



## **REDUPRE**

International Project Identifying and Reducing Prejudices as a Source of Conflict between Roma and Non-Roma Population

**Cases of Bulgaria, Italy, Romania, and Slovenia Compared**

2011 - 2013

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# **RECOMMENDATIONS TO LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES OF BULGARIA, ITALY, ROMANIA, SLOVENIA AND TO THE COMPETENT BODIES AND AGENCIES OF THE EU**

Adopted at the REDUPRE concluding meeting held on 27-28 May 2013 in  
Maribor, Slovenia

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

These recommendations are the result of the research, experiences, surveys and opinions that were accumulated during the two years activities (2011-2013) in the frame of the “International project on identifying and reducing prejudices as a source of conflict between Roma and non-Roma population – REDUPRE”. The project was realised in the selected geographical areas of Bulgaria (Razgrad), Italy (Friuli – Venezia Giulia), Romania (Timișoara, Sânpetru Mare, Sântana, Aleșd) and Slovenia (Črnomelj, Metlika and Semič). The project has been realised with the assistance of the European Union, DG Justice. The coordinator of the project’s international consortium was the Institute for ethnic and regional studies from Maribor, Slovenia. The partners were the Institute for Population and Human Studies (IPHS), Sofia and Association INTEGRO, Razgrad – both from Bulgaria, International Institute for High Legal and Economic Studies for Development (IGES), Gorizia and Cultural Association Them Romano Onlus – both from Italy, Resources Center for Roma Communities (RSRC), Cluj Napoca and Euroregional Center for Democracy (ECD), Timișoara – both from Romania and ECERS – European Centre for Ethnic, Regional and Sociological Studies of University of Maribor, Association of the Roma Councillors of Slovenia, Cankova and Institute for Education and Culture – ZIK, Črnomelj – all from Slovenia.

### COMMON RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE AUTHORITIES IN BULGARIA, ITALY, ROMANIA AND SLOVENIA

The situation of Roma in Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and Slovenia is specific with regard to the genuine traditions, historical backgrounds, present political, social and economic circumstances in which they live, and concerning the legal enactments regulating their rights and participation in decision making. In spite of some positive results achieved in the recent decade is the gap between Roma and the majority population in the fields of housing conditions, access to education, employment opportunities and access to health services is – with slight differences in particular fields or geographical areas – the common feature for all these countries.

The insufficient political will of the ruling elites, both on national and local level, to undertake an efficient way for resolving the problems that have been accumulated in recent decades or even for implementing rights and standards, which are enshrined in the EU and national instruments (as are “strategies”) is deepening the unequal and discriminated position of Roma in the given societies and pushing them even more toward segregation and the social-economic backwardness.

The unwillingness or dithering behaviour of the state structure and of the given civil society to condemn and punish the hate speech against Roma and even the racial attacks on them is contributing to the creation of the negative social atmosphere, which leads to wide-spread discrimination of Roma and even to the perception that the discriminated status of Roma in a particular society is a “natural phenomena,” which is justified by their inherited characterises and could not be changed at all. Moreover the anti-Gypsism is used for obtaining the support of the electorate as it happens, in illustration, in the recent parliamentary elections in Bulgaria.

Hence the problems of Roma communities represent a significant open political and socio-economic issue in the given society. Together with other accumulated problems emanating from the aggravation of social situation of the majority of population in all these countries – as a part of the situation in the EU in this regard as a whole – could be a fertile ground for political and social turmoil with unpredicted consequences. This is why should be the problems of Roma without delay addressed urgently and coordinated taking into account that they are deeply rooted in different areas of social life and in all levels of the society fibre.

**We are inviting the national, regional and local authorities of Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and Slovenia to consider the following actions of common character for all these countries:**

