

**TACKLING STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICES
BETWEEN ROMA AND NON-ROMA
IN THE EU MEMBER STATES:
BULGARIA, ITALY, ROMANIA AND SLOVENIA**

Editor in Chief: Prof.Dr. Silvo Devetak

Maribor, Slovenia, 2013

**Tackling Stereotypes and Prejudices between Roma and Non-Roma in the EU Member States:
Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and Slovenia**

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A NOTE OF THE EDITOR

1. This publication contains an outlook of the main results and of pertinent theoretical observations of experts, members of NGOs who in the period 2011-2013 conducted the international project: “Identifying and reducing stereotypes as a source of conflicts between Roma and non-Roma population – Cases of Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and Slovenia compared.” One of the main outcomes of the project are the Recommendations to national, regional and local authorities of the countries involved and to the EU structure that is dealing with these issues (pp. 331-343). The project has been namely realised with the assistance of the European Union, DG Justice.

In order to come as close as possible to the reality of life situations that could be to a given extent being compared they have decided to realise the project activities in the carefully selected local geographical areas of those countries. In Bulgaria they focused on the circumstances in the broader area of the municipality of Razgrad. In Italy they selected the region of Friuli – Venezia Giulia. In Romania where it was, due to the type of settlement of Roma, difficult to localise the area that will be comparable with those in other countries they focused on Roma settled in the areas of Timișoara, Sânpetru Mare, Sântana, and Aleșd. In Slovenia they selected three municipalities of the region called Bela Krajina i.e. the municipalities of Črnomelj, Metlika and Semič. The locations of the project’s activities see on the map in Appendices (p. 345). Several consecutive waves of the World and European Values Survey (<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org>) have revealed that in 2012 was the social distance in regards Roma huge but was particularly pronounced in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe where more than two thirds of Roma are concentrated.

The coordinator of the project’s international consortium was ISCOMET Institute for ethnic and regional studies from Maribor, Slovenia. The project’s 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 Centre for Roma Communities (RSRC), Cluj Napoca and Euro regional Centre 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, Črnomelj – all from Slovenia

2. At least on the eastern part of these locations – in the Balkans – has Gypsy been one of the oldest ethnic groups that settled these territories in the process of the great “re-settling of nations.” Prof. Dr. Ilona Tomova reported in her article on the situation of Roma in Bulgaria (pp. 17-58) that the presence of Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire was documented during the 7th century when the Byzantine canonist Theodor Balsamon drew the attention of the churchmen and laymen towards the Roma twice in order to reduce the contacts between the local Christian populations with the newcomers to the possible minimum. During the time when the first Roma groups arrive to the Balkans, the Eastern Orthodox Church made namely immense efforts to limit the spread of heresies and paganism and for imposing of Christianity in the newly-baptized kingdoms. The Gypsies were just one of the groups, salient and helpless enough, that were an object of persecution as “pagans” stressed Tomova.

3. The REDUPRE projects brought together an excellent group of partners which have the ability to complement each other and were able to develop a common methodology and common goals when it

was necessary. This is a very important matter when organising an international project. The majority of partners have been ISCOMET co-operators for many years. With some of them we have developed a fruitful cooperation in developing common projects dealing with democracy, human rights, inter-religions dialogue and cross-border cooperation as a tool of conciliation and friendship in the period after the 90s when was than South Eastern Europe in great disarray caused by transition and the carnage in ex-Yugoslavia. In the realisation of REDUPRE new colleagues have join us – for instance, from Association INTEGRO from Razgrad, Bulgaria and from the Resource centre for Roma communities from Cluj-Napoca, Romania – who brought into our NGOs community of “believers” a new impetus and knowledge. In the process or realisation of REDUPRE activities had thus emerged a new international group of civil society’s experts who show the common “identification” with the grievances of Roma people who represent the greatest “ethnic minority” in the EU. Roma are living on the “other side” of the European society’s standards, under the pressure of overt discrimination because of their ethnic and racial origin, and are (for the time being) unable to defend their rights and human dignity. The EUNEG international group has enriched its knowledge of problems with which the Roma people are confronted and first of all strengthen the collegial and professional relations among them that are a *condition sine qua non* for the efficient functioning of one international group with common ideals and viewpoints on Roma issues. A great privilege for our work was the collaboration of two “external evaluators” of our work – Prof. Dr. Jan Berting, the Emeritus professor of the Rotterdam University and Ass. Prof. Dr. Jernej Letnar Čerňič from the Graduate School of Governmental and European Studies, Slovenia.

4. Why we have chosen the problem of prejudices and stereotypes in the relations between Roma and non-Roma people as a topic of our project? The reason was very simple. Contemplating about the question why is not possible to implement efficiently, for instance, the positive approaches to the Roma communities as are numerous EU and national strategies or local initiatives we came to the conclusions that are prejudices and stereotypes of each other that exist on both sides one of the very important reasons for the state of affairs. The same could be said for the manly negative evaluation of Roma by the majority population. Hence, it was necessary to explore the radices of this psychological state of mind especially on the side of the majority of population that is in the majority of cases the foundation on which the position of “democratic majority” is build. As illustration of the REDUPRE theoretical standpoints in this regard consult the articles of Dr. Gregor Maučec “Theoretical conclusions emanating from the project’s activities” and “Identifying and changing stereotypes between Roma and non – Roma people” (pp. 261-266 and pp. 275-282). The article of Dr. Vera Klopčič “Broadening the understanding of social consequences of prejudices and stereotypes between Roma and non-Roma: historical and contemporary perspective” represent a unique study of the social consequences of the treated phenomenon in the historical context (pp. 283-289). While the article of Prof. Dr. Jan Berting and Dr. Christiane Villain-Gandossi “The political, economic and social representation of the society that has lost ‘its roots’ in real life is the disjunction phenomenon of the EU” placed the Roma problem in the broader context of inter-cultural and inter-ethnic relations within the EU (pp. 267-282).

5. As the basis of the REDUPRE project a elaborated program of work with time-table was prepared. In addition have the partners agreed on the methodology for realising particular actions. They established at the very beginning a working group considering those and similar topics. Any misunderstanding or problem regarding the realisation of particular actions was resolved in amicable way through the dialogue of partners.

6. The first goal of the REDUPRE project was to prepare the analyses of the situation of Roma in the given country with emphasis on the circumstances in the areas that were the object of the project’s activities. On this basis we have than prepared detailed contents and methodology of realising the project’s activities, of course, with emphasis on the problems that have been put forward as the most

urgent in the particular analyses. In order to provide the possibilities for comparative analyses of the situations we prepared the analyses. In the context of the analyses of the situation in general, also from the historical point of view, we have provided in accordance with the agreed structure of the study the information and comments of the following topics: 1) legal situation, 2) education, 3) employment, 4) healthcare, and 5) housing conditions.

The summaries of these very large and documented analyses are published in the First Chapter of this publication.

Prof. Dr. Ilona Tomova wrote in her article on Bulgaria (pp.189-200) a stricken revelation that “are Roma among the most stigmatized, marginalized and discriminated groups in Bulgaria, in the Balkans and in Europe as a whole” and that “at the moment, the pressure for integration of Roma comes mainly from the European Union and not from the political structures and the civic organisations of Roma. The Roma community in Bulgaria is the youngest in the country. Three fifths of it consists of children and young adults – twice as much as amongst the ethnic Bulgarians.

Prof. Ezio Benedetti and Prof. Antonietta Piacquadio analysed the situation of Roma in Italy (pp. 59-95), which is characterised by their division between the “old” autochthonous Roma (Sinti) and the new comers, mostly as immigrants from the Balkans, and by not recognition of Roma problems in the national legislation, and by a great number of regional legislation on different Roma issues that is more or less a dead letter on the paper. They offered an original view on the Roma family that is for a population like the Roma, without a territory and therefore without any public institution or state the most important element of their social organisation. In addition to the family it exists in Italy the *kumpània*, a set of families which are not necessarily united by ties of kinship.

Both authors had been complemented with articles “The main juridical issues concerning Roma/Sinti communities in Italy: no recognition-no progress” by Prof. Ezio Benedetti (pp. 297-306) and “Double discrimination towards Roma/Sinti women in Italy: juridical and social perspectives” by Prof. Antonietta Piacquadio (pp. 307-313)

Ana Leu revealed in her article (pp. 97-143) an astonishing fact that were in the Romanian Principalities Roma slaves and for a long time used as exchange objects. There are documents from the 19th century proving that carriages were being bought from Vienna in exchange for 30 Gypsy nomads; young Gypsies were paid as a fee for medical services, and slave auctions were organized at monasteries. The abolition of slavery was a process that ended in 1856.

According to the 2002 census, the total population of Romania amounts to 21 680 974, of which the Hungarian ethnic group accounts for 6.6% (1 431 807), while the Roma ethnic group represents 2.47% (535 140). Consequently, the Roma are the second largest ethnic minority group in the country. According to the data made available by the Council of Europe (Roma and Travellers Division) in 2008 (quoted by SALTO Cultural Diversity Resource Centre), Romania ranks first in Europe with a total number of Roma which amounts to 1.85 million, representing 8.5% of the country’s population.

The religious makeup of Roma points to an overwhelming Orthodox majority (82%) followed at considerable distance by Pentecostals (6.4%), Roman Catholics (3.8%) and Reformed (3%). If blending *marital status* into the demographic picture Leu wrote, one discovers that in 2002, 73% Roma were not married, 22% – married, 1% – divorced, 4% – widows/widowers. A significant share of the population (18%) was also held by those in a consensual union.

In order to have an up-to-date perspective on the portrayals of the Roma, the REDUPRE team monitored the online versions of the first four large circulations daily newspapers in the quality press category: *Adevărul*, *România Liberă*, *Jurnalul Național* and *Evenimentul Zilei* (The Audit Bureau of Circulations in Romania, 2011).

According to the official data published in the Mojca Frankovič article about 7 000 Roma are living in Slovenia. But in the 2002 consensus survey only 3 246 people or 0.2 % of the population claimed to be Roma and 3 834 people defined the Roma language as their mother tongue (pp. 145-187).

The socio-economic status of Roma in Slovenia is generally poor. Their material, social, educational

and occupational level is exceptionally low when compared to that of the majority population. They badly integrate in education and because of the frequent failure in this field; they fit the group of permanently unemployed; because of their low level of education. A large majority of the adult Roma is illiterate, dependant on occasional jobs and financial social support. Roma in Slovenia have no social power; they are dispersed in Roma communities and permanently marginalized. They mostly don't have basic living conditions. Rare communities are communally organized and have infrastructure which would enable normal living circumstances.

The Law about the Roma community in the Republic of Slovenia was passed in March 2007 and it determined the specific rights of the Roma community in Slovenia. It has been a huge step towards the assertion of specific rights of Roma, because it regulated the status of the Roma community in Slovenia; it defined the concern of the state organs and those of self-regulating local communities by realising specific rights of the Roma communities. Besides that it also arranged the organisation of the Roma community on the national and local level as well as financing. A Slovenian speciality is that in 20 municipalities with the significant number of Roma they elect their representative in the local council. Nevertheless are Roma in Slovenia victims of systematic discrimination in spite of the achievements in last years claimed in his article Darko Rudaš, president of the Association of the Roma Councillors of Slovenia (pp. 315-317). A pertinent complement to the analyses of Roma situation in Slovenia represents the theoretical article of Nada Žagar, M.A. "Prejudices in the light of discrimination of Roma" (pp. 319-324).

7. In the period November 2012 – March 2013, a quantitative surveys of the stereotypes and views on Roma – non Roma relations of population were realised in the areas were the project "Identifying and Reducing Prejudices as a Source of Conflict between Roma and Non-Roma Population – Cases of Bulgaria, Italy, Romania, and Slovenia Compared – REDUPRE" has been realised. The aim of these surveys and of the "in depth interviews" with selected personalities, which were organised in parallel, were to identify the main characteristics of the public opinion concerning the topics that constitute the contents of the REDUPRE activities.

8. In the frame of REDUPRE much diversified activities were the most indicative three workshops, which were organized in each of the partner country. The core agenda of these events comprises the same topics which were enlarged in accordance with specific circumstances in each country and location respectively. The contents of the event and the methodology of its realization was carefully prepared taking into account the outcomes of the "in deep interviews" and "opinion surveys" (see point 6 above) and the theoretical background provided by a special REDUPRE group of experts in the field.

On the workshops (and seminars) we brought together adequate structure of local Roma and non Roma population. The structure of participants was adapted to the specific circumstances in each country and locality respectively but in general comprises the following strata of population by particular workshop:

- Members of commune and local councils and other organs, leaders of local Roma organizations and of relevant organizations of the majority population.
- Members of local public organizations and services dealing with Roma people (teachers, principals, social workers, Roma school assistants, police officers, guidance counsellors and the similar).
- Selected representatives of Roma and non-Roma women with emphasis on Roma women who "has been successful" on their professional life.

The aim of organizing similar discussions in each of the partner country was to create a possibility to make a comparative analysis of the outcomes and thus provide the organizers among other with standpoints for elaborating the conclusions of general character for all countries and the recommendations – common and separate for each country – to the local, regional and national authorities in Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and Slovenia and to the competent structure of the European Union as well.

Short reviews of the “lessons and proposals” deriving from the workshops in Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and Slovenia are published on pp. 229-254 of this publication.

9. In addition to the raising of awareness of the population involved and of public opinion in general are the Recommendations to local, regional and national authorities of Bulgaria, Italy, Romania, Slovenia and to the competent bodies and agencies of the EU the most valuable outcome of the REDUPRE project (pp. 331-343). The Recommendations are carefully prepared and deal with the proposals on how to approach very concretely the outstanding Roma problems in the countries concerned. The first part of it addressed the problems that are common for all REDUPRE countries. The second part of the Recommendations includes proposals and suggestions to national, regional and local authorities of each of the REDUPRE country separately, i.e. to Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and Slovenia. The third part of Recommendations invites the relevant organs and bodies of the EU to consider the proposals made by the REDUPRE project partners.

10. We were very satisfied with the coverage of REDUPRE activities in the mass media, on national and local level, of the project’s countries. In the REDUPRE archives is a vast documentation, which is including clips from papers, TV video and radio audio reports on particular REDUPRE. In illustration we would mention that, for instance, in Italy REDUPRE actions were covered by RAI TG news, by the regional newspaper “Il Piccolo” and magazine “Economia e Società.” In Slovenia has been news on REDUPRE activities published on the national RTV SLO, commercial TV Siol.net and on local radio station Radio Krka as well. Information on its activities was published also in the National internet portal “Siol.net” in bulletin of the Slovenian press agency and in the local newspapers “Dolenjski list” and “Belokranjec.” In Bulgaria was information on REDUPRE activities spread among the broader public by the local media Ecuin 7. Of special importance in this regard was the interview of Prof. Dr. Ilona Tomova in daily programme show “Кой говори?” of the Bulgarian “Darik Radio.”

Extensive information on the REDUPRE project and commentary of the problems of Roma in the EU with emphasis on those encountered by Roma in REDUPRE countries was given by the REDUPRE Coordinator Prof. Dr. Silvo Devetak in his interview on the national RTV SLO program “Kaj govoriš? = So vakeres?” (What do you speak?).

CHAPTER I

ANALYSES OF THE SITUATION OF ROMA IN THE FOUR COUNTRIES WITH EMPHASIS ON CHOSEN LOCALITIES

**(Razgrad in Bulgaria; Friuli Venezia Giulia in Italy; Timisoara, Sanpetru
Mare, Santana and Alesd in Romania and Bela krajina in Slovenia)**

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ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION OF ROMA IN BULGARIA

The unwanted people – prejudices and stereotypes, discrimination and social exclusion

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INTRODUCTION

The Roma are among the most stigmatized, marginalized and discriminated groups in Bulgaria, in the Balkans and in Europe as a whole. Several consecutive waves of the World and European Values Survey have revealed that the social distance in regards Roma is huge but is particularly pronounced in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe where more than two thirds of Roma are concentrated. Their mass migrations to Western Europe and the USA after 2001 have led to a series of deportations from the recipient countries, particularly Italy, France, and Germany, the Netherlands, Finland, Canada and others – and in some cases with cases of extreme violence. Here's what the results of the international comparative "Minorities and Discrimination Survey" (EU-MIDIS) reveal:

Looking at the breakdown of the results according to specific groups in Member States, the 'top ten' experiencing the highest levels of discrimination over a 12 month period were, in descending order: Roma in Czech Republic (64%), Africans in Malta (63%), Roma in Hungary (62%), Roma in Poland (59%), Roma in Greece (55%), Sub-Saharan Africans in Ireland (54%), North Africans in Italy (52%), Somalis in Finland (47%); Somalis in Denmark (46%); and Brazilians in Portugal (44%).

As an average, each Roma person experienced more incidents of discrimination over a 12 month period than other aggregate groups surveyed – such as Sub-Saharan Africans or Turkish respondents. However, looking at the breakdown of the results for specific groups in Member States, the highest number of discrimination incidents over a 12 month period was experienced by North Africans in Italy: an average of 9.29 incidents for every North African person interviewed in Italy. The next highest number was 6.81 incidents for each Roma person in Poland and 6.69 for each Roma in Hungary (EU-MIDIS: 9).

1. CONSTRUCTING THE IMAGE OF THE ROMA.¹ STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICES

1.1. The history of the Roma in Bulgarian lands – the accumulation of negative representations and prejudices towards them

The ethnic prejudices towards Roma have a rich history and a long tradition in Europe, at the Balkans, and specifically in the Bulgarian society. Despite living in the Bulgarian lands for centuries, the Roma are traditionally perceived as "the most different," "the most distant" and "most alien." A number of factors have contributed to this image, some of which have been present for centuries, relying on the authority of powerful institutions.

The rejections of Gypsies/Roma by the Church during the Middle Ages and the Modern Age as "pagans" or "sinners" (Soulis 1961, Liegeois 1995, Fraser 1992) was of utmost importance

During the first centuries of the Ottoman Invasion in Europe, the Gypsies used to perform different military tasks and were perceived as an inseparable part of the Osman army. A considerable part of the Roma was "*musulems*" –volunteer non-conscripts who provided for their existence from military service and does not receive any support from the government (Mutafchieva 1996, Ivanova 2012).¹ This suggests their probable participation in the suppression of numerous riots of the conquered Christian population between 14th-16th centuries. The association of Gypsies with the Ottoman Empire could have probably contributed to the growing negative feelings and stereotypes towards them, especially on the Balkans.

¹ The politically correct term "Roma" entered the public space, the political documents, the research analyses and the media in Central and Eastern Europe only after 1990. In the historical documents of the earlier periods only the term "Gipsy" is being used; in the documents from the Ottoman Empire the terms used are "*Chengene*" and "*Kapti*;" in the documents of the Byzantium Empire the term "*Atinganos*" is being used. In the current text I use the term "Gipsy" primarily when historical sources and data are being interpreted, in quotations or sometimes as a synonym of "Roma," despite the broader meaning of the term "Gipsy." In none of the cases I do ascribe any negative connotations to this term and its derivatives.

Later, when Gypsies executed more military-supporting tasks for the Ottoman Army, they were deprived of their higher military personnel status in the late middle ages and the Early Modern Era. Their rejection as “nomads” and “spies” by the settled Christian urban and rural population dates from this period onwards, both in the areas conquered by the Seljuk Turks, as well as in Central Europe when they were settling there or in periods of military confrontations (Fraser 1992). It was this suspicion and prejudice that the Roma are spying for the Ottomans that has been the main driver for some Bulgarian Revolutionaries to shoot some members of this community during the April Uprising in 1876.

Throughout the centuries, their social exclusion has been driven both by the discrimination against them for being poor, as well as by the urban governments’ reluctance to grant them citizenship in the cities in order to avoid the obligation to look after and support them with their own voluntary funds for the poor (Lucassen, Cottaar 1998; Willems 1997). Such precautions were the main drivers for a similar stance in post-liberation Bulgaria, neatly documented in regional archives (Tomova 2007).

Their perception as “foreign,” or as “enemies” during the era of the modern nation-states building in Central and Eastern Europe – an era of bloody national-liberation struggles, as was the case with Bulgaria – is also important.

The activation of the national police structures in European countries has helped to marginalize the Roma through their increasing use of preventive measures against any potential disruptors of the public order and security, the steps towards the assimilation of the diverse, particularly the more populous, minorities and the measures towards “disciplining” the poor (Lucassen, Cottaar 1998; Willems 1997). Healthcare and hygiene institutions in Bulgaria, following the examples from Western Europe, have also played an important role in reinforcing the negative attitudes and strengthening the control over the Roma by constantly denying Roma and Nomads access to villages and other settlements in order to prevent the transmission of diseases and infections to the local people and livestock (Tomova 2007).

The ability to transmit nationally and internationally “authoritative” negative information about Roma via the media, scientific publications and governmental informational channels ever since the 19th century has also been a factor in the spreading of the negative image of” Roma – hence their increasing social exclusion (Lucassen, Cottaar 1998; Willems 1997).

Although to a varying degree, all of these factors have contributed to the formation of negative attitudes towards the Roma in the Bulgarian lands during different historical periods. However, the final outcome is an accumulation of negative presentations, stereotypes and prejudices, the attribution of low social status to the members of this ethnic group regardless of their personal achievements and characteristics, discrimination and social exclusion.

1.2. The settlings of the Roma

The history of Roma’s settling on Bulgarian lands has not been explored well enough. Some famous western European Gypsy experts, such as A. Fraser, D. Kenrick, P. Puxton, as well as many representatives of the Roma intelligentsia in Bulgaria, point out the King Ivan Shishman’s Rila Charter from 1378 as the first written evidence of the presence of Roma population in Bulgaria (Fraser 1992; Kenrick, 1998). They base their claim on a quite liberal interpretation of an unclear text, in which the term “*Agoupovi kleti*” is mentioned. However, other Gypsy experts interpret this name as the name of an area used by seasonal herdsmen settling (Marushiakova, Popov 1993).

The hypothesis of a mass presence of Roma in the Bulgarian lands even since 7th-8th century is widespread, with even earlier settlements of smaller groups of Roma not being ruled out. This hypothesis is based on indirect but still quite convincing evidence.

During 1018, after struggling for nearly half a century, the First Bulgarian Kingdom was concurred by Byzantium. David Crowe raises the hypothesis that the Gypsies have been settled during the Byzantine rule, but the Byzantine chroniclers had their attention focused mainly on the invasions of barbarians, the Romans and crusaders on the Byzantium-governed lands and did not necessarily note the arrival of

such a small, non-military group (Crowe 1994).

The presence of Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire at that time has been documented. During the 7th century, the Byzantine canonist Theodor Balsamon drew the attention of the churchmen and laymen towards the Roma twice in order to reduce the contacts between the local Christian populations with the newcomers to the possible minimum.² In the Canon LXI of the Council in Trullo he threatened with a 6 year long excommunication of any Christian, who earned his living by predicting the future, or by entertaining an audience using wild animals – bears and snakes. He declared these actions as Satanist and proclaimed the Gypsies, who practiced them, as false prophets.



A century later, Athanasius the First, the patriarch of Constantinople, sent out a circulatory letter to the churchmen in which he instructed them to urge their congregations to not communicate with fortune-tellers, dancing bears breeders, serpent-charmer and “in particular not to let Gypsies (Adinganous) to enter their homes as they teach Satanist things” (Soulis 1961). Of course, the local population has been using these “dishonourable” services for some time before this would draw the attention of the clergy, and it took even longer for a decision at the highest level to be taken stipulating special measures to ban such practices. Few centuries later, Joseph Briennius, in a treatise concerning the reasons for the misfortunes that afflicted the Byzantines, mentioned the people’s daily contacts with magicians, fortune tellers and Gypsies. During the XV century, another Byzantine cannon translated into Old Slavic recommended a 5 year excommunication for those, who seek the Gypsies’ predictions of the future, or who let fortune-tellers into their homes in order to perform magic to cure diseases, or for solving some other problem they may encounter (Soulis 1961, Fraser 1992).

The effectiveness of the official clerical letters, cannons and tracts aimed against the Gypsies might be put in doubt for variety of reasons but still, the unconditional stigmatization of the members of these groups as the “servants of the Devil” has had a strong impact reinforcing the mass prejudice against

2 From the XVI-XVII on the Gypsies-muslems were performing primarily military-supportive functions – most commonly transporting the cannons and were providing security (Mutafchieva 1996, Ivanova 2012).

1.3. Roma in the Ottoman Empire

In 1396, the Second Bulgarian Kingdom ultimately fell under the rule of the Ottoman Turks. The presence of a Roma population was mentioned in the Ottoman tax registries already after the first decades following the conquest of the Bulgarian lands. From XV to XVII century, the majority of the Roma described in those registries were Christians with Slavic names. This suggests that they had been in a close contact with the local population for long time, had accepted its religion and naming system, and had spoken its language (Stojanovski 1989, Zirojevich 1981, Mujic 1953 and others).

New groups of Gypsies arrived alongside the Ottomans, who had accepted Islam already before arriving to Europe. Part of them had served the conquering army, while others had joined the victors in search of better living conditions.

The first laws specifically directed towards the Roma in the European part of the Ottoman Empire were introduced in the 16th century. In 1530, the Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent issues "The law for the Gypsies in *Rumeli Vilayet*," and another law is issued in 1541 – for the governor of the Roma *sanjak*. Those laws defined the proper way of collecting fines and taxes from this population, the amount of tax for the Muslim and Christian Roma, as well as a special tariff for taxing the families of prostituting Roma women. The cohabitation and the shared nomadic living among Muslim and Christian Gypsies is banned (Mjuic 1952, Galabov 1961, Stojanovski 1989, Fraser 1992, Marishiakova and Popov 1993, 2000).

The data from the numerous Ottoman tax registries give grounds to claim that in the period between the 15th and 19th century the Gypsies in Ottoman Empire had a social status and rights similar to those of the rest of the "*raya*."³ Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566) put systematic efforts to unify the taxation approach to the productive population and to remove many categories that had special obligations towards the state (such as the Gypsies allied with the army in the framework of military and military-servicing units) by reclassifying them into an ordinary *raya*. The military organization of Roma started to deteriorate since the time of Murad the Third (1574-1595). With their military functions vanishing, so were the tax exemptions, they became increasingly involved in various tasks needed for the normal functioning of the cities and in the provision of craftsmen services to the rural population (Petrovic 1976, Zirojevich 1981, Domitrov 1997-1999, Ivanova 2012).

Although very rarely, there were cases of Roma who occupied high positions in the Balkan lands of the Empire – doctors, prison guards, sextons, janissaries, *spahis* (the Ottoman landlords) (Stojanovski 1989). The Ottomans collected the same taxes and fines from the Roma as they did from other subjects. The *cadis*' (Ottoman judges') registries reveal that the Roma used and benefited from the same judiciary services as all other non-Muslim subjects of the Empire. The Turkish authorities required from the local population to not resort to mob law when dealing with Gypsies suspected in criminal offenses, but to hand them over them to the authorities for a just investigation and conviction to take place. There were documented cases in which the *cadis*, who were dealing with Roma appeals against damages inflicted upon them, ruled in favour of the Roma and demanded repartitions from the damaging party. There were multiple rulings from *cadis* and tax collectors demanding Roma be freed from slavery, or receive a tax exemption when severe diseases, or natural disasters, had befallen them (Jorga 1930, Crowe 1994).

Starting from the 18th century the Muslim Gypsies in the European parts of the Ottoman Empire began to outnumber the Christian Gypsies. The main reason for this conversion was economic pressure. Accepting Islam and taking up Muslim names made their economic activities easier and ensured lower tax burden. Around the same time, the Ottoman authorities took bolder measures for the permanent settling down of the Roma and their involvement with agriculture in *chiftliks*.

Ottomans showed considerable mistrust towards the Roma, regardless of their religious affiliation. This

3 The Ottomans called "*raya*" the subdued non-Muslim population of the Empire.

was due to their conviction that the Gypsies were not following strictly neither the religious traditions of Islam or the government laws – a suspicion similar to the one the Orthodox Christians had.⁴ Muslim Gypsies were forced to pay taxes which were only levied on Christians and Jews solely because of this mistrust in their orthodoxy. Judiciary documents from Bitolia reveal that the Muslim Gypsies had to systematically prove that they implement Muslim rituals and follow Muslim requirements in order to be exempt from paying “*cizye*.”⁵ It was explicitly written in some laws that Gypsies were not wanted for helping the Ottoman army – even in the army supply rear-guard. When the Ottoman Army transformed into a conscript one in the XVIII’s century, Muslim Gypsies were not recruited until 1874. They did not have the right to become Muslim clergy either and were often not permitted to vote in the elections of imams. In this regard, the position of the Muslim Gypsies did not differ much from that of the Christian *raya*.

Despite the aforementioned restrictions, the position that Gypsies had in the Ottoman Empire was much more favourable than the one of the Roma in Western and Central Europe, who had been suffering from systematic persecution, annihilation and assimilation.⁶ The situation was also drastically different from the semi-slave status of the Roma in Wallachia and Moldova, maintained until the mid-60s of the XIX century. The Ottoman Empire did not banish, kill, lock up, nor send their Roma to be rowers in their fleet as did the governments in Western European countries. The Empire did not make them “forget” their language and take up a different ethnic identity in a short period of time, as it was attempted in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. This made possible the preservation of the language, culture, ethnic identity and the traditional way of life of a major part of the Roma in Bulgarian lands and in the Balkan states that emerged after the fall of the Empire. At the same time, the ethnic tolerance of the Ottomans cultivated a relatively high tolerance towards the ethnically distinct groups among the local population as well.

The attitudes of the local populations towards the Gypsies had probably been quite ambivalent. The cultural differences were used as justification and markers for obtaining a different social status. The Gypsies occupied a lower status level as compared to Greeks, Serbians, Bulgarians, Jews, Armenians and other subjects of the Ottoman Empire,⁷ and that had seriously hampered their assimilation. D.Crowe

4 The Ottoman traveler, historian and poet Evliya Çelebi expressed succinctly the suspicion in regards Roma Muslims that was typical for the Ottomans: “The Rumelian Gypsies were celebrating together with the infidels the infelicitous holiday of the painted eggs, with the Muslims – the holiday of the offering, and together with the Jews – the cane holiday not accepting either of the religions. For that reason when they are buried, our imams don’t read prayers, and close by the Bended Gate a separate space is allocated for Gypsies’ cemetery. Once having been rejected that way, a special *firman* was issued imposing *haraç* on them. This is why nowadays two *haraç* are being charged on the Gypsies. According to an account from the times of the Conqueror, *haraç* was being charged even on dead Gypsies while they were still on their spot in the neighborhood, even on the dead ones” (Evliya Çelebi 1972).

5 *Cizye* is a universal monetary tax levied in the non-Muslim population in the Ottoman Empire.

6 In France for example in 1504 Louis XII issued an order for dispelling of the Gypsies out of the country. Until 1510, failure to abide the order was punishable by hanging. Later on it has been prohibited for more than three or four Roma to assemble in one place. In 1647 the “bohemian” way of life was punishable by galleys. In 1506 - 1785 in Italy 147 injunction against Gypsies have been adopted. In Spain forced assimilation policy has been implemented for centuries. Exclusion of Roma was practiced in even harsher forms in Germany, Holland, Switzerland and other countries of Western Europe (Liegeois 1994, Fraser 1992).

7 David Crowe quoted Peter Sugar’s view, according to which Roma status was so low that they were not even allowed to settle in neighborhoods of their own in the cities but each night after work they were forced to leave and go back to their shacks outside the city limits. However some clarification is needed here. The Ottomans everywhere accepted the social hierarchy and social system governing the population that was in place in the conquered lands legalizing it without imposing new matrices. They didn’t oppose the slave labor in Wallachia and Moldova. Their normative frameworks only confirmed and reproduced the existing low status of the Roma in the Bulgarian and Serbian lands. At the same time, the notion that the Roma were not allowed to settle in the cities is over-generalized. A lot of evidence of the presence of distinct Roma neighborhoods in Serbian and Bulgarian cities in the XV century exists and the attempts to stimulate the settling in order to make the tax and fees collection easier reinforce this trend. Crowe himself provided evidence from Ilhan Hanin that in Plovdiv 907 Roma lived in 1489–1490 and their number reached 1000–1100 in 1516. Other Bulgarian towns with numerous Roma families in XV–XVI century were Yambol, Stara Zagora, Sofia and Nikopol. Based on various registries, A. Stojanovski and S. Ivanova show that in the Ottoman Empire the small Gypsy *cemaats* were usually in close proximity to the rest of the population and that Gypsies didn’t live apart but in mixed neighborhoods/villages; however the existence of separated Roma neighborhoods has been recorded already in the XVI century in some towns. According to both authors, the spatial separation into distinct neighborhoods becomes a common practice during the following centuries (Stojanovski 1989, Ivanova 2012).

raised the hypothesis that the main reason for such lowliest status was the lack of clear professional affiliation of the Gypsy population, but this hypothesis needs a more thorough reasoning. The historians note that Roma have often taken up crafts, which “grow old” and start to generate lower incomes; that means that the prestige of practicing such a craft also declines (Georgieva 1992). Indeed, they have performed various agricultural functions, as well as sometimes they held specific professions and skills, which differentiated them from the rest, and which had led to perceiving them as “impure” and “sinful” – sufficient reason for contempt, stigmatization, spatial segregation and limiting of contacts even with those representatives of the group, who do not practice “impure crafts.” In pre-Modern society, the crafts bore different status load, which automatically reflected on the people and families that practice them. On the one hand, the Gypsies had been sought for these specific skills and for their willingness to do things that the rest of the population was unwilling to do.⁸ On the other hand, they had been feared, distanced away from and despised precisely because of these abilities and crafts. In that way the Gypsies fit into the traditional south-Balkan societies in quite contradictory way. Those sedentary were better accepted – both in the economic life as well as in the festive-ritual system.

1.4. Roma after the liberation of Bulgaria (1878)

The period of the Bulgarian national identity formation was a time in which the relationship towards “others” changed drastically, including the Roma. Indeed, the Gypsies had never been seen as an immediate threat to the Bulgarian nation-building; that has made the attitude towards them more moderate. At the same time, however, the fact that the majority of them had been Muslim put them into the group of “natural enemies” and reinforced the suspicions towards them. During the revolutionary actions against the Ottoman rule in 1876, there had been cases of mob law in regards Muslim Gypsies in some towns taking different forms – from “baptizing” to murder.⁹ These were not acts on a mass scale, but rather symptoms of the growing ethnocentrism and nationalism in critical moments of the Bulgarian Revival. When analysing these facts, one should keep in mind the entire instrumental nature of such behaviour. They were driven by the intent of the revolutionaries to unite around themselves the peaceful Bulgarian population and to bend it to their military orders, demonstrating their power (including the power to proclaim someone as an enemy and execute him under this claim). The killings aimed also to prevent the eventual withdrawal from revolutionary activities of the upraised villagers at the clash with the Turkish military formations by making them responsible for the death of their fellow citizens that was punishable by hanging. The choice of Roma as the “necessary victim” is easily foreseen – they were Muslims, therefore alien, and possibly – enemies; they were despised, which made even the drastic measures of violence against them psychologically easier to commit; while at the same time Roma were quite helpless and were not in a condition to mount organized resistance to the rebels. Other reasons have also helped solidify the belief in the “natural inequality” of the Roma in the epoch of Balkan nationalism. On the one hand, the XVIII – XIX century was the period when Gypsies started falling behind in social, educational and cultural aspects compared to Bulgarians. On the other hand, comparing Bulgarians to other Balkan nations that have surpassed them in terms of economic and cultural development, have achieved some form of political autonomy, or full independence from the Ottoman Empire, was contributing to the feeling of inferiority among Bulgarians. They possibly had a subconscious need to compare to someone who was more inferior to them and whom they could easily

⁸ I mean the relatively more frequent performing by Gypsies of occupations like executioners, gravediggers, animal slaughterers, processors of leather and other sub-products of slaughtered animals, rat- and stray dogs and cats slayers, manufacturing of “magical objects,” including practicing witchcraft and disenchanting, not to mention prostitution, which everywhere in pre-modern societies were lavishly paid but at the same time deeply disgusted leading to social isolation of those performing those “dirty” occupations. On the “disgrace” related with performing such occupations see also Stuart (1999).

⁹ Based on all the historical sources I have read I think it’s about not more than two executions throughout the entire period of the preparation and realization of the April uprising of 1876 but those were spectacular and quite traumatic acts that shouldn’t be ignored or forgotten just because they were not a mass practice.

blame for all of their negative characteristics which had tormented them and of which they had been ashamed. This “someone” ended up being the Roma.

In the years after the Liberation the specific nature of the Bulgarian nationalism, which developed mainly as an empowerment of the ethnic Bulgarians, added to the marginalization of large minority communities, including the Roma. Just like other Balkan nations¹⁰ struggling for national independence during the continuing collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Bulgarians borrowed the German model for an ethnic nation, i.e. of a state of one ethnic group destined to guarantee the political, economic, social, cultural and symbolical reign of this dominant group. This is the model which R. Brubaker (1997) calls “nationalizing nation-state.” It traumatically experiences itself as a “still unformed nation-state,” as a state, in which other ethnic and religious groups have to “go away,” to melt down, or at least to learn to “know their place” which is the vulnerable and stigmatized place of the “aliens,” of the dangerous, of the “inferior,” because they are different. The administrative and police control of these “aliens” strengthens, and in the case of the Bulgarian Muslims and the Roma, the efforts for their assimilation started.

The social control of those “dangerous minorities” immediately after the creation of the new Bulgarian state took up different forms and degrees of violence. It was motivated by the specific need for keeping the social order on one hand, and by the need for legitimating the power of the new national, political, economic and cultural elites in the young Bulgarian state, on the other. The new political elite enforced its rule to confirm the new social hierarchy, to enforce cultural norms, to homogenize the society, to neutralize the dangerous, to put in practice moral sanctions for the behaviour in all of its aspects, to discipline exactly through the melting down, the marginalization and the control over the potential dangerous “foreign” groups. The cultural characteristics of the Eastern Orthodox Bulgarian population were imposed as the “norm” by the institutions of the newly established state. Roma were dismissed as too distinct, as a marginalized ethnic group, situated for centuries on the bottom of the social hierarchy. A large part of them were Muslims, spoke a foreign language, and these two markers were of particular significance for defining diversity. The fact that the stereotype of the Roma was of nomads, or at least of not entirely settled people, had been very unfortunate for them. All of these attributes were seen as unwanted, prompting suspicion, fear and negative feelings and resulted in discrimination.

After the Liberation, the processes of social exclusion and/or integration of the Roma in the Bulgarian society ran at varying speeds and with some inconsistency. The Bulgarian Roma was amongst the first in Europe who received voting rights, on a par with the rest of the Bulgarian population. However, there were multiple examples of pre-election manipulation of the Roma population in the first decades after the Liberation. During the 90s of the XIX century, some impoverished Roma joined pre-electoral gangs, organized by the political parties in order to scare, or “annulment” of their political rivals. Roma-nomads were used as paid “votes,” moved to the desired place in order to cast a vote for the person, who paid them. The media, however, did not concentrate their attention so much on the political violence and corruption from the side of the government and the opposition parties, but on the individual “violators,” especially if they were Roma. Incidents of such nature were used as the rationale to accept an Act for the Change of the Electoral Law in May 1891, when non-Christian Roma and those without a permanent residence were stripped from their right to vote (Marushiakova, Popov 1993).

Additional explanation is needed in this case. We have already mentioned that the nomadism – either voluntary or forced – of some Roma subgroups has been a very important factor in the formation of negative stereotypes towards them, and for their social exclusion even though it being characteristic for an ever-decreasing part of the Roma in the Balkans. Despite the tendency for constant mass settling of the Roma in Europe, a number of Western Gypsy specialists see the nomadism as a central characteristic of this ethnic group even today (Acton 1995, Beier 1985, Fraser 1992, Liegeois 1995 and others). Nomadism itself was associated with amorality, was perceived as a threat to the sedentary

10 The same applies also to the Central-European states, which gained independence after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

society, which is why the repressions and restrictions of freedoms of the nomads were perceived as a necessity by the Church, the secular institutions of the late Middle-ages, and particularly by the different political regimes during the Modern era – the time when the sedentarism was superimposed as the norm. Similar negative stereotypes towards the nomads, as well as fears from them, are present in all European societies. Characteristics, which evoke disgust, fear, and terror and were supposed to legitimize the violent methods for their exclusion from the “normal and upright” society, were constantly, and everywhere, ascribed to nomads. They were presented as criminals “by nature,” as immoral, debauched, filthy, dishonest, irresponsible, without scruples, uncivilized, lazy, undisciplined, incompetent, “parasites” – all morally reprehensible characteristics, revealing their “inferiority” and “imperfection” as compared to the sedentary (Acton 1995). Along with all of this, they were often described also as dangerous – because of their vitality, or because of the militarism of some nomad groups, especially during the pre-Modern times, or in view of the romantic challenges they pose to the values of the modern sedentary society: the order, “degrees of freedom,” the possibilities for controlling and disciplining the citizens, the legitimacy of private property, especially over land, etc. T. Acton puts an accent on the fact, that the dominating sedentary population had the power and the ability to ethnicise, marginalize and discriminate the nomads, while the nomads were not able to institutionalize their anti-sedentary prejudices (Acton 1995).

The development of capitalist relationships in Bulgaria, on the one hand, and the shrinking of the national markets after its exit from the frame of the huge Ottoman Empire, on the other, led to a deep crisis in craftsmanship. It affected the Roma as well. With the gradual modernization of the Bulgarian society and the shrinking demand for the services provided by the Roma, the negative attitudes and stereotypes amongst the rest of the population increased. They started to be perceived as people who were unable to cope with the problems of the changing reality, useless for society, parasitizing from the charity of the rest of the population. As a result they lag behind in all social spheres – education, culture, economics, and politics.

These processes took place with differing speeds and acuteness in different Roma subgroups. Some were completely marginalized; others preserved their status via their traditional skills and crafts, while third ones took up the path of the Bulgarian poverty. Ever since the end of the XIX century, the proportion of the Roma population in factories in the developing Bulgarian industry was growing. In the beginning of the XX century, the Roma made their first attempts for the creation of their own cultural, educational, youth and sports organisations. They began to publish their own periodicals. Part of them supported the political struggles of the leftist parties.

Since 1940, when the Bulgarian governments allied the country with Nazi Germany, the Gypsies in Bulgaria became victims of multiple discriminatory actions. They were forbidden to visit central parts of the capital and of large cities, to use public transport. Their food rations were lowered tremendously when compared to the rest of the Bulgarian population - they were lower even than the ones for the Jews, who were an object of a special discriminatory policy. A part of the Roma in Sofia and the large cities were sent, alongside Jews, to labour camps. But despite Bulgaria being an ally to Nazi Germany, it does not let Jews and Roma with Bulgarian citizenship be deported in concentration camps, or be destroyed because of their ethnic belonging.

1.5. Roma in socialist Bulgaria

The political changes from the middle of the 1940s had contradictory implications for the minorities in Bulgaria, including the Roma. At first, under the influence of the pan-European post-war tendencies towards respect for human rights, the Roma receive vast opportunities for developing their culture. Their equality in all spheres of the social life was declared. Efforts were made for the increase of their educational and qualification levels. Opportunities for the lowering of the unemployment among them were created. Gradually, the overall welfare and living conditions of Roma families improves. In

March 1945, the “All-Gypsy Organization for Fight against Fascism and Racism and for the Cultural Advancement of the Gipsy Minority” was established. The Gypsy theatre “Roma” was formed in 1947. The amateur performances in arts and sports by Roma were encouraged.

However, from the mid-50s, influenced by events in the Soviet Union, the national policy in regards to Roma changed drastically. A systematic cultural assimilation was launched. The local Roma organisations were shut down, and their activities were moved to the local chapters of the “United Front.” The “Roma” theatre was closed down. The chair of the All-Gypsy Organization, Shakir Pashov, who was a Member of the Parliament and the editor of the first Roma newspapers in the country – “Istikbal” and “Romano esi” – was proclaimed as an informant to the police during the period until 9.09.1944 and was sent to a concentration camp.

On 20.10.1956 Decree No 685 of the Council of Ministers of the RSFR (Russian Socialist Federative Republic) on the “inclusion of the vagabonding Gypsies into labour” was adopted. It was followed by Decree No 1216 of the Council of Ministers of People’s Republic of Bulgaria “On the resolution of the issue of the Gypsy minority in Bulgaria” from 8.10.1957 and by Decree No 258 of the Council of Ministers “On resolving the issues of the Gypsy population in PR Bulgaria” from 17.12.1958 (Council of Ministers Gazette, 1958). Those decrees laid the legal foundations for the settling, education and work commitment of the Bulgarian Roma; they also prohibited the “begging and vagrancy.” A policy for solving Roma living problems began throughout the whole country.¹¹ The supporting social policies were “complemented” with assimilatory measures. A pressure to change the Muslim names of Roma and to subsequently form a Bulgarian ethnic identity began. The term “Gypsy” itself was considered as offensive and an insult and the Roma get the privilege to sue the “offenders.” Representatives of the Roma intelligence who had shown “excessive interest” in the history and specific culture of their ethnic group, had begun collecting of Roma folklore and were making efforts to put together a dictionary for the Roma language were put under surveillance and pressure from the structures of State Security.

2. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS. THE FEARS AND PREJUDICES RELATED TO SOME DEMOGRAPHIC SPECIFICS OF THE ROMA GROUPS IN BULGARIA

The years of serious economic and political crisis in the post-communist period coincided with deep demographical shifts. The decrease in fertility, the emigration of hundreds of thousands, mainly young people, the high mortality and the fast decrease of the population were all considered by many politicians and common people alike, as threats to the national security and weakening the military and economic power of the country.

Bulgaria is one of the countries with the fastest declining populations in Europe. According to the National Statistical Institute data, in 1989, the population of Bulgaria was 8 999 300 people; last census results (2011) show that it has shrunk to 7 351 234 people– or a decrease of 1 641 066 people for the post-communist period. Only the Roma community is growing. It is the youngest ethnic group in the country.¹² It is characterized by a number of specifics in regards its demographic behaviour, which are exaggerated by politicians and media and periodically (especially prior to elections) lead to staged panics about a “demographic invasion of the minority and mainly – the Roma,” portrayed as a fast

11 Despite the fact that tens of thousands Roma households have received interest-free loans and construction materials for building their homes, in most of the cases the loans have been so small that the most that can be built was small houses with one room, a kitchen and a tiny entrance-hall. The mushrooming Roma households didn’t have an option but to add illegally rooms for the grown-up and married sons or to build a house of their own close to that of their parents without any construction permits. As a result the over-population and the illegal construction in Roma neighbourhoods turned into a norm.

12 According to NSI data, the Roma community expands in the period 1992-2001. In 2011 less people self-identify as “Roma” than in the previous census.

demographic and cultural “meltdown” of Bulgarians. The demographic fears are a cause for strong negative attitudes and commonly repeated prejudices in regards to Roma in the country.

