideration was also given to contributions made to the public debate about the Strategy on dedicated websites at http://www.ulippnm.vlada.hr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=102 and http://www.ulippnm.vlada.hr/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=4&Itemid=80.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia is adopting the Roma Inclusion Strategy from 2013 to 2020 in order to encourage and support the process for the social and economic inclusion of the Roma minority through involvement and coordinated action by all bodies and organisations at each level of Croatian society and, thus, ensure a better quality of life for the Roma and reduce disparities and gaps between their socio-economic status and that of the rest of the population.

The objective of the Roma Inclusion Strategy is to systematically assist the members of the Roma minority in Croatia in improving their living conditions, to foster and support their inclusion in social life and decision-making processes in both local and wider community contexts without making them forgo their own identity, culture and traditions, and to encourage them to take an active role in changing their status in the society. The Strategy is also focused on transforming the attitude of the majority population towards the Roma by promoting the principles of non-discrimination and desegregation.

Protection and promotion of equality are among the highest values of the constitutional order in the Republic of Croatia, and they are the prerequisites for the exercise of equal opportunities, and protection from discrimination based on race or ethnicity or skin colour, sex, language and faith is secured and regulated by the Prevention of Discrimination Act and the Constitutional National Minority Rights Act.

Along with desegregation, the principle of non-discrimination is a fundamental principle of the Strategy. Accordingly, the processes designed to achieve its goals will, in particular, focus on the existing aspects of multiple discrimination against specific groups within the Roma community. Examples of such discrimination can be found in the treatment of Roma women, who are most often discriminated based on their ethnicity, but also on the grounds of their gender and, sometimes, based on their age, as well. Similar examples can also be found when it comes to elderly people, persons with disabilities, children, and special-needs and developmentally challenged children.

As opposed to negative discrimination, discrimination can also be positive if it is adjusted to specific forms of deprivation suffered by a discriminated group. Therefore, this Strategy promotes positive discrimination in favour of the Roma community to ensure their access to social assets.

The Strategy was also prepared by relying on the Ten Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion. The Principles were presented at the meeting of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion, held in Prague in April 2009. In June 2009, the Council of Ministers in charge of Social Affairs adopted them as an annex to its conclusions and invited Member States and the European Commission to take them into account when preparing their policies and strategic documents. These Principles include: (1) Constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies; (2) Explicit but not exclusive targeting; (3) Inter-cultural approach; (4) Aiming for the mainstream; (5) Awareness of the gender dimension; (6) Transfer of evidence-based policies; (7) Use of EU instruments; (8) Involvement of regional and local authorities; (9) Involvement of civil society; and (10) Active participation of the Roma. The Principles were also adopted in the Republic of Croatia, namely, at the Seventh Extended Session of the Working Group for the Monitoring of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Action Plan, which was held in Zagreb on 20 November 2009.

Monitoring of the National Roma Programme and the Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plan for 2005-2015 indicates the constant improvement of the status of the Roma minority in all fields,

particularly in the fields of education, inclusion in socio-political life at the local level through Roma national minority councils and representatives, and legalization of settlements and improvement of infrastructure in all parts of the Republic of Croatia. Analysis of the views of the relevant authorities, local and regional governmental representatives, Roma national minority councils and representatives and associations, international organisations and independent experts has been incorporated into the Strategy. Monitoring of Strategy implementation will be done by means of progress reports on the Action Plan for Implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy, and quality monitoring will facilitate further progress in the inclusion of the Roma minority into Croatia's core society.

Once implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy from 2013 to 2020 commences, the National Roma Programme, adopted by the Croatian Government on 16 October 2003, and the Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plan for 2005-2015, adopted by the Croatian Government on 31 March 2005, will no longer be applied.

II. Theoretical, legislative and strategic frameworks for the Strategy

II.1 Roma exclusion

Social exclusion should be understood as the relatively permanent, multiply conditioned and multidimensional state of deprivation of an individual. It is a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully in the society and societal processes solely by virtue of their poverty or lack of basic competencies and lifelong learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination. Consequently, excluded persons and groups are being distanced from employment, income and educational opportunities as well as social and community networks and activities. Socially excluded persons have no access to power and decision-making bodies and, thus, often feel powerless and unable to take control over the decisions that impact their day to day lives.³

Poverty is the aspect or form of deprivation which is most often reduced to material deprivation, that is, the lack of financial resources. Poverty can be defined in two ways: as multidimensional and as relative deprivation. While relative deprivation refers to the lack of access to adequate food, clothing, household necessities, sound working and living conditions and common social services, poverty implies the lack of resources enabling people to avoid privation, that is, to ensure living conditions acceptable in a particular society.⁴

Poverty is a one-dimensional concept, while exclusion is multidimensional. Poverty is about the financial (material) dimension of life (so-called income poverty), while exclusion – in addition to the lack of money – also implies deprivation in other areas of life: education, employment, housing, social connections, policy decision-making, etc. The purpose of combating poverty is to reallocate resources, while the efforts to alleviate exclusion aim at achieving a higher degree of social integration (i.e. inclusion).

Social inclusion is a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live. It ensures that they have a greater participation in decision-making which affects their lives and access to their fundamental rights.

The European approach to social exclusion is based on the understanding that poverty and social exclusion are not primarily a result of human weaknesses or failures on the part of individuals, but a result of structural problems in society. The circumstances in which people find themselves are influenced by a number of different economic, social and cultural factors interacting with and reinforcing each other. While those factors play a certain role in prolonging or intensifying such a situation, there is more to poverty and social exclusion than the sheer lack of job or insufficient income.

Social exclusion refers to all cases where social ties are severed and has three major dimensions:

³ See the Joint Report on Social Inclusion:

http://www.mspm.hr/djelokrug_aktivnosti/medunarodna_suradnja/jim_zajednicki_memorandum_o_socijalnom_ukljucivanju_rh/zajednicki_memorandum_o_socijalnom_ukljucivanju_hr.

⁴Šućur, Zoran: *Siromaštvo, višedimenzionalna deprivacija i socijalna isključenost u Hrvatskoj* ("Poverty, Multidimensional Deprivation and Social Exclusion in Croatia"), Zagreb, 2006.
<http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&id_clanak_jezik=20248>.

- the economic dimension (unemployment, scarcity of financial resources), reflected in long-term dependence on social benefits and long-term exclusion from the world of paid labour;
- the non-recognition of social, civil and political rights, which occurs as a denial of rights (in particular, those to housing and health-care) and accumulated difficulties and handicaps which lead to long-term non-integration;
- ruptures in social relationships,⁵ which result in isolation and severance of social or familial bonds.

In Croatia, several groups are hit particularly hard by social exclusion and poverty: the disabled, the mentally impaired, the homeless, the unemployed, the retired and the Roma. Social exclusion and poverty are much more widespread among the Roma than in other social groups. In the Roma community, absolute deprivation is far above relative deprivation. It is estimated that 76% of the Roma and 20% of other population residing in the vicinity of Roma settlements live in absolute poverty. In addition, their poverty is often deep and persistent and affects practically all aspects of their lives, including housing, education, Health and employment.⁶ Furthermore, social exclusion among the Roma is multifaceted. In addition to being reflected in each of the three major dimensions of exclusion, the exclusion of the Roma and, in particular, marginalised Roma communities, also extends to other dimensions of exclusion, such as the political, financial, cultural, symbolic or spatial ones.

All these types of exclusion are causally related to each other keep the Roma as a whole and, in particular, marginalised and segregated Roma communities within the overall Roma population trapped in the vicious circle of exclusion and deprivation. Therefore, in order to achieve sustainable social inclusion and poverty reduction among the Roma in Croatia, the policy to prevent or reduce exclusion requires a dynamic and all-encompassing approach that would combine economic and social measures.

II.2 Economic implications (costs) of Roma exclusion

As an excluded group in most of the countries where they live, the Roma face limited access to education, difficulties in labour market integration, income levels much lower than those of the majority population and, accordingly, a poor health profile, which in turn results in their higher mortality rates and lower life expectancy. Roma exclusion entails not only significant human suffering but also significant direct costs for public budgets as well as indirect costs through losses in productivity.

If we look at the birth rate trends, we can see there is one distinctive attribute which distinguishes the Roma from majority populations and it is tied to population dynamics. The Roma population and most of the other populations exhibit reverse demographic trends. The European Union's demographics show that, while its majority population is rapidly aging, the proportion of the Roma is increasing. As a consequence, the proportion of the Roma is also growing when it comes to the economically active population.

⁵(Choffé, 2001:207), Šućur, Zoran (2004), Socijalna isključenost: pojam, pristupi i operacionalizacija ("Social Exclusion: Definitions, Discourses and Operationalization"), Zagreb, 2004
<http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&id_clanak_jezik=22120>.

⁶Bejaković, Predrag, Vodič za socijalnu uključenost ("A Guide to Social Inclusion"), Institut za javne financije, 2009.

Age structure trends in the Republic of Croatia generally reflect those in the European Union. The demographic situation in Croatia has been characterized by a shrinking population and aging for quite some time now. In spite of a slight increase in the total fertility rate in 2009, natural population growth is showing a persistent downward trend,⁷ leading to a continually increasing share of the older population and a decreasing share of the younger one, that is, to demographic aging. Croatia's population aging index is continuously on the rise. From 2001 to 2005, it grew by 8.9% in total terms, with a 10.7% increase for the female population and a 7.1% increase for the male population.⁸ These upward trends largely exceeded the estimates made for the period under review, according to which the aging index was to grow by 6% for the total population and for women, and by 7% for men.⁹ In 2010, the expected ageing index stood at 110.3% for the total population, 133.3% for women and 88.5% for men. The process of population ageing in the Republic of Croatia will continue unless a dramatic increase occurs in birth rates - which is, under the existing circumstances, practically impossible - or the immigration of a population in the fertile age range. The aging of the population is expected to continue, with some demographic projections suggesting that, by the year of 2031, the share of the elderly will reach between 20% and 25% of Croatia's total population.¹⁰

According to the 2001 census, the aging index for the Roma population stood at 5.5. This stands in sharp contrast to the ageing index for the rest of the population, which - in the same year - reached 90.7. Although the 2011 census figures are not yet available, it is assumed that the disparities between the Roma and the rest of the population are still enormous and that the share of working-age Roma population in the total working-age population of Croatia will rise.

In the Republic of Croatia, just like in other European countries with Roma populations, the vast majority of working-age Roma presently lack the level and scope of education required to participate successfully in the labour market. In most of countries, a relatively large number of Roma do not make any major contributions to their central and local budgets because they mostly live on social welfare benefits, which they supplement with earnings from unregistered work. As a result, hundreds of millions of euros are lost annually in productivity and in fiscal contributions to the governments of these countries.¹¹

⁷ Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Report on the Implementation of the Joint Social Inclusion Memorandum (JIM) of the Republic of Croatia in 2010.

⁸ Central Bureau of Statistics, Republic of Croatia Population Estimate for 2010

<http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2011/07-01-04_01_2011.htm>.

⁹ Tomek-Roksandić, Spomenka; Perko, Goran; Lipovšćak, Mirjana; Mihok, Diana; Puljak, Ana; Radašević, Hrvoje; Čulig, Josip. Usporedba procjene indeksa starenja zagrebačkog, hrvatskog i europskog pučanstva (II. dio) (Comparison of Estimates of the Zagreb, Croatian and European Population Aging Index (Part II)), Hrvatski časopis za javno zdravstvo (pp. 1845-3082) 2 (2006), 8; <<http://www.hcjz.hr/old/clanak.php?id=13023>>.

¹⁰ Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Report on the Implementation of the Joint Social Inclusion Memorandum (JIM) of the Republic of Croatia, March 2007.

¹¹ The World Bank, Europe and Central Asia, Human Development Department, Economic Costs of Roma Exclusion, April 2010. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTROMA/Resources/Economic_Costs_Roma_Exclusion_Note_Final.pdf. According to this report by the World Bank's Europe and Central Asia Human Development Department, which provides data analyses for four European countries with significant Roma populations (i.e. Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and the Czech Republic), the lower threshold for estimates of annual productivity losses is more than €2 billion, which is also confirmed by the UNDP's estimates for 2006. The lower threshold of annual fiscal losses for these four countries is €843 million. The UNDP estimated that the economic losses for the four countries combined are as much as €5.7 billion annually, while the fiscal losses are €2 billion annually. The annual fiscal gains from bridging the employment gap are much higher than the total cost of investing in public education for all Roma children - by a factor of 7.7 for Bulgaria, 7.4 times for the Czech Republic, 2.4 times in Romania, and 3.3 times in Serbia. Slovakia estimates that the economic losses caused by the social exclusion of the Roma reach 7% of its GDP. Slovakia also estimates that the costs of Roma exclusion from the labour market are higher than the costs required for their inclusion in society. Projections suggest that these costs will rise over time because the Roma population is younger, with larger family sizes than

At present, there are no exact data on the economic implications of Roma exclusion in the Republic of Croatia. However, a survey conducted by the UNDP, the World Bank and DG Regio in 2011 indicated that the share of the employed within the working-age population (i.e. the employment rate) amounted to 34.91% for the Roma compared to 77.13% for non-Roma, while the share of the unemployed within the working-age population (i.e. the unemployment rate) reached 65.09% for the Roma and 22.87% for non-Roma. With regard to the labour force activity rate, the figures showed that only 18.21% of the Roma were active in the labour market as compared to 58.41% of the non-Roma population. Furthermore, when it comes to absolute poverty, where household income stands below the defined poverty line of HRK 25 (US\$4.30) per day, the survey showed that this group included 8.9% of the Roma households compared to 5.47% of non-Roma households. The material deprivation index suggested that 86.35% of the Roma were materially deprived as compared to 41.59% of the non-Roma population, with 66.01% of the Roma and 22.24% of non-Roma living in extreme material deprivation. Compared to 10.58% of the non-Roma population, only 4.49% of the Roma between 25 and 64 years of age had spent the average number of years in education. When this figure was disaggregated by gender, it turned out that only 3.54% of Roma women had spent the average number of years in education, as compared to 5.44% of the Roma men. These data suggest that the Roma community in Croatia, just like in other European countries, features similar elements of economic and social exclusion: a low level of education, a high rate of unemployment and a high rate of material deprivation, which implies dependence on the social welfare system and subsistence benefits, as well as a consequently worse health profile of the population. Accordingly, economic implications and financial costs related to the social and economic exclusion of the Roma certainly exist, and the Republic of Croatia – just like other European countries with excluded Roma populations – shoulders the burden of financial losses.

Roma inclusion is a necessary investment and is financially profitable in the long run. It is important to recognise that, apart from barriers such as labour market discrimination, the vast majority of the working-age Roma in Croatia, just like in other European countries, lacks the human capital necessary to participate effectively in the labour market. Very low levels of education among the working-age Roma translate into exclusion from the labour market and subsequent economic and fiscal losses. Therefore, investing in education among the Roma is of great importance because bridging the education gap is also the economically smart choice to make.

Investing in the education of Roma children thus contributes not only to the prosperity of the Roma community but society as a whole. Potential benefits for the state would come from increased governmental revenues from personal income taxes, employee contributions, savings on unemployment insurance, welfare benefits, public employment projects, etc. (Kertesi and Kezdi, 2006).¹²

majority populations. The larger the productivity gap between the Roma and the majority population, the higher the financial losses – as is the case, for example, in Romania.

¹² The study *Expected Long-term Budgetary Benefits to Roma Education in Hungary* estimates that the net budgetary benefit of investing (i.e. return on investment) in the education of a child from his/her age of four amounts to €70,000.00 in case he/she completes secondary education, or about €55,000.00 in case he/she completes a vocational training school. In addition to providing estimates per child, the study also takes into account the relative uncertainty of return on investment for all children, and suggests that an investment of €14,000.00 per child would break even with a 20% success rate (Kertesi and Kezdi, 2006).

The World Bank's analyses in the four countries showed that, in addition to their easier inclusion in the labour market, better educated Roma can also expect much higher earnings. The estimates suggest that in 20 to 30 years, when the results of changes in Roma education start to unfold, it will be evident that the costs of integrating the Roma are much lower than those of maintaining the standard of their socio-economic conditions. If the employment rate among the Roma could be raised to that of the majority population, the overall rate of employment would be increased by 5% to 10%, depending on the proportion and size of the Roma population in a particular country. Taking into account the effect this would have on the growth of GDP, national economies would make a substantial improvement in all indicators that are based on the percentage of GDP per capita.¹³

According to most of the standard economic models, like that of the World Bank, increasing labour market participation by the working-age population is indispensable for facilitating economic growth and especially requires the participation of those who are at an economically active age, but are unemployed. In the Roma community, the proportion of persons over 50 years of age is generally lower, while that of those below 30 is far higher than in the majority population. Therefore, the Roma population accounts for a significant and permanently growing share of the resources necessary to increase labour market participation. According to modest estimates, the inclusion of the working-age Roma population in the labour market could trigger a 4-6% growth of national GDPs. Hence, by not prioritizing the economic inclusion of the Roma, the states with Roma communities are wasting a significant amount of financial assets, let alone social benefits. These losses are reflected in and include:

- the indirect cost of lost GDP – as a result of social exclusion, unemployed Roma fail to produce any domestic product;
- increased governmental outlays for social welfare, financial assistance and health insurance for those excluded and in poverty;
- losses through higher health costs due to substandard living conditions and lack of prevention;
- losses related to education costs in segregated and low standard schools that fail to provide quality education, as well as special-needs schools which require higher costs;
- extra public safety costs due to higher crime rates caused by exclusion and economic deprivation;
- increased administrative costs of supervising the flow of welfare outlays.¹⁴

Losses related to low employment levels among the Roma and costs such as health insurance for the unemployed, social welfare and financial assistance as well as the inefficiency of the education system in relation to education levels among the members of the Roma community have a direct negative impact on the social standard. Ensuring equal labour market participation for the Roma is necessary in order to cope with increasing costs at the national level, in particular those related to pension benefits, health care and other expenses associated with the ageing of the population. Successful and sustainable inclusion of the Roma would mean not only improvements in the status of the Roma community, but would also bring about economic and financial gains for

¹³ Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, Járóka, Lívia, Working document on the EU strategy on the social inclusion of Roma, September 2010, <http://www.feantsa.org/files/freshstart/Communications/Flash%20EN/Docs_relating_to_Flash_2010/September/100928jaroka-working-doc-roma.pdf>.

¹⁴ Marcinčin A. and Marcinčinová E. The Cost of Non-Inclusion - The key to integration is respect for diversity. Open Society Foundation, Bratislava, 2009, <http://www.romadecade.org/files/ftp/Publications/2_cost_of_non_inclusion.pdf>.

the benefit of the entire society. Therefore, it is necessary to realize that the social inclusion of the Roma is not merely a moral obligation, but also an economic necessity. The full integration of the Roma is essential not only as some kind of charity towards the Roma community, but also for the sake of the financial interests of the country as a whole.

II.3 International regulatory framework of the adoption and implementation of the Strategy

Status analysis: In the international context, the Republic of Croatia pays particular attention to respect for the rights of the Roma and the efforts to strengthen their inclusion in all activities in society. At the national level, its activities rely on **international standards and international instruments**, both global and regional,¹⁵ in the field of human rights, to which Croatia is a party and based on which it also regularly prepares and presents its national reports.

With regard to promoting and protecting Roma rights, the RoC actively co-operates with international human rights organisations, with special focus on collaboration with the **United Nations**, in particular its Human Rights Council, well as co-operation with the Human Rights Council's thematic procedures, to which Croatia has extended a standing invitation. To this effect, pursuant to her visit to Croatia, the UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing prepared a report which also contains a section on the situation of Roma people.¹⁶

Concerning its co-operation with the **Council of Europe**, Croatia – in addition to complying with the provisions of the regional instruments it has ratified – enforces the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights¹⁷ and follows up on the recommendations made by the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers as well as the European Commission to combat racism and intolerance. Croatia is also implementing the Council of Europe's Enough! campaign, which it joined in 2008 and which is designed to combat discrimination against the Roma (the campaign's television spot was broadcast on HTV, Croatia's national public television broadcaster).

Croatia also co-operates with the **Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe**, which monitors the efforts made in the region to promote and protect of the rights of the Roma, especially through its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

Croatia fully supports the **EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020**, which calls for the strengthening of measures in the fields of education, employment, health care and housing in order reduce the existing problems related to the social integration of the Roma.

The Republic of Croatia also plays an active role in the **Decade of Roma Inclusion**, including its Presidency from July 2102 to June 2013.

As stipulated by Article 140 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, “international treaties which have been concluded and ratified in accordance with the Constitution, published and which have entered into force, shall be a component of the domestic legal order of the Republic of Croatia and shall have primacy over domestic law. Their provisions may be altered or repealed only under the conditions and in the manner specified therein or in accordance with the general rules of international law.”

¹⁵ The following key instruments should be cited:

- Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1951, and its additional protocols
- Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of 1995
- European Social Charter
- European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of 1992

¹⁶ See the Report (A/HRC/16/42/Add2) prepared pursuant to the visit from July 2010.

¹⁷ See the Oršuš case (Application no. 15766/03).

Apart from its commitments under international treaties, the Republic of Croatia is bound by other obligations under international law, which ensue from its membership in international organisations. The following international treaties and documents are of particular relevance to the exercise of Roma rights:

DOCUMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948;
2. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966;
3. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966;
4. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1965;
5. UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 and the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1999;
6. Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography of 2000; and
7. Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities of 1992.

DOCUMENTS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The Council of Europe dedicates the bulk of its efforts to the protection of human rights and, in particular, minorities. The extent to which its documents are legally binding differs depending on whether they stipulate obligations expressly assumed by Croatia under the relevant treaties or commitments undertaken pursuant to authorisation from the Council of Europe's bodies. The Council of Europe is an organisation whose activities extend to the protection of human rights and democracy, the preservation and development of the European cultural identity and the resolution of social problems such as the protection of minorities and the fight against xenophobia, environmental protection, etc. Within the aforementioned scope of activity, a series of documents have been developed, which deal, *inter alia*, with the protection of the Roma and are binding for the Republic of Croatia as a member of the Council of Europe. These include:

1. Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (the so-called European Convention on Human Rights) of 1951 and its additional protocols;
2. Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of 1995;
3. European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of 1992;
4. Instrument of the Central European Initiative for the Protection of National Minorities of 1994;

5. Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers, other Council of Europe bodies and the European Parliament concerning specific Roma issues:
 - a) Recommendation No. Rec(2000)4 of the Committee of Ministers – Guiding principles of an education policy for Roma/Gypsy children in Europe of 2004;
 - b) Recommendation No. Rec(2001)17 of the Committee of Ministers on improving the economic and employment situation of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in Europe of 2001;
 - c) Resolution No. P6_TA(2006)0244 of the European Parliament on the situation of Roma women in the European Union of 2006;
6. Recommendation of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) on combating racism and intolerance against Roma/Gypsies of 1998;
7. Specific recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance within the process of monitoring the implementation of commitments pertaining to the Republic of Croatia:
 - a) Resolution ResCMN(2002)1 of the Committee of Ministers on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Croatia of 2002; and
 - b) Second and Third Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) on Croatia - CRI(2001)34 of 2001 and CRI(2005)24 of 2005

II.4 Croatian regulatory framework of the adoption and implementation of the Strategy

The regulatory framework which governs the rights of national minorities in Croatia includes:

Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (*Narodne novine* /RoC Official Journal/, no. 85/10. – Consolidated Version);
 Constitutional National Minority Rights Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 155/02, 47/10, 80/10 and 93/11);
 National Minority Language and Script Use Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 51/2000);
 Identity Cards Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 11/02, 122/02 and 31/06);
 Education in National Minority Languages and Scripts Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 51/00 and 56/00);
 Primary and Secondary School Education Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 901/11, 16/12 and 86/12);
 Religious Community Legal Status Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 83/02);
 Electronic Media Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 153/09);
 Croatian Radio-Television Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 137/10);
 Croatian Parliamentary Elections Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 120/11 – Consolidated Version);
 State Administration System Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 150/11);
 Local and Regional Self-Government Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 60/01. – Authoritative Interpretation, 129/05, 109/07, 125/08, 36/09 and 150/11);

Local and Regional Self-government Elections Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 33/01, 10/02, 155/02, 45/03, 43/04, 40/05, 44/05 – Consolidated Version, and 109/07);
Municipal Chief Executive, Mayor, County Prefect and City of Zagreb Mayor Elections Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 109/07, 125/08, 24/11 and 150/11);
Civil Servants Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 92/05, 107/07, 27/08, 49/11 and 150/11);
Local and Regional Civil Servants Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 86/08);
Courts Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 122/10 – Consolidated Version, 27/11 and 130/11);
Public Prosecution Office Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 76/09, 153/09, 116/10, 145/10, 57/11 and 130/11);
Anti-Discrimination Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 85/08);
Gender Equality Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 82/08);
Social Welfare Act (*Narodne novine*, br. 33/12);
Criminal Code (*Narodne novine*, no. 125/11); and
National Population, Households and Dwellings Census Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 92/10).

As the fundamental legal document, the *Constitution of the Republic of Croatia*¹⁸ is rooted in the principles of freedom, equal rights, national equality, social justice and respect for human rights, as laid down in Article 3 thereof: “Freedom, equal rights, national and gender equality, peace-making, social justice, respect for human rights, inviolability of ownership, conservation of nature and the environment, the rule of law and a democratic multiparty system are the highest values of the constitutional order of the Republic of Croatia and the grounds for interpretation of the Constitution.” Furthermore, the Croatian Constitution places robust emphasis on the equality of all individuals and groups. To this effect, Article 14 reads as follows: “All persons in the Republic of Croatia shall enjoy rights and freedoms, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, political or other conviction, national or social origin, property, birth, education, social status or other characteristics. All persons shall be equal before the law.” Article 66 states the following: “In the Republic of Croatia, everyone shall have access to education under equal conditions and in accordance with his/her aptitudes. Compulsory education shall be free, in conformity with law.” The amendments made to Croatia’s Constitution in June 2010 have altered its wording by introducing therein the Bosniaks, Slovenes, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Russians, Bulgarians, Poles, Roma, Romanians, Turks, Vlachs and Albanians in addition to the previously listed national minorities. As a result, the Constitution’s Historical Foundations now expressly list each of the twenty-two national minorities living in the Republic of Croatia.

The ***Constitutional National Minority Rights Act*** (CNMRA)¹⁹ guarantees the following rights to the members of all minorities in the Republic of Croatia, including those of the Roma minority:

1. To express their belonging to their national minority;
2. To use their first names and surnames in their minority language and script;
3. To obtain their identity cards in their minority language and script;
4. To use their language and script in private and public life as well as official purposes;
5. To receive education in the language and script they use;
6. To use their insignia and symbols;

¹⁸ Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (consolidated text), <<http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/232289.html>>.

¹⁹ Constitutional National Minority Rights Act, 2002, <<http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/310287.html>>.

7. To enjoy cultural autonomy by maintaining, developing and expressing their own culture, and preserving and protecting their cultural assets and traditions;
8. To practise their religion and establish religious communities together with other members of that religion;
9. To have access to the media and engage in media activities (i.e. receive and disseminate information) in the language and script they use;
10. To engage in self-organisation and association in pursuit of their common interests;
11. To be represented in representative and executive bodies at the national and local levels, as well as administrative and judicial bodies;
12. To participate in public life and the management of local affairs through their national minority councils and representatives; and
13. To be protected from any practice that poses or may pose a threat to their existence and exercise of their rights and freedoms.

II.5 Conformity of the Strategy with European Union strategies

When preparing the National Roma Inclusion Strategy from 2013 to 2020, particular attention was accorded to alignment with all major European Union documents dedicated to inclusive growth and development and which encourage social and economic inclusion of marginal groups: Europe 2020 – the European Strategy for Smart, Sustainable, Inclusive Growth²⁰ and the EU Framework for Roma Integration by 2020,²¹ which contain the guidelines for member states when drafting their national strategies aimed at Roma integration in order to ensure application of effective policies for the social and economic inclusion of the Roma minority.

The Strategy is additionally based on these documents: the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion²² and the Social and Economic Integration of the Roma in Europe,²³ which are significant to the social and economic inclusion and improvement of the status of the Roma in the territory of the European Union.

1. EUROPE 2020

In its efforts to overcome the current economic crisis, in 2010 the European Union adopted *Europe 2020 – the European Strategy for Smart, Sustainable, Inclusive Growth*. This strategy constitutes a platform for a common way out of the crisis and the transformation of the European Union. The Europe 2020 strategy proposes three priorities which complement each other: smart growth through greater investment in knowledge and innovation; sustainable growth through

²⁰ *Europa 2020 – Europska strategija za pametan, održiv i uključiv rast*, March 2010. <http://www.mobilnost.hr/prilozi/05_1300804774_Europa_2020.pdf>.

²¹ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, April 2011. <http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/discrimination/docs/com_2011_173_en.pdf>.

²² Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion, December 2010. <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0758:FIN:EN:PDF>>.

²³ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – The social and economic integration of the Roma in Europe, April 2010. <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0133:FIN:EN:PDF>>.

more efficient use of greener and more competitive resources; and inclusive growth through a high-employment economy delivering economic, social and territorial cohesion. Within the framework of inclusive growth, the objective is to secure economic, social and territorial cohesion to raise awareness and recognition of the fundamental human rights of people affected by poverty and social exclusion, allowing them to live in dignity and to actively participate in society.

Member states are expected to promote shared collective and individual responsibility in combating poverty and social exclusion and to define and implement measures addressing the specific circumstances of groups at particular risk. The Roma are mentioned explicitly as one of the most numerous target groups, simultaneously the socially and economically most excluded European minority.

2. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – THE EUROPEAN PLATFORM AGAINST POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION: A EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION

The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion, adopted in 2010, lays down the framework for achieving the European Union's objectives concerning poverty and social exclusion by a minimum of 20 million by 2020. This platform is part of the Europe 2020 Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth. The key activities under this platform are improved access to employment, social security, basic services (health-care, housing, etc.) and education by marginalized and socially excluded groups; better use of EU funds to support social inclusion and combat discrimination, social innovation in order to find smart solutions in Europe after the crisis, particularly in the sense of more effective and efficient social welfare; new partnerships between the public and private partnerships.

According to this document, a special task of the member states is to define and implement measures aimed at specific groups (among whom the Roma are in fact highlighted), other minority groups, single-parent families, elderly women, the disabled and the homeless. In this sense, the European platform provides a general framework for the measures which Croatia introduced in its own strategic documents which deal with the Roma.

3. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – AN EU FRAMEWORK FOR NATIONAL ROMA INTEGRATION STRATEGIES UP TO 2020 BY 2020

The EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies by 2020 is the European Union's response to the current situation in the Union pertaining to the status of the Roma and an impetus for decisive action, in active dialogue with the Roma, in order to end the economic and social marginalization of the largest European minority. Pursuant to Directive 2000/43/EZ, member states²⁴ are obliged to secure for the Roma (as all other EU citizens) non-discriminatory access to education, employment, vocational training, health-care, social security and housing.

²⁴ COM(2010) 133, Social and Economic Integration of the Roma in Europe.

According to the European Commission's guidelines, the national strategies of member states must adhere to a targeted approach that will, in compliance with the Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion,²⁵ actively contribute to the social inclusion of the Roma into the majority society and the elimination of divisions where they exist, and complement and contribute to the broader Europe 2020 framework and thus comply with the national reform programmes. In order to achieve visible progress in Roma integration, it is necessary to secure concentration of national, regional and local integration policies on the Roma in a clear and specific manner through explicit measures to eliminate the challenges they confront. The Commission proposed to member states the development of national Roma integration strategies, and the adaptation of existing strategies in order to meet the EU's Roma integration goals with targeted campaigns and sufficient funding (national, EU and others) for their implementation.

This Strategy was developed in compliance with the fundamental recommendations of the EU Framework, simultaneously retaining the broader scope inherited from the National Roma Programme, which was deemed to have significantly contributed to progress in the status of the Roma minority and reducing the gap between it and the rest of the population.

4. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF THE ROMA IN EUROPE

The Social and Economic Integration of the Roma in Europe is a European Union strategic document adopted in 2010 which builds on the mobilization of EU institutions, member states, international organisations and non-governmental organisations to support the social and economic integration of the Roma. The European Union is attempting to spur stronger cooperation between national, European and international actors in order to increase the effectiveness of already existing instruments in the achievement of Roma inclusion. As the foundation for stronger cooperation, this document cites the European Platform for Roma Inclusion and the Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion.

II.6 Conformity of the Strategy with the Croatian strategic framework

A component of the Strategy's framework is composed of other national plans, programmes and strategies which defines the objectives and stipulated measures for improving implementation of social inclusion and uplifting the status of marginalized groups which are significant to the exercise of Roma rights:

- National Framework Curriculum for Preschool Education and Learning and General Mandatory and Secondary Schooling of 2011
- Adult Education Strategy of 2007

²⁵ The ten Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion were presented at the first Platform meeting on 24 April 2009. The attachment contains the Council's conclusions of 8 June 2010: European Commission, 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion, 2009:

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Documents/2011_10_Common_Basic_Principles_Roma_Inclusion.pdf.

They encompass: 1) constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies, 2) explicit but not exclusive targeting, 3) intercultural approach, 4) aiming for the mainstream, 5) awareness of the gender dimension, 6) transfer of evidence-based policies, 7) use of European Union instruments, 8) involvement of regional and local authorities, 9) involvement of civil society, 10) active participation of the Roma.

- National Employment Incentive Plan for 2011 and 2012
- National Social Inclusion Enabling Plan for 2011 and 2012
- Republic of Croatia Social Welfare Development Strategy for 2011-2016
- National Youth Program for 2009-2013
- National Health-care Development Strategy for 2006-2011
- National Human Rights Protection and Promotion Programme for 2008-2011
- National Gender Equality Policy for 2011-2015
- National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking for 2012-2015
- National Addiction Prevention Programme for Children and Youth in the Educational System and Social Welfare System for 2010-2014
- National Strategy to Combat Drug Abuse in Croatia for 2006-2012
- Republic of Croatia Official Statistics Development Strategy for 2004-2012
- Republic of Croatia Statistical Activity Programme for 2008-2012

The strategic approach is based on the commitments undertaken after the signing of the memorandum with the European Commission, the content of which is also of significance to the improvement of the socio-economic status of the Roma:

1. Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion of the Republic of Croatia (JIM) between the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the European Commission of 2007, which sets as priorities the struggle against poverty and social exclusion, modernization of the social protection system and preparation of the Republic of Croatia for full participation in the open method of aligning social protection and social inclusion in the European Union. The Memorandum outlines the key challenges involved in resolving the problems of poverty and social exclusion, presents the chief policy measures which the Republic of Croatia has undertaken in the light of agreements calling for commencement of implementation of joint EU objectives in national policy and identifies the key policy issues for future monitoring and re-evaluation of policy. It designates the commencement of implementation of EU social objectives in the struggle against poverty and social exclusion through national policy, taking into account the specific aspects in each candidate country. An entire chapter in this document is dedicated to the introduction of measures to end stereotypes and racial prejudice against the Roma as integral components of policies devised to assist the Roma. The priorities and measures specified in this document pertain to inclusion and improvement of the status of members of the Roma community in all fields: the educational system, lifelong education, preservation of Roma culture, language and customs, political participation and cooperation in decision-making processes, health-care, housing, hiring, projects focusing on the Roma and prevention of violence and discrimination.
2. The Joint Assessment of Employment Policy Priorities (JAP) of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Entrepreneurship and the European Commission of 2008 constitutes an analysis of the key challenges involved in reforming the labour market and employment policy and it is one of the evaluation documents of a candidate country in the field of employment policy which defines employment policy and the reorganisation of institutions in compliance with the requirements of the European employment strategy and the European Social Fund's enabling mechanisms. This document stresses that one of the challenges pertaining to the status of the Roma minority is that among the Roma, unemployment remains endemic. Discrimination against the Roma in Croatia continues, whether in matters

pertaining to access to jobs and education, or in terms of society's general attitude. Thus, more effective implementation of existing programmes for sensitive groups on the labour market is proposed, as well as their expansion, particularly for the purpose of exerting a significant impact on the hiring of Roma. In this context, it is necessary to initiate separate studies with the aim of analyzing and supervising the status of hiring among the Roma minority, identifying the risks that they confront and the corresponding policy responses.

II.7 Policies and strategies aimed at inclusion of the Roma minority in Croatia since 1990

After its declaration of independence in 1991, Croatia's priorities were to end the war, restore its occupied territories through peaceful reintegration and implementation of a programme of reconstruction and care for and return of displaced persons, refugees and exiles. The status of the Roma minority was not in the focus, while the rights of the Roma community were regulated by laws and regulations which governed the rights and status of national minorities in general.

In keeping apprised of trends in European countries and the recommendations of European Union institutions, the Republic of Croatia acknowledge the difficulties confronted by the Roma in Croatia and it took the first steps aimed at greater inclusion of the Roma community in society as a whole. In 2003, Croatia adopted the National Roma Programme, which contained a series of measures aimed at providing systematic assistance to the Roma by improving their quality of life, ensuring their inclusion in society and, in particular, contributing to decision-making at various levels and the preservation of their identity, culture and traditions.

The *Croatian Government's National Roma Programme* (NRP) specifies the basic problems surrounding the social integration and social status of the Roma and sets forth concrete measures which must be implemented by the Croatian Government and local authorities in the field of preserving the Roma culture and language, the conferral of citizenship to the Roma, political representation, education, housing, health-care, social welfare, family protection and protection of women, and employment.

The overall coordination and monitoring of policies and activities targeting the Roma community at the national level were entrusted to the Croatian Government's Office for National Minorities.²⁶ Implementation of measures and policies at the national level falls under the purview of the relevant ministries, while at the local and regional levels it is the responsibility of the corresponding bodies at that level of governance. In January 2003, the Croatian Government formed the National Roma Programme Monitoring Commission. Out of the Commission's 23 members, seven (7) were selected from among the ranks of the Roma minority, while the remaining members, 16 in all, are representatives of various bodies of state authority – ministries and other institutions, and the City of Zagreb and Međimurje County (including the Commission's chairwoman).²⁷ The Commission is chaired by the deputy prime minister in charge of social affairs. The Commission decides on the policies and measures that will be carried out, and it consists of five task forces, in charge of: (1) Roma inclusion in culture and social life and

²⁶ Now the Croatian Government's Office for Human Rights and National Minorities.

²⁷ Pursuant to a decision made in 2008, the Commission had, including its chairwoman, 28 members, of whom nine (9) were Roma. As of 2012, the Commission has 31 members, of whom nine (9) are Roma representatives.

enforcement of international documents; (2) status rights and non-discrimination; (3) education, science and sports; (4) social welfare and health-care and employment; (5) physical planning and housing.

Parallel to implementation of the National Roma Programme, the Republic of Croatia expressed readiness, together with several other European countries,²⁸ joined the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015,²⁹ launched by a group of major regional and international actors.³⁰ By implementing the National Roma Programme and joining the Decade, Croatia is simultaneously putting into place the basic UN Millennium Development Goals and the European Union Social Inclusion Programme geared toward the most vulnerable minority population in Europe: the Roma.

In order to align its activities and efforts at integrating Roma with the Decade's goals, in 2005 the Republic of Croatia adopted the *Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Action Plan* (DRIAP) which sets forth clear objectives, measures, indicators and the institutions responsible for implementation of the measures to improve the lives of the Roma in the fields of education, housing, employment and health-care. Since the initiative for the Decade of Roma Inclusion encompassed an extended period, and incorporates both external (on the part of the Decade's official bodies) and internal mechanisms to monitor implementation (the commission which monitors these measures in Croatia), as well as a certain financial structure for support, primarily through the Roma Education Fund, the DRIAP constituted the key document in the field of Roma inclusion.

In April 2005, the Croatian Government established the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Action Plan Task Force, which is tasked with the systematic monitoring and coordination of implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Action Plan, the proposal of measures to improve implementation of the Action Plan, the drafting of recommendations, opinions, expert explanations and reports, and guidelines pertaining to implementation of the Action Plan, and monitoring of the timetables and expenditure of funds to implement the Action Plan's measures. The task force has 12 members, of whom 4 are from among the ranks of the Roma minority and 8 are representatives of state bodies.

In 2007, the *Joint Social Inclusion Memorandum* (JIM) was drafted and signed. The memorandum is a document of the Croatian Government, or rather of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, created to aid Croatia in the struggle against poverty and social exclusion. The memorandum provides a general overview and presents the principal challenges pertaining to resolution of poverty and social exclusion, and it also outlines the measures that Croatia will undertake. The memorandum also contains specific measures for the inclusion of the Roma population which supplement the measures specified by the National Roma Programme

²⁸ Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, Serbia and Montenegro; Bosnia-Herzegovina, Spain and Albania joined the initiative subsequently.

²⁹ The Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 is an initiative which emerged in 2003 during a regional conference in Budapest called "Roma in an Expanding Europe: Challenges for the Future". The initiative constituted a political commitment of the 9 Central and East European governments, including Croatia, to actively participate in solving the problems of Roma poverty, exclusion and discrimination through focused action (described through a series of specific measures in the national Decade Action Plans) in basic fields tied to improvement of the quality of life of Roma: education, employment, health-care and housing.

³⁰ Among which the most active are the World Bank, the Open Society Institute, the United Nations Development Programme, the Council of Europe, the Council of Europe Development Bank, the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions, the European Roma and Travellers Forum, European Roma Rights Centre and the Roma Education Fund.

and the Decade Action Plan, such as: inclusion of Roma children in education, preservation of Roma culture, language and customs, inclusion of Roma representatives in local and regional self-government, access to high-quality health-care, inclusion in decision-making processes, employment incentives, improvement of housing conditions, prevention of violence and discrimination as well as strengthening the Roma by participation in activities to evaluate the effectiveness of measures and projects aimed at their inclusion.