- To implement efficiently the integration strategies and other relevant instruments, which have been adopted as a common action within the European Union and to support the all-European, especially European Union endeavours for combating negative events involving Roma in Europe, which are the result of growing anti-Gypsism.
- To elaborate and implement, in addition, specific regional integration strategies in order to address specific issues that Roma are facing in the particular regions as regard access to adequate housing, the right to education, attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to employment, the right to social security and access to goods, services and public places. The strategies should contain clear goals; foresee detailed actions, defined expected results and implementation timeframe as well as to create mechanisms to monitor the progress and results.
- To create legal and institutional possibilities for involving Roma communities stakeholders as partners in the development of policies, in adopting decisions, in elaborating solutions, and in monitoring the implementation of policies and decisions on local, regional and national level.
- To undertake the necessary measures which should contribute to the diminishing of prejudices and stereotypes in relations between Roma and non-Roma population, to the elimination of hate speech and discrimination practices and to the raising of awareness of the majority population of the values of Roma culture and tradition; this could be achieved among other by introducing adequate curricula in the primary and secondary schools and by stimulating the presence of Roma issues (with emphasis on positive cases) in mass media.
- To elaborate programs and organise training courses of civil servants, social workers, teachers, medical staff, police officers and similar vocations working in services that regard Roma or operating in areas of their settlements; besides professional skills should the programs include the acquirement of knowledge on Roma traditions and culture and on the specific social fibre of multi-cultural societies.
- To consult the NGOs, which accumulated in the recent years significant expertise concerning different “Roma issues” – also through projects co-financed by the EU – and are therefore able to promote the best practice models of intervention that can be taken-over and further transformed into relevant policies and regulations by the governmental structures.
- To ratify the Protocol No. 12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Social Charter, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime (Bulgaria and Italy) and to adopt the necessary procedures for the implementation of these international instruments (Romania and Slovenia).

**We are inviting the Roma organisations, institutions and relevant agencies in Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and Slovenia to consider the following actions of common character for all these countries:**

- To fight prejudices and stereotypes towards the majority population and to develop the culture of cooperation, mutual understanding and respect between Roma and non-Roma population living in the neighbouring settlements.
- To develop the ways and means for Roma communities to maintain and develop their ethnic identity, language, culture and traditions in the broader social environment while respecting and keeping the legal order of the country (on national and local level) and respecting the traditions and moral standards of the majority population as well.
- To raise the awareness of Roma parents (and where appropriate of Roma children) that is education on all levels the most important tool on the way to find solutions for ameliorating their

life as individuals; with spreading education will Roma create also better conditions for improving the social position of their communities as a whole in the given society.

- To develop, in common or individually, different self-initiatives concerning searching solutions for such problems as are employment opportunities, improvement of local infrastructure and similar problems, which should get the adequate support of local and national authorities.
- To request and being prepared to take an active part in the work of governmental and non-governmental institutions and agencies concerned with Roma “issues,” rights and position and in developing policies, adopting decisions, elaborating solutions, and in monitoring the implementation of relevant policies and decisions on local, regional and national level.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO BULGARIAN LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES**

### **Recommendations to the state and political structure**

**Stop discrimination and racism against Roma:** We urge the Bulgarian state to monitor the level of racism towards the Roma ethnic group and respond actively and immediately with all eligible legal means in the cases of anti-Roma discourse and events. We call on the Bulgarian Council of Ministers, the Commission for Protection against Discrimination and Council for Electronic Media to strengthen their cooperation particularly for a better prevention and non-admission of hate speech and all forms of racial hatred against Roma.

**Ending the abuse of buying the votes of Roma citizens:** We urge the Bulgarian state to put into practice all legal measures to eradicate once and for all the vicious practice for buying Roma votes during elections by focusing on the fight against the buyers and brokers of votes. Moreover, we strongly call on the authorities to make efforts and start wide, systematic and consistent campaign for raising the awareness of Roma people about their citizenship role.

**Strengthen the Roma participation:** We urge the public authorities and political structures to open up for Roma and include them in their structures and governing bodies. Moreover, we urge them to invest in the growth of Roma professionals as well as to appoint Roma experts on the merit base in all levels of the state and municipal administration, in the social, education, health and public security institutions.

**Guaranteeing the execution of the adopted policy frame related to Roma integration and particularly the National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS) 2012-2020:** We urge the Council of Ministers to ensure the integrated inter-sectorial approach and realize simultaneously the complex aspects of the social inclusion and respect of basic human rights at all levels. For this reason we call on the Ministerial Council to create a body of executive power with an appropriate mandate, sufficient administrative mechanisms, human capacities and financial resources to take the overall responsibility for the managing, coordination, monitoring and control of the National Strategy for Roma Integration (NSIR) 2012-2020. We appeal to the Council of Ministers and Bulgarian Parliament to provide sufficient methodological and financial support to the municipalities and nongovernmental organisations to implement the NRIS and achieve efficient outcomes for Roma people.