2.1. Number of the Roma and a conservative estimate of number of the population belonging to vulnerable ethnical groups in a similar situation

Self-identification is a main principle for determining the number of people belonging to an ethnic group. However the researchers of marginalized and stigmatized groups usually note that a part of their members prefer to publicly declare a different ethnic identity, hoping to escape the contempt, discrimination or the violence. This process is also observed amongst the Roma in the majority of European countries. This is the reason why the “experts” are rarely content with referring to the official data of statistical institutions, but make their own judgement about the number of Roma based on “objective criteria.” In most cases these estimates are very disputable (Liegeois 1995, Marushiakova and Popov 1993, Tomova 1995, Ivanov 2012).

Based on data by the National Statistical Institute from the 2011 census, the Roma remain the third largest ethnic group in Bulgaria: 325 343, or 4.9% of the Bulgarian citizens have identified themselves as “Roma” (this share was 0.2% higher than in 2001, but the absolute number was 45 565 lower than that from the 2001 census when 370 908 people identified themselves as “Roma”).

The forecasts of the number of people that would self-identify as Roma done in the period 1992-2004 and based on different values of their natural increase rate were a lot higher. Their population was expected to exceed 450 000 people, but with the caveat that outward migrations are not factored in this forecast, as well as noting that the natural increase rates remain constant. The data from the subsequent 2011 census were surprising for a large part of the experts, as well as for the majority of the population.

The tendency for part of the people, who are identified as “Roma” or “Gypsies” by their surrounding population, to self-identify themselves as Bulgarians, Turks, or Romanians continues. The main reason is the low social status and the stigmatization of the Roma community. Experts believe that the number of those perceived by the surrounding population and discriminate against as “Gypsies” is more than 800 000,¹³ or 11% of the population of the country.

2.2. Place of habitation

The degree of urbanization of the largest ethnic groups in Bulgaria is different. Three quarters of those self-identifying as Bulgarians (77.5%), more than the half of those self-identifying as Roma (55.4%) and almost two fifths of the Bulgarian Turks (37.6%) live in towns and cities. Where people live is detrimental to the access to quality health care, good education, the ability to find work and to generate financial income, to the level of infrastructure, living conditions, the magnitude of poverty – and from there, also the difference in child and maternal mortality, average life span, the power relations in the family and the natality, which is related to all this. A worrying fact is that the urban/rural gaps deepened in the post-communist years. Data about the changes in the place of residence of large ethnic communities in the Post- Communist period are summarized in Table 1 below.

13 Already in 1992 the Bulgarian Romanologists E. Marushiakova and W. Popov made an “expert estimate” of the number of Roma in the country at 800 000 people without any methodology or serious arguments to substantiate their claim. Later this figure was repeated by Jean-Pierre Liegeois whom they were consulting. The Bulgarian sociologists remained quite sceptical and for years treated this as an overestimation. The above estimate is based on another debatable estimate – the one by the Ministry of Interior from 1989, when based on “objective criteria” 576 927 people were determined to be “Roma.”

Table 1: Place of residence of the large ethnic groups in Bulgaria (in %).

Type of settlement	Bulgarians			Turks			Roma		
Year	1992	2001	2011	1992	2001	2011	1992	2001	2011
Urban	71.6	73.5	77.5	31.6	37.0	37.6	52.3	53.8	55.4
Rural	28.4	26.5	22.5	68.4	63.0	62.4	47.7	46.2	44.6

Source: NSI (National Statistical Institute): 1994, 2004, 2011.

Finding a legitimate work in the villages for the landless Roma population is extremely hard. The concentration of young, poor, continuously jobless Roma in villages with an aging and shrinking non-Roma population often leads to changes in the power relations and the cultural models in those villages, as well as to an increase in thefts of agricultural produce, money and property from the homes of elderly people, to exacerbating of conflicts and to media attention towards “the criminal behaviour of the Roma.” Throughout two decades, the lack of an adequate reaction from the police and the court, as well as the media noise around such conflicts leads to increasing fears, prejudices and negative attitudes towards all the Roma.

2.3. Marriage rates, fertility, mortality

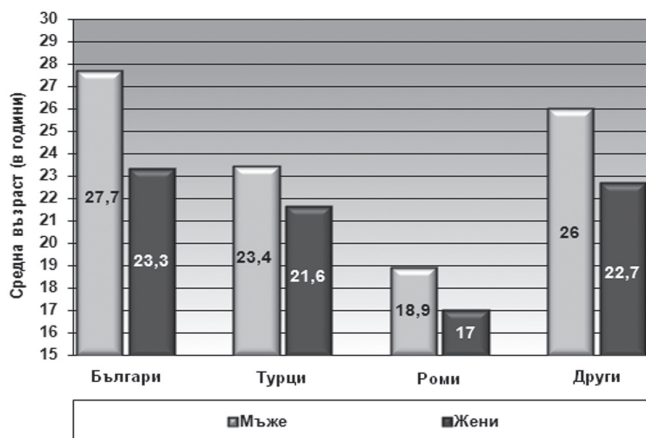
The Roma community is the youngest in the country. Three fifths of it consists of children and young adults – twice as much as amongst the ethnic Bulgarians.¹⁴ This fact, as well as the existing difference between the fertility of the women from this minority community and the majority leads to a sizeable increase in the proportion of Roma in the Post Communist period, and especially – in the youngest age groups. The young age structure predetermines that the highest net reproduction rate¹⁵ amongst the Roma will be maintained, which determines the higher fertility in this community in the middle and the long perspective.

The Roma are the group with the earliest marriages/family cohabitations in the country. According to 1994 data, around 80% of Roma establish families upon reaching adulthood (Tomova 1995:42). Later sociological researches reveal a tendency of keeping the early marriages amongst different Roma subgroups, and especially amongst the poorest and least educated young people until 2011 (Ivanov 2003, Tomova 2005, FSG 2009). Early marriages are a prerequisite for early births and for a larger number of children.

¹⁴ According to the data from the last (2011) census when the ethnic identity of large number of children (most probably – from ethnic minorities) hasn't been recorded, the share of Roma people aged between 0 and 29 years is 57.33%. For ethnic Bulgarians this share is 28.11% (NSI 2011).

¹⁵ The net reproduction rate reflects the number of life-born girls, which will reach fertility age to replace 1000 women aged 40-49 leaving the fertility age group due to ageing or death. The net reproduction rate (NRR) is also defined as the average number of daughters that would be born to a female (or a group of females) if she passed through her lifetime conforming to the age-specific fertility and mortality rates of a given year.

Graph 1: The median age of beginning a family life (marriage or cohabitation) of the large ethnic groups in Bulgaria by sex in 2004. *First group of columns presents Bulgarians, second group of columns presents Turks, third group of columns presents Roma and the fourth presents other population. Light grey colour of the columns presents male and dark grey colour presents female.*

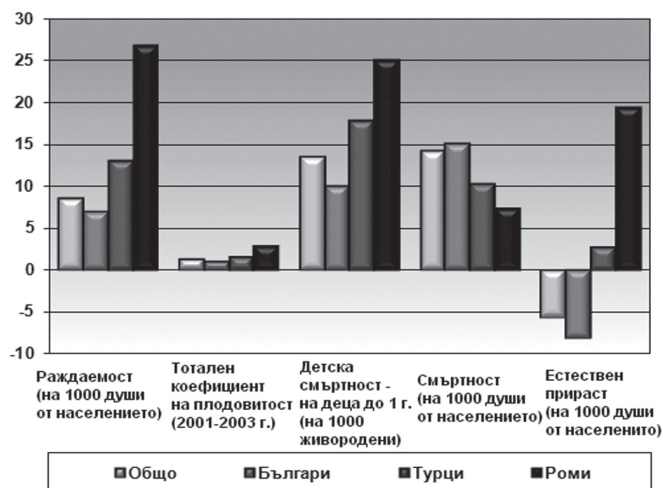


Source: NSI unpublished data, 2004 (see Tomova 2005).

The decrease in the fertility is a tendency which is characteristic for all the ethnic groups in the country, but does not affect them to the same degree. A higher fertility is kept within the communities, in which the process of modernization is relatively slowed.

According to data from NSI, the fertility amongst the Roma between 2001 and 2004 was at 26.7 per one thousand (Graph 2). When comparing this to the 6.9 per one thousand among the ethnic Bulgarians, the figure might look frightening. It should be noted, however, that the average fertility in Bulgarian in 1950 was, in fact, 25 per one thousand – not that much lower than the one amongst the Roma at the moment (Tomova 2005).

Graph 2: Birth rates, child mortality rates, death rates and natural increase of the population of the large ethnic groups in Bulgaria by 01.03.2001. *Groups of columns from left to rights: crude birth rate (per thousand people) – 1st group of columns; total fertility rate (2001-2003) – 2nd group of columns; infant mortality rate (per thousand live births) – 3rd group of columns; crude death rate (per thousand people) – 4th group of columns and natural increase (per thousand people) – 5th group of columns. Distribution by ethnic affiliation from light grey to dark grey: total for Bulgaria – 1st column within the groups of columns; Bulgarians – 2nd column; Turks – 3rd column and Roma – 4th column.*



Source: NSI unpublished data, 2004 (see Tomova 2005).

We have to underline that the Roma community is extremely heterogenic and any generalizations tend to dim, rather than shed light on the social processes within the community being researched. It is very important to know that the demographic attitudes and behaviours of the Roma with secondary and tertiary education are identical to those of the Bulgarians. The fertility amongst Roma women with primary education (at least 8 grades) and permanent job is close to that amongst ethnic Bulgarian women. The problem is that the groups of the people with higher education and of the employed Roma women are very small. The fears of Bulgarians are connected with the early and numerous births of low educated jobless Roma, presented by some politicians and media as a demographic, economic and cultural threat to Bulgaria.

2.4. The Roma family

The average size of Roma households in Bulgaria is 4.85 people – more than twice as large as the average for the country. A negative relationship between the size of a household and the educational status of the members of the family is observed – the lowest the education the highest the size of the household. The poor illiterate Roma with many children are also the ones who are most often portrayed in the media. This creates strong negative stereotypes and prejudices towards all Roma – as people who are not willing to control their sexual and reproductive behaviour, who are irresponsible towards their family and parent duties, leeching on social funds for child benefits and family allowances. Throughout the years of transition, the tendency of young males from the poorer groups to abandon their wives and children and to practice “serial monogamy” grows amongst the Roma community (Pamporov 2005). In the Roma households, the men have a much higher status than the women. They occupy the main power positions and play a major role in ensuring the financial means for supporting the household (through their own work, or organizing the work of the women). The main social roles of the Roma women are the ones of mothers and wives. The gender division of labour follows patriarchal model and is often kept through excessive violence on women. In 85% of Bulgarian Roma households, the young married family lives with the husband’s parents (FSG 2009). The overexposure of the differences in the family models and the generalizations, that “(all) Roma marry young and give birth to a lot of kids, who they do not take care of” from the media and politicians lead to a strengthening of the negative stereotypes and prejudices towards the Roma community in the country. The data of the structure of the

Roma households attract the attention to a powerful influence of the patriarchal order.¹⁶

There is a consensus in the gender literature that the male dominance is growing in the communities that are exposed to economic stress; in cases of chronic military actions, or increase in anarchy and the inability of the state to guarantee inviolability of life and the property of its citizens. It is growing in the situations of declining ability of the government institutions to hold the monopoly over legitimate violence and amongst groups, undergoing a cultural assimilation, or a sudden collapse of their traditional economy and culture. These factors (with the exception of military action) are present to a higher degree in the big minority communities in the country, especially amongst the Roma.

3. DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION OF THE ROMA IN BULGARIA

3.1. Citizen/political integration and disintegration

The Roma in Bulgaria, just as in other countries, face a lot of difficulties in the realization of their **political and civil rights**. As a result of the prolonged and massive decline of Roma participation in the labour market after 1989, their opportunity to identify a national-wide political party who would defend their economic, political and civil interests or to rely on trade unions' support has sharply declined. Instead, various political parties embarked on buying Roma votes directly: in return for small amounts of money paid to the large number of individuals before elections; or through party promises, later taken up by the "ring of firms" around the parliamentary represented political parties; or through the use of "strong positions" in the social networks in the ghettos – those of loan-sharks, shop keepers, giving stock on credit, or the employers in the grey economy. The political parties usually stop taking interest in their "clients" after elections. Amongst the Roma themselves the alienation and indifference towards the political life in the country has increased. The majority of the other Bulgarian citizens saw the "immorality of the Gypsies" and "their readiness to leech on any social structures" exemplified in the resulting cynical situation, but not the abuse of those people rights by the political and economic elites in the country.

Unlike the Bulgarian Turks, the majority of whom accept the Movement for Rights and Freedoms as their voice and defender of their political and, although very rarely, economic rights, the Roma are unable to mobilize and to unite around "their" party, which would translate their social demands into the language of legitimate political discourse. Despite the existence of numerous Roma parties and NGOs (or as a result of their fragmentation), the political representation of the Roma in the parliament, in the executive and even in the local governments is not adequate, or at least is not effective enough.

A serious indicator of the difficulties the Roma have to deal with when exercising their political and civil rights is the inability of their representatives in the legislative and executive powers on a local level to create a serious public debate on the problems of the Roma exclusion and to cooperate in the realization of consistent programmes of social integration. At the moment, the pressure for integration of Roma comes mainly from the European Union and not from the political structures and the civic organisations of Roma.

Another important indicator of the political and civic disintegration of the Roma is the lack of civil and professional resistance against the speech of hatred in the media and the political sphere on the side of prosecutors, and the court, which significantly contributes to increasing the negative attitudes, social

¹⁶ I would like to note immediately that the patriarchal attitudes dominate the thinking, the interpersonal relations and the entire way of life of the Bulgarian society. However in the case of the sizeable minority communities – those of the Turks, the Bulgarian Muslims and the Roma – they are omnipresent. The post-communist changes reinforced the patriarchal order and the male dominance in those communities even further. In the case of Roma living in the big ghettos the strengthening of male domination can be observed in its pure forms.

distance and discrimination against the members of this community.

One serious problem of the civil disintegration, which the Roma are facing, is the rise of the spatial segregation of their community in the post-communist period. The concentration of Roma in separate neighbourhoods has increased in the last twenty years both in the urban, as well as the rural regions.¹⁷ Another form of social exclusion, connected with violating the civil rights of the Roma, is the continuous segregation in the educational institutions. In the last years the society en large is increasingly aware of the fact that the existence of segregated Roma schools is the main reason for the lower educational standard of the Roma community. The Bulgarian governments and the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth accept verbally the need for quick measures in this area, but specific plans for actions, nor economical estimates the costs of implementation of these desegregation programmes have still not been done.

The exclusion of Roma from the civic and political sphere is not interpreted as a deficit in the political system and the civil society, not as an immaturity of the democratic system in the country, but as a civil, moral and a cultural deficit of the Roma themselves. These interpretations reinforce the negative stereotypes and prejudices towards this vulnerable community.

3.2. The economic and social integration and disintegration of the Roma

One of the most dramatic changes in the Bulgarian society in the post-communist period is the fast deindustrialization of the country during the 90s and the destruction in the agricultural sector caused by an unthought-of “reform.” For just a couple of years, the country lost 1 300 000 jobs (Beleva 2005). The need for unqualified and low-qualified workforce shrank abruptly.

The Roma, who were the last to join in the army of industrial workers and who generally have lower education and qualifications than the Bulgarians, were expectedly amongst the first to fall out of the labour market. Because of their low social and cultural capital, as well as because of the growth of negative stereotypes and prejudices against their community, they have the hardest time to reintegrate in the ranks of the shrunk-to-minimum working class even in periods of economic growth. Thus the changed macroeconomic situation in the country led to their mass exclusion from the labour market and to the constant recreation of extremely high levels of unemployment in their community, as well as in their involvement in low-paid work, often provided by the social ministry as a temporary measure for decreasing the unemployment among the long-term unemployed with low education.

The correlation between employment/unemployment and ethnicity is very high for the whole post-communist period. According to data from the representative survey on Roma commissioned by the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party in 1980 and covering 4943 people, the employment in their group was very high. Around 88% of males and 80% of females of working age were employed or 84% of the whole community (Dimitrov, D., B. Chakalov., I. Georgieva and others 1980). This employment rate was kept throughout the 1980s. In 1992, according to census data from NSI, 47% of the Roma of working age were employed. In 2001 this percentage falls to 17.9%. After 2002, the number of employed Roma starts to gradually increase and reaches around a third of the working age population in 2007-2008, but still remains at an extremely low level. This growth is soon followed by another fall due to the economic crisis. Based on NSI data from the 2011 census, only 20.6% of the Roma of working age are employed. To sum up, there is a fall in employment amongst Roma in the post-communist period in the range of 37-66% during almost 25 years. No other minority in the country has been affected that severely by mass unemployment.

17 According to the data from the representative survey “Emergence of socialist way of life among the Bulgarian citizens of Roma origin” from 1980, 49% of the Roma in Bulgaria lived in separated neighbourhoods. Surveys from the second half of the 1990s show that already more than three quarters of the Roma live segregated.

Table 2: Economic activity pattern of the population aged 15 and over from large ethnic communities in Bulgaria, based on 2011 Census data (%).

Economic indicators	Bulgarians	Turks	Roma
Economically active	68.7	53.3	41.1
– Employed	87.5	74.2	50.1
– Unemployed	12.5	25.8	49.9
Economically inactive	31.3	46.7	58.9

Source: Author's calculations based on NSI 2011 Census data.

Some long-term unemployed Roma make their living out of seasonal and temporary jobs abroad. Many others live in extreme poverty, fall victim to money lenders and subsequently to human trafficking (this mainly refers to women and children) or are forced to live on theft, fraud and other crime.

The trend towards Roma's exclusion from the working class, on the one hand, along with the lack of opportunities for their adequate political representation and involvement in decision-making that directly affects their community, on the other hand, breeds social inequality and distance in Bulgarian society – both of which are nowadays perceived as ethnic and are, therefore, more dangerous and destructive. It also contributes to the sense of social exclusion being a destiny shared by the whole group regardless of the personal endeavours and skills of an individual. One of the most serious consequences for Roma is the reinforcement of the sense of helplessness and lack of future prospects among a growing number of children and youths; this destroys the opportunities open to a person to manage a situation and frequently provokes self-destructive or deviant behaviour.

The media and general public's interpretation of the cause of the persistent large-scale unemployment of Roma relates to the stereotypes and prejudices against the members of this community, which are further reinforced by the neoliberal ideology supported by the media and politicians; it namely suggests that Roma leave the labour market because they are lazy and irresponsible and prefer to rely on state benefits. Sociologists and economists frequently emphasise that the primary reason for this phenomenon is Roma's lower cultural and social capital, which makes them especially vulnerable in periods of economic restructuring, deindustrialisation and economic crisis. Scientists rarely analyse and politicians even more rarely address issues about ethnic discrimination in the labour market and diminishing chances of working class children and youths to lead a normal life –particularly of those living in large ghettos in the conditions of neoliberal ideology domination (and socioeconomic changes in the spirit of neoliberalism).

Roma's interpretation of the unemployment among their group quite differs from that of the majority. Having two-thirds of its members unemployed in the course of two decades and half of its members with secondary education not being able to find any job, the community is convinced that it is a victim of ethnic discrimination in the labour market, which dooms it to unemployment irrespective of education.

The dramatic difference in the interpretation of the cause and nature of Roma social exclusion from the socioeconomic sphere represents a threat of potential conflicts and riots like those in the United States, France and the United Kingdom. The exclusion of an entire ethnic community from reasonable and worthy participation in Bulgarian social and economic life endangers future democratic development and social cohesion for years to come.

3.3. Spread, depth and severity of poverty among vulnerable ethnic communities; standard of living; ethnic projections of extreme poverty

In the transition period, mass, deep and long-term impoverishment of many population strata was observed in Central and East European countries and in Bulgaria in particular. The new poverty, which

is most noticeable in the Roma community,¹⁸ is characterised by several features: it is widespread; its rate is above the average for the country; it is related to large-scale exclusion of elderly Roma from the labour market and a rapid decline in their children's education; it is continuous and likely to pass on to future generations, i.e. to become constant; it is connected with the increasing exclusion of Roma from nearly all spheres of social life and with the intensified segregation of their community; it reflects the cumulative effect of several powerful negative factors – ethnic divisions, enormous intergroup distance, spatial and institutional segregation and deep impoverishment. This new type of poverty is not a component of the life cycle of an individual, but rather socio-economic dependency and exclusion of the majority of the Roma population, both of which proceeding from the structural changes in the Bulgarian economy and the specific vulnerability of Roma during these changes. This poverty is envisaged to continue in the medium term and be passed on to future generations.

The massive impoverishment of the Bulgarian population is usually attributed to the structural changes made during the transition from a planned economy to a free market as well as to the disadvantages of market development, arising from an increase in monopoly power. The explanation for Roma's deep and widespread poverty, however, follows completely different logic: the cultural traits of the Roma community and moral and personal deficiencies of some of its members are usually cited as a major cause of poverty. Such a prejudiced explanation for the spread of poverty among Roma leads to reinforcement of their negative image and increases social distance.

3.4. Access to social services (education, health care, housing, etc.)

3.4.1. Education

Education is a major status indicator in modern and post-modern societies. Although a higher academic degree nowadays does not guarantee employment, a professional career, senior post or high income, the lack of education or a lower education level certainly places an individual at the bottom of the social ladder and limits his/her opportunities for positive social mobility even in excellent economic conditions. The level of education determines the risk of social exclusion and is frequently regarded as an indicator of the existence of discrimination and exclusion. It is one of the most important factors in assessing the risk of unemployment and poverty and passing poverty and social exclusion on to future generations.

The Roma community is the community with the lowest levels of education in Bulgaria. Another idiosyncrasy of the group is that functional illiteracy of women is three times as common as that of men. Since namely women raise children, their illiteracy or poor education seems to be crucially important for their children's educational aspirations and attainments. We should bear in mind that there is a strong correlation between the level of education and the subgroup division, type of settlement, degree of neighbourhood segregation.

18 Data from international comparative surveys of the Roma in Central and Eastern Europe reveal that relative poverty is more common even in economically better developed countries like Hungary and Slovakia although absolute poverty rates are lower there. They are highest in Romania and Bulgaria. *Source:* UNDP/ILO Regional survey, 2003; Szelenyi & Emigh (eds.) 2001; Ringold 2000; Ringold, D., M. Orenstein, E. Wilkens, 2003. See also data from the international comparative survey of UNDP/WB/FRA: *Regional Survey of Roma at Risk of Marginalization*, 2011.

Table 3: Structure of large ethnic communities in Bulgaria by completed level of education in 2001 and 2011 (persons aged over 20).

Education/grade	Bulgarians		Turks		Roma	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
Tertiary education College/university degree	19.2	25.6	2.4	4.9	0.2	0.5
Secondary education/High school	47.6	52.3	21.9	29.7	6.5	9.0
Primary education (7-8th grade completed)	24.9	18.0	46.9	44.5	41.8	40.8
Completed 4th grade	6.9	3.4	18.6	13.4	28.3	27.9
Persons who did not complete 4th grade; illiterate/never been to school	1.4	0.9	10.2	7.5	23.2	21.8

Source: Author's calculations based on NSI 2004 and 2011 data.

In all three groups, an increase in education levels is observed in the period between the two censuses, but the change is slightest in the Roma community. Thus, social inequality and distance, prejudices and stereotypes about Roma are not only reproduced but also reinforced.

In Bulgaria there is a widely-held prejudice that the major reason for Roma's poor education lies in their specific culture: they merely do not value education; hence any investments and endeavours to increase their educational levels are destined to fail. Even teachers and school principals tend to underestimate the factors increasing educational inequalities among minority children and youths, which should be defined as discrimination. The ruling neoliberal ideology, focused on the principal of personal responsibility for one's actions as well as on formal equality, which does not take into consideration that different social groups do not have equal chances in life, reinforces the trend towards blaming victims for their situation – a typical manifestation of modern racism in contemporary society.

The reasons for the declining education of Roma and its being retained at a very low level during the post-communist period are complex. The main one lies in the widespread, deep and long-term impoverishment of Roma families, which coincided with a drastic reduction in budgetary expenditure on education and child support allowances.

We shall outline hereunder some structural changes in the social and educational systems in Bulgaria, which do not allow Roma and Turkish children to enjoy equal rights in terms of access to education and quality of the education they receive.

In the post-communist period, an increase in the fees for public kindergartens caused a drastic reduction in the proportion of Roma children attending them. For years in succession, over four-fifths of the Roma children were not able to attend kindergartens due to financial problems.¹⁹ Later on, other difficulties accrued: it appeared that there were no preschool vacancies for tens of thousands of children, especially in cities, after hundreds of nurseries and kindergartens had been closed down and their buildings – sold to private individuals. Moreover, admission to kindergartens was gained either by using one's personal contacts or through the Internet, which accordingly prevented many Roma from gaining access to that paid public service.

The government still does not allocate any grants-in-aid in order to embrace children of preschool age although experts repeatedly place particular emphasis on the necessity of such monthly supplementary welfare allowances. Children do not fully take advantage of the compulsory one-year preschool education, which is free of charge. Dropping out of preschool has serious consequences for Roma

¹⁹ For example, in the crisis of 1997, barely 5% of the Roma children aged 3-6 attended kindergarten. In 2001 their percentage slightly increased to 16%. According to the data from a multi-purpose survey, conducted by NSI in 2008, about one-fourth of the Roma children of preschool age attended nurseries, kindergartens or preschools. Despite the introduction of compulsory one-year preschool education in 2003-2004, Roma children rarely take advantage of this opportunity – only two-thirds of them attended preschool in 2008.

children. Many of them enter school, having a poor command of the Bulgarian language and without having acquired the basic knowledge and skills they need to cope with the educational process, which results in their early school dropout. Socialisation patterns in many Roma groups, particularly in ghettos, substantially differ as compared with middle-class Bulgarians,²⁰ and this poses additional challenges to the school adaptation of Roma students if they have not attended preschool.

Other actions of the Ministry of Education at the beginning of the 1990s may be deemed institutional discrimination. As early as 1991, the funds for extracurricular activities were curtailed in view of “expenditure optimisation” in education. It affected mostly Roma and Turkish children who used to improve their Bulgarian language skills in such classes; furthermore, therein they used to receive additional assistance in acquiring knowledge of mathematics and other subjects that were not fully comprehended by them during school lessons.

Another change which had a disproportionate impact on Roma children related to a change in the statutory class size. It was increased to 30 students. As a result, the educational process in classes, wherein the mother tongue of even a few children differed from the official language, was seriously impeded. The situation in rural settlements was most difficult. Due to the small number of pupils, many children in rural schools studied in so-called “merged grades.”²⁰ The quality of education in those schools appeared to be intolerably poor. The lack of funds once again led to a massive reduction in teaching jobs particularly in smaller or rural schools. The rest of the teachers had to teach subjects in which they were not experts. This further impaired the quality of education in rural settlements where most of the children were Turks and Roma. In urban areas, where there were large ghettos with segregated schools, the quality of education was so poor that even eighth-grade students experienced insurmountable difficulties in reading.

Not enough is done for preventing segregation in education in urban settlements. In the Law on Secondary Education and the Regulations of its enforcement, desegregation of Roma children is not stipulated as a priority. Proposals for legislative changes in this respect were first submitted in 2011. Almost nowhere in the country, there are programs developed for a gradual closure of segregated schools in large urban ghettos and admission of their students to integrated ones. When a “Roma” school is closed down due to various reasons and all its students are automatically moved to the closest regional school, secondary segregation is usually observed: Bulgarian and Turkish children leave the school and it turns into a Roma one. The notion of school integration is narrowly defined. Frequently, it refers to enrolment of Roma children at state schools where children from the majority predominate. Mechanisms for motivating teachers to foster integration and teach tolerance, sensitivity and rejection of discrimination are not provided.

As early as 1991, the Bulgarian government cut out most budgetary expenditure on child and pupil support allowances. State aid on child goods, educational materials and books was cancelled. The practice of distributing free textbooks was abandoned even in compulsory education (up to grade eight) until 2004.²¹ Cheap, cooked food funded by the national or local budget was no longer served in schools. Many poor children used to spend hours on end at school feeling hungry. This significantly affected their ability to concentrate and acquire knowledge in class. Impoverished families were not able to buy the necessary textbooks and educational materials for their children. In 1999, for example, 95% of Roma pupils had only half of the necessary textbooks and educational materials or did not have any at all. Textbooks²² freely provided for socially disadvantaged children were never sufficient enough, and

20 Translator’s note: If the number of pupils in class falls below the statutory class-size minimum, children in different grades are taught the same subject in a single classroom – for example, first- and second-grade students are taught maths together.

21 In 2004 free textbooks were provided for first-grade students. In subsequent years, free textbooks were provided up to grade 4. From 2009 to 2010, students from grade 1 through 7 were included in this program.

22 Only children, both of whose parents were unemployed and received monthly allowances, had access to such textbooks. Until 2001, such allowances had been granted only to some people in need mainly in urban areas. Afterwards, the so-called “income threshold” was set at such a low level that prevented many poor people from receiving allowances. It meant that their children would not be entitled to free textbooks. Furthermore, the set of free textbooks did not include other educational materials. With-

in most schools, pupils were not allowed to take them home, which posed serious challenges to their self-preparation. This predetermined poor achievements of students from low-income families and their early school dropout, especially when their mother tongue differed from the official language.

Low budgetary expenditure on education resulted in a decline in the quality of education in state schools. Many teachers lost their motivation to work selflessly in poor conditions and for low salaries especially when they were expected to devote more effort to working with children with a poor command of the Bulgarian language or learning deficiencies and difficulties. Many surveys reveal that teachers are strongly prejudiced against Roma pupils, which promotes an unconcerned, derogatory or even rude attitude towards Roma children.²³ Teachers' indifference and low expectations induce indifference and low aspirations in students and actually contribute to the early school dropout of the most vulnerable group.

The negative representation of Roma by the media reinforces prejudices and stereotypes in society – including among children – which are expressed by a rude and contemptuous attitude towards Roma students in mixed schools. Teachers either refuse to intervene in conflicts between children or tend to punish Roma children for them. There is an overwhelming necessity of civic and intercultural education and re-training of teachers to work in a multicultural environment. An unfavourable environment at school also contributes to early school dropout of Roma.

Schools which provide higher quality of education, intensive foreign language teaching and computer lessons have introduced a system of different entrance exams, one of which is a Bulgarian language exam. This constitutes a new barrier to children whose mother tongue is not the official language of the country. Admission to such schools is possible only for children from families who are able to pay high tuition fees. Since poverty severely and disproportionately affects the Roma and Turkish communities, continues for a long time and is deeper among Roma, it appears to be a major obstacle to the access of children from large minority groups to quality education. Poverty entails more limited access to tertiary education as well.²⁴ Despite the formal equality of access to education, the social and educational systems constantly create obstacles to the access of children from poor families, rural settlements and minority groups to proper education.

Furthermore, there are other factors contributing to early school dropout. In many poor families, children supply labour to ensure their survival. In others, parents think it is useless to invest in education because they are convinced that regardless of their education, their children will remain unemployed due to ethnic discrimination. This attitude additionally discourages children to go to school. In some religious families, especially recently converted to Protestantism, the deterioration of school discipline does not allow parents to send their children (particularly girls) to school. Patriarchal norms, over-control on girls and women and overvaluation of virginity as a clear symbol of the “honour” of a girl and her family also lead to early school dropout of girls.

The rapid decline in Roma's education at the beginning of the 1990s still affects the education of Roma children: illiterate and undereducated parents are not able to motivate their children to study; have no ambitions for their education; and cannot help them overcome learning difficulties. This, along with the above-described structural factors, results in reproduction of illiteracy, unemployment and poverty by future generations within the same family, neighbourhood or subgroup.

In Bulgarian society, the media and politicians focus their attention on the poor education of Roma children living in ghettos and underestimate the gradual emergence of an active Roma intelligentsia, though not numerous yet. The presumption that Roma should be blamed for their low educational levels and general statements that “Roma do not value education” increase social distance and discrimination against Roma in the labour market as well as in the society.

out them (e.g. without exercise books) it was impossible to teach children adequately.

23 See the studies of I. Ivanov from Shumen University and I. Dimitrov from Sofia University.

24 In 2002 a report of the World Bank indicated that two-thirds of the members of non-poor families had secondary or tertiary education whereas in poor families their percentage was less than 30%. The data from the 2001 and 2011 censuses clearly showed that during that period the percentage of ethnic Bulgarians with secondary or tertiary education ranged between 67 and 78% whereas among Roma it ranged between 7 and 10%.

3.4.2. Health care

The National Statistical Institute (NSI) has not provided more recent demographic data on fertility, mortality, morbidity, life expectancy and other indicators, disaggregated by ethnicity; therefore, the analysis hereunder shall be based on NSI data from previous years as well as on representative sociological surveys.

The comparative survey *Health and the Roma Community*²⁵ reports that Bulgarian Roma demonstrates very poor health status even compared with the Roma population in other countries. Their self-assessment of health is the lowest in comparison with Roma from other surveyed countries. They most often point out that they are not able to cope with daily activities due to their poor health, but at the same time, they do not receive the necessary help. They face great difficulties in obtaining a medical disability certificate from the Territorial Expert Medical Commission even if they have had a heart attack or stroke or undergone a cancer operation, or they suffer from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or another acute disease causing disability. Bulgarian Roma rank first among Roma from all surveyed countries in respect of a number of diseases like high blood pressure, diabetes, cardiac diseases, arthritis and rheumatism, asthma, chronic bronchitis, stomach ulcers, prostate and menopause-related problems. The fact that children also suffer from some of these diseases is very alarming. Bulgaria occupies the first place in terms of high blood pressure among Roma children aged under 15 and second place regarding asthma and chronic bronchitis. Bulgarian Roma claims that they have mostly eyesight problems and auditory difficulties. Lacking or poor infrastructures in their settlements and neighbourhoods expose Roma to a greater risk of hepatitis, gastrointestinal diseases and diseases caused by parasites.

Access to health services depends on various factors, which exert a negative cumulative effect on Roma health. The quality of health services greatly depends on the economic situation in a country and government policies on health care. In Bulgaria and Romania, the financial resources for health care (allocated from the state budget as well as personal) are most scarce. Simultaneously, the share of out-of-pocket expenditure on health care is unbearably high for most people, particularly for poor social groups. Compared to other EU members, Bulgaria has the highest share of out-of-pocket expenditure on health, entirely covered by patients upon provision of medical services – on average, half of the cost of treatment or even a greater portion in some cases is paid by patients.

Another problem affecting Roma to a greater extent is the uneven distribution of physicians and hospitals. The patients-per-physician ratio is highest in areas with a large portion of Roma and Turkish populations. It means that they receive poorer health care services and lose more time waiting in front of examination rooms upon every visit; furthermore, they have to travel a long distance to visit a medical specialist, laboratory or hospital.

The exit of nearly two-thirds of the adult Roma from the formal labour market and their temporary, seasonal or irregular employment in the grey market cause health insurance problems for many of them. According to the survey *Health and the Roma Community: Analysis of the Situation in Europe*, in December 2008, 26% of adult Roma had no health insurance; it constituted 18% of the entire Roma population. As a result, they rely more on emergency room services, physician's altruism and pharmacists' advice when purchasing medicines without visiting a doctor. The legislative changes adopted after 2008 as well as the increasing portion of grey market workers have probably led to a rise in this percentage.

The health care access is also hindered by the bureaucratisation of medical services, following from the health care reform in Bulgaria. It is most difficult for minorities, people from rural areas, poor people, illiterates, chronically ill people, mothers and children from remote settlements to overcome bureaucratic obstacles.

Doctors' disregard and unawareness of Roma's cultural differences and traditions cause deterioration

25 The survey was carried out on the basis of a uniform methodology in Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Slovakia and the Czech Republic throughout November and December 2008.

in their relations with patients and force a great majority of poor and undereducated Roma to resort to self-healing. The high mobility of some Roma groups also limits their access to health care services. The media and politicians draw attention to the fact that many Roma have no health insurance and use emergency room services more often than other people. It reinforces the conviction of the society that “Roma live parasitically off state welfare funds and personal charity.” As a result, the middle-class become less willing to pay in full their health care contributions and the principle of solidarity is undermined. This in turn further limits the access of poor people to health care.

3.4.3. Housing

The rapid ghettoisation of Roma neighbourhoods in the post-communist period led to a deterioration in the housing conditions of many of their residents. As early as the beginning of the 1990s, a withdrawal of the state institutions from ghettos commenced. Many health care centres, cultural institutions, schools, kindergartens, social centres and services and public transport lines were closed down. The control over illegal construction, public order maintenance, compliance with normative regulations (including those pertaining to life- and health-threatening risks, such as fire-precaution standards, sanitary and hygienic regulations, etc.) was sharply reduced.

Segregation of marginalised minorities in isolated neighbourhoods usually leads to social isolation of the residents of such neighbourhoods, a sharp deterioration in their housing conditions, difficulties in building and maintaining infrastructures and hygiene, public transport problems and difficulties in the provision of vital services. One of the gravest consequences following from segregation is that young people are offered much less opportunities to prepare for employment in real economic conditions, and the members of segregated neighbourhoods face greater challenges in finding employment.²⁶

Poverty and social exclusion are major reasons for poor housing conditions in Roma neighbourhoods. In 1992, 31.1% of Roma had living space of less than 5 sq. m. per person.²⁷ In 2001 very similar data were reported – 29.9%.²⁸ The last population and housing census reveals that in 2011 Roma continued to be the group living in the poorest housing conditions. Moreover, the difference between them and the rest of the population was considerable. While ethnic Bulgarians had average living space of 23.2 sq. m. per person, Roma had only 10.6 sq. m. At present, minimum a quarter of the Roma (23.5%) have living space of up to 5 sq. m. per person.²⁹ Many of those self-identifying as Bulgarians and Turks, who live in similar conditions – less than 5 sq. m. of living space per person – belong to subgroups identified as “Gypsy” by the neighbouring population. The minimal number of people declaring different ethnic self-identity, who have living space of less than 5 sq. m., is impressive – 96 011 persons.

Graph 3: Percentage of persons who have living space of less than 5 sq. m., by ethnicity in %. *First column presents general population, second column Bulgarians, third column Turks and fourth column Roma.*

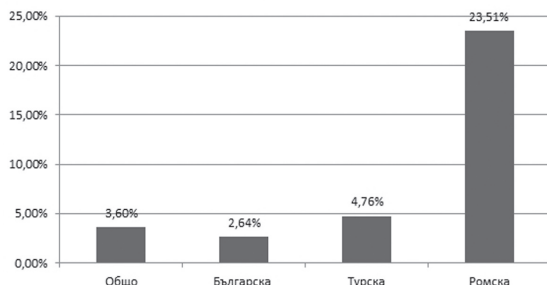
²⁶ See Wilson 1987, 1999; Council of Europe, 2005, 2007.

²⁷ NSI, 1995. *Housing Census Results: Housing conditions of the population* (Vol. II). Sofia: Statistical Publishing and Printing House.

²⁸ NSI, 2003. *Population, Housing and Farming Census: Housing fund* (Vol. II); *Housing conditions of the population* (Book 1). Sofia.

²⁹ These estimates are not accurate because the preliminary NSI data are presented on interval scales and we are not able to estimate the percentage of the households which have living space of 5 m² per person or less.

Минимален относителен дял (%) на лицата, които живеят на 5 и по-малко кв.м. жилищна площ по етническа група



Source: NSI 2011 Population and Housing Census.

Habitability of dwellings and neighbourhoods is a crucially important indicator of people's prosperity and health status. In this respect, we observe substantial differences among large ethnic groups in Bulgaria.

Table 4: Percentage of households living in dwellings with different degree of habitability in terms of ethnicity of the head of household in 2011 (%).

Available amenities	Bulgarians	Turks	Roma	Total for the country
Indoor plumbing	97.0	85.5	62.9	94.9
Outdoor plumbing	2.7	12.9	29.6	4.4
No plumbing	0.3	1.6	7.5	0.7
Sewage system	76.4	39.4	39.8	72.5
Cesspit	7.7	14.8	10.5	8.5
No sewage system	15.9	45.8	49.7	19.0
Toilet facilities in the dwelling	78.9	35.6	20.7	73.6
Toilet facilities in the building	3.7	13.5	12.1	4.8
Outdoor toilet facilities	16.5	49.5	61.1	20.5
No toilet facilities	0.9	1.4	6.1	1.1
Hot water supply in the dwelling	86.1	58.9	29.2	82.1

Source: NSI 2011.

Over the last years, technological infrastructures in Roma neighbourhoods have been improved. In some areas, the quality of construction and repair works, however, is poor,³⁰ construction supervision is not strict enough. Monitoring of spending as well as of results of such infrastructural projects, partially funded by European funds, is generally carried out on the grounds of accounting papers and financial documents without any close examination of the final outcome and survey of the opinion of the Roma living in the respective neighbourhoods.

Illegal dwellings in Roma neighbourhoods, which usually outnumber other dwellings in ghettos, pose a serious problem. Under socialism, the state imposed restrictions on the right of a person to settle and work in cities. These restrictions were more constraining for undereducated and poorly qualified people as well as for those having low social capital. At the same time, there was demand for everything, including workforce. Hence the government turned a blind eye to illegal construction in Roma neighbourhoods with the sole aim of satisfying the shortage of unskilled labour by employing

30 See Tomova, Pamporov, Milenkova, 2008. *Socio-economic Situation of Vulnerable Ethnic Minorities in Bulgaria, 2007-2008* (ordered by the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic Issues).

workers from these areas. It did not include these neighbourhoods in urban planning. Otherwise, it would have built technological and social infrastructures therein to ensure their proper functioning as urban neighbourhoods, but there were “no sufficient financial resources therefore.” On the other hand, the illegal status of Roma dwellings and neighbourhoods enabled the government to exert control and pressure on “illegal” citizens. If needed, they could have always been dismissed from jobs on the grounds of not having residence permits (which offered an advantage to employers under the existing labour legislation favouring employees) or forced to leave the settlement on the pretext that they occupied illegal dwellings. Consequently, Roma’s housing problems are part of an unfortunate legacy.³¹ Moreover, they have intensified over the past 20 years. It is difficult for administration officials to simply destroy an illegal dwelling because if it is the sole dwelling of a family or the family cannot afford to buy a new house or rent one, by law this family must be accommodated in a municipal dwelling. However, no municipal dwellings are available – at least not to tens of thousands of families. Simultaneously, the problem with illegal dwellings is stereotypically presented by politicians and the media as a result of Roma’s disregard of social norms and rules rather than a consequence of their persistent discrimination in meeting their housing needs.

4. STEREOTYPES, PREJUDICES AND DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS ROMA

The post-communist development provided conditions not only for recognition of the ethnic and religious heterogeneity of Bulgarian society but also for reinforcement of ethnic differentiation (Mitev 2000). The restoration of the right of ethnic self-identification, basic cultural, religious and linguistic rights of minorities and to a considerable extent of their political rights reflected the positive changes in the process of society’s democratisation. However, there was a growing sense of relative deprivation of Bulgarians and their being endangered by ethnic minorities. Minority groups became more conspicuous. Under the influence of political manipulation and rude nationalistic rhetoric in media and politics, large ethnic groups began to perceive themselves as “more threatening,” which made them more vulnerable. The large-scale exclusion of Roma from the labour market and subsequently from all significant social spheres increased social distance. The existing political instability and rapid impoverishment of a large portion of the Bulgarian population reinforced the trend towards ensuring survival only within one’s own circle (family, friends, neighbourhood or community); increased community egotism, which led to a stronger encapsulation of ethnic and religious groups; enhanced frustration; and increased the likelihood of discriminatory behaviour towards “all others.”

The media (dailies in particular) also contribute to the negative stereotypes and prejudices against minority groups, namely against Roma, who are usually presented as criminals, irresponsible and lazy people, parasitically living off state welfare funds.

In Bulgarian society, an attitude of disapproval of racist speech and acts of racial and ethnic discrimination has not been adopted yet. None of the Bulgarian institutions regards the formation of democratic and humane values, like tolerance and acceptance of the otherness of the young generation, as a priority. Moreover, intolerance towards others is considered a natural manifestation of patriotism. There is reinforcement of the irrational view that a good patriot is someone who can “love and hate with passion,” and love being directed towards “own people” while hate – towards “everybody else.”

Minorities are perceived in terms of depersonalised categories such as: “*there are exceptions, but generally speaking all of them ... (Turks, Gypsies, etc.) are alike*” or “*we can neither trust them nor rely on them ... (Bulgarian Turks, Bulgarian Muslims, Roma).*” The ethnocentric opinion that “*people*

31 After examining Ottoman tax registers, Slavka Draganova (2008) concluded that in the 19th century the Roma who lived in Bulgaria had smaller and poorer houses. These differences were not obliterated in liberated Bulgaria; on the contrary, they widened.

from our community are better by nature than others” is readily expressed. Negative opinions about large minorities are publicly expressed. Ethnic stereotypes produce significant social distance which provokes alienation in informal relations and discrimination in social relations.

According to the cross-national survey *European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS)*, the Roma in Bulgaria and Romania face discrimination more rarely than the Roma in the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. Nonetheless, these results might have been influenced by the different thresholds of sensitivity to discrimination in the surveyed countries, different levels of awareness of anti-discrimination bodies and (dis)trust in the police, court of law and other authorities.

Table 5: Discrimination experiences of Roma in seven Member States.

State	Mean discrimination rate ^a	Mean victimisation rate ^b	% of discrimination incidents that were officially reported ^c	% of crimes officially reported to the police ^d	Police stops past 12 months with profiling
Bulgaria	26	12	8	12	1
Czech Rep.	64	46	34	24	14
Greece	55	54	10	11	38
Hungary	62	34	18	15	23
Poland	59	33	29	28	9
Romania	25	19	19	25	5
Slovakia	41	28	20	31	6

^a % discriminated against in the past 12 months (9 domains: employment, housing healthcare, social services, education, leisure and retail services, bank services).

^b % victimised in the past 12 months (crimes: property, in-person crime – exposure of assault or threat and serious harassment; in-person crime – exposure of racially motivated assault or threat and serious harassment;).

^c mean for all discrimination types.

^d mean for all crimes.

Source: European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS).

In view of the widespread strong negative prejudices and stereotypes towards Roma, each domestic incident may provoke ethnic conflicts under certain conditions. The risk is even higher during elections and economic crises as well as in periods of increasing inflation, unemployment and poverty.

4.1. Data from national and international surveys of prejudices, stereotypes and social distance towards Roma

In Bulgaria, surveys of ethnic prejudices, stereotypes and social distance, particularly referring to Roma, were carried out as early as 1991, after the collapse of the communist regime, abandonment of the policy of forced assimilation of minorities and restoration of their basic rights and freedoms.

The first survey, ordered by the then President of the Republic of Bulgaria, was conducted by the Institute for the Study of Youth Populations in 1991. The Katz-Braly test was used to measure intergroup stereotypes and prejudices. 160 college and university students took part in the survey. It was carried out in a period of rising ethnic tensions provoked by the recent forced assimilation and exile of hundreds of thousands of Bulgarian Turks from the country; by the delay in the restoration of ethno-cultural minority rights; by political parties’ ruthless exploitation of ethnic fear, incited by the same parties in presidential or parliamentary election struggles; by the existing social and political insecurity; by the increasing unemployment, poverty and crime.