The *Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plans for 2009/2010 and 2011/2012* are documents adopted by the Croatian Government and after their approval by the National Roma Programme Monitoring Commission at the proposal of the Decade of Roma Inclusion Monitoring Task Force. These documents contain detailed measures for the 2005-2015 Action Plan in 2009/10 and 2011/12 for each of these four fields: education, health-care, employment and housing. The DRIAP also contains an overview of the availability or absence of data for indicators, and designation of the links between each of these measures with the fundamental guidelines (combating discrimination/segregation, struggle against poverty). The DRIAP specifies deadlines and the funds required for implementation.

In the attempt to improve the status and living conditions of Roma minority and to involve the members of the Roma community in public and social life, the Croatian Government regularly allocates funds from the Central Budget for implementation of the National Roma Programme and the Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plan. Thus, during the period from 2005 to 2009, the funds allocated for implementation of measures and programmes dedicated to the inclusion of Roma quadrupled in comparison to the initial year of investment.

Table 4: Financing allocated from the central budget for implementation of the National Roma Programme						
Year	2004.	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Allocated amounts (€)	122,000	374,000	1,600,000	1,900,000	2,383,300	5,287,400*

* including finances from EU funds

According to the Implementation Report on the Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plan for 2009 and 2010 for execution of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Action Plan and the National Roma Programme in the Republic of Croatia Central Budget for 2009 and 2010, a total of HRK 20,666,04 were secured (since the specified measures from both documents are compatible, the amounts cannot be broken down for each year). In 2009 and 2010, a sum of HRK 21,595,932.89 were expended for the Roma Support Project – Phare 2005 and Phare 2006 programmes, of which HRK 5,748,267.26 were allocated from the RoC central budget, while HRK 15,847,665.63 were funds from the European Union budget. The Croatian Government secured an amount of HRK 9,200,000 for legalization of Roma settlements in Medimurje County, which were encompassed by projects under the Phare 2005, Phare 2006 and IPA 2008 programmes.

It is noteworthy that these reports do not encompass the considerable expenditures made at the local and regional levels, and the funds expended by state administrative bodies in numerous programmes not specifically earmarked for members of the Roma national community and/or in cases when data on the ethnicity of beneficiaries were not available.

II.8 APPLICATION OF EXPERIENCES FROM EARLIER POLICIES AND MEASURES

In order to ensure successful and sustainable results for the measures foreseen by the strategic documents on Roma inclusion and improvement of their status in Croatia, future strategies and policies must be based on the experiences and insights gained through implementation of the measures under existing strategies and policies.

The National Roma Inclusion Strategy from 2013 to 2020 was formulated so as to offer an all-encompassing approach to the integration and status improvement of the Roma minority in the Republic of Croatia. The objectives and measures contained in this document are based on the ten-year experience in implementation of the National Roma Programme and the seven-year experience in implementation of the Decade Acton Plan and on the basis of available reports, studies and analyses of strategic document implementation.³¹ Additionally, in order to ensure the relevance of the Strategy documents in the sense of setting objectives and measures in compliance with the challenges and needs arising from inclusion of the Roma community and, ultimately, to their comprehensiveness and effectiveness, representatives of the state and public authorities at the national and local levels, experts with relevant expertise in various fields encompassed by this strategy, representatives of international organisations with many years of experience in programmes aimed at Roma inclusion and experience in drafting studies and analyses of their implementation in the European Union and the region and representatives of the Roma community all participated in the development of this document, incorporating their knowledge of and insights into the impact of previous policies in their local communities.

Experience has shown that the following must be taken into consideration in the achievement of objectives and effective intervention aimed at inclusion and improvement of the status of the Roma community in Croatia:

- The Croatian Government has issued two mutually complementary strategic documents on Roma inclusions with measures that largely overlap: the National Roma Programme and the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Action Plan. The enabling bodies for both documents are generally the same. The implementation of measures and the reporting process increase the extent of administrative operations with any particular increase in the impact of social interventions. In addition to the increased extent of work tied to reporting, double reporting has a demotivating impact, and it also turns attention away from concrete implementation activities. The recommendation from most of the main stakeholders, including representatives of the Roma community, is for the planned amendment of the strategic documents to go in the direction of consolidation and clear links between these two documents, a thorough revision achieved on the basis of an evaluation and unambiguous definition of objectives, measures and jurisdictions, and financial needs. Adhering to recommendations and experiences, this Strategy was created in a manner which merges both documents and clearly sets and defines the objectives and other parameters and secures the prerequisites for a more successful and

³¹ Among others, the relevant publications include: UNDP, *Monitoring Framework for the Decade of Roma Inclusion*, November 2008; Human Rights Centre/UNDP, *Provedba Akcijskoga plana Desetljeća za uključivanje Roma za Hrvatsku u periodu 2009. - 2010.* (in the context of the Monitoring Framework for the Decade of Roma Inclusion, UNDP, 2008); National Roma Programme Monitoring Commission, *Izješće o provođenju Nacionalnog programa za Rome za 2007., 2008. i 2009. godinu*; Office for National Minorities of the Croatian Government, *Izješće o provođenju Akcijskog plana Desetljeća za uključivanje Roma za 2009. i 2010. godinu*; Human Rights Centre and Roma for Roma Croatia, *Analiza i smjernice za osnaživanje romskog civilnog sektora u Republici Hrvatskoj*, 2012.

effective implementation of measures and monitoring of their results, while the application of the Strategy and the accompanying Action Plan means that these documents will no longer be valid.

- Quality monitoring and evaluation of implementation are highly important to the successful and effective implementation of members and interventions and the determination of further steps in achieving set goals. One of the main problems associated with monitoring and evaluation is the accessibility and manner of presenting data on the progress made by these measures, for there is a notable absence of data on the education of Roma, employment, health-care and housing, as well as indications on overall poverty. Previous strategic documents generally define and have as a result an overview of data on members of the Roma community as the beneficiaries of services and programmes, which register the absolute number of persons encompassed by the programmes without showing what these numbers proportionately mean or how they are linked to the broader measures of outcomes/results. Another general problem that has been observed is the difficulty in accessing and dispersal of data and lack of ethnically disaggregated data which would facilitate a precise estimate of the gap between the Roma and the other populations in all areas as well as more precise measurement of progress and implementation at the national level. The absence of data makes it difficult to verify the effectiveness of the measures being implemented, and also prevents the establishment of baselines, i.e., reference points that serve as a foundation for comparison, evaluation and goal-setting without which it is difficult to monitor progress. Therefore particular attention in the drafting of the accompanying Strategy Action Plan should be dedicated to establishing indicators that will allow the measurement of the impact of interventions, and also set standards for gathering and monitoring data.
- With reference to the institutional aspect of the National Roma Programme, a clear distinction has been drawn between provisions which pertain to implementation, monitoring and evaluation, responsibilities, and reporting requirements and frequency. At the national level, the Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities has been designated as the central coordinating body for monitoring and submission of a consolidated document based on the annual reports dealing with the Decade's four fields of interest. The Office is supported by specialized bodies: the National Roma Programme Monitoring Commission and the Decade Task Force.
- Local and regional self-governments have emerged as the weakest links in the implementation of the measures under the National Roma Programme and the Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plan. Not one of the strategic documents was binding for the local authorities, and so each local governmental unit decided independently whether and to what extent it would implement the specified measures. As a result, and despite the continual increased investment by the Croatian Government in Roma inclusion processes, a lasting and sustainable impact has not been entirely achieved. Thus, it will be necessary to undertake measures for further decentralization of policy and measure implementation, with a clearer breakdown of priorities for the Decade and Strategy at local levels of administration, wherein such an administration would, in cooperation with the relevant ministries, assume greater responsibility for implementation. The strategic document must clearly specify and enhance the role and responsibility of national and local authorities and clearly determine which measures, or rather

which shares in responsibility for financing and implementing Roma inclusion measures go to national (ministries, offices) and which to local authorities (municipalities, cities, counties), and then also define the monitoring system in this sense. In order to ensure implementation of measures and achievement of Strategy objectives and action plans at the local and regional levels, regional self-government units should be obliged to draft county action plans for Roma inclusion. Counties should be provided with the assistance of bodies from the national level in when drafting and implementing action plans, and education in the fields of community development, social inclusion, the struggle against poverty, minority rights and use of funds, particularly EU funds, should be provided to them.

- Experience has shown that, in the interest of coordinated activity and achieving set goals and results, it is necessary to find ways and establish functional mechanisms to establish better vertical cooperation, interdepartmental cooperation and also cooperation between governmental bodies, non-governmental organisations and international actors. The establishment of such cooperation and partnerships is necessary in order to achieve synergy, but also in order to attain a greater feeling of responsibility and ownership of achievement, particularly by those at the local level. The need to strengthen work in the community, both among the Roma and the rest of the population in awareness raising, enhancement and social reconstruction of those communities or, perhaps better stated in the case of relations between the Roma and others, the “construction” of communities, will not be met without effective teamwork and partnership at the local level between social welfare centres, family centres, educational institutions, health-care institutions, the non-governmental and governmental sectors, the business sector and representatives of both communities. However, the stability of such activities will require ensuring firm state support which must provide an unambiguous strategic and legal framework at the level of subordinate legislation, and financially underwrite the development of local programmes where the local authorities do not have sufficient capacity, will or means, with use of available EU funds.
- Experience over the past ten years of carrying forward policies and measures dedicated to integration and improving the status of the Roma in Croatia has shown that the Roma community is not sufficiently actively involved in their implementation but also in their creation and assessment of their impact. This does not pertain to Roma representatives who are involved in various initiative and participate in implementation and monitoring. However, despite the involvement of Roma representatives, most of the community remains excluded. Women in particular are excluded, and there is a very small number of Roma women who have assumed leading roles in the active creation, implementation and evaluation of interventions. This Strategy and the accompanying Action Plan therefore focus particular attention to spurring more active involvement by both Roma women and men, particularly in marginalized and deprived Roma communities, in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the Strategy and related policies. Involvement and active participation by Roma men and women in all phases of the process will allow the Roma to move from being passive beneficiaries of services into active participants in the process of their inclusion, so that they gain a sense of ownership and assume responsibility for increasing the effectiveness of policies and measures. Involvement of the Roma must be encouraged and it must come about at the national, regional and local levels through contributions by Roma experts and activists in various institutions and through consultations with the maximum possible number of Roma in

designing, implementing and evaluating policies. In this vein, the openness and transparency of inclusion policies are very significant to encouraging the active involvement of members of the Roma community, and it is also important for policies to touch upon and deal with uncomfortable topics and taboos in an appropriate and effective manner. Therefore, this Strategy takes into account the importance of greater and more systematic involvement by the highest possible share of the Roma population, particularly at the local level, and in this regard it also acknowledges the need for building the necessary capacity for members of the Roma community in Croatia to assume a more active role in society.

III. Strategy Context

III.1 The Roma community in the Republic of Croatia

Over roughly the past thirty years, several research projects on the Roma have been conducted in Croatia, and among the most significant is the research conducted by the Social Research Institute in Zagreb in 1982, with its results published under the title *Društveni položaj Roma u SR Hrvatskoj* [Social Status of the Roma in the Socialist Republic of Croatia], the research conducted by the Ivo Pilar Social Science Institute in 1998, under the title *Društveni razvojni položaj Roma u Hrvatskoj* [Social Status of the Roma in Croatia], the National Institute for the Family, Motherhood and Youth in 2002, under the title *Struktura romskih obitelji i poimanje sadržaja roditeljstva u njima* [The Structure of Roma Families and Notions of the Role of Parenthood in Them], and the research collected in the anthology *Kako žive hrvatski Romi* [How the Croatian Roma Live] published by the Ivo Pilar Institute, Zagreb, 2005.

Although there is no consensus on the arrival of the Roma in Croatia's territory, the most widespread belief is that the Roma first came to Croatia as part of a larger group which arrived in Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries through Asia Minor and South East Europe.³² The first written document in which the Roma are mentioned is a mercantile record from Dubrovnik dated 1362. Roughly ten years later, in 1373, the Roma were mentioned as being in Zagreb as well, where they were merchants, tailors and butchers. In Dubrovnik, the Roma (*Jeđupi*) lived in Gruž already at the end of the fourteenth and in the fifteenth century, forming kinship communes which engaged in traditional Roma trades and music. In the medieval period, the Roma population was tied to the cities. In Pula in 1497, a certain priest named Dominik Ciganin ('Dominic the Gypsy') was active, while in 1500 the Roma were mentioned as living in a suburb of Šibenik. There are little data on the actual number and status of the Roma in Croatia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Gypsy "*šipušli*", musicians, were mentioned in Croatia in 1671. In Međimurje, the Roma were mentioned in 1688, when, in Legrad (which was then administratively a part of Međimurje), a child of the "Gypsy" Duke John was baptized, while in the eighteenth century Međimurje's feudal lords allowed the immigration of Roma trough-makers. It is important to note that most of the Roma population during this period belonged to the lower or middle class and that they lived equally as a group with the rest of the population. During the nineteenth century, large groups of Roma came to Croatia from Romania. They belonged to the Roma group known as the *Koritari* ('trough-makers') and they settled in Međimurje and the Drava River basin (Podravina). They spoke *ljimba d'bajaš*, a Romanian dialect ('Vlach' dialect), and together with the already present *Kalderaši* and *Lovari*, constitute the core of today's Roma population in Croatia.

During the Second World War, the Roma community was directly persecuted under the racial laws of the time and endured high losses. There is no agreement on the possible number of Roma who lost their lives in Croatia's territory, but the proportions are clear if one keeps in mind that in the roll of Jasenovac concentration camp victims listed by individual names, 16,045 were Roma,

³² For sources on Roma history, see, for example, Danijel Vojak: *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje i rukopisne zbirke Arhiva Odbora za narodni život i običaje kao izvor za proučavanje povijesti romskog stanovništva na području Hrvatske u razdoblju od kraja XIX. stoljeća do 1941*, Etnol. trib. 27-28, Vol. 34/35, 2004/2005, pp. 207-236 and the sources cited therein.

of whom 5,599 were children, while according to the 1931 census there were 14,284 Roma.³³ Many Roma participated in the people's liberation war, and during the 1990s they also participated in Croatia's Homeland War.

Roma in Croatia's territory were first recognized as a national minority in the constitution of 1974, after which Roma have been guaranteed the protection of their minority rights in compliance with effective legislation. The members of the Roma community in Croatia's territory have considered this their homeland for centuries, and within which they actively contribute to the development and welfare of the entire community to the best of their ability.

The contemporary status of the Roma has been formed through two typical forms of coexistence. Roma communities living in relatively isolated and separate rural settlements have preserved their national and cultural self-awareness, but poverty and backwardness in comparison to their surroundings has appeared. By contrast, the living standards of that part of the Roma population which has lived intermixed with the general population has been considerably better, but at the price of the loss of components of their national identity.

III.2 Demographic data on the Roma in the Republic of Croatia

During the past several decades, the number of Roma in Croatia increased from 1,257 in 1971, to 3,658 in 1981 to 6,659 in 1991. According to the 2001 census, 9,463 people declared themselves members of the Roma minority in the Republic of Croatia, out of which 4,686 were women and 4,777 men. According to the official indicators, Roma accounted for 0.21% of the total population in the Republic of Croatia in 2001. The number of Roma in the Republic of Croatia, according to the censuses conducted from 1948 to 2001, is shown in Table 1.³⁴

The precise number of Roma who today live in the Republic of Croatia and their territorial

Table 1: Number of Roma in Croatia according to censuses from 1948 to 2001							
Census year	1948	1953	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
No. of Roma	405	1,261	313	1,257	3,858	6,695	9,463

distribution is difficult to ascertain for a number of reasons, including the decision by a certain number of Roma to declare themselves members of other ethnic groups, which is a

direct result of negative experiences and the reserve of the majority population, generally based on stereotypes and prejudices.³⁵ One of the causes for refusal to declare as Roma is also the fact that they are not a homogenous population. There are differences within the Roma population in terms of language, socio-economic status and religion. Thus, the results of the official population census is only an indication of the actual state of affairs. According to estimates made by the

³³ Danijel Vojak, op. cit, p. 216. By way of comparison, the 1921 census recorded 4,611 Roma.

³⁴ Data on the number of Roma in the Republic of Croatia according to the 2011 census were not available during the drafting of this Strategy.

³⁵ The research conducted in 1995 on a representative sampling consisting of secondary school pupils in Croatia (N=2,715) examined the level of acceptance or rejection of certain ethnic groups (Previšić, 1996 and Posavec/Hrvatić, 2000). Of the 13 ethnic groups, the Roma were – alongside the Serbs and Montenegrins, negatively perceived due to wartime events – at the lowest levels with reference to 7 features of the Bogardus scale of social distance. With reference to "close relatives by marriage", the Roma ranked 12th in this research, while with reference to "close personal friends", "neighbours", "classmates", "citizens of the Republic of Croatia" they ranked 11th.

Council of Europe, between 30,000 and 40,000 Roma live in the Republic of Croatia. According to the results of the research into ‘Structure of Roma Families and Notions of the Role of Parenthood in Them’ conducted in 2002 by the National Institute for the Protection of the Family, Motherhood and Youth, 51% of the Roma in Croatia are “indigenous”, 17% moved inside of Croatia, while the remainder consisted of new residents. During the 1990s, the intense settlement of Roma from other parts of the former Yugoslavia was recorded, particularly from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo.

Table 2 provides a comparative overview of the number of Roma by counties encompassed in the 1991 and 2001 censuses. The data show that an almost 50% growth in the total number of Roma in Croatia, and considerable growth in their number in individual counties, while in some counties (generally those directed impacted by warfare), the number of Roma declined. Table 3 shows the municipalities and cities by county, and the precincts of the City of Zagreb, which according to the data from the 2001 census, have over 100 Roma living in them.

Table 3: Municipalities/cities by county and precincts in the City of Zagreb with over 100 Roma residents		
County name	Name of municipality/city	Number of Roma
Zagreb	Velika Gorica	130
Sisak-Moslavina	Novska	120
	Sisak	436
Varaždin	Petrijanec	366
Primorje-Gorski Kotar	Rijeka	489
Brod-Posavina	Slavonski Brod	582
Osijek-Baranja	Beli Manastir	153
	Belišće	160
	Darda	210
	Osijek	124
Vukovar-Srijem	Vinkovci	114
Istria	Pula	301
	Vodnjan	195
Međimurje	Čakovec	1,105
	Kotoriba	156
	Mala Subotica	430
	Nedelišće	541
	Podturen	173
	Selnica	162
	Orehovica	237

During their migrations, while coming into contact with numerous cultures, the Roma adopted elements typical of the areas in which they resided for extended periods. The majority population in the Republic of Croatia

Table 2: Number of Roma by counties		
County	1991	2001
Zagreb	128	231
Krapina-Zagorje	2	4
Sisak-Moslavina	315	708
Karlovac	16	7
Varaždin	333	448
Koprivnica-Križevci	204	125
Bjelovar-Bilogora	144	140
Primorje-Gorski Kotar	504	589
Lika-Senj	49	10
Virovitica-Podravina	86	4
Požega-Slavonia	0	7
Brod-Posavina	223	586
Zadar	7	4
Osijek-Baranja	782	977
Šibenik-Knin	42	8
Vukovar-Srijem	265	167
Split-Dalmatia	39	11
Dubrovnik-Neretva	5	4
Istria	637	600
Međimurje	1,920	2,887
City of Zagreb	994	1,946
Total – Croatia	6,695	9,463

City of Zagreb	Trnje	163
	Peščenica-Žitnjak	751
	Gornja Dubrava	200
	Donja Dubrava	126
	Sesvete	343
Total		8,347

generally has no or insufficient knowledge of the traditions, language, art and other traits of the Roma. The results of the aforementioned research conducted by the National Institute for the Protection of the Family, Motherhood and Youth show that the Roma language is generally spoken in Roma families (78.9%), or any of the dialects of the Roma language (*romani chib* is spoken by 42.4% of the respondents, *ljimba d' bjash* by 36.5%), while 11% of the respondents speak Albanian, and only 6% of the families speak Croatia, while 4% of the respondents expressly refer to their language of everyday communication inside their families as Romanian.³⁶

The Roma often accept the dominant religion of the place in which they live and then add to it elements of their traditional beliefs. Thus, the Roma in Croatia belong to various religions: 45.5% of the Roma declare themselves as Muslims, 31.1% as Catholics, 16.9% as Orthodox, while 6.8% declared either no religion or some other faith.

The family is the fundamental element of the Roma social structure, with some specific aspects that ensue from their traditions. Research from 1982 shows that the average Roma household has 5.6 members, while research from 19987 indicates the relatively highest number of households has 5 or 6 members, with notably considerable differences between individual settlements. This feature considerably sets Roma families apart from the average household in Croatia, because the average Croatian household numbered 3.23 members in 1981, only to decline to 3.1 members in 1991, while the data for 2001 indicate that the average household in Croatia has 2.99 members. Roma households are mainly young. The aging index among the Roma population according to the 2001 census is 5.5, which is in direct contrast to the aging index among the remainder of the population, which is 90.7. A

³⁶ For Roma groups and dialects in Croatia, see Zoran Lapov: "Riječ redaktora", in: Veljko Kajtazi, *Romsko-hrvatski i Hrvatsko-romski rječnik*, Zagreb, 2008, and Zoran Lapov: "The Romani Groups and Dialects in Croatia. With a Special Emphasis on the Romani borrowings in Croatian Language", in B. Schrammel, D.W. Halwachs, G. Ambrosch (eds.), *General and Applied Romani Linguistics, Proceedings from the 6th International Conference on Romani Linguistics*, Munich: LINCOM Europa, pp. 79-89.

breakdown of the population based on age shows that most Roma are in the youngest age group (0-4 years) and that moving up the age scale their number gradually decreases: approximately 55% of the population is below the 0-19 year threshold, approximately 40% of the population is in the 20-59 bracket, while only about 3% of the population is older than 60 years of age.³⁷

The assignment of roles in Roma families is traditional. Women are not emancipated, and are in fact often marginalized and exposed to discrimination, which is reflected in the upbringing of children and the functioning of families. Additionally, a very high birth rate is present. In some Roma communities, arranged marriages, marriages involving minors and coerced marriages are still a predominant form of “traditional practice”. Women in Roma society are subordinate and thereby without a greater say in family planning. The high fertility of the Roma community is also partially a consequence of this status of women. Nonetheless, it should be borne in mind that the above description of the status of Roma women contradicts the manner in which the Roma community sees itself: as a community in which women, particularly adult women, are respected and deemed pillars of the community. They maintain ethnic identity and tradition, protect the unity of the family, manage the money and engage in communication with the world outside.³⁸

III.3 Socio-economic status of the Roma in the Republic of Croatia

The unfavourable socio-economic status of the Roma is due to deep-seated social problems tied to poverty, low education rates, high unemployment rates, inadequate living conditions and housing, poor health-care and broad-spectrum discrimination. Interlocked and interlinked by cause and effect, these negative factors create a closed circle of exclusion from which the Roma cannot extricate themselves on their own, without assistance. The low living standards of most Roma and the constantly present marginalization contribute to their dependence on social welfare. Their poverty rates are at times ten times higher than equivalent rates among the rest of the population. According to the UNDP's report *Faces of Poverty, Faces of Hope*³⁹ from 2005, the poverty rate among the Roma in Croatia is two and a half times higher than among the remaining population which lives in the vicinity of the Roma.⁴⁰ Poverty among the Roma was considerably more widespread than in other groups or in society as a whole. Based on a poverty line of 60% of the median net per capita income, 76% of the Roma and 20% of the remaining population residing in the vicinity of Roma settlements live in absolute poverty.⁴¹ Based on its character, Roma poverty is often deep and permanent and affects almost all aspects of living standards (housing, education, health-care, etc.).⁴²

³⁷ Pokos, Nenad, “Demografska analiza Roma na temelju statističkih podataka”, 2005: <http://www.pilar.hr/images/stories/dokumenti/zbornici/30_hr/z_30_035.pdf>.

³⁸ Kusan Lovorka, Zoon Ina, “Izveštaj o pristupu Roma zapošljavanju: Hrvatska”, Council of Europe, September 2004: <http://www.coe.int/T/DG3/RomaTravellers/archive/stabilitypact/activities/Croatia/romaaccessemploymentCroatian_en.asp>.

³⁹ UNDP, Regional Bureau for Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (2005.) *Faces of Poverty, Faces of Hope*. UNDP, Bratislava, Slovak Republic. <http://vulnerability.undp.sk>. The report presents a profile of the vulnerability of the Roma populations in countries participating in the “Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015” (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro).

⁴⁰ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), “Siromaštvo, nezaposlenost i socijalna isključenost”, Report, 2006. <<http://www.undp.hr/upload/file/104/52134/FILENAME/Siromastvo,%20nezaposlenost%20i%20socijalna%20isključenost.pdf>> (accessed 5 Feb. 2012).

⁴¹ UNDP, “Vulnerable Groups in Central and South Eastern Europe”, <<http://vulnerability.undp.sk>>.

⁴² Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion in the Republic of Croatia, March 2007.

Despite the fact that the members of the Roma minority in the Republic of Croatia are to a considerable extent encompassed by the application of rights in the social welfare system, poverty and exclusion are social problems which are still largely present in the Roma community. Even though one cannot speak of complete social discrimination of the Roma, certain forms of social labelling, stigmatization and segregation do indeed exist.⁴³ In other words, the Roma have been on the margins of social interest for many years, which has contributed to the lag in the quality of their living conditions in comparison to the average living conditions of most of the population. Thus, one may speak of the Roma as a multiply marginalized population. Roma marginalization has several major dimensions: socio-economic, physical, cultural and political, and all of these are compounded when Roma women are considered.

The *socio-economic* marginalization of the Roma is tied to their low socio-economic status, low level of education, affinity for certain professions and low level of inclusion in formal (registered) forms of labour. This status is closely tied to their (non-)participation in the educational system. A high number of Roma remain outside of the labour market and have no possibility for competing for a higher social status due to their distance from educational institutions. Most Roma communities belong to the poorer segments of the population with low incomes and living standards, high unemployment rates and difficult access to health-care and educational services.

The Roma are evidently marginalized with reference to the dominant/registered form of labour. Thus, they are generally not included in formal types of employment. The unemployment rate in the Roma population in Croatia is exceptionally high. Since they are marginalized with regard to formal labour, most of the Roma population is dependent on social assistance and unemployment benefits to meet their basic living needs.

Since the Roma are generally poorly represented in those professions which could facilitate a higher living standard and status, they are poorly represented in high-profile professions and their overall economic status is markedly unfavourable. The majority of the Roma population is locked in an endless cycle of poverty which has even assumed an extreme form. The economic status of the Roma in most societies has even assumed forms of destitution in which their basic existential needs are threatened. Thus, when speaking of the status of the Roma in societal stratification, according to some scholars the Roma are outside of the system's stratification, or rather below the lowest levels of the standard stratification scale.⁴⁴ This position is referred to by some as a "sub-class". The term sub-class is closely tied to the concepts of poverty, urban segregation and ethnic (racial) discrimination. Therefore, given their economic status, the Roma are not only marginalized, but also "excluded" from the social stratification system.⁴⁵

Physical marginalization pertains to spatial segregation and the undeveloped infrastructure of Roma settlements. The Roma live throughout Croatia's territory, but most of this population lives in Međimurje County, the City of Zagreb, Osijek-Baranja County, Sisak-Moslavina County, Istria

<http://www.delhrv.ec.europa.eu/images/article/File/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20JIM_hrv_0320071.pdf> (accessed on 7 Feb. 2012).

⁴³ Stigmatization is the negative denotation of individuals or groups in society or political and cultural life, or labelling those who should be excluded. The concept of segregation is a differentiated validation of individuals or groups in the social aspect (living conditions) and their exclusion based on class, nationality, faith or some other characteristic.

⁴⁴ Michael Haralambos – the difference between social inequality and social stratification: social inequality pertains to the existence of socially generated inequality, while social stratification is a separate form of inequality, which pertains to the existence of observable social groups (class, stratum) ranked one below the other.

⁴⁵ Šućur, Zoran, "Romi kao marginalna skupina", scholarly paper, January 2000.

<http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?id_clanak_jezik=31756&show=clanak>.

County and Primorje-Gorski Kotar County. The Roma community in Croatia is spatially dispersed, and not tied to a typical settlement type. In the cities they often reside in poorly equipped suburbs. In villages, they most often live in separate Roma hamlets. In most cases, the Roma population lives in marginalized and segregated communities which can be found in both urban and rural areas. Such divisions are also a result of the fact that the Roma – compelled by their negative experiences during the history of their migrations – chose a physical and social distance in order to preserve their specific qualities and resist, or at least slow, assimilation processes. However, such segregation delays and hinders integration into Croatian society.

With the exception of the City of Zagreb, most Roma live in ethnically homogenous and often illegally-built settlements or on private property at the peripheries of cities and municipalities. Most settlements were developed without a land-use plan, they do not meet basic hygienic conditions and are inadequate for human habitation. Expecting that the government will resolve problems related to housing, the Roma in these settlements still live in wooden abodes and metal containers without suitable infrastructure.⁴⁶

The Roma community in segregated communities often have limited access to basic services. Their situation was exacerbated by transition processes, as well as the economic crisis in the past three years, which led to an additional deterioration of the social and economic conditions in society and reinforced the negative impact of transition processes on the living conditions and employment prospects of the Roma. Such spatial concentrations also had a considerably negative impact on including the Roma on the labour market, the existence of utilities infrastructure, community services, health-care, education, housing and transportation and increasing the likelihood that the Roma population will remain in poverty. The lack of interest and unwillingness of local governments in some parts of Croatia to become engaged and contribute to improving the socio-economic status of the Roma in their areas are another factor in maintaining the Roma population's current status. Additional aggravating factors are xenophobia and intolerance for the Roma which existed even prior to the economic crisis, although the latter intensified it, leading to even greater segregation of the Roma population.

Political marginalization is tied to the poor political participation of the Roma. The Constitutional National Minority Rights Act has guaranteed and effected the right of the Roma minority, together with 11 other minorities,⁴⁷ to representation in the Croatian Parliament via one MP. The Constitutional National Minority Rights Act stipulates that the members of national minorities in the cities and municipalities in which they account for between 5% and 15% of the population, or if they account for over 5% of the population in a county, national minorities are entitled to proportional representation in the representative bodies of these local governmental units. Furthermore, in local and regional self-governmental units, the Roma are represented by via national minority councils at all levels of local authority where they account for over 1.5% of the total population, in local governmental units in which over 200 members of an individual national minority live, and in regional governmental units in which over 500 members of an individual national minority live. In cases when the criteria for election of national minority councils have

⁴⁶ Miletić, Geran-Marko, "Uvjeti stanovanja i stambene aspiracije Roma", in: *Kako žive hrvatski Romi*, Institut društvenih znanosti Ivo Pilar, 2005. <http://www.pilar.hr/images/stories/dokumenti/zbornici/30_hr/z_30_159.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Article 17(5) of the Croatian Parliamentary Elections Act stipulates that the members of Austrian, Bulgarian, German, Polish, Roma, Romanian, Rusyn, Russian, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vlach and Jewish national minorities are entitled to jointly elect a member to the Croatian Parliament.

not been fulfilled, and in the territory of local governmental units in which a minimum of 100 members of a national minority live, a national minority representative is elected. The councils consist of 10 minority members at the municipal level, 15 members at the city level, and 25 members at the county level, and they participate in elections of the chairman of the council for a specific local governmental level. The representatives of councils are elected by a direct secret ballot for a period of four years in regular elections for national minority councils in local and regional self-government units, while the candidates are nominated by Roma associations (NGOs) or a specific number of members of the Roma minority.⁴⁸ The councils have an advisory role for the bodies of local and region self-government.

Local and regional self-governments cover the operating costs of councils while certain costs in the fields of culture and employment are covered by the Croatian Government's Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities. The conditions for representation of the Roma community in representative and executive bodies at the local level have thus been fulfilled. Despite this, the Roma national minority councils are confronted with various problems in their functioning due to the lack of systematic support for basic costs by local governments, which has resulted in varying levels of activity. The unclearly defined or differently interpreted advisory role of the councils, without an actual authority, also creates additional ambiguities as to how they actually contribute to local self-government, except for the fulfilment of participatory democracy on paper.⁴⁹ In most cases at the local level, the Roma community does not have sufficient influence to make decisions, while the Roma representatives in the councils feel that their recommendations do not have any impact on the local authorities. One of the problems is a lack of broader coordination and cooperation between all councils functioning in the Republic of Croatia, which is a barrier to achieving transparency and an impediment to their influence. Moreover, another reason for inadequate participation in decision-making is that the Roma representatives in the national minority councils are mostly insufficiently prepared to effectively represent their communities due to a generally low level of education and the skills required for this type of advocacy.

Besides the Roma national minority councils, some representatives of Roma non-governmental organisations participate at the local level through membership in local specialized bodies which make decisions on the allocation of funds for most educational programs and the development of the relevant legislation, strategies and projects. High-quality cooperation between the Roma minority and local authorities varies from one area to the next, but for now it has been most effective in urban zones.

The *cultural marginalization* of the Roma is apparent at the level of value systems and way of life. This marginalization comes down to the fact that Roma customs, behaviour and attitudes appear as an obstacle to the greater participation of the Roma in the dominant culture of society, because they are qualified as deviant, or the entire culture is viewed as having lesser value in comparison to the general culture in society. The cultural traits of the Roma reflect a specific way of life, and its manifestation in outside appearances, everyday conduct and institutions and

⁴⁸ The candidates for members of the national minority councils and the candidates for national minority representatives may be nominated by national minority associations or a minimum of 20 members of the national minority from the territory of the municipality or 30 from the territory of cities and 50 from the territory of counties (Constitutional National Minority Rights Act, *Narodne novine*, no. 11/02, 47/10, 80/10, 91/11).

⁴⁹ Novak. Croatia: "Stanje u zemlji u području obrazovanja Roma i radna strategija fonda za obrazovanje Roma"; UNDP, *Unplugged: Faces of Social Exclusion in Croatia*, 52

interpersonal relations. The Roma originated in a cultural/civilisational sphere that is fundamentally different from that of Europe. They brought numerous customs and attitudes with them from their original homeland which did not fit into the way of life of the European population. They also brought with them a different system of values in which Western materialism was not a supreme value, which dictated their attitude toward employment and work. By accepting the value orientation of the societies in which they live, the Roma were condemned to live in an anomalous situation and thus forced to exploit “informal” ways to exercise generally-accepted values.⁵⁰

The differences between the Roma and the majority population are also great in the areas of family and education. Some Roma marry early, leading to pregnancy among minors, which is also one of the causes for their absence from the educational process. Thus, most of the Roma population experiences an abbreviated adolescence and youth and does not participate in the adolescent sub-culture which plays an essential role as a transition period prior to assuming social roles.

The differences in ways of life and value systems between the Roma and the remaining population result in the emergence of stereotypes, a lack of trust and an unwillingness to get closer and engender an understanding between the two groups, thus deepening the rift between them, while the cultural marginalization of the Roma remains a fixture.

⁵⁰ Šućur, Zoran, “Romi kao marginalna skupina”, scholarly paper, January 2000.
<http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?id_clanak_jezik=31756&show=clanak>.

IV. Strategy policies

IV.1 Main strategic areas

Although a considerable number of measures have been implemented in the Republic of Croatia in recent years within the framework of the National Roma Programme and the Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plan and great progress has been achieved, the status of most Roma in Croatia is still rather troubled. Moreover, to a certain extent the parallel implementation of two strategic documents caused confusion and a lack of clear orientation at the regional and local levels. Therefore, this Strategy constitutes an attempt to define robust measures which will be clearly focused and directed toward existing social and economic problems confronted by the Roma community. It is an attempt to ensure that national, regional and local policies aimed at inclusion are unified and concentrated on the Roma in an unequivocal and specific manner, and deal with Roma needs with explicit measures to prevent and eliminate the obstacles which they confront.

In its communiqué on the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies by 2020, the European Commission proposed that member states develop national Roma integration strategies and adjust existing ones in order to meet the EU's objectives for Roma integration. The European Commission issued an instruction for the development of national strategies aimed at the Roma that will define national objectives in compliance with the objectives of Roma integration as defined in the EU Framework for National Strategies. There is a strong recommendation for an integrated approach, combining activities in various fields and for the objectives to encompass a minimum of four crucial fields: education, employment, health-care and housing, in order to bridge the gap between marginalized Roma communities and the majority population. Member states must add additional objectives before this which are relevant to their specific national context and define the transitional steps.

On the one hand, the Strategy also inherited the National Roma Programme by encompassing a broader field than the EU Framework recommendations, while on the other the Strategy brings some novelties in comparison to the National Roma Programme. The Strategy's primary fields encompass:

- Education
- Employment and inclusion in economic life
- Health-care
- Social welfare
- Physical planning, housing and environmental protection
- Inclusion in social and cultural life, associations
- Status solutions, prevention of discrimination and assistance in the exercise of rights.

These fields include a broad spectrum of specific issues tied to inclusion and improvement of the status of the Roma which were not included in the National Roma Programme. The fundamental features of the Strategy are the increased reach into Roma populations in marginalized settlements, work in the community and encouragement of active Roma inclusion in the implementation of programmes and activities, as opposed to an approach in which target groups passively receive various aspects of social welfare.

Keeping in mind the specific and subordinate status of women in Roma communities, during development of the Strategy due consideration was accorded to the gender dimension, the protection of women and the introduction of gender equality principles in each field. Elements tied to the promotion of the human rights of women and gender equality, equal employment opportunities, gender-sensitive education, equality in decision-making processes in political and public life and elimination of violence against women were integrated into the Strategy's objectives and measures.

IV.2 OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR ROMA INCLUSION UP TO 2020

The purpose of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy from 2013 to 2020 is to set the guidelines that will facilitate the achievement of genuine and permanent changes in the socio-economic status of the Roma minority in Croatia. Under the Strategy, a goal and objectives were set which are aimed at achieving the implementation of the planned measures linked to various segments and fields of activity.

The goal set by the Strategy is to improve the status of the Roma minority in the Republic of Croatia by reducing the multi-dimensional socio-economic chasm between the Roma and the remaining population and by harmoniously, openly and transparently achieving the full inclusion of the Roma in all segments of society and the community.

Four objectives were set within the framework of the Strategy, with uniform achievement that will secure achievement of the goal:

- To create and develop human capital in the Roma community by raising the level of general and targeted education of children and adults and encouraging life-long learning
- To improve the economic status of the Roma by facilitating access to the labour market, increasing employment opportunities and self-employment and encouraging equal hiring opportunities
- To improve the health and social status of members of the Roma community by ensuring equal and adequate access to quality health-care and social welfare and improving living conditions
- To improve the social status of the Roma through the creation of the conditions for the achievement of fundamental human and minority rights by eliminating all forms of discrimination and encouraging active participation in society and decision-making processes.

IV.3 PERFORMANCE AND EFFICIENCY INDICATORS FOR IMPLEMENTED MEASURES

The achievement of the designated objectives requires an all-encompassing approach that will integrate and mutually link measures and interventions in various fields. Thus, the measures pertaining to employment are closely linked to measures aimed at education; the measures pertaining to education, health-care and social welfare are closely tied to measures aimed at resolving status issues; measures for improving the Roma population's general health are tied to measures for improving housing conditions. The implementation of all measures requires sound

coordination between different bodies and sectors, as well as active involvement of the actual Roma community.

In order to follow the individual and combined impact measures, it is necessary to establish indicators that enable the clear and unambiguous measurement of achievements, evaluation of progress, and also the orientation of measures and interventions in the desired direction. Roma inclusion policies, measures and activities are aimed at eliminating exclusion based on ethnicity and also gender-based social exclusion. This therefore implies that the proposed indicators must be disaggregated in the same manner. Changes associated with the status and social inclusion of the Roma will be gauged with reference to primary and secondary EU social exclusion indicators (Laeken indicators)⁵¹ which precisely measure different aspects of poverty and social exclusion. Besides the Laeken indicators, with reference to the measures other indicators of Roma social and economic status have been established which will show trends in the achievement of the desired results. The success of implementing measures and interventions will be measured in relation to indicator trends, and implementation will be deemed successful if they, at a minimum, demonstrate a halt in negative trends.

Furthermore, the major indicators of success for Strategy objectives include the following:

- Creation and promotion of the relevant policies in a manner that will facilitate improvement of the Roma community at the national and local level in compliance with the fundamental principles of this Strategy, measured by number and type;
- Positive changes in the position and status of the Roma population at the level of local communities and local and regional self-government due to the impact of implemented initiatives;
- Reduced discrimination and discriminatory relations of the remaining population with reference to the Roma, measured via different surveys in Roma communities;
- Changes in the majority population's attitude toward the Roma population, measured by surveys or public opinion research both among members of the majority nation and among the Roma themselves.

These indicators will be subject to change – discontinuation, amendment or supplementation with new ones in compliance with changes in the status of the Roma.

⁵¹ The process of creating poverty and social exclusion indicators was initiated during the Belgian presidency of the EU in the latter half of 2001. They are known as *Laeken indicators*, because they were first approved at the European Council summit in Laeken in December 2001. It was agreed that they would encompass three levels: (1) ten primary indicators of financial poverty and material deprivation, employment, health and education; (2) secondary indicators which supplement their primary counterparts, but worked out in greater detail; (3) any indicators the individual countries themselves decide to add to their national plans for inclusion, and which help them interpret the primary and secondary indicators and/or shed light on the specifics of a given region.

IV.4 Priority Strategy policies

IV.4.1 Education

REPUBLIC OF CROATIA STRATEGIC EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

The National Framework Curriculum for preschool education and general mandatory and secondary education⁵² stipulates: “the Republic of Croatia has committed itself to the development of a knowledge society, because knowledge is the fundamental productive and developmental force in society. Knowledge, education and life-long learning are the fundamental drivers of growth for Croatian society as a whole and for each individual. They facilitate better understanding of oneself and critical thinking about everything that surrounds the individual, the ability to gain one’s bearings in new situations and achieve success in life and work. Learning and education contribute to the development of personal, cultural and national identities among individuals.”