**Cooperation with (pro) Roma civil society organizations and independent bodies:** We urge the Council of Ministers, responsible ministers, regional and local authorities to organize and perform appropriate consultative process with (pro) Roma non-government organisations and independent bodies working to improve the situation of Roma in the society based on the principle of good partnership, respect and taking account of the proposals and recommendations made by civil society actors.

## **Recommendations concerning specific problems of Roma**

**Housing:** We recommend the Ministry of Regional Development to plan adequate measures in the Operational Programme for Regional Development to finance technical and social infrastructure in Roma neighbourhoods. We recommend also the Ministry of Agriculture to plan such measures in the Rural Development Program, financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

We call also the respective ministers to allocate sufficient budget for co-financing the programs and projects aimed at improving housing issues of vulnerable population, including also Roma.

We urge the municipal councils to regulate Roma neighbourhoods, to legalize the massive houses fit for habitation and to apply stricter control to prevent further illegal construction. Furthermore, we recommend that local authorities should not focus solely on social housing projects, but also to consider the provision of municipal plots for Roma, on which they can build their own homes, with built complete infrastructure.

**Education:** We call on the state to provide not only the children but also elderly Roma with their constitutional right to learn the Bulgarian language. Integration centres is necessary to be established at regional/local level offering society orientation assistance to Roma adults who need support to learn the society norms and rules as well as Bulgarian language. Provision of preparatory classes is good but insufficient measure for learning Bulgarian language by Roma children. Therefore, we recommend the Ministry of Education to provide additional Bulgarian language classes in the schools with predominantly students from ethnic minorities or after an individual evaluation of each student from ethnic minorities. We recommend that the Ministry of Education also reduce the standard for the number of students in a class and provide a larger amount of expenditure standard for students from families of ethnic minorities with low incomes and with deficits in Bulgarian language.

We call on Agency for children's rights, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Education to prioritize the work of municipal departments for child protection on preventing children at risk of dropping out or dropped out of school. Both the Ministry of labour and social policy and Child Protection Agency need to enhance the skills of social workers to evaluate this risk and planning adequate plans to address the risk to the methods of social work with the family. Furthermore, the responsible ministries need to establish a coordination mechanism for overcoming the school dropout by which to enhance the interdisciplinary approach and inter-institutional co-operation at local level, and also to strengthen monitoring of compliance with school attendance.

**Roma cultural identity:** We recommend the ministry of culture and municipal governments to support the establishment of Roma cultural clubs and community centres where Roma preserve and develop their culture and language as well as develop relationships of solidarity and friendship with their fellow-citizens. We call on the media to avoid presenting the Roma in a biased way, associating them with poverty, criminality and failure of liability. We urge them to avoid generalizations and the attribution of criminal acts committed by individuals on the entire Roma community. Instead, we appeal to the media present the Roma as everyone else – as individuals and characters who have their own lives, dreams, achievements and failures.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO ITALIAN LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES**

### **Recommendations to the state and political structure**

**Improve national legislation on minorities and citizenship standards:** We urge Italian government to reform the Law No. 482/1999 on linguistic minorities including Roma, Sinti and Travellers within the recognized linguistic minorities. This reform would grant the recognition for the Roma, Sinti and Travellers

the basic rights as minority which actually is denied. We call the Italian government to solve the urgent issue of the about 20000 Roma living in Italy who are stateless persons. Specific round tables with their countries of origin should be set up in order to find a solution for their actually “suspended” citizenship status.

**Improve international and European standards:** We urge the Italian government and the Parliament to adopt all necessary measures to speed up the ratification process and to enable the full application of these conventional instruments within the Italian legislation: the Protocol No. 12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems.

**No data-No progress:** We urge the Italian government to involve local authorities and NGOs in the definition of a clear set of criteria and methodology to improve the knowledge and the capability to manage in a correct and non-discriminatory way the Roma, Sinti and Travellers communities living in Italy. Such an approach should avoid the use of fingerprints and other biometrics approaches, focusing rather its attention on the socio-economic dimension of the Roma issue. We call the Italian government to adopt urgent measures to avoid the actual situation concerning the scarcity of reliable data on Roma/Sinti in Italy.