The survey reported that there were widely-held negative attitudes, stereotypes and prejudices against Roma.³² They were perceived mainly as criminals: 89% of the respondents described them

32 Attitudes towards Bulgarian Turks, Roma, Jews and Armenians were surveyed. All of them belong to traditional minority groups in Bulgaria.

as thieves, 76% – as bullies; 75% – as profiteers; 70% – as liars; 67% – as swindlers. The reasons for overemphasising these qualities were several. After the collapse of the communist regime, social inequalities, unemployment and poverty sharply increased. There was a dramatic rise³³ in offences against persons and property; the crime clearance rate, however, significantly dropped. Many journalists and politicians succeeded to divert attention away from the most serious fraud and theft cases relating to embezzlement of “state property” and organised crime wherein a special place was held by former employees of the State Security Service, power athletes (wrestlers, weight lifters, oarsmen) and politicians who provided a political umbrella for all of them by pointing someone else – Roma – as the “main culprit.” Namely in 1990 it became normative to indicate the ethnicity of suspects or convicts, especially if they were members of ethnic minorities. Nowadays, this practice is still followed by most print media in Bulgaria.

Another two significant groups of representations ascribed to Roma may be classified as “cultural traits” and “moral attributes.” Roma are mainly described as *dirty*, *illiterate*, *ill-bred* and *primitive*. There is a high frequency of use of words like *insolent*, *unscrupulous*, *unceremonious* and *lazy*. They are often characterised as a group having less worth and less rights. 3 out of the 15 traits that are most commonly attributed to Roma are less offensive or positive – 83% of the respondents described them as *carefree*, 73% – as *cheerful* and 64% – as *musical* (Tomova 1992).

In the period 1992-1999, a series of sociological surveys were carried out and special attention was given to social distance, stereotypes and prejudices against large ethnic communities in Bulgaria. Identical indicators were used in five of the surveys, thus enabling data comparability, namely: *The Ethno-cultural Situation in Bulgaria* (1992), two surveys *Relations of Compatibility and Incompatibility between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria* (1994 and 1997), *The Phodope Mountains – a Model of Tolerance* (1998), *A Culture of Peace within the Young Generation in Bulgaria* (1999). Since the last two surveys target a specific region and age group, only the results of the first three shall be presented hereunder in detail.

From 1991 to 1999 there was a considerable relief in the relations between Bulgarian Christians, on the one hand, and Turks and Pomaks, on the other. Simultaneously, negative attitudes, prejudices and social distance towards Roma remained unchanged at an extremely high level. Roma were the most rejected group as compared to all traditional ethnic minorities in Bulgaria (Georgiev, Tomova, Kanev, Grekova 1992; Mitev 1994; Tomova 2000). Some concrete results are shown below.

Table 6: Attitudes of Bulgarian Christians towards Roma (positive answers) (%).

Attitude	Bulgarians 1992	Bulgarians 1994	Bulgarians 1997
Gypsies are lazy and irresponsible	85	85	84
Gypsies are inclined to commit crimes	90	91	89
Gypsies do not value education	64	-	-
Gypsies cannot be trusted and relied upon	-	84	85
Gypsies should live separately rather than together with us	72	65	67
All Gypsies are alike	90	85	80

Source: IMIR. Data provided by the following surveys: *The Ethno-cultural Situation in Bulgaria* (1992) and *Relations of Compatibility and Incompatibility between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria* (1994 and 1997).

33 In 1994 Ivan Batzarov, Chief of the National Police, said in a personal interview that until 1989 the average number of homicides in Bulgaria had been between 7 and 10 cases per annum whereas after 1990 it rocketed to about 800 cases per annum. The same refers to crimes against property. Simultaneously, the clearance rate of even the most serious crimes against the person decreased more than four times, but guilty verdicts were delivered in an extremely small number of cases (personal archive of Ilona Tomova).

There was enormous and persistent social distance from Roma. Moreover, it was observed in nearly all relations. Bulgarians firmly rejected any possibility of Roma holding senior posts or working for government or law enforcement bodies. This phenomenon might be explained by the sharp increase in social differences between ethnic communities in Bulgaria. Another possible explanation refers to reinforcement of ethnocentrism during economic crises or sudden social and political changes. This explanatory pattern, however, has less heuristic value in the analysis of the relations between Bulgarians and Turks. Apparently, the influence of other factors (like political representation, media attitude, changes in demographic behaviour, etc.), affecting ethnocentrism to a varying extent, and the degree of acceptance or rejection of different minority groups should be analysed.

Table 7: Social distance between Bulgarians and Roma (positive answers of ethnic Bulgarians) (%).

I agree to:	1992	1994	1997
Marry a Gypsy	5	5	6
Have a Gypsy friend	30	30	27
Live with Gypsies in the same neighbourhood	52	40	32
Work with Gypsies	55	51	40
Live with Gypsies in the same settlement	61	61	50
Live with Gypsies in the same country	66	72	60
My child having a Gypsy teacher	-	19	16
Have a Gypsy chief of the local police office	-	11	13
Have Gypsy officers in the army	-	12	14
Have a Gypsy government minister	-	11	13
Several of my child's schoolmates being Gypsies	-	63	58
Half of my child's schoolmates being Gypsies	-	19	11
Most of my child's schoolmates being Gypsies	-	11	6

Source: IMIR. Data provided by the following surveys: The Ethno-cultural Situation in Bulgaria (1992) and Relations of Compatibility and Incompatibility between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria (1994 and 1997).

A survey of the Helsinki Committee reported very similar data in 2005 although a different scale was used therein. The proportion of ethnic Bulgarians willing to have Roma friends was reported to have slightly increased to 33%. 37% of the respondents declared that they agreed to live with Gypsies in the same neighbourhood, and 48% – to share a workplace with Gypsies (Kanev, Choen, Simenova 2005). Negative stereotypes and social distance towards Roma were extremely strong among Bulgarian Turks and Bulgarian Muslims. However, their answers were about 10-20% more favourable with respect to Roma as compared to the answers of members of the dominating ethno-confessional group – Bulgarian Christians (Georgiev, Tomova, Kanev, Grekova 1992; Mitev 1994; Tomova 2000).

In the period 1997-1998, Bulgaria was involved in the international comparative socio-psychological research *Representations of Roma in European Countries* led by Professor Juan-Antonio Peres. It was carried out among college and university students from Bulgaria, Spain, Italy, Moldova, Portugal, Romania and France. The survey showed that negative feelings, attitudes, stereotypes and prejudices against Roma were openly expressed in the three post-communist countries whereas in West European countries students exhibit a more ambivalent attitude. Compared to Romanians and Moldavians, Bulgarian students demonstrated lesser social distance and less prejudiced and discriminatory attitudes towards Roma. In comparison with the respondents from the other two post-communist countries as well as with Italians, the French and Portuguese, Bulgarians more frequently declared that active social and political actions should be taken in order to improve Roma's life, that segregation and discrimination should be counteracted in housing, etc. Bulgarian and Spanish students were more aware that Roma are constantly victims of discrimination. They were also least likely to lay the blame for the existing

inequality on Roma themselves (Tomova 2000, Topalova 2002).

In 2007 and 2008 the Open Society Institute conducted the comparative survey *Social Distance and Ethnic Stereotypes about Minorities in Bulgaria* (Pamporov 2009). In addition to the research into attitudes towards traditional minorities in Bulgaria (Turks, Pomaks, Roma, Armenians and Jews), social distance from various groups of immigrants and minorities consisting of citizens of neighbouring countries (Romanians, Serbians, Greeks and Albanians) was surveyed. It was established that the greatest social distance was experienced by the Roma community as compared to all traditional minorities. Roma were less desired as spouses, neighbours, friends, colleague and compatriots in comparison to the members of new immigrant groups and minorities consisting of citizens of neighbouring Balkan countries (except for Albanians, who were even less preferred neighbours). Respondents' tendency to move to a new place if members of various minority groups settle in their neighbourhood was examined. Living with Roma neighbours was most strongly disapproved (to the same degree as the option of living with Kurds): 12% of the respondents indicated that they would take drastic steps such as changing residency (in Bulgaria it meant that they would sell their dwelling and buy a new one, probably more expensive, at some other place). Social distance from black people, Kurds and Arabs was the only greater distance observed. However, the difference was small – between 3 and 5% in favour of Roma – and disappeared when Bulgarians' willingness to have Roma colleagues, either their peers or their superiors, was measured. The greatest number of negative stereotypes referred to Roma. They were mainly portrayed as *thieves* and generally – as *swindlers/liars*, a representation which also included *criminals*. They were very frequently described as *lazy* and *dirty*. Bulgarians were likely to place more emphasis on low education levels of Roma, and *illiteracy* was ascribed to them as a cultural trait.

In 2009 Zornitsa Ganeva's book *Development of Ethnic Stereotypes in Childhood* was published. The author examines stereotypes about Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma held by children from four age groups – those of 6-, 9-, 12- and 15-year-olds. Children's representations of the three ethnic groups are surveyed in terms of 14 qualities (7 antonymous pairs – *cheerful/sad*, *clean/dirty*, *peaceable/aggressive*, *clever/stupid*, *hard-working/lazy*, *friendly/hostile*, *honest/dishonest*). The characteristics attributed to Roma by over 50% of the respondents from a respective group are shown in table 9 below.

Table 8: Representations of Roma by 6-, 9-, 12- and 15-year-old children.

6-year-old children		9- year-old children		12- year-old children		15- year-old children	
Dirty	79.2	Dirty	97.9	Lazy	81.3	Dirty	87.8
Lazy	77.1	Stupid	83.0	Dirty	79.2	Dishonest	77.6
Dishonest	64.6	Lazy	80.9	Dishonest	68.8	Lazy	73.5
Stupid	64.6	Dishonest	74.5	Aggressive	66.7	Aggressive	71.4
Hostile	56.3	Hostile	70.2	Stupid	62.5	Hostile	65.3
		Aggressive	61.7	Hostile	54.2	Stupid	61.2
				Cheerful	54.2		

Source: Ganeva 2009: 145.

Children from all age groups ascribe all positive qualities to their own group, but there is a relative decrease in positive evaluations among 12- and 15-year-olds. All ethnic Bulgarian respondents attribute numerous negative characteristics to Roma. Furthermore, the negative stereotyping is very strong. The mean for negative characteristics ascribed to Roma is 4.90,³⁴ and 0.72 for positive. The highest factor level is reached by the opposition between *honest* and *dishonest* (0.823), followed by *friendly/hostile* (0.807). A positive attribution is mentioned only by the group of 12-year-olds. Ethnic Bulgarians express

³⁴ Higher figures indicate that greater importance is placed on the choices which are made (0 – minimum, and 7 – maximum).

most frequently negative attitudes towards Roma – almost twice as often as Turks. Moreover, Roma are least liked by Ethnic Bulgarians: the degree of liking for Roma among Bulgarians is 1.60 (while among Turks it is 3.19).³⁵ Social distance between Bulgarian and Roma children is greatest (i.e. they would most rarely choose a Roma for a friend or neighbour). The attitude of ethnic Bulgarians towards Roma reflects the idiosyncrasies of “stigmatic thinking,” if we use Moscovici’s term, which suggests that a stigmatised group is represented as existing in another world and more stress is laid on its biologically, rather than culturally, determined traits (Moscovici 2002). Among children aged between 6 and 15 years, there is observed a constant increase in the number of negative characteristics they attribute to their own group and positive qualities they ascribe to other groups. Nonetheless, children aged between 6 and 15 years develop a strong attachment to their own group. The survey reveals the strong influence of group stereotypes in Bulgarian society, which are formed in early childhood and in the process of socialisation. They function as social norms and are unreservedly accepted by children.

In the 1990s, Ivan Ivanov from Shumen University conducted a series of surveys of institutional racism in the Bulgarian education system. They show that ethnic Bulgarian teachers are strongly prejudiced against Roma pupils. Roma children score highly only with respect to their physical power, health, beauty, self-confidence, communicative skills and team spirit. Simultaneously, they receive low scores in terms of their intellectual abilities (0.12), good upbringing (0.10), orderliness (0.11), high educational attainment (0.12), discipline (0.13), frankness (0.16) and rationalism (0.19). Ethnic Bulgarian teachers portray Roma pupils as children who have low learning motivation and low educational aspirations (0.19), who are incurious, (0.22), uncreative (0.21), disorderly (0.11) and who avoid failures (0.20). Roma children are perceived as unruly (0.40), uncooperative (0.45), irresponsible (0.40) and rebellious (0.40). Teachers represent them as aggressive (0.60) and at the same time as having an underdeveloped sense of guilt (0.26), thus fostering their image of being *dangerous*. According to Bulgarian teachers, Roma demonstrate a strong need for entertainment (0.82), sex (0.60), self-justification (0.51) and ostentation (0.60). The image of children from the three largest ethnic groups is strongly influenced by teachers’ ethnocentrism, which is most overtly expressed by ethnic Bulgarian teachers, as well as by widely-held ethnic stereotypes in Bulgaria. Furthermore, the image of the Roma pupil treated with prejudice by nearly all teachers is especially negative and may give rise to institutional racism in education (Ivanov 2000). Only kindergarten teachers are not liable to exaggerate the differences between children from various ethnic groups and think that it is not necessary to pursue different aims as regards children from different ethnic groups. They reject the necessity of using different teaching methods, explanations, task formulations, syllabi, examination and evaluation methods, result analyses, organisation of the teaching process, etc. Ivanov claims that frequently teachers unintentionally try to impose frameworks on students’ development, corresponding to their own prejudices. Low expectations for the intellectual attainment of Roma children provoke their low aspirations and achievements. (Ivanov 1996, 1997 and 2000).

4.2. Reports and decisions of national and international monitoring bodies

Since mid-1990s, Bulgarian human rights organisations and bodies as well as international monitoring bodies have periodically been criticising Bulgaria for recurrent incidents of institutional racism and hate speech. In its annual report for 2009, the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC) states as follows: *In February 2009, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) ... expressed concern with regard to a series of issues related to the discrimination against ethnic minorities in Bulgaria, including:*

- poor representation of ethnic minorities in governmental bodies;
- selective transfer of Roma children to special schools for children with developmental disabilities;

³⁵ Higher figures indicate a higher degree of liking (1 – not liking at all, 5 – liking a lot).

- discrimination against the Roma in employment, housing, healthcare and education;
- use of excessive force by law enforcement officials against Roma;
- spreading racist stereotypes and hostility against minorities by media and organizations, such as the Ataka party;
- poor knowledge and inadequate application by the judiciary bodies of the standards for the protection against racial discrimination.

According to BHC “the CERD recommendations did not result in a serious debate in Bulgarian society. None of the governments in power until the end of the year had introduced any measures to overcome the issues indicated. In some respects, the situation even worsened, for example as a result of the demolition of Roma houses in several Bulgarian cities (BHC 2009).”

In February, 2009, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) published its *Fourth Monitoring Report on Bulgaria*. In terms of the progress achieved since the previous report (2004), ECRI noted the *Protection against Discrimination Act* and the protection it provides the Roma; the creation of the Ministry of Education and Science’s Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities; the country’s participation in the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 and the programmes aimed at solving the educational, housing, labour and other problems of the Roma; the adoption of the Media Code of Ethics, which prohibits unjustified announcement of race, religion or ethnoses, etc. In terms of deficiencies, ECRI noted the failure to apply the *Penal Code* provisions on racist crimes; the insufficient effectiveness and funding of Roma programmes; the lack of a policy on the reduction of the number of Roma children sent unjustly to institutions for children with disabilities; the impunity of racist talk in the media; the inadequate persecution of racist actions by the police; and the lack of a system for collection of ethnic data.

ECRI recommended that Bulgaria should immediately ratify *Protocol 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights*, which protects against discrimination; to provide the Commissions for Protection against Discrimination with sufficient human and financial resources; to not impede the freedom of association of any community; to effectively integrate the Roma children in the schools; to train the Electronic Media Council on fighting racism; to penalise politicians for hate speech; to prevent racial profiling and the excessive use of force by the police.

After 2000, when Bulgaria signed the European Social Charter, the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) judged three times that different legal documents and social practices violate social rights of the Bulgarian citizens, especially if they are from the Roma minority. In 2006, ECSR decided “that the situation concerning the inadequate housing of Roma families and the lack of proper amenities constitutes a violation of Article 16 of ESC taken together with Article E.” The Committee also holds “that the situation constitutes a violation of Article 16 of ESC taken together with Article E because the Roma families are disproportionately affected by the legislation limiting the possibility of legalising illegal dwellings; and the evictions carried out did not satisfy the conditions required by the Charter; in particular that of ensuring persons evicted are not rendered homeless.”³⁶

The hardships – a result from the economic crisis, from the ineffective judiciary system, also from the resistance of the majority against active measures for improvement concerning the housing of the Roma and their access to social and health services, hamper the execution of the recommendation of the European institutions. Even after the Bulgarian accession to EU, Article 13 and Article 14 from the European Social Charter were constantly violated (“Right to social and medical assistance;” “Everyone has the right to benefit from social welfare services”). In 2009 the European Committee of Social Rights concluded that:

“1. The level of social assistance paid to a person under 65 living alone is manifestly inadequate. 2. It has not been established that person in need, whose social assistance is interrupted after 12 months, can obtain adequate resources to meet the necessary costs of living in a manner consistent with human

36 European Committee of Social Rights. Decision on the Merits, 18 October 2006. Complaint No. 31/2005.

dignity. 3. The level of social assistance is manifestly inadequate. 4. It has not been established that elderly persons without resources receive adequate social assistance.” (Conclusions 2009 - Bulgaria). ECSR expressly points out that these infringements disproportionately affect Roma; consequently, they should be deemed a violation of Article E.

The lack of serious civic opposition against the constant shrinkage of social rights of the Bulgarian citizens as well as the mass political and media propaganda (claiming) that social funds are being drained out “by irresponsible Roma people,” “unwilling to work and acting as parasites on the system for social assistance,” led to three in a row changes in the Social Assistance Act, which stipulated reduction of the period for monthly assistance for a long-term unemployed person at first to 18 months (2006), and after that to 12 and 6 months (2008). Along with the suspension of the monthly payments for unemployment and poverty, the right to free of charge state health services for such a person was suspended as well. These measures especially affected the Roma community. After a collective claim to the European Committee of Social Rights, lodged by the European Roma Rights Centre, the Committee decided, that there are infringements on Article 11, Par1 – Right to protection of health, and Article 13, Par. 1 – Right to social and medical assistance. The decision was:

“The authorities have failed to take appropriate measures to address the health problems faced by Roma communities stemming from their often unhealthy living conditions and difficult access to health services. The medical services available for poor or socially vulnerable persons who have lost entitlement to social assistance are not sufficient.” (Conclusions 2009 - Bulgaria).

On November 4, 2010, the UN Human Rights Council held its universal periodic review for Bulgaria. The participating countries addressed 113 recommendations to the country, many of which were general, did not target the situation in the country and/or were formulated in extremely diplomatic language. However, some recommendations concerned serious human rights issues: discrimination against Roma and other ethnic minorities; the excessive use of force by law enforcement bodies; violence and discrimination against institutionalized children, people with psychiatric disorders and sexual minorities; racist and xenophobic hate speech; the deplorable conditions at correctional facilities; and justice for minors and juveniles. By the end of the year, the Bulgarian government had not made a statement on the recommendations indicating which ones it accepts and which it rejects.

On October 7, 2010 the Council of Europe’s Commissioner for Human Rights sent the Bulgarian Prime Minister a letter in which he expressed his concerns with respect to the discrimination and social exclusion of the Roma. In his response in November, the Prime Minister quoted several modest projects targeting the Roma community, but did not offer a vision or long-term plan to find a solution to the problems (BHC 2010).

On March 25, 2010, the European Court of Human Rights found Bulgaria guilty of violating Article 14 (the ban on discrimination) in relation to Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights in several cases with Roma people. The Court pointed out that the elimination of racism in modern multicultural European societies is a priority goal of all member states, and that the Bulgarian courts must comply with the constitutional principle of citizens’ equality before law (BHC 2010).

In its annual report for 2010, the Commission for Protection against Discrimination states that 168 complaints about ethnic discrimination were filed in the period 2006-2010. The Commission points out that in 2010 there was an increase in incidents of discrimination on more than one ground. Thus, 11 further cases of multiple-discrimination were added to the existing 22 complaints about ethnic discrimination. It is specified in the report that ethnic and racial discrimination is latent because the victims, who are often vulnerable, are not willing to file a claim. In 2010 the Commission rendered 15 decisions on 14 complaints about ethnic discrimination and 1 – about racial discrimination. In 10 cases, decided upon the merits, the sitting panel acknowledged that there was direct ethnic discrimination in three cases, approved one settlement agreement between the parties and determined that there was indirect ethnic discrimination in one case. Three injunctions against further infringements were granted. The panel addressed three recommendations to the competent authorities with the aim of preventing future ethnic and racial

discrimination. It rejected five discrimination claims because it established that discrimination was not committed. Five of the cases were discontinued due to abandonment of the claims or lack of jurisdiction. All of the rulings referred to complaints about discrimination in employment (6 claims), access to goods and services (3 claims), personal relations (3 claims) and law enforcement (3 claims).

In July 2011 Ms. Gay J. McDougall, United Nations Independent Expert on Minority Issues visited Bulgaria with the intention to assess the situation of minorities, particularly the Roma, Turkish and other Muslim minorities, and to consult on Bulgaria's legislation, policy and practice relevant to minority rights, non-discrimination and equality. Her comments were: *"Current Government initiatives and financial commitments are having little more than superficial impact and are failing to address the entrenched discrimination, exclusion, and poverty faced by many Roma... Many policies seem to remain largely only rhetorical undertakings aimed at external audiences – official commitments that are not fulfilled in practice. Concrete actions on the ground and adequate financial commitment are essential.* Ms. McDougall found that in such key areas as housing, employment, education and health care, *"all the evidence demonstrates that Roma remain in desperate circumstances at the very bottom of the socio-economic ladder."* In addition, the Roma *"experience discrimination in all walks of life that leaves them totally marginalized and in persistent poverty."* Ms. McDougall emphasized that the Government's obligation to guarantee equal access to quality education to Roma children remains *"overwhelmingly unfulfilled."* *"While Bulgaria was among the first European countries to acknowledge the need for desegregation of Roma children in education, the vast majority of Roma children are in sub-standard de facto segregated schools in Roma neighbourhoods,"* she said. *"The small, inconsistent pilot project-based approach that has been undertaken to date will never reach the transformative tipping point necessary to confront the vast socio-economic challenges faced by the Roma,"* was her conclusion.³⁷

4.3. Institutional discrimination against Roma

4.3.1. Police brutality

Since the beginning of the 1990s, BHC has constantly been drawing attention to police brutality and particularly to frequent use of unjustified violence during arrests and interrogations of Roma. Some of the most drastic cases were brought to the European Court on Human Rights and Bulgaria was ruled guilty in many of these cases. Sometimes discriminatory behaviour towards Roma is a practice in whole police offices and even their chiefs adopt such behaviour.

In 2010 the European Court on Human Rights adopted a record number of decisions against Bulgaria under Article 2 of the ECHR (the right to life). In seven of them, the Court found Bulgaria guilty of violating this human right. The Court once again underscored the inconsistency between the regulations on the use of potentially deadly weapons in the Bulgarian *MIA* Act and the provisions of the Convention.

4.3.2. Local authorities' discrimination acts

Many Roma in Bulgaria have been living in extremely poor conditions for years on end. The conditions in their neighbourhoods have further deteriorated in the last two decades. The unemployment of tens of thousands of Roma living in villages and towns force them to migrate to cities in order to seek sustenance. This further contributes to the poverty in Roma neighbourhoods. Sometimes newcomers squat in abandoned dwellings or build shacks out of available materials. This frequently gives rise to complaints by the non-Roma citizens living in the vicinity.

³⁷ UN News Centre: *UN expert urges Bulgaria to turn Roma policies into concrete action*. 11th July, 2011.

In 2011 the election campaigns of two political parties were based on their promises that as soon as they join local governments, they would vote in favour of the demolition of illegal dwellings in Roma neighbourhoods. Local governments in power generally refrain from such actions because they are not able to offer alternatives for the hundreds of thousands of Roma entitled to housing rights, who live in neighbourhoods that are not included in urban planning or who do not have title deeds for their dwellings. Only in some cases Roma dwellings have been demolished. However, such a step usually leads to permanent deterioration in living conditions and some social problems. In Yambol an apartment block, wherein many Roma families lived in poor conditions, was demolished in 2010. Some of them were accommodated by their relatives; others squatted in abandoned houses in nearby villages. Many of them were completely destitute.

In 2009 several Roma houses were demolished in different urban areas. The local council in the city of Burgas ordered the demolition of 46 Roma houses in September 2009 on the grounds that the buildings were illegal. They were the only homes of more than 200 Roma. No alternative accommodation was provided. The lack of effective civic opposition against the violation of Roma's housing rights encouraged local authorities in other towns and cities to do likewise. On 16 October, the local authorities in the capital of the country demolished a home in the Voenna Rampa neighbourhood in Sofia, on the grounds that the 32 Roma living there since 1991 were squatters and that the building was in risk of caving in. No alternative accommodation was offered to the inhabitants, among whom pregnant women and people with disabilities. In all these cases the demolition was supported by the police, which used disproportional force beating the inhabitants of the demolished houses.

The Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria denounced the actions of the local authorities in Burgas, Sofia and Yambol. He stated that in such cases international law requires adequate consultations with potential victims, informing them about the purposes of the eviction and the alternative use of the land to be vacated, provision of effective internal legal means of protection, including free legal assistance against the eviction decision or access to land in case the victims remain homeless.³⁸ None of these conditions was met during the forced evictions in Burgas, Sofia and Yambol. This statement was met with indifference by the Government, many members of the Parliament, local authorities as well as by some media.

In December 2009, the Supreme Administrative Court (SAC) found a Sofia municipal mayor guilty of abuse of Roma. The court held that the mayor's anti-Roma statements on a radio station – “the cows will be less in the way than a Gypsy neighbourhood,” “such a Roma community is ten times more dangerous when located close to residential areas than a landfill” – constitute a violation of the dignity of all Roma and create an abusive environment for them. The court also held that it did not matter whether it was the mayor's intention to humiliate the Roma, it was sufficient that this was the result of his actions. The CPD penalised the mayor with a fine in the amount of BGN 1 000 (EUR 513), a ban to similar statements in the future and an obligation to apologise on the same radio station, as well as to publish at his expense the CPD decision in a national daily. The mayor complied. The SAC final verdict confirmed that the mayor's hate speech against the Roma, including the statement that “the Roma have to gradually cultivate, to develop normal hygienic habits because the other people suffer from their lack of basic hygiene” is a breach of the law. This is the first case, in which an official has been sentenced to publicly apologize for hate speech and to publish the verdict at his expense (BHC 2009).

4.3.3. Image of Roma in media

Hate speech became an established practice in the Bulgarian media in mid-1980s, when the Bulgarian Communist Party imposed a policy of forced assimilation of Bulgarian Turks. After 1989 hate speech was a common occurrence in most articles about Roma. President Zhelev's advisor on ethnic issues

³⁸ See CESCR, General Comment No. 7: The right to adequate housing (Art. 11 (1) of the Covenant): Forced evictions, HRI/GEN/1/Rev.9 (Vol. I), Sixteenth session (1997), §§ 15-16.

filed several reports and complaints with the Attorney General of the Republic of Bulgaria, in which he had documented how the print media provoked ethnic hostility and hatred towards Roma and Bulgarian Turks and appealed to the Attorney General to launch a case on his own initiative, order an investigation and initiate proceedings against some of the media. Nonetheless, the Attorney General, Mr. Tatarchev, replied that, in his opinion, the enclosed materials “reflect the true situation, and the freedom of speech guarantees editors and journalist their right to write about unpleasant facts in impolite language.”

Several studies on press articles about Roma, which were organised by the Initiative for Human Rights Foundation, Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, Open Society Institute and S.E.G.A. Foundation, proved that in the 1990s hate speech prevailed in materials about Roma in all surveyed newspapers; moreover, Roma were usually portrayed as criminals and violators of common moral norms, as lazy and irresponsible people who are not willing to work but live on social welfare funds and as a social, demographic and cultural threat to the development of Bulgarian society. It was established that the number of press materials about Roma sharply increased in election periods, when political parties used to buy the votes of poor Roma, as well as in summer periods, when political news were scarce and Roma were used as “tabloid reading material” to attract readers’ attention through sensational or fabricated scandals.

The accession period and the years after the accession of Bulgaria to the European Union were characterised by a decrease in the intensity and power of hate speech in most Bulgarian media. However, the conclusion of BHC made in 2008 is valid even today: „The situation with freedom of expression in Bulgaria deteriorated in 2008 due to a combination of old problems and new trends concerning all manifestations of this human right. BHC monitoring identified in 2008 as well:

- strongly expressed and widely disseminated racism, xenophobia, sexism and prejudice towards religious and sexual minorities;
- failure of the media regulator, the Council for Electronic Media, to enforce the law on the control over the radio and TV operators that violate it;
- inaction of the ethics committees in press and electronic media in cases of obvious violations of their codes of ethics.”

In December, 2008 the Council for Electronic Media (CEM) conducted monitoring of the national radio's Horizont programme and Nedelya 150 broadcast. The CEM report notes that the people of unequal status, the sexual and the ethnic minorities are still kept out of national air. In January, 2008 the CEM organised a discussion on hate speech in the media, which clearly indicated the weak and ineffective role of the regulator in penalising this type of speech. The self-regulation bodies also remained passive to this serious problem in the Bulgarian media. In a scandalous and embarrassing case, the most prominent journalism award for young journalists, Chernorizets Hrabar, was awarded in May 2008 to Kalin Rumenov, who often uses racist speech against the Roma³⁹ (BXK 2008).

The CPD is developing a strong practice against racist hate speech. It rules with strong motives against the trend of journalists indicating the Roma origin of alleged criminals. Invoking the international standards, the CPD defines this as hate speech and qualifies it as harassment in violation of the PADA. The commission analyses media self-regulation in this respect and firmly reveals measures that are formalistic and declarative.

In BHC’s annual report for 2009, it is again highlighted that: „Hate speech towards ethnic and religious minorities continued to dominate in some media. These include most of all the SKAT television and its programmes Parallax, UpFront, Discussion Studio, etc., as well as the *Ataka* newspaper published by the extreme nationalist party bearing the same name. Hate speech against ethnic minorities, religious

39 This award was established by the Publishers’ Union. Several international organizations protested at the end of August against the granting of the award to a racist. On September 10, representatives from the WAZ media group, owner of the largest dailies, joined the protest. Several days later the Publishers’ Union and the Chernorizets Hrabar Academy, which acts as a jury, revoked the award.

communities and people with different sexual orientation occurred sporadically in other media as well. The Electronic Media Council, which statutorily regulates the radio and television operators, remained passive and inefficient. The ethics committees at the print and the electronic media, whose codes require counteraction to hate speech, were also inefficient.”

According to BHC, the case law of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination (CPD) on hate speech developed in a positive direction over 2009. On several occasions, the CPD ruled in line with the international standards that stereotypical negative statements against minorities are a violation of human dignity and create a hostile and abusive environment in contradiction with the law. The CPD is consistent in advocating that freedom of expression is not absolute and that instilling intolerance goes beyond its boundaries. The commission ruled against hate speech in a series of print and electronic media, qualifying it as abuse. It obliged these media to introduce specific and effective self-control means in order not to allow publications disseminating prejudice. In some cases the CPD explicitly stated that the measures taken by the media to prevent discrimination are “formalistic and declarative.” In one case it obliged a newspaper to join the Media Code of Ethics. It obliges the responsible persons to publish at their expense its convicting decisions, as well as apologies for their statements. In cases of negative general statements about the Roma, CPD obliges the media not to mention the ethnic origin when this is not pertinent to the meaning of the information. The CPD obliges the media to report within a specific deadline what measures it has implemented to ensure compliance with the body’s decisions. In July, 2009 the SAC ruled against a television station, which aired a stereotypical anti-Roma broadcast. The court held that such broadcasts create a hostile environment among the public. The court confirmed the CPD decision to oblige the media to adopt internal mechanisms for the prevention of all forms of discrimination.

The CPD also ruled on several cases of hate speech. In November 2010 the CPD fined the owner of an internet media outlet for allowing abuse on ethnic grounds: racist comments calling for violence posted by readers of the website. The commission obligated the website owner not to allow such acts of discrimination in the future.

In 2011 the Commission for Protection against Discrimination examined press materials with obscene content, published in the three most largely circulated, non-nationalistic dailies in Bulgaria – Novinar, Trud and 24 Chassa. It established that texts containing hate speech, which reinforced negative stereotypes towards Roma and incited hatred, were periodically published in these newspapers. We anticipate its ruling against each newspaper.

In 2010 and 2011 two studies on materials published in different newspapers were carried out by the Open Society Institute and INTEGRO. Their results were published in the *Population Review* in 2011 and 2012. They reveal a trend towards substituting overt racism against Roma for “modern” racism, which is more difficult to be identified but equally destructive and humiliating for Roma. Special attention is paid to the role of the liberal press in the dissemination and reinforcement of negative stereotypes about Roma even if hate speech is being avoided.

5. CONCLUSION

Right from their settlement in Europe, Roma were stigmatised by the most powerful institution – the Church – as *infidels*, *immoral people*, *Devil’s servants* and *sinner*s. All people who communicated with them were threatened with excommunication and eternal torment. This stigma resulted in their social isolation and placement at the bottom of the social ladder in the Middle Ages and at the dawn of Modern Times. Although Roma did not suffer mass annihilation, expulsion or forced labour on galleys in the Ottoman Empire, the prejudices against them continued to be strong and widespread. It gave rise to their discrimination in all spheres of social life and their being perceived as unreliable even if they strictly observed religious traditions and social norms. The years of emerging Balkan nationalism

and fights for the liberation of Greece, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria were characterised by hostility towards and rejection of Muslims and all “ethnically different” people. At the same time, Roma were always represented as outsiders, though nowhere perceived as an immediate threat to the establishment of a new national state. Moreover, they were stigmatised and defamed as morally and socially inferior. In addition, they were deprived of some rights, guaranteed to other citizens, for a different length of time. The police, sanitary and administrative bodies exercised constant tight control over Roma. They had limited opportunities for integration in the labour market, at school and in local communities. Even though Bulgaria did not allow the removal of Jews and Roma to concentration camps in World War II, Roma were victims of discriminatory laws, segregation and restrictions during the whole war period. The ideals of equality and fraternity, proclaimed by the communists, gave rise to the provision of state assistance to the development of Roma culture for a short period of time and to its prosperity respectively. However, at the end of the 1940s, the policy of promoting Roma’s ethnic identity gave place to various campaigns aiming at their cultural and social assimilation. To a certain extent these policies were eased by the measures of the communist government to alleviate poverty in Roma neighbourhoods, to include large numbers of Roma in state industrial and agricultural enterprises and cooperatives and to eradicate illiteracy among children and adults. At the end of the 1980s, the income of Roma families was average or even above the average for the country, but their housing conditions were poorest. Spatial segregation persisted in the Roma community as well as in schools. The major reason therefore was their being perceived as unequal and potentially dangerous.

In the post-socialist period, Roma appeared to be the most vulnerable group in all former socialist countries. Namely their community was most severely affected by unemployment and poverty. In addition, the likelihood that their children will be sent to segregated schools or schools for mentally handicapped children increased, thus both limiting their opportunities to receive better education and qualifications and passing poverty on to future generations. For a long period of time, Roma lacked adequate political representation and union protection, which contributed to their vulnerability and inequality. Their housing conditions rapidly deteriorated and spatial segregation increased. It reinforced social inequalities, limited their access to employment and social services and posed serious challenges to the socialisation of young people. All surveys reported a decline in Roma’s health status and access to health care services as well as exacerbation of health problems in Roma neighbourhoods. The decline in Roma’s social life and social cohesion in Bulgaria cast Roma and Bulgarians in two diverging parallel worlds.

New suspicions, prejudices and fears in respect of Roma, mainly relating to the differences in their demographic behaviour, were added to the traditional ones in the post-socialist years. The fear from “demographic assimilation,” aroused by high fertility and early marriages of Roma, turned into a moral panic over “demographic and cultural assimilation of Bulgarians” and “gypsification of the society,” this panic being promoted by politicians, the media and some scientists. It led to an increase in spatial isolation and institutional racism as well as to the transferring of the whole responsibility for “solving Roma’s problem” mainly to the police and partially to school.

The general repressive attitude provokes violence and discrimination against Roma and contributes to the marginalisation of their community. Simultaneously, another phenomenon is observed: namely the impatient expectation that state institutions would “do whatever is necessary” to change the status quo. It implies mainly a more active intervention of the police and administrative bodies in the control of Roma’s behaviour, heavier punishment for misdemeanours and offences committed by Roma, their mass commitment to panel institutions, etc. It also suggests that “the drain of the social funds” providing long-term state assistance to unemployed Roma should be limited. The irrational expectation that “the state would resolve the Roma problem” is connected with an unwillingness to commit additional resources for providing equal opportunities for Roma in education, health care and employment and for improving their housing conditions. It also relates to the opposition to such social policies, which are interpreted as “favouring Roma and discriminating against the majority of the population.” The

victimisation of Roma increases; the trend towards attributing their problems and social inequalities to their culture or personal idiosyncrasies is reinforced. They are both expected and required to change their lifestyle quickly without regard to the fact that their situation and the attitude of “the others” towards them have not changed respectively. The expulsion of Roma from France, Italy, Finland, the Netherlands, Austria and other West European countries reinforces the repressive attitude towards the Roma community and discourages any further democratisation and humanisation of the society. To an increasing extent, politicians, civil society structures and Roma themselves regard appeals for “integration of Roma” as social demagoguery and political hypocrisy. The poor living conditions in the period of economic, social, political and moral crises, lasting for over several decades, will delay the re-examination of the consequences of Roma’s social exclusion, as well as the initiatives aimed at dealing with these consequences, for an indefinite period of time.

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ANALYSIS OF ROMA SITUATION IN ITALY WITH EMPHASIS ON FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA AND VENETO

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INTRODUCTION

The legal, social and historical issues concerning the presence of Roma and Sinti in Italy only rarely have been the subject of a thorough and systematic analysis. And too often, they have been addressed from the viewpoints of the so-called urban decor, safety or public order.

On the other hand, in spite of the fact that Roma and Sinti are clearly the biggest minority in Europe, all European states consider the Roma, and in general the people that these groups are assimilated to, at least a problem, if not worse. This preliminary observation helps explain why, despite the various campaigns and initiatives promoted in recent years by the European institutions, different NGOs, citizens' associations, local governments and public authorities in order to foster the dialogue between Roma and non-Roma, it is still often very complex the implementation of policies aimed at integration and constructive dialogue with these communities.

The international community, especially the European institutions, makes a highly critical judgment of the policies followed by different countries with reference to Roma and Sinti. The negative judgment from time to time hit the Czech Republic, France and other countries. Also Italy was confronted with the criticism of this or that aspect of its policy, critics who have spared certain attitudes of civil society. Italy was in 2011 submitted to the Universal Periodical Review by the UN Human Rights Council: among the 92 recommendations related to Italy, as many as 10 have focused on the treatment of Roma and Sinti minorities. A number of other international institutions highlighted the highly discriminatory policies enacted by Italian government from 2006 (i.e. the opinion of the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Woman on Romani Women in Italy published in July 2011).

On 10 March 2010, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, has been heard in the hearing by the Commission for Human Rights of the Italian Senate and had words of bewilderment and strong criticism referring at the inspections she made in Roma camps of the previous days. It must be said that also some Italian institutions, as the already quoted Commission for Human Rights of the Italian Senate, completed very critical and deep analysis of Roma situation in Italy, focusing their attention on the need to find a quick solution to the discrimination suffered by these groups in our country and proposing some initiatives in order to avoid two of the main problems affecting Roma and Sinti in Italy: the lack of certain data concerning housing, employment, health services, education (no data-no progress); enhance and foster the participation of Roma and Sinti to public life through a more active participation to associations, political life and civil society (as stated in the Report of the Senate published in 2011 Roma and Sinti are "invisible" and "made themselves invisible"). The main result of this report has been the launch of a "National Strategy for Roma in Italy," which focuses its attention to the different issues already repealed. The real problem is that still after two years the Government did not adopted an Action Plan which should clearly define competences and roles of central and local authorities in order to achieve the goals stated in the strategy.

In Italy, there are eleven regional laws on Roma and Sinti and a wide network of local measures and municipal ordinances, but lacks a national plan that should fixed the lines of action that should be both flexible (with respect to the different needs and the local context) and shared in their application. This failing was emphasized by ANCI, the National Association of Italian Municipalities, during a hearing in the Senate in 2010 and, as mentioned, has not yet been transposed in 2013 despite the launch in 2011 of the aforementioned national Strategy on Roma.

The present work has the objective of building a shared knowledge. It absolutely does not pretend to solve the problems and the diversity of positions in the political debate. If anything, the idea is to provide, under different perspectives, guidelines and opinions, a cognitive framework that goes beyond stereotypes and a starting point through which opinions can be compared in a constructive way. A better understanding of the phenomena can lead to the identification of more effective policies to ensure security and integration. The basic idea of this project is, in fact, that only mutual knowledge can help overcome mutual stereotypes and prejudices.

In preparing this analysis were taken into account the documents approved by international, European, national and local bodies; directions and recommendations of the European Commission and the Council of Europe, the report on minorities prepared by the Italian government in 2010 and the aforementioned Report on Roma issued by the Italian Senate in 2010. The analysis will focus on the experience and the situation in the Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto regions (which has specific characteristics compared to the rest of Italy, but interesting for the “bridge” these geographic area has between East and West of Europe).

The first part of this analysis deals with the context of the presence of Roma/Sinti communities in Italy and Friuli Venezia Giulia: historical origins, geographical distribution, areas of origin and settlement, cultural and anthropological profiles. The second part of the work focuses on the analysis of the legal situation of Roma in Italy and Friuli-Venezia Giulia, with a continuous comparison with international standards and EU regulations. In the third part of the work we will analyze the socio-economic aspects specific to their condition: the numerical and demographic change, housing issues, access to services such as education and healthcare, the working conditions; issues related to security and crime; the situation of children. In the fourth part, finally, we analyze the situation of discrimination and integration of Roma and Sinti in Italy and in the two regions mentioned. Particular attention is paid also to the participation of these communities in public life and associations, as well as the presence of discriminatory and stereotyped behaviours, with a series of proposals to increase the participation of Roma and Sinti in public life by encouraging the inclusion and the reciprocal knowledge between Roma and non-Roma.

This work cannot be a point of arrival on the knowledge of issues affecting the Roma and Sinti in Italy but it is a starting point for both further study and analysis and for the start of still lacking concrete administrative and public regulatory initiatives.

1. ROMA AND SINTI PEOPLE IN ITALY: HISTORICAL, ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. The historical origins of the presence in Italy of Roma and Sinti communities

When we speak of Sinti¹ or Romani population, we refer to a very heterogeneous reality, which is difficult to place in unique conceptual, historical, anthropological and sociological categories: Roma, Sinti, Travellers, Caminanti, Manouches, Gitanos etc. do not all speak the same language (although the Romani language, as we shall see in the next section, is an element which allows to find distinctive feature common to all the different groups), not all profess the same religion, are not for most nomads, have diversified traits, live in very distant from each other geographical areas, are also characterized by different levels of socio-economic development distinct. But then, what do these communities have in common?

Their origin is still a controversial issue. Supported by linguists (who identify significant similarities between Sanskrit of the tenth century and the common roots of the various dialects, *romanés*, spoken by most of them), many historians believe that the romas belong to and Indo-European group located between the II and the III millennium B.C. in Central Asia, perhaps in the Afghan highlands. Subsequently, these populations moved into north-western India where they remained stable until the moment when, around 1000 A.C., they undertook the first major exodus due to the Arab and Mongolian invasions of their territories. From here begins their history and their destiny of traveling and nomad people that brought them to walk the streets of the Middle East, the Balkans, Western and Eastern Europe, North Africa, even, from the sixteenth century, the colonies overseas: as protagonists of voluntary or forced migration,

1 Weber, Max, *Etica protestante e spirito del capitalismo*, Milano, 1974, p. 63 ss.

nomads for necessity or vocation, the Roma have always lived in a situation of marginalization and self-marginalization, in a relationship with other populations characterized by stigma, by mutual suspicion and prejudice.

Other scholars do not share the idea of common linguistic and geographic origins due to a number of reasons: first of all because in their opinion it is not possible to attribute to the majority of Roma the ethnic identity based on physical traits common to those who lived around the year one thousand in the Indian sub-continent; moreover because it seems difficult to support the claim of a common linguistic origin considering that the majority does not speak any of the regional varieties of the *romanés*, not to say of the multiplicity of cultural traits that distinguish the various groups. In short, the debate is open, but, to quote Weber, the question of descent, if it is significant in its symbolic dimension, it is irrelevant in that of history.²

What is certain is that the presence of Roma in Italy has several origins:³ the Sinti, who practiced the craft of carnies, arrived in Italy from Central and Eastern Europe since 1422 escaping from the wars between Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires. The major historical Roma and Sinti groups are the *Havati* Sinti, whose name in Romanès and Proto-Slavic means Croatian, their presence is registered since 1500 but most of them came after the Second World War, escaping from Istria, and acquiring in some cases the Italian citizenship after the Treaty of Osimo (1972), traditionally they are dedicated to the craft of horse breeders, carnies and gathering roots and herbs. Second historical groups of Italian Roma are the *Khorakhané*, carriers of the *khora*, the Koran, from Bosnia, Serbia, Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, who arrived in Italy in three waves. The first during the Fascist period, as a result of the racist policies of the Italian government and the start of the forgotten genocide of Roma/Sinti (*Porrajmos*) during the Second World War, when a great number of Roma and Sinti from different Yugoslav regions were deported to Italy and imprisoned in various transit camps (in Friuli Venezia Giulia a particularly important role was played by the concentration camp of San Giorgio di Nogaro where it is estimated that between 1940 and 1945 were imprisoned in inhumane conditions around 10 000 Roma and Sinti before being transferred in Germany to complete the genocide); the second one in the 60s due to the economic crisis that had hit those regions and finally the last wave as consequence of the wars that devastated the former Yugoslavia in the 90s and the end of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe (many Roma living in Italy actually have their origins in Romania and Bulgaria). Along with these groups (Sinti who arrived between 1400 and 1945 who are mainly Italians and Roma who arrived after 1960 who are mainly stateless, Romanians or “Yugoslav”) other historical Sinti communities in Italy are represented by the so called Sinti *Abruzzesi*, fled to Italy after the battle of Kosovo in 1389, the Roma *Lovara*, whose origins are Danube-Carpathian and whose name derives from the term *lob*, which means horse in Hungarian; and the *Caminanti* group still present in Sicily, Sardinia and southern Italy, who are traditionally the only nomads between these different Roma/Sinti communities.

Even if we look just at the Italian context we can see the extreme diversity that characterizes the geographic origins of the various groups who settled in the area as early as the 1500. What is possible to state is that Sinti communities are present in Italy since the 1600 (Sicilia, Molise, Abruzzo, Calabria, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Sardegna) and are mainly Italian speaking citizens, catholic and located in both rural and urban areas. Roma communities are mainly coming from Eastern and Central Europe; they started to permanently live in Italy since 1960 with a great new wave after 1989 and are mainly located in great urban areas (Milano, Roma, Napoli, Torino, and Verona).⁴

2 Piasere, L. *Italia Romani*, Roma, 1999. The data and the dates that follow are all taken from this book edited by the well known Italian ethnograph and scholar Leonardo Piasere. The most outstanding scholar who dedicated since the 60's his research to the Roma and Sinti presence in Italy.