The framework curriculum is based on 13 principles that serve as value-laden points of departure for the development and implementation of the national curriculum, which among other things includes: high quality education for all, equality of educational opportunities for everyone, mandatory general education, involvement of all pupils in the educational system, respect for human rights and the rights of the child and interculturalism.

The curriculum set seven educational objectives, as follows:

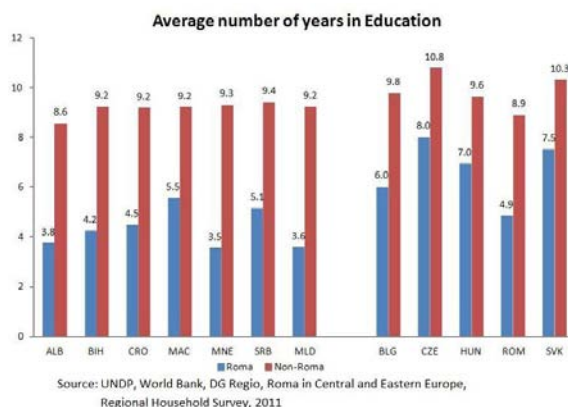
- to secure a systematic method to instruct pupils, encourage and improve their intellectual, physical, aesthetic, social, moral and mental development in line with their abilities and affinities;
- to teach and educate pupils in compliance with general cultural and civilisational values, human rights and the rights of the child, to qualify them for life in a multicultural world, to respect differences and tolerance and to actively and responsibly participate in society’s democratic development;
- to ensure that pupils acquire fundamental (general educational) and vocational competencies, to qualify them for live and work in a flexible socio-cultural context based on the demands of a market economy, contemporary information and communication technologies, and scientific advances and accomplishments.

EDUCATION OF THE ROMA IN CROATIA

After almost an entire decade of the National Roma Programme and the Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plan, the greatest progress in Croatia has been made in the field of including Roma children in the educational system. Nonetheless, there are still a multitude of problems at all levels of education concerning the practical implementation of both the national education policy and measures from the strategic documents aimed at the inclusion of the Roma minority into society. The educational level of the Roma population is quite low, and the average number

⁵² Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, National Framework Curriculum for preschool education and general mandatory and secondary education (in Croatian) 2011, <<http://public.mzos.hr/Default.aspx?sec=2685>>.

of years spent in the educational system is considerable lower in comparison to the majority population



PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

Preschool learning and care for children is a component of the educational system in the Republic of Croatia, and it is intended for children aged six months until their enrolment in primary school. The Republic of Croatia is a signatory to the *Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention*,⁵³ number 156, which in Article 5, point B stipulates that “the state is responsible and obliged to care for children of preschool age”.

Preschool activity, under the Preschool Education and Learning Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 10/97, 107/07), has been regulated as a sub-system of the educational system of the Republic of Croatia since 1997.⁵⁴ In the 2009/10 school year, the total inclusion of children of preschool age in regular programmes (five-hour and ten-hour programmes) was 58% of preschool-age children. The inclusion of children in shorter programmes was roughly 28%. In the year prior to beginning school, 99.6% of children are encompassed in preschool programmes, either in regular kindergarten programmes or in preschool programmes.⁵⁵

Within the framework of preschool education, an overriding problem is the low inclusion of Roma children in preschool education programmes in integrated groups. Preschool programmes are also not uniformly implemented in all areas. The data show that Roma children are insufficiently included in the system of preschool education, which the gender equality ombudswoman pointed out in an analysis of data on the education of the Roma minority published in the Report on her work for 2009. The inclusion of Roma children in preschool education varies with regard to the fact that besides funds from the central budget, preschool education is also financed by the Roma Education Fund, which resulted in the higher inclusion of children in preschool education.

- end of 2007/2008 school year: 810 children (409 m, 401 f)
- end of 2008/2009 school year: 692 children (350 m, 342 f)
- end of 2009/2010 school year: 824 children (422 m, 402 f)
- end of 2010/2011 school year: 586 children (322 m, 301 f).

⁵³ Convention 156, Convention on Equal Opportunity and Equal Treatment of Male and Female Workers. Workers with Family Responsibilities, 2010, <http://www.nhs.hr/dokumenti/konvencije/Konvencija_156_Radnici_s_obiteljskim_obvezama.pdf>.

⁵⁴ Zakon o predškolskom odgoju i naobrazbi (*Narodne novine*, no. 10/97, 107/07), <<http://www.zakon.hr/z/492/Zakon-opred%C5%A1kolskom-odgoju-i-naobrazbi>>.

⁵⁵ Source: www.mzos.hr.

The commencement of the 2011/2012 school year indicated a slight uptick in the number of children in the preschool education system: it included 623 children, of whom 289 (137 m, 152 f) in preschool education, and 334 (185 m, 149 f) in preschools.

The under-representation of children of the Roma minority in preschool education has multiple causes, from their parents' lack of awareness of the importance of preschool education through a shortage of finances in local governmental budgets and continuous preschool programme financing and the insufficient capacity in kindergartens, to the lack of awareness of the need for long-term planning of Roma community inclusion at the local level. The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MSES) has acknowledged this problem, and as of 2009, based on a decision by the minister, it has secured co-financing from the central budget to cover the cost of preschool education. Co-financing of the parental share in the economic cost of preschool education has been secured for all members of the Roma minority. Together with co-financing of the remainder from local budgets, this facilitated kindergarten for members of the Roma minority free of charge.

PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

According to the Primary and Secondary Education Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 901/11, 16/12, 86/12), primary education is mandatory for all children who reach the age of 6, and it has a duration of eight years. This same law stipulates that primary schools may be founded by the state, local and regional governments (cities, municipalities and counties) and other legal and natural persons. The overwhelming majority of schools are public, while the number of private and parochial primary schools is negligible. The Education Development Plan for 2005-2010 specified an inclusion rate for primary school-age children of 97.5%. Although this rate is very high, even in comparison to the EU average, the MSES is planning additional efforts and foresees further growth in inclusion rates. The primary school system includes special schools and departments for members of national minorities and children with developmental impairments.⁵⁶ For according to the Education in National Minority Languages and Scripts Act and in compliance with the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages, national minorities exercise the right to education in their language and script with the obligation of simultaneously learning the Croatian language together with other models for instruction on national minority languages and cultures which is exercised Croatian-language schools. Children with developmental impairments are educated in regular schools under regular, adapted or special programmes or, when this is truly the sole option, in special institutions under special programmes with the appropriate rehabilitation and social support.

With reference to the primary school education of the Roma, the biggest problems are the irregularity of attendance, the low rate of completion of primary education, i.e., dropping out of school prior to reaching the age of 15, inadequate monitoring of the share of Roma children being educated under special needs programmes, inadequate planning and irregular financing of extended board programmes, the absence of continued and targeted support for teaching staff working with Roma children, and the non-enforcement of measures to prevent segregation.

⁵⁶ Source: Miličević, Filip; Dolenec, Danijela, "Razvoj socijalne dimenzije u obrazovanju: izvještaj za Hrvatsku" ["Development of the social dimension in education: report for Croatia"], Institut za društvena istraživanja u Zagrebu, May 2009, <<http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kroatien/06848.pdf>>.

Since 2002/2003 and the adoption of the National Roma Programme, the number of Roma pupils enrolled in primary education increased from 1,500 to 4,435 (2,246 m and 2,189 f) in 2010/2011, and to 4,915 (2,509 m, 2,406 f) at the beginning of the 2011/2012 school year, which is an indicator of the efforts made by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports to increase the inclusion of Roma children in mandatory primary education. However, the completion of mandatory primary education is at a very low level as far as the Roma minority is concerned. The main objective is therefore to ensure that all Roma children complete their mandatory primary education.

There are multiple reasons why members of the Roma minority do not achieve results in primary education, why they do not succeed in primary education to the extent to which other pupils do. The fact is that Roma pupils repeat grades several times during their primary education and largely leave school after completing the fifth or sixth grade of primary school, i.e., when they reach the age of 15 as a rule, but without completing their primary education.

Pursuant to Articles 135, 136 and 152 of the Primary and Secondary School Education Act, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports has at its disposal mechanisms for action in cases of parental neglect, so that after repeated attempts to establish contact with parents, it may report neglect to the state administrative office in the relevant county or the social welfare centre with jurisdiction, which results in a monetary fine according to the aforementioned law. Since misdemeanour charges must follow in such cases, the potential measure of charging a fine, if it proceeds, often has no effect due to the inefficiency of the courts and the massive nature of the problem.

Pursuant to a judgment issued by the European Court of Human Rights, the Republic of Croatia is one of the countries in which educational segregation has been officially acknowledged. It is present in preschool and primary education in areas near large “Roma settlements”. In the 2001/2002 school year, a total of 865 Roma children were attending primary schools in Medimurje, of whom 511 were in segregated Roma classes. The children were assigned to a total of 24 such classrooms in four primary schools. In the Macinec Primary School, 83.33% of the Roma children were attending such classes, while in the Kuršanec Primary School this figure was as high as 88.49%. With aim of enforcing the European Court’s judgement, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports adopted measures and specified activities as a prerequisite for the long-term elimination of the causes leading to only Roma children in certain departments. One of the measures is the institution of preschool programmes for all Roma children in Medimurje during the year preceding enrolment in primary school, i.e., from 15 September of the current year to 15 September of the following calendar year, five hours per day throughout the week with transport and board for all Roma children. This programme is now in its third year, i.e., it is continuing in the 2012/2013 school year. Other measures include, among other things, Croatian language instruction for children with insufficient or no knowledge of Croatian. The schools are responsible for foreseeing enhanced Croatian language instruction classes and extended board programmes within the scope of the school curriculum. The additional training of teachers and work with parents are integral components of the measures to enforce this judgement.

Educational segregation has a negative impact at three crucial levels which contribute to Roma inclusion in society. It directly most intensely causes a reduction in the quality of education which Roma children receive. Roma children attending segregated schools have a higher chance of remaining unemployed or working at jobs which do not require a high level of skill, which are

often typically done by Roma. On the other hand, Roma children who go to integrated schools are confronted with the challenges of being encompassed by the school curriculum and fitting into the milieu of the rest of the population. By contrast, teachers and instructors in the “Roma classes” are confronted with trying work conditions and limited funds and opportunities for implementing additional support programmes required by Roma children. Besides often having very limited materials at their disposal, there is also no way to adequately compensate their additional work with children. Confronted with the irregular attendance of the children, a lack of attention and concentration often due to the difficult conditions in which the children live, and the lack of parental support for their children’s education, teachers often fail to achieve educational objectives. The frustration and feeling of helplessness leads many to lower their criteria, so that often children reach the fifth grade without having mastered basic reading and writing skills. Additionally, in the “Roma classrooms” the children often do not have the opportunity to experience positive peer influence, i.e., peer expectations in such classes rarely contain the component of good performance in school. The children are therefore faced with lowered expectations by teachers, low peer expectations, and often with low parental expectations, so it is not surprising that they expect little from themselves. “Such a practice contributes to the drop-out of children from the school system (in most countries the percentage is approximately 50%) by the fifth grade, and this also has a negative impact on the possibility of continuing education at the secondary and higher educational levels” (Rekosh, Sleeper, 2004).

The school drop-out trend and the later enrolment in primary education are also present among Roma children in Croatia. Estimates show that by the eighth grade of primary school, approximately 70% of Roma pupils are lost to the primary school system.⁵⁷ This statistic indicates that the system has not sufficiently given Roma children the opportunity to enter the educational system in time and with adequate preparation. This problem could largely be solved with high-quality and integrated preschool education which ensures linguistic preparation and higher success in school. Over the past year, projects have been implemented in Medimurje County which encompass all children in a mandatory preschool programme that lasts for the entire school year. In some areas preschool education has been organized for children aged 4 and over.

SECONDARY SCHOOL AND HIGHER EDUCATION

The secondary school system is governed by the Primary and Secondary School Education Act and the Vocational Education Act. The three basic groups of secondary schools are: gymnasiums, vocational schools and art schools. The duration of secondary school learning depends on the curriculum, so gymnasiums, art schools and some vocational school programmes last four years. On the other hand, some vocational school programmes (industrial and skilled trades) last one to three years. Secondary schools may be founded by: the Republic of Croatia, regional governments (counties) and other legal and natural persons. The vast majority of schools are public, while the number of private schools (mainly gymnasiums) is still rather low. The level of inclusion of youths in secondary school programmes is shown in Table 3. The data from 2004 show that Croatia lags behind the EU average, but also the intent to improve the inclusion rate. On the other

⁵⁷ Novak, Jagoda, “Romi i Romkinje u visokom obrazovanju ili dok temelji klize...”, (‘Roma men and women in higher education, or until the foundations slip...’; Right to Education column), December 2008, <http://www.iro.hr/userdocs/File/pno_kolumna/Romi_u_VO.pdf>.

hand, Eurostat data on the share of the population aged 20 to 24 with completed secondary schooling (ISCED level 3a, 3b or 3c) show that in 2006 this share in Croatia was better than the European average: 94.6% in comparison to the European 78.1%. (MSES, 2008).

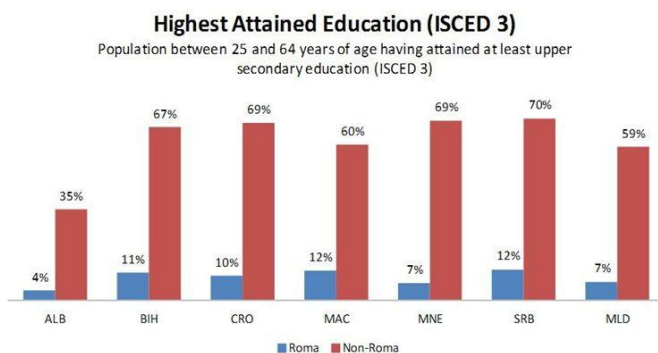
According to the Education in National Minority Languages and Scripts Act, and in compliance with the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages, the members of national minorities exercise the right to education in their languages and scripts with the obligation of simultaneously learning the Croatian language together with other models for instruction on national minority languages and cultures which is exercised Croatian-language schools.

Children with developmental impairments are educated in regular schools under regular, adapted or special programmes or, when this is truly the sole option, in special institutions under special programmes with the appropriate rehabilitation and social support.

Table 3. Rate of inclusion of secondary school-age youths in secondary educational institutions ⁵⁸				
Year	2004	2007 (goal)	2010 (goal)	EU average 2004
Inclusion rate	79.2%	81%	83%	85%

Source: MSES, Education System Developmental Plan, 2005-2010.

Educational policies are oriented toward the promotion of secondary school education for all pupils qualified to enrol in secondary school, and for pupils of Roma nationality by means of



Source: UNDP, World Bank, DG Regio, Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, Regional Household Survey, 2011

scholarships and securing tuition in adult education programmes if a matter of their first occupation. According to the data of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, in at the onset of 2011/2012, 425 pupils (214 m, 211 f) of Roma nationality were included in the secondary education system. Since the number of pupils in secondary schools compared to the number of primary school pupils is unsatisfactory, the MSES has

eased the enrolment of members of the Roma minority, because they live under conditions which may have influenced their success in primary school. Additionally, the MSES has decided upon all specifics (for example, increasing the number of pupils in classes in order to facilitate the enrolment of pupils based on the National Roma Programme). For all regular secondary school pupils, the MSES secures scholarships and, as needed, accommodates them in dormitories. Despite these measures, only about 10% of the Roma population completes four-year secondary education.

Monitoring of the number of enrolled members of the Roma minority in institutions of higher education depends on their willingness to declare themselves members of the Roma minority if they wish to exercise their right to scholarships provided by the Ministry of Science, Education

⁵⁸ Source: Table 3; Miličević, Filip; Dolenec, Danijela, "Razvoj socijalne dimenzije u obrazovanju: izvještaj za Hrvatsku", Institut za društvena istraživanja u Zagrebu, May 2009, <<http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kroatien/06848.pdf>>.

and Sports. At the beginning of the 2011/2012 school year, 28 scholarships were awarded to students of Roma nationality.

ADULT EDUCATION

Within the framework of the national project entitled “Decade of Literacy in Croatia – For Croatian Literacy, 2003-2012”, adult citizens have been taught to read and write, i.e., given a primary school education, which includes members of the Roma minority.

The data show that Roma women are considerably less encompassed by the system of adult education and informal education than Roma men, which the gender equality ombudswoman indicated in an analysis of data on the education of the Roma minority published in her Operating Report for 2009. The last available data on inclusion of the Roman national minority in the adult and informal education system indicate that the number of Roma who obtained literacy skills in this manner was:

- 1 Sept. 2007-31 Dec. 2008: 515 pupils (368 m, 147 f)
- 1 Sept. 2008-31 Dec. 2009: 489 pupils (350 m, 139 f)

Pursuant to the National Roma Programme and the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Action Plan, the Croatian Employment Bureau has implemented measures to co-finance and finance the education of Roma individuals. Despite educational opportunities, the Roma only participate in such programmes to a very limited degree. According to the Bureau’s data, in 2010 32 persons throughout Croatia were encompassed by the education co-financing/financing measure, of whom 9 were women. Based on branch offices, the measure encompassed 16 persons in Čakovec, two of them women, 12 persons in Zagreb, 7 of them women, and 3 persons in Slavonski Brod and one person in Osijek, while in 2011 this measure encompassed 35 persons of Roma nationality, of whom 11 were women. Based on branch offices, 31 persons were encompassed in the Čakovec Regional Office (of them 10 women), and 4 persons (1 women) in the Križevci Regional Office.⁵⁹

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and strategic objectives have been defined on the basis of experience in the implementation of two already existing strategic documents of the Croatian Government and analyses of available data on indicators of inclusion in the educational system and available data on the educational accomplishments of members of the Roma minority.

The primary responsible authority for the measures that will be implemented within the framework set objectives is the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports and the Croatian Employment Bureau for the field of adult education.

GOAL: To improve access to quality education, including education and care rendered in early childhood, but also primary, secondary and university education with special emphasis on the elimination of potential segregation in schools; to prevent

⁵⁹ Croatian Employment Bureau, “Izvjješće o provedbi mjera iz nadležnosti Hrvatskog zavoda za zapošljavanje prema Nacionalnom planu za poticanje zapošljavanja za 2009. i 2010. godinu, za razdoblje od 01.01. do 31.12.2010. godine” [Report on implementation of measures under the authority of the Croatian Employment Bureau according to the National Employment Incentive Plan for 2009 and 2010, for the 1 Jan.-31 Dec. 2010 period] <http://www.hzz.hr/docslike/Izvjjesce_z_2010_godinu_mjere.pdf>.

premature discontinuation of schooling and to facilitate an easy transition from school to employment.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: To raise the quality and efficiency of education of members of the Roma minority, and ensure the acquisition of the requisite knowledge and skills that will promote the personal development of pupils, and the completion of primary education with the aim of continuation of schooling and the reduction of differences between the educational accomplishments of Roma children and the average level of educational accomplishments of all pupils encompassed by the primary education system in the Republic of Croatia.

Definition: By 2015, set up a system of support to educational institutions for the development of educational programmes and application of educational practices that will ensure adequate preparation of children for school and the conditions for genuine social integration while respecting diversity in the multicultural milieu, including children from needy families.

Progress indicators:

- Instruments adopted at the level of the MSES, Education and Teacher Training Agency (ETTA), which ascertain the programme of monitoring and support and the responsibility of individual institutions for its implementation.

Baseline value:

- No instruments adopted

Sources of data:

- ETТА report
- Independent evaluation of National Roma Strategy implementation
- Quality assessment of preschool and primary education available to Roma children by the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education (NCEEE)

Objective 2: To increase the inclusion of Roma children of both sexes in preschool education and raise the quality level of preschool education of Roma children as a component of early childhood learning, which helps reduce the differences in social origin and learning ability, and attempts to meet children's developmental needs as best as possible, and introduce them to the world of conscious learning.

Definition: To establish mechanisms that will facilitate the accessibility of preschool education to marginalized and socially excluded groups through increased activity in the community. To increase the number of enrolled Roma children of both sexes in integrated preschool programmes within the framework of regular preschool institutions and the number of children not included in preschool education, in preschool programmes lasting a minimum of one year at five hours per day during the academic year up to 2020. A minimum of 2 years of preschool is recommended.

Progress indicators:

- The net ratio of Roma children enrolment/net enrolment is the ratio of enrolments of children of specified age for the level of education in comparison to the total population at that age.
- The rate of participation by Roma children of both sexes in integrated programmes of preschool education:
 - a) regular, comprehensive programmes

b) preschool programme: for children six years of age who are not enrolled in regular preschool education programmes

- Monitoring of these indicators must be done by programmes.
- Public expenditure for preschool education as a share in local/regional budgets (%)
- Number of hours which pupils spent in individual programmes
- Evaluation of the quality of preschool education – teaching standard, self-evaluation
- Number and quality of completed professional training seminars for work in multicultural environments; Number of participants, duration of education, qualification and success

Baseline value:

- Share of Roma children encompassed in preschool education in comparison to the total number of Roma children of preschool age in 2012.
- Share of Roma children encompassed in preschool programmes in comparison to the total number of Roma children of preschool age in 2012.

Sources of data:

- 2011 population census, which will provide a conclusive number of residents in the Roma population in each county.
- Generation estimate according to the UNDP.
- State administrative offices – data from the birth registers.

Objective 3: To bring the level of inclusion of Roma children in primary education up to the average nation-wide primary education level in the Republic of Croatia (achieve an inclusion rate of 98%) and bring the level the completion of primary education by members of the Roma minority up to the average level of completion of primary education for the Republic of Croatia (achieve a completion rate of 95%)

Definition: To secure inclusion of all children of Roma nationality in primary education regardless of their familial status with regard to citizenship, residence and existence of documentation on the identity of the child. To implement measures aimed at reducing differences in the quality of education and to offer support to children, families and educational staff.

Progress indicators:

- The rate of the Roma population's inclusion in primary education.
- The rate of primary school completion by members of the Roma minority.
- The ratio of school completion/primary ratio of primary school completion is the ratio of the total number of pupils who successfully complete their final year of primary school in a single generation in comparison to the total number of children who should complete schooling.
- The drop-out rate and its causes
- Educational accomplishments of Roma pupils, or successful completion
- Number of years spent in primary school education (the matter of repeated grades)
- Number of Roma children in standard and adapted programmes in comparison to the number of all children in standard and adapted programmes.

Baseline value:

- Share of Roma children encompassed in primary education in comparison to the total number of Roma children of primary school age in 2012.

- Number of members of the Roma minority who completed primary school in comparison to the total number of members of the Roma minority over the age of 15.

Sources of data:

- 2011 population census, which will provide a conclusive number of residents in the Roma population in each county.
- Generation estimate according to the UNDP.
- 2011 population census, which will provide a conclusive number of residents in the Roma population in each county according to age structure.

Objective 4: To abolish all separate classes only attended by Roma minority pupils by 2020.

Definition: Institution of rules to stipulate the obligation and modes for planning and implementing desegregation and measures aimed at preventing the appearance of educational segregation.

Progress indicators:

- Number of classes attended solely by Roma pupils.
- Formally adopted rules on prevention of educational segregation and modes for desegregation

Baseline value:

- Number of classes attended solely by Roma pupils.

Sources of data:

- MSES database

Objective 5: To reduce the difference between average inclusion and completion of secondary and higher education among members of the Roma minority in comparison to the average inclusion and completion of secondary and higher education at the national level in Croatia with the objective of levelling opportunities for securing knowledge and career skills and the continuation of schooling. To increase the number of members of the Roma minority who enrol in secondary and higher education by 2020. To increase the number of members of the Roma minority who complete secondary school by 2020.

Definition: To implement measures aimed at encouraging primary and secondary school pupils to continue their education and to render assistance to pupils, families and educational staff with ongoing scholarships for students and an enhanced role for the Roma national minority councils and the non-governmental sector in the field of information and awareness-raising in Roma communities on the importance of continuing education. To implement measures aimed at reducing differences in the quality of education.

Progress indicators:

- The growth rate in the number of Roma enrolled in secondary and higher education. Funds allocated at national and local levels for scholarships, accommodation, travel (%)
- The number of beneficiaries of scholarships and financial aid
- The enrolment rate of Roma pupils in secondary schools compared to percentage of Roma pupils who completed primary school
- The number/percentage of Roma pupils in gymnasium programmes in comparison to the total number of those enrolled in secondary school programmes
- The growth rate in the number of Roma who complete secondary education
- The drop-out rate and its causes

- Educational accomplishments of Roma pupils, or successful completion
- The number of years spent in secondary school education (the matter of repeated grades)

Baseline value:

- The number of members of the Roma minority who have enrolled in secondary school and university study in comparison to the total number of Roma minority members who enrolled in secondary school and university study in the initial year (2012).
- The number of members of the Roma minority who have completed secondary school in comparison to the total number of Roma minority members who completed secondary school in the initial year (2012).

Sources of data:

- MSES database

Objective 6: To reduce the differences between average inclusion and completion of higher education by the Roma minority and the average inclusion and completion of higher education at the national level in Croatia with the objective of levelling opportunities for securing knowledge and career skills and the continuation of schooling. To increase the number of members of the Roma minority who enrol higher education by 2020. To increase the number of members of the Roma minority who complete higher education continue on to graduate studies by 2020.

Definition: To implement measures aimed at encouraging secondary school pupils and college and university students to continue their education and to provide support to pupils, families and educational staff with the continuation of scholarships for students and an enhanced role for Roma minority councils and the non-governmental sector in the field of information and awareness-raising in Roma communities on the importance of continuing education. To implement measures aimed at reducing differences in the quality of education.

Progress indicators:

- The growth rate in the number of Roma who complete higher education.
- The growth rate in the number of Roma who continue on to graduate study.
- Funds allocated at national and local levels for scholarships, accommodation, travel (%)
- The number of beneficiaries of scholarships and financial aid
- The number of years spent in higher education
- The drop-out rate and its causes

Baseline values:

- The number of Roma who completed higher education in comparison to the total number of persons who graduated in the initial year (2012).
- The number of Roma who continued graduate study in comparison to the total number of persons who continued post-graduate study in the initial year (2012).
- The number of Roma who enrolled in higher education in 2012 in comparison to the number of Roma who completed secondary school.
- The number of Roma who enrolled in graduate study in 2012 in comparison to the number of Roma who graduated in the initial year.

Sources of data:

- MSES database

Objective 7: To increase the inclusion of Roma adults in literacy, education and qualification programmes through general, vocational and higher education, with the aim of nurturing individual potential and enhancing their capacity and competence to achieve greater competitiveness on the job market and permanent employment and increase their social inclusion and active participation in all fields of contemporary life.

Definition: To increase the inclusion of Roma adults (women in particular) in primary and secondary education and vocational training programmes with the objective of enhancing their knowledge, competencies and abilities to participate in and compete on the job market and to actively include them in society and social processes. To increase the rate of Roma adults who complete primary, secondary and/or vocational training by means of adult education programmes in line with the demands of the job market. To implement measures aimed at encouraging adults over the age of 15 who have not completed primary and/or secondary education to continue their schooling and to provide support to persons encompassed in these programmes and their families and in socio-economic inclusion upon the completion of education. To enhance the role of the Roma national minority councils and the non-governmental sector in the fields of information and awareness-raising in Roma communities on the importance of continuing education.

Progress indicators:

- The inclusion rate of Roma who participate in adult education, life-long learning and vocational education programmes in comparison to the total Roma population.
- The growth rate among the Roma minority encompassed in adult education, life-long learning and vocational training programmes.
- The growth rate among the Roma minority who continue increasing their educational qualifications in compliance with job market demands.
- Funds allocated at national and local levels for scholarships, accommodation, travel (%)
- The number of beneficiaries of scholarships and financial aid
- The number and type of programmes attended by individual Roma
- The drop-out rate and its causes

Baseline value:

- The number of Roma who completed any of the adult education or vocational training programmes in 2012.
- The number and type of educational programmes completed by individual Roma in 2012

Sources of data:

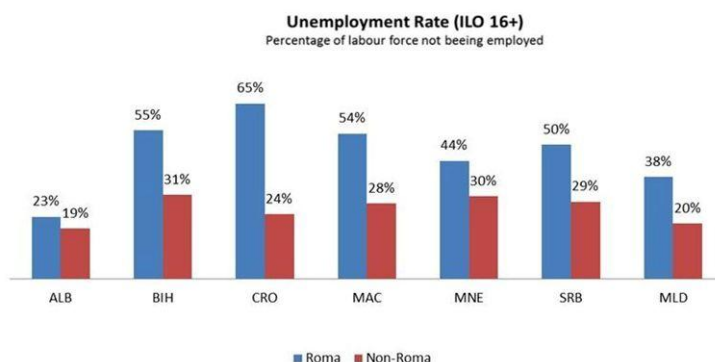
- MSES database
- Croatian Employment Bureau database
- Database of educational institutions with certified educational programmes.

IV.4.2 Employment and economic inclusion

Employment and inclusion of the Roma in economic life is one of the priority matters in the socio-economic inclusion of the Roma in the Republic of Croatia, but simultaneously one of the primary challenges. The Republic of Croatia and a high number of other countries in the European Union and the region are confronted with a generally high unemployment rate. In March 2012, the registered unemployment rate was 20%, encompassing 339,882 unemployed individuals. The generally high unemployment rate is negatively reflected in the already ‘traditionally’ high rate of unemployment of Roma capable of engaging in work.

The data for the preceding three years show a negligible drop in Roma unemployment, although this figure is still very high in comparison to the share of the Roma in Croatia’s total population. At the end of December 2009, a total of 4,731 unemployed persons of Roma ethnicity were registered, which was 1.79% of total unemployment in Croatia. In 2010, the Croatian Employment Bureau had recorded 4,533 unemployed persons of Roma ethnicity, which was 1.49% of total unemployment, while at the end of 2011, this figure was 4,499 unemployed Roma, which was 1.42% of the total number of unemployed persons. Given that according to official statistics from 2001, the Roma accounted for 0.2% of the total population in Croatia (or roughly 0.8% according to unofficial estimates), it is apparent that the share of unemployed Roma in the

total population of the unemployed is seven to eight times (or two times if unofficial data are used) higher than their share in the total population. Expressed in percentages looking inside the population, the difference in relation to unemployed Roma and the remaining population is 65% of unemployed Roma in comparison to 24% of the remaining population.⁶⁰



Source: UNDP, World Bank, DG Regio, Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, Regional Household Survey, 2011

Poverty caused by Roma unemployment in Croatia is a long-term situation. According to research conducted by the former Institute for the Family, Motherhood and Youth conducted in 2002, 89% of Roma households did not have members with a continuous source of income, while only 6% of them were employed full time. According to a UNDP report for 2006,⁶¹ in some Roma settlements the unemployment rate was as high as 100%. As a result of marginalization and low educational achievement, the Roma are still today excluded from formal employment. The absence of formal employment means an absence of social status which necessarily springs forth

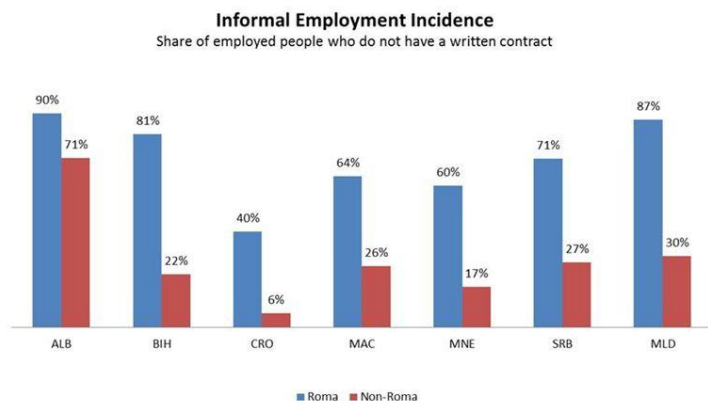
⁶⁰ UNDP, World Bank and DG Regio – Source: UNDP, World Bank and DG Regio, “Romi u Središnjoj i Jugoistočnoj Europi, Regionalna anketa kućanstava” [The Roma in Central and South-east Europe, Regional household survey], 2011.

⁶¹ UNDP, “Siromaštvo, nezaposlenost i socijalna isključenost” [‘Poverty, unemployment and social exclusion’], 2006.

<<http://www.undp.hr/upload/file/104/52134/FILENAME/Siromaštvo,%20nezaposlenost%20i%20socijalna%20isključenost.pdf>>

from formal paid work, as well as exclusion from the social security system. This has particularly had a negative impact on the status of the Roma community, as many traditional Roma occupations disappeared in the preceding century or were greatly weakened by industrialization. A considerable share of Roma economic activity is present in the gray (informal) economy. Many unemployed Roma earn income by collecting and selling raw materials. Collection of scrap metal is a flexible activity which preoccupies entire families, including women and children, on a daily basis.

Additionally, in order to survive and feed their families, many Roma engaged in unregistered work without any manner of contract. According to a survey of households conducted by the



Source: UNDP, World Bank, DG Regio, Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, Regional Household Survey, 2011

UNDP, World Bank and DG Regio in 2011, as many as 40% of the Roma respondents declared their involvement in informal labour activities, without a contract, in comparison to 6% of remaining population who made the same declaration.

The problems of Roma employment are complex, so they require a multidisciplinary approach.

The basic obstacles to Roma employment on the open market are low levels of education and non-acceptance of additional qualification, employer prejudice, and the erroneous self-perception by the Roma that they are a discriminated minority and that it they will not find jobs no matter what they do; there is also the marginalization of the Roma population and their life in poverty.

The high unemployment rate among the Roma is one of the consequences of unresolved status issues for a certain number of people in the Roma community, which is a direct barrier to their access to the labour market. Approximately 10% of the Roma living in Croatia do not have Croatian citizenship, while 3% hold no citizenship documents of any kind, or any other documents which certify their status,⁶² which considerably affects their access to employment, as well as basic rights and services. Unresolved status issues emerge as a result of their own non-engagement in these matters, but also as a result of insufficient knowledge and familiarity with the functioning of the system and civil and minority rights and duties.

Also, the value system of Roma families and communities developed within a traditional lifestyle, resulting in insufficient appreciation of regular employment, health insurance and the right to pensions within the Roma community, and thus also poor motivation for completing their education. Families with a higher number of children often derive most of their income from

⁶² Kušan Lovorka, Zoon Ina, "Izveštaj o pristupu Roma zapošljavanju: Hrvatska" [Report on Roma access to employment: Croatia], Council of Europe, September 2004, <http://www.coe.int/T/DG3/RomaTravellers/archive/stabilitypact/activities/Croatia/romaaccessemploymentCroatian_en.asp> (accessed: 31 Jan. 2012).

social assistance based on verification of earnings, so that they enter the snare of inactivity and dependence on the system in which labour is not worthwhile.

The tradition of formal education is absent in the Roma community in Croatia, as adult members of the community do not sufficiently encourage children and youth to go to school, and the community is also missing positive role models. This partially results from the lack of motivation by members of the Roma community based on the fact that in the case of the Roma population, it is notable that unemployment is actually higher for persons with higher levels of completed education. This points to the difficulties which Roma workers confront in finding work for which they are qualified. For the stigma borne by the members of the Roma community is a barrier to employment because it leads to discrimination in hiring, both in state and public agencies, as well as among private employers. The traditionally deep-seated prejudices about the Roma held by employers and the low tempo of self-employment reduces the opportunities for finding satisfactory jobs and improving social status. A report compiled by the Croatian Legal Centre, the Croatian Helsinki Committee and the women's rights non-governmental organisation B.a.B.e., entitled "Status of the Roma in Croatia" for 2004 and 2005, reveals that employers do not hire Roma even in cases when their labour is needed and there is a public interest involved. The report cites the example of court cases in which Roma are engaged as interpreters for the Roma language, but without remuneration. Thus, Roma unemployment trends in the Republic of Croatia also need to be monitored based on the level of education, because greater difficulty in securing employment even after obtaining a certain degree of education in comparison with members of the majority population may indicate discrimination against the Roma in hiring practices.

Educational level is the primary factor standing in the way of hiring unemployed Roma. At the end of 2011, 3,179 persons of Roma nationality were registered as lacking schooling, with incomplete primary education (70.6%), of whom 1,669 were women (52.5%) and 1,017 persons of Roma nationality who had completed primary education, of whom 476 were women (46.8%). There were 262 persons of the Roma minority with completed three-year secondary school qualifications (of this 96 women, or 36.6%) and 37 persons of Roma nationality with completed four-year secondary school qualifications (of this 23 were women, 62.1%). Out of the total number of unemployed persons of Roma nationality, two have completed college, and two have completed university/college (of these two, one is a woman).⁶³ The high percentage of 70.6% of registered unemployed persons who have not even completed primary school constitutes an obstacle to their further inclusion in adult education and qualification programmes offered by the Croatian Employment Bureau. According to these data, it is apparent that the educational structure of most Roma is sufficient solely for work which is poorly paid, and entirely inadequate for work in state and public agencies, which require at a minimum the completion of four-year secondary schooling or higher educational qualifications, because three-year secondary schooling is not sufficient for engaging in work in the civil service. Besides the aforementioned aspects, ignorance or insufficient knowledge of the Croatian language also constitutes a barrier to employment. According to the Administration Ministry's data for 2011, two Roma individuals were employed in the civil service.

The Croatian Employment Bureau – within the framework of measures from the National Roma Programme and the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Action Plan – is implementing co-

⁶³ Source: Croatian Employment Bureau report.

financing measures for the hiring of Roma with a duration of 24 months and co-financing of hiring Roma in public works programmes. According to the 2010 and 2011 reports, a total of 847 unemployed persons of Roma nationality were encompassed in employment and education measures through the active hiring policies of the National Employment Incentive Plan for 2009 and 2010 and the National Employment Incentive Plan for 2011 and 2012. The Roma National Minority Employment Co-financing measure for a 24-month period encompassed 16 persons, while the public works measure encompassed 762 persons; 67 persons were encompassed in education for the unemployed, while 2 persons were encompassed in the measure for vocational training for work without establishment of formal employment. The highest number of employed Roma persons was recorded in the public works measure. Particular interest was shown in inclusion of unemployed Roma in public works programmes with emphasis on utility infrastructure works in Brod-Posavina, Osijek-Baranja, Međimurje, Bjelovar-Bilogora and Koprivnica-Križevci Counties. Based on co-financing for employment, public works programmes, vocational training for work without establishment of formal employment and financing of education for unemployed Roma, HRK 4,898,088.25⁶⁴ were allocated in 2010, while HRK 7,061,805.27 were allocated in 2011.

But despite these measures, funds and efforts invested by the Republic of Croatia in improving the economic status of the Roma minority to increase their employment, a satisfactory effect has not been achieved. One of the reasons for this is the difference between the micro-regions in which members of the Roma minority are present in significant number and the absence of systematic data on the specifics of individual regions, which stands in the way of adjusting policies. There is thus a need to develop a map a micro-region in order to identify specific needs in each individual region and adaptation and implementation of appropriate strategies.

Also, coordination between bodies at the national and local levels is not always satisfactory, and existing mechanisms for hiring, education and social welfare are insufficiently coordinated. There are also mechanisms to incentivize self-employment adjusted to the Roma population. Thus, the dominant employment by means of public works was conceived as an interim measures and does not result in more permanent employment and constitutes a burden to the local and regional governmental budgets. Additionally, due to the unadapted system of information in Roma communities and/or insufficient motivation on the part of the Roma community for information, members of the Roma minority are not adequately informed of the available measures to encourage employment.

Also noteworthy is that the entitlement rights system with its three pillars – children's allowance, housing/utility costs and support compensation – demotivates the regulation of employment issues for the Roma and their involvement in the formal world of work, and it also encourages unregistered work.

ROMA WOMEN – EMPLOYMENT AND INCLUSION IN ECONOMIC LIFE

The status of Roma women is particularly vulnerable, both in the majority society at large and inside their own communities. Their educational structure is even lower than the educational

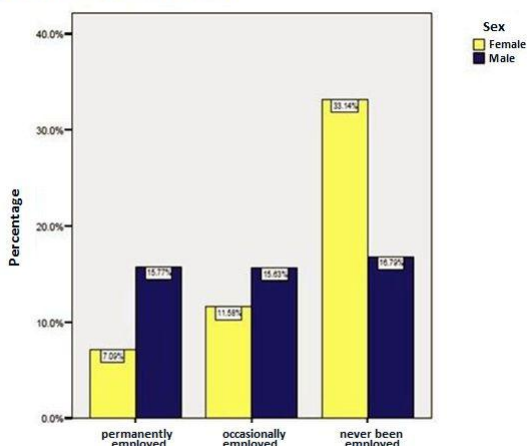
⁶⁴ Croatian Employment Bureau, "Report on implementation of measures under the jurisdiction of the Croatian Employment Bureau according to the National Employment Incentive Plan for 2009 and 2010 for the period from 1 Jan. to 31 Dec. 2010" (in Croatian) <http://www.hzz.hr/docslike/Izvjesce_zo_2010_godinu_mjere.pdf>.

structure of Roma men, which is often a consequence of discrimination against Roma women by the Roma community itself (the average age of entering marriage and giving birth to a first child is 15-18 years, which means overstepping a segment of development and an age when they could obtain an education and become involved in the job market/the transition from childhood to parenthood). On average, women in Roma communities have four children each.⁶⁵ According to the Croatian Employment Bureau's records for 2011, of the 2,265 registered unemployed Roma women, 1,669 of them, or 73.6%, have not completed primary school, while only 5.2% have completed three-year secondary and higher schooling.

According to indicators, it may be said in conclusion that most Roma women live in economically poor conditions which include inadequate housing, life in traditional communities in which early marriage and early childbirth are the norm, with a higher number of children than women in the majority population, and the traditional division of household tasks in which most housework and child-rearing falls to women. Moreover, Roma women who live in separate Roma settlements and in rural zones are in a much less favourable situation than Roma women who live in urban areas, such as Zagreb. Women in segregated and marginalized Roma communities are the most vulnerable part of the population.