**Development of regional/local strategies:** We call the Italian Government and the local authorities at different levels of involvement (Regions, Provinces and Municipalities) to launch a national table of confrontation based on National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Travellers based on Communication of the EC n. 173/2011 adopted in February 2012 in order to adopt a National Action Plan. The National Action Plan should take into account the subsidiarity principle and should provide for a clear distribution of competences at different administrative levels. The plan should also contain clear goals; foresee detailed actions, defined expected results and implementation timeframe at a local level as well as mechanisms to monitor the progress and results at a national one.

In addition we urge Italian authorities to establish special independent national monitoring body for evaluation and monitoring of the progress of the national action plan within the European Union strategy on social and economic integration of Roma in Europe.

### **Recommendations concerning specific problems of Roma**

#### **Cooperation with and between independent bodies and NGOs and fostering Roma/Sinti associations:**

We urge Italian local and national authorities, stakeholders and political elites to respect the well-intended suggestions of independent bodies and non-governmental sector and to stop politicize the basic human rights as their role in to ensure and protect the rights of all members society. Moreover we call local authorities to enable and favour the construction of a stable net of relations between the NGOs dealing with Roma rights, tackling moreover the evidence of the scarce or no participation of Roma/Sinti people to associative and political life of the country.

We call local authorities to favour the creation of a network between associations and local authorities in order to promote: the recognition of Italian citizenship to Roma children born in Italy (this is part of the wider «ius soli» campaign); promote a campaign to insert Roma/Sinti between recognized minorities and create a regional and national network between associations and NGO's dealing with Roma/Sinti communities (territorial cooperation).

Considering that there are about 14 different regional laws in force dealing with different aspects of Roma/Sinti integration, and that very often there is no coordination different regions and public sectors involved, we urge the collection of legal and social provisions deeming such approach very useful to individuate good practices and positive experiences of integration between Roma and non Roma.

**Housing:** We are calling national and local authorities to take concrete actions immediately to improve housing condition so Roma community particular in communities without water and electricity (legalisation of settlements and construction of basis infrastructure). Authorities should in cooperation with Roma community propose, adopt and realise solutions and measure which will contribute to the dialogue between Roma and non-Roma community and prevent ghettoization of Roma settlements. We call for an urgent national plan concerning housing tackling the settlement policies both at a national and local level.

**Education:** We call Italian authorities to adopt specific measures to improve Roma participation and achievements in education specially by:

- Involving families in schooling processes and programmes (especially women),
- Improving the knowledge of Italian especially between non Italian Roma,
- Improving the knowledge of Roma and Sinti culture and traditions between Italian teachers and school staff,
- Developing and carrying out info campaign among Roma parents on importance of education for their children,
- Considering that Roma assistants in schools do not exist, create this new professional figure starting from Roma women who could act as mediators between Roma families and school institutions Roma children,
- Including information on Roma culture in mainstream curricula,
- Taking actions to attract adult Roma for education as it will contribute both to higher educational level as well as to awareness of the importance of schooling for their children.

**Roma cultural identity:** We call local authorities to foster events between Roma and non Roma such as music, movies, traditional festivals etc.; focusing the attention especially on young people promoting the knowledge of Roma/Sinti traditions and culture). We urge national and local authorities to focus the attention of media on the real situation of Roma/Sinti camps, fostering the possible use EU funds to finance documentaries and TV/Radio programmes on Roma/Sinti traditions and history (Porrajmos could be one of the issues), promoting cultural, musical events and traditions between non Roma in schools, festivals, theatres.

**Employment:** We suggest authorities to adopt concrete measures for increasing Roma employability such as:

- The use of European Social Fund instruments for specific projects for Roma/Sinti communities at a regional level ensuring to young people a job qualification and vocational training,
- Helping Roma to obtain national vocational qualification according to the regulations and laws,
- Favouring the creation of cooperatives between Roma/Sinti in order to foster their traditional working activities (small craft, circus, street performances and similar),
- Fostering social entrepreneurship as an opportunity for sustainable employment within Roma/Sinti communities.