3 At the end of the war, about 500 of these Sinti who survived to genocide decided to stay in Italy. The new democratic government granted them an area to the limits of the municipality of Udine where about 250 Sinti still reside. Paradoxically, they are still in many cases stateless persons but they are currently the largest and most historical Sinti community in the Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia.

4 Cermel, M., *cit.*, 2009, pp. 25-70.

1.2. The Roma/Sinti society: marriage, family, work and kriss

The Romani society is a simple and pre-capitalist society. It is characterized by the adoption of flexible, dynamic and interchangeable systems of life, the fondness for open spaces and for research of direct contact with nature. Also the time in the Romani world, follows the rhythms of nature, the events of human life and the work is never a time pressing and chanted in a rigorous way. The Romani vision of time is static and is similar to the Oriental one. To give some examples, the day is divided only in *divèsse* (morning) and *ràtte* (night), the only seasons are the *linaj* (summer) and *vènde* (winter).⁵

Moreover it is a patriarchal society: the men are dominating and women are subordinate to them. The rights of succession, inheritance and recognition of the social group only pass through the men, according to a strict patrilineal system. The descent goes, then, for one sex only.

In this society the individual is not considered on the basis of its economic position, but his social position is based on his moral and ethical qualities.⁶

The Romani society is a parental-familiar society, because the family relationship is dominant in the system of social relations and the concept of family extends to the whole parental clan.⁷ The family, in fact, for a population like the Roma, without a territory and therefore without any public institution or state, is the most important element and the social organization of the people themselves is based on it. The concept of family among the Roma do not include only the conjugal family, but extends to all blood relatives, descendants from a common ancestor.⁸ By this point of view it is possible to speak of “extended family” that includes relatives and brings together more marital families. In addition to the family exists the *kumpània*, a set of families which are not necessarily united by ties of kinship. The family appears to be the place where the Roma practice economy, education and solidarity; it is a safe harbor of refuge which meet their human needs and cultural activities. This patriarchal and enlarged family stands as a social structure capable of transmitting to individuals a stronger sense of ownership and the possibility to identify within a group.⁹

The roles of male and female within the family are very different: the man is the head of the family and he must be obeyed, he dominates the public sphere and dedicates to the collective activities, the woman, on the contrary, is wife and mother, she takes care of the domestic life and has a subservient role to her husband and the other males of the family.¹⁰

Another important element for Romani society is marriage (*biav*), an important mean by which is possible to gain social prestige, to define the relationships between families and regulate the distribution of wealth. The virginity of the woman, in this system, is conceived as the most important value in order to have a successful marriage; it is also considered an index of the morality of the women. Marriage is a value and a social duty, because it ensures the survival of the family and of the community as a whole. It is therefore possible to affirm that in this process of constitution of the family is included all dignity of the Roma man.

The social life of the Roma communities is governed by a set of rules and laws which, although unwritten, are effective and respected. These laws form the so-called “Gypsy Law,”¹¹ which consists precisely of oral laws handed down from father to son through the centuries, structured on reciprocity and solidarity and focused on the pure-impure dichotomy (on which we will focus also in next pages). This is, in fact, the foundation of the social group that is expressed in a set of rules that govern the behavior of the main aspects of life. The social sanction that involves the disapproval of the group, a lower estimate in the individual and its greater marginalization, is the instrument that regulates and

5 Piasere, L., *Popoli delle Discariche. Saggi di antropologia zingari*, Roma, 1991, pp. 12-36.

6 Ibidem, p. 37.

7 Battaglia, G., *Europei senza patria: storie di Rom*, Napoli, 2009, p. 46.

8 Ibidem, pp. 51-53.

9 Cermel, M., *cit.*, 2009, pp. 55-56.

10 Barbieri, Stefanelli, Nicolini, *Zingari. Rom e Sinti*, Casale Monferrato (AL), 1994.

11 See Simoni, P., *Il giurista e gli zingari: lezioni dalla common Law*, in *Politica del Diritto*, a. XXX, n. 4, dicembre 1999.

punishes personal behaviors that do not conform to these rules. In the Roma society there are not executive or central powers. Everything is based on tradition and wisdom of the elders. The most important form of social supervision is the “*Kriss*” (“judgment”), which acts as a veritable gypsy civil court and legal system. It is made up of older people, usually some heads of the family who have the role of judges, and a more influential person who plays the role of president. It is convened every time that a serious dispute happens within the group (of moral, matrimonial, economic or civil nature) and has the duty to maintain the order and the respect for traditions. His verdict is final and definitive.¹² Roma has also a particular idea of what is the value of work within their society. In fact, work is intended only as a source of livelihood and does not represent an index of social prestige. It is conceived as a necessity, not as a lifestyle.¹³ Among the traditional economic activities engaged in by most Roma there are: metal processing, breeding and trade of horses and other animals, palm reading, traveling shows, musical performances and artistic activities, itinerant sale, purchase and sale of used cars, begging for alms.

The Romani culture is transnational and multi-faceted: it has many facets depending on the group we consider. It includes many aspects, such as: knowledge, art, morality, laws, stories, proverbs. However, it is possible to identify the basic concepts common to the various communities which are mainly linked to a dualistic view of the world, among them the most important are: the concept of honour and shame, the concept of pure and impure and the concept of good and bad luck linked to the religious sphere.¹⁴

As regards the first aspect, it should be noted as honour, prestige (*pativ*) is one of the most important aspects of Roma life. It is opposed to the shame (*laz*).¹⁵ To this idea is also connected the concept of pure and impure, where pure means words, behaviors, or positive actions that help to enhance the honour of the individual (respectability, personal hygiene, warmth, modesty), while impure is all that the individual performs negative (indecent, licentiousness, adultery, murder). This is an aspect of Romani culture that draws its origins from the Indian system (it is also applied to the sphere of food and body, animals and plants) and is closely linked to the dichotomy of life and death.¹⁶

With regard to the third aspect, the religious one, it can be said that no religion is properly Romani: the Roma have always adapted their beliefs to the religion of the country in which they arrived accepting different rites and beliefs mainly for reasons of survival. Therefore, among them there are Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants and Muslims. They celebrate several religions, different from group to group. As said, the different communities mostly adopted only the outward rituals of various religions; rarely did they enter in the deep meanings. However, all Roma believe in God (*Devel*) - force for good, good, intelligent, top and right - against which there is a force of evil, the devil (*Beng*). At these two forces are also linked the two entities of fate, good and bad luck (*Baxt and Bibaxt*), which govern all aspects of life, leading to successes and failures. Gypsy culture has a very high concept of man and the freedom that *Devel* gives him to choose for the bad or the good. Everything is at the service of man, of every man. The man is the apex in the hierarchy of values, followed by nature and life.¹⁷

With regard to the philosophy of the Roma people, as stated it is based on personal freedom, which is the deep sense of Roma life. It is wrong, however, to confuse this sense of liberty with the sort of nomadic anarchy. It is more a philosophy of survival, based on the essential and the ability to survive with the minimum of things. The Roma are, in fact, a people always ready to go, to leave, because is the group that matters and not the things. Today, however, nomadism is the exception: the majority of still nomadic households are present among Sinti (present in Italy, especially in the North).

The Roma are a peaceful people, which have never declared war on anyone, a people respectful of nature and of the earth, a people who know how to live with tolerance.

12 For a complete analysis of these concepts see: Barbieri, Stefanelli, Nicolini, *op. cit.*, chapter 2 and 3.

13 Piasere, L., *cit.*, 1991, chapter 3.

14 Cermel, M., *cit.*, 2009, pp. 95-99.

15 Cermel, M., *cit.*, 2009, pp. 61-63.

16 Ibidem, pp. 90-92.

17 Ibidem, pp. 112-116.

Finally, it is important to point out that the Romani culture has gained due to its history of persecutions and discriminations a position of defence and refusal of the majority cultures of the non-Roma (or, in Romani, *gagè*). In particular, the transformation of the contemporary society - from agricultural to industrial to the current post-industrial - has contributed to the change and the crisis of Roma culture itself. Today, in fact, there seems that there is no more space for the traditional work of the Roma and this also negatively affects the perception of traditional roles, especially within the family. The mass media have been even more crucial in inducing the crisis of traditional Roma values: the spread of TV even in the Roma/Sinti world offers, especially to young people, models and values (such as consumerism, individualism, the importance of money, etc.). Quite in contrast to those presented by the Roma traditions and are likely to affect deeply the traditional Roma society itself.¹⁸

1.3. The Roma and Sinti situation in Italy today

There are no precise data on the presence of Roma in Italy, because the national census does not provide information on belonging to linguistic minorities or ethnic groups, and because there are no fixed criteria for ranking king persons or groups as “gypsies.”¹⁹ According to the official statistics there are 110 000-120 000 Rom, of which about 70 000 are Italian citizens.²⁰ But in 1995 Minority Rights Group International has estimated 90 000 to 110 000. In 2012, the document of the National Strategy has indicated a presence of 170 000 to 180 000 units.²¹

Most of the foreign Roma come from Romania²² and Bulgaria (both members of EU since 2007). Then there are the non-EU Roma. About 90 000 Balkan Roma arrived in Italy in the 90s followed the break-up of the former Yugoslavia. There are several doubts about the accuracy of numerical data on the presence of Roma in Italy, which would be the result of progressive additions made by the authorities, activists and scholars who have followed the biggest arrivals of Roma in the country. OsservAzione points out that the authorities often refer to these data: this is not proof of their objectivity, but it makes them socially and politically relevant.²³

Without wishing to descend into too much detail, it should be pointed out that the main distinction between the groups of Roma in Italy is based on criteria of a legal nature, or on the Italian citizenship. Part of the Roma outside the EU, usually from the former Yugoslavia, is in fact stateless, because without valid documents proving their identity.

Unlikely these can becoming stateless law as well, because at the time of submission of the application for recognition of the status of statelessness should produce the certificate of residence and the residence permit, which often do not have. Some are able to obtain the right to asylum or a residence permit for humanitarian reasons. Then there are the Roma born in Italy, lived in the fields, but who are unable to obtain Italian citizenship at the age of 18 because they have no documents certifying their residence in Italy for all 18 years.²⁴

18 Ibidem, p. 108.

19 Scalia, G.M., *Le Comunità “sprovviste di territorio.” I Rom, i Sinti e i Camminanti in Italia*, Ministero dell’Interno, Dipartimento per le Libertà Civili e l’Immigrazione, Italia, 2006, p. 21.

20 Commission for integration policies of immigrants, *Second Report on the Integration of Immigrants in Italy*, Dipartimento per gli Affari Sociali, Roma, 13 Dicembre 2000. Even for the document adopted by the National Strategy there are about 70000 Italian Roma See Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Ufficio per la promozione della parità di trattamento e la rimozione delle discriminazioni fondate sulla razza o sull’origine etnica, *Strategia Nazionale d’Inclusione dei Rom, dei Sinti e dei Caminanti*, Attuazione Comunicazione Commissione Europea n.173/2011, 28 Febbraio 2012, p. 13.

21 Ibid.

22 Romanians in Italy are about 860000, only 50000 of these are Roma.

See: <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2007/11/08/italy17280.htm>.

23 OsservAzione, *Cittadinanze Imperfette*, Edizioni Spartaco, Italia, 2006, pp. 26. The most recent “official” national study of the Roma, Sinti and Travellers is the Final Report of the survey on the status of Roma, Sinti and Travellers in Italy, promoted by the Extraordinary Commission for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights of the Senate of the Republic (2011), which, however, makes use of sources such as experts, and data collected by NGOs, therefore not having used its own data.

24 National Strategy for Inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti, pp. 15-17. The Italian authorities acknowledge the existence of

The Roma are commonly called “gypsies” or “nomads.” The first term has clear negative connotations, while the second - applied equally to all Roma - is based on the erroneous assumption that they are nomads. Historically nomadism was mirroring the economic survival of the group and a defense mechanism against the hostility of the non-Roma, but in 1994 the authorities reported that well over 51.4% was sedentary.²⁵

The label “nomads” is used to legitimate marginalization: the authorities state that they maintain their nomadic lifestyle as a reference image and recognize it as a fundamental trait of Roma culture,²⁶ thus supporting the construction of camps. So the perception of Roma as nomads is officially approved,²⁷ helping to reinforce the idea that there are Italians and they would not be entitled to stay in Italy. Usually Roma are perceived as foreign and this is also shown by the existence, in the past, of a number of administrative “offices for nomads and non-Europeans”²⁸ It should be stressed that, in the document of the National Strategy the Italian authorities themselves recognize that nomadism in identifying a salient cultural trait of Roma communities is outdated and erroneous, and that the term “nomadism” does not photograph the actual situation correctly.

For what concerns their religion about 75% are Catholic, 20% Muslim and 5% belongs to other religious groups: Orthodox, Jehovah's Witnesses and Pentecostals. The biggest Roma/Sinti communities are located in Milan, Rome, Naples, Bologna, Bari and Genoa (around 80 000). However there is a significant Roma presence in Veneto, Emilia Romagna, Abruzzo, Puglia and Calabria (10 000 people). The Sinti communities are mostly located in Abruzzo, Molise, Calabria, Sicily, Sardinia and Tuscany (around 20-25 000 people).²⁹

The “Gypsy question” in Italy is back on top of public opinion and newspapers as of November 2007. The climate of distrust and racial hatred is gradually increased and has given rise to different phenomena of widespread violence, including riots and attacks on the camps, as in Turin in 2011-2012 and in Roma in 2009 and 2012. During the summer of 2008, a series of robberies and rapes and the alleged abduction of a child have, then, precipitated the situation, even if these fears are not confirmed by statistics on perpetrators.³⁰

It is in this context that the Italian government, which was the fourth Berlusconi government after the elections of April 2008, launched the so called “security alert,” contributing (together with most of the national media) to the diffusion of stereotypes - such as the one Roma=Romanian and Romanian=criminal - that fostered hate, racial discrimination and racist nationalist behaviours towards Roma. Still today, in fact, many Italians tend to confuse Roma and Romanians, but as we know the two terms are distinct: It must be said that the Romanians are among one of the biggest foreign communities living in Italy. They are more than 800 000 and the main communities can be found in Piedmont, Lombardy and Lazio. Not all Roma, therefore, are Romanians and not all Romanians are Roma, although about one-third of the Roma in Italy today has Romanian citizenship.³¹

a problem inherent fundamental right recognized to members of the Roma community who were born and raised in Italy but without citizenship, and those who are effectively stateless. In the document of the National Strategy, is indicated in the objectives for the biennium 2012-2013 to examine the issues related to the legal recognition of the Roma from the former Yugoslavia and the definition of routes and administrative and diplomatic solutions to overcome the problem of ‘de facto statelessness. See National Strategy for Inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti, p. 99.

25 Ministero dell'Interno, Ufficio centrale per i problemi delle zone di confine e delle minoranze etniche, Primo rapporto sullo stato delle minoranze in Italia, 1994, p. 374.

26 Council of Europe, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention (ACFC), Second report submitted by Italy, ACFC/SR/II(2004)006, 14 May 2004, 12.

27 Sigona, F., Locating ‘The Gypsy Problem.’ *The Roma in Italy: Stereotyping, Labelling and ‘Nomad Camps,’* 31(4) *Journal of Ethnic and Migration studies* 2005, 741-756, at 746.

28 Piasere, L., *Popoli delle Discariche. Saggi di antropologia zingari*, Roma, 1991.

29 See Sigona, R., cit., in *Journal of Ethnic Migration Studies*, vol. 31, n. 4, July 2005, p. 744 and the quali-quantitative research *Italiani, Rom e Sinti a confronto*, edited by the Istituto per gli Studi sulla Pubblica Opinione and presented at the European Conference on Roma population on 22-23 January 2008.

30 Internazionale n. 751, July 2008, p.24; Internazionale n. 783, December 2011; Internazionale n. 795 May 2012.

31 Cfr. Mircea-Butcovan, *Rom, Romeni, Persone*, Internazionale n. 748, giugno 2008, p. 27.

The government reacted to this hysteric climate against Roma that it contributed to create, by calling for the expulsion of all the Roma who were not Italian citizens and the suspension of the Schengen agreements. The so called security decree (order 3676 of 30 May 2008), proposed by the Minister of Interiors Roberto Maroni (one of the political leaders of the xenophobic and secessionist party Lega Nord), had and still has, due to the fact that it has not been suspended nor by the Monti government neither by the actual Letta government, among its fundamental points: the introduction of the crime of illegal immigration, repatriation for EU citizens who commit crimes or are not able to sustain themselves economically, DNA testing for family reunification procedures, the filing (to be implemented through fingerprinting) of all Roma (including children), more power to mayors for security issues, sending thousands of troops in major Italian cities interested by immigration, fighting petty crime through the appointment of “special commissioners” with special powers (to solve the Roma emergency) to the prefects of Rome, Milan and Naples. To tackle the camps the government has therefore set itself the target to proceed to the identification of all those who live in those camps, starting from the regions of Campania, Lazio and Lombardy. The most of Roma are in fact concentrated in the cities of Rome, Naples and Milan, more than 700 of the 800 illegal camps surveyed are located in these cities, anyway it must be said that there is a strong presence in other cities: Brescia, Pavia, Padua, Genoa, Bologna, and Bari.

Those “extraordinary” measures enacted by the Berlusconi government have attracted strong criticism from different national and international organizations and institutions, in particular: the European Union, the Holy See, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF Italy, NGO’s as Amnesty International and Save the Children, the Community of St. Egidio and the Council of Europe. They defined the measures (in particular the decision to fingerprint all the Roma) discriminatory and unjust as they infringe fundamental rights enacted in a number of international conventions signed and ratified by Italy and even in the Italian constitution.

In its Concluding Observations on the UN Human Rights Committee has stated its concern about the camps’ policy.³² The Advisory Committee for the Framework Convention has expressed concern about the fact that “the integration model is based mainly relied on by the authorities still on the kind of life we lead in the fields ... isolated from the rest of Italian society.”³³ The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe noted that Italy take “appropriate measures ... to ensure that the Roma are offered housing in quantity and of sufficient quality to their particular needs,” and condemned the forced evictions of Roma living in camps.³⁴ Similar concerns were expressed by the Committee for the Elimination of racial Discrimination, which has called on Italy to act firmly against measures denying residence, and avoid placement in fields isolated from inhabited areas,³⁵ as well as the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe.³⁶

32 U.N. Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee: Italy, CCPR/C/ITA/CO/5, 24 Aprile 2006.

33 Council of Europe, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention, Second Opinion on Italy, ACFC/INF/OP/II(2005)003, 24 Febbraio 2005.

34 Appendix to Resolution ResChS(2006)4 Information provided by the Permanent Representative of Italy during consideration by the Committee of Ministers of the report transmitted by the European Committee of Social Rights concerning Collective complaint No. 27/2004.

35 U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Concluding observations: Italy, CERD/C/304/Add.68, 7 Aprile 1999, par. 11 e U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Concluding observations: Italy, CERD/C/ITA/CO/15, 16 Maggio 2008, par. 14.

36 Council of Europe, Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, Report by Mr Alvaro Gil-Robles, Commissioner for Human Rights, On his visit to Italy, 10-17 June 2005, for the attention of the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly, CommDH(2005)9, Strasbourg 14 Dicembre 2005, par. 210-212.

2. THE PROTECTION OF MINORITIES IN ITALY AND THE LEGAL SITUATION OF ROMA AND SINTI IN ITALY AND IN FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA (FVG)

At this point of our discussion is essential to analyze in detail the question of the legal situation of Roma and Sinti in Italy. In this context, in fact, it seems undeniable to qualify Sinti and Roma as a minority, although, as pointed out later, this qualification is not recognized in the Italian legal system. This situation brings to obvious consequences both on the practical and formal level, with serious consequences for what concerns the legal protection of these ethnic groups.

Preliminary, it is important to say that the issue of legal protection of minorities is closely linked to national and international protection of human rights. In this respect, it should be emphasized that the issue of human rights is of such an importance in the contemporary world that often we speak about human rights properly or inappropriately, and in reference to situations that are very different from each other.

It may, indeed, be said that the concept of human rights is often abused, devalued, and sometimes even manipulated.

At the outset, it is therefore considered useful to dwell on the original notion of human rights. Therefore they should be understood as rights that are based on the respect for human life and that deal with the dignity of every individual. Human rights belong to man intended as person and, therefore, they should not be acquired, inherited or earned since they belong to humanity as a whole from the very beginning. This means that these rights are imprescriptible, inalienable and universal, in the sense that they belong to every human being without distinction of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political opinion, national or social origin, wealth, birth or other status. This approach should favour rediscovering the original meaning and the increasingly topical importance of human rights, especially in a globalized world.³⁷

In this context, in fact, human rights can serve as a “code for humanity,” a sort of religion or track, able to guide all living beings. To that end, we should also clarify that this analysis focuses on a particular area of human rights: the one concerning the rights of minorities and their protection. Despite the fact that many other issues concerning human rights protection are involved in the discrimination processes which affect Roma people in Italy and elsewhere in Europe.

This analysis is particularly focused on a specific minority living in Italy for centuries and that, in this case, is that of the Roma and Sinti communities. This is an issue that, in hindsight, it is often dealt superficially, leaving the floor for prejudice, stereotypes and clichés. We thereby make a contribution to our knowledge of the problems that this minority is facing with and which have not yet found an adequate response and protection in the country and in the institutions that represent it.

2.1. Art. 6 of the constitution and the protection of minorities in Italy: example of a special order?

The Italian Constitution contains specific references to the topic in question, going to provide for the possibility of granting asylum to foreigners who, in their countries, cannot take advantage of democratic rights. The Fundamental Principles of the Constitution (Articles 1-12) define these rights: the Art.

³⁷ For a complete legal definition of human rights by different methodological and theoretical perspectives (liberalism, realism, radicalism, universalism) see: Zanghi, C., *La tutela internazionale dei diritti dell'uomo*, Torino, 2005; Woodiwiss, A., *Human rights*, New York, 2005; Brems, E., *Human Rights: Universality and Diversity*, The Hague, 2001; Forsythe, D.P., *Encyclopedia of Human Rights*, vol. 1, Oxford, 2009; Cassese, A., *I diritti umani oggi*, Bari, 2009; De Gennaro, A., *I diritti umani oggi. Nuovi diritti individuali e diritti umani*, Bologna, 2010; Pisanò, A., *I diritti umani come fenomeno cosmopolita. Internazionalizzazione, regionalizzazione, specificazione*, Milano, 2010; Bobbio, N., *L'età dei diritti*, Torino, 2005; Dworkin, R., *Taking rights seriously*, Harvard, 1978; Butler, F., *Human rights protection: methods and effectiveness*, London, 2005.

3, in particular, impose a general principle of non-discrimination, while Article. 6 states that “The Italian Republic protects linguistic minorities with special rules.” The Constitution therefore uses only the criterion of language as a distinctive ethnic and national minority. Religious minorities are also expressly protected under Articles. 8, 19 and 20, while are political minorities protected in an indirect manner through the provision of other standards (freedom of thought, association, etc.).³⁸

By virtue of the personalist principle every human person, intended as a combination of dignity and unrepeatable originality, is at the heart of the entire legal system, and, more generally, of any manifestation of politically organized coexistence. The personalist principle has an active and a passive dimension.

From the active point of view every human person, with his intelligence, his ability to free and responsible self-determination, his creativity, his hard work, is the first, indispensable “resource” which the constitutional system and the social community is called to consider. The legal system, unless there are unavoidable reasons constitutionally provided for, provide for the orderly coexistence which will be built starting from the free and creative contribution of each member of the community and is committed to abide by and enforce the peculiar life project of each person, the particular embodiments and the fulfilment of their basic needs, in short, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” (as expressed in the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America, 1776).³⁹

By this point of view, it is clear that the way of life freely chosen by each person or Roma/Sinti should be regarded and valued as long as does not conflict with the constitutionally guaranteed rights of others or with the fulfilment of mandatory constitutional duties.

From the point of view of the passive personalist principle, it requires that the intervention of public institutions and, more generally of the same social realities is functional to the care and promotion of freedom and human dignity, suitable to generate processes of liberation and emancipation from need and dependence.

In this sense, the objectively disadvantaged condition that many Roma and Sinti people live in Italy implies an active public responsibility, so that there is an inseparable link between the personalist principle (Article 2 of the Constitution), a principle that states formal equality and positive actions of the public authorities aimed at removing economic and social obstacles which prevent equality, and the full development of the person and his participation in the social, political and economic life of the country (Article 3 of the Constitution).⁴⁰

Following this argument it is possible to go back to the foundations of the legal reasoning about the nodes that affect the condition of Roma and Sinti in Italy and preferring to omit any historical, anthropological and sociological premise - which refer to other parts of the present analysis - about these populations in respect to whom for centuries in many European countries has operated the stigma of legal discrimination and even a work of persecution, forced assimilation and annihilation.

Returning, however, to a more strictly legal analysis of the Roma and Sinti issue in Italy it must be immediately noted that the legal situation of these populations in Italy was and is extremely complex and problematic.

To begin to understand in a rational way the complexity of the legal status of Roma and Sinti in Italy we must start with the obvious: these are people who have rights and obligations as any other person and which belong to an ethnic and linguistic minority.

Roma and Sinti people are first of all like every other person, and as such they have rights and duties like any other Italian or foreign citizen or stateless person, depending on the legal status of any individual. In this sense, every Italian citizen has equal social status, is subject to compliance with the law

38 Montanari, L., *Minoranze (tutela delle)*, in Cassese, S. (ed.), *Dizionario di diritto pubblico*, Milano, 2006, pp. 3651; Palermo, F., Woelk, J., *La tutela delle minoranze nell'ordinamento italiano. Un sistema complesso tra asimmetria, decentramento, uguaglianza e promozione della diversità*, in Pförtl, E., *Valorizzare la diversità: tutela delle minoranze ed Europa multiculturale*, Roma, 2003, p. 278.

39 Baggio, M.A., *Il principio dimenticato: la fraternità nella riflessione politologica contemporanea*, Roma, 2007, p. 215.

40 Ibid., pp. 216-218.

and should receive the same treatment of all others citizens without any discrimination for reasons of race, language, personal and social condition under Article 3 of the Constitution. The reference to the constitutional equal social dignity among the citizens is essential for the plight of the Roma and Sinti, considering that these people are in fact subjected to discrimination, marginalization and stigmatization.

It should be noted that dignity is considered to be a natural attribute of each person. Dignity is recognized only if and to the extent that a person's humanity itself is not subject to any form of degradation and is therefore that overall state in which it is who enjoys others' and his own respect and esteem.⁴¹ The respect for the equal human dignity implies the right of everyone to be treated as a person, the right to be recognized as morally worthy to weave any social relationship, with the only limits of his own attitudes and of his the legal capacity.⁴²

The equal social dignity is connected with the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of race and personal and social conditions and aims to avoid behaviours that, based on the many individual, cultural and social differences which actually jag our societies or lifestyles, including illegal ones, even unintentionally discriminate person and thus cause feelings of humiliation or debasement and do not lessen the estimate that every person deserves as a human being.⁴³

The equal dignity concept includes also a ban for the society as a whole and for each member of it to express judgments of unworthiness on other people and thus also presupposes the existence or the formation of a social conscience oriented to mutual respect among all persons and not to transform the social differences in factors of exclusion. In accordance with the principle of substantive equality provided for by Art. 3, paragraph 2 of the Constitution, it requires also that all public authorities should strive to remove those economic and social obstacles that hinder the effective equality and participation of the person in the economic, social and political life of the country.

As confirmed by the repeated reports from international bodies to Italy this is situation that Roma and Sinti are living in Italy: even in cases in which they are Italian nationals, they are equal by law, but they are often unequal in fact due to the their ethnic-linguistic belonging, their ghettoization, stigma also induced by collective means of mass communication, moreover their lifestyles are sometimes considered annoying or uncomfortable or dangerous.

So anti-discrimination actions are useful, but not enough, because what are really necessary are very specific positive actions in each field: housing, employment, social services, health services, education.

2.2. The law No. 482 of 15 November 1999 and a classification of minorities in Italy

Despite the constitutional provisions described above, due to a number of political and legal reasons we do not have the time to analyze here,⁴⁴ the first national law which deals with minority rights in Italy has been adopted just in 1999, more than 50 years later the entry in force of the Republican Constitution.

A significant advance in the treatment of the subject has been done with the approval of Law No. 482/1999, entitled "Regulations for the protection of historical linguistic minorities," including twenty articles.

While establishing Italian as the official language of the Republic (Art. 1) the law implements Article 6 of the Constitution and the principles established by the European and international organizations as well. It identifies the criteria for recognition (a minority to be recognized must be a historical linguistic

41 See Ruggeri, A., Spadaro, A., *Dignità dell'uomo e giurisprudenza costituzionale (prime notazioni)*, in Angiolini, V. (ed.), *Libertà e giurisprudenza costituzionale*, Torino, 1993, p. 223.

42 See Pace, A., *Problematica delle libertà costituzionali. Parte generale*. III ed., Padova, 2003, p. 114.

43 See Rolla, G., *Profili costituzionali della dignità umana*, in Ceccherini, E. (ed.), *La tutela della dignità dell'uomo*, Napoli, 2008, pp. 68-70.

44 For a complete and satisfactory analysis of these issues see Pfösl, E., *cit.*, chapters 4 and 5.

minority) and enumerates the groups recognized by Italian law, namely: “the Albanian, Catalan, German, Greek, Slovenian, Croatian” and “those speaking French, the French-Provençal, Friulian, Ladin, Occitan and Sardinian” (Article 2).

According to Art. 3 it is then up to the Provincial level of local government to define the territorial delimitation where the envisaged rights should be applied.

The principles identified are in line with those of the Council of Europe Framework Convention on minorities, which, as we have seen, entered into force only a year before, and which form the reference model for the whole law No. 482/1999.

The law defines as pillars of its action the principles concerning minority rights listed in the Constitution: the linguistic criterion for the identification purposes, the need for recognition and the territorial anchorage of the recognized rights.

The law has been implemented by a Regulation dating back to 2001. It should however be noted that there are also many regional laws - which will be discussed in a diffuse way ahead – aiming to protect the minority rights (eg the law of the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia for the protection of the Slovene minority enacted in 2001).

As a matter of fact, despite the law No. 482, minorities within the Italian legal system, not all enjoy the same degree of protection. The classification adopted in the literature since 1999, following the approval of the framework law, opt for the distinction between:

- 1) Minorities “super-protected” or more protected groups present in special regions such as Trentino-Alto Adige (German speaking minority), Valle d’Aosta (French speaking minority) and Friuli-Venezia Giulia (Slovene speaking minority);
- 2) Recognized minorities with a medium level of protection, those listed by the law under which the different level of protection depends on the rights you decide whether or not to cover (Croats, Albanians, Friulans, etc.);
- 3) Minorities whose interests are not recognized, i.e. groups that lack the objective requirement of recognition by the public authorities. (In this category are inserted, as we shall see in the next chapter, Sinti and Roma, excluded from the list of historical minorities recognized and therefore not protected, except through some regional laws).

So what is most interesting for the purposes of the present research, and what is probably the biggest obstacle and limit for a full recognition of Roma and Sinti rights in order to fight discrimination and prejudices that affect these communities in Italy, is the fact that this law does not recognize between the linguistic minorities worthy of protection Roma and Sinti people, leaving these communities in a sort of not regulated limbo.

2.3. The national strategy on Roma and the regional legislation on the protection of minorities and on Roma/Sinti: the Friuli Venezia Giulia case

As already stated, the presence in Italy of Roma people is (especially in the regions of south-central Italy) has been documented since the fifteenth century and has been, over the centuries, enforced by several migratory flows, which have come forward with great force in the twentieth century (especially after the two world wars); the Sinti ethnic groups, however, settled in Italy in a more recent period (beginning of 20th century), and are mostly found in the north of Italy keeping somehow more alive the call to nomadism (often linked to the activity of carnies and traveling shows). A special case is then made up of the Travellers (*Camminanti*), who have settled since the 18th century in the valley of Noto in Sicily and in Calabria.

The relationship between these groups and the local communities has often been conflictual and

problematic since the very beginning.⁴⁵ But in Italy in the last decades the already problematic relationship between Roma and non-Roma has worsened and focused primarily on settlement processes and the use of urban spaces by these populations. These tensions reverberated on local authorities (municipalities in the first place), called to give concrete and immediate answers to their citizens/voters who were more and more afraid about the presence of Roma in their neighbourhood fostered by prejudices and stereotypes deeply rooted in the minds of many people since the XVI century.⁴⁶

In the last decade there has been a worsening of the situation because public opinion (the national media in the front row) and some political parties have identified Roma living in camps as one of the main enemies of civil society. Media gave particular emphasis on criminal episodes of crime of which some of them were made protagonists (rape, manslaughter, etc.) highlighting the “diversity” and the “bestiality” of these populations.⁴⁷ The media often described Roma as “sort of sub-humans out of every social rule and control,”⁴⁸ fostering the demand of many people and some xenophobic political parties for radical solutions of the problem and not very compatible with a state – such as Italy – which is defined by law and by its Constitution (Art. 2) a country which recognizes and guarantees the human rights of the individual and which has among its basic principles the protection and the recognition of the rights of linguistic minorities (Art. 6 of the Constitution).

But the government have never seriously considered the development of an overall strategy towards the Gypsy population – as happened instead (although the results are not always positive) in other European countries⁴⁹ – dealing with the Roma issue since the 90’s only considering it as a problem of public order and nothing else.⁵⁰

During the last twenty years the only acts of the government regarding the Roma people have been a great number of circulars (administrative acts but not legislative measures) adopted by the Ministry of the Interior on the “problem of the nomads”⁵¹ and directed to the Prefects and Superintendents of police

45 The Italian scholar and anthropologist Luca Piasere documented more than 200 cases of fights, violent persecutions and expulsions of Roma people from different Italian towns in the period between the XV and the XX century. See Piasere, L., *I rom d'Europa. Una storia moderna*, Bari, 2004, p. 33 ff.

46 Impagliazzo, M., *L'antiziganismo nella storia europea*, in AA.VV., *Il Caso Zingari*, Milano, 2008.

47 See http://web.giornalismmi.info/mediarom/articoli/art_1025.html.

48 Daniele, U., “Norme a favore dei Rom,” *definizione e stereotipi della alterità nella legislazione italiana sui Rom*, in Zecchini, M., *Oltre lo stereotipo nei media e nella società*, Roma, 2005, p. 124.

49 France, for example, has adopted since 1990, a law on the “traveling people,” the so-called Besson Law, which, on the one hand, forced the municipalities with more than 5 000 inhabitants to set up a reception area, on the other hand launched a program on housing specifically designed for Roma; but since 2003 there are also some rules in force (enacted by the – at that time – Interior Minister Sarkozy) which are very restrictive for those Roma who commit offenses within the parking areas of reception. Moreover we must not forget the decision taken in 2010 by the same Sarkozy, once he became President of the Republic, to expel from the country all Roma who did not have the documents in rule by carrying out a real ethnic census, for further comments on the French legislation see Cermel, M., *Rom e Sinti*, cit., p. 142 ss.. See also for the specific case of the United Kingdom Simoni, A., *Stato di diritto e Rom*, in *Alla periferia del mondo. Il popolo dei Rom e dei Sinti escluso dalla storia*, in www.fondfranceschi.it, p. 67 ss.

50 It must be pointed out that there have been numerous bills filed in the Chambers but never discussed nor by the House of Representatives neither by the Senate and therefore never examined, among them it is possible to mention the bill no. 7433 “Recognition and protection of minorities Roma, Sinti and Caminanti” presented during the XIII legislature and the bill n. 7610 “Measures for the recognition and protection of Roma and Sinti people and for the preservation of their cultural identity” presented on 13.2.2000.

51 The main administrative acts adopted by the Ministry of Interior are the following: Circolare M.I.A.CEL. n. 17/73 del 11.10.1973 pos. 15900.2.22 prot. 7063. Oggetto: Problema dei nomadi; -Circolare M.I.A.CEL. n. 19/80 del 13.7.1980. Oggetto: Legge 18.3.1968 n. 337 - Spettacoli viaggianti; Circolare M.I.A.CEL. n. 13/82 dell'1.9.1982. Oggetto: Problema dei nomadi; Circolare M.I.A.CEL. n. 151/85 del 5.7.1985 XXVII/P.6. Oggetto: Problema dei nomadi; Circolare FL. 9/88 dell'8.4.1988. Oggetto: Problema dei nomadi; Circolare M.I.A.CEL. n. 6/88 del 6.6.1988 prot. n. 088025-84-15100/1359. Oggetto: Legge 18.3.1968 n. 337 - Spettacoli viaggianti; Decreto M. I. 7.4.1989 e Decreto M. I. 23.10.1989 “Individuazione dei Comuni interessati alla predisposizione di infrastrutture necessarie alla realizzazione di aree attrezzate per l'ospitalità delle minoranze nomadi;” Circolare M.I.A.CEL. n. 8/89 dell'1.7.1989 prot. n. 089031-61-15100/10304. Oggetto: Ordinanza sindacale d'urgenza. Responsabilità e controllo; Circolare M.I. Dip. P.S. n. 4/91 del 18.1.1991 pos. n. 559/443-123/A-200420/I 6/2/1/1. Oggetto: Insediamenti di nomadi, zingari ed extracomunitari. Attività di vigilanza e di controllo. For a complete analysis of these administrative acts see the document prepared by a group of independent experts and published by the Ministry in December 2011 “Publication on Minorities without territory”: http://www.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/13/La_publicazione_sulle_minoranze_senza_territorio.pdf.

which faced the Roma issue as a problem related to criminality and never by the socio-economic point of view (there are also some occasional circular of the Ministry of Education on the education of Roma pupils).⁵²

But it is a matter of fact that Italy has signed and ratified (with L. 28.8.1997 No. 302), the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (made in Strasbourg by the Council of Europe on February 1, 1995). Nevertheless, the Convention, although it contains very noble principles and recognizes important rights to those who are part of a national minority, postulates an active intervention of individual states to ensure that these rights do not remain only on paper.

By this point of view, it is important to stress that, even in the absence of a definition of a national minority, the Framework Convention is applicable to Roma and Sinti and this has been recognized both by some member states (see Statements of Germany and Slovenia) and by the Advisory Committee (opinions of 14 September 2001 and 25 October 2005).

Moreover, Italy has not yet ratified 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.

As already stated, since 2003 the Italian government led by Silvio Berlusconi adopted a zero tolerance strategy towards Roma, considering – following the example adopted by Sarkozy in France – the possibility to expel all Roma from the country and starting a true ethnic census through mandatory fingerprints collection (also for minors) which has been hardly criticized by a number of international organizations and NGO's. The hysteric climate, fostered by many media, against Roma has resulted not only in discriminatory behaviours but also in different physical attacks (Turin 2009 and 2011, Rome 2007 and 2010 etc.)⁵³ committed by groups of Italians fostered by some political parties and movements (as the xenophobic Lega Nord and the nationalist and fascist movements Casa Pound and Ordine Nuovo) and finally in the decision taken by many majors in a number of Italian cities to evict the squatter camps and expel Roma from the urban areas.⁵⁴ Such blind policy has transformed Italy in one of the most intolerant countries in Europe concerning Roma and worsened the social exclusion of Roma, fostering their tendency towards invisibility, enforcing the difficulties of communication and the refusal of the Italian way of life by many Roma and Sinti.⁵⁵

The things seemed to change with the new Government led by Mario Monti since November 2011 after the resignation of Berlusconi. In fact, according to the European Union strategy on social and economic integration of Roma in Europe, the Office for the promotion of equal treatment and the removal of discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin of the Italian Government has adopted on February 2012 a "National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Travellers based on Communication of the

52 Circolare n. 207 del 16.7.1986. Oggetto: Scolarizzazione degli alunni zingari e nomadi nella scuola materna, elementare e secondaria di primo grado; Circolare n. 5 prot. n. 17 del 12.1.1994. Oggetto: Iscrizione nelle scuole e negli istituti di ogni ordine e grado di minori stranieri privi di permesso di soggiorno. Modifiche e integrazioni del paragrafo 7 della C.M. 31/12/91 n. 400, già modificato dalla C.M. 7/3/92 n. 67; Circolare n. 3711/B/1/A del 6.4.1995. Oggetto: Iscrizione degli alunni alle scuole e istituti statali di ogni ordine e grado. Integrazioni e modifiche alle CCMM n. 363 del 22.12.1994 e n. 49 del 10.2.1995.

53 For a complete documentation of these violent acts against Roma see www.cestim.it/03zingari.htm.

54 It has been calculated that since 1990 there have been more than 600 forced evictions of Roma camps in Italy (www.caritas.it). This policy is still active and many evictions are still ordered by many majors also today in Milan, Rome, Naples, disregarding the fundamental rights of these people, fostering the climate of hate and discriminatory behaviors of many Italians and worrying international organizations as Unicef Italia. For the period March-April 2013 see: <http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/milano/viale-ungheria-ha-vinto-campo-nomadi-sgomberato-909815.html>; <http://www.unicef.it/doc/849/spadafora-preoccupazione-per-sgomberi-campi-nomadi-a-roma-e-milano.htm>, <http://duepuntozero.alemanno.it/category/campi-nomadi>, <http://www.internapoli.it/articolo.asp?id=24713>.

55 As researchers we experimented this situation also within the Redupre project. It has been, in fact, almost impossible to involve non Italian Roma within the activities of the project, most of them feared expulsion or were truly convinced that me and my colleagues within the project were just masked policemen ready to arrest or even beat them. The situation with Italian Sinti has been a little bit easier, but also in this case the involvement of these communities within the project activities has not been immediate and completely satisfactory.

EC No. 173/2011.”⁵⁶ This Strategy, positively evaluated by the EC, provided for the overcoming of the emergency approach that characterized the governmental policies in this field from 2003 to 2011. The National Strategy called for an inclusive approach at a territorial level of governance.

But as often happens in Italy the strategy remained and still is mostly a declaration of intent rather than a practical tool to foster the socio-economic integration of Roma and a legal base in order to fight discrimination in order to achieve the main goal of the recognition of Roma and Sinti as minorities. What is missing is, in fact, a National Action Plan (provided by the Strategy) in order to practically enforce the statements contained in the document. This Action plan should, in our opinion, involve both the Italian Government and the local authorities at different levels (Regions, Provinces and Municipalities) to launch a national table of confrontation on these issues. The Nation Plan should take into account the subsidiarity principle and should provide for a clear distribution of competences at different administrative levels. The national plan should 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 another useful tool could be the decision to establish a 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.

Anyway, it is matter of fact that the discrimination and the zero tolerance policy towards Roma and Sinti is still continuing in many Italian cities. The climate of hate and mutual distrust between Roma and non- Roma is fostered both by media (see note 72 page 31) and by many local politicians, who prefer to answer to the demand of security of their citizens advocating and supporting stereotypical and discriminatory behaviours towards Roma rather than adopting serious integration and social programmes at a local level. It is, therefore, possible to affirm that even if the new Italian governments after Berlusconi tried to change direction of the policy towards Roma and Sinti communities, Italy is still at a minimum European level of protection of these minorities, not to mention what it is, in our opinion, the most serious legal weak point in this regard, i.e. the fact that the quoted law 482/1999 on the protection of historical linguistic minorities does not provide any protection for the Romani language spoken by most of the Roma and Sinti living in Italy.

Stating form these fundamental considerations, it is now important to stress the role and the impact – in some cases positive – that the different Regional laws on Roma/Sinti had on the legal status of these communities in Italy since the 70’s. Special attention will be devoted also at the Friuli Venezia Giulia Regional Law No. 11/1988 on Roma issues, which, in our opinion, is still toady one of the more advanced legal instruments existing in Italy concerning these ethnic groups.

It is a matter of fact that Italian Regions had to make up for the shortcomings of the central state and sought, by the end of the eighties, even with the limited legal means at their disposal and sometimes with little understanding of the phenomenon, to address some of the nodes that the presence of Roma and Sinti generates in the territory.

The result is that, to date, 10 regions (including 2 with special statute: Sardinia and Friuli Venezia Giulia) and one autonomous province (Trento) have developed specific pieces of legislation to address the Roma issue. The content as well as the effects of this legislation will cover in this part of our analysis; it is important to remind also that other regions have in several occasions inserted provisions relating to the “nomadic groups” (in particular regulation of the resting points) in normative texts generically dedicated to immigration (so the Marche Region in Law 12/1998).

The Regions (at least those who have used the Regional Law instrument for this purpose) have operated, in a surreptitious way, to the more than 50 years non-compliance by the Government of the Constitutional provisions on minorities, providing in fact for recognition of these minority groups and giving at the same time, partial implementation at the 1995 Framework Convention.

56 For the complete text of the Strategy adopted in 2012 by the Italian Government led by Mario Monti see: http://www.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/22/0251_STRATEGIA_ITALIANA_ROM_PER_MESSA_ON_LINE.pdf.

Regional measures are concentrated on the most (but for the two exceptions represented by Tuscany and the Province of Trento) in the late eighties, before Italy was interested by the phenomena of massive immigration from various parts of the developing world and, paradoxically, before that the revision of Title V of the Constitution in 2001 had expanded the legislative powers of the regions.

Some regions (Veneto, Basilicata, Molise, and Piemonte) had included in their Statutes some programmatic provisions called of “first generation” that placed among the tasks of the local authority to provide for the protection and enhancement of the cultural heritage of ethnic and linguistic minorities on their territory.⁵⁷

But it is only since the mid-eighties that the regions started to enact organic legislative in favour of the Roma and Sinti communities. By this point of view it is interesting to note that these communities are often also identified as nomads and/or gypsies in some of these legislative texts, further proof – stated that the term gypsies is rather offensive and that the Roma and Sinti have turned in most of the cases from a nomadic at a sedentary way of life – of the scarce knowledge, superficiality and even ignorance the Roma issues are treated by State authorities also at a local level.

The region that acted as a trailblazer is Veneto with the Regional Law No. 41/1984. This law, even though the heading states “Measures to protect the culture of the Roma,” is largely devoted just to the discipline of the camps and to the contributions payable to municipalities for the construction and maintenance of the camps themselves (Art. 3). It deals mainly with the issue of the regulation of the so called “nomad camps,” focusing the attention on the urban dimension of the phenomenon, somehow to reassure the population and ushering that set of political decisions at a local level which brought to progressive ghettoization of the Roma and Sinti in Italy which had as result the fact that most of the Roma and Sinti call Italy “the country of the camps.” An interesting and innovative part of this law is, anyway, represented by some provisions establishing funding to municipalities and mountain communities for education and vocational training of young Roma people.