Data on employment of Roma men and women show a relatively low employment rate, while women inside the unemployed group are employed less by a factor of one half. According to research conducted by the Better Future Roma Women's Association in 2009 based on a sampling of 715 respondents in five counties, out of the total number of respondents only 7% of the women were employed compared to 16% of men. Roma women are more rarely hired even for temporary jobs: 12 % of the respondents in comparison to 16% of the men. As many as 33% of the women were never employed, compared to 17% of the male respondents.

Image 8: Employment by sex



Source: Research by Association of Roma Women Better Future, The Life of Roma Women in Croatia with Emphasize on Access to Education, 2009.

Even when they are employed, a very small number of Roma women have the status of an employed person with a contract and registration in the Croatian Pension Insurance Institute (CPII). A very small number of Roma women fit into the category of employees with paid health-care and retirement insurance, less than half the number of the formally employed Roma men.

The most common source of temporary or permanent income for Roma families is social welfare in the form of support compensation and children's and maternity allowances. Roma women officially registered as unemployed are considered to be "exploiting" the state social welfare

⁶⁵Baranović, Branislava, Research by the Better Future Roma Women's Association, "Life of Roma women in Croatia with emphasis on access to education" (in Croatian), January 2009
<http://www.ijf.hr/socijalna_ukljucenost/adminmax/files/Izvjestaj_ZivotiObrazRomkinja.pdf>.

system. However, they work quite hard as do all women in the world who live in poverty. Besides taking care of their children, they work in gardens to raise vegetables, they maintain their homes, do their laundry and care for the physical, mental and financial needs of their entire families. Besides this, many of them even take part in lucrative activities, together with their spouses. In Zagreb, many Roma women sell used clothing at open-air markets. In Sisak County, there are settlements in which almost all residents collect scrap metal (e.g. Capraške Poljane) – and women work side-by-side with men as equals. In the Medimurje region, farmers often seek out Roma women to do seasonal agricultural work. Throughout the country, as their last resort to ward off destitution, women go to the streets and beg.⁶⁶ Thus, the question and problems tied to the status of Roma women must be approached in a manner that will allow for the improvement of their socio-economic status and eliminate multiple forms of discrimination, while simultaneously respecting the traditional framework of the Roma community and social inclusion opportunities for Roma women.

An example of good practice is the project implemented in 2011 within the framework of the IPA programme “A better perspective for Roma women on the job market”, led by the Zagreb Branch Office of the Croatian Employment Bureau, in which its partners were the CESI, the Better Future Roma Women’s Association and the City of Zagreb,⁶⁷ while BFI Austria served as a project associate.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and strategic objectives have been defined on the basis of experience in the implementation of two already existing strategic documents of the Croatian Government and analyses of available data on indicators of inclusion in the educational system and available data on hiring of members of the Roma minority.

The primary responsible authorities for achieving the objectives set within the strategic field of employment are the Ministry of Labour and the Pension System, the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, the Croatian Employment Bureau, the GOHRRNMGHRRNM in cooperation with the relevant governmental administrative bodies, including the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Trades, the Ministry of the Economy, the Ministry of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development, commercial banks and credit unions, and in cooperation with business aid institutions and local and regional governments.

GOAL: To bridge the gap between the Roma minority and the majority population on the labour market.

⁶⁶ Kusan Lovorka, Zoon Ina, “Izveštaj o pristupu Roma zapošljavanju: Hrvatska”, Council of Europe, September 2004 <http://www.coe.int/T/DG3/RomaTravellers/archive/stabilitypact/activities/Croatia/romaaccessemploymentCroatian_en.asp> (accessed 31 Jan. 2012).

⁶⁷ Among the most important results of the projects are: 6 job trainers are qualified for individual adapted work with Roma women. Out of the total number of Roma women encompassed by the project (48), 27 successfully completed training for vocational qualification: computer operator, assistant chef and hotel maid; 13 beneficiaries were employed. The “ROMANI” Centre for Counselling and Information which continued its work even after the close of the project (sustainability has been assured).

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: To raise the level of social inclusion of the Roma population by enhancement of their ability to participate on the labour market

Definition: Within the framework of this objective, mechanisms will be set up to encourage, motivate and include Roma on the labour market, which will entail interdepartmental cooperation, amendment of regulations and motivation of the Roma. This objective complies with the Joint Memorandum on Hiring Policy Priorities.

Progress indicator:

- The inclusion rate of the Roma population on the labour market based on age and sex in comparison to the total number of work-capable persons in the Roma population
- The inclusion rate of the Roma population on the labour market based on age and sex in comparison to the inclusion rate of the remaining population on the labour market

Baseline value:

- According to a survey conducted by the World Bank and DG Regio in 2011, the percentage of work-capable Roma men/women inside surveyed households shows that the Roma employment rate inside the total work-capable population aged 15-64 was 34.91%, of which 41.06%, were men and 24.08% were women, while inside the 15-24 age bracket it was 23.79%, of which 31.06% were men and 12.96% were women.

Sources of data:

- Research, surveys, records of the Croatian Employment Bureau, reports from Roma NGOs and Roma national minority councils.

Objective 2: To increase the competitiveness and rate of employability of young members of the Roma minority

Definition: In order to achieve this objective, a series of measures will be implemented to encourage young Roma men and women to remain in and/or return to the educational system and acquire the knowledge and skills that will raise their competitiveness on the job market. Among other things, professional dissemination of information and consultations for young Roma men/women at the end of primary school for the selection of vocations and suitable secondary school programmes, and also to provide information on labour market needs. Young Roma men/women who drop out of regular schooling after the completion of primary school will be provided with professional counselling and definition of activity plans with the objective of resumption of education: **continuation of secondary school education and/or enrolment in adult education programmes**. In areas with significant Roma populations, targeted activities will be organized to familiarize Roma pupils with various occupations **being sought on local labour markets**. One of the activities that will be aimed at employers to encourage hiring of young Roma men/women, both in the manufacturing and commercial sectors, and in public bodies at the local, regional and national levels.

Progress indicator:

- The employment rate of young Roma in comparison to the employment rate of young people in the Republic of Croatia during the reporting period, disaggregated based on gender

Baseline value:

- From the records of the Croatian Employment Bureau at the beginning of the reporting period

Source of and method for gathering data:

- Records of the Croatian Employment Bureau

Objective 3: To increase the competitiveness and employability rate of Roma women

Definition: Activities aimed at achieving this objective will focus on Roma women as a multiply marginalized population within the Roma community. A part of these efforts will be aimed at increasing the employability of Roma women throughout workshops on active job-seeking adapted to the target group. Significant efforts will be invested in providing support to the self-employment of Roma women and the development of sole trades, and the opening of individualized lines of credit to micro-finance sole trades/enterprises owned and/or managed by Roma women.

Progress indicator:

- The employment rate of Roma women in comparison to the employment rate of women in the Republic of Croatia in general during the reporting period

Baseline value:

- From the records of the Croatian Employment Bureau for the reporting period

Source of and method for gathering data:

- Records of the Croatian Employment Bureau

Objective 4: To increase the competitiveness and employability rate of long-term unemployed members of the Roma minority

Definition: In order to achieve this objective, various educational programmes will be organized and conducted to train and qualify long-term unemployed members of the Roma minority, and financial incentives for hiring will be secured for employers. Public works programmes will also be organized to encompass the long-term unemployed.

Progress indicator:

- The employment rate of long-term unemployed Roma in comparison to the employment rate of the total number of long-term unemployed disaggregated by gender

Baseline value:

- Records of the Croatian Employment Bureau as at 31 Dec. 2012

Source of and method for gathering data:

- Records of the Croatian Employment Bureau

Objective 5: To increase the formal self-employment rate of members of the Roma minority

Definition: This objective is aimed at encouraging and creating the criteria for Roma self-employment. Interventions and measures to achieve this objective will focus on the education and counselling of Roma on self-employment and launching their own businesses. Roma men and women will be encouraged to become involved in entrepreneurship, rural development and other relevant programmes put forth by the relevant departments. Targeted support programmes in the formalization of self-employment and development of sole trades will be created and implemented. Another incentive is the co-financing of the gross minimum wages of self-employed persons in the first two years of operation, as well as the opening of credit lines for micro-financing with specially adapted conditions for micro- and small business/sole trades which are traditionally led by Roma. Considerable efforts will be geared toward support to self-

employment of Roma women through education on women's entrepreneurship and inclusion in existing women's entrepreneurship programmes conducted by the relevant state administrative departments.

Progress indicator:

- The employment rate of unemployed members of the Roma minority via self-employment in comparison to the formal self-employment rate of the majority population, disaggregated by gender

Baseline value:

- Records of the Croatian Employment Bureau as at 31 Dec. 2012

Data gathering method:

- Records of the Croatian Employment Bureau

Objective 6: To raise the level of motivation among Roma for participation on the job market

Definition: In order to achieve this objective, workshops geared toward members of the Roma national majority will be organized to help them acquire active job-seeking skills. Various activities will also be organized that will promote existing Roma employment and self-employment measures through the inclusion of Roma NGOs and other groups in job fairs, visits to employers, promotion of hiring measures and similar activities.

Progress indicator:

- The number of completed workshops on "Employment Preparation for Roma Men and Women"
- The number of completed workshop through mobile clubs for job-seeking organized inside Roma settlements or in the premises of local governments
- The number of Roma men and women participating in workshops

Baseline value:

Records of the Croatian Employment Bureau as at 31 Dec. 2012

Source of and method for gathering data:

- Records of the Croatian Employment Bureau
- Surveys

Objective 7: To bolster the capacity of the Croatian Employment Bureau for work with members of the Roma minority

Definition: Within the framework of measures aimed at achieving this objective, research and analysis of Roma employment opportunities will be conducted. Additionally, various educational activities will be conducted for the purpose of raising the sensitivity of job counsellors who work with unemployed persons with lower employability prospects.

Progress indicator:

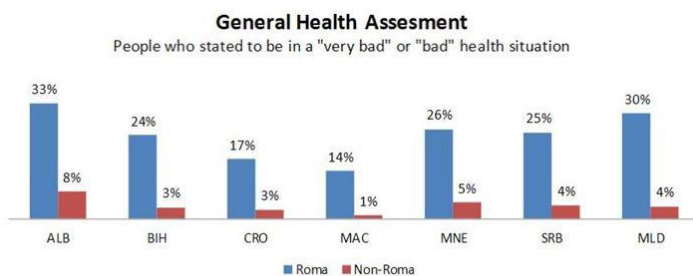
- Number and type of services of the Croatian Employment Bureau geared toward the Roma

Source of and method for gathering data:

- Records of the Croatian Employment Bureau

IV.4.3 Health care

The specific socio-economic situation of the Roma minority is largely dictated by their status when it is a matter of health and health-care. The Roma population confronts various challenges pertaining to social exclusion and poverty, which directly foments their inequality and the gap between the Roma and the rest of the population in the field of health-care. The socio-economic inequality of the Roma population constitutes a permanent challenge for health-care programmes, while their health status is directly linked to social determinants of health, because a large part of the Roma population lives under unsanitary conditions and their health is generally poorer in comparison to the majority population.



Source: UNDP, World Bank, DG Regio, Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, Regional Household Survey, 2011

According to a regional survey of the UNDP, World Bank and DG Regio on the results of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 conducted in Croatia in 2011, which encompassed 3,869 Roma and 1,106 members of the remaining population in 757 Roma households and 350 households of the remaining population, 12.28% of the surveyed Roma assessed their health as poor or very poor in comparison to 10.67% of the remaining population who made the same statement. The poorer health of the Roma in comparison to the majority population may be attributed to several causes. A high number of Roma are not covered by health insurance, which is often a direct consequence of unresolved status issues. Roughly 10% of the Roma living in Croatia do not have citizenship, 6-7% are foreign citizens, while 3% do not possess any manner of citizenship papers or other documents which certify their status,⁶⁸ which directly affects their lack of access to health insurance, and also their access to other rights which would enable them to exercise the right to health insurance, such as the right to employment and social welfare. A part of the Roma are left without health insurance once they complete or drop out of school, or after their employment ends. This most often occurs as a result of untimely registration with the Health Insurance Institute, caused by insufficient knowledge or unfamiliarity with how the system functions.

On the matter of health insurance for children, the Croatian Public Health Institute has concluded that access to and quality of health-care services for Roma children are the same as for all other children. Since all children in the Republic of Croatia are entitled to free health care until they reach the age of 18, comprehensive health-care for them is assured. In some counties, however, the parents of Roma children do not take advantage of this possibility at their disposal and even

⁶⁸ Kusan Lovorka, Zoon Ina, "Izvjestaj o pristupu Roma zapošljavanju: Hrvatska", Council of Europe, September 2004 <http://www.coe.int/T/DG3/RomaTravellers/archive/stabilitypact/activities/Croatia/romaaccessemploymentCroatian_en.asp> (accessed: 31 Jan. 2012).

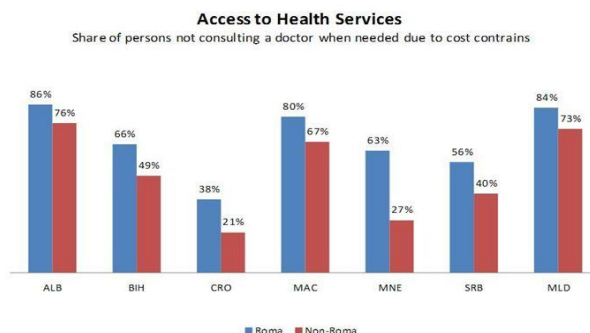
oppose preventive care, thereby violating the *Public Protection Against Communicable Disease Act*.

Furthermore, the poor health of members of the Roma community is also due to poor and unsanitary living and housing conditions, a lack of access to basic infrastructure and to healthy potable water, low community hygiene standards and environmental risks. Some of the causes of this poor health which may be directly linked to poverty are malnutrition and the lack of access to health-care services due to financial reasons. An unfavourable financial status as a cause for lack of access to medical care has also been confirmed by the World Bank and DG Regio survey, in which 38% of the Roma respondents declared that they do not visit a physician because they cannot pay for treatment. The opinion of the Roma community is that the impossibility of access to health-care services by the Roma population is additionally exacerbated by the fact that in recent years the Republic of Croatia has amended laws and regulations concerning health services on several occasions, “from lists of drugs obtained by prescription to payment of participation fees, hospital care, and the most recent change pertained to so-called supplementary health insurance which is paid in a monthly sum as specified by the aforementioned law” [the Voluntary Health Insurance Act].⁶⁹

According to information obtained from the Croatian Health Insurance Institute, drug lists, basic and supplemental, have been amended on several occasions, but in the direction of improving the quality of medical care for the population at large, through, for example, the introduction of the New Drugs List and a higher number of smart drugs. Furthermore, the

legislative interventions contained in the Amendments to the Voluntary Health Care Act in the regulation of categories of insured persons who continue to draw benefits under voluntary health insurance policies under these amendments equally pertain to all of the Institute’s insurants and insured persons, thereby not specifically affecting the Roma population. Additionally, the possibility of exemption from the stipulated participation fees, besides conclusion of a voluntary health insurance policy with the Institute, is encapsulated in the regulation and establishment of the right to exemption from payment according to the completed income census which is HRK 1,516.32 per household member, a threshold likely surpassed by a small number of Roma households. Thus it is worthwhile mentioning that in its overall operations, the Institute applies one of the basic principles of equality of all before the law in the exercise of rights to health care and other rights ensuing from health insurance.

The National Roma Programme Progress Report for 2010 and 2011 indicates that in the field of health-care dissemination of information to the Roma on possibilities to make use of health-care



Source: UNDP, World Bank, DG Regio, Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, Regional Household Survey, 2011

⁶⁹ Roma Association of Zagreb and Zagreb County, “Proposals for implementation of the National Roma Programme by task forces organized by the Roma Association of Zagreb and Zagreb County” (in Croatian) <http://www.umrh.hr/Novo/nacionalni_program.htm> (accessed 31 Jan . 2012).

is ongoing. In the field of health, all persons insured by the Croatian Health Insurance Institute, including members of the Roma minority, exercise identical access to health-care. According to the Health Insurance Act, pursuant to which Croatian citizens and aliens with permanent residence in the Republic of Croatia are registered, several bases for registration of health insurance are foreseen: registration based on employment, through a family member who is a policy holder, registration within a 30-day period after the end of employment, within a period 90-day period after the completion of regular schooling, and so forth. It has been observed that members of the Roma minority often cannot register for health insurance on one of the aforementioned bases because they are not registered in the citizenship rolls, while they rarely exercise their right to health-care according to the Aliens Act.

Besides the aforementioned, the causes of the poorer health among the Roma population also lie in the high rate of alcohol and tobacco use which is furthermore linked to health risks and an increased dependency rate. According to the World Bank and DG Regio survey in 2011, on average the Roma spend more money to purchase cigarettes and alcohol than the rest of the population. Although there are no precise data on the extent of addiction in the Roma population, increased alcohol consumption has been observed by social welfare agencies, tied to the phenomenon of resulting ailments such as liver cirrhosis and intestinal tract disorders, as well as the far-reaching social and economic consequences of alcoholism, such as pathological effects, violence, disruption of families, etc. There are indications that there is a high level of various dependencies among the Roma population, including smoking among children and pregnant women, drug abuse, gambling, etc. The causes of addiction, besides the unfavourable social situation, can also be found in the low level of education among the Roma and their limited awareness of health issues and prevention of disease and dependency.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Life expectancy at birth in the Republic of Croatia,⁷⁰ similar to the EU, is 76.6 years, 73.5 for men and 79.6 for women (in the EU it is 76 for men and 82 for women).⁷¹ According to estimates, Roma life expectancy is 10 years less⁷² and they rarely live to a deep old age, as indicated by demographic indicators. The infant mortality rate in Croatia in 2010 was 4.4 per 1,000 live births,⁷³ while in the EU27 this figure was 4.3 per 1,000 live births.⁷⁴ Although data disaggregated by nationality are lacking, there are indicators of a far higher infant mortality rate in Roma communities.

Besides indicators of poorer general health among the Roma in comparison to the rest of the population, there are also significant health-related discrepancies inside Roma communities, so that a difference between the health of children and women as particularly vulnerable categories has been noted in comparison to men. The report of the United Nations Development Programme

⁷⁰ Croatian Public Health Institute, "Natural trends in Croatia in 2010" (in Croatian), July 2011, <<http://www.hzjz.hr/publikacije/stanovnistvo2010.pdf>>.

⁷¹ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product_details/dataset?p_product_code=TSDPH100.

⁷² COM(2009)567, "Solidarity in health: reduction of health inequality in the EU." See also Fundación Secretariado Gitano, op. cit. and Sepkowitz K, "Health of the world's Roma population", 2006, based on the situation in the Czech Republic, Ireland, Slovakia and Bulgaria.

⁷³ Croatian Public Health Institute, "Natural trends in Croatia in 2010" (in Croatian), July 2011, <<http://www.hzjz.hr/publikacije/stanovnistvo2010.pdf>>.

⁷⁴ Ratio between the mortality rate of children under the age of one year and the number of live births in the same year, Eurostat Data, 2009, <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=demo_minfind&lang=en>.

(UNDP) on five countries notes that the child mortality rate of Roma children is 2 to 6 times higher than the general population's rate, depending on the country. Other countries, among them Croatia, high infant mortality rates were also recorded in Roma communities.⁷⁵ According to the Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plan progress report for 2009 and 2010,⁷⁶ in Croatia the causes of death among Roma infants, with quite a high share (40.9%), included sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), violent death, such as choking on stomach contents, other types of aspiration and respiratory ailments (most often pneumonia), which distinguishes them considerably from the Croatian average, which is 5%. A rather high share of Roma infants, as many as 50%, were not treated prior to death and died outside of health-care institutions, while in 63% of the cases they died at home, as opposed to the Croatian average in which 95% of such infants received treatment and died in hospitals. Medical assistance prior to death outside of hospitals was received by an additional 2% of infants, while 3% of deceased Roma infants received no treatment at all. Complete vaccination of children in 2010 was 75.8%, incomplete vaccination was 6.41%, while 17.7% of Roma children received no vaccinations in some parts of Croatia due to the low response of Roma in the sense of visits to physicians for vaccination and refusal of physicians to vaccinate children in the field in Roma settlements.

The vaccination rate of Roma preschool children has reached the level of vaccination of the remaining population's preschool children. According to the survey conducted by the World Bank and DG Regio in 2011, the vaccination coverage was 96.6% for Roma children 0-6 and 96.48% of children aged 6 years and older. The contraction rate of illnesses vaccinated against among Roma children generally corresponds to the contraction rate among other children. Sources of possible epidemics, such as a measles epidemic which broke out in 2008 among Roma children in Zagreb and Brod-Posavina Counties, most often strike children in families of mobile Roma groups who do not reside in the Republic of Croatia, rather they often migrate along a route which encompasses Spain, Italy, Germany, Serbia and Croatia. Nonetheless, the health of Roma children remains a matter of special care, keeping in mind the poor living conditions in segregated Roma settlements and areas with high concentrations of Roma residents and low levels of awareness and knowledge of proper care and protection of children's health and prevention methods vis-à-vis infectious disease such as hepatitis and dysentery, so-called "soiled hands illnesses" conveyed by contaminated food and water.

Furthermore, Roma children with developmental impairments facing the same challenges confronted by children with developmental impairments in the population at large are more frequently institutionalized than such children in the rest of the population due to generally poorer living conditions and the segregation of Roma communities. Also, due to the conditions in which they grow and the frequent impossibility of early socialization and preschool learning which would bring their abilities to the same level as that of the remaining population among children of the same age, they are evaluated as children with reduced mental capacity to a much higher degree, i.e., they are diagnosed as children 'with mild mental retardation', which results in unequal status in the school system and reduced possibilities for quality education.

⁷⁵ UNDP, "Avoiding the dependency trap: the Roma in Central and Eastern Europe", 2003. Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic. Equality and Human Rights Commission, "Inequalities faced by Roma and Traveller communities: an overview", 2009.

⁷⁶ Croatian Government's Office for National Minorities, "Progress Report on the Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plan for 2009 and 2010" (in Croatian), May 2011, <http://www.nacionalnemanzine.vlada.hr/images/pdf/izvjesce_o_provodjenju_akcijskog_plana.pdf>.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Together with children, women in Roma communities are also an especially vulnerable group. Roma women are one of the most deprived categories of the Roma population due to their exposure to multiple forms of discrimination and social exclusion based on race, sex and status. Gender and ethnicity have a major impact on the health status of Roma women and they are a group with a high likelihood of risks caused by inadequate health care. The health of Roma women is poorer in comparison to the health of men in the Roma community, and their health is also poorer in comparison to women in the remaining population. The health of Roma women is a key area of concern keeping in mind socio-economic factors such as poverty, inadequate nutrition and lack of access to health services. The health of Roma women is at a critically low level because they rarely undergo medical examinations, or they only do so when severely ill.

Prejudices and stereotypes against the Roma in general create a misconception that the poor health of Roma women is the result of their irresponsibility for their own health and the health of their children and that this is due to negligence and a low level of awareness and a poor culture of health. It should be borne in mind that Roma communities often have poor transportation links to settlements with specialized health-care institutions. Another noteworthy aspect is the financial (in)ability of Roma women to cover the costs of transportation to health-care institutions and the costs of medical examinations and prescribed drugs. Furthermore, the avoidance of health examinations is often tied to the lack of trust in health-care staff and the discriminatory attitude toward the Roma by of health-care workers.

Viewed in overall terms, the combination of discriminatory practices, high treatment costs, complicated bureaucratic procedures and unresolved status issues which affect the exercise of the right to health-care together contribute to the limited or complete inaccessibility of health-care to a high number of Roma women in Europe.⁷⁷ According to data obtained from Roma organisations in Croatia, approximately 40% of Roma women do not have health insurance. Roughly 60% of Roma women enter non-marital unions very early, at the age of 13 or 14, and already by the age of 15 they are living the life of motherhood.⁷⁸ The cultural patterns which impose early marriage and pregnancy as minors, as well as early and numerous births which increase the risk of complications during pregnancy and delivery are a cause of high infant mortality and high fertility rates. Additionally, there is generally insufficient awareness of protecting women's health, responsible sexual behaviour and personal hygiene as ways to prevent disease and improve the health of women and children. This is confirmed by the failure of Roma women to respond to calls for gynaecological examinations.⁷⁹

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ROMA IN THE HEALTH-CARE SYSTEM

⁷⁷ European Roma Information Office (ERIO), "Roma Women in Europe", accessed 3 Feb. 2012, <<http://erionet.org/site/upload/advocacy/Roma%20Women%20in%20Europe.pdf>>.

⁷⁸ Gender Equality Ombudswoman, "Roma men and women in the educational process" (in Croatian), May 2005 <<http://www.prs.hr/content/view/94/53/>> (accessed 31 Jan. 2012).

⁷⁹ Croatian Government's Office for National Minorities, "Progress Report on the Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plan for 2009 and 2010" (in Croatian), May 2011, <http://www.nacionalnemanjine.vlada.hr/images/pdf/izvjesce_o_provodjenju_akcijskog_plana.pdf>.

Due to their specific lifestyle, the Roma are subject to discrimination and segregation which additionally exacerbates their status. The prejudices against the Roma population which result in discrimination also appear in the field of health-care, and among health-care professionals. A European Union survey on discrimination against minorities conducted in several member states in 2009 showed that between 11 and 23% of Roma respondents declared that they had experienced discrimination at the hands of health-care workers in the preceding 12 months.⁸⁰ Discrimination against the Roma population in health-care institutions has consistently taken third place after discrimination in the private sector and in hiring. There are no precise data on discrimination against the Roma population by health-care workers in the Republic of Croatia. According to some indicators, there are cases of discrimination against the Roma in health-care institutions in Croatia.

An increase in the number of health-care workers of Roma nationality could also help improve the health of the Roma population. The number of young Roma attending secondary education with a medical/health-care curriculum is still insufficient. There are twelve (12) pupils attending secondary education with a medical/health-care curriculum, of whom eight (8) are female pupils studying for the nursing profession, one (1) is a female pupil studying for the profession of dental technician, one (1) is a male pupil studying for the profession of radiology technician and one (1) is a female pupil studying for the profession of medical laboratory technician. Four pupils have received scholarships from the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. The Faculty of Medicine in Rijeka is being attended by one (1) male student of Roma nationality and one (1) female student is attending the College of Health. In Medimurje County in 2010, a significant increase in the number of young Roma enrolled in secondary medical schools has been noted, as the number of Roma pupils studying for health-care professions at the secondary level is twelve (12), while the number of Roma pupils studying for health-care professions at the higher education level is two (2).

MONITORING OF ROMA HEALTH

In order to better influence the effect of the health-care strategies, measures and programmes aimed at improving the overall health of the Roma, this effect must be monitored. The gathering of data which provide an authentic picture of Roma health is rendered difficult by the fact that they are mostly frequently not disaggregated by ethnicity. One of the objective reasons for this lack of data or their under-representation in the case of the Roma is the fact that many Roma do not declare their ethnicity as Roma. Besides this, another one of the primary reasons for the unavailability of statistical data is the inadequate systematic data gathering on the situation of the Roma by the relevant public institutions, service providers and governmental ministries. For example, the county public health offices, in cooperation with the Croatian Public Health

⁸⁰ EU-MIDIS, European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey, 2009, <http://www.equineteurope.org/midis_roma_en.pdf> (accessed: 10 Feb. 2012). It is important to note also that a high share of discrimination cases remain unreported, which may also be an indicator of segregation and the closed nature of the Roma population inside their segregated communities. The EU-MIDIS survey showed that 66%-92% of the polled members of the Roma population, depending on their country of residence, did not report discrimination against any relevant institution or authority where discrimination did in fact occur during the 12 preceding months. The primary reason which the Roma cited for non-reporting of discrimination is that nothing would have changed had they reported it. Furthermore, 23% of the Roma respondents declared that they avoided various places in order to avoid potential discrimination, which suggests that the level of discrimination would have been greater had they not avoided such places.

Institute, gather routine statistical data tied to health-care institutions, pharmacies and the Central Statistics Bureau, which do not contain information on ethnicity.

The Croatian Health Insurance Institute also does not maintain records which clearly denote the ethnicity of insured persons, so the number of Roma persons encompassed by health insurance is not clearly apparent.

Besides the problem of the lack of routine health statistics indicators to monitor outcomes based on nationality, the Ministry of Health has pointed out that public health statistical research is defined by the Annual Statistics Activities Programme of the Central Statistics Bureau submitted each year to the relevant ministries and the Croatian Government, and then sent to Parliament for ratification. Without changes to the Programme which would allow the monitoring the health and health protection of the Roma through the introduction of special records on ethnicity to the health-care system, it is impossible to monitor the rendering of health-care to any national or ethnic group through health-statistics research. Such changes also entail high financial costs, for the health-care system computerization project did not foresee reporting based on nationality, so primary health-care teams do not even have the possibility of reporting on health, visits and examinations in this manner. In order to monitor the health indicators specified by the Objectives, it is necessary to plan and secure funding to implement special research not encompassed by the Annual Statistical Activities Programme.

Application of the principle of equality of all before the law in the exercise of the right to health-care and other rights under health insurance is certainly the foundation for non-discriminatory access to health-care. However, uniform enforcement of laws and regulations without an understanding that as long as some communities in society endure unequal living conditions, the uniform application of the principles of non-discrimination may place such communities on an even more unequal footing, that is discrimination by way of non-discrimination appears. Therefore, pursuant to the UNDP recommendations incorporated into the Monitoring Framework for the Decade of Roma Inclusion, the evaluation of the health of the Roma population and implementation of effective measures should include computation of indicators such as mortality and infant mortality rates, vaccination rates, the extent of health insurance coverage, monitoring of infant mortality and the number pregnancy among minors. It will also be important to estimate the extent of the Roma population, not simply the number of insured, but also the ability of patients to pay contributions for drugs, i.e., the share of households which cannot afford a prescribed drug. Additionally, it is important to assess the situation tied to various forms of discrimination of the Roma population which foments their segregation and impedes the exercise of constitutionally and legally guaranteed rights.

In order to gain a clearer picture of the specific situation of the Roma population, several pilot research projects were conducted to ascertain the health status and health insurance among the Roma populations in individual counties, while in cooperation with individual county public health departments, data were collected on the vaccination coverage in five counties with the highest Roma populations in Croatia and in all other counties in which Roma live. However, gathering data on the health and living conditions of the Roma population at the level of regional self-government has largely been absent due to a lack of interest in the problems facing the Roma community and the will to cooperate in most counties, which is also apparent in the fact that most counties have only modestly defined their priorities pertaining to Roma health, which prevents

implementation of measures and programmes aimed at improving the general health of the Roma minority.

Keeping in mind that aforementioned points and setting forth from the social inclusion measures of the Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion of the Republic of Croatia in chapter 4.4.3. Roma – *to improve the health-care of the Roma population*, one of the primary objectives of the National Roma Strategy from 2013 to 2020 is to improve the health of the Roma population in the Republic of Croatia and reduce inequalities and the chasm between the health status of the Roma and the remaining population by ensuring the same level of quality and availability of health-care, with the involvement of and coordination between all bodies and organisations at all levels of society in the Republic of Croatia whose operations are aimed at rendering health services and securing the quality of life in the community.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and strategic objectives have been defined in compliance with the observed needs of the Roma community on the basis of experience in the implementation of the two already existing strategic documents of the Croatian Government (NRP, DRIAC).

The primary responsible authority for the measures foreseen for achieving the objectives set in the strategic field of health-care is the Ministry of Health. The measures in this component of the strategy aimed at educating staff will be the responsibility of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports.

GOAL: To improve the health of the Roma population and the quality and availability of health-care.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: To increase the health insurance coverage of the Roma population.

Definition: To establish the mechanisms for systematic dissemination of information and encouragement of the Roma population to resolve the status issues that will facilitate the exercise rights to health insurance. In order to achieve this objective, it will be necessary to ensure systematic and coordinated functioning of various bodies of public authority in order achieve synergy.

Progress indicator:

- The inclusion rate of a specified population in mandatory health insurance, by settlement, age and sex.

Baseline value:

- The share of the Roma population without health insurance who make use of emergency medical assistance without the help of health insurance during the year.

Sources of data:

- 2011 census, which will finally establish the number of Roma residents in each county.
- Records of admittance of persons who seek health-care in emergency medical units.

Objective 2: To increase availability health-care services for the Roma population with emphasis on the elderly, the disabled and persons with physical impairments and special needs, and mobile Roma groups.

Definition: To establish mechanisms that will facilitate the availability of health-care services to members of the Roma minority, with special emphasis on marginalized and socially excluded groups through increased activity in the community. This objective complies with Measure 11 of the National Health Development Strategy for 2006-2011, as follows: In the system of care, prevention and special concern for the health of threatened groups, ensure a high quality joint approach to the health and social welfare system and the civil society system to help the most sensitive components of the population.

Progress indicators::

- 100% access to health-care services by the Roma population with emphasis on the elderly, the disabled and persons with physical impairments and special needs, and mobile Roma groups by 2020
- The rate of access to health-care by the Roma population based on age, disability, physical impairment, special needs, broken down by age, sex and mobility.

Baseline value:

- According to a survey conducted by the UNDP, World Bank and DG Regio in 2011, the share of people who live in households that have access to health-care services when necessary as a percentage of the overall population living in the surveyed households is 91.9%.

Methods for gathering data and sources of data:

- Surveys and research.

Objective 3: To raise the level of the Roma population's awareness of responsibility for their own health.

Definition: To inform and educate members of the Roma population on the importance of responsible behaviour concerning their own health and ways to prevent disease.

Progress indicator:

- The rate of contraction of disease caused by unhealthy lifestyles and/or as a result of untimely use of health-care services.

Baseline value:

- The rate of contraction of disease caused by unhealthy lifestyles and/or as a result of untimely use of health-care services in 2012.

Sources of data:

- Data from the Croatian Public Health Institute

Objective 4: To improve protection of women's reproductive health, the health of pregnant women and children, and to reduce the pregnancy rate among minors.

Definition: To inform and educate Roma women, but also the broader Roma community, on reproductive health and prenatal health and the risks linked to pregnant minors. This objective

complies with the Objective 1.5. *To raise the quality and availability of health-care for women and girls* of the National Gender Equality Policy for the 2011-2015 period.⁸¹

Progress indicators:

- Contraction rate of reproductive system disease and complications tied to pregnancy and childbirth among Roma women.
- Mortality rate (prenatal, neonatal and postnatal) of children disaggregated by ethnicity (number of child deaths per 1,000 births)

Baseline value:

- Contraction rate of reproductive system disease and complications tied to pregnancy and childbirth among Roma women in 2012.
- Mortality rate (prenatal, neonatal and postnatal) of children disaggregated by ethnicity (number of child deaths per 1,000 births) in 2012

Sources of data:

- Records of the Croatian Public Health Institute, records of health-care institutions

Objective 5: To increase sensibility of health-care professionals for work with the Roma population and improve the Roma population's communication with family practitioners.

Definition: To increase sensibility of health-care professionals for work with the Roma population, in order to establish trust between members of the Roma community and health-care professionals, and increase the number of Roma who have chose family practitioners.

Progress indicators:

- The percentage of Roma who are satisfied with the conduct and attitude of health-care professionals.
- The satisfaction of members of the Roma population with the attitude of health-care professionals toward them.
- The percentage of Roma who choose a family practitioner, based on age and gender.

Baseline value:

- Basal epidemiological study with polling of a prospective type in several counties simultaneously.

Sources of data:

- A survey that would be repeated each year in the same area.

Objective 6: To reduce the instance of disease caused by poor sanitary standards and disease for which there are vaccinations.

Definition: To increase, through a combination of measures that will ensure sanitary housing conditions for the Roma population, vaccination coverage and to educate and inform the Roma population about sanitary habits, to achieve a reduction in the contraction of diseases linked to poor sanitary standards and diseases for which there are vaccinations.

⁸¹ National Gender Equality Policy from 2011 to 2015. As published in the Croatian language in *Narodne novine*, no. 88/11 <<http://www.ured-ravnopravnost.hr/site/hr/nacionalni-dokumenti/politike-planovi-programi-strategije/nacionalna-politika-2011-2015.html>>.

Progress indicator:

- The rate of contraction of disease linked to poor sanitary standards and of diseases for which there are vaccinations.

Baseline value:

- Indicators of intestinal and louse infestation may be monitored, but this must be conducted as a separate epidemiological inspection for each Roma community.

Sources of data:

- Epidemiological research.

Objective 7: To reduce the widespread consumption of all addictive substances among the Roma population, with emphasis on children and adolescents, and to raise awareness of the harm caused by such addictive substances.

Definition: To raise awareness of the harmfulness of consumption of addictive substances in the Roma community through dissemination of information, education and awareness-raising measures in the Roma population, parents and children. This Objective complies with the priorities and objectives of the National Addiction Prevention Programme for children and adolescents in the educational system and children and adolescents in the social welfare system from 2010 to 2014, and the National Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy in the Republic of Croatia for 2012-2017.

Progress indicator:

- Rate of addictive substance consumption in the Roma population among children and youth.
- Increased awareness in the Roma population, particularly children and adolescents, on the harm caused by consumption of addictive substances.

Baseline value:

Estimate of addictive substance consumption rate in the Roma population.

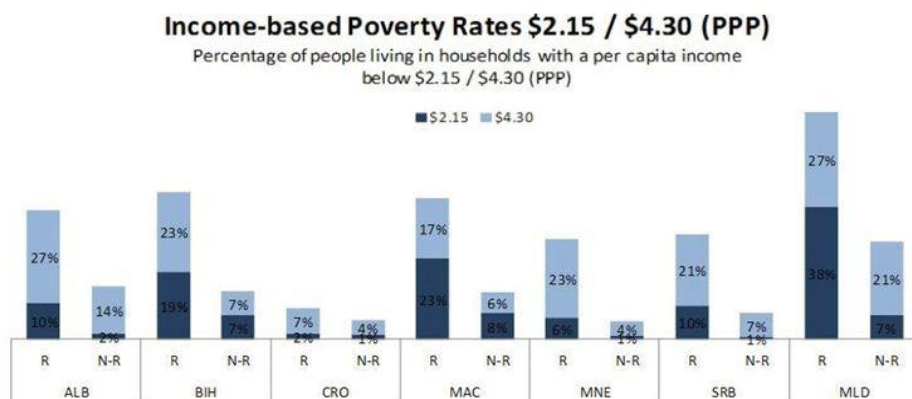
Sources of data:

- Official registers, analyses of reports, pilot research.

IV.4.4 Social welfare

Poverty among the Roma is considerably higher than in other groups or in society as a whole. According to poverty line of 60% of the median per capita net income, 76% of Roma and 20% of the remaining population residing near Roma settlements live in absolute poverty.⁸² Roma poverty, by its character, is frequently deep and permanent and influence virtually all aspects of living standards (housing, education, health and similar aspects).⁸³

According to the World Bank and DG Regio survey conducted in 2011, the total unemployment of the Roma population in the Republic of Croatia reached 65.09%, while unemployment among the young Roma population within the 15-24 age bracket was as high as 76.21%. The high unemployment rate and the high number of children means that a high number of Roma families



Source: UNDP, World Bank, DG Regio, Roma in Central and Eastern Europe,
Regional Household Survey, 2011

depend on assistance to survive.

On average, 13.5% of all social assistance recipients who are Croatian citizens as of the middle of the past decade were Roma,⁸⁴ and this accounted for roughly 50% of the Roma population. In Medimurje County, with a total population of 111,000, in which approximately 6,000 Roma live, the share of the Roma population in the total population receiving welfare aid is 78%. Data from the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth on the recipients of various forms of social assistance are released monthly, but since they are not disaggregated according to ethnicity, newer data on the number of Roma/welfare recipients are not available. However, the example of the Medimurje Roma settlement Kuršanec, in which approximately 90% of all households exercised the right to

⁸² UNDP, Vulnerable Groups in Central and South Eastern Europe, <<http://vulnerability.undp.sk>>.

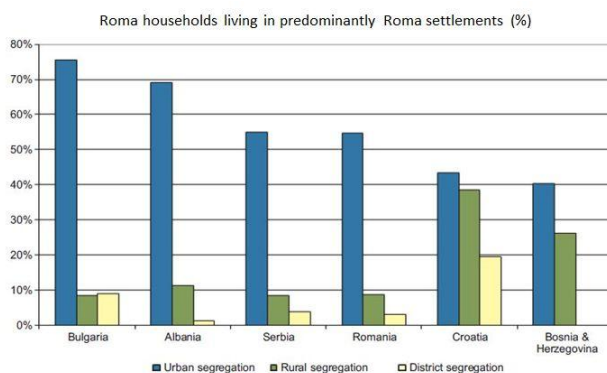
⁸³ Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion of the Republic of Croatia (in Croatian), March 2007, <http://www.delhrv.ec.europa.eu/images/article/File/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20JIM_hrv_0320071.pdf> (accessed: 7 Feb. 2012).

⁸⁴ Kušan, L., Zoon, I.: "Izveštaj o pristupu Roma zapošljavanju: Hrvatska" (in Croatian), Council of Europe, 2004. Available at: <http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/archive/stabilitypact/activities/Croatia/romaaccessemploymentCroatian_en.asp>.

welfare support during the period from 2000 to 2008⁸⁵ shows the degree of dependence of the Roma population on this type of social assistance.

Despite the fact that members of the Roma minority in the Republic of Croatia are encompassed by the social welfare system to a considerable extent, poverty and exclusion are social problems which are largely present in the Roma community. Roma communities in segregated settlements often have limited access to basic services. Even though welfare assistance is the sole and primary income in a high number of Roma families, it has been noted that monetary assistance is not spent purposefully in a significant number of cases.⁸⁶

In most cases, the Roma population lives in marginalized and segregated communities which may be found in both urban and rural areas. Such spatial concentrations have a considerably negative impact on the inclusion of the Roma on the labour market, on the utility infrastructure, utility services, public health, education, housing and transportation, and they keep the Roma population



Source: UNDP, 2006

in impoverished conditions. The lack of interest and unwillingness of local governments in some parts of Croatia to become involved and contribute to improving the socio-economic status of the Roma in their areas additionally foster these conditions for the Roma population. Additionally aggravating factors are xenophobia and intolerance aimed at the Roma, which were

present prior to the economic crisis, but are now reinforced, leading to greater segregation of the Roma population.