**Social and health services:** We call authorities to review the legislation on social subsidies in order to ensure higher effectiveness and prevent possible abuse. In addition we propose to develop and establish a new institute of social mentor/counsellor who will operate in Roma settlements in order to inform and help Roma in the administration procedures with public authorities and to prevent possible inappropriate use of social subsidies funds. This institute could overgrow in a so called social incubator which could become a central institution within the Roma settlement.

We urge national authorities to launch a national campaign to inform Roma and Sinti about possible diseases, increase the awareness especially between women in order to avoid misconduct and to foster a pre-emptive approach to medical care.

We call the Ministry of Health to promote between doctors and health care personnel the knowledge of Roma culture in order to fight stereotypes and discriminatory behaviours.

**Criminality:** We recommend and urge local authorities to launch media campaigns and education campaigns between non Roma concerning this issue. We call police authorities and health services to foster awareness between Roma on issues such as alcohol and drug abuse.

**Media:** In order to avoid negative consequences of inadequate reporting we propose stakeholders to ensure adequate training and education journalist and editors and owners of local media. We are urging the journalist reporting on Roma community to respect the highest reporting standards, to avoid generalisation and impartiality and to report frequently about positive examples. Roma should be included frequently as an object of the news not only as a subject. We call the editors and owners of the media to prevent the hate speech and incitement of intolerance on so discussion forums.

Considering that cultural aspects of Roma/Sinti communities are mainly unknown to common people (the only exception is music) media could develop specific campaigns in order to foster the reciprocal knowledge between Roma and non Roma.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO ROMANIAN LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

### Recommendations to the state and political structure

#### **Assurance of a genuine and constant political commitment for the improvement of the Roma condition:**

The Government and other political actors should put into practice the 2009 request of the *Presidential Commission for the Analysis of Social and Demographic Risks*<sup>1</sup> in Romania for a “genuine and constant political approach to the challenges of ensuring equal opportunity policies for the Roma minority.” In 2011, “*The Strategy of the Government of Romania for the Inclusion of Romanian Citizens Belonging to the Roma Minority for the Period 2012-2020*” (the National Roma Integration Strategy) was adopted due to the request of the EC communication (COM(2012) 226), *National Roma Integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework. Therefore, it is the Government responsibility to make the necessary steps to update and implement the Strategy.*

**Assurance of the application of the 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion:** In the foundation of the National Roma Integration Strategy should be placed The 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion that were presented for the first time at the meeting of the European Platform for Roma inclusion in Prague on 24 April 2009:<sup>2</sup> 1) Constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies, 2) Explicit but not exclusive targetin, 3) Inter-cultural 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 and 10) Active participation of the Roma

So far the new Strategy is not even mentioning the 10 principles and it is obvious that the practical implementation of the principles is a first step in bringing about the desired change for the Roma in the European countries, but so far they remained just another piece of paper.

**Evaluation of the results of the previous Roma public policy documents:** After a decade from the first adoption of a Roma Strategy (2001, updated in 2006) the Government should ensure an external evaluation of the results so far, in order to build upon them in the new strategic approach.

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<sup>1</sup>The extended report of the Presidential Commission for the Analysis of Social and Demographic Risks: Risks and Social Inequalities in Romania/*Riscuri și inechități sociale în România*, p. 212.

See [http://www.presidency.ro/static/CPARSDR\\_raport\\_extins.pdf](http://www.presidency.ro/static/CPARSDR_raport_extins.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> On 8 June 2009 the Council of Ministers in charge of Social Affairs annexed the Principles to their conclusions and invited Member States and the Commission to take them into account. See:

[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Documents/2011\\_10\\_Common\\_Basic\\_Principles\\_Roma\\_Inclusion.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Documents/2011_10_Common_Basic_Principles_Roma_Inclusion.pdf)

**Assurance of complete use of the Public Policy formulation standards:** The Government should meet all the standards for elaboration of the Strategy as a public policy document<sup>3</sup> under Romanian law. The Romanian government has a set of norms for elaboration of public policy documents, adopted in 2006 in preparation for the EU accession – government decision no. 870/2006, which established the standard quality requirements for government strategies, action plans, public policy proposals, etc. Without full respect of the elaboration standards, there will be significant difficulties for implementation and monitoring.