It is clear, in this law and into the others that will follow, the centrality for regional legislators of the discipline of the camps and of transit areas intended for use by nomadic groups, which in some cases have been specially equipped with acceptable health and service standards (for what concerns the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia this is the situation of the camp “Monte Sei Busi” in Udine) but in most cases are in terrible conditions, without water, electricity, and highly below the international and European standards for what concerns services and health issues (for what concerns the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia this is the situation of the camp located in Via Pietraferatta in Trieste).⁵⁸

Born in the late sixties in some cities of northern Italy (including Milan, in 1967), considered a positive factor also by the association Opera Nomadi,⁵⁹ the camps seemed to respond to the purposes of integration of the Roma in the best way possible and a possible way to preserve forms of semi-nomadic lifestyle. Moreover many local administrators believed that this was the best way to carry out educational activities and vocational training for young Roma through municipal services, while ensuring acceptable levels of sanitation and control over the population residing therein. As we already stated the situation evolved in a complete different way, transforming these realities in veritable circles of hell that fostered social exclusion and discrimination against Roma rather than fight it.

57 For example, Art. 4 of the Statute of Molise (1971) provided that the region “protecting the historical and linguistic heritage and traditions of the ethnic communities existing in its territory and in agreement with the municipalities concerned favours improvement of their rights,” while Article. 56 letter. r) of the “old” Statute of Calabria (L. 591/1971, now repealed) provided that “in accordance with their traditions, promotes the use of historical, cultural and artistic heritage of the people of Albanian and Greek language; promote teaching of the two languages in the places where they are spoken.”

58 Recently Unicef Italy and the UNHCR expressed strong concern about the situation of Roma camps in Italy. See: <http://www.unicef.it/doc/849/spadafora-preoccupazione-per-sgomberi-campi-nomadi-a-roma-e-milano.htm>.

59 Opera Nomadi is one of the oldest associations dealing with Roma and Sinti issues in Italy. It has been founded in Bolzano in 1963 by a group of Italian Sinti. Since the eighties it has been criticized by other Roma and Sinti associations, such as AIZO (Associazione Italiana Zingari Oggi) for its approach strictly favourable to Sinti belonging just to some ethnic groups, disregarding other clans and even discriminating Roma groups considered as too different. See <http://www.operanomadimilano.org/chi/chi.htm>.

After a few months, the Lazio Region followed the example given by Veneto and adopted in 1985 the first law on “Standards for the Roma” (Regional Law No. 82/1985). The purpose of this act was two-fold and set out in Art. 1 of the law: on the one hand it is intended to safeguard the cultural heritage and identity of the Roma and, secondly, to enable them to practice their nomadic lifestyle and to stay on in the region in designated areas, regulating also in this cases the camps (it must be said that actually the situation of Roma camps especially in Rome is really dramatic). The measures provided for by this law are economic incentives for both the promotion of Roma culture and for the protection of the right to nomadic lifestyle, which is expressed in a particular discipline through the regulation of camps and the destination of grants to municipalities for the purchase and maintenance of these areas. Just in its final part the law provides funding for regional vocational training for these ethnic groups. As we will see, the real problem is that despite the fact that almost all of these laws provide for funding concerning camps and vocational training, in most of the cases Regions have been able to comply with these norms in regional budgets or for lack of funds or lack of political will, so much so that even the most innovative provisions contained therein has been unheard.

The moment of greatest production of these laws by the Regions coincides, however, with the end of the eighties; between 1988 and 1995 9 different laws on Roma minorities have been adopted by the Italian Regions:

- Sardinia Regional Law No. 9/1988 (Protection of ethnicity and culture of the nomads);
- Friuli Venezia Giulia Regional Law No. 11/1988 (Regulations for the protection of Roma culture within the territory of the autonomous region Friuli-Venezia Giulia);
- Tuscany Regional Law No. 17/1988 (Regional Law on measures to safeguard the Roma, then entirely replaced by Regional Law No. 73/1995);
- Emilia Romagna Regional Law No. 47/1998 (Rules for the nomadic minorities in Emilia-Romagna);
- Veneto Regional Law No. 54/1989 (Regional Law on measures to safeguard the culture of Roma and Sinti, which replaced the quoted Regional Law No. 41/1984);
- Lombardy Regional Law No. 77/1989 (Regional action for the protection of populations belonging to traditionally nomadic or semi-nomadic ethnic groups);
- Umbria Regional Law No. 32/1990 (Measures to promote the integration of nomadic society and for the protection of their identity and their cultural heritage);
- Liguria Regional Law No. 21/1992 (Measures to safeguard the Gypsy populations and nomads then fully repealed by Art. 64 of the Regional Law No. 12/2006 on the Promotion of the integrated social and health services);
- Piemonte Regional Law No. 26/1993 (Interventions in favour of the Gypsy population).

Overall, this first set of laws basically approved the positions and logics of action already taken up by Veneto and Lazio. These provisions have not been able to present innovative ideas (with the exception of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia Region which we will analyze shortly) considering that the main interest was to give to Regions a regulatory authority of temporary camps (or transit camps), providing for the payment of contributions on behalf of municipalities that take over that responsibility.

All other areas of possible regional competence (training and professional integration, assistance, health care, schooling for children, crafts, promotion of culture and identity, etc.) have mostly been ignored by these laws with the exceptions of Sardinia and Friuli Venezia Giulia.

As regards the latter this legal act is widely innovative both for what concerns the logic and the practical provisions. First of all the Regional Law 11/1988 (modified and integrated by two different acts in 1988 and 1995: Regional Law No. 54/1988 and Regional Law No. 25/1991) provide for a general recall of the Italian Constitution (Art. 3 and Art. 6) and of the main international acts recognizing the Roma's rights to be protected as minority (Art. 1 par. 1) and states the need for the protection of the culture and identity of Roma people. Even if the second part of the Law (Titolo II) is devoted to the issue of the identification and subvention to the purchase of land by municipalities in order to create stable areas

for Roma, it states for the first time the idea that not all the Roma are nomads, therefore introducing an innovative aspect of social housing and of permanent presence of Roma on the territory (art 5 and Art. 6).

The third part of the law (Titolo III) is even more interesting, in fact it provides for specific projects for the creation of cooperatives of social solidarity (Art. 11) and for labour inclusion of Roma in agricultural and livestock sectors (Art. 12). Such approach is of fundamental importance in order to shift the attention of local and even national authorities from a merely emergency approach represented by provisions on camps on a more comprehensive socio-economic approach which focus the attention on unemployment and the consequent poverty as main factors of social exclusion and though of discrimination.

The Regional Law 11/1988 continues focusing its attention on the rules for inclusion of Roma youth in schooling and vocational training as a mean to fight social exclusion, poverty and unemployment (Titolo IV articles 13-15). Also these provisions are extremely innovative providing for specific rules in order to foster education and avoid school leaving through specific approaches aimed at protecting Roma culture and identity also through reciprocal knowledge. Finally the Law (Titolo VI) establishes specific procedures and rules in order to preserve Roma identity and culture focusing also its attention on one of the fundamental goals also of the Redupre project: the reciprocal knowledge as main action to fight stereotypes and tackle prejudices. The idea is that of financing specific researches, conferences, studies and workshops in order to favour the knowledge of Roma culture, identity and history by non-Roma. One of the weak points of this law is that, as all the other Regional Laws of the same period, even if it established a regional committee participated by municipalities, associations, Roma representatives and other local bodies it has not been able to effectively guarantee the functioning of this structure which is largely under-represented and now inactive.

What is also very interesting is the fact that this one of the few Regional Laws which directly stated the amount of money dedicated each year within the Regional budget to the activities foreseen by the law. After this quick analysis of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Regional Law on Roma, we must note that the theme (which also acquired importance in the media) seems to lose appeal to the Regional Councils so that the last decade there has been only two attempts of regulation at a regional level of the Roma and Sinti: one adopted by Tuscany in 2000 (Regional Law No. 2/2000 Interventions for the Roma and Sinti peoples) and the one adopted by the Autonomous Province of Trento in 2009.

Even if both laws have profiles of interest that, for reasons of space, will not be examined in detail, however, the Tuscan Regional Law No. 2 of 2000 deserves a nod for its attempt to overcome the concept of camps (or transit areas) in favour of stable housing solutions (equipped residential areas) that combines the unique needs of families of Roma and Sinti with the most modern needs of urban and environmental integration through the sustainable recovering of abandoned villages in rural areas.

A further aspect is related to the implementation and the financing of these laws, which in many cases remain as a dead letter if not refinanced annually. And this, unfortunately, is the fate suffered by most of these laws (with the virtuous exceptions of Sardinia, Tuscany, Piedmont and Friuli Venezia Giulia) that in many cases are now just of historical importance but not applied at all.

2.3.1. The failure of recognition of Roma/Sinti communities as minorities in Italy and the role of Italian regions in building a legal framework for these groups: from legal recognition to socio-economic integration

As we have already noted above, in the Italian legal culture has so far failed an attempt to deepen all aspects of the legal status of people who refer to the culture of Roma and Sinti, even if they are people present in Italy since the fifteenth century. Maybe it was the lack of an adequate legal thought, even among scholars of the right of minorities, which has so far supported a weak or even discriminative public policy towards this population.

It must, indeed, be aware that Roma and Sinti groups constitute a national minority which spread

throughout the country and which is dispersed in most of the regions, in addition, their main problem of minority is not represented by the need to protect the Romani language and to use that language in relations with the public administration or the courts but by the way they (as a community) relate with the territory (in particular the housing) and the difficult integration in the social context where they are rooted.

In the absence of an overall legislative action concerning Roma and Sinti at a central level, and stated that the recent Strategy of inclusion is still at an embryonic phase due to the lack of a concrete National Action Plan to implement it, there are, in my humble opinion, five main areas in which Regions can legitimately operate in relation with the presence of Roma and Sinti ethnic groups in their territories:

- a) the area of the evaluation of the language and culture of the Roma, Sinti and Traveller communities, understood as the promotion of a cultural asset measured at a regional dimension;
- b) the area of housing policy, which also incorporate the discipline of stopping places and transit camps (this aspect also formally falls under the government of the territory and the regional competences as reformed with the Constitutional Law No. 3/2001 which gave more powers to the Italian regions);
- c) The area of assistance and social integration;
- d) The area of education;
- e) The area of production activities and labour market.

These are areas (coinciding with matters of legislative power) in which regional powers have been enhanced as a result of the 2001 constitutional reform and in which it is possible to carry out the policies for the regions also independently from the central State, looking for ways to solve some of the nodes that the protection of Roma and Sinti groups still poses.

The regional legislators from 1984 to the present have tried (with the limited tools at their disposal) to adjust the most problematic aspects of the presence of Roma and Sinti in their territories, filling the void of protection that a national legislature had left absent.

They have done so through legislative texts that, for one, has constituted a form of recognition (the only one) of the Roma/Sinti community in Italy and, on the other hand, had as its main purpose the discipline of camping, early-turned from tools of protection of nomadic lifestyle in means of affirmation of segregation. There are also some virtuous exceptions, as perhaps the above analyzed Friuli Venezia Giulia Regional Law 11/1988, which for the first time focused its attention on the socio-economic dimension of the problem.

This means that also other areas for the exercise of regulatory powers were explored by regional authorities (from cultural promotion to vocational training, by the measures for schooling to those for the protection of typical handicrafts and traditions), but even in these areas the laws (and their concrete implementation) have proven to be effective and to have reached only partially the purpose of social integration and employment of Roma and Sinti groups.

The season of production of regional legislation on Roma has stalled in fact in 2000 (with the last Regional Law adopted by Tuscany, which tried to calibrate housing policies on the needs of family groups through the creation of small sustainable villages in uninhabited areas of the Region), immediately after the fatiguing passage of the national law of protection of historical linguistic (Law 482/1999) and just before the constitutional amendment of Title V, which has expanded the boundaries of authority (especially on the legislative side) of the Regions.

The approach described in this chapter of the analysis is that, far from having been arrested, according to Law 482/1999 (as you might be led to believe by a non-depth examination of the judgment of the Constitutional Court No. 159/2009) the power of the Regions (also ordinary ones) in relation to the "Roma issue" can continue to be exercised in relation to the five areas mentioned above.

What the Regions cannot do is to discipline the linguistic rights or rights relating to the protection and use of languages as regulated by Law No. 482/1999.

But, even with this limitation, there are still wide margins for possible interventions by regional

legislatures in the direction of social inclusion of Roma and Sinti, as it seems to show the recent Provincial Law of the Autonomous Province of Trento No. 12/2009, which, properly connected to the use of public services provided by local authorities, impose precise obligations and compliance with the rules of coexistence by groups and individuals, those including also Roma and Sinti minorities.

3. THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION OF ROMA/SINTI COMMUNITIES IN ITALY AND FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA (HOUSING, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, CRIMINALITY AND DEVIANCE, HEALTH ISSUES)

The stages of the process that led to the current difficult situation of Roma and Sinti communities in our country can be summarized in four steps.⁶⁰

The first goes from the post-war period up to the years of the economic boom; in this period of time the Roma and the Sinti, ply the streets of a country that was still largely rural and backward, exercise traditional jobs, live in small communities in transit; maintain habits, rituals, cultural traits, values, tradition-bound in a regime of complete autonomy from the world of *gagè*: justice, marriages, relationships are set internally and according to ancient customs, social ties coincide with those of blood pacts that are further strengthened or inaugurated during annual events: trade fairs or holidays, the patriarchal family is the core, the heart of the community as a whole, respect for the elderly, repositories of memory and tradition, characterizes the relationships between generations.

With the economic boom that invests Italy in the early 60's and sweeps away the legacy of a still rural economy, start a second phase which occupies the next two decades: the work and services traditionally offered by gypsies become useless and obsolete and they are forced to reach the suburbs of the big cities in search of new resources. Thus began the process of sedentarization that changes in an irreversible way the traditional aspects of Roma and Sinti culture. It is during these years that the game of which today we suffer the effects started: if those who then tried the road of integration (mainly through school education) had received adequate responses they could represent, for all other Roma, a positive example to follow and would have created a bridge generation capable of managing change: citizens are able to stem the push to deviance and return memory and meaning to their cultural traditions. But things have gone in a very different way: at the time, because of prejudice and blindness of the institutions, their choice appeared to the eyes of others Roma and Sinti, losing a choice, a choice not to imitate that exposed them to humiliation and harassment and led them in a no man's land: foreigners for the other gypsies, foreigners for the *Gagé*.

The third phase, which reaches the threshold of the new century, is the one that would lead to a point of no return. At the end of the 70's the sedentarization process, accelerated by the restrictions placed on nomadic lifestyle, both by the quoted Regional Laws and acts of the Ministry of Interiors, concluded and the suburbs began to be occupied by Roma and Sinti camps: free zones, without services, left to themselves, that instead of being a temporary solution preparatory to housing situations are true and institutionalized gangrene within the main urban areas of the Italian peninsula. Some of these settlements are allowed others abusive and therefore are subject to regular eviction orders followed by new squats in a sort of tacit and ambiguous practice. And meanwhile, Roma and Sinti lose traditional jobs, new jobs are invented and a sense of insecurity spread all over Roma and Sinti communities: activities related to the burglary of the machines, the collection of paper, glass and iron, these are the new jobs.⁶¹ The Roma and Sinti learn to access the few resources available on public and by voluntary associations thus feeling a relationship with the world of *gagè* of total liability and dependence, while the elderly lose their authority, and some of the young people become labourers for criminal enterprises,

60 Piasere, L., *cit.*, 2009, pp. 120-150.

61 Bezzecchi, G., Pagani, M., Vitale, T., *I Rom e l'azione pubblica*, Milano, 2005.

this is the period when theft becomes “work” and the begging habit. Not for everyone, of course, but for many.⁶²

Starting at the end of the 80’s and with an acceleration in the 90’s, significant migratory flows, coming first from the war zones in the former Yugoslavia, then from Eastern Europe, complicate the already difficult situation.

The last phase, the current one, shows the results of these complex dynamics compounded by a final, recent wave of immigration from Romania that started in a crawl in 2000. The Roma Romanians escape from harsh living conditions and real xenophobic persecution: the magnitude of their presence now exceeds that of all other groups and finally breaks the precarious balance that until now was still somehow functioning while the institutions tried to face the situation in two main ways: trying to regularize the presence of Roma in the area, gearing up camps and activating timid local welfare policies, or pretending not to know and not to see and then intervene when the protests of citizens rise, or elections approach or the occupied land has a different use according to the urban plans. Then the response has often been the eviction or the removal, new squats a little further. Meanwhile, someone has been able to exit from this vicious circle – some children go to school, some adults work – but the situation is definitely deteriorated in many regions and the winning logic seems to be the one that justifies the repressive practices attempted by many local and national authorities.⁶³ The result is that those who commit crimes make invisible the honest and weak the ones who would like to become honest.⁶⁴

Over time, if the substance of public policies towards them did not change (always oscillating between repression and welfare, two sides of the same coin, because they both deny the principle of equal dignity), the effects of this institutional ignorance has produced significant changes within the various Roma and Sinti communities present in the country. At first, when the process of sedentarization in Italy began some Roma/Sinti had knowingly engaged in a process of integration. It was the choice of those who had decided to break with their world, to get away from the camps and through the work and education of the children ask for citizenship. Why move away from the camps? Because they recognized even then the camp as a ghetto that mortifies the identity and exposes people to deviance.⁶⁵ It was a very hard choice, because it meant that these persons no longer do not feel nor gypsies neither gagè to the end, losing at the same times the pride to keep their memory and their traditions, their habits, their loved ones.

Today it has expanded the number of those who embark on this path of social integration and cultural mediation that does mean neither approval nor assimilation, but, in fact, cultural ambivalence. And in this connection it may be said that there is ambivalence in prison, including Roma girls who wage the battle of change: they do not want to become like us, but most of them do not even want to be like their mothers or their sisters. This is self-evident perhaps in schools: there are a lot of Roma and Sinti children who are between the two worlds, no longer feel neither one thing nor the other and their challenge is this, said with a little of rhetoric, that they are the sons of no one, but maybe, indeed, the children of a new and better world.⁶⁶ This dimension can be mainly found among young Roma women living in the camps, where there is poverty and neglect. There are more and more Roma and Sinti women, often alone or with their husbands in prison, struggling, in opposition to the culture of the family, to give their children a different fate.

At the beginning of the sedentarization process, there was a minority that, in a regime of separation and non-confrontation with the non-Roma, lived thanks to illegal activities (mainly petty theft, small trafficking of stolen wear, cars and similar) remaining strictly linked to the archaic traditions of the group. The others, the more, the majority were those who, lived in the camps in miserable conditions.

62 Cherchi, R., Loy, G., *Roma e Sinti in Italia: tra stereotipi e diritti negati*, Milano, 2009.

63 Ibid., p. 66.

64 Calabrò, A.R., *Zingari: storia di un'emergenza annunciata*, Napoli, 2008.

65 Piasere, L., *cit.*, 2009, p. 156.

66 Ibid., p. 220.

Masters in the art of getting and living by the day: children and women begging, men with precarious or invented jobs, jobs at the limits of the law that allowed little more than survival.

Today the situation is changing. A deviant subculture is more and more rampant: peddling and prostitution are the new activities and who twenty years ago could not even speak Italian, now organizes internet scams, there are extremely rich Roma who built villas (abusive): those who subscribe to belong to organized crime, usually a family, rarely a real racket. This a dimension which is the opposite to the values of traditional culture, as well as to those of the majority culture.

Those who remain in the camps are more and more in a condition of segregation, cultural deprivation and poverty in a tragic chain of exclusion and small deviance. And then the desperate, those who have nothing, absolutely nothing, not even the camp to live.

What happened in the last 20 years, even among the Roma/Sinti, is a kind of social stratification. If we consider as an indicator of the socio-economic conditions the labour situation, what comes out is a flattened down pyramid: at the top we find who belong to criminal organizations, in the center, the minority, those who have the security of a job and a house, and at the base, the majority of those living on the margins of legality and the edge of survival.

Faced with a policy of non-acceptance by the majority, rejection of the comparison, the Roma are increasingly closed within their kin groups and the camps have become veritable ghettos in which the criminal subculture has spread deleting tradition, memory and culture. This, of course, does not cover all the gypsies, but certainly many of those living in the camps.

The work is a central issue to assess the degree of social integration of Roma within the territory. In fact, no reliable data exist concerning the rate of unemployment but the working conditions of the Roma and Sinti is extremely problematic at a national level, because of the constant difficulty in integration, the lack of professional qualification, social marginalization in which they find themselves.

The economic activities in which Roma and Sinti are active are extremely diverse. There are some traditional activities which are still carried a little everywhere: metal work (e.g. tinsmiths, coppersmiths, gilders), the recovery of different materials and their sale, trade of horses, crafts and entertainment circus (as musicians, jugglers, acrobats, dancers); professions related to traveling shows, especially the carnies, the itinerant sale or markets (fruit, vegetables, junk, carpets, etc.), the manufacture and sale of various objects such as violins, belts, tablecloths, lace, wicker, often seasonal farm work. Other crafts instead are largely disappeared: grinders, umbrella makers, manufacturers of iron and wood wrought. New activities which are developing are used car trade, junkyard, labourers in the building, maintenance of roads.

All these trades are designed as if it were a sale of goods and services to customers. What most characterizes the Roma and Sinti in the performance of these businesses is their great adaptability according to the place, the time, the occasion. Roma culture in the work tends to be conceived as a necessity for survival and not as an end, as a dimension of identity.

For a closer look, while the professional reality of the Roma from the former Yugoslavia shows a significant feature of diversification, the employment status of the approximately 70 000 Italian Roma and Sinti appears to be more homogeneous.

Until the 60's about 30 000 Sinti in north-central in Italy were devoted to travelling shows, fairs and similar activities, while a similar number of Roma and Sinti in south-central Italy were mainly engaged in breeding and trading of horses and in metalworking. The spread of television, cinema, discos and video games, took away to traveling shows the monopoly of public entertainment. Currently less than 50% of the Italian Sinti lives of traditional "trades" during events as fairs and similar (about 20 000 people).⁶⁷

Moreover, hundreds of teenagers, however, remain excluded from the ancient work activities and are struggling to find employment. The Roma of Central and South are living through a deep crisis. Only in

67 Ibid., pp. 221-222.

Isernia and in some cities of Abruzzo, Puglia and Calabria, you may find single families that are able to sustain themselves through the trade in horses. Even iron crafts, once addressed to farmers, fishermen and housewives, have almost disappeared.

Among the Roma coming from the Balkans the most common trades are the following: the collection and processing of copper, the manufacture of various items (pots, vases, amphorae, vases), the recycling of items found in landfills or in dumpsters, such for example iron, aluminium, batteries of old cars; the collection of other materials, such as for example, the old appliances or other household items.

In the center-south of Italy but even in some cities of the north (as Trieste), there are hundreds of Roma who practice scrapping, almost always without license or within unauthorized collection centers. There also many who work in construction as precarious; few dozen (in whole Italy) are employed as labourer in public authorities, and in some isolated cases, in as administrative officer. Few are active in catering, social cooperation is a recent activity and, at least for now, assisted by public funds. What is anyway astonishing is that less than 3% of Italian Roma and Sinti finished high school and less than 0.5% has a university degree.⁶⁸ Schooling is still a very sensitive issue, school dropout is still very high (more than 65% of Roma and Sinti pupils do not finish the elementary school) and without education it is not possible any kind of social redemption as stated also within one of the best and more recent socio-economic analysis of the Roma and Sinti communities in Italy.⁶⁹

Without collateral and with limited sources of income, many of these Roma live by begging and gimmicks, structuring a condition of life on the margins of legality and no guarantees for the future.

If you add to these general considerations the current crisis in the labour market that has hit Italy it is easy to understand the reasons why Roma and Sinti are today, maybe even more than a few years ago, on the edge of working life and of economy of our country, without any real possibility of economic and social growth.

Below we will briefly analyze the different aspects of socio-economic status of Roma in Italy with a particular focus on the situation of Friuli Venezia Giulia. Due to the lack of official statistical data concerning the Roma and the Sinti all the numbers are a rough estimate made on the information that we collected thanks to the help of two associations (Caritas Trieste and Associazione Insieme in Udine) who kindly gave us some disaggregated data.

3.1. Living Conditions

The Roma settlements in Italy vary in size from a small number of families living in one or two buildings, caravans, or huts to large settlements of around 700-800 people. The settlements also varied in their legal status. For example, they could be defined as illegal, irregular, or unauthorized if no prior authorization for their establishment had been granted or if they occupied private land without the permission of the owner. A number of settlements have been established by municipal councils, prefects, or other authorities or have been regularized after their establishment and are defined by the authorities as legal, regular, or authorized. Some of the larger settlements have existed for 20 years or more and have become institutionalized (or at least semi-authorized) to a certain degree, such as the Monte Sei Busi camp in Udine. The larger settlements that have existed for a longer period are tolerated by the local authorities and in many cases are supplied with public utilities, a postal address, and other services, such as transportation to schools and health care. In general, however, the housing in these settlements consists of shacks, huts, or cabins that the inhabitants have built on their own. While the homes in some long-term unauthorized settlements are generally somewhat more durable than those in more recent illegal or unauthorized settlements, the overall conditions tend to be below acceptable standards. This applies in particular to the most recent settlements that have sprung up in the last few

⁶⁸ See www.mjur.it/abbandonoscolatico/immigrati/03.htm.

⁶⁹ Senato della Repubblica, XVI Legislatura, Commissione straordinaria per la promozione e la tutela dei diritti umani, *Rapporto conclusivo dell'indagine sulla condizione di Rom, Sinti e Camminanti in Italia*, Roma, 2011, p. 22.

years, mostly as a result of increased migration to Italy.

Authorized settlements or camps (both terms are used by the Italian authorities) are established by municipalities and are administered by public agencies and civil society. Authorized camps are most often located in remote and isolated areas far away from urban centres or in industrial zones. While far from ideal, basic conditions appeared to be met in the authorized camps. Some settlements have pre-school facilities, while most offer some form of transportation to and from schools. In order to live in such camps, residents must sign a pact saying that they will uphold certain social and legal conditions.⁷⁰ Access to the camps is often limited to the inhabitants, who have a special kind of identification pass that may be checked upon entering the settlement. Furthermore, some economic activities are prohibited within the area of the camps (for example, the collecting of scrap metal or the production of small metal artefacts). In addition to a limited number of reception centres,⁷¹ the settlements and camps remain the only way the authorities are addressing the housing situation of Roma and Sinti.

The authorities have seen evictions as a solution to the problems associated with unauthorized housing. Among Roma and Sinti, however, evictions from unauthorized settlements are of great concern, particularly forced evictions that are carried out by the authorities and law-enforcement officials.⁷²

Municipal governments carry out forced evictions in order to discourage migrants and “nomads” from settling in unauthorized camps and settlements. The policy of evictions is not effective, as it perpetuates the problem and does not contribute to the integration of the people concerned. In the majority of cases involving forced evictions, those concerned simply moved to other places, usually to other unauthorized sites.

The situation in **Friuli Venezia Giulia** is the following: there are about 2 500 Roma and Sinti living in the region (less than 0.15% of the total population), the biggest communities are located in Udine (settlement of Monte Sei Busi about 400 Sinti people and something as 200 Roma in unauthorized settlements), Trieste (about 100 Roma living in unauthorized camps, as the one in Via Pietraferrata we had the possibility to visit, about 300 Sinti mainly living in social housing), Carnia (a mountain region which host since the XIX century a group of about 1 000 Sinti still dedicated to traditional works, fairs and similar activities), smaller familiar groups are present in the rest of the region.

We firmly believe that the authorities should close all unauthorized camps and settlements because of the prevailing deplorable living conditions. However, it questions the policy of evictions in those situations where no housing alternative is provided to those concerned. In such situations, the practice of forced evictions does not contribute to the solution of the existing problems but only reinforces the continuing marginalization and segregation of the Roma and Sinti.

3.2. Crime and security issues

During this research and within the Redupre activities realized in Italy, the issue of crimes allegedly committed by Roma and Sinti was raised both by authorities and Italian citizens. Measures undertaken by the authorities were in part justified by concerns regarding crime. The authorities appear to have interpreted the crime statistics as evidence of a link between the migration of Roma and an increase in

70 “Patto di socialità e di legalità con i cittadini romeni abitanti nello spazio di via Triboniano del comune di Milano.”

See: http://www.casadellacarita.org/index_files/userfiles/Patto%20di%20socialita%20viaTriboniano.pdf.

71 Reception centres are public premises that the authorities have made available to foreigners, free of charge, providing them with basic needs. The Grazie Ex Deledda reception centre in Naples, for example, spends ca. EUR 90 000 a year on food for the inhabitants and on providing security for the premises. This kind of support is offered to those foreigners who are temporarily unable to meet their needs for housing and subsistence. Furthermore, such centres may provide also the possibility to participate in Italian language lessons, vocational training and cultural exchanges with the Italian population. See reference to ‘Centri di accoglienza’ on the website of Polizia di Stato, http://www.poliziadistato.it/pds/ps/immigrazione/centro_accoglienza.htm.

72 See “Written Comments of the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), Osservazione and Sucar Drom, Concerning Italy, for Consideration by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination at Its 72nd Session,” 2008, pp. 23, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/ngos/errc-cohreitaly72.pdf>, which says: “Many of the forced evictions and destruction of property have taken place in Rome, where as Mayor Walter Veltroni reported, 6 000 people were forcibly evicted between January and November 2007, according to the Italian national newspaper agency ANSA of 6 December.”

crime. This view has been reinforced and fuelled by sensationalist media reports that have exploited the issue. The perception that Roma are to be feared as criminals was exacerbated by the killing of an Italian woman, allegedly by a Roma man from Romania, in Rome in November 2007. While the death of two girls on a beach near Naples in August 2009 has been explained by the media as a matter of prostitution (the real tragedy is that the media documented the people taking bath and sunbathing in a completely relaxed manner due to the fact that the girls where “just two Gypsies”),⁷³ even if later the police arrested two young Italians with the accusation of rape, sexual violence and murder.

At the same time, Roma and Sinti themselves have faced increased threats to their safety. Regarding the Ponticelli incident in which a mob burned down a Roma settlement following rumours that a young Roma woman had tried to kidnap a baby, the prefect of Naples acknowledged there was no evidence that this woman had in reality done so. The violent attacks were, in the prefect’s view, orchestrated by criminal organizations who were interested in acquiring the land on which the Ponticelli camp stood for them.

Still, there have been some minor incidents, such as unknown individuals setting fire to vegetation on a hill in the immediate vicinity of the Via Candoni camp in Roma as an apparent warning to the inhabitants to vacate the camp or the June 2012 attack at the Via Ravajoli camp in Torino organized by a some xenophobic and fascist groups (i.e. Casa Pound and Lega Nord) “to punish an alleged case of sexual violence” denounced by a young girl living near the camp and which was completely invented. Another very sensitive issue concerns the police violence over Roma which, in most the cases, is not reported by the victims for fear of reprisals and expulsions.⁷⁴

Moreover, there are statistical data⁷⁵ that show that more than 8% of the prison population (about 3 000 persons) is made up of Roma and Sinti, an enormous number if compared to the total Roma population in Italy. But the interesting thing is that just the 10% of these prisoners have long prison sentences, most of them have been condemned for small criminal activities such as petty theft.

Regard as to criminality and security issues in **Region Friuli Venezia Giulia** the most self-evident data is that about 10% of the total prison population is made up of Roma and Sinti, most of them are condemned for no more than one year of prison. There are not specific cases of attacks to Roma settlements, even if Caritas Trieste and Comunità San Martino Al Campo reported more than 200 cases of verbal and also physical discrimination towards Roma in the period 2009-2012 only in the city of Trieste.

3.3. Employment, health and education

The majority of adults living in the settlements do not hold legal employment. Only a small portion of them have short-term jobs (without legal contracts) or work as travelling salespeople. The limitations that Roma and Sinti face in trying to obtain stable and legal employment are directly linked to their lack of residence and working permits, in addition to their generally low level of education and lack of other skills sought in the labour market. Even those who do have the right to seek legal employment have great difficulty doing so, as their residence papers indicate that they live in “nomad” camps, or that they are from areas that are known to be inhabited by Roma and Sinti. As a result, the only available employment is informal, short-term, and poorly paid. In addition, Roma are discriminated against even in the unofficial labour market, as they are paid a lower hourly rate than other migrants.

The living conditions in the camps are disadvantageous for Roma and Sinti living there, regardless of their citizenship. That said, the Italian Roma and Sinti have the advantage that, in principle, their citizenship guarantees their right to work, even if it is clear that they are discriminated too.

⁷³ -Il Mattino, 17 August 2009, p. 12.

⁷⁴ Caritas reported that only in 2011 more than 12 000 cases of police violence against migrants have been committed in Italy. Caritas Italia, *Rapporto migrant 2011*, Milano, 2011, p. 136.

⁷⁵ www.ministerointerni/popolazioneecarceraria2012/nomadi/04htm.

There are serious concerns about access to health-care services for Roma and Sinti living in the settlements. These services are particularly needed by children and women. The overwhelming majorities of people in the settlements are not registered with a family doctor and therefore can only benefit in a limited way from health services. Those requiring constant medication and prolonged hospitalization are the most affected.

Living in unauthorized camps poses risks for Roma and Sinti. The lack of electricity and gas forces people to use improvised devices or resort to candles. There have been cases where employing such means has caused fires that resulted in the deaths of dozens of people, primarily children.

According to Italian legislation, every child, regardless of legal status, has the right to education, which is obligatory until 16 years of age. Nevertheless, access to education is often difficult for Roma and Sinti children because of the isolated position of the irregular settlements and the lack of transport links. As a result of this and other factors, as the traditional suspect many Roma and Sinti still look at the Gag  educational system, considered dangerous for the preservation of their identity and traditions, a considerable number of children do not receive adequate education.

The situation is much worse in unauthorized camps than in authorized ones. The poor living conditions and the effects of repeated evictions all have a negative impact on the school attendance of Roma children in these camps. Furthermore, extreme poverty might also expose children, especially unaccompanied minors, to exploitative practices such as begging, or prostitution.

It must be stressed that the Ministries of Interior and Education are working together since 2009 to facilitate access of Roma children to education. The authorities are planning to increase their attention with regard to monitoring schools to verify that children are attending school, and that their performance is being assessed.

For what concerns the education, health and employment issues in **Region Friuli Venezia Giulia** the situation is the following: more than 70% of the total Roma and Sinti population are unemployed, only 2% have a diploma and less than 0.2% have a university degree. The school drop-out of Roma/Sinti pupils is still very high: more than 40% of the pupils do not finish primary school. Illiteracy is still affecting more than 35% of Roma and Sinti adults. In general, the situation seems to be somewhat better in authorized camps than in unauthorized camps. In the Monte Sei Busi camp, children represent around half of the approximately 400 inhabitants, and more than 85 per cent of them attend school. Perhaps one reason for the higher level of attendance in this camp is that the municipality provides buses for their transportation to school. In addition, several children attend high school.

Some Roma women have found jobs as cleaners in private houses. Many of the Roma living in the camps in Udine and Trieste craft copper cauldrons and sell them to authorized dealers. They also collect scrap metal, and some even trade copper products for it. They face difficulties in finding long-term jobs, as they lack residence, working permits or any kind of qualification and vocational training. They would like to have authorized places in markets to be able to sell their products there instead of through irregular arrangements.

The access to health and social services is limited to first aid, while less than 1 woman every 4 accept to resort to routine gynecological exams. However, one positive exception should be noted in the Monte Sei Busi camp in Udine, where Sinti are registered with family doctors and receive health care.

4. DISCRIMINATION AND INTEGRATION OF ROMA AND SINTI COMMUNITIES IN ITALY

In addressing the problem of discrimination against Roma and Sinti people, it is not possible to ignore the fact that it is the most discriminated ethnic group in Italy both in interpersonal relations between individuals (think of the practice of real ostracism towards Roma as regards access to the rental housing market or to the absolute lack of job offers by the so called “gag ”), and in that of their treatment

by the State and its administrative apparatus (so-called “camps” and their regulations are the most significant evidence of this situation). These discriminations occur on an ethnic basis, since, as has often been pointed out previously, more than half of Roma and Sinti present on Italian territory has Italian citizenship.

First it is important to make an initial distinction concerning the concept of discrimination, according to whether the legislation refers to civil or to criminal liability.

With regard to the civil law, the concept of discrimination can also be portrayed as any situation in which it is to put in place an illegitimate unequal treatment, meaning that any active conduct, omission, exclusive or inclusive conduct can be defined as discriminatory.

On the other hand, criminal does not refer to the concept of unequal treatment, but rather to a series of behaviours and acts of various kinds that can be classified into the broader category of racism. Those are all the conducts put in for racial, ethnic, national, religious, gender reasons. These conducts cause first an offense to the dignity of all those who belong to the group against which the injury have been addressed.

Define the two aspects of discrimination is useful to define what are the prohibited conducts, and at the end of the topic under consideration, to examine the remedies provided by the criminal or civil law.

4.1. Participation of Roma to public life, social exclusion and politics, discrimination and prejudice (a sociological approach)

We have repeatedly noted that the Roma/Sinti are a nation of 10-12 million people with their own language and their own culture, with a well-defined identity, a minority group which for its total number is bigger than that of the inhabitants of many Member States. Therefore, Roma cannot be defined, at European level, a minority. As noted above, but for the sake of consistency, it seems appropriate to recall here, several factors which have prevented the formation of larger communities rooted in a limited area: closely-knit families, but also a strong rivalry between clans and the other, the need to move frequently, following job opportunities in craft fairs, markets, where to buy and sell animals or performing in shows. In fact it should be noted that not only the Roma and Sinti have led neither a nomadic existence, nor that all Roma and Sinti living today constantly moving: there are in Europe (in Italy), many settled communities, while those traveling are now a small percentage.

Xenophobic violence against Roma and Sinti and, in general, towards “foreigners” is fuelled by nationalist movements in worrying expansion in many European countries, which are inspired by the racist stereotypes generated by Fascism and Nazism between the two world wars of the last century, claiming ethnic purity and integrity of the country.⁷⁶

On the other hand have local movements arose that fuel with the same hatred against foreigners, immigrants, Roma and Sinti, but claiming a local cultural identity distinct from the national one or even opposed to it, to ask for separation from the nation state.

We need to reflect on the expansive force recently taken by the notion of cultural identity, which has some positive aspects, but also many negative aspects. It is possible, in fact, to perceive a growing obsession with identity, so strong as to lead, in some cases, extreme and unreasonable claims.⁷⁷

The assertion of strongly localized cultural identity was once a subject of study for anthropologists or linguists. It was believed that the prevailing trend was that the progressive linguistic and cultural approval was favoured by economic and social dynamism.⁷⁸ Nowadays, however, the affirmation of localism identity is a means to achieve political consensus, immediately spendable in electoral terms by those who show up and offer themselves as representatives of these instances.

The local cultural identity, which in itself is a treasure, translates, in its crudest form but politically

⁷⁶ Sarup, M., *Education and the ideologies of macis*, Trentham, 1991, pp. 96-100.

⁷⁷ Prinz, A. (ed.), *Global Forces, Local Identity: the Economics of Cultural Diversity*, Zurich-Wien, 2011.

⁷⁸ Sigona. N., *Figli del ghetto: gli italiani, i campi nomadi e l'invenzione degli zingari*, Forlì, 2002.

profitable in the rejection of foreign cultures or real racism, manifested especially against those who are weaker, as are Roma and Sinti.

Racism, in some cases, is institutionalized, as evidenced by the numerous trade union ordinances or measures of other local authorities who, in different ways, are addressed, more or less explicitly against Roma and Sinti, and national laws that put many restrictions against Roma.

Roma and Sinti are people devoid of territory, this is one of the main reasons why they are still perceived as strangers and may be referred to as “enemies” by the inhabitants of the locality in which they temporarily settle or attempt to settle.

Degradation, dirt, high probability of burglaries in homes, are the aspects that certain organs of information normally associate to the camps; aspects that sometimes coincide with the actual situation that surrounds the lives of many Roma and Sinti, to whom is attributed the willingness to live in such a manner, without questioning the causes that determine it.⁷⁹

From the fear aroused against “gypsies” and from the objective state of abandonment in which they are forced to live, it follows the forced nomadism which obliges Roma and Sinti. They wish to stay together out of necessity and for strong emotional bonds, going round in circles looking for an accommodation more or less tolerated and safe. The families of Roma and Sinti cannot and do not want to disperse because as individual members, isolated, they would have less ability to survive in a society that rejects them. The cost would be the camouflage within the Gagè society, giving up family ties and concealing their identity.⁸⁰ Paradoxically, the discovery that “normal” people, with a good level of education and a regular job are of Roma or Sinti origins arouses disbelief revealing component of racist prejudice that animates the xenophobic movements.

4.2. Development of participation of Roma people to public life fighting prejudices and discrimination

At this point of our analysis we need to ask ourselves some questions. Why these people, of which we have traces, memory and story for a long time, remained within their “cultural diversity”? Why do they live in the camps? Why they are not “close” to us, in the schools, in the universities, in the workplace, in civil society and in political representation? What makes them so far apart, so different from “us”? And, although they are so different from each other, on the basis of what do they recognize themselves as “we”? And vice versa on the basis of what we recognize them as “they”?

We are convinced that what defines the core of the cultural diversity of the Gypsies, the heart of their ethnic identity, is a conception of time and space different from the one that we all share (as result of the modernization process, that, with the advent of capitalism has transformed our society). Our hypothesis was that, having been nomads for a long time, and anyway, even if sedentary, having lived in conditions of social separation, marginalization and alienation from labour market, they had been tied to a use of time and space, and a cognitive representation of it, typical of pre-industrial societies.

Very briefly, we can say that while for us, so called “modern,” the present time is the place in which the past experience becomes future projects, in pre-modern societies, which were static society (as far as a society is never completely static) the past is not experience and history, but, tradition that recurs immutable, and the present time is the “signifier” of life and the future, in terms of planning, does not make sense, it was established by the individual fate because of birth. This leads to a vision of the existence, in which, there are a lot of fatalism and are the destiny, the fortune and the misfortune, to determine the milestones of a life. A life, marked by reassuring repetition of acts and habits, always equal to them, where, tradition and blood ties define the identity of each.

If this was true, if there was not projectuality and they lived from day to day, if it really was the tradition to prescribe, generation after generation, values and customs, if the clock was not to dictate precisely

⁷⁹ Piasere, L., *cit.*, 1990, pp. 45-75.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

the order of daily activities, then, these people had in his hand a wrong map with which they moved into a territory, "ours," that had its own space-time rules. And we know that individual identity is constituted through the experience of time and space, we know, that there is a clear sense of continuity between the lived experiences of time and the attitude towards reality; and we know also that the identity of a group is organized around the ability to elaborate together the continuity and the change. The normative strength of the social representation of time is so strong to put out of civil forum, in a territory marked by deviance or by madness, anyone who transgresses.

This cultural diversity, it was said that both should be preserved and enhanced, therefore, likely to be the condemnation of the Gypsies, because it closed them in an identity prison that is metaphorical than real prison: the gypsy camps. Ghetto which hindered the comparison, the mixture, the transformation, the change, which prevented the integration process (meaning integration the acquisition of rights of citizenship, education, work, etc.), which represented a breeding ground for the deviant subculture that erodes traditions and culture.

If this analysis were correct, than it was necessary a mutual effort of change: on the one hand, social policies, that were aware of cultural obstacles that Gypsies had to overcome, and that offer them equal opportunities for effective integration into the social context; on the other, the awareness by the Gypsies themselves of the necessity of questioning habits, certitudes and prejudices.

In this sense, we would like to strongly support the importance of launching housing policies that allow within a reasonable time the closure of the camps (considering different possibilities and promoting favourable economic conditions: small plots of land to house settlements of extended families, apartments, farmhouses discharged where enable small production ...) because the camps were (and are even more so today) just a terrible parody of what was the field stop of a people who were nomad, a parody that has nothing to do with tradition and culture. We believe it is necessary and urgent to facilitate pathways into employment for adults and, above all, invest in the education of gypsy children (scholarships, tutors ...) not only because education gives the right of citizenship, but also because only through education (and thus the socialization to the norms, values, knowledge of society in general) the gypsies could save and retrieve the specificity of their culture and their tradition.

Only when this bridge was built only at that moment, memory and tradition would become a living thing, which would not have prevented from living together, but strengthened the identity of one and called for the respect of others: memory and tradition are tools that become a resource only within a process of living together, of constant comparison. Otherwise they are a constraint.

Is not the identity, personal or collective, the result of a contamination? And is not the contamination the vital element that allows us the encounter with the other, who is different from us, openness to the world and experience? The identity, that is, the awareness that we have of ourselves, of what we are and what we do not want to be, of our sense of being part of a community of choice but, at the same time we are unique and unrepeatable. The identity is built in the comparison and is much stronger the more it is able to question their own beliefs. For this reason, the isolation and marginalization in which Gypsies live exposes them to the risk of cultural deprivation, memory loss, and abandonment of traditional values. It would be wrong to say that Gypsies have lost their identity: the identity cannot be missed, it changes, and memory and oblivion are the dynamics that constitute this process of this transformation. We need to think about the directions and outcomes of this process, and to understand what part playing memory, tradition and history. The starting point has to be this: identity, such as culture, is two entities in continuous transformation in the flow of time, open to otherness, enlivened by the contamination.

Migration processes in which Europe is involved are questioning the ethnocentric perspective of someone who wants to erase diversity and activity; rather it prefigures the need to open negotiations on the principles that should regulate interracial and intercultural societies. Because even though the clash between majority and minority has always historically played in unbalanced power relations, the game, unless the strongest decides to eliminate, I mean physically eliminate the other, has always been resolved in a reciprocal change. Because if true that at the core of the collective identity of the

Gypsies is to border drawn with the world of non-Gypsies, the boundary begins to have many flaws and schooling of children it is the most obvious example. The threat for the identity of the Gypsies has already proved successful in the deviant subculture.

As stated in a commentary requested by the Italian Ministry of Interior in 2012 to Caritas Italia concerning the *Conclusive Report on the Condition of Roma and Sinti in Italy* adopted by the *Extraordinary Commission for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights* of the Italian Senate in 2011, it is clearly stated as follows: “Although there are those who claim otherwise, Italy is fast becoming a multi-ethnic country, inhabited by people who come from other countries and other cultures. People who in most cases and overcoming many difficulties, work, study, plan their lives and exercise the rights and duties of citizenship. People with whom we build up business relations, friendship and love.

But we are not doing this with the gypsies. They are foreigners, prisoners of our double stereotype of the gypsy ugly, dirty and bad and the gypsy free, artist, son of the wind. They are subject of interventions that fail to escape from the logic of welfarism or repression. Ignored, tolerated or chased away. They are in a vicious cycle where it is no longer possible to distinguish cause from effect, the innocence from guilt.

We have the impression that we have come to an end, that this situation is not sustainable. They came definitely to an end and the gypsies have to accept the comparison, get in the game, breaking the chain of marginalization and delinquency. A challenge that must be accepted by them, for our part must be allowed. If it does not break this perverse practice of welfarism, which does not recognize the other as equal and that produces ties of passivity and dependence, it will be difficult to produce significant changes. This means that soon the traditional culture will not remain anymore, because delinquent culture does not protect the traditional culture: delinquent culture kills traditional one.

We can also say that we have reached to an end: we live in a society that has changed, which is becoming multi-ethnic and multicultural, and if we will not be able to put in discussion habits, values and certainties, we will pay a very high price endangering security and social peace. In this sense deal with the proper tools and the right perspective is a task that cannot be postponed. At the local level it would seem that, with few exceptions, positive action in carried out in favour of the integration of gypsies, are limited.”