CHILDREN

Segregation of Roma settlements has a negative impact on the inclusion of Roma children. Roma children who attend segregated schools have a high chance of remaining unemployed or working at jobs that do not require a high level of skill, which are typically done by Roma. On the other hand, Roma children who go to integrated schools are confronted with the challenges of participating in the school curriculum and fitting into the community of the remaining population.

Furthermore, when speaking of small children, there are concerns tied to their nutrition, health and early development, because the status of Roma children is still largely excluded from the

⁸⁵ Šlezak, Hrvoje, "Natural trends of the Roma population in Međimurske County – the case of the Roma settlement of Kuršanec" (in Croatian), *Hrvatski geografski glasnik* 72/2, 77-100 (2010) (accessed: 5 Feb. 2012).

⁸⁶ Alcoholism is frequently present in most Roma settlements. An escalation in various forms of socially-unacceptable behaviour has been recorded at times when monetary welfare assistance is disbursed, such as juvenile delinquency, prostitution, gambling, a high number of violent crimes, and crimes against sexual freedom and sexual morals. In order to alleviate this phenomenon, social welfare centres utilize the legal possibility of rendering assistance to the Roma in kind. However, in some cases even this aspect of welfare assistance does not reduce the phenomenon of non-purposeful expenditure of means, as a certain number of recipients sell such received goods for cash, wherein the sum received is less than the value of the sold in-kind aid. On the other hand, some families continue to seek aid in kind due to problems with extortionist money-lenders, as this is the only way they can feed themselves.

debate on Roma poverty. The strategies for alleviating poverty among children have not yet managed to successfully overcome the complex interaction between material deprivation, physical exclusion and the discrimination to which the Roma population is exposed. Children in Roma families often grow up under more arduous conditions, due both to poorer education and lack of participation in formal types of work and the specific lifestyle of their parents. One of the most striking features is the very high number of children in Roma families.

Keeping in mind the often inadequate living conditions in Roma settlements, such as insufficient housing space, entire families living in a single room and the lack of basic sanitary conditions such as indoor lavatories or indoor plumbing, the concern for the well-being of Roma children is all the greater because children in Roma communities are an important source of income for their families in the sense of exercising the right to children's allowances.⁸⁷ Therefore, the fact that many households do not meet even the minimum criteria for establishing a family and family life is no barrier to the birth of a high number of children. To many, immediate economic benefit is more important than providing a quality life for children.⁸⁸ This is confirmed by the fact that families with five or more children more frequently have the most family court injunctions due to neglect of the basic needs of their children. The well-being of Roma children should also be in the focus because relevant social welfare agencies are reporting the non-purposeful spending of aid money, which is primarily intended to meet basic living necessities.

A particularly vulnerable group of Roma children are children without adequate parental care, children with developmental impairments and children subject to parental neglect. Precise data on the number of Roma children who belong to any of these groups are not available, because statistics on children and adolescents without adequate parental care, children with developmental impairments and children subject to parental neglect are not disaggregated by ethnicity. Thus it is difficult to precisely determine how many Roma children belong to any of these groups.

In the Republic of Croatia, the protection and well-being of children, particularly children and adolescents without adequate parental care, are among the priorities of the social welfare system. Therefore, the comprehensive National Activity Plan for the Interests of Children from 2006 to 2012 is based on the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child of 2004. The plan on the deinstitutionalization and transformation of social welfare homes and other legal persons rendering social welfare services in the Republic of Croatia, covering the 2011-2016 (2018) period, takes into account the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to the extent that non-institutional accommodation must be secured for children without adequate parental care for 80% of children (foster homes, family homes, organized housing), of which most will be in foster homes, so that children without adequate parental care up to the age of three are given care outside of their own families by foster families as a rule⁸⁹ and that the separation of children from their local communities should be prevented in the interest of maintaining contacts with relatives and other contacts. However, the Committee has also noted

⁸⁷ The Croatian Pension Insurance Institute pays an allowance of HRK 300 for each child. For each third and fourth child, the allowance is raised to HRK 500 per child. This means, for example, that a family of four receives HRK 2200 per month in children's allowances.

⁸⁸ Šlezak, Hrvoje, "Natural trends of the Roma population in Međimurske County – the case of the Roma settlement of Kuršanec" (in Croatian), *Hrvatski geografski glasnik* 72/2, 77-100 (2010) (accessed: 5 Feb. 2012).

⁸⁹ Article 96(1) of the Social Welfare Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 33/12) stipulates that a social welfare centre will recognize the right of a child, particularly a child under seven years of age, to accommodation with a foster family. In compliance with the conditions specified by the Social Welfare Act, the age of a child placed with a foster family has been raised. Thus, as a rule, a child up to seven years of age has to be placed with a foster family.

that in the Republic of Croatia, counselling and monitoring of vulnerable families are not well structured and defined, and it recommends measures to improve the functioning of social welfare centres and the priority rendering of assistance to families in order to prevent separation of children from their families.

According to the consolidated official statistics from 2009 on the number of wards in institutional homes, foster families and family homes, the current ratio between institutional care and extra-institutional forms of accommodation in the Republic of Croatia is 39.9% to 60.4% to the benefit of extra-institutional forms of accommodation (primarily with foster families).⁹⁰ These data do not provide a clear indication of just how many Roma children there are without adequate parental care and without parental care due to death of a parent or the inability of a parent to care for them due to illness or other justified grounds and accommodated in institutional or extra-institutional forms of care. However, the most recent studies conducted in the European Union indicate that in comparison to their total number in the population, Roma children are over-represented in institutional care in most countries in which Roma live.⁹¹

For many children who are institutionalized for one of the aforementioned reasons, foster care and adoption are the only way for them to leave the institutional environment. For Roma children, the chances for adoption are considerably less due to prejudice and stigmatization of the Roma population in general, while for Roma children with developmental impairments the chances for foster care or adoption are even smaller. The report by the European Roma Rights Centre indicates that Roma children born with impairments are often placed in institutionalized care for a minimum of one year, or two in order to render constant medical treatment and due to the inability of their families to care for these children, such as lack of adequate space, lack of utility services, poverty, insufficient knowledge and because the families often have many children requiring care. The same research at several locations has shown that the surveyed Roma families declared that one or more of their children with impairments have spent a minimum of several months after birth in an institution. It was also ascertained that the actual condition of the child was not a direct reason for his/her placement in institutional care, rather in most cases it was a matter of the inability of the family to care for the child. Bearing in mind the difficulties confronted by other parents who have children with developmental impairments, care for such children under the living conditions of the Roma population is an even greater challenge.

When speaking of children who must be separated from their families due to parental neglect, various measures are undertaken vis-à-vis parents who do not adequately care for their children in the interest of the protection and well-being of said children. Mechanisms for supervision of parental care exist in the Republic of Croatia, and social welfare centres are charged with monitoring the status of children in families. Insofar as neglect of a child reaches such a degree that such child can no longer be left under parental care, the parent(s) is/are deprived of the right to live with their child and raise him/her, and the child is entrusted to another person or institution

⁹⁰ Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, "Plan for the deinstitutionalization and transformation of social welfare homes and other legal persons rendering social welfare services in the Republic of Croatia, 2011-2016 (2018) (in Croatian), October 2010, <http://www.mzss.hr/zdravstvo_i_socijalna_skrb/socijalna_skrb/reforma_sustava_socijalne_skrbi/plan_deinstitucionalizacije_i_t_ransformacije_domova_socijalne_skrbi_i_drugih_pravnih_osoba_koje_obavljaju_djelatnost_socijalne_skrbi_u_republici_hrvatsk_oj_2011_2016_2018> (accessed 8 Feb. 2012).

⁹¹ Life Sentence: Romani Children in Institutional Care, A Report by the European Roma Rights Centre and Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, Milan Šimečka Foundation, and Osservazione, June 2011, <<http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/life-sentence-20-june-2011.pdf>> (accessed 8 Feb. 2012).

for care and learning. If a parent abuses or flagrantly neglects⁹² parental duties and rights, parental care is deprived by court decision. The available data indicate a relatively small number of applications of this measure in comparison to the actual situation, given that a certain number of Roma children engage in panhandling and do not attend primary school, which indicates neglect of children by parents and the need for more frequent application of these measures, but also a certain degree of tolerance by social welfare centres for such behaviour by parents. Social welfare centres are considerably more tolerant in the application of family law injunctions when dealing with Roma families, and as a rule they only opt for the rescission of parental care in a case of a grave threat to the health or life of a child. According to the report on the work of the Children's Ombudswoman, even though the Office of the Children's Ombudswoman received 282 reports concerning the right of children to protection against violence and neglect, only 28 cases were recorded which involved restriction or rescission of the right to parental care.⁹³ However, it is unclear from this report how many of these were cases of restriction or rescission of the right to parental care of Roma children.

Analysis of the state of foster care for children from the standpoint of experts, organized by UNICEF's Croatia Office and conducted during 2008 on the basis of data gathered at four seminars attended by a total of 237 participants, experts and foster caregivers showed that experts in most counties were unsatisfied with the lack of foster families for specific groups of children (children with special needs, children with behavioural dysfunctions, Roma children). One of the specific features common to most counties was the marked difficulty in accommodating Roma children with foster families. Since there is a notable shortage of foster families for Roma children, there is a great need for a higher number of foster families who are sensitive and prepared to care for Roma children.⁹⁴

In order to render proper care with a family to children from Roma communities without adequate parental care, children with developmental impairments whose parents are unable to care for them or children who must be removed from their families due to parental neglect, efforts are being made to encourage potential foster caregivers and adoptive families to take on Roma children for foster care or adoption. Here it is particularly necessary to stress the importance of encouraging foster care and adoption and specialized foster care within the Roma community, by Roma families, in order to ensure for these children an upbringing within the framework of the tradition and culture to which they belong by birth. The promotion of foster care inside Roma communities is being carried forward in Medimurje County, where education for foster caregivers is organized every three months. A minimum of one Roma family joins each time such educational course are held. However, a problem which often emerges with Roma foster caregivers is that these potential foster families do not earn any personal income, which runs counter to the provisions tied to the issuance of foster care certification, and caregivers have often not even completed primary education, or they have abbreviated primary education completed at adult education academies. Despite these obstacles, social welfare centres are finding ways to introduce new Roma families

⁹² Flagrant abuse of parental duties implies physical or mental abuse of children, sexual molestation of children, coercion to perform excessive labour, incitement to panhandling and theft, and so forth. Flagrant neglect of a child implies, among other things, neglect of care for the basic needs of a child, such as nutrition, hygiene, clothing, medical treatment, regular attendance of school, and abandonment of a child, and if a parent fails to protect a child from the harmful actions of others.

⁹³ Republic of Croatia, Children's Ombudswoman, Report on the Work of the Children's Ombudswoman for 2010 (in Croatian), <<http://www.dijete.hr/>> (accessed: 8 Feb. 2012).

⁹⁴ UNICEF Croatia Office, "Foster care of children in Croatia, situation analysis and proposed guidelines, September 2009, <http://www.unicef.hr/upload/file/322/161299/FILENAME/Publikacija_udomiteljstvo_djece.pdf> (accessed: 8 Feb. 2012).

to the foster care system. Barriers to foster care placement of Roma children also emerge in the Roma community, because the Roma population perceives the foster care placement of children with Roma families as a new way to ‘profit’ so that children are ‘taken’ from families.

YOUTH

Another particularly sensitive group in the Roma community encompasses Roma adolescents (youth). Out of all of the national minorities and ethnic groups in Croatia, the Roma undoubtedly endure the most difficult social position, dictated by their high degree of social exclusion. Studies consistently show that the Roma are “over-represented” in all categories requiring social protection: the very poor, the long-term unemployed, those without higher educational qualifications, the uneducated, members of large families, persons without residence, citizenship, etc. Thus the Roma, particularly the youth, must be given an opportunity to escape the cycle of poverty, discrimination and marginalization. With the objective of improving the living conditions of the members of the Roma minority, the Croatian Government adopted the National Roma Programme and the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Action Plan, which are aimed at assisting the Roma in a systematic manner, especially children and youth, by improving their living conditions and inclusion in social life and decision-making processes with the preservation of their identity, traditions and culture.

The National Roma Programme encompasses the field of education, preservation of traditional culture, inclusion of the Roma, especially children and youth, into social and political life, status issues, elimination of discrimination, health-care, employment, social welfare, protection of the family, motherhood and youth, and physical planning. The measures foreseen in the Action Plan will contribute to the elimination of long-term marginalization and discrimination against the Roma minority, and the eradication of poverty, and also ensure a higher living standard in line with economic growth. Therefore, there is a clear need for an exhaustive study based on creditable research on youth who are marginalized and stigmatized in Croatia. Without reliable information, strategies and policies aimed at this group are often inadequate and do not fulfil actual needs.

The National Youth Programme from 2009 to 2013 explains the situation of young Roma: they belong to a minority with the most precarious social status, with a high level of social exclusion and with only 10% of Roma children who complete primary school, and only 5% who complete secondary school. In Chapter 1, ‘Education and computerization’, 1.1.4. ‘Education of special youth groups’, the National Youth Programme specifies that the education of Roma children and youth is being implemented in compliance with the National Roma Programme from 2003 and the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Action Plan. Statistics indicate that a considerable number of young Roma will never find a job. This is compounded by the low level of education and qualifications. Social marginalization has led to a sort of mimicry, so that according to estimates only one fourth of the Roma are actually registered as Roma. Also, the lack of infrastructure in Roma settlements and the non-entry of Roma children and youth into the system prevents this group from participating in education and qualification for work. In this manner, young Roma do not acquire the qualifications and skills that would make them employable. A particular problem is nonetheless the insufficient involvement of social agencies and local communities in the creation of social support mechanisms for young people and their families in

persisting in education, information and organisation of accessible alternative, extra-institutional forms of education and acquisition of qualifications.

It should be stressed that education is a constitutional and legal obligation and as such it must be made available to each individual, particularly children and youth who are socially excluded and unable to exercise their rights without additional support.

THE DISABLED

Persons with disabilities in the Roma community are also an exceptionally sensitive group. While persons over the age of 60 are almost non-existent, as only 3% of the Roma population in Croatia is older than 60, the disabled in the Roma community are virtually invisible. Individual rights, such as assistance and care allowances, personal disability compensation, parent-caregiver or general caregiver status and compensation until employment, and particularly individual rights to social services (e.g., home care and assistance, professional family assistance, early intervention services, and residential services) are exercised to a minor degree in relation to the overall Roma population. This does not, however, mean that there are no disabled persons in the Roma population or that their numbers are small. This is actually an indicator of their discrimination within the Roma community and their neglect by other family members who do not seek assistance for them, and as such they remain undetected by the relevant public agencies and thus insufficiently protected. In Međimurje County, this situation has improved somewhat over the past two years. All Roma children with developmental impairments undergo expert analysis and exercise their rights in line with their disability. Among older persons, the situation is slightly different because individual physical impairments among them are most often due to alcohol consumption, while they cannot receive compensation until employment because they are not sufficiently educated nor qualified, or they lack the certification necessary for registration with the employment bureau.

WOMEN

Most studies that provide disaggregated data based on ethnicity and gender show that Roma women are subject to greater social exclusion than Roma men, as well as greater discrimination based on ethnicity, gender and status. Their exclusion is reflected in the fields of employment, education, health-care and housing. Additionally, Roma women have very limited access to social welfare and aid, financial services, and particularly to participation in public and political life.

The status of Roma women has not changed despite the fact that the Decade of Roma Inclusion is now in its eighth year. In its resolution on the situation of Roma women of 1 June 2006,⁹⁵ the European Parliament asserts, among other things, that due to patriarchal traditions Roma women and girls still not enjoy the full respect of their freedom of choice in matters pertaining to the most fundamental decisions in their own lives, that Roma women face extreme levels of multiple discrimination, that there is an unacceptably wide gap between the levels of education of the remaining population and that of Roma women, that a vast majority of girls in Roma communities

⁹⁵ European Parliament resolution on the situation of Roma women in the European Union, 1 June 2006, <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P6-TA-2006-0244+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>> (accessed: 5 Feb. 2012).

do not complete primary education, that the rate of unemployment among adult Roma women is often many times higher than that of the rest of the women's population and that Roma women are often the victims of human trafficking in Europe. Various studies show that a high number of Roma women endure physical or sexual violence perpetrated by their partners and that at some point in their lives, a high number of Roma women become victims of domestic violence perpetrated by their spouses, fathers- or mothers-in-law, or other family members, in some cases over extended periods. A high number of cases of violence and violations of human rights of Roma women go unreported. The failure to report violence against women also occurs in other communities, but it is very likely that the number of reported cases of violence against Roma women is considerably lower than the number of reported cases of violence against other women due to cultural reasons, the danger of stigmatization of women in the community, and also due to distrust of the relevant institutions. Over the past several years, there has been a notable increase in economic violence against Roma women, who are most often the members of the family who receive monetary aid, by their spouses, who spend such financial assistance to settle debts, or for gambling and money-lending. Roma women therefore often seek assistance in kind in order to secure the basic necessities to feed their children.

In some Roma communities, arranged marriages, marriages among minors and forced marriages are still predominant as "traditional practices", which expose some girls to sexual violence and exploitation, but also completely block any possibility of education, particularly secondary education and, as a result, employment, because secondary education is essential to any sort of successful participation on the labour market. Human trafficking or, more specifically, trafficking in women and children, is a problem for the entire community. Both the general population and the Roma population, particularly people of lower socio-economic status, are exposed to increased risks of becoming victims of human trafficking. Because of their own poorer socio-economic status, lower education and high unemployment rates, Roma women are additionally exposed to the risk of becoming human trafficking victims.⁹⁶ This risk is all the greater in light of Croatia's upcoming accession to the European Union, with the opening of state borders and the reduced control of the passage of persons from one country to another. Also, in the context of human trafficking, Roma women's associations have pointed to the problem of human trafficking which besets the entire Roma community, ascribing it to Roma customs and traditions.⁹⁷ Special emphasis has been placed on the arrangement of marriages of minors for money or other compensation, which is justified as a "Roma custom", but actually constitutes trafficking in children and a serious violation of numerous children's rights. It has been stressed in particular that Roma often become victims of human trafficking for the purpose of coerced marriage of minors and panhandling.

Keeping in mind the aforementioned points, one of the primary objectives of the Strategy is to raise the quality of life and encourage the social inclusion of the Roma minority in the Republic of Croatia and to reduce inequalities and the gap between the socio-economic status of the Roma and the rest of the population by securing the same level of quality and availability of social

⁹⁶ Balogh, Lídia and Kóczé, Angéla, Policy Paper "Current Issues in Europe Regarding the Social and Political Inclusion of Romani Women", issued for the Roma Women in Focus conference held in Budapest on the 7 April, 2011, <http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/partpol_romaniwomensocialinclusionineurope_ewl_april2011.pdf> (accessed: 5 Feb. 2012).

⁹⁷ Round table on "Tradition, customs and pressure from the community", Better Future Roma Women's Association, Zagreb, 2 December 2011.

welfare in timely fashion, with the participation and coordinated action of all bodies and organisations at all levels of society in the Republic of Croatia, whose activity is focused on rendering social services and ensuring a sound quality of life in the community.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal and objectives of this component of the Strategy have been defined in compliance with the observed needs of the Roma community and with the participation of experts in social welfare and international organisations with experience in working with Roma communities and based on experiences in implementing the two already existing documents of the Croatian Government.

The primary responsible authority for the measures foreseen to achieve the objectives set in the strategic field of social welfare is the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth. The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports will be responsible for measures in this component of the Strategy aimed at staff training, while the Croatian Employment Bureau will be responsible for the hiring incentive measures.

GOAL: To reduce the poverty of the Roma population and improve the quality of social services and services in the community.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives 1: To raise the quality, availability and timeliness of social services and services in the community with special emphasis on women, children, adolescents, the elderly and the disabled.

Definition: In order to achieve this objective, it will be necessary to reinforce the capacity of existing agencies, social welfare centres and family centres, to render social services to the Roma population residing in Roma settlements, as well as marginalized Roma settlements, and to encourage the Roma to exercise their rights. It will also be necessary to form mobile teams consisting of experts and educated and qualified Roma mediators for the purpose of everyday rendering of social services in Roma communities. This objective complies with the priorities and measures of the Republic of Croatia Social Welfare Development Strategy from 2011 to 2016, particularly Chapter 4.6. 'Changes in social welfare centres (social welfare departments in counties)'.

Progress indicator:

- The share of respondents who expressed satisfaction with rendered services
- The share of the Roma population to whom social welfare is available and timely
- The number of complaints filed by the Roma to ombudsmen or legal aid teams

Baseline value:

- The current quality of services rendered and satisfaction of service beneficiaries
- The number of complaints filed by the Roma to ombudsmen or legal aid teams in 2012

Sources of data:

- Survey, studies, reports submitted by social workers

Progress monitoring mechanisms:

- To conduct an analysis of surveyed beneficiaries.

Objective 2: To raise the quality of life of Roma families with special emphasis and the well-being of children and adolescents

Definition: Awareness raising, education and encouragement of members of the Roma population, families and youth for a higher quality of life inside the family and better care for children and quality parenting. The measures to achieve this objective are aimed at vital segments of family life and child care, and they imply participation by the relevant bodies and organisations through individual or joint activities in order to achieve synergy and thus a positive impact. This objective complies with Republic of Croatia Social Welfare Development Strategy, Chapter 4.7.3. 'Development of family-oriented services'.

Progress indicator:

- The share of families in which the quality of life improves in comparison to the quality of life measured at the start (e.g., in 2012) – evaluation of outcome

Baseline value:

- The quality of life measured at the beginning of a certain questionnaire to gauge this construct; Data from the "How the Roma Live" research by the Ivo Pilar Institute
- Data from the Social Welfare Centre – quality of life indicators,
- Research may be conducted; who will conduct it must be specified.

Sources of data:

- Surveys, research, data and records from the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Croatian Employment Bureau, Children's Ombudswoman

Objective 3: To enhance the capacity of local Roma communities to recognize the risks of exposure to human trafficking, sexual exploitation and other forms of violence with emphasis on women and children

Definition: In order to reduce these risks faced by the Roma population, especially women and children as the most vulnerable groups, from human trafficking, sexual exploitation and various other forms of violence, it will be necessary to work on awareness-raising, education, information and strengthening of the Roma population, particularly women and children, with regard to the potential risk of exposure to these phenomena and existing protection mechanism.

Progress indicator:

- Share of the Roma population, women and children, aware of human trafficking, sexual exploitation and other forms of violence, and protection mechanisms in relation to the baseline value

Baseline value:

- Share of the Roma population, women and children, aware of human trafficking, sexual exploitation and other forms of violence, and protection mechanisms

Sources of data:

- Surveys in Roma communities.

IV.4.5 Physical planning, housing and environmental protection

PHYSICAL PLANNING

For the purpose of creating the prerequisites for zoning, regulation and infrastructure development in the areas in which the Roma reside and improving the housing conditions of the Roma population in the Republic of Croatia, the Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning is implementing the measures specified by Chapter XIII: Physical Planning of the National Roma Programme (Croatian Government, 2003) and the chapter on Housing in the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Action Plan (Croatian Government, 2005) for which it has been designated the responsible authority, coordinator or implementation associate.

From 2004 to the present, 14 counties have been identified, by means of the county physical planning departments, which have sites inhabited by Roma (so-called Roma settlements) in their territory that require zoning, regulation and utility hook-ups. Moreover, the Ivo Pilar Social Science Institute conducted research into the physical distribution and character of Roma settlements in Croatia's territory and compiled the study "Sites of sedentary Roma – the status and improvement of the development of settlements and aspirations for housing types" in order to obtain knowledge on the spatial distribution of Roma settlements, the features of the housing stock and the status of the social and technical infrastructure, and the desires and needs of the Roma population tied to housing and the utility infrastructure of the settlements in which they live. On this basis, the book *How the Roma Live* was published in both Croatian and English. The research and preparation of the study were financed by the Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning.

Main problems:

The very phenomenon of "Roma settlements", i.e. specific sites inhabited by Roma, is a sign of physical segregation of a considerable portion of the Roma minority. Such 'settlements', besides a low housing standard, over-development and generally unregulated environment, are also characterized by an interim nature. Many Roma settlements are not recorded in the existing physical/land use plans of local and regional self-government units, so there continues to be a need to adopt new, or amend and supplement existing, physical plans. Local and regional self-government units do not have zoning plans, so many existing settlements are not encompassed by the physical planning documentation, and by the same token many settlements were built outside of areas specified in physical plans for housing development.

This impedes the permanence of solutions based on site permits, and manifests itself in deficient or non-existent utility infrastructure. At many places property rights issues have not been resolved: the builders of residential structures are not the owners of the land on which such structures are built, regardless of whether it is under private, municipal/urban or state ownership. Therefore, permanent solutions are not possible even in exceptional cases outside of physical plans. The updating of land registers is also part of the problem.

Thus, many of the houses in which the Roma live were built illegally. Besides these problems, the legalization of houses and settlements also involves the problem of cost, which many Roma families cannot cover on their own. Even in cases in which settlements are legalized and have utility infrastructure, the houses themselves do not have electricity, water and sewage hook-ups. Many families have trouble paying utility charges.

The adoption of physical plans or amendments and modifications to these plans in compliance with the situation on the ground has been detected as a problem, and relevant measures must be defined in response. However, the approval of initiatives for the adoption or amendment of physical plans and the decision to actually adopt them remain within the purview of local and regional representative bodies.

The legal construction of housing structures for the Roma is rendered difficult by the lack of finances necessary to prepare project documentation for family homes, utility contributions and other costs associated with the issuance of construction certification. The problem of legalizing Roma settlements, i.e., non-legal settlements, is hampered by lack of knowledge of effective regulations, a shortage of funds to launch procedures and difficult access to institutions rendering services. All of this results in ghettoization (physical separation of the Roma minority).

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The development of county programmes of activities and measures to improve the conditions of facilities and housing conditions at sites inhabited by Roma – The preparation of county programmes was initiated by 14 local and regional self-government units which have sites inhabited by Roma in their territories which require physical planning solutions, regulation and infrastructure hook-ups, and by the City of Zagreb's Institute. Up to the present, county programmes have been compiled and adopted by 13 counties: Zagreb, Sisak-Moslavina, Karlovac, Varaždin, Koprivnica-Križevci, Bjelovar-Bilogora, Lika-Senj, Virovitica-Podravina, Brod-Posavina, Osijek-Baranja, Istria and Međimurje Counties and the City of Zagreb. Primorje-Gorski Kotar County drafted its programme, but the County Assembly did not ratify it.

The county programmes are expertise-based studies which provide data on each site (its residents, spatial data such as, e.g., title to land, purpose of the land according to the valid plan, utility infrastructure, housing structures, public use structures), an estimate of actual needs and works which must be done in order to improve housing and community living standards (need for drafting plans, resolving land title issues, parcelization of land and its registration, building infrastructure, construction of public use structures) and an estimate of the cost of all proposed works and other data vital to implementation.

The preparation of county programmes was co-financed by the previous Ministry of Physical Planning and Construction.

The implementation of county programmes of activities and measures to improve the conditions of facilities and housing conditions at sites inhabited by Roma – Within the framework of implementation of the county programmes, the Ministry is duty-bound to serve as an associate in securing the funds to assist local self-governments in developing physical plans for sites inhabited by the Roma (physical land-use plans of municipalities or cities in that component pertaining to sites inhabited by the Roma and/or detailed land-use plans).

Using secured funds from the commencement of implementation of the National Programme and Action Plan to the present, 16 local self-government units in 13 counties drafted and adopted a total of 25 physical plans for 17 sites inhabited by Roma and created the requisite physical planning conditions for further activities aimed at legalization of illegally built structures, and regulation and infrastructure upgrading of these sites.

Continued monitoring of the status of sites inhabited by the Roma – For the purpose of setting up a database on physical planning documentation of local self-governments for the sites inhabited by the Roma, the Ministry's Decision on allocating funds to local self-governments for the development of physical plans drafted pursuant to local self-government requirements, in accord with all levels and submitted continually to county physical planning departments as the coordinators of implementation of county programmes and the parties responsible for establishing databases at the regional level.

The objectives and points of departure contained in the National Roma Programme from 2003 in the area of physical planning and housing will not change, rather implementation of measures outlined in preceding documents (National Roma Programme of 2003 and the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Action Plan for 2011 and 2012) will continue to be implemented. The adoption of the remaining county programmes (this pertains to Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, which still has not formally adopted its programme) and physical plans by local self-government units inhabited by Roma will continue, and these will be further monitored and co-financed by the Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning in order to achieve the best possible housing for the Roma population.

The progress of programmes and plans will be systematically monitored and interventions will be made when necessary. The objective is to disincentivize the uncontrolled spread of sub-standard settlements and the establishment of boundaries for growth through infrastructure works and the selection of purposes for tracts in the interest of the social and economic affirmation of the Roma. The optimal transformation of areas, particularly valuable urban or peripheral undeveloped zones must be facilitated such that phased solutions are proposed which also include temporary forms of land use.

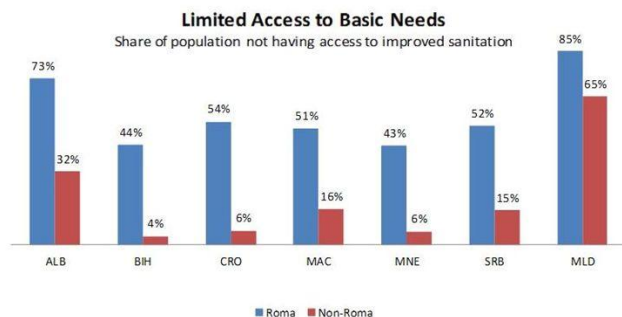
HOUSING

In general, empirical research into housing in Croatia is exceptionally rare, and this, by extension, includes research into Roma housing. There is no specific regulation which governs the state's obligations to provide housing for socially-needy households.

Croatia has drafted the Joint Social Inclusion Memorandum in 2007, while according to the National Enabling Programme for Social Inclusion 2011-2012, one of the activities in the field of easing access to housing by socially-needy groups was the preparation of an assessment of housing needs by various socially-needy groups. The documents which the Republic of Croatia will draft after joining the European Union also include the National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion, wherein the question of Roma housing will be one of the priorities.

In its documents, the Council of Europe calls for the treatment of the Roma as a national minority entitled to all civil, social and other rights, and not as a socially deprived group, while the Recommendation of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, Rec(2005)4, defines places inhabited by the Roma as flats/houses, but also caravans and mobile homes, which must be taken into consideration by member states.

The main principles of the National Roma Strategy in the field of housing are destigmatization, desegregation and de-ghettoization at the levels of processes, funding (implementation mechanisms) and the people who are the Strategy's beneficiaries or implementers, and aimed at



Source: UNDP, World Bank, DG Regio, Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, Regional Household Survey, 2011

raising the standards and adequacy of Roma housing in the Republic of Croatia.

The housing standard is evaluated by the number of flats for permanent residence, the floor space of flats, the average floor-space per resident, the average number of persons per flat, as well as the number of rooms, the furnishings in the flat, such as kitchens, lavatories and bathrooms

and installations (electricity, water, sewage, central heating). The United Nations housing programme defines adequate (suitable) housing as more than a roof over one's head: it means suitable privacy; space; physical accessibility; suitable safety; ensured leasing; structural stability and durability; suitable lighting, heating and ventilation; adequate fundamental infrastructure such as water supply, sanitary facilities and waste disposal facilities; an adequate and accessible location with reference to work and basic amenities; all of this should be available at reasonable cost.

The European Union aspires to bridge the gap between the portion of the Roma with access to housing and public utility services and the remaining population. Research⁹⁸ has shown that only 4% of the Roma households encompassed in the sampling (N=968) had installations/furnishings which guarantee a hygienic standard required for normal living, i.e., hook-ups for indoor running water, electricity, sewage and possess a bathroom and lavatory in their homes. Households without any such hook-ups can mostly be found in Varaždin and Međimurje Counties. According to UNDP data (2008), 3% of the majority population's households live in shacks or dilapidated houses, while among the Roma households this figure is 25%; approximately 61% of Roma households do not have indoor toilets, access to bathrooms or a place to dispose of waste, while this is the case for only 19% of households in the neighbouring majority population, and between 72% and 100% of households throughout the EU are connected to the public water supply system.

Specific housing issues pertaining to the Roma in Croatia are the still unresearched housing problems in urban and rural locations, the problems of homeless Roma, and the problems of former Roma felons returning after serving their prison sentences. Also, the share of Roma among the recipients of aid to settle housing costs is not known.

The financing of projects using European Union funds will not be applied to private property, but rather only to projects implemented by the public authorities, so that local and regional self-governments have been called upon to draft projects to improve Roma housing.

⁹⁸Geran-Marko Miletić, "Uvjeti stanovanja i stambene aspiracije Roma" [Roma housing conditions and housing aspirations], in Maja Štambuk (ed.), *Kako žive hrvatski Romi*, Zagreb: Institut "Ivo Pilar", 2005, pp. 159-175.

Housing should be an integral component of most national strategies and programmes, and also measures, as an issue which encompasses all major sectors, while the activities tied to housing should be part of an integrated approach, including, in particular, human rights, education, health-care, social issues, employment and public safety and desegregation.

On the other hand, there are examples of good practices. The official statistics of the Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds, whose predecessor was the Ministry of Regional Development, Forestry and Water Management, show that thus far positive solutions have been found for 105 families whose members are Roma based on all models of housing accommodation as stipulated by the Areas of Special State Care Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 86/08 and 57/11). Out of this number, 58 families were assigned housing in the form of state-owned houses, 11 families were assigned state-owned damaged houses and basic construction materials to repair the damages, 7 families were assigned state-owned flats, one family was assigned a state-owned construction site and 28 families were given basic construction materials to repair or build family homes owned by the aid-seekers. Currently, the requests of 73 Roma families have yet to be resolved.

In the interest of improving the Roma population's housing conditions, the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds co-financed the construction of a Roma family settlement in the Darda Municipality in Osijek-Baranja County by the end of 2010 within the framework of the multi-year EIB II – Integral Local Community Development.

The Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning has sought from the counties charged to develop county programmes of activities and measures to improve the housing space and conditions at sites inhabited by the Roma the gathering of data on the extent of aid needed by local self-government units in the interest of securing housing for members of the Roma minority or the rendering of other types of assistance in the resolution of housing problems. Assistance for housing issues were thus rendered by: the City of Čazma, the City of Daruvar, the City of Valpovo, the Municipality of Darda, the City of Karlovac, the City of Ogulin, the City of Ozalj, the Municipality of Saborsko, the Municipality of Vrhovina, and the City of Virovitica. Additionally, local self-government units allocated funds to settle housing expenses (bills for electricity, water and natural gas), lump aid sums or payment of housing costs (rent). Such forms of aid were allocated to: the City of Sveti Ivan Zelina, the Municipality of Kloštar Ivanić, the Municipality of Sveti Đurđ, the City of Koprivnica, the City of Križevci, the City of Karlovac, the City of Ozalj, the City of Virovitica, the City of Slatina.

Main problems:

Housing structures are inadequate. These are sub-standard structures, which neither in terms of quality nor dimensions offer adequate space to satisfy the elementary needs of residents.

Replacement housing has not been secured for dwellers in structures that cannot be legalized at specific locations. They are unequipped or unsatisfactorily equipped with infrastructure hook-ups (electricity, water, sewage). The flats themselves are also poorly equipped.

There are various problems in urban and rural areas.

There are considerable obstacles to housing integration, which come to the fore when, within the framework of measures to prevent ghettoization, the possibility of moving/integrating the Roma

population into majority settlements or residential buildings together with the majority population arises.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Main problems:

In many Roma 'settlements' the collection and disposal of community waste is not organized. There are also problems surrounding payment for waste collection. Animals are held in many houses in an inappropriate manner.

Considerable pollution is caused by the inappropriate handling of waste.

The quality of drinking water is very low. Deficient utility infrastructure is becoming an environmental problem when the question of access to water and sewage, i.e., public sanitation, is not adequately resolved.

Supervision by the authorised individuals in local governmental units (utility wardens, for example) of local conditions and the environment is inadequate.

It has also been observed that when performing certain activities in waste management (collection, transport, processing), some members of the Roma minority do not respect stipulated procedures.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives of this part of the Strategy have been set in compliance with observed problems tied to the field of housing and providing housing, physical planning and environmental protection in areas in which the Roma live. These goals and objectives have been formulated through dialogue between state bodies, representatives of the Roma community and non-governmental organisations.

The authorities responsible for the measures to achieve the objectives set for the strategic area of housing, physical planning and environmental protection are the Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning, the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Regional Development and European Funds, and local and regional governments.

GOAL: To improve the housing conditions of the Roma population

PHYSICAL PLANNING

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: To ensure physical planning documentation for Roma settlements in order to create the conditions to improve the Roma population's housing.

Definition: This objective will be achieved through the development, updating and implementation of county programmes of activities and measures to improve the condition of buildings and the environment at sites inhabited by the Roma. The objectives as set forth will be achieved by making use of existing documentation, which must be updated/adapted as needed.

Progress indicators:

- The number of settlements legalized in the sense of their incorporation into physical plans.

Baseline value:

- The number of settlements legalized in the sense of their incorporation into physical plans in 2012.

Sources of data:

- The available data of the Central Statistic Bureau from completed research (county programmes).

Objective 2: To regulate and equip and also improve the quality of housing in legalized Roma settlements.

Definition: This objective will be achieved through the development and potential amendment and supplementation of existing physical plans of local self-governments for sites inhabited by the Roma, as the physical planning prerequisite for the integration of their buildings into the spatial and functional systems of existing settlements. The situation in sites inhabited by the Roma will also be continually monitored by local and regional government and the Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning. In this manner, the objectives of physical planning conditions for legalization, regulation, equipping, and increasing housing standards in areas inhabited by the Roma.

Progress indicators:

- Reduction in the number of requests for construction licenses or legalization of Roma structures rejected due to the impossibility of their incorporation into valid physical plans.

Baseline value:

- The number of rejected requests for construction licenses or legalization of Roma structures in 2012.

Sources of data:

- Records of the Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning.

Objective 3: To resolve property rights issues in Roma settlements.

Definition: The Procedures for Illegally Constructed Buildings Act (*Narodne novine*, no 90/11) has enabled the retroactive legalization of structures built without the necessary documentation permitting construction to all builders or owners of unlegalized buildings, including Roma, by launching a procedure for retroactive legalization, i.e., securing a ruling on the actual state of affairs with the relevant administrative body. Local self-governmental units, the Public Prosecution and the State Asset Management Agency must be included in the resolution of these property law matters.

Progress indicators:

- Growth in the share of settlements/plots/houses with unencumbered property rights status.

Baseline value:

- The share of settlements/plots/houses with unencumbered property rights status.

Sources of data:

- Records of local and regional governments, the Public Prosecution, the State Asset Management Agency (SAMA)

HOUSING

OBJECTIVES:

Objective 1: To improve the residential integration of Roma into communities

Definition: This objective should be achieved by raising awareness and knowledge of the Roma on ways to use residential buildings and the environment in compliance with the rules on utility and household order. Additionally, the measures within the framework of this objective will promote anti-discriminatory measures.

Progress indicators:

- Improved living conditions in Roma settlements (community hygiene, waste disposal).

Baseline value:

- The quality of life and sanitary conditions in Roma settlements in 2012.

Sources of data:

- Reports from local self-governmental units, reports from social welfare centres, reports from inspection agencies.

Objective 2: To secure housing under suitable conditions.

Definition: The measures encompassed by this objective are aimed at the creation of conditions for the integration of the Roma in the sense of housing by implementing desegregation measures. In order to achieve this objective, it will be necessary to implement measures aimed at raising the living standards of the Roma population. In the first place, the minimum housing standard must be defined (including infrastructure hook-ups). It will also be necessary to evaluate inadequate Roma structures, render assistance in upgrading residential facilities or housing units to put the housing standard where possible and carry forward social programmes to secure housing for Roma families and individuals where necessary. Furthermore, exchanges will be organized for housing units which cannot be legalized do to land-use reasons. Since there are corresponding regulations for this, oversight and legal aid should be used to ensure that they are not implemented to the detriment of Roma tenants. Houses for Roma families in areas of special state care will be repaired and constructed in compliance with the Areas of Special State Care Act according to the plans of regional and local governments. Infrastructure projects for Roma settlements will be co-financed in cooperation with and pursuant to requests from local and regional governments which are responsible for these projects, and programmes, activities and measures will be carried out to improve the environmental and housing conditions in sites inhabited by the Roma, particularly with reference to better access to utility services.

Progress indicators:

- Increased living standards and quality of life in Roma settlements
- Inclusion of the Roma population in measures aimed at securing housing under suitable conditions.

Baseline value:

- The standard and quality of life in Roma settlements in 2012.

Sources of data:

- Assessment of the adequacy of Roma housing

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: To improve the environment in Roma settlements.

Definition: The implementation of organized collection and removal of waste in legalized Roma settlements by local self-governmental units and authorized utility community. The clean-up of existing unregulated waste dumps and prevention of the appearance of new ones in all Roma settlements. Reinforcing cooperation between regional and local governments and the Roma minority in order to coordinate and enhance environmental protection activities, and prevent the appearance of new unregulated dumps.

Progress indicator:

- The share of Roma settlements in which waste is properly managed.
- Reduction of the negative impact of waste on the environment.

Baseline value:

- The share of Roma settlements with unregulated waste dumps.

Sources of data:

- Reports and studies by local and regional governments.

Objective 2: To raise the level of the Roma minority's knowledge of environmental protection and the methods for its implementation.