**Allocate the necessary financial resources for Strategy implementation:** The Government should ensure a clear allocation of funds both from the state budget and from the European Union Structural Funds for the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy as it was requested by the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. So far, for 2012 and also for 2013, there is no clear financial allocation of the state budget funds for the Strategy.

**Assurance of strong coordination of the Strategy implementation:** Clarified and simplified institutional mechanism should be elaborated in order to coordinate different layers of governance involved in the implementation of the public policies for Roma in order that they contribute to the common goals in accordance to their mission, hierarchical position, level of responsibility and resources available. The actual structure of coordination is involving:

- The National Agency for Roma, responsible for *“applying, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating”* NRIS measures.
- The Central Department for Monitoring and Evaluation / the National Contact Point for the NRIS – overall responsibility for ensuring communication at different levels of governance and monitoring the implementation of the NRIS.
- The Inter-Ministerial Working Group, a structure consisting of state-secretary level staff.
- The Ministerial Commissions for Roma with a role in *“monitoring the enactment of measures under their specific domains and submitting, on a semi-annual basis, progress reports in order to assess the impact of actions for the inclusion of Roma.”*
- The County Offices for Roma, at least in terms of officially aligning their respective missions to the role assigned through the NRIS and also work in close connection with County Commissions for Social Inclusion.

**Redesign the implementation mechanism of the National Roma Integration Strategy:** The implementation mechanism needs a re-design, the allocation of the main responsibility at the ministry level – education, health, employment and housing including in accordance with the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, while maintaining a monitoring and expert support to the National Agency for Roma.

**Assurance of full application of the European antidiscrimination provisions:** In terms of antidiscrimination, Romania should strengthen the mechanisms to prevent discrimination and ensure equal treatment of all citizens under the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and the provisions of the EU Race Directive; she should adopt a zero-tolerance policy against discrimination and intolerance, with a special focus on combating anti-Roma behaviour in Romanian society.

**Systematically collection of data on the situation of Roma:** The Government should initiate a process of a systematic data collection and should delegate such responsibility to the National Institute for Statistics, the public body that is responsible for designing data collection instruments and collecting statistical data at national level. In the last decade, Romania did not systematically collect data on the situation of Roma, whether quantitative or qualitative, most of the public structures are ignoring ethnicity based on some provisions of the personal data legislation. However, data collection legislation allows for the collection of

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<sup>3</sup> GD 870/2006 for the approval of the Strategy for improving the development, coordination and planning of public policies at central government level, Annex, Section II, Lines of Action, 1.1. Types of policy documents.

sensitive data for clear statistical purposes.<sup>4</sup> Through Structural Funds projects several pieces of research collected data at national level on situation of Roma, but this is not covering the entire need for data that can substantiate the future public policies.

**Ensure a systematic consultation process with the Roma and non-Roma civil society stakeholders:** The government should promote a genuine and pro-active consultation process in order to have the voice of the Roma taken into consideration. However, the government continue to act rather ad-hoc and there is a need for consistent consultations with Roma and non-Roma civil society organizations in setting priorities for the Roma and especially in the context of the 2014-2020 programming.

**Support the increase of organizational capacity of the Roma civil and political movement:** Limited organizational capacity and political capital of the Roma movement in Romania, together with a very low political will to make a change in the life of the Roma are contributing to the today's status of the Roma.

### Recommendations concerning specific problems of Roma

**Elaboration of education, health, employment and housing policies and action plans:** For the education, health, employment and housing, the National Roma Integration Strategy should have a limited number of directions for action and to have also a limited number of measures, contribution of a better allocation of funds, accountability, monitoring and evaluation.

**Education:** It is necessary to revise the legal provisions regarding the school segregation of Romani children in schools and ensure their equal access to the quality education. There should be clear responsibilities and sanctions applicable to those failing to implement desegregation provisions. Financial measures should accompany the desegregation process in order to facilitate integration of students studying in segregated environments into mainstream schools and classes. The government should also redefine its policy on inclusive education by using the international standards defined by UNESCO and other international organisations in the field.

**Employment:** To extend the affirmative action measures in employment of the Roma together with other services, on-the-job training, apprenticeships and tutoring. Special attention should be focussed on the professional development of the Roma women, through qualification courses, assistance in accessing jobs and other complementary social interventions (day-care centres, multifunctional centres and after-school programmes). It would be commendable to develop further the social economy concept and legislation in Romania, aiming at active employment of the members of the Roma communities.