Moreover, the document continues in its analysis stressing the need for an urgent action led by the Italian Government in order to improve the juridical contion of Roma, Sinti and Camminanti in Italy: “There are initiatives to be undertaken urgently, before the situation deteriorates further, so obvious as to be almost trivial. The list can easily be the following:

- *The recognition of the Romani language which has been excluded by law on linguistic minorities despite a first draft included it; the reason for this exclusion is quite questionable: the non-attributability of the Roma people in a specific territory, ignoring the fact that Gypsies are one of the most common linguistic minorities in Italy.*
- *A limited recognition to a few specific groups of the right to nomadic lifestyle and the establishment of temporary transit areas for those who are the last semi-nomadic groups in Europe (about 20 000 between Kalderasha Roma, Sinti and Sicilian Travellers).*
- *A serious census of Roma, Sinti and Trevellers in Italy, planned at national level under the conditions and within the appropriate time, which should follow the regularization of those who, while living in Italy for several generations, still do not have Italian citizenship. Census and not profiling. The difference is substantial: the first is aimed for inclusion; the second has nothing to do with the Roma because it concerns only a transversal category of people, criminals, regardless of ethnicity.*
- *Recognizing Italian citizenship to children born and living in Italy, once they reach the age of majority (this is part of the wider “ius soli” campaign promoted by a number of civil society association and recently even by the new Minister for Immigration, Cecile Kyenge).*
- *Finally, the Italian government, lagging behind other countries must urgently apply the funds al-*

*located by the European Social Fund to start inclusion policies, housing, work and school. The gradual and planned closure of the camps is a civic duty, work a right enshrined in the Constitution, the education of the new generations is vital for the good health of the entire society.”*⁸¹

It is, moreover, important to point out that these recommendations will be expressly recalled also in the National Strategy for Roma inclusion, finally adopted by the Italian Government in spring 2012.

Beside these general problems, we strongly believe that one of the most urgent issues is the solution of the legal limbo and of the failed recognition of Roma and Sinti as minority. Without a legal ground there is no hope to tackle and fight discrimination toward a group which by a legal point of view is invisible. The problem of legal treatment of Roma is actually a structured and complex problem, which can be seen as the sum of more problems referred to three main fields of intervention, immigration, minority issues, and discrimination:

- a) It is a topic of immigration, because some of those are not Italian or coming from EU countries and are often in a position of irregularity;
- b) It is a social problem because about 75 thousand subjects are Italian and the other significant part are, citizens of the European Union but, they all live in situations of exclusion;
- c) It is a problem of linguistic minority, due to the urgent request of at least recognition of the Romani language within the framework of the Law no. 482/1999;
- d) It is an issue of public policy, because exclusion can lead to manifestations of anti-social or violent behaviours;
- e) It is a problem of ethnic and racial discrimination, because public opinion, and not only, also expresses clamorous signs of impatience and nervousness.

The previous (XVI) legislature, which began in April 2008 and finished in February 2013, has produced 4 draft laws presented by the Parliament dealing with Roma issues. The Draft Law No. 2227, presented on May 31 2011, by 17 senators of the opposition, is the only one with a truly systematic approach, which proposes legislation guidelines by an ethnic and linguistic point of view. There is also another draft law which deserves a mention, it deals with the characteristics of the camps and transit stop for nomadic peoples, while, the other two bills were devoted to the problem of the protection of the linguistic Roma and Sinti minority.

To the diversity of issues corresponds a strong diversification of the legal instruments of the law. In other words, taking into consideration the content of the Constitution, we should realize that the regulatory limits are different with regard as to the areas of intervention. Immigration, such as the right of asylum and the legal status of foreigners, public order and safety are subject of exclusive legislation of the State (Article 117 letter. A, b and h); and likewise belong to the State the regulation of the essential levels of services concerning civil and social rights and the general rules for education (Article 117 letter. m and n); the statement, except to the autonomy of educational institutions and with exclusion of education and vocational training, health protection, promotion of cultural activities are matters of concurring legislation and, therefore, the State can only establish “fundamental principles” (Art. 117 third paragraph).

The exclusive competences of the regional legislation are matters which are not provided for in the first, second and third paragraph of Art. 117 are of. If we consider that the regulatory authority with regard to minorities, such as Roma and Sinti, is a matter of exclusive regional legislation, the problem on the need for a state law would not arise at all, and we should check out, region by region, the content of the interventions performed.

Summarizing what already stated before, the situation of the legislation concerning Roma and Sinti in Italy today is as follows.

There are 11 regional laws in force: 10 regions and one autonomous province have largely legislated on Roma issues long time before the entry in force of the amendment to Title V of the Constitution

⁸¹ Caritas Italia, *Commento sul Rapporto conclusivo dell'indagine del Senato italiano sulla condizione giuridica di Rom e Sinti in Italia*, Roma, 2012, pp. 2-3 and p. 5.

(Constitutional Law No. 3/2001), providing not only to recognize rights, but also to prepare specific financial commitments. This situation, in the absence of a State law that identifies at least the basics rights of those persons, after the amendment of Title V might even lead to some doubts about the dangers of overspill constitutional interventions in relation to the compatibility of economic commitments indicated.

Indeed, regarding the recognition of the rights of Roma/Sinti groups, the regional legislation (and the Province of Trento) is very advanced even by European standards.

Regional laws approved so far (Lombardy, Veneto, Friuli, Emilia Romagna, Lazio, Tuscany, Piedmont, Umbria, Sardinia, Liguria, Marche, and a law of the Province of Trento), have as common the recognition of the right to nomadic lifestyle and protection of the cultural identity of Roma and Sinti populations, considered as a social category that needs a specific discipline because of its peculiarities.

With regard to the housing problem we must recognize that there has been some effort by the regions, in allowing a easier access to the house. Many regions, as Friuli Venezia Giulia, adopted the introduction, at regional level, of micro-areas policy, (successfully implemented in some regions as Tuscany), in favour of self-experience, (these are also experiences that have been happily realized in some areas and, perhaps, in the period of transition to a more appropriate allocation of housing), in the financing of restructuring within the existing camps in order to improve the living conditions of the residents. Continuing on the housing issue, it is significant to remember that different regulatory instruments provide regional support for a granted access to housing for Roma and Sinti who choose this housing solution, through the provision of funding from the European Social Fund or the Resettlement Fund Board of Europe.

With regard to the issue of employment, is very interesting the experience of consulting space aimed to the introduction to work activated by Municipality of Rome in 2007, which allowed the occupation and encouraged the self-social and economic promotion, through the constitution of service cooperatives, trade and crafts in various fields, while preserving cultural identity and encouraging the preservation of traditional crafts. Of course, hand in hand must be initiated vocational training policies through the implementation of special courses and promoting career guidance.

The State, for its part, has relied on mainly two types of interventions.

As a matter of secondary legislation on schooling, it enacted various administrative acts: the right to study/compulsory schooling for nomadic children (1986), multicultural education as a mediator between different cultures (1990), and intercultural approach to education (1994). In the same vein, there is the Protocol signed in 2005 between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry for University and Scientific Research and Opera Nomadi, which provides programs for school integration, to combat school drop-out, and also specific training for multicultural teachers and for Roma and Sinti cultural mediators. It is necessary, even in this area, a joint effort of local authorities, Ministry of Education and private social organizations, however, very active for years in this area, to achieve the ambitious goal of “ensuring a compulsory, free and quality for all school education.”⁸²

For what concerns the health protection field, the Italian government has made significant efforts contained in the circular implementation of Articles 34, 35 and 36 of the Consolidated Law on Immigration. But even in this area, there are serious difficulties in dependence of the poor goodwill of many health professionals (and other users) towards the Roma/Sinti, and towards diseases often linked to poverty and chronic lack of hygiene, housing conditions of extreme distrust.

The State has intervened on the issue of Roma and Sinti also with primary legislation acts, not only with administrative acts, as well as the rules of a general nature relating to the protection of human rights, the Constitution, the Law of ratification of the European Convention on Human Rights (Law No. 848/1955), the Law of ratification of the Social Charter for Human Rights (Law No. 30/1999), and finally the Law No. 286/1998 on the condition of foreigners in Italy. So far prevailed, namely, the use

82 European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe, *ECRI general policy recommendation No. 13 on combating anti-gypsyism and discrimination against Roma*, adopted on June 24, CRI (2011)37.

of the power state regulations related to the letters a), b), h) Art. 117 of the Constitution, while certainly appears evident the absence of a positive intervention in relation to the letter m) of the same article, which refers to the minimum levels of essential benefits which should be guaranteed throughout the national territory to persons belonging to a particular minority as the Roma and Sinti undoubtedly are, and in relation to the need to establish the “basic principles” for regional intervention. This shortage creates some significant problems. Thus, for example, there is no response in the face of difficulty of obtaining a residence permit, bound, to date, the regular contract of employment and residence, not always demonstrable living in camps very often without number, and the recognition of citizenship to those who were born on Italian territory, but cannot prove they have resided regularly until the age of majority and, therefore, remain in a legal limbo, or at risk of statelessness. Furthermore, the same Law No. 286 meets serious difficulties in applying the people who are “nomadic” as a way of life.

Moreover, international stakeholders urge to Italian State to deal with Roma and Sinti issues.

Among these it is possible to repeal:

- a) The annual “Reports” (2008 and 2011), of Amnesty International, considering the situation of Roma and Sinti in Italy, noted that: “to Italian, European and coming from abroad Roma, have been denied equal access to education, housing, health care and employment, and have continued in several cities, including Milan and Rome, illegal forced evictions, with the consequent worsening of the poverty of the affected communities. In several cases, the evictions were not preceded by adequate consultation and reasonable notice, nor formalized in accordance with the domestic law, thereby preventing access to judicial remedies.”
- b) The European Parliament Resolutions 11/03/09 and 25/03/10, which have emphasized that the nomadic peoples, who represent the largest minority in Europe are a highly vulnerable social group, affected by a high risk of unemployment and poverty, often victims of widespread criminalization and discrimination.
- c) The EU Commission Communication of 7/04/2010, on the side-lines of the Second European Conference on Roma (Córdoba on 8/4/10) which contains many useful suggestions to identify key factors for effective inclusive strategy, which encourages the integrated use of EU funds, as levers for social inclusion, in this documents it is proposed the identification of patterns of typed and shared approach to inclusion policies, calls for greater collaboration between the EU, Member States, NGOs, local authorities and community, recommend to permeate through the so called mainstreaming method, all social policies with measures to promote Roma inclusion, to disseminate successful models, including through participation in the network of the United Euroma for implementation of the use of Structural Funds for Roma inclusion, to carry out actions coordinated and long-term, focusing on the importance of policy coherence, also to provide specific positive actions (to overcome the disadvantages), and finally recommended to overcome the reluctance of local authorities to deal with such issues and reinforce the participation of Roma in the decision-making processes which affect them.

It must be stated that something seems to change in the last few months, the most important passage is represented by the National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma, enacted by the Italian government in 2012 (see paragraph 2.4. of this analysis), which has to be practically implemented by a National Action Plan.

We need to study how and where to intervene, we need a synergistic approach, not only between the various administrations, each for their expertise and the bearer of his own experience, but even among these, the voluntary sector and, above, communities in Italy.

An effective law on Roma/Sinti issues in Italy could only be achieved with the contribution and the will of all: of those who intend to build on the many successes (and failures of many) of the regional legislation, of those who would be able to find a common denominator for protect the Romani culture, of those who would be able to plan a uniform land management in relation to the Roma/Sinti presence within the territory, of those who deems it necessary to identify and provide some basic principles

preparatory to regional operations, as well as the determination of the essential levels of performance, in the exercise of legislative powers regional, bearing in mind that, in the terms that I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, there are considerable scope for State intervention.

Such a “dedicated” legal instrument would be useful to recognize the specificity of the Roma and Sinti minorities and to outline a system of interventions and guarantees in a perspective of mutual respect and appreciation of differences. It would point out, in essence, the characteristics of these populations, compared to the condition of foreigners in general, to recognize the right time to nomadism as to the permanence, the preservation of cultural identity and basic rights such as health, education, participation in social policy, including through moments of confrontation with the public authorities.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion of this investigation comes within Redupre project allows us to formulate some considerations and make some proposals and working hypotheses.

The goal of this analysis is essentially to provide the public and private discussion with a shared knowledge base and analysis tools. That make possible to compare concrete, more constructive and free from prejudices and preconceived ideas on the presence of Roma and Sinti in Italy. In fact, we are interested only in reflection on various political positions in our country on Roma/Sinti topic, where such political positions, often based on prejudices and little or no knowledge of the people and the reality of Roma and Sinti have somehow a direct influence on housing, social, education and health policies regarding Roma and Sinti communities, or influence directly or indirectly the adoption or non-adoption of legal rules that preserve or discriminate against Roma and Sinti.

In this sense, we think of great value and fully acceptable as stated in the 2011 Final Report of the Senate on the status of Roma and Sinti in Italy, where it is notable that “the choice to know, in this case more than in others, is itself a political choice. Not only because it is to break a vicious circle, a spiral in which ignorance and prejudice feed on each other, but because it brings to light the knowledge of the exploded social and living conditions so dramatic that can be tolerated only if you decide not to look at, if you turn your head the other way when you meet a beggar child, or passes in front of one of the camps that line the periphery of many of our cities. Deciding to break through this veil of ignorance, want to know and to know is the starting point without which no policy can be built.”⁸³

The hope to achieve this ambitious goal is the starting point and can also be represented by a transnational project as Redupre is, a project that starts from the many vantage points in the territories involved, makes homogeneous the research methods and data collection and information processing by their systematic processing, complementing them with quantitative surveys and appropriate qualitative research and in this way build a reliable European database. This project is not possible without dialogue, involvement, the direct participation of stakeholders. This participation is not available spontaneously but requires work and training. This is the first proposal.

The second proposal concerns the National Plan on the Roma and Sinti issue. The absence of this Action Plan, intended as the practical application of the principles contained in the National Strategy, has been recently criticized by many international bodies which have observed over the years and in recent months our country. The lack of this national action plan, intended as a shared tool of intervention between central government, local authorities and civil society organizations, limits or prevents the use of those resources that are available for European social targets and European integration policies. In addition, the failure to adopt national and organic legislation on Roma and Sinti has further complicated the situation, not to mention that these communities do not even have the protection that is normally afforded to other linguistic minorities present in Italy, not being included in the list of minorities worthy

83 Senato della Repubblica, XVI Legislatura, Commissione straordinaria per la promozione e la tutela dei diritti umani, *Rapporto conclusivo dell'indagine sulla condizione di Rom, Sinti e Camminanti in Italia*, Roma, 2011, p. 3.

of protection by the national legislation currently in force (Law No. 482/1999).

However, the terms National Actions Plan cannot carry the harmful illusion that there is a unique and homogeneous solution for an issue such as this: only pragmatic, differentiated, concrete answers, can lead in the right direction and these entail articulation and decentralization and direct responsibility of local institutions. The step in the right direction can be represented by the creation of a national task force at the service of local institutions, non-governmental organizations, and representatives of the Roma which will help to pass from existing ideas and the will to concrete realization of projects. There is a need for a technical formulation and administrative implementation of all these aspects. Many European countries have already moved and are moving in this direction.

The third proposal concerns the issue of regularization. In particular, it has been highlighted that the issue of recognition of citizenship for children born and grown in Italy for which a solution is imposed in the same way than for the other hundreds of thousands of children and adolescents in the same condition in the vast reality of our immigration.

The fourth proposal concerns the policies and law. There are two points of great cultural and symbolic value that would require a specific legislative intervention. We have a duty to make an act of reparation by entering the genocide of the Roma among those who are remembered every year on January 27th in the Memorial Day. And, as noted above, we must reopen the matter of the law 482/1999, which recognizes the Italian linguistic minorities in order to include the Roma minority and its language, the Romani, between the minorities worthy of protection. It is paradoxical, as has been pointed out recently, that the recognition of the existence of the Roma minority exists, but only in negative, in particular through the acts of the Ministry of the Interior for its functions which are primarily concerned with security issues.

Next to these symbolic aspects which the authorities should deal with, but no one can underestimate the extraordinary importance that the symbols have, there are also some practical issues that should be tackled as soon as possible.

The first practical issue is that of “camps.” It is a reality that, with very few exceptions, does not exist in other European countries. And it is a reality characterized, using the language of the international conventions, by inhuman and degrading conditions. This reality of the camps is actually incompatible with any project of inclusion and integration, considering that the camps reproduce those conditions of cruel marginalization whose effects are then poured into city life. It is there that generation after generation we will lose the people of landfills, a people made for more than forty per cent of children up to fourteen years.

We need a program of gradual closure of the camps, starting from the most degraded, and offer different, acceptable, accepted, discussed and compared housing solutions.

The second practical point is that of the children and the schooling. Among the many experiences that emerges from the activity the Community of Sant’Egidio there is one project inspired by a school incentive for the fulfilment of primary education through a policy of scholarships managed on the basis of precise rules and their strict compliance. Also in this case the involvement of families is crucial, in particular – especially with regard to the pre-school stage that is so important to anticipate the processes of socialization and prevent the formation and consolidation of cultural handicap – should be examined carefully the possibility of involving directly mothers (often, it must be remembered, very young mothers) in the educational pathways.

The third practical point concerns the employment. To be recognized as Roma is an obstacle to finding a job, even for those who had started training courses work that appeared promising. Can we think for positive action, incentives or disincentives that mitigate this discrimination?

The last problem we want to emphasize is that of participation. This is an essential question, a *conditio sine qua non*. And at the same time is one of the most difficult problems. Today, the reality of the associations appears highly fragmented and crossed by group and sectarian conflicts. The focal point is how to invest to form inside the Roma and Sinti communities a lever of social workers, cultural

mediators who are the basis of a network of participation marked by stability and continuity. This requires resources, but these resources are intended to generate significant cost savings in other areas of care as that of security. And at the same time these are resources that could be invested in the future not only of our society but of the Roma, Italy and Europe as a whole.

Outside the demagoguery and the simplifications we know that it is a difficult question that nobody in Europe has solved yet and that has no easy solutions. It is a field in which you can only proceed to trial, gradually correcting mistakes and learning from experience and good practices already in place in other countries. To achieve this fundamental objective, however, the public policy has to behave responsibly, even more because it is one of the most unpopular issues with which to measure, with obvious repercussions on the electoral level.

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ANALYSIS OF ROMA SITUATION IN ROMANIA WITH EMPHASIS ON TIMISOARA, SANPETRU MARE, SANTANA AND ALESD

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INTRODUCTION

The present study draws upon a wide range of literary and statistical evidence in order to provide an objective outline of the Roma in Romania, away from both overly romantic and critical nuances.

If briefly reviewing the list of references, one can notice that the paper is almost an inventory of publications which either analyze the Roma directly or provide indirect clues for an accurate and complete profile.

To this end, the study embarks on a four-chapter tour.

The first chapter – *An overview of the Roma in Romania* – opens the way with a stroll down the history lane. The narrative thread checks off all the ‘hot spots’ from Roma’s arrival in Europe and Romania to contemporary facts and also lays emphasis on the slavery episode largely enigmatic to many Roma and non-Roma alike.

The following sub-chapters turn the history tide to *Demographics* and *Indicators of social and economic status*, piling up a notable amount of information for a snapshot of the four fields on whose shoulders the Roma’s precarious condition rests: employment, education, healthcare and housing.

The third chapter makes a thorough review of the international, European and domestic laws and policies displayed in the shape of an open-down parabola whose vertex is represented by the EU accession – the time when the measures taken are said to have reached the highest intensity. The review culminates in describing the participation of the Roma in public life and drawing a set of conclusions and recommendations.

“To traverse the world, men must have maps of the world” Lippmann said in his 1922 masterpiece – *Public Opinion*. His words pave the way for the fourth chapter – *Stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination* – which catches a glimpse of the cognitive, affective and behavioural bias held about the ethnic group in question.

For such purpose, the chapter summarizes national and EU reports on discrimination and also gauges the social distance between the Roma and the non-Roma by blending both the self- and the hetero-image into the analysis.

Given that many of the stories about the Roma are told by journalists, the chapter also looks at the articles in the four largest circulation daily newspapers in the quality press category, between 1 October and 31 November 2011.

The tour ends with an analysis of the four localities chosen as focal points for the research conducted in Romania, within the REDUPRE project – Timișoara, Sânpetru Mare, Sântana, Aleșd. The analysis delves into the main arguments which recommend these as edifying case studies in relation to the overall project goal by summarizing demographic, social, economic data and so forth.

As an additional note, it should be borne in mind that the word “Gypsy” appears only in quotations due to thus being employed by the authors and in the history chapter as an equivalent of the noun “țigan” which used to flag the low rung to which the Roma were relegated during the slavery years.

In a nutshell, the paramount argument which recommends this study for lecture is the significant amount of sources reviewed for building a broad and objective portrait of the Roma and also the order in which the information unfolds. In other words, the study doesn’t jump to conclusions about the main issues the Roma are confronted with, but tries to draw a natural flow of data establishing a cause-effect relationship between history and modern-day challenges.

1. AN OVERVIEW OF THE ROMA IN ROMANIA

1.1. History at a glance

“‘Who are these people?’ asks the man behind the counter in the photo store in Southall, an area also known as London’s Little India.

He is handing over my order: a hefty pile of colour photographs, of which a picture of two Roma women and their children (above) is the first.

“They look just like the Banjara in Rajasthan – that’s where I come from,” he says.

He points to a beautiful print on the wall, showing a glamorous group of female Banjara dancers.” (BBC News July 8, 2009).

1.1.1. The Roma make it to Europe

The question that the man behind the counter asks in the BBC series is the same question that scholars have asked for many years in their attempt to trace back the Roma’s origin. It took them a great deal of perseverance and hard work to make way through the stories and documents left behind by an ethnic group whose “collective memory has retained more of the legendary than of certainties” (Liégeois 1994). Actually, it was not until the 18th century that the certainties began to come to light due to H.M.G. Grellmann, the author of the first modern scientific paper having the Roma as centrepiece. The paper was published in 1783 and established that the not-so-new kid in town had Indian origins due to a comparative philology study which linked the language they spoke to Sanskrit (Achim 1998). The conclusion was that their language came from the North-West of the sub-continent and that the influx from India to Europe occurred between the 9th and 14th centuries in several waves (Liégeois 1994).

Gradually, the Roma arrived in the Byzantine Empire where they were named *athingani*. The collective name tag derived from the Greek word *athinganos* or *athinganoy* meaning *pagan*, *untouchable*, *impure* which pointed to a heretical sect whose adherents were known as soothsayers and magicians (Dumitrescu, Căpiță and Manea 2008).

In his book – *The Gypsies* – Angus Fraser (1992) states that “the earliest reference to the presence of Gypsies in Constantinople comes, most probably, from a Georgian hagiographical text, *The Life of Saint George the Athonite*, composed at the monastery of Iberon on Mount Athos around 1068.” The text mentions Emperor Constantine Monomachus who asked for the help of the *athingani*, “descendants of Simon the Magician, notorious for soothsaying and sorcery” who were supposed to kill the wild animals in Philopation Park considered guilty of his disease.

The name *athingani* spread in a number of countries, resulting in the French *Tsigans*, German *Zigeuner*, Norwegian *Sigöyner*, Italian *Zingari*, Romanian *Țigani* etc. (Liégeois 1994).

However, a recent study shows that the oldest and most certain reference to the Roma was found in a letter of Gregorios II Kyprios (the Patriarch of Constantinople, 1283-1289). Such theory implies that the word *athingani* in the earlier mentioned text pointed to the original heretical sect whose name was to stick later with the Roma people (Achim 1998).

Despite the two theories sharing the earliest reference spectrum, most works and authors embrace the first mentioned.

1.1.2. Romania: Roma’s next stop for the 14th century

The ground zero reference concerning the Roma in Romania is a deed from 1385 in which the Prince of Wallachia donates the possessions of Vodița Monastery to Tismana Monastery. Among these, 40 Gypsy families (*sălăse*) are mentioned (Achim 1998).

In 1388, again in Wallachia, Mircea the Elder (Mircea cel Bătrân) donates 300 families to Cozia

Monastery; in Moldavia, the Roma are first mentioned in 1428 when Alexander the Good (Alexandru cel Bun) donates 31 families to Bistrița Monastery; in Transylvania, the earliest reference is a document (dated approximately between 1390 and 1406) stating that boyar Costea owns several villages as well as 17 ‘tent Gypsies’ (*Ciganus tentoriatos*) (Achim 1998).

In the 15th century, almost all monasteries and boyars had Roma slaves. Their number grew at a rapid pace thus making Dimitrie Cantemir state, at the beginning of the 18th century, that in Moldavia “Gypsies were spread all over the country” and “There was almost no boyar who did not own several Gypsy families.” (Achim 1998, p. 26).

Most researchers explain the arrival of the Roma by invoking two migration waves: one dating back to 1026 and heading for Damask, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Spain, France and another occurring in 1192 and heading for Dnieper, Don, Caucasus. The Gypsies from the second wave came across the Tatars and became their slaves. This encounter is believed to have set the ground for the arrival of the Gypsies in Romania (Dumitrescu, Căpiță and Manea 2008).

Even though the number of information sources concerning Roma’s arrival is higher in Moldavia and Wallachia than in Transylvania, the last mentioned makes up for its lack of data at the end of the 15th century. Thus, in 1493, a group of Gypsies headed by Voivode Rajko is referred to in Cladova, Arad County, while the Gypsies in Timișoara are brought up by archival sources as cannon casters (1500) and torturers of György Dózsa (1514) (Achim 1998). The story of Roma was different in different parts of the country.

In the Romanian Principalities, Roma slaves were long used as exchange objects. There are documents from the 19th century proving that carriages were being bought from Vienna in exchange for 30 Gypsy nomads, young Gypsies were paid as a fee for medical services, and slave auctions were organized at monasteries. The abolition of slavery was a process that ended in 1856.

In Transylvania and Banat regions, most Roma were “royal serfs” and only a small part were slaves. In the 18th C, the Habsburg empire forced Roma to settle. That is why, at the end of the 19th century, they were integrated in the fabric of the majority population.

1.1.3. “Will you ever dare to be among the civilized peoples as long as one can read in one of your newspapers: *Young Gypsy woman for sale?*”

Fortunately, the answer to Kohly de Guggsberg’s question (cited in Achim 1998) was a categorical yes. The unequivocal answer came from the Romanian intellectuals who had studied abroad and returned home fascinated by the Western world and its new beliefs and ideals. Yet, their fascination hit against the contemporary certainties of their country which still preserved and took pride in its Gypsy slaves. Slavery soon turned into the “the country’s greatest shame, the darkest stain in the eyes of the foreigners” (Guggsberg cited in Achim 1998). This conclusion was reached in the context of the news avalanche



Figure 1: A poster announcing an auction of Gypsy slaves¹ (Source: Wikipedia)

¹ The text reads: For sale: A first “sălaș” (family) of Gypsy slaves. Through an auction at noon at the St. Elias Monastery on 8 May 1852. It comprises of 18 men, 10 boys, 7 women & 3 girls. In fine condition.

concerning the abolition campaigns in the USA and the French and English colonies.

As a clue to the high sensitiveness Romanian society reached at that time, it should be borne in mind that the first American novel translated into Romanian was Harriet Beecher-Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Achim 1998).

Such sensitiveness was not only the result of the overly romantic views of the new intellectual wave, as many may think, but also of the accurate picture figures painted. Namely, between 1830 and 1860, the total number of Roma in Moldavia and Wallachia increased from roughly 200 000 to 250 000. According to most estimates, these accounted for almost one third of the total number of Roma in Europe (Achim 1998). Consequently, their social status wasn't quite the 'Guinness world record' that intellectuals wished for in view of adhering to Western ideals.

Such conclusion led to the abolition of slavery which took the shape of a two-decade process. Its milestones, at a glance, were: the laws which set free the Gypsies belonging to the Metropolitanate, bishoprics and monasteries (1844 in Moldavia, 1843 in Wallachia) and the laws which set free the state-owned Gypsies (1844 Moldavia, 1847 Wallachia).

The final step towards complete abolition was taken in 1855 in Moldavia and 1856 in Wallachia when the privately owned slaves (the only ones remained) were liberated (Achim 1998).

The catapult responsible for launching the abolition process into its final stage is an apparently petty incident that took place in Moldavia. The incident represents one of the spiciest episodes in Djuvara's book *Between East and West* (2007) and tells the story of a half-Gypsy boy on the Cantacuzino estate in Moldavia.

The boy is the illegitimate son of boyar Dimitrie Cantacuzino-Paşcani who had a love affair with a Gypsy servant. When the boyar passes away, his legitimate wife, Profîra Cantacuzino, leaves to Paris together with little Dincă, the love child.

Dincă becomes an excellent cook due to the lessons taught by a renowned French chef paid by Mrs. Cantacuzino. However, because of a considerable decrease in her financial sources, the lady decides to return to Romania together with Dincă and Clémentine, the French chambermaid madly in love with the boy.

When the girl finds out that Dincă is a slave, she drops the initial marriage plan. Her husband-to-be asks for the help of Prince Grigore Ghica. The latter fails to persuade Mrs. Cantacuzino to set the boy free but promises Dincă he will do something about it. Dincă refuses to wait any longer and commits suicide after shooting his fiancée first. It is said that this tragedy made Prince Ghica order his ministers to stay in the Council Room all night long and draw up a project law for solving the issue. The law was promulgated a few days later and the Moldavian example was replicated by Wallachia, a little bit ashamed because its close neighbor was one step ahead.

The abolition of slavery in the Romanian Principalities gave rise to a transition period at the end of which the Roma were either peasants (mainly because of the 1864 land reform) or craftsmen still loyal to their traditional crafts. However, this episode is believed to have pushed the Roma to the edge of the Romanian society which entered the modern times with this "history relic" attached (Achim 1998).

Unlike in Moldavia and Wallachia, in Transylvania most Roma were already settled in the 19th century. According to the 1893 census, most nomads were in Caraş-Severin, Hunedoara and Timiş counties. Still, because of the sedentarization the Habsburg Empire began in the 18th century, the number of nomads became increasingly lower. Thus, the end of the 19th century witnessed the rise of a community integrated in the fabric of the majority after losing much of its cultural identity (Achim 1998).

1.1.4. The Interwar wind of change

The Interbellum set a completely different frame for the Roma in Romania. This time Romania didn't refer to Moldavia and Wallachia only, but to Greater Romania also encompassing Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania (with Banat, Crişana and Maramureş regions included). The new background also changed the ethnic make-up and the Roma's position. More precisely, the latter were the sixth largest

minority group after Hungarians, Germans, Jews, Ukrainians and Russians representing 1.5% of the total population (over 260 000 Roma). According to the same census from 1930, 15.5% Roma lived in the cities while a staggering 84.5% lived in the countryside (Achim 1998).

If one were to flag the landmarks in the history of the Roma during the Interbellum, he or she would definitely stress the major shift in the occupational structure and the emerging Roma elite.

Indeed, the 1918-1920 land reforms turned an important page. These transformed many of the Roma into land owners and alleviated their plight to a certain degree. Many families managed to have better houses and to climb the social ladder. Yet, there also existed an opposite pole represented by those who had to give up their traditional crafts and take up new jobs (Achim 1998).

On the other hand, as Crowe (1996) emphasizes: "The 1920s saw something of a Gypsy renaissance take root in Eastern Europe and Russia as some intellectuals struggled to carve out a niche for the Gypsies in the new nations." In 1933, the "renaissance" took one step further and two Roma organizations were established – the General Association of the Gypsies in Romania and the General Union of the Roma in Romania. The latter was the most important organization by far due to its nationwide coverage (Achim 1998).

Unfortunately, it remained a mere beginning as the road to emancipation was curtailed by WWII and the deportation episode which produced irreversible harm.

1.1.5. Antonescu's policy and its communist follow-up

General Antonescu decided to deport the nomadic and "dangerous and undesirable Gypsies" to Transnistria in 1942. According to Achim (1998), approximately 25 000 people were deported and roughly half of them died on a land which was supposed to become their 'new home.' In 1944, the Roma who survived came back to Romania and were allowed to return to their occupations even if many of them were unable to work anymore as a result of the ill-treatment during the deportation.

Despite this episode, Achim (1998) states that the Roma were not an issue until scholars (supporters of biopolitics) turned it into one. In their opinion, "...in Romania, there were minorities who represented a bioethnic danger. These were the so-called 'minorities of extra-European origin' or 'ballast minorities': the Gypsies, the Jews and others, who were distinct from the historical minorities, who did not constitute a danger of this kind."

The end of WWII could have been the introduction to a better chapter in the Roma's history but, as Crowe (1996) highlights in his book *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, "Any dreams of postwar healing were dashed by the gradual Soviet takeover of Eastern Europe."

In a nutshell, the communist approach towards the Roma was one which deliberately ignored their cultural identity and heritage (official documents didn't even mention the Roma as a distinct ethnic group) and focused on the integration of this segment that led a "parasitic way of life" (Crowe 1996).

The Roma posed a serious threat to the communist theory which praised classless society based on common ownership and wished to reverse the social hierarchy having the proletariat at its top. The precarious living conditions, the nomadic life-style, the high illiteracy rate, all crumpled the much-desired impeccable look of the working class which was to prove its superiority over the bourgeoisie.

According to Achim (1998), it was this very theory that urged the communists to take measures for integrating the Roma and not the Roma problem itself which referred to an ethnic group placed on the edge of society. The result was a relatively significant number of Roma who climbed the social ladder by getting jobs in the militia, in the army etc., or even by becoming mayors in the villages. Consequently, during the 50s and 60s, the fact that the Roma belonged to "the poor" proved to be a catapult which launched them to higher positions. Still, a few years later, the Communist Party began to lose its enthusiasm and turned to people who had a certain education and competence.

From a housing perspective, many Roma benefited from better living conditions as they moved to flats or nationalized houses in the big cities. For instance, in Transylvania and Banat, some of them moved into the

houses of the German ethnics (*saşi*) who had left to Germany (Achim 1998).

On the other hand, a major shift took place in the occupational structure. The Roma had to give up their traditional handicrafts and embrace new jobs in the fields of heavy or construction industry, agriculture etc. Some Roma continued to practice their crafts without being noticed by authorities (bucket makers, tinkers, and small traders), others took up illicit trade and became protagonists of the black market (Achim 1998). Roma were also urged to send their children to school. This measure reduced illiteracy and resulted in Roma students attending vocational schools. The other side of the coin, however, was the denial of their ethnic origin for not being discriminated and for getting higher ranks in the social structure (Center for Documentation and Information on the Minorities in Europe – Southeast Europe [CEDIME-SE]).

As David Crowe (1996) shows, the Helsinki Watch stated that “by the early 1970s, the official policy was simply to ignore the existence of the Gypsies, while in 1972 the Romanian government announced that the minorities question was resolved.”

Nevertheless, figures proved that the question was far from being resolved. The 1977 census revealed that the Roma represented 1.5% of the population (even though several government agencies estimated the accurate figure to approximately 2.5%). The picture was all the more concerning as the unemployment rate was extremely high (for Roma men it amounted to 32.7% while for Roma women it stood at 48%) (Crowe, 1996).

Such findings determined authorities to do more to integrate this segment but no notable results showed up. The last 10 years of the Communist regime were labelled as a period of social chaos and economic crises which progressively shifted the focus from the Roma issue. As a consequence, many of them lost their jobs and, inherently, the allowances for their children, the right to own a house or to retire. Such dramatic change pushed the Roma again to their prior condition of outcasts (CEDIME-SE).

1.1.6. “So many of the Gypsy communities haven’t moved forward at all. They are exactly where they were whether it’s 10 years ago, 20 years ago.”

This is what Kevin Hoy from the Smiles Foundation states in a CBN News story (2010) about the Roma in Romania, after several projects he has carried out. His statement marks an important point on the itinerary followed by this community from 1989 to present day, an itinerary which experienced both ups and downs.

If beginning with the full half of the glass, one should mention the transition of the Roma whose specificity was almost erased during the Communist regime to a group that is aware, values and strives to put on the map its cultural identity.

When looking at the empty half of the glass, one cannot ignore the ample research carried out by the University of Bucharest and the Research Institute for Quality of Life in 1992.

The research pinpointed that most Roma (79.4%) didn’t have any profession, while 16.1% had modern professions, and 3.9% stuck to traditional crafts. (Achim 1998).

Despite the earlier mentioned findings, certain papers stress that many Roma started their own business or continued the trade they had begun during the communist regime, thus making considerable fortunes. Still, as Achim (1998) highlights in his book, this is only a niche that strongly contrasts the vast majority at the opposite pole and adds to the tension between the Roma and the non-Roma population.

The issues faced by the Roma community have been tackled and touched upon by the Romanian authorities through a series of laws and policies aimed at alleviating their plight and calibrating their status as a distinct ethnic group with distinct identity and cultural heritage. One of the most recent proofs is the intensive media campaign which invited the Roma to declare their true ethnicity at the 2011 census for an accurate perspective on the country’s demographics.

However, going back to Kevin Hoy’s comment for a symmetrical closing of this chapter, the not-so-rosy picture that reality paints shows how many Roma communities haven’t made any progress at all being a history relic Romania has borne along from the slavery age to present day.

1.2. Demographics

According to the data made available by the Council of Europe (Roma and Travelers Division) in 2008 (quoted by SALTO Cultural Diversity Resource Centre), Romania ranks first in Europe with a total number of Roma which amounts to 1.85 million, representing 8.5% of the country's population.

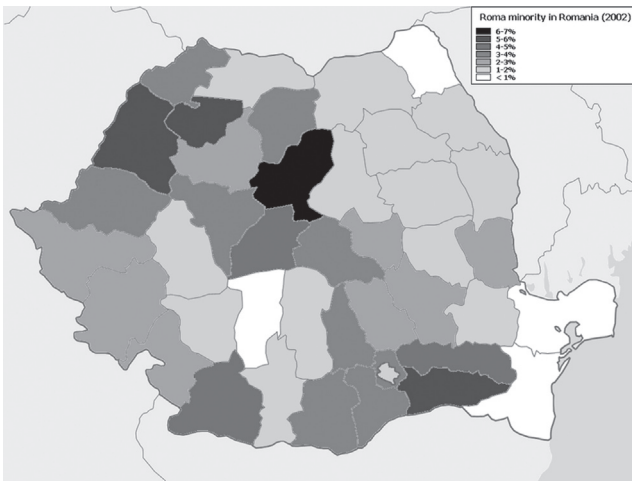
Figure 2: Roma population by country.



Source: Council of Europe

According to the 2002 census, the total population of Romania amounts to 21 680 974, of which the Hungarian ethnic group accounts for 6.6% (1 431 807), while the Roma ethnic group represents 2.47% (535 140). Consequently, the Roma are the second largest ethnic minority group in the country.

Figure 3: The Roma ethnic group in Romania.



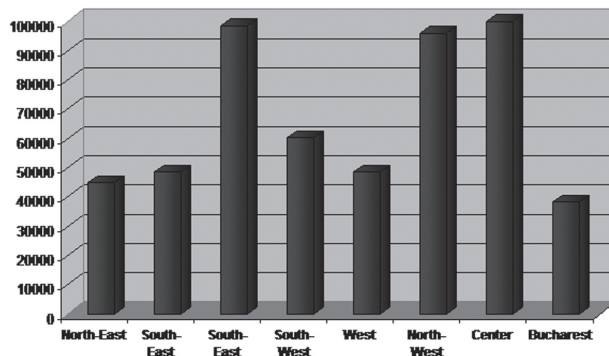
Source: Wikipedia

Despite the six-year period between the two estimates, the significant discrepancy between the two figures emphasizes that the accurate number of Roma people in Romania is subject to controversy given that most of them do not admit to their ethnic origins out of economic or social reasons.

As the Roma Inclusion Barometer emphasized (Bădescu et al. 2007), the experts and research institutes other than the National Institute of Statistics pointed to a higher percentage of Roma population. All the more interesting, according to the same barometer, the average estimates made by both Roma and non-Roma people concerning the amplitude of the Roma ethnic group in Romania were much higher than the official ones (almost 10 times).

Taking into account the 2002 census, the regions having a higher percentage of Roma population are: Center (3.96%), North-West (3.5%), South (2.91%) and South-West (2.58%).

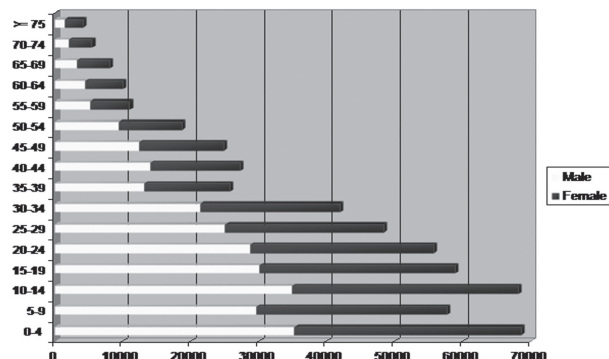
Figure 4: Roma population by region.



As far as the *gender distribution* is concerned, the 2002 census reveals a 2% gap between the Roma men (51%) and Roma women (49%). The gap reaches its maximum in the South-East (5.5%) and becomes extremely narrow in the West where the shares are almost equal (on the other hand, the West region is the only one where Roma women outnumber Roma men).

When taking a look at the Roma population by *age*, the highest density can be noticed in the 0-34 group. The climax is reached by the 0-4 group representing 12.8% of the total population and is closely followed by the 10-14 group accounting for 12.7%. If considering gender an additional variable in the age equation, the 2002 census highlights that men outnumber women between 0 and 44 years while women prevail in the group aged over 55. The two shares become similar between 45 and 54 years.

Figure 5: Roma population by age and sex.

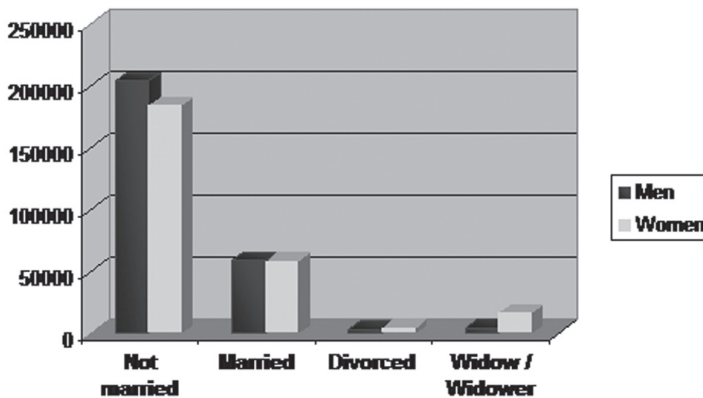


The religious makeup points to an overwhelming Orthodox majority (82%) followed at considerable distance by Pentecostals (6.4%), Roman Catholics (3.8%) and Reformed (3%).

If blending *marital status* into the demographic picture, one discovers that in 2002, 73% Roma were not married, 22% - married, 1% - divorced, 4% - widows/widowers. A significant share of the population (18%) was also held by those in a consensual union.

When drawing a parallel between the Roma women and men, the census reveals close figures for those married or in a consensual union and significant gaps for the other statuses. Namely, the not married men outnumber the women by 11%, while divorced women outnumber men by 63%. In the case of the widow/widower status, the number of women is approximately 3.5 times the number of men.

Figure 6: Roma population by sex and marital status.



When adding age to the sex-marital status analysis, figures show that the number of women aged under 15 who are in a consensual union is almost 5 times the number of men belonging to the same group.

The number of married women aged between 15 and 19 is almost 4 times higher than that of men, while the number of widows is twice the number of widowers, for the same age group.

If we widen the perspective and relate to the majority, the findings show that the share of Roma people entering a consensual union at an early age is much higher than the share held by Romanians.

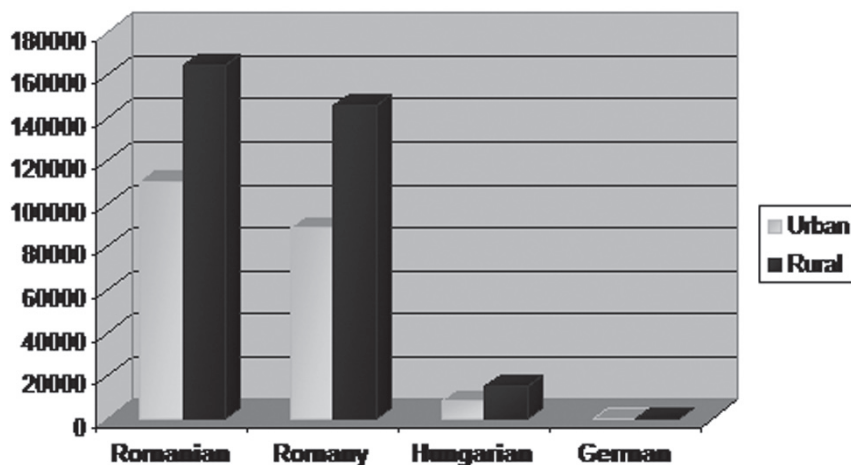
For instance, the Roma men aged under 15 who have a partner account for 0.14% while their Romanian counterparts stand at 0.0001%. Furthermore, the 15-19 age group reiterates the cleavage with 11% Roma men and 26% Roma women in a consensual union unlike 0.2% Romanian men and 3.5% Romanian women.

Another prominent discrepancy between the Roma and the rest of the population is the *early motherhood and the number of children*. If comparing the Roma and non-Roma women aged between 15 and 19 who gave birth to living babies, the former hold a 23% share while the latter stand at 4%. In other words, the share of Roma women (in the total Roma population) is almost 6 times higher than the one of the non-Roma.

Also, the number of living babies per 1000 Roma women aged 15 and over is approximately 2500 and tops the list. The second and third ranks are held by Csangos and Ukrainians, respectively, while the majority misses the tip of the ice berg by 800.

A deeper insight into the Roma population reveals that 55% have Romanian as *mother tongue* while 44% have Romany as mother tongue. The third language at the top of the hierarchy is Hungarian (4.5%) while all the other languages hold insignificant shares.

Figure 7: Roma population by mother tongue and urban/rural residence.



1.3. Indicators of social and economic status

In the 2007 *Poverty Assessment Report* published by the World Bank, the Roma came under scrutiny given the major discrepancies between them and the rest of the population. The report emphasized that of the three main ethnic minorities in Romania – Hungarian (5.9%), Roma (2.5%) and German (0.5%) – the Roma were the only group who had a standard of living much lower than the majority. The cleavage was highlighted by 2006 figures which showed that the share of poor Roma was likely to be four times the share of poor Romanians.

The four fields on whose shoulders Roma's precarious condition rests are: employment, housing, healthcare and education.

1.3.1. Employment

In order to have an accurate perspective of the employment issues faced by the Roma, the starting point will be considered the 2002 census which shows that of the total Roma population (535 140), only 23% are economically active. Roma score is low in the 42% economically active Romanian population. The active Roma population consists of 71.5% employed and 28.5% unemployed people. The latter category encompasses more people looking for their first job (18.3%) and less people in search of a new job (10.2%).

The economically inactive population aged 10 and over holds a significant share in the Roma population (54%) mainly due to the large number of people engaged in family duties (32.7% of the inactive Roma) or retired (10.7%).