Definition: In order to achieve this objective it will be necessary to involve the representatives of the Roma minority in environmental protection campaigns and targeted programmes of regional/local self-governmental units, through which information on open tenders and programmes may be distributed. The measures under the framework of this objective are aimed at encouraging Roma associations (enhancing capacity) to carry out environmental protection education projects and awareness-raising activities. Also, the implementation of measures under the Sustainable Development Education Action Plan to foster knowledge and skills among the Roma population in the field of environmental protection and sustainable growth.

Progress indicators:

- Increased levels of knowledge on environmental protection and capacity for independent project planning and implementation.

Baseline value:

- The unsatisfactory level of knowledge of environmental protection by members of the Roma community.

Sources of data:

- Reports on implementation of measures.

IV.4.6 Inclusion in social and cultural life

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION BY THE ROMA NATIONAL MINORITY

Pursuant to the provisions of the Constitutional National Minority Rights Act, the Local and Regional Representative Body Elections Act⁹⁹ and Croatian Parliamentary Elections Act,¹⁰⁰ representation of the Roma in the representative bodies at the local and regional levels has been facilitated, as well as the possibility of election of a national minority representative to the Croatian Parliament who would also represent the Roma. In local and regional self-governments, there is no legal obligation to ensure representation of the Roma minority in executive bodies, nor any obligation to plan for the hiring of the necessary number of members of the Roma minority in the governing unit's administrative bodies by means of the admittance plan, given that the Roma minority, according to the census conducted in 2001, did not account for over 15% of the population of any local self-government unit nor over 5% of the population in any county in the territory of the Republic of Croatia.

REPRESENTATION

Pursuant to the data from the corresponding voter rolls which were used for the needs of holding local elections in 2009, the members of the Roma minority had a share of over 5% but less than 15% in the total electorates in four local self-government units, i.e., in the municipalities of Darda (Osijek-Baranja County), and Mala Subotica, Orehovica and Pribislavec (Međimurje County).

Pursuant to the provisions of the Constitutional National Minority Rights Act, such a share in allows for representation of the Roma minority in municipal councils. A higher share would also ensure proportionate representation of the Roma minority in representative and executive bodies.

In elections for the Croatian Parliament held in 2011, a member of the Roma minority was elected to jointly represent the Roma, Austrian, Bulgarian, German, Polish, Romanian, Rusyn, Russian, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vlach and Jewish minorities. This is the second time that a person of Roma nationality was elected to represent the aforementioned minorities.

Elections to national minority councils and for national minority representatives were held in 2011, and they demonstrated the considerable awareness of the Roma on the need to participate in elections. For example, the turnout of Roma voters in the municipalities was 63.4%, which is a 42.46% higher percentage than the turnout for the national minority councils and representatives in 2007. The number of elected Roma minority councils and representatives also increased in comparison to 2007. Thus, 17 Roma councils (7 at the county level, 5 at the municipal level) and 11 representatives (4 at the county level, 5 at the city level and 2 at the municipal level) were elected, which in comparison to the councils and representatives elected in 2007 is an increase by one council and two representatives.

Roma representatives actively participate in the formulation of policy (National Roma Programme and Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plan) and they are members of the National Roma Programme Monitoring Commission and the Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plan Task

⁹⁹ *Narodne novine*, no.: 33/01, 10/02, 155/02, 45/03, 43/04, 40/05, 44/05 – consolidated text, and 109/07).

¹⁰⁰ *Narodne novine*, no.: 116/99, 109/00, 53/03, 69/03 – consolidated text, 167/03, 44/06, 19/07, 145/10 and 93/11 – Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia, no. U-I- 120/2011.

Force. The members of the Roma minority participate in decision-making processes, from the Croatian Parliament to local communities, wherein three representatives of the Roma were elected to municipal representative bodies in Medimurje County, and one Roma woman was elected to the Zagreb City Assembly. Over 300 Roma were elected to national minority councils and as representatives at all levels in Croatia.

The National Roma Programme Progress Report for 2007, 2008 and 2009 state that “in the interest of qualifying Roma representatives, particularly women and youth, to participate in decision-making and to become more involved in social life (...) in the coming period it will be necessary to continue the education of representatives of the Roma minority, particularly women and youth, on the rights guaranteed by the Constitutional National Minority Rights Act.”

Although a major part of the problem in the functioning of the national minority councils and representatives was solved by the enactment of the Constitutional National Minority Rights Act up to the present, there are still shortcomings indicated practice, analyses and studies. The general problems of national minority councils in Croatia are reflected in the Roma minority councils. A sampling typical of all councils is visible in the case of Roma minority councils. Thus, the councils have not even assumed their role in education, information and enhancement of cultural life in minority communities which has been facilitated for them by the constitutional act.¹⁰¹

When speaking of procedures for the nomination, election and appointment to working and advisory bodies, indicators¹⁰² show that the representatives of the Roma minority are most often included in the work of advisory bodies at the invitation of well-known persons, which imposes the conclusion that the procedures for election of Roma representatives to advisory bodies is not transparent. Such practices for the nomination, election and appointment of Roma representatives to advisory bodies are not inclusive and empowering for the Roma community as a whole.

Besides difficulties in enforcement of the Constitutional National Minority Rights Act at the level of local and regional self-government units, other obstacles have been observed. At the legislative and executive levels there is a notable disproportion between representation of the Roma community and the remainder of the population. At these levels there is not a single employed member of the Roma minority. It is also possible to observe a smaller number of representatives of the Roma community included at levels at which legislative proposals and solutions and other public policies for minority groups and society as a whole are formulated.

The manner in which the members of the Roma minority in working and advisory bodies perceive their role is also significant. Only a smaller number of them see their role as a contribution to the creation of legislative and strategic documents and the advancement of existing instruments. Most of them primarily see their role as one of disseminating information on the solutions contained in public policies that were adopted and influenced by others. They also see their role in the sphere of motivation and networking in order to implement public policy, which is only an aspect of the instrumentalization which does not guarantee them a proactive and emancipatory role in advisory bodies in public administration.

¹⁰¹ Gjenero, Davor, “Neiskorištene šanse modela manjinske samouprave u Hrvatskoj” [Missed opportunities for the minority self-government model in Croatia], STINA, Minorities Forum, April 2010, <<http://www.nacionalne-manjine.info/files/STINA37.pdf>>.

¹⁰² According to research on political participation by Roma men and women, “Politička participacija Roma s naglaskom na Romkinje – Croatia”, by Aida Jašarević, *Romsko srce*, 2011.

Furthermore, in the bodies dealing with Roma problems at the regional level, the number of members of the majority population is higher than the number of Roma themselves. It is important to ensure that the role of the presiding members in bodies which deal with Roma problems be assumed by a higher number of members of Roma nationality, for they will in this manner exert a greater influence on the creation of agendas and the course of deliberations, as well as a greater feeling of power in the consideration of solutions to the problems of the minority communities they represent, and also greater responsibility and ownership of the results of implementation of policies and initiatives.

Another problem that has been observed is the participation of the same persons in several advisory or working bodies dealing with Roma community issues. Although this may be the result of an interdepartmental approach to dealing with Roma problems, this may also indicate a closed system and the impossibility of access by other representatives of the Roma population. One of the reasons for this phenomenon may also be that the relevant public administrative agencies and the legislator do not have persons in charge of dealing with the Roma population's problems in their offices, rather they simply entrust these tasks to the same individuals who participate in several working or advisory bodies, which may result in inefficiency, because this reduces the availability and efficacy of such persons.

Representatives of the Roma minority often participate in working or advisory bodies voluntarily and without remuneration, which indicates the possible lack of allocated funds in budgets that would encourage professionalism, greater availability and attendance of meetings by Roma representatives, and ultimately increase the effectiveness and efficiency of these bodies.

Half of the elected Roma representatives do not consult with those whose interests they advocate in working and advisory bodies. Therefore, there is no formal horizontal consultation between the representatives and members of Roma communities, while representatives believe that informal communication of various types with members of the community is sufficient and with this they consider such consultations done. Such practices result in the exclusion of most members of the Roma community and their lack of input in the planning, creation and implementation of policies and measures that concern their status, and they should be changed.

ROMA WOMEN AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Participation in advisory bodies at local levels indicates greater involvement of Roma women at these levels (27 Roma women currently participate in the work of national minority councils at the regional, local and municipal levels in Croatia).

According to the results of the research entitled "The political participation of the Roma with emphasis on political participation by Roma women in the region's countries", the gender presence of Roma men and women is uniform in all categories. However, when observing the criteria for involvement in the work of working or advisory bodies based on gender or minority status, most Roma women (17 of them), responded affirmatively to the assertion that they were summoned to participate in working and advisory bodies dealing with Roma problems due to their ties to the Roma community, and 13 of them cited their experience in working on these problems, while only one Roma woman stated that she is in a working or advisory body due to her professional qualifications. Only half of the Roma women believe that one of the reasons for their participation in these working or advisory bodies is their ties to the Roma community. On

the question of ties with political parties as a reason for their involvement in a working or advisory body dealing with Roma problems, the data show that only 3 Roma women believe that good ties with political parties are a criteria for their involvement, in comparison to 7 Roma men and 6 respondents from the majority population. The data also indicate the possibility that the participation of Roma women in public and political life is acceptable based on experience or a combination of experience and education.

When viewing the engagement of members of working and advisory bodies at all levels in various organisations, it is apparent that due to a lack of political party backing Roma women in these advisory bodies have considerably less influence in articulating priorities and relevant solutions than is the case with Roma men or members of the majority population in the same advisory bodies.

According to the results of the research on “Political participation of Roma with emphasis on Roma women – Croatia” conducted by Aide Jašarević (*Romsko srce*, 2011), the barriers which most often emerge in the work of working and advisory bodies and the general involvement of Roma women in political life are: “the large families, the lack of free time, the low level of education, and the patriarchal attitudes of husbands who restrict or forbid wives from being active in public and political life. Two thirds of the respondents in the research believe that Roma women are not sufficiently represented in decision-making bodies”.

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OF THE ROMA MINORITY VIA NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

The number and heterogeneity of Roma non-governmental organisations in the Republic of Croatia are well known. Besides the fact that this heterogeneity and lack of actual data stand in the way of developing a high-quality structured dialogue with the Roma community, they do not allow for the empowerment of Roma associations and the development of space and channels to transmit messages on the needs and rights of the Roma as a national/ethnic minority in the Republic of Croatia.

Roma non-governmental organisations are confronted with similar barriers and problems in Croatia as in other countries in the region and throughout Europe. In the Republic of Croatia, 143 NGOs are registered which were founded and are administered by the Roma, of which 46 are in the City of Zagreb. Despite the fact that there is a high number of Roma organisations in Croatia, only half of them are formally active, and the influence and impact of most associations is rather modest. Out of the total number, only about ten of them have been continually active and visible. Roma associations still have not achieved the level of activity which would make them a factor of change and increased involvement of the Roma and for improving the socio-economic status of the Roma community.

Since the commencement of implementation of the National Roma Programme, numerous activities to render support and encouragement to Roma associations so that they can overcome the obstacles they confront have been conducted. Education and training has been organized by various national, local and international instances with the aim of enhancing the capacity of Roma associations to take an active role in the initiation of positive change of importance to the Roma community. It would appear that the efforts undertaken still have not generated sufficient results.

Most Roma associations still lack the capacity necessary to achieve greater influence to change the Roma community's status. They lack the capacity to monitor implementation of measures associated with strategies and policies directed at Roma inclusion and improving their status, they lack the power and strength necessary for advocacy, while they also lack the skills necessary to successfully secure funds, financial capacity, knowledge and expertise to create high-quality projects, successful implementation and monitoring the impact and quality of implemented measures. Additionally, their competitiveness in fund-raising is negligible, while their capacity, human, logistical and financial resources for developing and implementing projects financed by EU funds are acutely insufficient.¹⁰³

The Roma population's level of education and information on such possibilities must be raised so that they can improve the overall situation of the Roma in the Republic of Croatia by drawing EU funds. Many Roma associations still do not comprehend the trends that drive fund-raising and the administrative procedures implied by raising and using funds. Therefore their efforts dedicated to raising the requisite funds often end in failure, which provokes frustration and distrust in the actual will of donors to support initiatives aimed at the Roma community.

A part of the Roma organisations have experience in project implementation and manage to raise funds for their work, predominantly from the central budget earmarked to finance the activities of such associations. If 2009 is compared to 2011, roughly the same amount of funds for Roma projects at the annual level has been maintained.

Higher quality projects may be proffered by a very limited number of Roma associations whose names appear as the receivers of funds from year to year. The great majority of Roma associations have no such possibility and generally their work and activities depend on other associations as partners. Some Roma associations have managed to establish partnerships with other associations, but for most the lack of the requisite level of education and expertise among their members makes them unacceptable partners in the initiatives of other associations, particularly in cases of complex projects which demand specific knowledge, skills and higher levels of education. In some cases in which they are included in initiatives as partners to more influential and stronger organisations, their influence in such partnerships is modest, and they themselves, just like their communities, often derive little benefit.

Besides this, the extent and degree to which activities by most Roma associations involve a higher number of members of their communities are questionable, as is the extent to which their communities feel positive changes and benefits of these associations' activities. Additionally, among the Roma associations, as in the case of the advisory and working bodies, the common phenomenon of the engagement and participation of the same persons has been observed. Roma associations are administered by Roma leaders who are also the members of Roma national minority councils and advisory bodies. The same Roma leaders in some cases lead more than one Roma association. Roma leaders involved in various activities, initiatives and events which

¹⁰³ "To resolve the problems with which the Roma national minority still confronts, professionalism and projects which have long-term effects and implemented in a high-quality and effective manner are essential. Young people, educated people and the future generations currently in school must be included. The consistent implementation of the measures established by the National Roma Programme would certainly help, as would the adoption of criteria for programme quality, their implementation and effectiveness, instead of favouring associations and obtaining on the basis of an association's shortcomings the post of association president." – Anka Dalipovski, president of the Integration Centre in EU.STINA, Minorities Forum, April 2010, <<http://www.nacionalnemanjine.info/files/STINA37.pdf>>.

pertain to the Roma community are therefore at the source of information and knowledge. However, the transfer of knowledge and information between Roma leaders and Roma communities, particularly from higher to lower levels (toward Roma communities) is not adequate for various reasons – partially due to the preservation of positions of power, and partially due to the lack of capacity for timely and quality transfer of knowledge and information. This furthermore results in insufficient participation by members of the Roma community in initiatives aimed at inclusion and development of Roma communities.

Also insufficient is the level of inclusion of young Roma in the work of NGOs through volunteer work, activism and/or leadership. Roma NGOs themselves have recognized the need for greater involvement of young people in civic initiatives.¹⁰⁴ When speaking of young Roma activities, one of the challenges tied to their assumption of leadership roles in Roma associations is the small number of highly-educated Roma, while youths with secondary school qualifications most often do not have the required skills, such as the ability to express themselves well in writing and even in speech, nor active knowledge of foreign languages.

Active Roma associations are dependent upon the central state budget and the budgets of local and regional governments for financial support. However, the decreased revenues available due to the economic crisis and recession means that funding for minorities is palpably less than in preceding years, so that the activities of Roma associations have also declined.

In order for the civil sector, particularly Roma associations, can be included in the higher quality implementation of measures, the following are required:

- To draft a thorough study and analysis of all actual needs of the Roma civil sector and to implement an estimate of the capacity and needs of Roma associations with regard to types of training and education, the structure of donation tenders, modes for successful cooperation at the practical programme implementation level and encouragement of the young Roma population which is not represented among the leaders and presidents of Roma associations.¹⁰⁵
- To reinforce the capacity of Roma associations in compliance with estimates of need in order to for them to become actively and equally involved in the implementation of measures and initiatives directed at Roma inclusion.
- Roma associations must base their activities and initiatives on the actual needs of Roma communities detected via assessments of the situation in Roma communities. A needs assessment must include community members and take into account their perceptions of needs for certain types of initiatives and their benefits to the community. Also, Roma community members to whom the initiatives or measures pertain must be included in the process of planning and formulating these initiatives.

¹⁰⁴ Novak, Jagoda; Pecnik, Aron; Bajrić, Bajro, Human Rights Centre and Roma for Roma of Croatia, 2011/2012, “Analysis and guidelines for strengthening the Roma civil sector in the Republic of Croatia” (in Croatian), <<http://www.human-rights.hr/odjel-za-informiranje-i-istrazivanje/istrazivanje/>>.

¹⁰⁵ Human Rights Centre/UNDP, “Implementation of Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plan for Croatia in 2009-2010 Period (in the context of the Decade of Roma Inclusion Monitoring Framework)” (in Croatian), UNDP, 2008 <http://www.human-rights.hr/attachments/577_584_Integracija%20Roma-kinja%20-%20Centar%20za%20ljudska%20prava.pdf>.

ROMA CULTURE

Roma culture and customs are specific in terms of their content and practice. The Roma have no written history. History in Roma culture has been preserved and conveyed by oral narratives handed down from generation to generation. Moreover, Roma customs and culture have changed over time and assumed elements of the communities in which they have lived. Their stories conveyed by oral tradition as well as their music have succumbed to the influence and features of the countries in which they have settled.

Roma customs are characterized by peculiarities but, since the Roma are not a homogenous group, their customs are not entirely uniform within the Roma community. In terms of religion, the Roma in the Republic of Croatia are divided into Catholic Roma (39.2%), Muslim Roma (31.9%) and Orthodox Roma (28.9%). There are four main Roma tribes: Kalderash, Machavaya, Lovari and Churari, while the oldest Roma groups in Croatia's territory are the Lovari, Bajaši, Čergaši, Kaloperi and Khanjari (and others).

Their internal differences makes it difficult for them to determine their own national identity and preservation of traditional culture. The majority population does not sufficiently recognize the values and specific Roma culture and identity, but this also applies to the Roma population itself.

The Roma language actually consists of seven individual languages and numerous dialects. There is no literary tradition for the Roma language, nor a written history. The various languages spoken by the Roma and the largely oral literature indicates the need for standardization of the language and script, their consistent use in books, the media, the press and everyday communication, particularly in schools, and the need to develop publishing activities. The media portrayal of the Roma often upholds stigmatization and stereotypes. The nurturing of the traditionally present talent of the Roma for music and dance and the presentation of their creativity via the media may alter stereotypes of the Roma milieu and contribute to their affirmation. Thus, special attention should be dedicated to authentic Roma culture, customs, artistic creativity and language.

The Roma in the Republic of Croatia express their culture and customs through the initiatives and activities of NGOs and through the work of amateur groups. In Croatia there are a number of Roma culture and arts associations which attempt to bring Roma culture and customs to the communities in which the Roma live. The Roma attempt to bring their culture and traditions closer to the rest of the community by performing at various events and festivals, promoting Roma song and dance, as well as Roma poetry, thus making their contribution to the preservation of Roma culture and customs.

Investigations conducted among young Roma and their families has shown a rather poor situation where this concerns knowledge and use of the Roma language in everyday life. Research has confirmed that some Roma communities in Croatia do not even speak the language of their forefathers and have no habit of using it, particularly in places where Roma families desire the quickest and least painful integration into Croatian society as possible. In 2008, in an attempt to prevent the extinction of the Roma language and to encourage literacy and education of the Roma at all levels, the first Roma-Croatian and Croatian-Roma dictionary by Veljko Kajtazi (*Romano-kroacijako thaj Kroacijako-romano alavari*) was published.

On 25 May 2012, the Croatian Parliament adopted a conclusion whereby 5 November was proclaimed World Roma Language Day in honour of publication of the first Roma-Croatian and

Croatian-Roma dictionary. Additionally, the Faculty of Arts and Letters at the University of Zagreb is preparing the introduction of an elective Roma language course at the Indology and Far Eastern Studies Department. The Faculty, with support from the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, will assist the publication of a Roma language grammar in Croatian.

ANALYSIS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN STATE AGENCIES WITH ROMA NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS IN THE 2009-2010 PERIOD – FINANCIAL AND SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS¹⁰⁶

An analysis of cooperation between state agencies and Roma associations conducted in November 2011¹⁰⁷ established the following:

The *Ministry of Science, Education and Sports* is the governmental agency underwrites the highest number of projects in the Roma community to NGOs in the past three-year period. It also puts forward the highest total amount of funds from the central budget – HRK 1.4 million over the past three years, insofar as the mandatory contributions of the ministries to co-finance EU projects are excluded. In this sense, this ministry's funds in this area are remitted from as many as three sources: three departments from that same Ministry. It is apparent, however, that these are relatively small amounts for projects. These projects cover focused activities for the Roma community, but they are simultaneously not used to invest in direct capacity enhancement of Roma non-governmental organisations (NGOs) nor in direct cooperation with NGOs – there are no partner projects with the Ministry.

The *Ministry of the Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship* (or rather its agency, the Croatian Employment Bureau) is characterized by a high level of drawing money from EU funds for activities aimed at inclusion of the Roma community, particularly inclusion of Roma women in society – primarily preparation for employment and the working world. Therefore, such projects automatically affect the integration of Roma women and their contacts with the majority population, with the consequence of improving their economic and social status.

This type of project also entails relatively high monetary outlays (over HRK 2 million in the observed period). However, two matters are not clear with such EU projects: how much money truly goes to or directly benefits the beneficiaries and how much needs to be spent on project administration, and how effective such activities are in the sense of actual employment of Roma women under crisis conditions with a high unemployment rate in the population in general. These questions should be considered the next time when applying for similar EU tenders.

The *Ministry of Health and Social Welfare* allocates funds to Roma associations in tenders which cover vital and problematic fields, such as awareness raising among the Roma about their rights, promoting IT among young Roma, as well as education on health and prevention. However, this is a small number of projects in the period under observation and small projects in absolute

¹⁰⁶ What follows is a summary overview of the text *Analiza i smjernice za osnaživanje romskog civilnog sektora u Republici Hrvatskoj*, Zagreb, 2011/2012 by Jagoda Novak, Aron Pecnik, Bajro Bajrić. It is the result of a project called "With the Roma for the Roma" which the Human Rights Centre conducted in 2011 and 2012 in cooperation with the association called Roma for Roma in Croatia and with the support of the Croatian Government's Office for National Minorities and the Norwegian Embassy. The project's objective was to explore the capacity, needs and activities of existing Roma associations in Croatia in order to obtain a comprehensive overview of the Roma civil sector, which is a vital factor in the creation of recommendations at the level of policies to enhance and increase the visibility of the Roma civil sector in the Republic of Croatia.

¹⁰⁷ Jagoda Novak, Aron Pecnik, Bajro Bajrić: *Analiza i smjernice za osnaživanje romskog civilnog sektora u Republici Hrvatskoj*.

amounts (HRK 140,000 of the total value allocated to projects) in order to initiate more consolidated development in the sense of achieving project goals in the Roma community, or which would ensure the longer-term sustainability of project activities.

The *Ministry of Justice* allocates funds to Roma associations under a law governing free legal aid, whereby associations are recognized as legitimate providers of primary legal aid (legal advice, information, etc.). However, given the level of education in the Roma community and their generally unregulated status (domicile, residence, citizenship), it may be assumed that the community's needs far exceed the remitted funds, which fell sharply in 2010 and 2011 in comparison to 2009. This population's problems merit particular attention by introducing and offering legal aid through permanent mobile teams which have proven very effective in resolving the legal problems of both Roma men and women in domestic and European practice.

The *Ministry of the Interior* does not finance NGO projects by means of tenders, but it does foster cooperation in the field (prevention of crime, prevention of discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes, prevention of domestic violence and human trafficking, juvenile delinquency, etc.) and currently implements projects to build community trust in Medimurje County.

The *Ministry of Defence* did not fill out any tables, due to the specific nature of this Ministry, rather data were provided on financial decisions pertaining to the analyzed topic. This ministry's in-kind contributions for single instances of various observances (celebration of the most important Roma holiday, the Feast of St. George). The value of such works is genuine, but it cannot be expressed in monetary terms: St. George's Day, 6 May 2009 – set up and dismantling of tents, tables and benches for roughly 500 persons; St. George's Day, 6 May 2010 – transport, set up and dismantling of 15 M70 field tents and lending of generators; St. George's Day, 6 May 2011 – transport, set up and dismantling of tents, tables and benches for roughly 500 persons.

The *Ministry of Finance* did not fill in any tables due to the specific nature of this Ministry, rather data were provided on financial decisions pertaining to the analyzed topic. Projects financed under the EU PHARE 2005 and 2006 and IPA 2008, and co-financed from the central budget for 2009, 2010 and 2011 were tied to improvement of infrastructure and living conditions in Roma settlements in Medimurje.

The Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Finance, each for reasons specific to their jurisdiction, do not allocate funds through tenders nor participate in the capacity development of Roma associations for their sectors. The representatives of these ministries did not therefore even fill out the questionnaire in the standard fashion. However, from the data that they provided, it may be that they are open to this problem in cooperation, wherein the role of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Finance should be particularly stressed: the Interior Ministry on topics pertaining to trust building, prevention of discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes among the majority population, and prevention of crime and domestic violence among the Roma population; on the other hand, the Finance Ministry regularly participates in securing the necessary allocation of budgetary funds to co-finance EU projects (primarily infrastructure in Roma settlements).

However, it should be that the good work of these ministries depends primarily on the investment strategies for the Roma community of others – the relevant ministries (education, social policy, health, economy and the Croatian Government's relevant offices) – and the establishment of clear strategic medium-term and long-term priorities in the field of Roma inclusion policies, while

these ministries should primarily follow them in this sense, which they have been prepared to do based on thus far available data. The quality and outcome of projects will depend on well-formulated guidelines, goals and clear strategies by the aforementioned ministries, with monitoring by the rest.

The Government's offices have a somewhat different practice in this area, although all of them are characterized by regular allocation of funds to Roma and non-Roma NGOs which work in the Roma community in public tenders. The *Office for Human Rights* has a clear and narrowly defined criteria for tenders, focusing on a single theme (e.g. gender equality in the Roma community), and approving very small sums, but for clearly conceived projects. The Addictive Drug Abuse Office has a similar focus in its work, also allocating funds for its specific field.

Over the past three-year period, the *Office for National Minorities* approved very few projects and small overall amounts. For the measure 'Preservation of Traditional Roma Culture' under the National Roma Programme, HRK 218,000 were allocated in 2008, HRK 181,000 were allocated in 2009, and HRK 175,000 were allocated in 2010. The Office concentrated all of its attention to the drawing of EU funds (PHARE and IPA funds) and has succeeded in this with large absolute sums, primarily drawing funds for construction of infrastructure in Roma settlements and the accompanying educational activities. It is noteworthy that these were relatively significant funds for Croatian circumstances, for which it was particularly important that they be well-allocated, primarily for beneficiaries in the community, and for infrastructure undertakings to adhere to reforms and regulation of land registers, cooperation between local authorities (municipal chief officials, mayors) with local Roma populations, continuous education on the use of infrastructure advantages (education on waste disposal sites), as well as measures to secure regular payment of utility bills, given the often precarious social situation of the residents of these settlements.

It is also vital that such infrastructure projects avoid ghettoization, and to have common amenities built in settlements (culture and family centres, centres in the community), and for all EU project activities to be linked to the activities of already existing institutions in the system and their staffs (social welfare centres, community health centres, Croatian Employment Bureau offices and family centres) in order to achieve maximum efficiency in spending existing resources and combining them with EU sources.

The Roma projects endorsed by the *National Minorities Advisory Board* generally have cultural content (folklore, observation of Roma days, publishing, etc.) and they are almost regularly continuous. The continuity of allocation of finances for such projects is also apparent in the plans for 2012,¹⁰⁸ where a similar sum of aid is foreseen. Although the continuity in financing such projects is a positive thing, it is worthwhile mentioning they have a largely occasional and cultural character, i.e., they do not contribute to the direct capacity enhancement of Roma associations. Insofar other relevant state agencies (e.g. Croatian Government's NGO Office, Office for Human Rights, Office for National Minorities, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports) became involved in this segment of capacity enhancement of Roma associations, this operating strategy

¹⁰⁸ The National Minorities Advisory Board allocated a total sum of HRK 2,953,000.00 to the Roma national minority, of this HRK 2,403,000.00 went to implement cultural autonomy programmes and HRK 550,000.00 went to programmes aimed at creating the conditions for the exercise of cultural autonomy.

by the Advisory Board aimed exclusively at the enhancement cultural identity would be entirely understandable and acceptable.¹⁰⁹

Out of all agencies, no forms of cooperation, support or financing for projects by Roma non-governmental organisations were recorded by the Ministry of the Sea, Transportation and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction, the Tourism Ministry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, and the Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund. Since the jurisdiction of these agencies also touches upon the problems of Roma inclusion, it will be necessary to find possibilities to strengthen the cooperation of these bodies with Roma communities and Roma associations.

In compliance with the National Roma Programme measures, the *Ministry of Culture* is dedicating attention to authentic Roma culture, language, traditional culture and artistic crafts. Particular attention has been accorded to the development of publishing with the long-term aim of helping in the standardization of the Roma language and script. Programmes are implemented by means of Invitations to Propose Public Needs in Culture of the Republic of Croatia and besides the aforementioned aspects they encompass the area of literary and cultural/artistic creativity, library activities, international cultural cooperation and other fields which pertain to promotion and affirmation of Roma culture and customs in the Republic of Croatia with the aim of preserving Roma national identity and traditional culture.

The Culture Ministry has co-financed Roma NGO programmes for 2010 and 2011 in a total amount of HRK 97,000.00 as underwriting of book publishing, book purchases, literary events, international cultural cooperation and indirect co-financing. Numerous libraries in the Republic of Croatia are carrying out activities which include Roma in the work of libraries, set aside separate Roma language collections, and ensure observance of World Roma Day and the holding of seminars at which topics tied to intercultural familiarity with Roma culture and traditions are discussed (Zagreb, Čakovec, Karlovac, Koprivnica).

According to the aforementioned report, the Culture Ministry endorses Roma programmes in the sense of recommendations to local and regional governmental bodies in areas in which the Roma live, so that local self-governments can uphold programmes of traditional Roma music and traditions to the greatest possible degree through tenders to finance public needs in culture. All reports received by local self-governments must be evaluated in order to gain insight into the total success of implementation of the aforementioned measures. In the new National Strategy, local self-governments must be designated as the responsible authority for measures which will contribute to the Roma minority's inclusion in the public and political life of local communities.

Insufficient and frequently very poorly prepared tender documentation, as well as registration of the same programmes with several responsible authorities, have been observed in the preceding period. Implementation of education programmes to prepare tender documentation would result in the transparent work of programme principals and the better monitoring of programme implementation with the aim of improving work on the preservation of Roma culture.

¹⁰⁹ The NGO Office maintains that it would be worthwhile to consider the possibility of reformulating existing tenders by the Advisory Board in order to facilitate investment in enhancing the capacity of Roma NGOs. In this, it recalls that a regional network of associations, financed by the National Civil Society Development Trust, has been established to render direct technical support to individual associations, including newly-established and under-staffed associations.

The *National Civil Society Development Trust* is a vital factor in securing a conducive environment for the development of civil society. According to the Report on financing NGO Projects and Programmes for 2010 submitted by the NGO Office, no institutional support was allocated from National Trust tenders for the development of Roma associations for 2008, 2009 and 2010, while in 2010 only three projects from the “Our Contribution to the Community” programme were financed, with a total amount of HRK 44,692.00. Here it is important to point out that the National Civil Society Development Trust has not allocated any financial support to Roma associations under the programme entitled “Development of Democracy and Civil Society – Active Participation in Social Processes”, which may be interpreted in two ways: that Roma associations were not interested in such a programme, so they did not apply, or they applied, but the projects were not of a sufficient quality to merit financing. In any case, it is obvious that Roma associations need to be strengthened to intensify their work in the field of active participation in social processes.

The analysis conducted by the Human Rights Centre in cooperation with the Roma for Roma of Croatia association includes the conclusions from the Seventh Expanded Session of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Action Plan Monitoring Task Force which was held on 20 November 2009 in Zagreb,¹¹⁰ and it cites some of the conclusions pointed out by members of the Roma minority after deliberations: insufficient involvement of members of the Roma minority in all aspects of project implementation, the need for greater employment of the Roma on actual projects, and the involvement of the Roma in evaluation, and the difficulties in setting priorities which, according to the members of the Roma minority, may be established only by dialogue between Roma representatives in the Republic of Croatia and the relevant bodies at the national and local levels.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives of this component of the Strategy were set in compliance with the observed cultural and social needs of the Roma community. The goals were formulated through a dialogue between state administrative bodies and representatives of the Roma community and NGOs.

The authorities responsible for the measures foreseen to achieve the goals in the strategic field of inclusion in social and cultural life will be the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, the Ministry of Administration, the Croatian Government’s Office for Human Rights and National Minorities, the Gender Equality Ombudswoman and local and regional governments.

GOAL: To empower members of the Roma national community to participate in social, cultural and public life in order to bridge the gap between the Roma and the rest of the population.

¹¹⁰ The session was attended by members of the Task Force, the National Roma Programme Monitoring Commission from among the ranks of the Roma minority, representatives of the Justice Ministry, the Central EU Programme and Project Financing and Contracting Agency, the Central State Developmental Strategy and EU Fund Coordination Office and the Croatian Employment Bureau. Guests at the session included Mr. Erol Akdag, European Commission Delegation to Croatia, and Mr. Nazif Memedi, an MP in the Croatian Parliament.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: To achieve a positive perception of Roma culture inside the Roma minority, the majority population and society as a whole.

Definition: In order to achieve this objective, a series of interventions will be undertaken which will influence the gathering, presentation and presence of Roma culture, language and customs within the Roma and wider communities and society as a whole. Measures will be implemented that will create the conditions for active implementation of Roma cultural/social activities in all areas in which the Roma minority is present to a significant degree, including the establishment of multi-purpose centres in these areas. A special priority will be the construction of a Roma Culture Centre (in the City of Zagreb) which will serve as a central institution for Roma culture. Rendering of financial aid will continue for programmes dedicated to authentic Roma culture, language, traditional customs and artistic creativity and the initiation of collection and publication of Roma historical, literary and cultural materials (in the Roma languages or in Croatian). Informing the public on the Roma minority and the affirmation of Roma culture in all media (Croatian Television, and especially radio stations in areas where the Roma minority accounts for a significant share) will be intensified. Activities will include education of media and Roma representatives on validation of the Roma via the media, and ways to promote positive aspects and equal reporting on the Roma.

Progress indicators:

- Changes in perceptions of the Roma on their own group
- The social distance between the Roma minority and the majority population

Baseline value:

- Baseline study

Sources and data gathering method:

- Surveys on recognisability
- Eurobarometer or research

Objective 2: To raise the level of inclusion of the Roma minority, with particular emphasis on women, in the public and political life of local communities.

Definition: In the first place, an analysis will be conducted on the share of the Roma minority in the general population, and in local and regional representative bodies to exercise the right to representation as stipulated in the Constitutional National Minority Rights Act. In order for Roma representatives to successfully perform the functions for which they are elected in advisory and working bodies, seminars will be organized for newly-elected council members, national minority representatives and local and regional governments on their functions, rights and duties. Members of the Roma community, particularly women and youth, will be educated on participation in decision-making processes, the exercise of their rights and greater inclusion in social life. Roma community representatives will also be educated on activities tied to the enactment, implementation and/or monitoring of policies at the national and EU levels tied to the Decade of Roma Inclusion. Involvement of Roma representatives will also be intensified where this concerns active participation in domestic and international seminars and other conferences dedicated to issues vital to the Roma population and cooperation with Roma representatives from other countries and international institutions and associations.

Progress indicators:

- The number of Roma included in working, advisory and other local and regional governmental bodies, disaggregated by gender
- The number of local initiatives that aspire to include the Roma community in decision-making at the local level on matters relevant to their everyday lives
- The number of Roma initiatives aimed at local and regional governments and their success in achieving the defined aims

Baseline value:

- Data from the Croatian Government's NGO Office

Sources and data gathering method:

- Database of the Croatian Government's NGO Office

Objective 3: To reinforce the capacity of associations and other forms of gathering members of the Roma minority, with special emphasis on empowering associations and other forms of gathering led by Roma women, to advocate and solve problems in the Roma and wider communities.

Definition: The measures foreseen under this objective will encourage partnership and transfer of knowledge between general NGOS and their Roma counterparts during the announcement of tenders for project/programme financing aimed at solving Roma problems. The measures will include the organisation of educational programmes for members of Roma associations on management, establishment and administration of associations, creation and implementation of projects, advocacy, financial management and systematic linkage between Roma associations and representatives of the areas inhabited by the Roma. Education and capacity building of Roma ToT educators on all aspects of association management and project implementation will be ensured. Special donor lines will be introduced to finance civic initiatives with the aim of democratizing and mobilizing Roma communities, with special emphasis on women's initiatives. In order to reinforce the human potential of associations, education of Roma association representatives will be held to ensure IT literacy (ECDL programmes) and learning of the English language. Education of Roma association representatives will also be organized concerning the possibilities for financing their projects and activities through EU funds and for the creation of partnerships and networking with other similar organisations in the Republic of Croatia and beyond, through international projects.

Progress indicator:

- The number, percentage and type of Roma associations successfully implementing advocacy and problem-solving projects in the Roma and wider communities.

Baseline value:

- Data on from the baseline study

Sources and data gathering method:

- Medium-term evaluation of Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities

IV.4.7 Status resolution, combating discrimination and assistance in exercising rights for the Roma minority

STATUS RESOLUTION

Situation overview

There is not even an approximately accurate statistical figure on the number of Roma in Croatia who do not have their status resolved (temporary residence, permanent residence, citizenship). Based on the records of the Interior Ministry on the Roma who have been granted citizenship over a period of roughly 5.5 years (234 persons) and taking into consideration those Roma who do not have legal residence, only a rough estimate can be cited. By the same token, according to the very liberal estimates at which the UNHCR arrived in cooperation with individual Roma associations and through projects to render legal assistance to the Roma, there is possibly an estimated 500 Roma without the citizenship of any country (stateless), while an additional 1,000 are undocumented, so they may be at risk of becoming stateless. In any case, the figure of 1,500 is the lowest certain estimated number of Roma who, viewed broadly, do not have regulated status in Croatia. The actual number is certainly higher.

According to the Interior Ministry's records, during the period from 30 August 2007 (since data on naturalized Roma have been statistically maintained) to 4 January 2012, 234 persons of Roma nationality were granted Croatian citizenship.

Based on the request of eight persons, assurances were issued on the conferral of Croatian citizenship provided that – within a period of two years after the date of receiving such assurance – evidence of discharge from previous citizenship or evidence that previous citizenship will be discharged upon conferral of Croatian citizenship is submitted to the Interior Ministry. There are 48 requests being processed, while 29 procedures have been halted. Out of the total number of persons who have been granted Croatian citizenship, 86 are minors.

Mobile teams were established in May 2004 pursuant to measure 1 in Chapter VI "Status issues", in the National Roma Programme adopted in October 2003.

Under the currently effective National Roma Programme, the establishment and commencement of operation of mobile teams went forward in June 2004, education of mobile team members was planned for June 2004, while implementation of measures was foreseen by the end of that same year. The activities tied to establishment and education were implemented within the set timetable. In July 2004, the mobile teams held coordination meetings between their members and Roma community representatives in order to ascertain the priority Roma settlements, procedures and operating criteria in settlements, and the methods for informing the Roma in advance on the arrival of a mobile team in their area.

During 2004 and 2005, the mobile team of the *City of Zagreb* and *Zagreb County* held meetings in City Hall with its representatives, representatives from the Roma National Minority Council, the City Roma Commission, the City General Administration Office, the City Sole Trades and Sports Office, the City Culture Office, the City Labour and Social Welfare Office, the City Development Office, the City Asset Management Office, the City Property Law Office, the City Developmental Planning and Environmental Protection Department, the City Cadastre Office, and the City ADP Office, in order to verify proposals and consolidate all segments of the city

programme dedicated to the Roma in compliance with the National Roma Programme. Particular attention was accorded to regulation of the status of temporary residence for the Roma based on use of real property and establishment of the number and identity of school-age Roma children who are not registered anywhere. For this purpose, the Roma settlements of Struge, Kozari putevi, and Kozari bok were toured.

In the territory of *Međimurje County* from 3 to 23 September 2004, mobile teams toured the Roma settlements in Trnovec, Kuršanec, Orehovica, Pribislavci, Sitnice, Piškorovec, Podturen, Donja Dubrava and Kotoriba. The status of most Roma in this county's territory is unregulated. In early 2007 the members of the mobile team held a meeting in the village of Donja Dubrava on the topic of moving the Roma from this settlement with the aim of registering their domicile and securing personal documents.

In the territory of *Brod-Posavina County*, mobile teams encompassed 1,200 Roma in their work. Most of them have Croatian citizenship, while the rest resolved their status through temporary or permanent residence.

In *Istria Country*, Roma status issues have not been particularly notable.

In *Osijek-Baranja County* there are eight Roma settlements. There was successful cooperation with an attorney who offered free legal aid. A meeting was held in August 2008 between the mobile team and a representative of the city Roma Council and national minorities advisor for this county and a representative of the central government and social welfare centre in order to resolve specific issues pertaining to Roma status.

In *Primorje-Gorski County* during 2004 and 2005 all Roma settlements in the territory of the City of Rijeka, the settlements of Rujevica, Mario Gennari and Mihačeva Draga, and settlements in Crikvenica, on the island of Krk and in Gorski Kotar were toured. Most of these Roma have Croatian citizenship and resolved status based on the Aliens Act. However, a problem emerged with reference to housing accommodation, employment and securing basic living conditions (water, electricity and sewage lines).

In *Sisak-Moslavina County* during 2004, several meetings were held in order to register members of the Roma minority whose status is not resolved. In 2006, a mobile team toured the settlement of Capraške Poljane. In Varaždin County as well, a local radio station notified the Roma of the time when the mobile team would visit the area of their settlements (Strmec Podravski, settlements in the territory of the City of Ludbreg and the Petrijanec Municipality).

A small Roma population (350 persons) lives in the territory of *Vukovar-Srijem County* of whom most resolved their status through permanent resident, temporary sojourn or Croatian citizenship.