**Health:** To ensure the re-design of the health mediation policy approach, especially through adoption of measures to for sustainable and adequate financing, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, technical support, professional training and life-long learning programmes for health mediators.

**Housing:** To ensure, within the new 2014-2020 EU financial programming, the elaboration of integrated community development programs that will approach, in balanced way, education, health, employment and housing problems of the Roma. It would be commendable to implement the national programs for social housing in which the criteria for accession are adapted to the needs of the target population, in a manner that will avoid spatial segregation of the Roma.

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<sup>4</sup> Law no. 677/2001 on the protection of persons regarding the use of personal data and the free movement of personal data.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO SLOVENIAN LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

### Recommendations to the state and political structure

**Political use of Roma problems:** We urge the Slovenian state and political structures to stop the use of Roma problems for obtaining the support of the given electorate basis in the fight for the division of power on local or national level. On the contrary, we urge them to condemn and punish the hate speech and other expressions of racial hatred against Roma.

**Development of local/regional strategies and the responsibilities of competent ministries and public services:** We are urging communes with larger number of Roma that alone or in common with other communes develop and adopt local/regional strategies for social and economic integration of Roma, taking into account the recommendations enshrined in the European Union and in national strategies as well. The competent Slovenian ministries and public services should coordinate their efforts for advising the preparation of such strategies, especially concerning the specific EU structural funds to which is possible to apply for realising particular urban/settlement, infrastructural and similar projects included in the strategies.

**Cooperation with independent bodies and NGOs:** We urge the Slovenian state and political structures to consider responsibly the suggestions and recommendations of the independent bodies, of non-governmental organisations and of individual experts aimed at ameliorating the situation of Roma citizens and at ensuring them a non-discriminated social status in regard to the rest of the population.

**Improvement of institutional capacities:** We call the government and Parliament of the Republic of Slovenia to ensure without any delay the independent legal status of the Advocate of the Principle of Equality as it is provided by the EU legislation and to ensure to this unit the adequate human capacities and financial resources for unmolested and effective work.

### Recommendations concerning specific problems of Roma

**Housing:** We invite the Ministry of the environment and spatial planning to adopt, in common with local communities concerned, the adequate legal and other measures for “legalizing” the Roma settlements, in cooperation with members of Roma communities. It should explore also the possibilities for applying to EU structural funds for financing specific projects of this kind. It would be commendable to envisage the detailed timetable and the possibility of undertaking sanctions against the local communities that avoid the implementation of these measures. We urge the local communities to ensure to all Roma settlements, regardless of the legal status of their settlement, the supply of fresh water and the access to electricity.

**Education:** Ministry of Education, Science and Sport should:

- Adopt measures to include larger number of Roma children in early childhood education.
- Develop special programs for improving of knowledge of Slovenian language among Roma, particularly children.
- Review the role of Roma assistants in schools as well as define the qualifications necessary for the post of the assistant in order to avoid segregation of Roma children, and ensure a long-term employment of the Roma assistants.
- Review the teaching curricula and include also information on Roma culture. In addition a new subject should be introduced in primarily school or adaptation of the existing (e.g. education for coexistence) which would contribute to the mutual understanding of cultural differences between ethnic communities and to gradual elimination of negative stereotypes and prejudices not only among Roma and non-Roma communities but also towards other vulnerable groups.

- Create in common with the Ministry of labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities a stable funding scheme for further education of successful Roma students.
- Develop and realise in common with the Ministry of labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities different forms of “adult education” of Roma parents on how important is for their children to attend schools and being educated.

**Employment:** The Ministries of labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities and that of education, science and sport should develop new programs and allocate sufficient funds for strengthening the vocational training of Roma adults. The first Ministry should adopt measures for preventing abuses of social benefit system, develop a scheme of public works for the Roma and allocate more funds for developing and promoting so called social entrepreneurship among Roma.

**Social services:** We invite the Ministry of labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities to review the legislation on social subsidies in order to ensure higher effectiveness of this system and to avoid abuses of it. We propose to this Ministry to elaborate and establish a new institute of social mentor/counsellor who will operate in the given number of Roma settlements, whose duty will be to instruct and help Roma in the administration procedures with public authorities, to prevent the possible inappropriate use of social subsidies, to analyse promptly the situation in this regards, to advise the Roma in the settlement concerning schooling system, health services and the similar. The Roma mentor/councillor could be of help also in developing initiatives which could open new possibilities for adequate economic activities and could diminish the high percentage of unemployment of Roma.