When getting a deeper insight into the labour market participation, one discovers the lack of professional training at the root of low employment. Namely, 70% of the Roma are unskilled or carry out activities that do not require formal professional trainings. Many Roma have never performed a legally accepted economic activity or had to cope with long-term unemployment (more than 50% were unemployed for more than 27 months). Consequently, the key words which best describe their income sources are "occasional" and "informal employment" (Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development – POS DRU).

According to recent surveys, 16% of the Roma have social assistance as their only income source while the unemployment rate is 24% (POS DRU). If we compare the latter figure with the 2010 unemployment

rate in Romania – 7.3%, the discrepancy is striking (The National Institute of Statistics 2011).

On the other hand, recent surveys continue to point to a considerable gender gap in labour market participation with Roma women accounting for less than a third of the total number of employed Roma (POS-DRU).

A relevant update of the figures concerning the integration into the labour market is the study drawn up by the Research Institute for the Quality of Life (ICCV) in 2010. Despite the 8-year distance between the official census and the study, the coordinates which continue to provide an accurate overview of the Roma are high informal employment, poor formal qualification or non-formal qualification based on experience and tradition.

Building on the findings, ICCV establishes seven categories of working Roma: Roma who perform unskilled work in the informal labour market; extremely poor Roma who collect waste materials; Roma who perform household duties and other informal occasional activities; Roma who carry out traditional activities; Roma who are employed in the formal labour market; Roma who have their own businesses (e.g. real estate, recycling waste materials, trade etc.), Roma who work abroad. As shown by the authors, most Roma belong to the first two categories.

The study also pays particular attention to the traditional activities carried out by a notable share of the working population. These are said to have evolved from iconic practices or crafts like fortune-telling, blacksmithing and healing to niche activities like scrap metal collection, handmade bricks etc.

The appetite for traditional activities is explained by the high percentage of unskilled workers. In this regard, the study emphasizes that 43.6% of the employed Roma state they have no qualification. The percentage is even higher (73.7%) when a closer look is taken at the educational attainment of the interviewees.

Also, findings reiterate the gender gap in labour market participation by stating that most Roma who have never had jobs are women aged fewer than 34. The gap is once again made obvious by the high percentage of women who didn't look for a job during the last year because of family duties unlike men who mainly invoke the general economic background. The latter is held responsible for the failure on the labour market by most interviewees while individual factors like lack of education, ethnic origin or age come second.

The study also provides a snapshot of the efficiency of the employment policies by revealing that only 29% of those looking for a job resort to county / local employment offices whereas most of them go directly to employers or ask for the help of their friends, relatives, acquaintances.

A more recent perspective on the Roma population is provided by a knowledge brief issued by the World Bank in April 2011 (De Laat and Bodewig 2011). The analysis focuses on four countries – Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania and Serbia – known for their ethnic makeups with consistent Roma shares.

The brief pinpoints that the integration of this group into the labour market is extremely important considering the fast pace at which it is growing (in Romania, almost one fifth of the new entrants are Roma) and the proportion of Roma and non-Roma people aged between 0 and 15-29.8% and 12.4% respectively. In other words, the Roma youth enter the market at 2-2.5 times higher rates than the majority.

The analysis sounds a warning by stating that labour market integration continues to be poor despite the programs and strategies touching upon the issue.

In order to argue their statement, the authors resort to four main strands.

First, they state that the Roma are less likely to be working than the non-Roma and illustrate this tendency by pointing to a 13% employment gap in Romania.

Second, the Roma earn less than the non-Roma and the 61% wage gap in Romania is one edifying proof which can be invoked in this regard.

Third, the analysis contradicts the general public perception about the Roma's dislike of work by emphasizing the efforts they make for finding jobs. However, most efforts do not culminate in becoming formally employed even if their willingness to work is clearly outlined by the 84% labour

participation rate² of the Roma men which outnumbers the 75% rate corresponding to their non-Roma counterparts.

Yet, the proportion changes when it comes to the Roma women who participate in the labour market to a lesser extent.

Despite their wish to work, the analysis shows that across the four countries, 39% of the Roma women looking for jobs remain unemployed while 20% of the Roma men having the same goal fail to achieve it.

Another argument which remaps the position of this ethnic group refers to the 12% Roma who receive guaranteed minimum income social assistance, a relatively low percentage if considering their generally low level of income.

The perspective induced by employment is also underpinned by Roma's incomes.

According to the Roma Inclusion Barometer (Bădescu et al. 2007), in October 2006 the average income of the Roma was less than half the one of the non-Roma. During the same month, 43% of the interviewees didn't have any income at all whereas only 19% non-Roma stated the same. The extremely low standard of living also impacted the Roma children of which 11% lived in households with no income compared with 2% non-Roma.

In the rural area, the difference between the Roma and the rest was even higher and was also reflected by the 80% Roma versus 35% non-Roma who used goods produced in their own households.

The low or lack of income also entailed higher debts. The study pinpointed that the indebted Roma outnumbered the non-Roma (38% versus 20%) and established a link between the debts and the incomes. In October 2006 the average ratio between the two variables was found to be higher than 1 for the Roma unlike the non-Roma ratio which stood below 1.

Consequently, not only the number of indebted Roma was higher but also the value of their debts related to their earnings.

1.3.2. Education

The knowledge brief published by the World Bank (De Laat and Bodewig 2011) emphasizes that the public perception of Roma's poor education perfectly matches reality. The analysis shows that, in the four countries addressed, most Roma do not have secondary or higher education and the percentage of those who have completed secondary education is less than 20%. The gap between the Roma and non-Roma is once again striking considering that the latter hold a 75% share at the same chapter.

In Romania, 12% of the Roma take further steps after completing primary education compared with 75% non-Roma. In other words, the share of those who continue their studies is approximately 6 times lower than the majority.

The discrepancy is also confirmed by the 2002 census and recent national researches.

The census reveals that of 408 842 Roma aged 10 and over, 25.6% are illiterate.

The environment has a significant impact on the illiteracy rate. The conclusion can be drawn given that the Roma in the urban area account for 39% of the total while those in the rural area stand at 61%.

The research carried out by ICCV in 2010 also provides a conclusive outline. In brief, it highlights that 25% Roma cannot read or write, 50% have completed primary school and only 33% "ventured" into secondary school.

When getting to the three fundamentals for success in life, the respondents omit education and point to health, work and luck. In other words, education is not seen as a must-have of any individual wishing to achieve a high position in the social hierarchy.

The study also pays particular attention to the correlation between the parents' and respondents'

2 The proportion of the population aged 15 and over that is economically active: all people who supply labor for the production of goods and services during a specified period (according to the International Labour Organization cited on the World Bank web site).

education and concludes that the level of education is more likely to be higher if the interviewee has a proper family background which encourages study and professional competence.

However, despite the major role family plays, the large number of children which is characteristic of the Roma poses a serious barrier to their education. Two major reasons are the scarce financial resources and the shift of parental responsibilities to the elder children who take care of their younger siblings. Moreover, Roma children starts working in their household or in the informal labour market at an early age and do not have time to attend school.

The research carried out by Surdu, Vincze and Wamsiedel (2011) in 2009-2010 digs even further into the Roma's low educational attainment by correlating pre-school education with school dropout rate.

The link established between the two shows that those who go to nursery school or kindergarten are more likely to have higher school graduation rates.

A progressive parallel between the Roma children who attend pre-school education and the national average emphasizes that the participation rate of the former is 12 times lower than the latter at the age of 3, 7 times lower at the age of 4 and 5 times lower at the age of 5, and partially explains why 44% of the children aged between 7 and 11 and 65% of the children aged between 12-16 drop school.

When delving into the main reasons which trigger such impressive rates, the low income tops the list both for the Roma who leave school (42%) and for those who were never enrolled (55.8%).

Other reasons stated by interviewees are the *lack of transport means* (mentioned in the rural area only) or the *uselessness of school* mainly referred to in the urban area.

Contrary to public perception, marriage at an early age is not a major reason for dropping school. Yet, the percentage becomes significant from a gender perspective as all the persons who abandoned school for such reason are girls.

Another chapter of the research touches upon the expectations parents have when enrolling their children. In this regard, an overwhelming majority state that they simply wish their children to learn, while lower shares justify their pro-school attitude by invoking the need to learn a trade or to have a better standard of living.

Even if most parents are in favour of education, the family background and low income often discourage such attempts. The research shows that most children don't even have a table where to study at home and can't benefit from the help of their parents when doing their homework.

The precarious condition is a stigma which is often perceived as a starting point for discrimination. Thus, 38% of the parents state they are not satisfied with the teaching staff and frequently point to their insensitiveness towards the "humiliation and embarrassment" children undergo given their financial background.

When it comes to segregation, almost half of the interviewees say that both Roma and non-Roma children are treated equally while a smaller percentage state the contrary. If drawing a profile of the interviewees in the first half, one discovers that these belong to families where all children attend school unlike the other share that also have dropouts.

Segregation is highly influenced by the environment and the level of education attended. The research suggests that such phenomenon is more likely to arise in the primary school (where 65% of the Roma people learn in segregated classrooms unlike 53% in the secondary school) and in the rural area (where their share amounts to almost 70%).

1.3.3. Healthcare

Another chapter which is closely related to work and education and which paints an equally worrying picture of the Roma population is healthcare.

A brief inventory reveals that the major problems faced by this ethnic group stem from the scarce financial resources which hinder them from going to the doctor in the first place, the lack of ID papers and health insurance, the poor medical infrastructure to which Roma have access given that they usually

live on the outskirts, difficulties in buying the drugs prescribed in the rural areas, the lack of transport means to reach the medical care centres, legal issues concerning their place of residence, discriminatory behaviour and attitudes of the medical staff (Chiriac et al. 2007).

When referring to the health problems per se, the report lays a great emphasis on Roma's diet which is considered to be lacking in both quality and quantity. Thus, if drawing a food consumption ranking, vegetables top the list while dairy and meat products climb down to the lowest step of the hierarchy (Chiriac et al. 2007).

The imbalanced nutrition is also central to the 2009 report – *Health and the Roma community* (Wamsiedel et al. 2009) – which reveals that cereals, pasta and rice account for a consistent share in Roma's everyday meals, unlike fish, eggs or meat.

Both studies emphasize the immediate consequences of such inadequate diet and most frequently mention overweighting and obesity (also determined by insufficient physical activities), avitaminosis, malnutrition, anemia, dystrophy and rickets.

Besides imbalanced nutrition, a considerable share of the Roma population doesn't properly preserve the food and wash the fruits, vegetables etc. or uses products beyond their past expiration date. Such behaviour leads to enterocolitis for many of those who disobey the rules.

On the other hand, tap and drinking water are rather scarce in the Roma communities used to poor quality water and home hygiene. Such weak point is correlated with the occurrence of blood poisoning and infectious diseases.

Aside from the nutrition and hygiene-related problems, the report also points to cardiovascular diseases as one of the adults' most common health problems and to respiratory disorders (throat troubles, cough, cold or flu) in the case of children.

When shifting to the main reasons which generate the health problems mentioned above, consistent shares go to the lack of health education and information. An edifying example is the National Immunization Program which has failed to achieve its goals related to the Roma community mainly because of not providing enough information on the role of vaccination, the period for completing it and the free of charge status of mandatory vaccines. The result was that almost half of the children included in the sample didn't receive all the required vaccines.

The lack of health education, together with the perception originating in the Roma culture, lead to a relatively positive self-evaluation of the health condition. Almost 80% of the respondents state their health is either good or very good and only 5% have a gloomier perspective on their condition described as bad or very bad.

The percentage of those belonging to the positive self-assessment group decreases to 60% in the 2010 research conducted by ICCV but still stands at a considerable level. A 10% gap appears between the Roma women and men mainly because of the large number of children which negatively impacts the former's state of health.

Wamsiedel et al. (2009) explain the tendency to overestimate the state of health by quoting the findings of a report published in Spain according to which "a large percentage of Roma conceive health as the absence of disease, and disease as an incapacitating phenomenon linked to death."

There is a huge cleavage between this perception and the approach of the World Health Organization – "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Consequently, self-assessment cannot be considered a yardstick when touching upon this issue and one edifying example is the fact that despite the good and very good health of the majority, many people had disabilities, chronic diseases, cavities, were overweight or obese.

Another strand which gives a clue to the condition of the Roma is their preoccupation with health which has been inferred, among others, on the basis of drug use and frequency of visits to the doctor and dentist.

The research (Wamsiedel et al. 2009) shows that self-medication is widely spread among Roma and tends to increase with age. From a gender perspective, women are found to use drugs without

prescription to a higher extent (75%) than men (50%).

When touching upon the frequency of visits to medical care centers, most interviewees claim they make at least one visit to the doctor a year and almost half state they have never been to the dentist. Consequently, dental care is not a priority especially for those Roma living on the outskirts and having an overall bad health.

1.3.4. Housing

If considering the previous chapters which stressed the high unemployment or informal employment, lack of education and poor health of the Roma, housing becomes highly predictable.

A relevant introduction to its analysis is provided by the ICCV research (2010) which mentions living on the outskirts, poor infrastructure, limited access to utilities, ghettos and even landfill as key words in describing Roma's dwellings.

Furthermore, a comprehensive analysis which can be considered a yardstick when touching upon the houses inhabited by this ethnic group is the 2007 Roma Inclusion Barometer (Bădescu et al. 2007).

The research provides a two-fold perspective as it analyzes both the area where Roma live and their access to different services, on the one hand, and the house itself, access to utilities, legal status, household goods owned, on the other.

Before delving into these two perspectives, an important introductory note is made on Roma's satisfaction with the locality, area and residence they inhabit. According to the research findings, the Roma tend to be less satisfied than the non-Roma when assessing the three variables. The lower satisfaction mainly derives from evaluating the area they live in and their dwelling while higher contentment is related to the locality. Still, answers must be correlated with the interviewees' expectations and perceptions of optimal housing which may significantly differ from those of the non-Roma.

In order to remove any doubts, the authors begin by taking a snapshot of the areas they usually inhabit. Thus, the Roma are found especially on the outskirts of cities or villages unlike the non-Roma who live less in such areas. However, the Roma residing in the urban areas are more likely to live in the center than those in the rural area. The explanation rests on the high number of old buildings (dated approximately 1886) in the town centre which were rented by the state.

The mainly peripheral and isolated position gives rise to a major issue – access to services. And one of the first indicators reflective of this drawback are the roads labelled as “poor or extremely poor” by more than 60% of the Roma unlike roughly 40% of the non-Roma who state the same.

Higher figures can be also noticed when referring to the means of transport and services available in the community. Thus, most Roma negatively assess the former by stating these do not exist or are in a poor working condition and point to the lack of shops, schools or kindergartens in their areas.

The inner circle of the analysis begins with the dwellings Roma inhabit. These are described as less resistant than those of the non-Roma as only 55% of the Roma live in houses made of stone, brick etc. compared to 90% of the rest. The high vulnerability of the dwellings is also characteristic of the flats inhabited by this ethnic group who have low comfort levels.

To conclude with, even if most rural and urban Roma live in houses, the feature which makes the difference is the quality of dwellings which is much poorer than the one corresponding to the rest of the population.

The discrepancy becomes all the more worrying when taking a look at the percentage held by the Roma people living in shanties or abandoned buildings (3% in the rural area and 8% in the urban area). The number of non-Roma people having similar housing is statistically irrelevant and, therefore, entails that improvised dwellings made of scrap materials are almost a prerequisite of the Roma.

Utilities are another chapter which widens the gap between the Roma and the non-Roma analyzed. Even if the cleavage is less visible in the rural area, the urban area makes it prominent due to the 70% of the Roma households which are not connected to water, gas and sewerage systems, unlike other similar

households which amount to 20%. The lack of electricity tops the list given the 13% of the Roma who don't have such connection and adds to the lack of heating or heating based on waste materials which is characteristic of 12% of the Roma households.

Overcrowding is also referred to as one of the major issues considering that the average number of Roma persons per room is more than double the non-Roma average. The area per person is closely related and is found to be much lower in the Roma households (8 versus 19.5 square meters per person for the Roma and non-Roma, respectively).

However, one of the most serious issues is the lack of legal documents certifying ownership or rental. According to the survey, only 66% of the Roma have contracts for their dwellings whereas the percentage of non-Roma is 82.

The remaining 34% either do not have a valid contract or do not have any contract at all.

Of those having a contract, 67% own the place, 22% live in a house owned by their parents, 2% are tenants in a house owned by a company or a person, while 7% are tenants in a state-owned house. The last mentioned status applies almost exclusively to the Roma, if we consider the irrelevant percentage of non-Roma undergoing a similar situation.

In a nutshell, most Roma live in the rural areas, on the outskirts and have poor access to services given the inappropriate infrastructure. When shifting to the dwellings per se, these are made of non-resistant materials or even waste materials, are not in line with non-Roma dwellings in terms of connection to utilities, durable household goods and area per person. As regards the legal documents proving ownership or rental, the Roma rank low as a considerable share don't have valid contracts or any contracts at all.

Despite all these, the Roma are moderately content with the localities, areas and dwellings they inhabit (even if less content than the non-Roma) but such positive assessment originates in considerably different cultural background and expectations.

1.3.5. Conclusions

If making a brief review of the statistical information presented in this chapter, the Roma appear to be one of the most vulnerable groups given the significant share they hold in the total population as well as their high growth and poverty rates.

Even if Romania's ethnic makeup owes its diversity to different groups, no group deviates more from the majority axis than the Roma. Such deviation can be noticed when analyzing the four main fields which give a clue to the Roma's standard of living – employment, housing, health and education.

If merging all the findings, the major traits in the Roma's portrait are: high unemployment and informal employment, lack of skills and, subsequently, an impressive gap between the current labour demand and supply, low and occasional incomes, low educational attainment, non-resistant houses built in isolated areas with poor or no access to utilities and community services, poor health condition often overestimated because of lacking basic health education.

If adding the lack of ID papers and property deeds for the lands or houses Roma use, the perspective becomes even gloomier and highly justifies a thorough analysis of these topics within the frame of the national laws and policies reviewed in the next chapter.

2. LAWS AND PUBLIC POLICIES IMPACTING THE ROMA IN ROMANIA

2.1. International and European laws and public policies

Given its amplitude, role and length in time, the document chosen for opening the international suite is the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 and signed by Romania in 1955.

The document emphasizes *the freedom and equality in dignity and rights of all human beings* from its very first article and establishes that all the rights and freedoms mentioned in the Declaration apply to everyone “without distinction of any kind such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other states” (Article 2).

The chronological trip on the realm of international policies and laws leads to the next milestone – the **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination** which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1965 and was accessed by Romania in 1970. According to this document, all states parties condemn racial discrimination defined as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin” and commit to pursue a policy of eliminating it and to take measures for ensuring “the adequate development and protection of certain racial groups or individuals belonging to them for the purpose of guaranteeing them the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms” (Article 2).

On 21 March 2003, Romania recognized the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to receive complaints from persons claiming that their rights stipulated in the Convention were infringed and highlighted that according to domestic law, the competent body to receive and examine communications and complaints in Romania was the National Council for Combating Discrimination.

The most comprehensive multilateral treaty addressing minority rights is **The Framework Convention for the Protection of the National Minorities**, adopted under the auspices of the Council of Europe in 1995 and signed and ratified by Romania during the same year.

According to Article 1, the Convention is “an integral part of the international protection of human rights” and, therefore, must be supported with other existing human rights instruments.

The document defines the fundamental principles of non-discrimination and equality and emphasizes that its aim – the protection of the national minorities – is to be achieved not only by the states’ mere abstention from discrimination but also by their affirmative action (The Human Rights Project 2007).

Among the most important courses of action on which signatory states agree, one could mention: helping minorities to preserve and develop their culture and identity, fostering tolerance, mutual respect and understanding, recognizing the right to use a minority language in private and in public, recognizing the rights of minorities to set up and manage their own educational establishments and learn their own language etc. (The Human Rights Project 2007).

When shifting to the 21st century, one of the first notable documents to be mentioned is the **European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights** signed and proclaimed in Nice on 7 December 2000 (Charter of Fundamental Rights).

The Charter represents a premiere due to encompassing the civil, political, economic and social rights of the European citizens in a single document comprising of six chapters: *dignity, freedoms, equality, solidarity, citizens’ rights, justice*.

Non-discrimination is the centerpiece of *Article 21* which states that “Any discrimination based on any ground such as...race, colour, ethnic or social origin...membership of a national minority...shall be prohibited” (Charter of Fundamental Rights).

Another international commitment that Romania made and that exclusively addresses the Roma issues is the **Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015**, an idea which originated in the regional conference

“Roma in an Expanding Europe: Challenges for the Future,” held in Budapest in 2003.

In 2005, the Declaration of the Decade was signed by eight states, all having significant Roma communities that underwent severe social and economic problems.

The Decade was considered an unprecedented effort made by the European countries to enhance the status and social inclusion of the Roma. However, this enhancement was not supposed to occur without the Roma’s participation which is clearly highlighted by the vision and values statement: “*Nothing about us without us*: Roma participation will make or break the Decade. Roma representatives and civil society organizations are involved in every stage of the Decade. Roma shaped and defined the vision from the very outset. Roma civil society groups and experts identified policy priorities and played a key role in defining Decade goals and targets. Roma participation will be central to regular oversight and monitoring of the process over the next ten years.” (Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015).

The core areas the Decade addresses are: *education, employment, health and housing*. All the signatory countries established their goals and indicators for these four priority areas and developed action plans in order to touch upon them.

In Romania which held the Decade presidency between July 1, 2005, and June 30, 2006, the action plan proposed is still being publicly debated according to Government Decision No. 755/2005, even if the other member countries have already passed to its revision (Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015).

In broad lines, the goals established for each priority area of the Decade are: **education** – increasing the participation of the Roma children in pre-school education, increasing the participation of the Roma children and youth in the compulsory education (grades 1-10) and upper secondary education (grades 11-12), increasing the participation of the Roma in higher education, developing an inclusive educational climate, valuing and preserving the Roma cultural heritage; **employment** – increasing the number of Roma who are officially employed or have their own businesses; **healthcare** – strengthening the role of the national and local public authorities in the development and implementation of public healthcare programs which meet community specific needs, promoting intercultural education in the national healthcare system, increasing the Roma’s access to public healthcare services by including them into the healthcare insurance system (particular focus is set on women and children); **housing** – improving housing conditions for disadvantaged Roma families (Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015).

Five years after signing the Declaration of the Decade, Romania became part of the **Europe 2020 strategy** aimed at converting the EU into “a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy.”

The strategy addresses five core fields – employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate, energy – which set the ground for the national targets each member state had to establish.

In Romania, the Europe 2020 targets are: *employment; research, development and innovation; reducing greenhouse gas emissions; renewable energy sources; energy efficiency; education; social inclusion* (Europe 2020).

The key document which builds upon these targets is the *National Reform Programme 2011-2013* that particularly mentions the Roma ethnic group at the *Education and Social inclusion and Poverty reduction* chapters.

The former relates to the Roma youth within the frame of reducing the early school leaving rate. Among the measures taken for spurring school attendance, the programme invokes “Increasing participation to education for Roma children and youth by teaching Romany language and Roma history and traditions at all levels, introducing a chapter on Roma history in the curriculum..., allocating special places for admission of Roma in high-schools and higher education, creating school inspector positions for Roma children etc.”

The document also mentions the PHARE programmes “Access to education for disadvantaged groups.” implemented between 2001 and 2010 in order to “support the concepts of inclusive education, combating discrimination and segregation.”

In the field of social inclusion, Romania’s target consists of reducing by 580 000 the number of people

at risk of poverty and social exclusion. At this chapter, the Roma are mentioned by two key actions: *Reform of the social assistance system* and *Active social inclusion*.

Among others, the first mentioned revolves around the need to increase the quality of life for persons belonging to vulnerable groups. The document quotes the *Romanian Government Strategy on Roma Inclusion 2011-2020* which aims to enhance the socio-economic inclusion of the Roma by putting specific measures on the agenda of central and local public authorities.

Moreover, in order to prevent the school dropout among children belonging to disadvantaged groups, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection together with the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport have developed a project which is said to result in “setting up 32 school training centers; financial support granted to 7 680 children aged between 6 and 16 who belong to disadvantaged communities or Roma ethnics to be sent to kindergarten and / or to school.”

The *Active social inclusion* key action addresses the Roma in the context of the programmes aimed at facilitating the access to and participation in the labour market for the persons belonging to vulnerable groups.

On the other hand, their social (re)integration is reiterated by the flagship initiative “The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: European framework for social and territorial cohesion.” The platform lays emphasis on citizens’ involvement in combating poverty and states that it is the very lack of active participation which tops the major drawbacks of the Romanian system (National Reform Programme 2011-2013).

2.2. National laws and public policies

The Romanian legislative framework on national minorities has been long considered an example by many neighbour countries.

The main pillar responsible for establishing the much hailed rule of law is the **Constitution of Romania** which dates back to 1991 and was revised in 2003.

The titles that specifically deal with national minorities are: *Title I – General Principles*, *Title II – Fundamental right and freedoms*, *Title III – Public authorities*.

The ground is laid by Article 4 which states that “Romania is the common and indivisible homeland of all its citizens, *without any discrimination on account of race, nationality, ethnic origin*, language, religion, sex, opinion, political adherence, property or social origin.”

Furthermore, Article 6 points to the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity whose preservation, development and expression are guaranteed and recognized by the Romanian state.

When touching upon the fundamental rights, freedoms and duties, the Constitution clearly states that “all citizens are equal before the law and public authorities, without any privilege or discrimination” (Article 16).

The right to education (Article 32) particularly focuses on national minorities who are guaranteed the right to learn their mother tongue as well as to be educated in their language.

The third title *Public authorities* establishes that a national minority (which can be represented by one organization only) has the right to one Deputy seat if it fails to get the number of votes necessary for representation in Parliament (Article 62). The same title which regulates the relationship between citizens and public authorities gives national minorities the right to use their language before the courts of law (article 128).

The Constitutional provisions which outline the equality of citizens before the law and public authorities gave rise to several organic laws which pay special attention to the use of mother tongue by national minorities.

One edifying example is the **Local Public Administration Law No. 215/2001** which sets several rights starting from a minimum 20% share held by national minorities in the total number of inhabitants from an administrative-territorial unit.

The rights to which national minorities are entitled if holding a share above the minimum threshold are: the right to be informed in their language about the agenda of the Local Council and Local County meetings; the right to be informed in their language about the decisions taken by the local public administration (LPA); the right to use their language when communicating with LPA representatives and to receive answers in both Romanian and their language (in this regard, the Public Relations Departments must have employees who speak the language of the respective minorities); the right to have public announcements and the name of the localities and public institutions translated into their language and displayed as such.

A different share is established for the local councils whose representatives belong to national minorities. Namely, if at least one third of the total numbers of councillors belong to a national minority, their language can be used during the meetings on condition that the mayor ensures the translation into Romanian.

The Local Public Administration Law was later followed by the Government Decision no. 1206/2001 *on approving the application of the provisions concerning the right of citizens belonging to national minorities to use their mother tongue in local administration*.

The right to preserve develop and express cultural and ethnic identity, guaranteed by the Romanian Constitution, led to the **Government Decision No. 834/2003 on the establishment of the National Centre for Roma Culture**, a public institution with legal personality, subordinated to the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

The main objectives of the Centre are emphasized by *Law No. 430/2001 concerning the Strategy for Improving the Condition of the Roma* and comprise of setting up a theatre, a Roma museum and a musical and choreographic ensemble as well as of preserving the traditions and crafts of the Roma.

In order to catch a glimpse of the Centre's activity, one can consider its major contribution to the program "Sibiu – European Capital of Culture" where more than 100 artists (painters, craftsmen, dancers etc.) covered a significant part of the 2004-2008 agenda (Romani Kher).

Government Decision No. 881/1998 additionally fuels the development and expression of cultural identity by establishing the National Minorities Day on 18 December as a special occasion on which cultural activities, round tables and other similar actions take place.

Besides the legislation which sets the general framework for national minority rights, an important module comprises of the legislation on discrimination.

At this chapter, the landmark is considered the **Government Ordinance No. 137/2000 on preventing and punishing all forms of discrimination** (amended by Law 324/2006, Law 48/2002, Government Ordinance No. 77/2003) which defines discrimination as "any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, social category, belief, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, non-contagious chronic disease, HIV infection, belonging to a disadvantaged category, and any other criterion that has as purpose or effect the restriction, removal of recognition, use or exercise, on an equal footing, of the human rights and fundamental freedoms or rights recognized by law, in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life."

The following chapter "Special provisions" delves into the contraventions concerning: economic activity, employment and profession; access to public administrative, legal and health services; access to education; freedom of movement; the right to freedom of choice of residence and access to public places; the right to personal dignity.

The sixth section of the Ordinance plays a crucial role as it sets the state authority in the field of discrimination – the National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD). The Council is independent, reports to the Parliament and is responsible for applying the anti-discrimination domestic laws and international documents to which Romania is a party.

Article 19 provides an outline of the Council's responsibilities which mainly consist of preventing, mediating, investigating, ascertaining, sanctioning and monitoring discriminatory actions as well as of providing specialized assistance to the victims.

Despite the above legal provisions, CNCD was effectively established in August 2002. Its functions were set out by several Government Decisions (1194/2001, 1514/2002, 1279/2003) and consist of: proposing certain actions for the protection of disadvantaged persons and groups, proposing draft legal regulations, co-operating with the relevant public authorities, receiving petitions and complaints regarding violations of the legal provisions, co-operating with NGOs active in the field of human rights protection, ascertaining and sanctioning the contraventions mentioned by Government Ordinance No. 137/2000, carrying out programmes and national campaigns in order to fulfil its tasks etc. (Council of Europe, National Council for Combating Discrimination Romania).

According to the 2006 revision of the Ordinance No. 137/2000, an individual or legal entity can bring forward a case of discrimination within one year after the discriminatory action occurs. CNCD has the obligation to establish whether anti-discrimination laws were breached within 90 days. The Council can issue a fine or a warning. If the victim of the discriminatory action is an individual, fines range from 400 to 4000 lei. If the victim is a group of people or a community, fines range from 600 to 8000 lei (Law No. 324/2006).

The CNCD is also referred to by Law No. 612/2002 which designates it as “the competent body to receive and consider complaints (communications) in Romania,” in accordance with the International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

The first public policy which addressed the Roma in Romania was the **Government Strategy for Improving the Condition of the Roma 2001-2010**.

The strategy was approved by Government Decision No. 430/2001 and was the result of a close cooperation between the Government and Roma NGOs assisted by the EU institutions.

The strategy was drawn up in order to meet the Copenhagen criteria for joining the EU. The *2001 Regular Report on Romania's Progress towards Accession* pinpointed that the strategy was one of the major initiatives which touched upon the problems faced by the Roma ethnic group and described it as “a comprehensive and high quality document.”

The strategy was especially praised for its decentralized nature and for the great emphasis on the participation of the Roma in the implementation process. In this regard, each county had to establish an office including 3-4 experts of which one had to be Roma. Besides the County Offices, other organizational structures set up within the frame of the strategy were: the National Agency for Roma (established by Government Decision No. 78/2004 as a specialized body of central public administration, with legal personality; it is subordinated to the Government and coordinated by the General Secretariat of the Government), the Joint Committee of Implementation and Monitoring (JCIM) which acted as a coordinating mechanism, Ministerial Commissions for Roma responsible for implementing those strategy modules which corresponded to their fields of activity (Focus Consultancy Ltd. 2005).

The National Agency for Roma (ANR) proved its sustainability by drawing up the draft of the **Government Strategy for the Inclusion of the Romanian Citizens belonging to the Roma Minority**.

The new document builds upon the conclusions drawn by the 2001-2010 strategy assessment report, namely on the need to take further action in the education field (education is seen as the main pillar capable of driving the change of mentalities) as well as on the labour market (the lack/low level of income is one of the most severe problems faced by the Roma). Therefore, the objectives of the 2011-2020 strategy are: increasing the education level of the Roma, increasing the employment rate, reducing poverty, social exclusion and discrimination.

The six sectorial fields representing the core of the strategy are: education, employment, healthcare, housing and small-scale infrastructure, culture, social infrastructure.

According to the information on ANR's web site, the project is still being debated.

Another document which proves to be a landmark if considering discrimination and poverty as main coordinates of the Roma condition is the **National Plan for Combating Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion 2002-2012 (PNAinc)**.

The plan originated in the templates established by the European Council in 2000 and was adopted by Government Decision No. 829/2002. The document focuses on the Roma community in Chapter 14 which sets eight strategic objectives: providing the Roma with identity papers, ensuring access to medical care, increasing the participation of the Roma in compulsory and upper secondary education, fostering the employment of the Roma with a special focus on youth, solving the issues related to houses or lands for which the Roma don't have property deeds, combating any discrimination against the Roma and promoting a supportive collective attitude, improving the self-esteem and the public image of the Roma community.

PNAinc is coordinated by the Committee against Poverty and for Promoting Social Inclusion (CASPIIS) while the National Agency for Roma is responsible for implementing and coordinating the measures in the Plan (Decade Watch Romania Report 2010: Mid Term Evaluation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2010)).

Another touchstone in the field of Roma policies is the **Joint Inclusion Memorandum**. Even if the document dates back to 2005, it has surely set the ball rolling for the programmatic documents which followed.

JIM was drawn up by the Government of Romania and the European Commission in accordance with the provisions of the Accession Partnership. Its overall goal was to prepare Romania for the Social Open Method of Coordination (OMC) upon accession (The Research Institute for Quality of Life 2010).

In brief, JIM took a snapshot of the social problems faced by the Roma community (employment, poverty, healthcare, education, and housing) and identified several priority areas, thus establishing the coordinates of the pre-and post-accession social inclusion policies.

The EU membership led to Romania's full participation in the OMC thus compelling it to submit national strategic reports on social inclusion and protection.

The two reports submitted by Romania for 2006-2008 and 2008-2010 were analyzed by the European Commission and the Council of the National Reports on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion (The Research Institute for Quality of Life 2010).

Of particular concern were the comments made on objective 3 – *Improving the condition of the Roma* and the measures to be taken for achieving it. More precisely, the 2009 joint report states that: "...there is certain confusion between the objectives and the measures established. A positive element is the commitment to set up a system for monitoring and assessing the political programs for the Roma ...However the lack of measurable goals continues to be a weak point" (Romania – Joint report on social protection and inclusion – 2009). In an overall assessment of objective 3, the authors of the report conclude: "both targets and measures appear realistic and correspond to the needs, however, in the absence of any quantifiable objectives, there is a great risk for them to remain mere declarations of good will at a rather general level that cannot be adequately subjected to assessment" (The Research Institute for Quality of Life 2010).

If taking further steps in the chronological review of the Roma public policies in Romania, two more documents come into the spotlight: the **National Development Plan 2007-2013** and the **National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013**.

The former provides a comprehensive analysis of the current situation of disadvantaged groups on the labour market and delves into the problems of the Roma population with a special emphasis on employment and education.

The Roma are once again mentioned by the National Development Priority No. 4 – "HR Development, promoting employment and social inclusion and strengthening the administrative capacity" which originates in the following rationale: "Insufficient integration of the Roma population and of other vulnerable groups in education on the formal labour market."

The National Strategic Framework 2007-2013 derives from the priority areas established by the National Development Plan and is considered to be a tool which sets out the investment priorities for the regional and sectorial programmes to be supported by the EU.

The *Human Capital* chapter tackles Roma issues like poor education facilities, lack of skills, lack of housing and identity cards, poor participation in the formal economy etc. and puts the Roma on a list of social groups at risk of social marginalization.

The document reiterates their belonging to vulnerable groups at point 4.5 – Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resources – which is said to promote and develop all the social economy forms as a means to ensure social inclusion.

The general framework of public policies for Roma is provided by the **2009-2012 Government Program** which dedicates an important share of its objectives and measures to this ethnic group.

Chapter 5 – Education addresses issues such as: equal access to education, providing the necessary conditions for learning both Romanian and the minorities' language, promoting multiculturalism while *Chapter 6 – Healthcare* promises to increase the quality of the healthcare system through Roma sanitary mediators and community assistants.

Chapter 9 – Family, child protection and equal opportunities – specifically mentions the Roma community by setting a course of action which aims to increase the efficiency of the institutional structures and human resources in charge of solving the Roma issues and update the Government strategy in this regard.

Chapter 20 – Public order and security – stipulates that the national and local police will have employees who speak the languages of national minorities (at a local level, this measure applies to those administrative-territorial units where national minorities hold a significant share).

As stated by *Chapter 21 – Foreign Policy*, the Government commits to protect the rights of Romania's national minorities in neighbour countries, while according to *Chapter 22 – Culture and national heritage*, it commits to promote their culture.

Chapter 24 – European Affairs takes the initiative even further by advocating for a European Roma inclusion strategy aimed at removing their "second-hand citizens" status as well as a European agency that can be hosted by Romania.

Chapter 25 – Policies in the field of inter-ethnic relations explicitly mentions the Roma community as well as the need to improve its condition and reduce the gap between this ethnic group and the overall society.

The same chapter states that Roma-related issues are a distinct field which implies both domestic efforts and correlation with the European framework. In view of a substantial improvement, the national strategy and corresponding programs should: consolidate the local structures in charge of implementing the national strategy, establish a viable partnership between public administration and Roma communities, solve the ownership issues related to the houses and lands of the Roma, and increase the efficiency of those measures touching upon sectorial issues.

When delving into the public policies addressing the Roma, notable attention should be also paid to the documents corresponding to the four priority fields: employment, healthcare, education and housing.

In the employment field, the background is set by the *National Employment Plan* (which was last updated for 2006-2008), the *National Employment Strategy 2005-2010* and the *Short and Medium Term Strategy for Professional Training 2005-2010* (The Research Institute for Quality of Life 2010).

Despite the guiding lines established, these documents haven't been brought up to date.

However, the need to insert the Roma into the labour market, highlighted by the National Employment Plan is up-to-date and continues to fuel significant parts of the employment programmes developed by the National Agency for Employment.

The healthcare sectorial policies paint an even less rosy picture. The most recent document is the **Strategic Plan of the Ministry for Public Health 2008-2010** which mainly refers to the extension of the health mediators' network established by JIM in 2005 (The Research Institute of Quality of Life 2010).

Among the most important measures to be taken, the plan suggests: hiring 50 Roma health mediators per year, training community assistants and mediators in public healthcare and health education, drawing

up the necessary information materials, developing a system of evaluation indicators, evaluating, monitoring and extending the project (The Research Institute of Quality of Life 2010).

The Government Ordinance No.162/2008 regarding the transfer of responsibilities and competences from the Ministry of Public Health to the local public administration has resulted in the decentralization of the services provided by the Roma mediators.

Still, according to the study *Legal and equal on the labour market for the Roma communities* (The Research Institute for Quality of Life 2010), the 2009 and 2010 programmes don't mention the Roma mediators unlike the 2008 programmes which included specific targets and indicators for evaluating their achievement. The main reason which is believed to have triggered such omission is the financial crisis.

In the education field, the document which sets the frame for Roma people is the **Strategic Plan 2007-2009, drawn up by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport (MECTS)**.

The plan aims at ensuring the necessary conditions for the education of national minorities, in general, but also includes explicit measures to be taken for improving the Roma children's access to education. Among these, the most significant are: increasing the share of Roma children in preschool education for encouraging their social and educational development; preventing and reducing the dropout rate, providing new opportunities for those who haven't attended compulsory school, setting up a Roma inspector position in each county; training and hiring school mediators; allocating special places for the admission of the Roma youth to high schools and schools of arts and crafts.

The Roma children are also given as an example when touching upon the disadvantaged groups whose access to pre-school education should be top priority.

The guiding lines set by the 2007-2009 Plan haven't been brought up to date. However, the 2009-2012 Government Program includes structural reforms such as the decentralization of the education system which also impact the Roma. Additionally, MECS continues to carry out social programs such as the one providing school supplies for children whose families have low income but these do not target Roma students in an explicit manner (The Research Institute for Quality of Life 2010).

The housing field revolves around **Law No. 114/1996 (the Housing Law)** which includes the Program for Building Social Houses, implemented by the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism. The program targets those persons who can't afford to buy or rent a house given their low level of income (The Research Institute for Quality of Life 2010).

As stated by the above mentioned Law, the local councils distribute the social houses considering the recommendations made by the social committees. The Program addresses those families and persons having a net average monthly income below the average net monthly salary in Romania. The rent can't exceed 10% of the net monthly income per family. The houses can't be sold and may consist of new or renovated buildings (The Research Institute for Quality of Life 2010).

Another reference point is the **Pilot Programme – Social Housing for Roma Communities** – approved by Government Decision No. 1237/2008. The initiative emerged as an experiment tailored to the Government Strategy for Improving the Condition of the Roma and aimed to build no more than 300 social houses for the Roma families having low income (**The Roma Civic Alliance of Romania** 2010).

However, the Mid Term Evaluation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion emphasizes two major drawbacks of the programme. On the one hand, it emphasizes that the criteria for selecting the beneficiaries are not clearly stated and, on the other hand, it shows that the project implementation ignores the recommendations made by Roma organizations which stress the need to involve the Roma in the building process.

2.3. Conclusions and recommendations

The trajectory followed by the public policies for the Roma in Romania resembles to a high degree an open-down parabola whose vertex is represented by the EU accession.

The 2001 Accession Partnership and the need to comply with the Copenhagen criteria were the two drivers which led to opening a new chapter that looked at the Roma community from a brand new angle. This fresh perspective resulted in the Government Strategy for Improving the Condition of the Roma and, afterwards, in the Joint Inclusion Memorandum (The Research Institute for Quality of Life 2010).

However, once the vertex reached, the laudable pre-accession efforts began to lose intensity.

One of the reasons was the fact that the EU membership resulted in myriad programmes addressing the Roma. These programmes were not necessarily correlated and included measures which were inappropriately or never put into practice.

A second factor responsible for the decreasing curve was the world economic crisis which public policies failed to touch upon. Many strategies hailed for their objectives and suggested courses of action were not brought up to date and lost their vigour in the new financial context. The perspective becomes all the more worrying as those categories facing a high poverty risk before the crisis are prone to lead the way during the economic downturn also (The Research Institute for Quality of Life 2010).

The third factor which had an overwhelming contribution to the curve's changing direction was the lack of a solid monitoring and evaluation framework based on measurable indicators. As the 2009 Joint Report of the European Commission and the Council of the National Reports emphasizes, the thin line between objectives and measures can often lead to mistaking one category for the other. Additionally, many objectives are too broad, not time bound and difficult to measure (The Research Institute for Quality of Life 2010).

The factor which closes the quartet is the poor cooperation between different political levels, on the one hand, and between public authorities and civil society, on the other. According to the Mid Term Evaluation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion (**The Roma Civic Alliance of Romania** 2010), Romania uses a top-to-bottom approach which doesn't always correspond to local realities given the severe lack of dialogue between the parties involved.

The high impact of the above factors can be spotted in every major field addressed by the public policies for Roma.

As poverty is among the coordinates that best describe the condition of this ethnic group, the chapter which tops the failure list is *employment*.

According to the representatives of the national and county agencies for employment, interviewed for the study "Legal and equal on the labour market for the Roma communities" (The Research Institute for Quality of Life 2010), the measures for integrating the Roma into the labour market are not efficient.

First of all, the Roma are not motivated to shift from informal to formal employment given the lower income that the latter would bring.

Second, the lack of identity papers turns formal employment into an impossible dream while the poor education makes the Roma non-eligible for qualification programmes.

Third, there is a major gap between the labour demand and the requirements employers have, on the one hand, and the Roma's offer, on the other. It is this very gap that the job fairs or employment caravans, organized by the national and local agencies, fail to bridge. Add to all these lack of information or time which applies especially to those who are single providers for their families and you will get a complete perspective on the reasons which trigger the debacle.

The decentralization process and the uncorrelated public policies also take their toll in the *healthcare* field. An example is the transfer of the health mediators to the local public authorities completely unprepared for the wind of change. The Mid Term Evaluation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion (**The Roma Civic Alliance of Romania** 2010) emphasizes that there were local authorities who didn't hire

the mediators or, if they did, a significant change occurred in their role and responsibilities. The picture is once again completed by the lack of identity papers, a prerequisite for having access to medical care, and by the stereotypes and prejudices the medical staff has against the Roma.

Housing doesn't pay a fairly rosy picture either given the weaknesses of the current programs, the limited institutional capacity of the National Agency for Roma, the lack of cooperation between the Government and civil society or the lack of property titles for the lands and houses Roma live in (**The Roma Civic Alliance of Romania** 2010).

Education adds to the list the segregation of Roma children (the Order of the MECTS 1540/2007 on prohibiting school segregation of Roma children and approving the methodology for the prevention and elimination of school segregation of Roma children is not properly disseminated, applied or monitored and doesn't specify the sanctions applied to those school principals who fail to comply with its provisions) and the poor training of the teaching staff on Roma culture (**The Roma Civic Alliance of Romania** 2010).

After taking a snapshot of the major issues faced by the Roma, a set of basic recommendations naturally follows.

The first recommendation refers to the evaluation of the already implemented strategies and programmes. An honest and solid diagnosis of their strengths, weaknesses and outcomes can be extremely useful as a ground for future policies (The Research Institute for Quality of Life 2010).

Secondly, strategies should be brought up to date in order to address the Roma issues in the new context of the world financial crisis. Vulnerable groups are the most impacted by the scarce financial resources and therefore must be paid particular attention (The Research Institute for Quality of Life 2010).

Third, there is a prominent need for an integrated approach to Roma policies. In order to achieve such goal, any overlaps or contradictions should be removed and the cooperation between different political levels as well as the one between central / local authorities and civil society should be strengthened. The Decade Watch Report (**The Roma Civic Alliance of Romania** 2010) invokes several successful examples of EU countries which started from the bottom in order to reach the top. In other words, prior to implementing large-scale programs, the Government began with pilot programs applied on a local level with the active support and input of project beneficiaries and civil society. Consequently, in order for the national programs to meet the real needs of the Roma community, cooperation with NGOs and pre-testing of the suggested courses of action could be extremely useful.

Fourth, the employment field should be differently approached. In order to encourage the Roma to take part in the training and re-training programmes, a certain subsidy / allowance should be paid in order to compensate for the income they would have gained if working instead of attending the course. Subsidies should be also used to encourage employers to hire Roma and should be coupled with intensive information campaigns (The Research Institute for Quality of Life 2010).

Moreover, the assessment reports of the national and county employment agencies shouldn't focus only on figures (how many Roma were employed, how many fields were addressed etc.), but also on the reasons which triggered the nonaccomplishment. Additionally, projects which have as an overall goal the insertion into the labour market shouldn't settle for the training and re-training courses but should also take the trainees to the next step: meeting the entrepreneurs and finding jobs.

Fifth, there are two issues which pose serious barriers to any strategy or program devised for the Roma – the lack of ID papers and property titles. These are the basic bricks upon which public policies build and, therefore, should be addressed by special programs (**The Roma Civic Alliance of Romania** 2010).

Sixth, particular attention should be paid to the staff that interacts with Roma communities on a regular basis. The medical and teaching staff frequently fails to act according to the national public policies because of the stereotypes and prejudices they hold about this ethnic group. Consequently, there is an impetuous need for trainings which can help the staff in the healthcare and education system understand and grow accustomed to the Roma culture (**The Roma Civic Alliance of Romania** 2010).