Key problems

After the sovereignty of the Republic of Croatia was proclaimed, most members of the Roma minority who traditionally lived in the Republic of Croatia acquired Croatian citizenship by virtue of their heritage, and a smaller portion by naturalization, having met legal requirements in both cases. However, certain difficulties still exist with regard to proving citizenship status. This is a population which does not possess identification documents, and after the Second World War and later years they came to Croatia from other Yugoslav republics. These persons were generally not registered in the Croatian citizenship rolls when the latter were being organized in 1947/48,

because their domicile status in 1941 was not in any area of Croatia, so pursuant to citizenship regulations applied as legal rules they were not deemed Croatian citizens.

Moving from another republic to Croatia did not mean an automatic change in republic citizenship, rather it was exclusively a change in domicile from one to another republic within the framework of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Change in republic citizenship could only be done at the explicit request of the individual involved. Often it was erroneously believed that a member of the Roma minority had Croatian citizenship because under the regulations valid up to 8 October 1991 he/she had personal documents (identification card, passport, military documentation) and a personal citizen registration number designated by the relevant authority. However, these documents and registration number were issued to them as citizens of the SFRY, wherein the decisive relevant circumstance was registered domicile in the Republic of Croatia, and not Croatian republic citizenship.

In the portion of counties in which the status of members of the Roma minority is monitored (e.g. Brod-Posavina, Osijek-Baranja, part of Zagreb County), there is a considerable number of Roma whose status has not been resolved. This pertains to Roma who have lived in these areas for a long time and who have a firm tie to Croatia. Since the objective of this strategy is to resolve the problems of such persons by 2020, the work of the mobile teams will be expanded to a greater portion of Croatia's territory.

There are cases in which the members of the Roma minority, due to various subjective and objective reasons, do not report the birth of a child for entry in the state registers. Thus they are unable to obtain the child's birth certificate, which is the point of departure for the regulation of any type of status. During the time of the People's/Socialist Republic of Croatia, even those newborn Roma children who were duly entered in the Croatian birth register in very many cases were not entered in the citizen roll of any other republic of the former SFRY based on the place of birth of their parents. During procedures to ascertain Croatian citizenship, an explanation proffered by the registrar offices was that in cases of establishing the citizenship status of the Roma population, birth notifications for entry in the citizenship roll were often not sent anywhere, because not even the parents of a given child were certain of their own personal data.

A considerable number of Roma children acquired Croatian citizenship by virtue of heritage by force of law at the moment of birth and were entered in the birth register and citizen register in the relevant registrar's office. Members of the Roma minority who move to the Republic of Croatia from other countries acquire Croatian citizenship after a full eight years of uninterrupted approved residence in the Republic of Croatia until submission of a request, provided that they fulfil other legally stipulated criteria. The procedure to acquire Croatian citizenship by naturalization depends on the will of the interested party and is initiated solely at his/her request.

Even though the intention of the National Roma Programme is to resolve the status issues of the Roma who were residing in the Republic of Croatia as at 8 October 1991, i.e., the Roma who have lived in Croatia for twenty and more years and have not resolved their status, it has been observed in practice that the representatives of Roma associations often advocate the resolution of status of persons who came to the Republic of Croatia from neighbouring countries and do not have documented residence in Croatia, or persons seeking resolution of their status in the Republic of Croatia although they actually reside abroad.

The key problem with which the Roma are confronted is inadequate registration of civic status. A smaller number of the Roma minority cannot secure Croatian citizenship by naturalization because they do not have regulated residence in the stipulated duration or they have been convicted of a crime. Some did not regulate their status because they are not registered or they have not demonstrated an interest in registration in the citizenship records of another state which formed after the collapse of the SFRY whose citizenship they acquired by virtue of heritage. For example, the children of members of the Roma minority born in Croatia in the period from 1977 to 1991, whose parents had domicile in Croatia's territory at the moment of their birth but who were not Croatian citizens, were registered in the citizen's roll of the registrar's office in Croatia, thus according to place of domicile, but with data on republic citizenship of the Socialist Republics of Serbia, Macedonia, or Bosnia-Herzegovina, depending on the citizenship of the parents. While there was a common federal state such registration functioned, but after the collapse of the SFRY that fact is that such persons are not registered in the existing citizenship records of other states which emerged in the territory of the former SFRY. Since generally all successor states of the former SFRY have regulated in their effective laws in one way or another the principle of continuity of their citizenship (in some cases tied to registered domicile at a specific date in their territories), members of the Roma minority are directed to subsequent registration of citizenship acquired by heritage.

The Instruction on enforcement of the State Registers and Birth Register Adoption Entry Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 26/08) initiated the verification of entries; when on this occasion it is ascertained that citizenship data is erroneously recorded, a procedure is launched to correct the inaccurate data. The ombudsman receives petitions, among others, from members of the Roma population, with the complaint that registrar's offices directed them to the relevant police departments in order to launch procedures to void issued documents (personal identification cards, passports). Since the data on Croatian citizenship was recorded erroneously by an official (registrar), the question arises as to the manner in which the aforementioned Instruction guarantees that to these persons that such errors are not repeated. Namely, individuals have claimed that they were notified of the corrected data in the registers only after they contacted the registrar's office themselves and that they were unable to participate in such procedures.

The persons who find themselves in such a situation are directed to file requests for the conferral of Croatian citizenship. However, insofar as there is any shortcoming in the sought-after conditions,, such persons find themselves – not at their own fault – in a situation of being aliens who have yet to regulate their residence. Not infrequently, the persons who are in these situations state that payment of the costs of regulating residence, citizenship or new documents are a considerable outlay for them.

Since a considerable number of the Roma are in a difficult social situation, in the period from 2009 to the present, thus far it has been observed that the conditions stipulated by subordinate regulations constitute a major obstacle to the regulation of their residence in the Republic of Croatia. This is why – when enacting regulations – it will be necessary to take into account persons who have an unambiguously firm link to the Republic of Croatia but who live under trying social and financial conditions. Often these are persons born in the Republic of Croatia or have lived in its territory for decades prior to its independence but did not regulate their status precisely due to transition reasons, or they are persons who are members of the immediate families of Croatian citizens. When this is a matter of large families with limited incomes, the

stipulated conditions often constitute an insurmountable obstacle for the regulation of temporary residence in order to bring families together or secure approval of permanent residence.

In compliance with the Health-care for Aliens in Croatia Act, persons who have approved temporary residence are obliged to pay a monthly health insurance contribution. The inability to pay the required amount for health insurance due to limited income leads to the creation of a tax liability, and debts on this matter constitute a considerable monetary sum for a family.¹¹¹

Article 65(1) of the new Aliens Act stipulates that a person seeking approval of temporary residence for humanitarian reasons need not have secured funds for support and health-care, which is a major contribution in comparison to the preceding law. However, in a vast majority of cases, the petitioners for approval of temporary residence are families which have regulated status in the Republic of Croatia, so a way should be found to regulate their status as the family members of Croatian citizens and not due to humanitarian reasons, which has been the case thus far. Particularly because there is a need to connect families as one of the foundations for approval of residence, this is particularly valued taking into consideration that Article 62(1) of the Constitution stipulates that the family is under the particular care of the state. Here it should be pointed out that in this case the petitioners were obliged to meet all legal criteria, which they often could not do because of financial circumstances. Additionally, aliens who have approved residence on humanitarian grounds may work without residence and labour permits.

Since the representatives of Roma associations pointed out the need for further work by mobile teams, this strategy includes a new measure which, among other things, constitutes a continuation of earlier measures, i.e., the confirmation of the continued functioning of these operative teams, since they have proven to be an effective instrument for solving Roma status issues in the field.

Just as has been the case thus far, the mobile teams would consist of the representatives of the relevant ministries, state administrative offices in the counties, social welfare centres, Roma associations and Roma representatives. They would operate as established in the preceding measure for the territory of the City of Zagreb and Zagreb County, and Međimurje, Sisak-Moslavina, Primorje-Gorski Kotar, Osijek-Baranja, Istria, Brod-Posavina, Varaždin and Vukovar-Srijem Counties. This measure furthermore implies the rendering of assistance to the Roma population in the sense of clarifying the legal prerequisites for regulation of their status in the Republic of Croatia.

The members of mobile teams help the Roma in resolving their requests, in procedures launched through application of the Aliens Act, the Croatian Citizenship Act, the Citizen Domicile and Residence Act, the State Registers Act and social welfare and health-care regulations. Local and

¹¹¹ The Ministry of the Interior stresses that regulation of the status of aliens via approval of permanent residence and conferral of Croatian citizenship need not be based exclusively on the fact of a person's ethnicity. According to recent administrative case law, refusal of approval of temporary residence due to failure to settle health insurance liabilities does not constitute a breach of the Act to the plaintiff's detriment, because this is a legal prerequisite for approval of temporary residence in the Republic of Croatia. It is noted that the claim by the plaintiff that refusal of approved temporary residence in the Republic of Croatia prevents shared life with the members of her family, hence violating the rights guaranteed by the Croatian Constitution, the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, does not influence a different decision because according to the Aliens Act the plaintiff is entitled to regulate her status as an alien in the Republic of Croatia for the purpose of bringing her family together, provided that the legally stipulated conditions are fulfilled (Op. no.: Us-12901/2008-7 of 29 March 2012). The circumstance of a certain individual's presence in the territory of the Republic of Croatia does not mean that she/he meets the stipulated prerequisites for regulation of her status in the Republic of Croatia. There are also situations in which persons refuse to fulfil certain criteria, such as securing discharge from citizenship, which is one of the legal prerequisites for acquiring Croatian citizenship by naturalization based on registered residence in the Republic of Croatia.

regional state administrative offices, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth participate in their work as active stakeholders in the outcome of these measures, together with the Ministry of the Interior. Proposed responsible authorities, besides the Interior Ministry, are the Ministry of Administration, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth. Non-governmental organisations (including Roma NGOs), Roma representatives (particularly members of Roma national minority councils and elected representatives of the Roma minority) and local governmental bodies continue to be involved in implementing measures.

COMBATING DISCRIMINATION

Situation overview

Pursuant to the Prevention of Discrimination Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 85/08), which entered into force on 1 January 2009, the ombudsman has become the central body charged with the prevention of discrimination, which must submit an annual report on instances of discrimination in the Republic of Croatia.

According to the most recent data from the Report on Incidents of Discrimination for 2010,¹¹² out of all of the grounds specified in Article 1 of the Prevention of Discrimination Act, the highest number of complaints directed to the Office of the Ombudsman deal with ethnicity of the party filing the complaint. This report particularly underlines the poorer position of the Roma minority in comparison to other national minorities and ethnic groups. The reason for this is generally the prejudices of the majority population vis-à-vis members of the Roma minority, their segregation and ghettoization and their lower average level of education, high unemployment and poverty.

Despite the efforts undertaken by the Croatian Government and other relevant agencies for the purpose of systematically solving the problems to which the Roma minority is subjected in the Republic of Croatia, greater exertions will be necessary in the development of a more effective system to combat discrimination and protect the Roma minority from any form of discriminatory behaviour, particularly in cases of racial and other discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech.

In order to ensure the suitable protection of the Roma minority from all forms of discrimination in the Republic of Croatia, it is necessary to raise the awareness of the Croatian public, and of the Roma community itself, of anti-discriminatory legislation in the Republic of Croatia and to concentrate on its effective enforcement.

It will also be necessary to additionally educate the media and particularly raise their sensitivity to the problems of discrimination against the Roma minority, and conduct continual education of staff who work on cases following discrimination against members of the Roma minority. Finally, it will be necessary to improve cooperation between the relevant bodies and NGOs active in the field of combating discrimination against member of the Roma minority.

An analysis of the statistics gathered in the Republic of Croatia in the in the field of combating human trafficking over the past two to three years has shown certain trends in this area, as in the increase in the number of human trafficking victims who are citizens of the Republic of Croatia and the fact that the Republic of Croatia is increasingly becoming a state of origin and destination

¹¹² Ombudsman: "Report on Incidents of Discrimination for 2010" (in Croatian)
<<http://www.ombudsman.hr/dodaci/Izvjesce%20o%20pojavama%20diskriminacije%20za%202010.pdf>>.

for human trafficking victims. Also, over the past two years, increased work has been done on the identification of human trafficking victims from the Roma population. Processing of the statistics has made it apparent that the apparent forms of exploitation were sexual exploitation or mediation in the conclusion of arranged marriages, labour exploitation and panhandling or coercion to the perpetration of other, similar criminal acts (pick-pocketing, shoplifting, etc.). Keeping in mind that the victims were minors, thus particularly vulnerable, we believe that preventive work inside the community is of equal importance as well as proactive work by the police in the interest of the most successful identification of potential human trafficking victims of Roma nationality.

ASSISTANCE IN EXERCISING RIGHTS

Situation overview

Due to a series of reasons which together dictate the tenuous status of the Roma minority, its members, either due to a lack of information or fear of discrimination and distrust in the formal system find it difficult to turn to state (administrative and judicial) bodies with jurisdiction over exercise of rights. Primary legal aid is necessary, which has a preventive function, contributes to legal security, reduces the number of unnecessary procedures and disburdens the courts and administrative agencies.¹¹³ Since NGOs and legal clinics are the farthest from the state in the sense of not being identified with the state apparatus, a sound system of regulating primary free legal aid is greatly needed. Cooperation between the providers of primary free legal aid and local Roma representatives will also be required. Today they (NGOs and legal clinics registered to render free primary legal aid) are confronted with a series of problems, and the most serious are: the system's sluggishness and elaborate formalities and the narrow room for manoeuvre.

The problem in rendering secondary legal aid is that the list of attorneys who provide free legal aid is not updated, and most attorneys do not want to render free legal aid through the system precisely because of the immense bureaucracy and the modest compensation for their work. There is also the problem of a lack of knowledge on the possibility of utilizing free legal aid.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals of this component of the Strategy have been set in compliance with the Roma community's observed status and discriminatory issues. The goals have been formulated through a dialogue between bodies of state authority, representatives of the Roma community and non-governmental organisations. Separate goals and objectives have been set for each of these fields in this chapter.

The resolution of status issues, discrimination and rendering of support in the exercise of rights requires coordination and interdepartmental cooperation. The primary responsible authorities to achieve the goals set in the strategic field of status solutions, elimination of discrimination and aid in the exercise of rights in compliance with the objectives and measures to which they pertain shall be the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Administration, the Ministry of Justice, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities, the National Minorities Advisory Board and the Gender Equality Ombudswoman.

¹¹³ Conclusions of the seminar: "Reform of the free legal aid system: the future of legal counselling?" of 14 November 2011, organized by the University of Zagreb Law Faculty and the Embassy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in cooperation with the Office of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Croatia and the Human Rights Centre.

STATUS SOLUTIONS

GOAL: To fully (100%) regulate, in compliance with the legal framework (citizenship and permanent residence), the status of the Roma who have a firm tie to the Republic of Croatia (or the former Socialist Republic of Croatia) by 2020, with considerable support from the relevant bodies.

Explanation: A firm tie includes birth in the territory of the Republic of Croatia, close family ties, residence, being of interest to the Republic of Croatia, and similar considerations.

Note: This goal complies with the principles of the Zagreb Declaration adopted on 27 October 2011 at the international Conference on Securing Civilian Documents and Enrolment in State Registers (Prevention of Statelessness) in South-east Europe.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: To ascertain, through detection by the mobile teams, the number of persons encountering considerable difficulties in regulating their status in the Republic of Croatia.

Definition: In order to achieve this objective, multidisciplinary information counters will be formed at all places in which the Roma live, which will offer them relevant information on the resolution of status issues, prevention of discrimination, combating crime, and questions pertaining to health-care, education, social welfare, etc. The work of the mobile teams will also be reinforced and expanded, i.e., mobile teams will be formed to handle Roma status issues in all areas in which there is indication that members of the Roma nationality do not have resolved status. The mobile teams consisting of representatives of the police departments, regional or local state administrative offices in the counties, and representatives of the Roma minority councils in order to resolve status issues (e.g. entry in state registers, conferral of Croatian citizenship, regulation of residence). Social welfare centres should also participate in cases which involve children.

Progress indicators:

- The number of initiated and resolved cases
- The share of persons for whom status has been resolved within the total detected number of persons with unresolved status, disaggregated by ethnicity, gender and age
- The share of persons with resolved/unresolved status within the total Roma population, disaggregated by ethnicity, gender and age

Baseline values:

- The number of Roma individuals with unresolved status ascertained in the process of detection, disaggregated by the ethnicity, gender and age
- The share of persons with unresolved status within the Roma population with unresolved status ascertained in the process of detection, disaggregated by the ethnicity, gender and age

Sources of data:

- The records and reports of the Interior Ministry and the Ministry of Administration, and state administrative offices in the counties.

Objective 2: To raise the level of knowledge and encourage the members of the Roma community to fully cooperate in procedures aimed at resolving their status.

Definition: This objective will be achieved through the organisation of a campaign directed at raising awareness and the level of knowledge of members of the Roma community on the possibilities and methods for resolving status issues. Cooperation with Roma associations will be intensified in order to actively participate in the implementation of measures aimed at resolving the status of the Roma.

Progress indicators:

- The intensity of resolving the status/increase in the number of requests for status resolution during and after activities
- The number of cases of resolved status in comparison to the number of filed requests, disaggregated by ethnicity, gender and age

Baseline values:

- The number of persons of Roma nationality with unresolved status ascertained in the process of detection, disaggregated by ethnicity, gender and age
- The share of persons of Roma nationality with unresolved status ascertained in the process of detection, disaggregated by ethnicity, gender and age

Sources of data:

- Records of the Interior Ministry and the Ministry of Administration and the state administrative offices in the counties, activity reports

Objective 3: To establish mechanisms for the more rapid and effective resolution of Roma status issues in the Republic of Croatia.

Definition: In order to achieve this objective, activities will be undertaken aimed at the establishment of better regional and interdepartmental cooperation in order to eliminate administrative barriers and enhance effectiveness in the resolution of status issues for members of the Roma minority in the Republic of Croatia. These activities will include improved cooperation between the Interior Ministry, the Ministry of Administration and non-governmental organisations and Roma associations from the Republic of Croatia and NGOs in other countries. Work will also be done on the enhancement of the capacity of associations and Roma minority councils to facilitate their activity in the implementation of the measures under this objective.

Progress indicators:

- Better and more direct interdepartmental vertical and horizontal communication
- The duration of resolution of individual cases
- Difficulties in communication and cooperation eliminated

Baseline values:

- The duration of resolution of individual cases
- Difficulties in communication

Sources of data:

- Records and reports from the Interior Ministry and the Ministry of Administration, and the state administrative offices in the counties

ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION

GOAL: To reduce discrimination against the Roma minority

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: To raise the level of public awareness on the need to fight discrimination against the Roma minority.

Definition: For the purpose of achieving this objective, activities and campaigns aimed at the Roma minority, the police, the professional community, the general public and the media will be conducted, while NGOs will also be encouraged and given support. There will be a need for continual education of civil servants on anti-discriminatory legislation and its application in practice, continual education of the Roma minority on their rights and obligations pertaining to prevention of discrimination, with particular emphasis on Roma women, and continual education of media representatives on discrimination against the Roma minority and the need and mechanisms to combat it. The measures within the framework of this objective will also encompass awareness-raising among the broader public on Croatia's anti-discriminatory legislation and the activities being undertaken in the systematic elimination of discrimination against the Roma minority. Public forums and further activities will also be organized in the Council of Europe "Enough!" campaign. NGO programmes and projects dedicated to protection of the human rights of the Roma minority in the Republic of Croatia will also be encouraged and supported, with particular emphasis on programmes and projects aimed at validation and awareness-raising of Roma women on human rights and gender equality.

Progress indicators:

- Reduction of instances of discrimination against the Roma in all fields
- More effective resolution of cases in the field of anti-discriminatory legislation
- More sensitive reporting by the media on the status of the Roma minority in Croatia
- Percentage/number of persons who have heard of the "Enough!" campaign

Baseline values:

- Rate of recorded cases of discrimination against the Roma

Sources of data:

- Reports from the Ombudsman
- Surveys
- NGO reports

Objective 2: To improve interdepartmental cooperation between the relevant bodies and representatives (e.g. members of Roma national councils and Roma representatives) in combating discrimination against the Roma minority.

Definition: For the purpose of achieving this objective, measures aimed at the establishment and securing of systematic communication and transfer of information on the status of Roma human rights in Croatia between the relevant authorities at the national, regional and local level and Roma minority representatives. Mechanisms will be established for the exchange of information on the status of Roma human rights. Activities will be undertaken to improve the efficiency of the relevant authorities in the identification, prevention and combating of apparent forms of discrimination against the Roma minority. A database of court cases conducted pursuant to the Prevention of Discrimination Act will be maintained, and hate crime statistics will be monitored.

Progress indicators:

- More effective monitoring of the status of the Roma minority in the field, more effective resolution of the problems confronted by the Roma minority with reference to all apparent forms of discrimination

Baseline values:

- The rate of instances of discrimination against the Roma minority in 2012
- The share of resolved anti-discriminatory cases pertaining to the Roma within the total number of anti-discriminatory cases in 2012

Sources of data:

- Reports of the Ombudsman
- Court reports
- Interior Ministry reports
- Surveys
- NGO reports

Objective 3: To enforce and improve anti-discriminatory legislation by the relevant bodies at all levels (national/regional/local) and enforce all other regulations and laws with application of anti-discriminatory principles (education, housing, health-care, employment).

Definition: This objective will be achieved by ensuring the conditions for effective and comprehensive work by the relevant bodies participating in the detection, handling and monitoring of results of procedures conducted due to hate crimes in order to improve the system for their monitoring and more effective protection of victims and their fundamental human rights. Pursuant to the Protocol on Procedures in Cases of Hate Crimes from April 2011, the Ministry of Justice will continue to develop statistical forms and consolidate statistical indicators submitted by judicial bodies on hate crimes. Every six months, the Ministry of Justice will submit the gathered data to the Croatian Government's Human and National Minority Rights Office, by the end of the month for the previous half-year period.

Progress indicators:

- Increased rates of resolving cases tied to Roma discrimination
- Reduced duration of procedures tied to discrimination against the Roma before courts

Baseline values:

- The rate of resolution of cases tied to discrimination against the Roma
- The average duration of procedures tied to discrimination before courts

Sources of data:

- Reports of the Ombudsman
- Court reports
- Interior Ministry reports
- Surveys
- NGO reports

Objective 4: To reduce instances of violence against the Roma through police activity

Definition: In order to achieve this objective, measures aimed at securing the greater effectiveness of the police in the detection and prevention of violence against the Roma and violence in Roma communities will be implemented through the "Police in the Community" Strategy, particularly

the projects “Reform of Operative/Preventive Work by Uniformed Police” and “Crime Prevention”. Additionally, the Roma will be encouraged to report racial and other forms of violence, while the recording and statistical monitoring of the number of such incidents will be improved. Police officers of the Interior Ministry will be professionally trained to implement measures to oppose the appearance of violent behaviour among the Roma and raising their sensitivity in the sense of work with members of the Roma community.

Progress indicators:

- The reduction of the rates of violent behaviour and racially motivated violence – hate crimes.
- The reduced instances of violence against the Roma within Roma communities.
- The reduction of the rates of crimes and misdemeanours perpetrated by the Roma.

Baseline values:

- The rates of violent behaviour and racially motivated crimes/hate crimes in 2012
- The rate of violence against the Roma within Roma communities in 2012
- The reduced rate of crimes and misdemeanours perpetrated by the Roma.

Sources of data:

- Interior Ministry reports

ASSISTANCE IN THE EXERCISE OF RIGHTS

GOAL: To facilitate availability of information, legal advice and legal aid for the Roma population, which for various reasons does not refer to the relevant authorities.

Explanation: Primary legal aid, and especially legal counselling and information for citizens outside of and prior to judicial, administrative and formal legal procedures are of particular importance to achieve an effective legal system in which everyone’s rights are equally safeguarded. Due to insufficient knowledge of their rights and the mechanisms to exercise them, and of the Croatian language, the Roma population needs support and encouragement to achieve their rights and it is therefore necessary to ensure the conditions that will facilitate and ease this for them.

OBJECTIVES:

Objective 1: To increase the availability of legal aid to the Roma in compliance with the Free Legal Aid Act.

Definition: Through systematic dissemination of information to Croatian citizens on the possibilities offered by the free legal aid system, without amendments to the existing legislative framework, in compliance with legal solutions primarily in light of the Novelties to the Free Legal Aid Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 81/11). Through the application of legal provisions and systematic education of all providers of legal aid and the relevant bodies and the Roma minority, the availability of the legal aid system will also be made accessible to the Roma minority such that as a result they will be able to utilize the entire potential of the system in compliance with the legally stipulated conditions.

Progress indicators:

- Growth in the share of members of the Roma community who sought and received free legal aid

Baseline values:

- Share of members of the Roma community who sought and received free legal aid in 2012

Sources of data:

- Records of NGOs authorised to render primary free legal aid

Objective 2: To increase the visibility of free legal aid instruments

Definition: In order to achieve this objective, measures and activities will be implemented aimed at increasing the visibility of free legal aid by informing the public, through brochures which very simply provide users instructions on how to exercise the right to legal aid (which may be translated into the Roma language as needed), info-fliers and posters that will be distributed to social welfare centres, the Croatian Pension Insurance Institute, the Croatian Employment Bureau and through mobile teams directly in the field.

Progress indicators:

- The rate of use of free legal aid by the members of the Roma minority

Baseline values:

- The rate of use of free legal aid by the members of the Roma minority in 2012

Sources of data:

- Records of NGOs authorized to render primary free legal aid

Objective 3: To raise the level of availability of free legal aid to the Roma, particularly in cases of the existence of suspicion that they are the victims of discrimination by increasing the accessibility of aid in the exercise of rights and increasing the visibility of free legal aid.

Definition: This objective implies access not only to the courts, but also to all public legal bodies. In order to increase the visibility of free legal aid, measures will be implemented which include activities to inform the public through contact points in the counties, posters that will be distributed to social welfare centres, the Croatian Pension Insurance Institute and the Croatian Employment Bureau at info-counters.

Progress indicators:

- Changed perceptions of the availability of free legal aid
- Increased rates of use of free legal aid

Baseline values:

- Perceptions of the availability of free legal aid and treatment of instances of discrimination
- The rates of use of free legal aid

Sources of data:

- Records of NGOs authorised to render primary free legal aid
- Surveys

IV.4.8 Improvements in statistics gathering

The basic purpose of the National Strategy for Roma Inclusion by 2020 is to achieve the set goals aimed at including the Roma community and improving the socio-economic status of the Roma in order to bridge the gap between marginalized Roma communities and the majority population. The achievement of the goals set under the Strategy implies an integrated approach to different fields in which Roma exclusion is reflected and the implementation of a set of measures aimed at achieving each objective and ultimately the primary goal.

Achieving these objectives requires more than implementation of measures; it also requires monitoring their results and the impact they achieve. The monitoring process implies systematic and continual gathering, analysis and use of the information necessary in the process of management and decision-making within the framework of implementing measures and activities. The monitoring process enables the authorities in charge of said measures and activities, as well as the target group, to assess the course of implementation and its impact. Monitoring is a kind of tool used to analyze the accomplishment of planned results for the purpose of improvements and decision-making during implementation. The objective of monitoring is to observe positive phenomena and the level of achievement, as well as any problems that may emerge during implementation of measures and activities. This makes it possible for the authorities responsible for measures to respond and adjust their approach and intervene in timely and suitable fashion. This implies the regular and systematic monitoring of outlays, use of resources, implementation of activities, achievement of results, risk management and sustainability of results.

In June 2007, the Decade of Roma Inclusion Steering Committee recommended guidelines for the Decade's implementation, according to which the member states must set explicit goals by fields and develop adequate indicators and basic signposts for monitoring progress over time. The EU Framework for Roma Integration by 2020 recommends the application of rigorous monitoring methods to assess the impact of Roma integration measures, as well as the establishment of mechanisms to adapt the strategy in compliance with observed influence and impact.

DATA GATHERING

There are no legal obstacles to the gathering of ethnic data in the Republic of Croatia. The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, in Article 37, guarantees the safety and secrecy of data: "The safety and secrecy of personal data shall be guaranteed for everyone. Without consent from the person concerned, personal data may be collected, processed, and used only under the conditions specified by law." The fundamental legal instrument for protection of data is the Personal Data protection Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 103/03, 118/06, 41/08, 130/11) and two accompanying provisions: the Directive on the Management and Records Forms of Personal Data Collections (*Narodne novine*, no. 105/04) and the Directive on Storage and Special Technical Protection Measures for Specific Personal Data Categories (*Narodne novine*, no. 139/04). The legal system allows for the gathering of personal data, including data on ethnicity, in compliance

with international standards, even though the Council of Europe has expressed concern that the data on national minorities are insufficient for the valid application of laws and policies aimed at national minorities.

In order to reduce the shortcomings tied to existing data on the Roma population, within the framework of the Decade of Roma Inclusion Croatia has taken steps aimed at improving the quality of information on the Roma minority. Many indicators tied to the Decade of Roma Inclusion initiative are available. Nonetheless, there are still many shortcomings and lacunae. This particularly pertains to the gathering of data in the face of occasional compilation of studies and analyses.¹¹⁴

Unreliable data on the actual total number of the Roma make it difficult to obtain the genuine picture using data gathering, because the rates of unemployment, completion of education and similar indicators were not reliably computed. In order to overcome these drawbacks, Croatia has proactively made use of international aid available for Roma inclusion through EU funds and technical support. Cooperation with the UNDP office has also been set up in order to revise and improve the Decade Action Plan and to better orient monitoring and impact assessment.

One of the key problems is the availability and methods for presentation of data on the progress of Roma inclusion measures. The strategic documents foresee sources of data and responsible institutions for some of the priority areas, but clear provisions pertaining to available data are still lacking, possible sources of data and the institutions responsible for gathering data and reporting.

Also, the data foreseen for monitoring which may be found in reports are most often data on the members of the Roma community benefitting from services and programmes, thereby registering the absolute number of persons encompassed by programmes without showing what these numbers mean relatively or how they are linked to broader measures of outcomes and results. In order for the information yielded by numerical data to have genuine value, data must be gathered in a manner that allows for comparison with numbers in descriptions for the overall population, or a comparison of the number of persons for which a certain measure has achieved the desired outcome in comparison to the total number of persons encompassed by said measure.

The indicators currently cited in the progress reports generally concentrate on inputs/interventions, such as the number of campaigns conducted to achieve a certain goal, and on outcomes in the sense of the number of beneficiaries of a certain campaign. Missing, however, is measurement of progress in the sense of achieving results, or outcomes/impacts which the intervention had for beneficiaries, the system and achievement of the goal.

Another key problem is the lack of data on ethnicity. Data disaggregated by ethnicity are necessary for a clear picture of the situation and the needs of the Roma minority. Only ethnically disaggregated data can enable an accurate estimate of the gap between the Roma and the remaining population in all areas and thus allow for the measurement of progress and implementation at the state level. The lack of ethnically disaggregated data is tied to the impossibility of setting baseline values (reference data) for projected measures and consequently

¹¹⁴ OSI, "No Data – No Progress Country Findings", 2010, <http://www.soros.org/initiatives/roma/articles_publications/publications/no-data-no-progress-20100628/no-data-no-progress-country-reports-20100628.pdf>.

hinder comparison and evaluation which would allow verification of whether the measures being implemented are effective. Thus it is difficult to monitor progress.

Besides the fact that the Roma are often reluctant to declare their Roma nationality, a reason for the lack of ethnically disaggregated data lies in the fact that in the Republic of Croatia the data in statistics are generally not disaggregated according to ethnicity or nationality. In some ministries, however, ethnically disaggregated data are gathered with reference to the Roma community. The primary obstacle is the existing legal restriction on the registration of ethnicity of users, contained in Article 8 of the Personal Data Protection act, which bans gathering and analysis of data on citizens without their consent. Personal data as defined in Article 2 of this Act are any information which enables identification of a respondent.

However, Article 7 of that same Act allows gathering of data even without consent, if processing of such data is required to fulfil tasks done in the public interest or in the execution of public authority vested with the party maintaining the personal data collection... Since the case of monitoring implementation of the strategies contained in government documents is a need of greater public interest, i.e., the implementation of the measures foreseen in the strategic documents on Roma inclusion, ethnically disaggregated data gathering is a legally permitted category. Additionally, since the data on employment, education and health-care are released in cumulative form, the identities of individuals cannot be linked to the presented statistic and are thus safeguarded.

Also, an examination of the statistics gathered at all levels of state administrative bodies reveals shortcomings and a lack of uniformity in the methodology of gathering statistics broken down by gender with reference to the Roma minority. Thus it will be necessary to implement measures that will contribute to improvements in gathering data disaggregated by gender for the purpose of obtaining insight in the actual status of Roma men and women.

This complies with the Recommendations developed by the Task Force to improve gathering of statistics on the status of Roma women in local communities and society as a whole in the fields of education, employment, health –care and their participation in public and political life, established by the Gender Equality Office. Additionally, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, pursuant to the submitted and supplemented written Second and Third Periodical Report¹¹⁵ of the Republic of Croatia on progress made in enforcement of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women,¹¹⁶ in its Concluding Comments sought the implementation of effective measures to eliminate discrimination against Roma women, both in society as a whole and within their communities. Emphasis was placed on respecting their human rights through effective and proactive measures, including interim special measures, and the Committee particularly highlighted the need for the next report to contain an extensive overview of the status of Roma women and girls tied to their

¹¹⁵ Concluding comments of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on the Second and Third Report of the Republic of Croatia according to Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women <<http://www.ured-ravnopravnost.hr/site/preuzimanje/biblioteka-ona/un-konvencija.pdf>>.

¹¹⁶ UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 18 December 1979, published by the Croatian Government's Gender Equality Office, 2009 <<http://www.ured-ravnopravnost.hr/site/preuzimanje/biblioteka-ona/14-UN-konvencija.pdf>>.

educational opportunities and achievements, access to employment agencies and health-care and participation in public life and decision-making, particularly with reference to the policies which directly affect them.

The statistics contained in the Progress Report on the Constitutional National Minority Rights Act Action Plan for 2008 and 2009 were not broken down by gender. The gathering of statistics broken down by gender is an obligation ensuing from Article 17 of the Gender Equality Act (*Narodne novine*, no. 82/08), which stipulates that “all statistics and information on persons which are gathered, recorded and processed by bodies of state authority, local and regional bodies, and legal and natural persons who perform activities in compliance with regulations must be presented by gender”.

V. FRAMEWORK FOR MONITORING PROGRESS

V.1. FRAMEWORK FOR MONITORING PROGRESS

In order to improve the methods to monitor the impact of measures, the Strategy was prepared by taking into account the recommendations contained in the Framework for Monitoring the Decade of Roma Inclusion-Croatia, which provide guidelines for defining indicators to measure the impact of measures in the four key areas of Roma inclusion: education, employment, health and housing.

Education:

- attainment rates – data on the highest level of education completed, i.e. the highest degree received by individuals;
- completion rates (for primary and secondary education) – the number of children who have completed these education levels in a given academic years, including a breakdown of completion statistics by individual school achievement grades;
- dropout rates for primary and secondary education;
- enrolment rates for all education levels (primary, secondary and tertiary) – data on the percentage ratio of household members of primary- and secondary-school age to those who are actually included in the education system at these levels;
- participation in preschool education;
- types of primary school education programmes indicating whether the Roma children receive education according to regular curricula or under adapted programmes;
- participation of the Roma population in adult education (both formal and non-formal); and
- literacy rates.

Employment:

- unemployment rates;
- duration of unemployment
- unemployment monitored by education level;
- employment by gender and occupation; and
- main income sources.

Health:

- mortality rates and infant mortality;
- vaccination rates;
- extent of health insurance coverage – in terms of the number of officially insured persons and the ability of patients to pay contributions for medicines; and
- under-age pregnancy rates.

Housing:

- housing quality – the available housing area per household member and the type of housing (flat, house, shack, board hut/cabin, other / with a suite of rooms or without rooms, etc.); and
- household access to infrastructure –adequate water supply (i.e. piped water from in-house or yard taps or standpipes), access to energy (primarily electricity), basic infrastructure (indoor

toilet, bathroom, waste disposal facility) and social infrastructure (kindergartens, schools, public transport services, outpatient clinics, etc.).

The Strategy provides for the establishment/organisation of a more comprehensive data collection system to cover all areas of its implementation. To make the system fully operational, efforts will be needed to update the required templates, databases and reports so as to enable the maintenance of records of national minority members. For each strategy area, the system should be capable of generating data on the members of the Roma minority, disaggregated by age and gender. In addition to the agencies in charge of implementing measures, monitoring efforts should also involve participation by the Central Statistics Bureau as well as the relevant research centres and institutes.

Consideration should also be given to the fact that the situation of Roma communities differs depending on the region where they live. For implementation, monitoring and evaluation purposes, such regional disparities need to be explained in greater detail because they still pose major challenges when it comes to ensuring equal access to social and health care services.

To ensure successful progress monitoring, it is also crucial to create prerequisites by undertaking two fundamental groundwork activities, in particular:

- to map the disadvantaged micro-regions and segregated or marginalised neighbourhoods in order to get a clear picture of their geographical position, the situation in each of these regions, and how they differ from each other;
- to adopt, at the national level, guidelines (or provisions) on ethnically disaggregated data collection and the collection of data broken down by gender and age group, which will also be transposed to lower levels in order to obtain clear information on the status of the Roma minority in different areas;
- to set up mechanisms to collect data on the implementation of measures and activities aimed at the inclusion of the Roma minority and the improvement of its situation at all levels where such efforts are taken (i.e. nationally, regionally and locally), including data and indicators obtained from public and executive authorities, as well as those derived from civil sector activities and initiatives.

The Strategy provides for the following methods of collecting data and monitoring the implementation of measures and interventions:

Objective 1: To ensure the collection of statistics on the Roma minority in the RoC (subject to personal data protection requirements), with a breakdown by gender and age group.

Definition: In order to achieve this objective, each governmental body will, in collaboration with the Central Statistics Bureau and within the limits of its own jurisdiction, develop standard forms to maintain statistical data on the members of the Roma minority, including a breakdown by gender and age and a comparison with data for the general population. Efforts will also be made to develop and annually update a central database on the situation of the Roma population, which will be maintained at the RoC Government's Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities.

Progress indicators:

- The map of micro-regions is completed.
- The standard forms are developed to collect and monitor statistical data disaggregated by gender and age. The database is put in place. The information about the ethnic dimension of the efforts to implement rights and provide social services is available.
- Government agencies, public institutions and services and the general public have full and reliable information required to control and combat discrimination.
- The database is put into place.

Time-frame:

- During the course of 2013

Implementing agencies:

- Governmental bodies in collaboration with the Central Statistics Bureau
- Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities

Objective 2: To improve the methodology for collecting data on poverty rates, material and social deprivation, education, employment and the quality of life among the Roma population.

Definition: To implement new statistical forms for social welfare centres, social welfare homes and other providers of social welfare services in order to ensure that statistics on their users can also be monitored from the perspective of their nationality, which will – together with the computerisation of the social welfare system – allow better monitoring and targeting when it comes to the implementation of social policy measures aimed at the Roma minority. The measures to be taken under this objective will include analyses of reports by social welfare centres and other bodies (family centres, health care institutions, educational institutions, NGOs, etc.), data collection and targeted research on the effects of social protection measures and the accessibility and effects of social services, longitudinal studies aimed at monitoring indicators related to the Roma's social status, continued efforts to monitor the provision of social welfare assistance by local self-governments, and fact-finding initiatives to identify issues affecting the Roma population at the local self-government level.

Rationale: The IT implementation of new statistical forms in social welfare centres, social welfare homes and other providers of social welfare services will ensure that statistics on their users can also be monitored from the perspective of their nationality, which will then allow better monitoring and targeting when it comes to the implementation the social policy measures aimed at the members of the Roma minority.

Progress indicator:

- The results of qualitative and quantitative research on poverty, material and social deprivation and the quality of life

Baseline value:

- The results of qualitative and quantitative research on poverty, material and social deprivation and the quality of life (UNDP, World Bank, DG REGIO: Household Survey, 2011)

Sources of data:

- Research studies

Implementing agency:

- Ministry of Social Policy and Youth in collaboration with research institutions (e.g. Social Work Study Centre, Ivo Pilar Social Science Institute, UNDP, etc.)

Objective 3: To improve the methodology for collecting data on health, sanitary habits and other health indicators for the Roma population.

Definition: To design and implement various tools enabling systematic collection of data on health and sanitary habits among the Roma population and, thus, to ensure systematic progress monitoring for measures taken to enhance health care for the Roma population and their overall health status.

Progress indicator:

- The number and type of methods and tools for collecting data on health, sanitary habits and other health indicators for the Roma population.

Baseline value:

- Conducted epidemiological surveys or data from family practitioners' monitoring forms obtained via the Central Health Information System of the Republic of Croatia (CEZIH)

Sources of data:

- Reports and records of agencies and services collecting health-related data

Implementing agency: Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Central Statistics Bureau and research institutions (e.g. Social Work Study Centre, Ivo Pilar Social Science Institute, UNDP, etc.)

Objective 4: To improve the methods to monitor the inclusion, representation and participation of the Roma minority in the social, political and cultural life of the community.

Definition: To attain this objective, efforts will be made to analyse the share of the Roma minority in the general population (including disaggregation by gender) at the local and regional levels in relation to its representation in the representative bodies of local and regional governments with a view to achieving the rights to representation as provided in the Constitutional National Minority Rights Act.

Progress indicators:

- The analysis of the Roma's social and political inclusion is completed based on data collection and monitoring forms.
- The achievement of the Roma minority's right to representation in representative bodies.