**Local authorities:** We call communal councils to respect fully the position and the role of Roma councillor in their Council and to use this opportunity given by law for developing a dialogue and thus contributing to the coexistence of Roma and non-Roma communities. The communities with higher number of Roma should establish commissions for Roma issues aimed at contributing to the solution of particular problems and at improving cooperation with Roma in the commune.

**Media:** We would like to draw the attention of media stakeholders to the fact that there are international and national legal norms, which oblige them to avoid the hate speech and the incitement of intolerance as well. We urge the journalist reporting on Roma and the editors of media to respect the professional standards of journalism, to avoid generalisation and impartiality and to report also of positive cases, what would contribute also to the diminishing the negative stereotypes of people concerning Roma. We invite the Ministry of culture to organise, in common with the association of journalists and relevant experts, seminars for journalist and editors on Roma issues in order to improve the level of media reporting on Roma.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMPETENT BODIES AND AGENCIES OF THE EU**

We are inviting the competent bodies and agencies of the EU to consider the following suggestions and proposals:

- To encourage the national governments that have not yet done so to adhere to the relevant international instruments and in particular to the Protocol No. 12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems.
- To accelerate the work on the adhesion of the EU to the European Convention of human rights /ECHR/, including the Protocol 12 enlarging the discrimination causes to the contents as a whole of the convention.
- To implement efficiently – in coordination with the national governments – the EU strategies and programs and the continuation of work of the present EU institutional forms for Roma issues. The

European Commission should develop control mechanisms, which will ensure that the standards of public policy elaborated in each Member State, is fully in compliance with the requirements of EU strategies and other instruments on Roma issues. A clear plan of actions for the implementation, with clearly stated objectives and indicators, should be negotiated with the national governments and later monitored by the European Commission.

- To ensure that Roma as citizens of the EU, who are comporting in accordance with the legal provisions, will be not discriminated in enjoying their rights enshrined in the EU legislation, including the right to travel, to settle and employ without obstacles in the states-members of the EU.
- To organise a systematic collection of data on Roma by Eurostat and national statistical institutions in order to provide an adequate data basis for actions.
- To elaborate new legal possibilities for encouraging the national governments which have not yet done so to ensure the autonomous status of the competent bodies, which are dealing with the implementation of the EU directives on elimination of discrimination, and which are supposed to support the claims of victims of discrimination.
- To allocate significant EU funds in the 2014-2020 period, which will provide the eligibility of financing projects, aimed at Roma social integration.
- To elaborate new ways and means for the implementation of the EU legislation and standards on discrimination, hostile speech etc. A constant monitoring of the EU legislation on anti-discrimination should be implemented and the member states are required to improve their antidiscrimination legislation in order to ensure the full compliance with the provisions of the EU Directives.
- To provide programs, co-financed by the EU structural funds for fostering vocational courses for members of Roma communities, aimed at developing their professional knowledge for economic activities in the traditional vocations and for developing new self-employment opportunities, among other through social entrepreneurship, and with the help of supported incubators, adapted to special Roma requirements.
- To support non-governmental organizations and institutions dealing with activities that are contributing to rising awareness of the population on the Roma grievances, to ensuring the equality treatment, elimination of discrimination, human rights and social development of Roma.
- To provide the possibilities that the local authorities and Roma organisations apply for EU funding for the urban and communal arrangements of Roma settlements, including providing supply of water and electricity.
- To provide an adequate funding of programs, aimed at procuring increasing attendance of Roma children to kinder gardens and schools of different vocational orientation and on different levels. In addition, adoption of special grants within the scholarship European programme, aimed at providing Roma students with opportunities to acquire education on secondary and university levels.
- To explore the ways for further acknowledging the historical fact that Roma were victims of holocaust during the WW II, to continue with activities of international recognition of the Roma genocide and to support the inclusion of the Roma genocide within the Holocaust Remembrance Days, research and educational activities.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE REDUPRE PROJECT CAN BE OBTAINED FROM:**

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