Data sources and collection methods:

- The 2001 Population Census
- Surveys
- Reports on NGO activities and support initiatives

V.2 MECHANISMS FOR MONITORING PROGRESS

National Roma Inclusion Strategy 2013-2020 Monitoring Commission

In order to monitor the implementation of all operational components of the Strategy, the Croatian Government will set up the National Roma Inclusion Strategy 2013-2020 Monitoring Commission. The Commission which will be chaired by the representative of Roma minority in the Croatian Parliament and its members will be appointed on a parity basis from among the

representatives of bodies and institutions of the Republic of Croatia and the representatives of the Roma minority in Croatia. The Commission's structure, composition, jurisdiction and other issues related to its work will be defined by special decisions to be made by the Croatian Government.

V.3 ROLES OF STAKEHOLDERS IN MONITORING PROGRESS

To enhance the functioning of mechanisms and activities aimed at monitoring the implementation of measures and interventions under this Strategy, efforts are needed to consider and review the role of the Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities as well as that of the National Roma Programme Monitoring Commission and the Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plan Monitoring Task Force.

The authorities responsible for particular measures will, within the scope of their jurisdiction, bear responsibility for follow-up and data gathering efforts to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of those measures against agreed indicators. Every twelve months, they will furnish the steering body with their reports on the implementation of measures.

The data gathering and implementation monitoring processes should also involve active participation by the Roma community. One way of engaging the Roma community is by setting up info centres in micro-regions in order to survey the situation and detect the needs of the Roma in local communities. Mechanisms should be put in place to monitor the implementation of the Strategy at the local and regional levels by establishing municipal, city and county commissions to ensure follow-up on the implementation of the Strategy in local and regional-self government units with significant presence of the Roma minority. Such commissions should be set up in keeping with the principle of parity between their members representing local and regional authorities and those representing the Roma minority. Follow-up mechanisms could also be put in place by establishing task forces to monitor implementation at the local level. Such bodies would need to be composed of Roma representatives and members representing local and regional governments. The efforts to monitor the implementation of measures at the local and regional governmental levels should be aligned with follow-up activities undertaken by government agencies and the Commission for Monitoring for Implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy from 2013 to 2020.

Implementation monitoring methodology

To ensure systematic and suitable follow-up on implementation activities, it will be necessary to design and develop a simple and feasible methodology that ensures that the purpose of monitoring processes is understood and that all stakeholders are involved. Follow-up on Strategy implementation will be ensured through Progress Reports on the Action Plan accompanying the National Roma Inclusion Strategy. The GOHRRNMGHRRNM will appoint an expert team to develop a methodology to monitor implementation of the Strategy by each responsible agency and at each implementation level, including a standard reporting format.

Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities

The GOHRRNM's role in implementation monitoring, data collection and data consolidation will include the following key activities:

- gathering data from the authorities responsible for measures on an annual basis, i.e. by the end of the first quarter of the current year for the previous year;
- gathering and processing data within the GOHRRNM during the second quarter of the current year;
- preparing a Report on the Implementation of the Strategy Action Plan by the end of the second quarter of the current year.

Responsible authorities

The authorities responsible for particular measures will bear responsibility for follow-up and data collection efforts to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of those measures against the agreed indicators. They will be required to supply the steering body with their reports on the implementation of measures once each year.

Additionally, through the Commission's Task Forces, they will draw up lists of priority measures to be implemented during the next year and propose budgets required to implement such priority measures.

The Roma community

The role of the Roma community in collecting data and monitoring the implementation of measures is of crucial importance. Therefore, efforts should be made to ensure its participation in follow-up activities at all levels. The Roma community will take part in the implementation monitoring process through its representatives in advisory and working bodies and through the work of Roma minority councils and representatives.

To ensure greater involvement of the Roma community in monitoring processes, support and information centres (info centres) should be set up at the level of micro-regions. The role of such info centres will include fact-finding initiatives and efforts to identify the needs of Roma minority members at the local community level, co-ordination between Roma communities and relevant government agencies, data collection and follow-up on the implementation of programmes aimed at the inclusion of the Roma community.

Info centres will be established pursuant to decisions passed by the National Roma Inclusion Strategy 2013-2020 Monitoring Commission on the basis of proposals made by the GOHRRNM in co-operation with Roma associations and L/RSGUs.

Implementing agencies

At the local and regional levels, a part of implementation monitoring and data gathering activities will be carried out by public sector institutions that perform tasks and provide services of community interests, including services for Roma minority members. These institutions will, on an ongoing and systematic basis, collect data on services provided in connection with measures set in this Strategy as well as their beneficiaries.

Similarly, to ensure better progress monitoring, efforts are needed to encourage the establishment of bodies to follow up on implementation at the local level. The past experiences at the local level shows that such bodies are more effective if led by chief officials of L/RSGUs.

Regional and local Roma minority councils and representatives should, in keeping with their statutory role, take an active part in all aspects of this Strategy, including its implementation and monitoring. The efforts to follow up on its implementation at the local level should also be a task of information and support centres to be established in micro-regions. The activities of such info

centres will include fact finding initiatives to identify the needs of the Roma minority at the local community level, co-ordination between Roma communities and relevant government agencies, data collection and follow-up on the implementation of programmes aimed at the Roma. The GOHRRNM should, in collaboration with Roma associations, co-ordinate follow-up initiatives taken by info centres regarding the implementation of measures.

Domestic and international organisations and agencies

To ensure maximum accuracy in assessing the impact of measures set by strategic and operational documents, the efforts to monitor the implementation of measures under this Strategy will involve participation by international organisations and agencies that are focused on the implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 and which have, up to the present, actively monitored and reviewed the implementation of strategic documents in Croatia as well as all countries that have joined the Decade and are home to considerable Roma communities. Progress monitoring efforts should also involve participation by Croatia's experts and organisations engaged in monitoring and analysing the status of national minorities in general and/or that of the Roma minority.

REVISION AND EVALUATION

To ensure that all objectives and measures under this Strategy are consistent with trends related to the inclusion of the Roma and changes in their socio-economic status, the content of this document will need to be subjected to mid-term and independent external evaluation as well as a periodic revisions. Revision activities will be co-ordinated by the Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities, in co-operation with stakeholders at the national and local levels, including the Roma community as the target group.

Evaluation

In order to assess the results and effects of measures defined within the Strategy's objectives, their implementation will be subject to periodic evaluations organised as follows:

Mid-term evaluation – to be conducted by roughly mid-2014, with the assistance of an independent expert, involving active participation by Roma associations, and placing emphasis on the analysis of the available primary data and focused pilot surveys to identify trends;

Independent external evaluation – to be conducted near the completion of the operational/action plan in the latter half of 2015, by using participatory methods with active participation by representatives of the Roma, implementing agencies, L/RSGUs and other stakeholders.

Each evaluation will cover the Strategy and its accompanying Action Plan to the extent that these documents apply to the period under evaluation. The body responsible for conducting the evaluations and the implementing agency for all activities related thereto will be the Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities.

Revision

Revision will cover the National Strategy and its Action Plan and will take place in cases where the reports suggest that any of the planned objectives or measures fails to produce the expected results or cannot be implemented. Revision is deemed to include the deletion of certain objectives from the Strategy or certain measures from the Action Plan and/or the insertion of

new objectives into the Strategy or new measures into the Action Plan, as well as any change in time-frames, financial indicators, key implementing agencies and progress indicators. Revision can be either regular or extraordinary.

The process of regular revision with regard to the National Strategy or its Action Plan will be initiated by the National Roma Inclusion Strategy 2013-2020 Monitoring Commission. The GOHRRNM will, in collaboration with the authorities responsible for particular measures and on the basis of efforts made to monitor the impact and success of those measures, co-ordinate periodic revisions of the Strategy and its Action Plan. The revision process will rely on the results of activities undertaken to monitor the impact and success of measures as well as any findings, conclusions and recommendations ensuing from the evaluation of implemented measures. The revision process will proceed as follows:

1. Once the report is completed, implementation shortcomings are ascertained and recommendations are made for the forthcoming period.
2. Based on detected shortcomings and the recommendations made, the revision process is initiated with regard to the objectives and measures contained in the Strategy and its accompanying Action Plan to the extent these documents apply to the implementation period covered by revision. The revision process should identify the objectives and measures to be kept, removed from the documents or amended in line with the outcomes of implementation and recommendations made as a result of evaluation.
3. The GOHRRNM co-ordinates the revision process with the authorities responsible for specific measures and, in line with the weaknesses detected and recommendations made, revises the existing document during the third quarter of the current year.
4. The Commission prepares a final draft of the revised Strategy/Action and proposes it to the Croatian Government, which is supposed to adopt it in the fourth quarter of the current year so that its implementation can commence on 1 January next year.
5. The process of extraordinary revision is initiated by the National Roma Inclusion Strategy Monitoring Commission at its own discretion or at the initiative of individual authorities responsible for particular measures. Should the revision and evaluation process suggest that any measures should be amended, it will be notified thereof through the Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy Action Plan. To initiate the process of extraordinary revision, the National Roma Inclusion Strategy Monitoring Commission needs to receive an official request for amending specific measures under the Action Plan, including a rationale supported by concrete data.

VI. Strategy implementation

VI.1 Roles of implementing bodies and partners

The successful implementation of objectives and measures laid down in this Strategy requires concerted and co-ordinated action by implementing partners as well as other stakeholders whose efforts are focused on the inclusion of Roma people in Croatia the improvement of their socio-economic status. This implies the establishment of mechanisms to ensure a well-tuned vertical and horizontal co-ordination and action.

Co-ordination and concerted action needs to be achieved among key stakeholders, including the Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities as a focal point for Roma inclusion processes in the Republic of Croatia, governmental administrative bodies, public institutions and services, local and regional self-government units, the civil sector in general and stakeholders from among the Roma minority, including the members of targeted Roma communities. This implies action and co-operation involving efforts by higher and lower structures in ministries and local- and regional-level public institutions and services, top-down and bottom-up initiatives by the Roma community, as well as cross-sector collaboration among stakeholders at all levels.

Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities

The Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities will play the role of contact point for monitoring the progress of strategic measures by the authorities responsible for their implementation and other agencies and stakeholders involved. This will, *inter alia*, include encouraging the relevant bodies to implement measures, maintaining partnerships with both Roma and international communities and providing all necessary data and information to external evaluation teams as well as all relevant information to the interested public.

As a contact point, the GOHRRNM should act as a service that will, on a regular periodic basis (at least once a year), receive all relevant information about the implementation of measures and activities related to the implementation of the Strategy Action Plan. It will also need to have access to follow-up data and findings about the performance of measures by each authority responsible for their implementation at the national and local levels.

The GOHRRNM will be in charge of initiating, co-ordinating and carrying out evaluations and revisions of the Strategy and its accompanying Action Plan. The Office will also act as the authority responsible for implementing certain measures under this Strategy, for the purposes of which it will invite tenders for financial support, organise training programmes and monitor not only overall Strategy performance, but also its own measures.

Governmental administrative bodies and public sector institutions

Governmental administrative bodies and public sector institutions will be responsible for the implementation of measures and activities contained in the Strategy and its accompanying Action Plan to the extent these documents pertain to their areas of jurisdiction. Governmental administrative bodies will prepare their own action plans in line with the objectives and measures defined in the Roma Inclusion Strategy. Pursuant to such action plans, the required funding will be secured and allocated for each of the measures. Furthermore, GABs will supervise and co-ordinate measures implemented at the local level by institutions and

services within their respective areas of jurisdiction (vertical co-ordination and communication). To ensure efficient implementation of measures, they will also establish interdepartmental co-operation at all levels (horizontal co-ordination and communication). Public sector institutions will implement Strategy measures at the local level in line with their responsibilities.

Governmental administrative bodies should further enhance interdepartmental co-operation. The practice of monthly operational meetings between relevant authorities, which was introduced in September 2010 to exchange information and discuss any activities accomplished and planned in connection with strategic Roma inclusion documents, will be continued. In addition to interdepartmental co-operation, efforts are needed to establish more intense and higher quality collaboration with local and regional governments to increase efficiency in the implementation of measures at the local level.

Governmental administrative bodies will also adopt medium-term policies, develop tools for their implementation, choose their partners, including non-governmental organisations with the capacity to implement measures and activities aimed at Roma inclusion, and monitor the effectiveness of implementation and the achievement of outcomes against the defined policies.

Local and regional self-government units

Local and regional self-government units have a key role in the implementation of measures and the attainment of goals set by the Strategy. Local and regional self-government units with Roma communities settled and living in their territories bear responsibility for the inclusion of Roma community members and the improvement of their situation at the local level. The extent of their involvement in the implementation of measures contained in the Strategy will largely determine both the results and effects of those measures.

Collaboration between the central government and local and regional governments is definitely of great importance and constitutes a major prerequisite for the appropriate implementation of measures. In the strategic documents, most of the measures are planned at the national level. Initiatives to improve the Roma's status mostly follow a top-down approach, coming from the central government and NGOs based in the country's capital. At the same time, since central authorities are not in a position to be familiar with many of the specific challenges encountered by the local authorities, they lack sufficient knowledge of such problems. Therefore, it is important to achieve co-operation between higher and lower levels of government. In this context, a note should also be made of the importance of collaboration between first-instance central authorities at the county level and local and regional self-government units in order to create stronger links between national policies and their implementation the local level.

The role of local and regional self-government units should include the following:

- Participation in the mapping of Roma communities in their territories – L/RSGUs have knowledge and information on the spatial distribution and other specifics of Roma communities residing within their territories. Therefore, they should be involved and actively participate in the efforts to map Roma communities and diagnose their socio-economic status.
- The preparation of municipal, city and county action plans for Roma inclusion is one of the activities of particular importance for the implementation of Strategy measures. Local and regional self-government units where Roma minority members are entitled to elect their councils and representatives will, on the basis of this Strategy and its appertaining/accompanying Action Plans, prepare and adopt local and regional action plans

providing for priority measures, agencies responsible for their implementation, and time-frames for the inclusion of Roma minority members and the improvement of their situation at the local level – all in line with the specific needs and challenges that have been identified. The preparation of local and regional action plans should involve participation by all stakeholders at the local level, including above all Roma minority councils and representatives, Roma associations and local Roma community members.

- To ensure that Strategy objectives and Action Plan measures are successfully accomplished, local and regional self-governments will set up commissions to monitor the implementation of the National Strategy within their territories. Such commissions will be chaired by local or regional chief officials, with individual Roma acting as their deputies and other commission members appointed on a parity basis from among the representatives of local or regional bodies and institutions and those of the Roma minority.
- Setting up support and information centres (info centres) in counties with a significant Roma population, that is, with sizeable Roma communities. Info centres will serve as a tool for reaching out to a maximum number of the Roma at the local level. Their role will be multifaceted and will include activities in all areas covered by the Strategy.
- Local and regional self-government units will, to the extent of their jurisdiction and authority, collaborate with central administrative bodies on the implementation of measures defined by the Strategy in order to increase their effectiveness and impact. They will also participate in the evaluation and revision of the national strategic documents and the planning and creation of revised or new documents aimed at the inclusion of Roma minority members and the improvement of their situation.
- L/RSGUs will, to the extent of their jurisdiction and pursuant to their action plans, carry out activities and implement measures aimed at improving the living conditions of Roma communities within their territories. In line with their plans and responsibilities, they will secure and allocate the resources required for the implementation of measures contained in their Roma inclusion action plans.
- To improve the quality of life and the situation of the Roma in the communities where they live, L/RSGUs will establish a more intensive co-operation with Roma minority councils and representatives on the implementation of measures and activities aimed at Roma inclusion.

Civil sector

The civil sector plays a major role in the accomplishment of Strategy goals. Its role is multifaceted and encompasses the development and implementation of initiatives through projects aimed at solving the various problems of Roma communities, cooperation with governmental institutions on the implementation of less extensive projects, and the involvement of non-governmental organisations as providers of services and information for citizens but also at the policy-making level. When it comes to the implementation of measures aimed at the inclusion of Roma people and the improvement of their socio-economic situation, a particularly important role is fulfilled by Roma councils and associations. Therefore, Roma minority councils and representatives should take an active part in the implementation of measures set by the Strategy as well as greater responsibility for the achievement of its desired results and effects.

A key role of the civil sector is its participation in the efforts to monitor the implementation of the overall Strategy. When it comes to monitoring the implementation of Strategy, the Roma civil sector is in the first place responsible to Roma communities. Representatives of the Roma civil sector should take an active part in regular monitoring activities and evaluation and revision processes, including as members of the Monitoring Commission. Their task is to keep Roma communities informed of the progress of implementation and the results achieved. If the civil sector is to fulfil this role, Roma associations and councils should have the capacity needed for planning, implementing and monitoring measures and activities aimed at Roma community inclusion, which will require their systematic and appropriate education.

Efforts are also needed to strengthen Roma minority councils and representatives at the local level so as to enable them to fully perform their function of advisory bodies and to appropriately engage in the implementation of measures and the monitoring of their effects.

Additionally, cross-sector collaboration should be reinforced between governmental authorities at all levels, NGOs and Roma minority councils, to which effect the practice of cross-sector meetings, introduced in 2010, needs to be continued.

VI.2 Financial framework for Strategy implementation

To implement the measures defined under each Strategy objective, the required funding should be secured from the available sources, including the central budget, the budgets of local and regional self-government units and international sources, in particular, the available European Union funds as well as other funds dedicated to the inclusion of socially excluded groups or those targeted at Roma inclusion.

The funding required for the implementation of each measure will be precisely defined in the accompanying action plans, and that to be provided for within the Strategy during the next three years will be specified in the 2013-2015 Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy from 2013 to 2015.

The target amounts for bodies, offices and institutions responsible for the implementation of measures provided for under the Strategy will be included in the accompanying action plans.

SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

FINANCING FROM EU FUNDS – PRE-ACCESSION FUNDS – IPA, EU PROGRAMMES AND COHESION POLICY INSTRUMENTS

Pending its entry in the European Union, the Republic of Croatia will have access to pre-accession funds, in particular, through the IPA programme, i.e. the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance.

In the preparatory stage, special attention needs to be accorded to the processes of drafting the National Reform Programme and programming for the 2014-2020 Financial Perspective, as well as ensuring that the objectives, measures and activities defined by the Strategy are appropriately incorporated in the relevant documents to provide for a broad spectrum of interventions until 2020.

The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) is a pre-accession programme for the period from 2007 to 2013, which has replaced the previous CARDS, PHARE, ISPA and SAPARD programmes. The main goals of the IPA programme is to support candidate countries and potential candidate countries in their efforts to align with and transpose the *acquis communautaire* and to implement their harmonised legislation, and to prepare them for the use of funds that will become available to them as EU member states (i.e. structural and agricultural funds and the Cohesion Fund).

The IPA programme was established by Council Regulation (EC) No. 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006, with Commission Regulation (EC) No. 718/2007 implementing the Council Regulation establishing IPA being adopted on 12 June 2007. Commission Regulation (EC) No. 718/2007 was amended by Commission Regulation (EU) No. 80/2010 of 28 January 2010.

The basic objective of the IPA programme is to provide candidate countries and potential candidate countries with assistance in their harmonisation with and implementation of the *acquis communautaire* and their preparation for the use of the Structural Funds.

The Republic of Croatia has been an IPA programme beneficiary since 2007 and will continue to use it until the moment of its accession to the EU. The authority responsible for the overall co-ordination of IPA in the RoC is the MRDEUF, with the Ministry of Finance being in charge of its overall financial management. The financial value of the IPA programme for the period of seven years amounts to €11.468 billion.

Under the Multiannual Indicative Financial Framework for Croatia, the country will, in the period from 2011 to 2013, receive an indicative allocation of approximately €479 million, with the following breakdown by sector:

Indicative financial allocation per sector (€ million)		
2011-2013	Period 2011 - 2013	
Justice and home affairs and fundamental rights	64.50	15 %
Public administration reform	8.60	2 %
Environment and climate change	77.40	18 %
Transport	77.40	18 %
Private sector development	51.60	12 %
Social development	60.20	14 %
Agriculture and rural development	90.30	21 %
Other (<i>Acquis</i> specific projects)	-	-
Total	430.00*	100 %

* This table does not include allocations for IPA Component II, Cross-border Co-operation, which is dealt with in a separate Multiannual Indicative Programming Document.

OVERVIEW OF THE AVAILABLE INSTRUMENTS AND PROGRAMMES

European Union Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance – IPA

- **IPA I** – Transition Assistance and Institution Building – includes institution building measures and related investment in Croatia aimed at meeting the EU accession criteria, with emphasis on the fulfilment of political, economic and other criteria that will allow the country to meet its commitments once it is admitted to full EU membership.
- **IPA II** – Cross-border Co-operation – includes the following priorities: promoting cross-border co-operation; sustainable development of the environment; market development – economic development; improving cohabitation on the EU's external borders; improving the quality of life in border regions; and building the capacity of local/regional/national institutions for the implementation of EU programmes. The amount allocated to Croatia under IPA Component II – Cross-border Co-operation – for the three-year period from 2007 through 2009 totals approximately €40 million, with eligible project applicants being limited to non-profit legal entities.
- **IPA III**– Regional Development – supports infrastructure projects in the environmental protection and transport sectors as well as programmes promoting competitiveness and regional development. This component builds upon the ISPA programme and the Economic and Social Cohesion component of the Phare programme and aims at preparing Croatia for the use of the *European Regional Development Fund* following EU accession. Its potential beneficiaries include governmental administrative bodies, public and scientific institutions and the business community.
- **IPA IV** – Human Resources Development – supports measures aimed at promoting employment, education and training, and social inclusion. As a predecessor of the *European Social Fund (ESF)*, it finances social cohesion projects in order to attain the goals of the European Employment Strategy. The strategic document that provides a basis for this component is the 2007-2011 Operational Programme for Human Resources Development in the fields of employment, social inclusion and education. With the operational structure, the body in charge of the Operational Programme is the Ministry of Labour and the Pension System (MLPS), which is, along with the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth (MSPY) and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MSES), also responsible for specific measures, while the Croatian Employment Bureau (CEB – EU Project Finance and Contracting Department) and the Vocational Education Agency (IPA Programme Finance and Contracting Department) bear responsibility for implementation and contracting. In the context of such a decentralised system for the implementation of EU projects, the Delegation of the European Union reserves the authority to give ex-ante approval for tendering and contracting procedures, beneficiary institutions prepare Guidelines for Applicants/Terms of Reference/Technical Specifications, while implementing agencies bear responsibility for drafting tender documents. Potential beneficiaries include governmental administrative bodies, public institutions, social partners and NGOs.
- **IPA V**– Rural Development / IPARD – In 2012, applications were called for the following measures: 101 - Investments in agricultural holdings to restructure and upgrade them to Community standards; 103 – Investments in the processing and marketing of agricultural

and fishery products for restructuring purposes; 301 - Improvement and development of rural infrastructure; and 302 – Diversification and development of rural economic activities.

Union Programmes

The Union Programmes represent an integrated set of activities adopted by the European Union with a view to promoting co-operation among Member States in different areas linked to the EU's common policies. Under a special line-item in the EU's General Budget, the Union Programmes are normally intended for EU Member States, but some of them are also open to countries in the process of accession. As such, they are considered one of the major instruments of the pre-accession strategy in that they make candidate countries familiar with the EU's working methods and integrate them into its sector policies pending their eventual accession.

The Republic of Croatia currently benefits from 17 Union Programmes designed to provide Member States with financial support in implementing projects and programmes in different fields such as competitiveness, entrepreneurship, communication technologies, intelligent energy, the media, culture, etc. Among these programmes, two are of particular importance to attaining the goals of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 and the objectives of the Strategy.

The Second Programme of Community Action in the Field of Health 2008-2013 is a crucial instrument through which the European Union meets its Health Strategy objectives. It was established for the period from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2013. The objectives of the programme are: to improve citizens' health security, to promote health, including the reduction of health inequalities and the promotion of healthy ageing, to disseminate health information and to exchange knowledge and best practice on health issues.

The Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (PROGRESS) is a Union programme established by Decision No. 1672/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council. Its seven-year budget is €743.25 million. It is divided into five sections: (1) Employment: supports the implementation of the European Employment Strategy; (2) Social protection and inclusion: supports the implementation of the Open Method of Co-ordination in the field of social protection and inclusion. (3) Working conditions: supports improvements in the working environment and conditions, including health and safety at work; (4) Anti-discrimination and diversity: finances activities related to the effective implementation of the principle of non-discrimination and the promotion of the European policy of respect for diversity; and (5) Gender equality: aims to support the implementation of the Strategy for Equality between Men and Women 2010-2015¹¹⁷ and the European Pact for Gender Equality. Access to PROGRESS is open to local and regional authorities, public employment agencies and services, national statistics offices, research experts and advisors, universities and research centres, the media, non-governmental organisations (in particular, those which are members of European NGO networks) and the social partners.

¹¹⁷ <http://www.ured-ravnopravnost.hr/site/images/pdf/18-eu-strategija1.pdf>.

Cohesion policy instruments

Once it joins the European Union, Croatia will gain access to the cohesion policy instruments including the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund, which are within the Financial Perspective 2007-2013. The objectives of these instruments are convergence, regional competitiveness and employment, and territorial co-operation. The total financial allocation for the instruments amounts to €308 billion. Their common legal basis is Council Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006.

The European regional development fund (ERDF) is aimed at strengthening economic and social cohesion and reducing disparities in the development of regions within the EU. It mainly targets investment in infrastructure, investments in production with a view to creating jobs, local development and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. Access to the ERDF will be open to Croatia following its accession to the EU. Assistance from this fund is allocated to statistical territorial units under the EU's common classification system, i.e. the so-called NUTS regions. The objectives or categories of EU assistance interventions in the programming period 2007-2013 include Convergence, Regional competitiveness and employment, and European territorial co-operation. The Convergence objective covers regions corresponding to NUTS level II and those whose GDP per capita is less than 75% of the EU average. It is aimed at speeding up the convergence of the least-developed Member States and regions by improving conditions for growth and employment through the increasing and improvement of the quality of investment in physical and human capital, the development of innovation and of the knowledge society, adaptability to economic and social changes, the protection and improvement of the environment, and administrative efficiency.

The European Social Fund is aimed at reducing differences in living standards and prosperity across EU Member States and regions and, therefore, promoting economic and social cohesion. It is devoted to promoting employment in the EU and helping European companies and workforce to become better equipped to face global challenges, which is achieved through the following action:

- Funding is spread across the Member States and regions, in particular those where economic development is less advanced.
- Efforts are made to improve the quality of life for EU citizens by giving them better skills and better job prospects.
- Over the 2010-2013 period, a total of €75 billion will be allocated to the EU Member States and regions to achieve the aforementioned goals.

The Cohesion Fund is a financial mechanism designed to fund major infrastructural projects in the EU, in particular those in the fields of transport and environmental protection, with a view to achieving the economic and social cohesion of the European Union and promoting sustainable development.

Other foreign/international funding sources

In addition to the EU funds as sources of finance for the implementation of measures set by the Strategy, use will also be made of funding from other available international sources. To implement the measures set by the National Roma Programme as part of the activities of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, use will be made of resources from the Roma Education Fund (REF), which are included in the budget for 2012 and the projections for 2013 and 2014.

Other potential sources include the Open Society Foundations (OSI), United Nations and World Bank programmes, and the programmes of other potential sponsors.

VI.3 Implementation time-frame

The time-frame for the implementation of measures set forth under each objective will be precisely defined in the accompanying three-year action plans, with the following time-frame being planned for the activities related to key milestones in the implementation of the Strategy until 2020:

- Adoption of the Strategy by the RoC Government – fourth quarter of 2012
- Preparation of the Action Plan in line with Strategy objectives– fourth quarter of 2012
- Adoption of the Action Plan – first quarter of 2013
- Setting up mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the Strategy/Action Plan – first quarter of 2013
- Mapping micro-regions, conducting the required analysis and collecting data to set the baseline values for measures where necessary – first quarter of 2013
- Implementation of measures – on an ongoing basis from 2013 to 2020
- Monitoring the implementation of measures – on an ongoing basis from 2013 to 2020
- Preparation of three-year action plans by L/RSGUs – first quarter of 2013
- Setting up mechanisms/commissions to monitor the implementation of local and regional action plans – second quarter of 2013
- Mid-term evaluation – second quarter of 2014
- External evaluation – third quarter of 2015
- Revision of the Strategy – fourth quarter of 2015

	2012-2020								
Activity	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Adoption of the Strategy by the Cro. Gov.									
Preparation of the Action Plan									
Adoption of the Action Plan									
Setting up monitoring mechanisms									
Mapping micro-regions, conducting analyses and gathering data to set baseline values									
Implementation of measures									
Monitoring implementation									
Preparation of three-year actions plans by L/RSGUs									
Setting up mechanisms to monitor the implementation of L/RSGUs' action plans									
Mid-term evaluation									
External evaluation									
Revision of the Strategy									

VI.4 Expected outcomes and achievements of the Strategy

The National Roma Inclusion Strategy from 2013 to 2020 sets guidelines for achieving substantial and permanent changes in the socio-economic status of the Roma minority in Croatia and the overall improvement of its situation in the country by reducing a multidimensional socio-economic gap between the Roma and the rest of the population and by achieving Roma inclusion in all segments of the society and community.

Through its goals and objectives, the Strategy aims to ensure a comprehensive approach founded on the interaction of measures and interventions in different areas. Such an approach requires appropriate co-ordination across various bodies and sectors as well as active involvement by the Roma community itself.

Indicators have been set to reflect the outcomes and effects/impacts of measures in order to ensure follow-up on the implementation of measures and activities with a view to enabling a timely assessment of achievements and managing the efforts to involve the Roma community in all processes covered by the Strategy.

In addition to those indicators, criteria should be set to assess the expected outcomes and achievements, including a definition of what is understood by such outcomes and achievements. The Strategy will be deemed to have resulted in the desired effects and achievements if:

- The mapping of areas where Roma communities are located and where Roma people reside gives a clear picture of the situation and status of Roma communities in Croatia so as to allow a precise identification of disadvantaged micro-regions or segregated and marginalised neighbourhoods. A clear picture of the status will enable a better assessment of needs in different Roma communities and, thus, allow a targeted approach to each of them rather than a routine, linear and uniform provision of social services regardless of the status of their members. Accordingly, the desired impact will be deemed achieved if a targeted and tailor-made approach to Roma communities is ensured in line with their needs.
- Functional and effective mechanisms are in place to implement and monitor the implementation of measures and activities defined by the Strategy. This implies improving vertical and horizontal interaction between all agencies responsible for specific measures and stakeholders involved in the implementation of measures and activities as well as establishment of cross-sector communication and co-ordination as well as coherent, targeted and concerted cross-sector action at the national, regional and local levels.
- Cross-sector mechanisms are set up to monitor the implementation of measures at the local level. This implies the establishment of multi-sector info centres (i.e. support and information centres) in all areas with sizeable Roma communities. Such info centres will ensure that those who actually implement measures maintain a continued on-site presence inside Roma communities and that the residents of segregated and marginalised neighbourhoods are provided with timely and high-quality support, social services and information. These teams will definitely include trained and qualified Roma representatives.
- Local and regional governments are more intensely and actively involved in the implementation of measures covered by the Strategy. This implies drafting and acting upon Roma inclusion action plans at the county level, coherent and co-ordinated action by stakeholders at the local and regional levels, and setting up effective mechanisms to monitor

the implementation of measures and their impact, in consistency with mechanisms put in place at the national level.

- The Roma community is more involved in the efforts to plan, implement and monitor measures and activities as well as their impact and results. This implies the need for the Roma to take an active part in and greater responsibility for the achievement of positive effects expected from Strategy measures in terms of improving their socio-economic situation as well as their increased sense of ownership of the results of interventions.

The Strategy will also be deemed to have achieved the desired effects if the efforts to monitor indicators and measure achievements highlight the improvements planned for all Strategy areas. This, *inter alia*, includes changes in the field of education, which will be reflected in increased completion rates for education programmes at all levels of education, achieving a better quality of knowledge acquired and, eventually, a greater number of the Roma completing higher degrees of education. These changes also include positive shifts in reducing discrimination against and social exclusion of the Roma in all areas, increased employment and labour market inclusion rates, improved living and housing conditions, and resolved status issues for most of the Roma.

VI.5 Additional recommendations

GOVERNMENT OFFICE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND RIGHTS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

- The Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities co-ordinates the efforts made by governmental ministries and offices to implement measures contained in the RoC's strategic documents on Roma inclusion, acting in collaboration with the civil sector. At the same time, the Office co-ordinates the monitoring and external evaluation of measures as a process in its own right. These two functions should be clearly separated. Specifically, the role of the Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities as a key steering body and a point for information and data collection and dissemination should be maintained and strengthened in relation to the local government level, whereas the function of external monitoring and evaluation (i.e. external formative evaluation) should be assigned, on a defined periodic basis, to another independent expert body.
- To improve the co-ordination of activities taken to monitor the implementation of measures and interventions, the Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities requires additional capacity building in that its existing staff service needs to be strengthened by external experts at the local level (e.g. in Međimurje County, Osijek-Baranja County, the Cities of Zagreb and Rijeka, and the Croatian Littoral), who would – under clearly defined terms set by the Office – encourage and co-ordinate the implementation of measures in each local community.

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

- More intense efforts are needed to promote the inclusion of children in preschool education and ensure greater opportunities for education within integrated groups. Stronger engagement is also required on the part of Roma minority councils and associations involved in activities aimed at the social inclusion of the Roma in order to provide parents and other stakeholders at the local level with more information about the importance of and opportunities for including children in preschool education.
- Consideration should be given to the possibility of involving primary schools in the efforts to implement nursery and preschool education programmes, which is of particular importance in local communities lacking any form of organised preschool education and suffering from major gaps in the capacity to include children in preschool programmes.
- If a community cannot ensure inclusion in integrated education environments within regular preschool institutions because such institutions do not exist or lack the capacity to meet the needs of that community, the authorities in charge of establishing public preschool institutions and those responsible for education at the local and regional levels should provide for 'pre-prep' programmes, i.e. programmes designed to prepare Roma children to start their primary education and lasting for a minimum of one year prior to their entry into primary school. Such environments would also require a continued support focused on the efforts to develop and implement programmes aimed at strengthening the capacity of parents to properly raise and work with their own children in order to prepare them as well as possible for school.
- In the opinion of professionals from social welfare centres, the view that the organisation of "play-groups" in Roma settlements would only reinforce segregation poses a major problem

and obstacle for the socialisation of Roma children and their better adaptation to the education system, because Roma children will not be integrated in local kindergartens for many years to come. For the schooling system, this will mean the loss of at least another one or two generation of Roma children. Mobile kindergartens or “play-groups” would, as much as they may be perceived as segregating Roma children, largely contribute to their greater success in further education.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

- The action mechanisms for cases of parental neglect, where – after repeated attempts to contact with parents – the situations of neglect are reported governmental administrative offices with authority at the county level or to competent social welfare centres, seem to be ineffective in terms of retaining Roma students in the educational system. The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports recommends that, with regard to the application of the Family Act by relevant professionals and to the extent it pertains to the parental role and the mechanisms for work with parents, measures should be adopted and placed under the implementing responsibility of the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth. The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports is ready to co-operate with the aforementioned Ministry on implementing measures related to responsible parenting and work with parents within the Roma community. Measures would achieve these objectives should be proposed by the relevant government departments.
- Investment in human capital is a major component of growth and the way in which educational as well as regional and local authorities will address the challenges of educational segregation and poor-quality education for Roma children will largely determine the overall development of counties, municipalities and cities which are home to sizeable Roma communities. Given a relatively small number of such schools in Croatia and provided there is genuine political will at the national and local levels, this issue should not be considered unmanageable. Appropriate desegregation plans are to be drafted for areas where significant Roma communities exist or can be expected to emerge, and the funding required for their implementation should be secured by using resources from the central and local budgets as well as pre-accession IPA funds and, in later stages, EU structural funds.
- A special note should be made of the need to organise further training for all professionals in educational institutions attended by Roma children. To provide all children with high-quality education and equal opportunities for equal achievements, teachers dealing with the most vulnerable population need to be motivated for work, highly educated and committed to continuous professional development. Support mechanisms designed for preschool and school teachers, professional staff members and headmasters should be largely reinforced. The Education and Teacher Training Agency must take a stronger role in monitoring the work of and educating teaching professionals because the existing training system fails to meet their specific requirements. Efforts are also needed to build up the capacity of the Agency’s staff to monitor the quality of work in multicultural environments and with children from socially deprived families, and to identify discriminatory practices in the work of teaching professionals. In addition to posing a teaching challenge, dealing with children from socially deprived families often imposes a heavy emotional strain, so that teaching professionals should be provided with additional specific training in stress management, as well as coaching and supervision.

- Since the policy of educational integration for the Roma minority constitutes a long-term effort, it should encompass not only all participants in the education process, but also other social community stakeholders in order to ensure the sustainability of educational policy measures and the elimination of obstacles to their implementation. In other words, ongoing and comprehensive action is needed to break down any prejudice against different social groups, including the Roma minority, by developing and embracing positive criteria for looking at differences.

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF THE ROMA¹¹⁸

- The data about the respondents' education level, disaggregated by gender and minority status, reveal that the number of highly educated Roma women is comparatively low, including their ratio to interviewed Roma men (among the Roma with university degrees, the share of women is almost half that of Roma men). Such a qualification structure points to the need to reconsider the public policies promoting the education of Roma women. The share of Roma women relative to both Roma men and the majority population is the highest in secondary education. This leads to the conclusion that all advisory and working bodies dealing with Roma issues should pay special attention to the quality of preparations for their meeting and that, in their work, they should primarily focus on policies that will empower Roma representatives and ensure that any disparities can be put in correlation with differences in the qualification structure and, over time, reduced and eliminated.
- The results obtained on participation in advisory bodies clearly show that one and the same person often sits in several advisory or working bodies. The data collected point to the importance of transparency in the processes of nomination, election and appointment, which should rely on clear criteria and responsibilities for those participating in such working bodies in order to meet not only the principle of legality, but also that of the legitimacy of Roma community representatives. It is important to encourage the participation of most, if not all, members of the Roma minority in the election of their representatives to such working and advisory bodies and, thus, promote the role of the Roma minority as a stakeholder in public affairs.
- The appearance of one and the same person in several advisory or working bodies within different departments of the executive should be avoided by introducing a maximum number of Roma minority representatives into such bodies in order to enhance the efficiency and availability of those participating in their work.
- All structures where advisory bodies have been established and include representatives of the Roma minority are recommended to provide for and ensure public access to information about budget expenses for working and advisory bodies dealing with Roma minority issues.
- The procedures for the appointment of Roma minority representatives to working and advisory bodies should be conducted on the basis of clearly defined and previously announced criteria, encouraging the participation of most, if not all, members of the Roma minority in the election

¹¹⁸ Majetić, Mladen (2011), „Political Participation of the Roma, with Emphasis on Political Participation by Roma Women in the Countries of the Region”, Care International NWB.

of their representatives to such working and advisory bodies and, thus, promoting the role of the Roma minority as a stakeholder in public affairs.

- It is recommended that these procedures should provide for and require reporting on any horizontal consultation held between Roma minority representatives and relevant stakeholders from the Roma community in order to encourage Roma minority representatives to engage in participatory and empowering practices..
- Public administration and all other relevant stakeholders dealing with issues affecting the Roma population are called to show greater engagement and be more systematic in the implementation of consultation processes, both vertical and horizontal, with Roma minority representatives sitting in working and advisory bodies so as to encourage their wider participation in creating public policies that address issues affecting the Roma population.

ASSOCIATIONS

- Due to the specifics of the Roma community, its language, intra-group communication and, as it were, efforts are needed to raise the capacity of Roma associations for representation and advocacy. The impact of the Strategy and the level of communication among Roma associations can be significantly raised through train-the-trainer/educator courses for persons coming from the target group. Equipped with such skills, trainers/educators can also create added value for decision-makers by bringing them closer to the needs and realities of the target group. Trainers/educators can step up the exchange of information and good practices and have a positive impact on both decision-makers and the community they come from themselves.
- It is essential that governmental administrative bodies and local and regional authorities become aware of the needs of minorities within their jurisdictions in order to be able to effectively adjust their operating programmes and plans to the requirements and rights of groups they deal with. An approach rooted on the rights and requirements of the Roma would also allow better allocation of resources (both financial and non-financial) and increase the impact of decisions made.
- There are cases where the authorities autonomously set priorities that fail to meet and reflect the needs of the Roma community. This especially pertains to projects targeting multiple beneficiaries, with Roma issues being but one of project components. Good examples of such projects are those addressing challenges faced by vulnerable groups. By default, these groups are defined to include the Roma although their challenges require more complex and demanding solutions. Priorities must be established only through dialogue, which should inevitably involve Roma minority representatives. Before embarking on the preparation of any such project, while it is still in its conceptual stage, governmental authorities must definitely consult Roma representatives. This should also go for projects developed for a broader target group, where the Roma constitute but one segment of the overall project.¹¹⁹
- When setting priorities, efforts should be made to ensure harmonisation within governmental authorities, their co-operation with local communities and their ongoing joint dialogue with

¹¹⁹ Seventh Extended Session of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Action Plan Monitoring Task Force, held on 20 Nov. 2009<http://www.vlada.hr/hr/uredi/ured_za_nacionalne_manjine/akcijski_plan_desetlje_za_ukljucivanje_roma_2005_2015/sjednice_radne_skupine/sedma_prosirena_sjednica_radne_skupine_za_pracenje_akcijskog_plana_desetlje_za_ukljucivanje_rom>

Roma representatives so that projects are agreed upon between different governmental departments and local authorities on one hand and with the Roma on the other.

- When developing projects, provisions should be made to ensure the involvement of Roma representatives in the implementation of projects as active participants and parties in charge of specific activities, including their membership in evaluation committees to ensure their participation in the selection of preferred bidders as well as their participation in internal and external project evaluation and any such other stages of project implementation and evaluation.
- Arrangements should be made to develop the Roma minority's capacity to prepare and implement projects by including the training of Roma representatives as a component of each project affecting the Roma community; by connecting Roma organisations and associations with certain research institutions and other non-governmental sector entities to create synergy and, thus, build the capacity of Roma representatives, and by including the education of Roma representatives in regular training programmes for civil servants at the national level or in an even wider context.

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