Last but not least, an extremely important recommendation on which the success of all the others depends is the setting up of a rigorous monitoring and evaluation framework based on measurable indicators. The practice of elaborating public policies becomes useless if “the moment of truth” never comes, namely the moment when the outcomes are measured and compared with the objectives proposed. Many of the public policies which have been devised so far seem to be more preoccupied with the means than with the ends, even though red-carpet treatment should be given to both.

3. STEREOTYPES, PREJUDICES AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE ROMA IN ROMANIA

“For the real environment is altogether too big, too complex, and too fleeting for direct acquaintance. We are not equipped to deal with so much subtlety, so much variety, so many permutations and combinations. And although we have to act in that environment, we have to reconstruct it on a simpler model before we can manage with it. To traverse the world men must have maps of the world.” (Lippmann [1922] 1997)

3.1. How Romanian language relates to the Roma

Very often, the maps in Lippmann’s description take the shape of *stereotypes* which according to the Cambridge Dictionary consist of fixed ideas “that people have about what someone or something is like, especially ideas that are wrong.” Stereotypes can easily lead to the next level – *prejudices* – “unfair and unreasonable opinions or feelings, especially when formed without enough thought or knowledge” which, in turn, can culminate in *discrimination* – “treating a person or particular group of people differently, especially in a worse way from the way in which you treat other people, because of their skin colour, religion, sex etc.”

In other words, stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination are the cognitive, affective and behavioural facets of bias.

When analyzing the cognitive pattern applied to the Roma in Romania, the first landmark can be considered the definition of the word *țigăn* (Gypsy) in the Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language – DEX (the second edition, 2009): “1. Person who is a part of a population originating in India, is spread to almost all European countries and still has a semi-nomadic life style in some areas. 2. Epithet given to a brunette person. 3. Epithet is given to a person with bad manners.”

In September 2011, a group of 16 organizations lobbied for the change of this definition into one that would not fuel existent stereotypes and prejudices. The main adjustment referred to mentioning the pejorative sense of the word *țigăn* which discriminated against the Roma community and was used as an erroneous alternative to the politically correct noun *Roma*. Moreover, the petition suggested that the pejorative nuance should be also highlighted when the word was used as an epithet for a bad-mannered person.

Pursuant to the campaign, the Romanian Academy announced to make all the necessary changes in the next edition of the DEX (2014).

3.2. National and European surveys and reports on discrimination against the Roma

As shown in the introduction of this chapter, stereotypes and prejudices are the cognitive and affective steps preceding discrimination. The extent to which these apply to the Roma in Romania has been highlighted by resorting to literature rather than figures given that they refer to opinions and feelings instead of concrete behaviours.

Discrimination translates thoughts and feelings into specific conducts against a group and, therefore, statistics can provide a relatively accurate snapshot of the extent such phenomenon reaches.

An edifying example, in this regard, is the **European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey - EU-MIDIS** (2009) which took a fresh look at the unequal treatment this group experienced in everyday life.

The Roma were chosen as a front page subject due to reporting the highest level of discrimination of all the groups surveyed (North Africans, Sub-Saharan Africans, Turkish, former Yugoslavians, people from Central and Eastern European countries, Russians) in seven EU countries: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

The research ground which led to such conclusion comprised of: the experiences of discrimination in the five years prior to the survey (2004-2008); the reporting of these experiences; Roma's awareness of their rights and complaints mechanisms; the perception of discrimination; the racially motivated crimes against them and the reporting of these crimes; the encounters with law enforcement, customs and border control.

An overall introductory picture was given by the percentage of those discriminated against solely on ethnic grounds. In the case of the Romanian Roma, this amounted to 17%, a figure which placed them at the bottom of the seven-country hierarchy.

The survey delved even further and established nine areas reflective of the unfair treatment Roma underwent: *when looking for work; at work; when looking for a house or an apartment to rent or buy; by healthcare personnel; by social service personnel; by school personnel; at a café, restaurant or bar; when entering or in a shop; when trying to open a bank account or get a loan.*

Across the nine areas, 65% of the Roma in Romania claimed they hadn't been discriminated against in the previous five years. If taking a closer look at each variable considered, the areas reporting the highest levels of discrimination were *when looking for work* (40%), *by healthcare personnel* (20%), *when at work* (19%). The fourth area also identified as a source of discriminatory treatment was *At a café, restaurant or bar* which held a 13% share.

When being asked if they reported the discriminatory incidents experienced in the 12 months prior to the survey, approximately 81% of the Roma in Romania gave a negative answer. The highest non-reporting shares were held by the respondents *looking for a job* (93%) or *entering / in a café, restaurant or bar* (98%).

The survey went on to ask respondents why they didn't report the most recent incident, in the previous 12 months, in any of the nine domains. In Romania (similarly to the other six countries), the reason which topped the list was the fact that *nothing would happen or change if reporting* (66%). Important shares were also held by those who were *not sure where and how to report* (45%) as well as by the interviewees *concerned about the negative consequences of making a complaint* (32%). Additionally, 27% of the respondents considered incidents to be trivial occurrences, inherent to everyday life, while 22% stated that reporting such incidents would have taken too much trouble or time.

After taking a snapshot of the main discriminatory incidents occurred in the five years prior to the survey, the research provided an overview of the rights awareness and perceptions of discrimination.

The introductory question to this chapter asked *if discrimination based on ethnic / immigrant origin was widespread* in the respondent's country. In Romania, 42% stated it was very or fairly widespread, 36% considered it was very or fairly rare, while 12% mentioned it was non-existent. Compared with the other six countries in the survey Romania ranked as fifth judging by the percentage of those who considered ethnic discrimination to be prominent.

To sum up, of the seven EU countries addressed by the EU-MIDIS survey, Romania (together with Bulgaria) painted a fairly rosy picture in terms of discrimination against the Roma. Even though, at first glance, these results imply lower discrimination rates, the survey makes a cautious note which tempers potential enthusiasm. More exactly, the Roma in Romania and Bulgaria are said to be exposed to higher levels of spatial segregation. This entails two main assumptions: the lack of interactions between the

Roma and the mainstream society and potentially higher discrimination rates than the ones reported in the survey. Whatever the assumption, the overall conclusion is the same: authentic discrimination rates could be more prominent if the Roma had regularized contacts with the majority and the other ethnic groups.

Extremely relevant information on the discrimination against the Roma, also conclusive for the awareness of anti-discrimination laws and bodies, is **the report drawn up by the National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD) concerning the implementation of the EU Race Directive in Romania, between 2003 and 2010.**

According to the statistics, the total number of complaints, in the years analyzed, amounted to 823, while the findings stood at 129 (103 – discrimination because of ethnicity, 22 – nationality, 2 – ethnicity and nationality, 2 – racial discrimination).

When taking a snapshot of the criteria at the root of discrimination, the Roma ethnic origin was by far the most frequent (70% of the findings referred to the unfair treatment of the Roma).

The report also looked at the types of discrimination encountered during the eight-year time span.

At this chapter, *direct discrimination* came first whereas *unfavourable active or passive behaviour* and *harassment* came second and third, respectively.

The main fields on the black list, given the high levels of discrimination reported, were *personal dignity*, *private services* - cafés, pubs, *employment* and *education*.

The sanctions applied by CNCD broke down into warnings, fines, recommendations and mere findings. The highest shares went to the first three mentioned.

If making a brief review of the Council's rulings between 2002 and 2010, discrimination was mostly linked to: statements made by public authorities and journalists in newspaper articles, access to private services (especially cafés, clubs), classified ads in newspapers or job search web sites, school segregation.

One of the most notable rulings which ended with a 2000-lei fine was the very first case in 2003. The sanction was applied to the President of the County Council of Prahova whose statements in a press conference included syntagms like: "specific dirt," "the efforts of their leaders should focus on them, to put water, soap, books as basic tools for their education and move to the civilized world," "He is either Gypsy or Romanian."

Education was also brought into the spot light by those complaints which pointed to school segregation. In 2008, as a result of a complaint filed by Romani CRISS according to which most of the pupils in the schools for children with special needs were Roma because of their ethnic background rather than medical reasons, the Council recommended that the Ministry of Education take all the necessary measures for ensuring equal opportunities.

Examples could go on, pointing to the Roma ethnic origin as a central pillar to most of the discrimination cases handled by the Council. The number of complaints, however, is relatively low compared with the frequency of incidents mentioned by other surveys. If briefly reviewing the CNCD report, it is highly noticeable that the overwhelming majority of discrimination cases were either reported by NGOs (Romani CRISS most often, Liga Pro Europa etc.) or ascertained by the Council itself. Such conclusion reinforces the EU-MIDIS findings which draw attention to the low awareness of anti-discrimination laws and bodies among the members of the Roma ethnic group.

3.3. The Roma versus the others: A glimpse of the self- and hetero-image of the Roma and non-Roma groups

The surveys presented so far have touched upon the discrimination against the Roma mainly considering the opinions expressed by the members of this ethnic group. Yet, in order to have an integrated approach, one must also consider the dynamics of the relationships between the Roma and the non-Roma.

An important study which brings *the others* into the equation is the **Barometer of Ethnic Relations**

(2002) summarized in Aurora Liiceanu's article "Ethnic alterity and collective imagery" (Bădescu, Kivu, Robotin 2005).

The first outline of the interactions between the Roma and the majority population is drawn by the views on Romanians' *religiousness, honesty, hard work, intelligence, hospitality, hypocrisy* and *cleanliness*. *The first trait* is looked at from different angles as the Roma consider Romanians to be less religious than they consider themselves (11.8 vs. 18.6%).

When referring to *honesty*, the Roma state that this is a characteristic of Romanians (19.9%) to a higher extent than the Romanians themselves (13.2%).

The optimistic proportion changes when *hard work* enters the stage. Thus, 47% of Romanians consider themselves diligent whereas less Roma (37%) state the same.

Intelligence is seen almost similarly by both groups (27% Romanians vs. 23% Roma), while *hospitality* widens the gap as 60% of the Romanians claim they have a welcoming attitude unlike only 36% of the Roma who make the same assessment.

Hypocrisy is not a characteristic of Romanians according to the majority population. Yet, the percentage of the Roma who state the contrary is four times higher.

Cleanliness is highlighted by 4% of Romanians and 9% of the Roma. In other words, the Roma consider Romanians to be cleaner than the Romanians consider themselves.

To sum up, the self-portrait of Romanians includes lack of hypocrisy, hospitality, diligence and intelligence among the most important positive features and leaves cleanliness, honesty and religiousness for the negative side of the spectrum.

The Roma hold different opinions especially on hospitality and lack of hypocrisy, which are less prominent features attributed to Romanians.

The cleavage between self-image and hetero-image is much wider in the case of the Roma.

The first feature which mirrors the discrepancy is *cleanliness* seen as a characteristic of the Roma only by half of the Romanian and Hungarian respondents.

The second negative attribute is *primitiveness* highlighted by Romanians and especially Hungarians. The negative perceptions go on as half of the Romanians interviewed consider that Roma are *thieves* unlike 9% of the Roma themselves.

Laziness and hospitality are again put on the black list by both Romanians and Hungarians even though the Roma consider them diligent and welcoming.

In a nutshell, the self-image of the Roma showcases cleanliness, openness to progress, honesty, hard work, hospitality and kindness, whereas the hetero-image painted by Romanians and Hungarians emphasizes the contrary.

Another chapter which adds to the gap earlier described is the perception of the relationship between the Roma and Romanians.

The former consider this is based on cooperation (71%) rather than conflicts (16%) or mutual ignorance (17%) whereas the latter emphasize conflicts (40%) rather than cooperation (31%).

In order to improve interethnic relations, both the Roma and the Romanians agree upon forbidding the broadcasts which promote and incite to hatred, encouraging mixed marriages, non-segregated education, and severe sanctions for lowering the crime rate. Hungarians approve of these approaches but lay less emphasis on non-segregated education.

The social distance between the Roma and the non-Roma is not only reflected by the images they hold about each other, but also by the opinions they have on the same issues.

In this regard, the *Come closer* survey (Fleck, Rughinis 2008) provides useful information on how education is perceived by the two groups in relation to better interethnic relations.

The survey asked three main questions: if Roma children should learn Romany language in schools; if all children should learn about the history and culture of the Roma in schools; if a certain number of places should be allotted to the Roma in the high school admission exam.

Two thirds of the Roma respondents gave positive answers. However, the non-Roma tended to be

more in favour of teaching Romany language to Roma students (49%) and allotting special places in the admission exam (47%) rather than encouraging all children to catch a glimpse of the Roma culture (33%). These findings made the author conclude that the Roma were seen as poverty icons instead of representatives of a different culture.

Another clue to the social distance between the Roma and the non-Roma was the percentage of those who would accept a member with a different ethnic background in their families. The research showed that 54% of the Roma would welcome Romanians and 28% would accept Hungarians whereas only 18% of the non-Roma would do the same for the Roma.

The Roma also proved to be more open when it came to having a friend with a different ethnic background. Thus, 90% would welcome Romanians, 45% – Hungarians. On the other hand, less than half of the non-Roma coped with the idea of having a Roma friend.

The shares subscribed to the same pattern for Roma and non-Roma neighbours, colleagues, citizens and tourists.

When being asked about those whom they would rather expel from the country, 0.5% of the Roma pointed to Romanians and 7.1% named the Hungarians. The percentage of the non-Roma who would prefer the Roma out of the country was much higher (15.6%).

The answers of the Roma respondents were significantly influenced by their mother tongue. The survey concluded that those whose first language was Romany tended to be less open to interactions with the non-Roma while those having a different mother tongue were prone to accept the other ethnic groups much easier. Yet, the latter had a more reticent attitude towards fellow-Roma.

The level of income was also decisive for the acceptance rate. The survey showed that 60% of the Roma displaying a decent or more than decent standard of living had non-Roma family members unlike 30% who lacked financial resources.

Additionally, employment and family history had their say, too. Those Roma who worked in organizations or already had non-Roma relatives were more accustomed to the idea of welcoming new members with a different ethnic background.

The answers provided by non-Roma respondents were correlated with the ethnic profile of the area they lived in. If this was mainly inhabited by Roma people, the non-Roma tended to have a much friendlier attitude.

A greater likelihood to shorten the social distance towards the Roma was also determined by the size of the locality. The bigger the city or village inhabited by the non-Roma, the higher their tolerance towards the Roma. At this chapter, Bucharest appeared to be a city of striking contrasts as it ranked first due to both its acceptance and rejection rates (40% of its dwellers said they would welcome a Roma family member, 20% would keep the Roma out of the country).

When shifting to a map of regions, the shortest distance between the two groups was found in the Bucharest-Ilfov area, followed by the Western region. The other side of the coin was represented by the North East region where almost a quarter of the non-Roma would banish the Roma from the country.

The Roma Inclusion Barometer (Bădescu et al. 2007) signals the same attitude gap between the two groups. Thus, when asking if Romanians and Roma should share the same neighbourhoods, get married to each other; learn in the same classrooms and play together, the Roma were much more prone to give positive answers than the non-Roma.

To conclude with, the social distance between the Roma and the non-Roma is viewed differently by the two groups. The former are open to a shorter interactive and affective distance and also tend to draw a favourable outline of the latter. Yet, statistics emphasize that their openness concerns Romanians to a greater extent than Hungarians.

On the other hand, the non-Roma proves to be more reticent towards the Roma whose portrait is rather made up of negative features.

Consequently, the distance between the self-image and hetero-image widens in the case of the Roma but becomes much narrower in the case of the non-Roma.

3.4. The image of Roma in Romanian mass media. An up-to-date analysis of how large circulation newspapers portray the Roma

In order to have an up-to-date perspective on the portrayals of the Roma, the REDUPRE team monitored the online versions of the first four large circulations daily newspapers in the quality press category: *Adevărul*, *România Liberă*, *Jurnalul Național* and *Evenimentul Zilei* (The Audit Bureau of Circulations in Romania, 2011).

The methodology used for screening the articles published between 1 October and 31 November 2011 consisted of typing the words *rom/romi* (Rom/Roma), *țigan/țigani* (Gypsy/Gypsies) into the search engine of each online newspaper. As *Table 1* emphasizes, the first rank is held by *Evenimentul Zilei* while the fourth goes to *Adevărul*. In other words, the hierarchy dictated by the attention paid to the Roma is the reverse of the hierarchy by circulation.

Table 1: Newspapers ranked by the number of articles including the words *rom/romi/țigan/țigani* (1 October – 31 November 2011).

No.	Newspaper	Words searched	Number of relevant articles	Total
1.	Evenimentul zilei	rom / romi	30	62
		țigan / țigani	32	
2.	Jurnalul Național	rom / romi	24	34
		țigan / țigani	10	
3.	România Liberă	rom / romi	26	34
		țigan / țigani	8	
4.	Adevărul	rom / romi	9	21
		țigan / țigani	12	
Total				151

If drawing a map of the subjects touched upon (*Table 2*), the articles about the *crimes* committed in Romania and abroad top the list.

The so-called *Gypsy palaces*, *police raids* and *illicit fortunes* linked to these palaces miss the top by only one point but still can't go unnoticed because of the high score.

Begging comes third due to the stories focused on the Roma who thus make a living in Norway, Ireland and England. The 'hottest' articles in this category refer to the investigation carried out by the Irish police who confiscated thousands of euros from the Romanian Roma begging in Dublin as well as to the documentary made by BBC Panorama about the Romanian Roma children who are street beggars in London.

All newspapers (except for *Jurnalul Național*) quote Inspector Patrick McMenamin who describes a barefoot beggar in Grafton Street that has "more runners...than the Footlocker (shop)" due to manipulating the people who feel pity for him.

The fourth position is held by: *the 2011 census, the situation of the Roma in France and the discriminatory statements against Romanians in TV and radio broadcasts from France and Italy, respectively.*

Table 2: The main subjects covered (1 October – 31 November 2011).

No.	Subjects	Adevărul	România Liberă	Jurnalul Național	Evenimentul zilei	Total score
1.	Crimes committed by the Roma: – in Romania (illegal deforestation, policeman killed, aggression against the journalists from TVT89 channel, utilities not paid for 20 years, thefts of metal from railway lines, traveling by train without buying tickets, prostitution, counterfeiting Nokia phones) – abroad (thefts in Ireland, aggressions in Italy, thefts of metal from railway lines in UK, fights between Roma clans in Finland, squatters occupying a house in France)	3	2	5	5	15
2.	“Gypsy palaces,” police raids, illicit fortunes, heavily ornamented chapels in cemeteries	2	5	7	-	14
3.	Begging – beggars in Norway and Ireland, the BBC documentary – <i>The secret lives of Britain’s Child Beggars</i> , Mark Deans’ s comment (FX-MM magazine) on Britain’s hypothetical economic recovery based on Romanian child beggars	1	3	5	3	12
4.	2011 census	4	2	1	3	10
5.	Roma expelled from France, statements made by the French Minister of the Interior, Romanian police called in to make joint patrols to tackle delinquency problems in Paris	1	1	2	6	10
6.	Discriminatory statements against Romanians in TV broadcasts in France, radio broadcasts in Italy, a protest by the Romanians in Paris, the opinion expressed by the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs	-	1	1	8	10
7.	Projects for improving the condition of the Roma, public policies, strategies, suggestions made by the European Parliament members from Romania	1	3	2	3	9
8.	Romany culture (crafts, fashion, music)	1	2	2	3	8
9.	Actions for combating discrimination against the Roma (Roma moved close to a landfill, forced evictions, march against discrimination, sanctions applied to the Romanian President for discriminatory statements)	-	6	1	1	8
10.	Feature stories about people who help the Roma access EU funding, Roma ghetto in Bărbulești, Turkish Roma in Dobrogea, Roma village in Bacău, portrait of a Roma man who became builder after being a beggar	1	1	2	3	7
11.	Discriminatory statements made during/outside sports competitions	2	1	4		7
12.	Holocaust		3	3	1	7
13.	The wall built in Baia Mare to separate Roma from non-Roma dwellings	1	2	-	1	4
14.	Surveys about the Roma		1	1	1	3
15.	Child marriages	-	1	-	1	2

If remapping the monitored articles from a different angle – namely by counting all the episodes which link the Roma to the rather unfavourable image Romania has abroad (and especially in the EU countries), at least 41 stories (30% of the articles screened) are in the spotlight.

Another chapter which is worth mentioning refers to the words used for designating the members of this ethnic group. In this respect, the monitoring emphasizes a major shift from the pejorative noun “țigăni” (Gypsy), in fashion in the print media of the 1990s, to the politically correct term “Roma.” It is true that the search on each of the websites considered returns a significant number of articles including the word “țigăni”/“țigani,” but most of them are part of quotes, refer to the slavery period when “țigăni” was the noun used, are mentioned in articles concerning the pejorative meaning of the word which will be specified in the new edition of the Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language.

România Liberă appears to be the most politically correct newspaper, in this regard, while *Jurnalul Național* tends to use the words interchangeably. However, it cannot be inferred a link between the use of the pejorative meaning and the type of portrayal (negative or positive), as many of the articles which opt for “țigăni” build positive perceptions of the Roma.

Irrelevant mentions of the Roma ethnic origin continue to be a major issue. For instance, the title of an article reads “A family caught after not having paid heating and hot water for 20 years. See what bill awaits them” (*Jurnalul Național* November 17, 2011). The body of the article pinpoints that “...it is a Roma family, comprised of 6 persons.” Other examples are: “France sends other 150 Roma back to Romania” (*Evenimentul zilei* November 25, 2011) or “Heads of a prostitution network, arrested last night in Timișoara” accompanied by further explanations “Officers from the Organised Crime Squad arrested the heads of the network, all of them of Roma ethnic origin” (Petrovici November 25, 2011). However, the most relevant article is the one in *Adevărul* (Bejenariu 25 October 2011), titled: “The massacre from the woods on the banks of Nera river reached the authorities. The first finding: the Roma cut the trees.” The news is about the illegal deforestation in Caraș Severin county and emphasizes that “according to the first statements of the locals, it seems that those who resorted to such method *would have been* the Roma ethnics living in Socol, Câmpia and not only.” The contrast between the certainty induced by the title and the hesitating tone of the explanations is striking.

Other articles set a clear distinction between the majority population and the Roma. For example, an article speaks about *Capital Top 300*, a magazine which draws an annual hierarchy of the richest Romanians, and also mentions an alternative top of “the richest Gypsies.” The title reads: “Who the richest Gypsies in Romania are” (*Evenimentul Zilei* November 3, 2011).

It is also worth mentioning how different papers frame the same news especially with the help of the headlines. For instance, if analyzing the articles about the statements made by the French Minister of the Interior, *România Liberă* reads: “The French Minister of the Interior criticizes «the delinquency committed by Romanians» in France as «extremely cruel»” (Petrovici October 3, 2011), *Jurnalul Național* highlights: “The French Minister of the Interior attacks Romanians: They use children to make money” (October 3, 2011), *Evenimentul Zilei* states: “The French Minister of the Interior: the crimes committed by the Roma, extremely cruel” (October 3, 2011).

All the articles mention that the Minister stated he didn’t wish to stigmatize the Roma. However, the third headline above mentioned changes the Minister’s statement and writes Roma instead of Romanians. The body of the article, though, provides accurate information.

In conclusion, as Ungerleider argues in his 1991 study of Canadian media (Media Awareness Network), the news tell stories which cast people as “heroes, villains and victims.” Given that the Roma are most often chosen to play the villains, the collective imagery assigns a negative frame especially in the case of those to whom “alternative interpretations are not evident.”

4. ANALYSIS OF THE FOUR TARGET LOCALITIES IN ROMANIA

The present chapter introduces the four localities chosen as focal points for the research conducted in Romania, within the REDUPRE project, and also delves into the main arguments which recommend these as edifying case studies in relation to the overall project goal.

For such purpose, the chapter begins by providing a statistical overview of the Roma population in the West and North-West regions of Romania and its distribution pattern across counties and continues by taking a closer look at the four localities proposed.

According to the 2002 census, in the West region (comprising of four counties – Timiș, Arad, Caraș-Severin, Hunedoara), the two counties situated at the top of the hierarchy, judging by the amplitude of their Roma communities, are Timiș (16 084 Roma, i.e. 2.37% of the county's population) and Arad (17 664 Roma people, i.e. 3.82% of the county's population).

In the North-West region (comprising of six counties – Sălaj, Maramureș, Bihor, Bistrița-Năsăud, Satu-Mare, Cluj), the county that displays the highest number of Roma is Bihor where these amount to 30 089, representing 5.01% of the county's population.

The four localities representing the core of the research to be conducted in Romania are **Timișoara**, **Sânpetru Mare** (Timiș County), **Sântana** (Arad County) and **Aleșd** (Bihor County). The main reasons for which these are believed to make strong cases in the context of the REDUPRE project are their large Roma communities and the fact they are located in the border region. The latter is a value-added feature which gives the opportunity to analyze the prejudices against the Roma in different ethnic backgrounds, due to the fact that borderlands have always been places of “exchange and enrichment,” where plural identities meet and mingle (Dolff-Bonekämper 2004).

In the case of the three counties chosen, the proximity to Serbia and Hungary is mainly responsible for the multi-ethnic profile displayed, even though other groups (Germans, Slovaks, and Ukrainians etc.) also pay notable contribution to the great cultural diversity of the region. Therefore, in order to have a wider perspective on the perceptual categorization of the Roma, the research (as well as all project activities) addresses different ethnic backgrounds which reveal the relationships between the Roma and the Romanians, but also the relationships between the Roma and other ethnic groups which outnumber them or have similar dimension.

Moreover, communities of different sizes will be considered in order to determine how the quantitative aspect impacts the interactions among their members.

Consequently, the research sets the ball rolling for a comparative analysis of the prejudices and stereotypes which are prone to emerge in both small and large communities and aims to establish a correlation between the nature of the prejudices and the ethnic structure of the communities addressed.

4.1. Timișoara

Timișoara (Timiș County) is the largest city in the West region and also, according to 2009 statistics, the third largest city in Romania (*Agerpres National News Agency* 2 February 2010).

It is considered to be one of the country's most prominent multicultural emblems given the 29 ethnic groups and 17 religions it hosts. The great cultural diversity is also the key lever used for proposing Timișoara as a potential European Capital of Culture in 2020 (*The City Hall of Timișoara*).

In 2000, after a 5-month monitoring by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Center for Institutional Reform and Informal Sector (IRIS), Timișoara was awarded the ‘5-star city’ distinction due to its openness to foreign investment. Thus, the city displays a promising economic climate given the impressive investments particularly made by German, Italian, Swiss and USA companies and its low unemployment rate (Magyary-Vincze 2007).

Besides the economic environment, one of the main aspects which appeals to the foreign investors in the region is the distance to border crossings. Timiș County has three border crossings: two with Serbia (Stamora Moravița and Jimbolia) and one with Hungary (Cenad). The distance from Timișoara to each of the crossings mentioned is 56, 45 and 75 km, respectively.

According to 2002 official census, the total population of Timiș County amounts to 677 926. The Roma population accounts for 2.37%, ranking third after Romanians and Hungarians.

Timișoara is the largest city in the county, with a total population of 317 660 inhabitants. The city also holds the highest percentage of Roma in the total Roma population of the county – 19%, given its 3050 Roma people recorded in the official census.

When compared to the other ethnic communities in the city, Roma rank fifth after Romanians (85.52%), Hungarians (7.64%), Germans (2.25%) and Serbs (1.98%). However, taking into account that many Roma do not admit to their ethnic origin for fear of discrimination, the real size of this ethnic group is thought to be much higher.

In regard to the population structure by mother tongue, the Romany language is spoken by 10 433 people (1.53% of the county's population), being third to Romanian and Hungarian.

In Timișoara, the percentage of people having Romany as mother tongue is 0.6%, ranking fifth after Romanian, Hungarian, German and Serbian.

As stated by the research carried out within the frame of the PHARE 2004 programme – “Strengthening the institutional capacity and partnership building in order to improve the Roma living conditions and their image” (Magyari-Vincze 2007), in Timișoara, there are four main Roma categories – *băieși* (Boyash - miners), *geambași* (horse dealers), *căldărari* (coppersmiths), *gabori* (Roma of Hungarian origin).

The main neighborhoods where these can be found are Colonia Ștrand (East), Fratelia and Ronaț (North-West), Kuntz (North-East), Plopi (East) and Blascovics (West), all situated on the outskirts of the city. From a socioeconomic perspective, the Roma in Timișoara fall into two main categories: those who are very rich and have built “their famous palaces” with the money earned abroad (as one representative of the Local Police stated in the research report above cited) and those who are poor and live on the outskirts, in ramshackle cabins. The discrepancy between the two extremes is striking given the low standard of living of the latter and the opulence displayed by the former through the heavily-ornamented architecture of their houses which is usually inconsistent with the architectural style of the areas where they are built (Magyari-Vincze 2007).

On the other hand, the so-called Roma palaces are a constant topic in local mass media. A brief review of the local print media brings into the limelight many disagreements (that have often turned into fights) which have arisen because of the houses bought or built in historical neighborhoods. According to the articles, the Roma use to display banners with messages like “This is a house owned by Roma” and to take various intimidating actions for hindering non-Roma people from buying apartments in the respective buildings. Such behaviour is also one of the main issues feeding the stereotypes against the Roma community in the city (Lupulescu 2008).

As mentioned by the research earlier cited (Magyari-Vincze 2007), the problems faced by the Roma are related to four major fields: housing, employment, education and health.

The main issues corresponding to the first field refer to the lack of identity papers which hinders them from obtaining a dwelling, living in state-owned flats or houses and, thus, running the risk of being evacuated, living in ramshackle cabins built in the fields with no current water, electricity or toilet, the fact that public policies do not prioritize Roma along with other unprivileged categories for obtaining social housing.

When it comes to employment, the main problems faced by the Roma revolve around the difficulty to practice traditional crafts (e.g. tinsmithing), the lack of education which reduces the range of options down to black market or unskilled labour, the high percentage of Roma working abroad in the black market which also results in an increase in the number of children having no identity papers,

the discrimination against the Roma in the labour market, the non-feasibility of the expert training programmes which haven't created the necessary opportunities for the employment of those trained.

The main barriers impeding proper access to education are: the lack of identity papers which is a major obstacle to the timely enrolment of children in schools and kindergartens; the low level of income determining a significant dropout rate; the seasonal labour migration of parents who take their children abroad; the discrimination against the Roma children in schools; segregation; the fact that educational facilitators are not well-enough prepared for properly handling such problems.

Healthcare represents another problematic chapter because of the low income, improper nutrition, lack of medical insurance, the discriminatory treatment applied by the medical staff.

4.2. Sânpetru Mare

Sânpetru Mare is one of the largest communes in Timiș County, comprised of two villages: Sânpetru Mare and Igrîș.

The former is located 15 km from Sânnicolau Mare (the closest city), 55.5 km from Timișoara and 50 km from Arad.

The latter is very close to the border with Arad County and also to the town of Sânnicolau Mare.

As far as the distance to the Hungarian border is concerned, the locality is 35 km away from the Cenad border crossing. Given its proximity to Arad County, Igrîș village is particularly close to Nădlac crossing (7 km).

The locality dates back to 1333 and is very often mentioned for being home to the first library in Romania.

From an economic point of view, Sânpetru Mare displays a mainly agricultural profile.

Given its geographical position and ethnic structure, the locality is a member of the Limited Liability European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Banat – Triplex Confinium (*The City Hall of Sânpetru Mare*).

According to the 2002 census, the population of Sânpetru Mare amounts to 5844, out of which 72.51% are Romanians, 13.15% – Serbs and 12.13% – Roma. Consequently, in 2002, the Serbian and Roma ethnic groups had similar size, being second only to Romanians.

The percentage is said to be higher in Igrîș village where Roma accounted for 10% of the population during the same year. However, since 2002, this ethnic group has had a staggering upward trend. According to the monograph written by Florea Jebelean (2009), the Roma people represented 44.4% of the population in 2006, while according to the figures provided by the Timis County Council, the Roma held a share of more than 30% in 2009.

When shifting to the percentage of people having Romany as a mother tongue, the 2002 census reveals that only 0.92% speak this language. Such data places Romany on the third position of the hierarchy, the first two places being held by Romanian (82.98%) and Serbian (13.02%).

On a county level, the Roma population in Sânpetru Mare accounts for nearly 4.5% of the total Roma population in Timiș County, a ratio which places the locality close to the top of the hierarchy.

The main weak points of the Roma community in Sânpetru Mare are education, healthcare and employment.

According to the information provided by the City Hall, the locality has two schools: one in Igrîș village and one in Sânpetru Mare village.

In Sânpetru Mare, there are 246 students out of which 179 Romanians, 25 Serbs and 42 Roma.

In Igrîș, the number of students amounts to 126, but their ethnic structure is not mentioned. However, considering that Roma hold a significant share in the local population, a significant share is to be found in the educational process also.

The main education-related issues consist of a high dropout rate (having as main reasons the low level of income and the need to work from an early age for ensuring subsistence), the lack of information

concerning the importance of education and the facilities Roma children could benefit from in order to complete the educational process, and, last but not least, the uneven treatment which is sometimes applied to Roma children by colleagues or teachers given the negative perception they hold against this ethnic group.

Another field considered to be a major weakness is the local labour market.

On the one hand, Sânpetru Mare is a mainly agricultural area. Therefore, inhabitants look for jobs in nearby localities – Sânnicolau Mare, Periam and even Timișoara – where there is a higher number of entrepreneurs and, consequently, a higher likelihood of job opportunities. However, the lack of education and identity papers doesn't recommend the Roma as eligible candidates, a thing which results in an increasing tendency to work in the black market.

Moreover, the traditional crafts of the Roma (e.g. blacksmithing, tinsmithing) are no longer in compliance with the nowadays requirements of the labour market. Hence, there is a major cleavage between the labour supply and demand that can't be bridged given the lack of financial and information resources necessary for retraining.

It is the very same lack of financial and information resources that also triggers the healthcare issues with which Roma are confronted. Mainly, the disease rate is very high because of not complying with basic hygiene and healthy nutrition rules or not going to regular medical check-ups. Moreover, the medical staff operating on the local level is not always prepared to deal with Roma patients. Hence, they sometimes disregard them or do not explain clearly enough the medication prescribed, thus increasing even more the gap between the Roma community and the healthcare institutions.

4.3. Sântana

Sântana is a town located in the north-western part of Arad County. The closest cities are Arad (28 km) and Chișineu Criș (22 km), while the closest border crossings with Hungary are Curtici (15 km), Vladimirescu (31 km) and Turnu (45 km). The town originates in an older settlement – Comlăuș (dating back to 1334) which has nowadays become one of its major neighborhoods, and also includes the Caporal Alexa village (*The City Hall of Sântana*).

Sântana is the biggest town of the microregion located in the north-west of Arad County which includes two other cities – Curtici and Pâncota - and 4 villages – Olari, Simand, Zarand, Zimandu Nou.

The entire microregion is part of the Danube-Kris-Mureș-Tisa Euroregion (*The City Hall of Sântana*).

The population of Arad County amounts to 461 791 inhabitants and has the following ethnic structure: 82.16% - Romanians, 10.67% – Hungarians, 3.82% – Roma, 1.23% – Slovaks, 1.05% – Germans. Consequently, according to the 2002 census, Roma are the third largest ethnic group in the county. However, considering the statement made by Gheorghe Răducanu (Advisor to the Prefect of Arad County on Roma issues in 2005), the number of Roma is estimated to be almost double given that most of them refuse to state their genuine ethnic origin (Buga 2005).

Sântana has nearly 13 000 inhabitants out of which 14.91% are Roma. These figures place the Roma ethnic group on the second position after Romanians who account for 79.08%. Even though the share they hold in the total population is much lower, the Germans (3.49%) and Hungarians (2.19%) are the two other communities which bring their contribution to the town's multi-ethnic profile.

From a town-county ratio perspective, the Roma people in Sântana represent 11% of the Roma population in Arad County (being the second largest Roma community in the county), while from a microregional perspective, Sântana ranks first.

The population structure by mother tongue reveals that Romany language is spoken by 1.94% of the county's population, ranking third after Romanian (spoken by 84.72%) and Hungarian (10.45%).

The percentage of people having Romany as mother tongue in Sântana is much higher (10.09%), almost squaring with the number of Roma people mentioned by the official census.

According to local statistics, the main areas inhabited by Roma people are Comlăuș neighbourhood

(with over 3000 inhabitants) and Caporal Alexa village (Crețu 2008).

The most prominent issues these communities face are related to the inappropriate infrastructure and mainly consist of unpaved roads and poor water supplies. More precisely, the Roma in Comlăuș neighbourhood have to walk long distances for ensuring the water they need in their households for drinking, cooking or breeding animals (Crețu 2008).

As mentioned by the local development strategy, in 2005 the City Hall of Sântana submitted the project “Rehabilitating the road infrastructure in the Roma neighbourhood” within the frame of the governmental programme “Partnership for Roma support.” Even though the project was approved, the scarce financial resources of the City Hall rendered its implementation impossible.

Aside from the poor road infrastructure, a few hundreds of dwellings inhabited by Roma people in Comlăuș and Caporal Alexa are in an advanced state of decay, undergoing a severe danger of collapse or structural failure. The authorities stated that besides not being able to provide adequate shelter, such dwellings are likely to crash in case of prolonged bad weather conditions (Crețu 2008).

The antipode of the shabby houses above described is represented by the so-called palaces that rich Roma afford to build. As stated by the Advisor to the Prefect of Arad County on Roma issues, the impressive size of such buildings is directly linked to the importance that Roma families wish to have in the community. In other words, they are prone to build houses which stand out in order to both flag their social status and make sure there is enough room for all their relatives. Yet, despite the extravagance displayed, most houses are non-functional or only partially used (Buga 2005).

When alternating their significance with the opinions expressed by the architects in Arad, one discovers that most specialists lay emphasis on the contradiction existing between the heavily-ornamented houses and the architectural style in the region. In their opinion, such buildings shouldn’t even be granted a construction permit given the failure to comply with regional and local building codes (Buga 2005).

Another facet of the housing issue is the lack of property deeds. Many Roma people have transferred ownership by signing informal agreements in the presence of witnesses, thus avoiding the authentication procedure executed before a notary public. Consequently, ownership transfer can’t be neither tracked nor proved.

On the other hand, the lack of property deeds is just one aspect of a wider range of legal paper issues also including the lack of identity cards and birth certificates which apply to a considerable number of Roma people (Crețu 2008).

When it comes to employment, the local print media as well as the County Advisor on Roma issues reveal that many Roma families have built their welfare by buying antiques (especially furniture) from the elders in the region and selling them abroad. Also, according to the same sources, there is a significant share of Roma people who earn their living by practicing traditional crafts – i.e. manufacturing brandy boilers and rainwater pipes (Buga 2008). However, the unemployment rate among the Roma people is high given the lack of education and the increasing gap between the existing traditional craft supply and the labour market demand. Such gap is prone to become even wider considering the recent investments which mainly address the industrial field in the region.

4.4. Aleșd

Aleșd is a city located in Bihor County (North-Western Romania) which comprises of four localities: Aleșd, Pestiș, Tinaud and Pădurea Neagră.

The proximity to Hungary is marked by the relatively short distances to three border crossings in Bihor County: Aleșd Oradea (40 km), Borș (57 km) and Salonta (76 km).

Among the main strengths that the city displays, a great emphasis is put on the natural resources (mineral springs, thermal water), tourist objectives, cultural events representative for the region as well as on hunting and fishing opportunities. The tourism infrastructure is also positively assessed due to the accommodation establishments, restaurants and thermal water pools which tap into the resources of the

region (*The City Hall of Aleșd*).

Despite the impressive tourism potential, the city's economy has been mainly based on the building materials industry (especially cement, lime and refractory materials) which has undergone a steep decline after 1989. In 1998, Aleșd was declared underprivileged area and a major shift occurred to the light industry where new jobs were created given the foreign investments attracted to the region.

Local statistics pinpoint that the workforce is mainly skilled for the light and building materials industries, but it is not qualified for the tourism sector which is inappropriately harnessed (*The City Hall of Aleșd*).

Bihor is among the Romanian counties with the largest Roma population. Of the total number of inhabitants which amounts to 600 246, the Roma account for 5.01% (30 089), as stated by the 2002 census. These figures place the Roma ethnic group on the third position after Romanians (67.38%) and Hungarians (25.96%).

In line with county statistics, the Roma in Aleșd amount to 953, representing 9.15% of the city population (10 415 inhabitants). Therefore, the Roma rank third after the Romanians (65.17%) and Hungarians (19.07%) and are followed by the Slovak ethnic group (6.19%).

Shifting from ethnic to mother tongue structure, the 2002 census reveals that 3.02% people in Bihor County speak Romany, while in Aleșd the percentage increases to 9.11%, closely following the share held by the Roma community in the city population.

When analyzed through the lens of city-county ratio, the statistics above emphasize that the share held by the Roma from Aleșd in the total Roma population of Bihor county amounts to nearly 3.5%.

Local statistics highlight that the distribution of Roma among the four localities the city comprises favours Aleșd (945 Roma) over Tinaud, Pestiș and Pădurea Neagră. The highest number of Roma can be found in the Obor neighbourhood where several projects have been implemented in order to tackle and touch upon the issues this ethnic group is confronted with. However, such projects induced only a slight change and the respective issues continue to be as prominent as they were in the past (*The City Hall of Aleșd*).

First of all, the poor infrastructure significantly lowers the standard of living. One of the major flaws is the lack of electric power which has been addressed in 2007 within the frame of the project "Strengthening the voice of the Roma," carried out by Ruhama Foundation (Oradea). The project managed to bring electric power to 10 Roma households, but the rest continue to cope with this major lack (*Ruhama Foundation*).

Also, given the scarce financial resources of the Roma families, their dwellings cannot provide proper shelter given the advanced state of deterioration.

The flaws of the housing sector also refer to the precarious hygiene which proves to be a major obstacle to obtaining a job or going to school. In this regard, the Aleșd Town Hall and Ruhama Foundation have implemented a project whose main result was the Aleșd Multifunctional Center, a social service addressing the Roma, which encompasses a children day care and a public bath (Bursașiu 2009).

The former targets students aged between 6 and 12 who have low school performances, high dropout rates or major social problems like single-parent families, tense relationships with their parents, parents with disabilities or alcohol problems.

The latter targets both children and adults and aims to ensure a better personal hygiene as a first step to better health, higher school attendance and eligibility to work.

The Center opened in 2010 and is said to be correlated with the health education provided by the facilitators from the County Hospital in Oradea.

Other issues related to the Roma group in Aleșd are similar to those mentioned for the previous three locations that the project targets – namely, the lack of education, the lack of identity papers, the gap between the labour supply and demand.

Additionally, the conflicts between the Roma clans which are a constant subject to mass media and the low to almost non-existent participation in the local decision-making processes are also feeding the

prejudices against the Roma community whose vulnerability is listed as a weak point by the SWOT analysis in the local development strategy (*The City Hall of Aleșd*).

4.5. Conclusions

Timișoara proves to be a relevant case study from both the size and the multicultural perspective.

On the one hand, it is the largest city in the West region (and one of the largest in the country) which has a considerable Roma ethnic group that can serve as a solid foundation for a thorough and ample research.

On the other hand, the 29 ethnic groups in the city and the successfully maintained ethnic peace which has become a distinctive local emblem broaden the range of study in the context of an increasing Roma community.

Furthermore, the gap between the rich and the poor Roma in the city adds new facets to the research aimed at getting an insight into the perceptual frames applied to the ethnic group in question.

Sânpetru Mare represents a distinct case because of its lower number of inhabitants (5900) and its ethnic structure which places both the Roma and the Serbs second to Romanians.

Thus, unlike the other three localities addressed by the research, Sânpetru Mare allows for a stereotype analysis on a smaller scale, in a cultural background which equally owes its diversity to two ethnic groups – Roma and Serbian.

Sântana has been chosen as a target location of the REDUPRE project given its notable Roma community (representing 15% of the local population) which is second only to the Romanian one.

The German and Hungarian groups hold lower shares (3.5%, 2%, respectively) and, therefore, the town can be considered an illustrative case of the prejudices that arise in the communities where the Roma and the Romanians are the two protagonists of the ethnic background.

The discrepancy between the rich and the poor Roma as well as the economic upward trend and its subsequent impact on the local labour market are two additional aspects which provide the opportunity for a thorough research of the Roma issues in the area.

Aleșd makes a different case because of its Roma community which despite being numerous (9% of the local population) is second to Hungarian (19%) and is closely followed by the Slovak group (6%). Therefore, the town provides the opportunity for analyzing the relationships between the Roma and one other ethnic group which outnumbers them as well as the relationships between the Roma and a smaller ethnic group.

Consequently, the culturally diverse background in Aleșd fosters a broad comparative analysis of the perceptual frames held by several ethnic groups in relation to the same Roma community and brings into the limelight two new entries – the Hungarian and the Slovak communities – which haven't been protagonists in any of the three other localities addressed by the research.

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ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION OF ROMA IN SLOVENIA WITH EMPHASIS ON BELA KRAJINA

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1. ROMA PEOPLE IN SLOVENIA

1.1. Immigration of Roma people to the Slovene territory

The immigration of Roma people in Europe has also left a mark in the Slovene towns. It occurred through a longer period of time and in three directions. The predecessors of Roma people who immigrated to the region of Prekmurje came to Slovenia through Hungary. To Dolenjska, Bela krajina and Posavje the Roma people came from the ex-Yugoslavian republics. A group of Roma or Sinti, which had come from Germany and Austria, immigrated to Gorenjska. In some historical sources the Roma in Prekmurje are described as Hungarian or Carpathian, the Roma in Dolenjska as Croats or white, and the Roma in Gorenjska as German or Sinti.

The largest portion of immigration came from the north-east side. Families mostly populated the border towns. Another strong wave of Roma occurred from the south-east side. These were quite the nomads and they mostly only travelled through the Slovene towns, partly also due to the persecution by the authorities (Štrukelj 2004, 26).

Šiftar believes that the Roma came to the Slovene territory before the Turks, or rather that they came with the Turkish people, or they were running from the Turks and were according to some sources announcers of the Turkish incidents (Šiftar 1970, 13).

The first presence of the Roma on the Slovene territory can be established through the preserved European historical documents, because the Slovene ones occurred later. The Episcopal judicial chronicle from Zagreb which mentions a Rom from Ljubljana in 1387 is important information because it proves the presence of Roma in Slovenia already in the 14th century.

One of the younger historical documents in Slovenia which mention Roma is a document given as a gift to the monastery Bistra in 1452. From this and other sources from that time we can discover that the name "Cigan" (=Rom) belonged to two families in the 15th century. Of great importance are also the inscriptions in the Luger's feudal book from the year 1453 and onwards. In the documents from that time we can often find expressions like "Zigeiner" or "Zygeune," which was connected to the blacksmith occupation (Štrukelj 2004, 25).

All these mentions in the historical documents are important sources and proofs, when establishing the presence of the first Roma families on the Slovene territory. We can, therefore, also conclude from the documents that some Roma families stayed in Slovenia and settled permanently in some towns. The Roma which passed through Slovenia only left their name behind.

From the 17th century onwards the mentions of the Roma have been more definite. There are many inscriptions in the judicial documents, ordinances and circulars which dealt with and arranged the Roma issues; and this demonstrates the strained relationship between the Roma and the authorities.

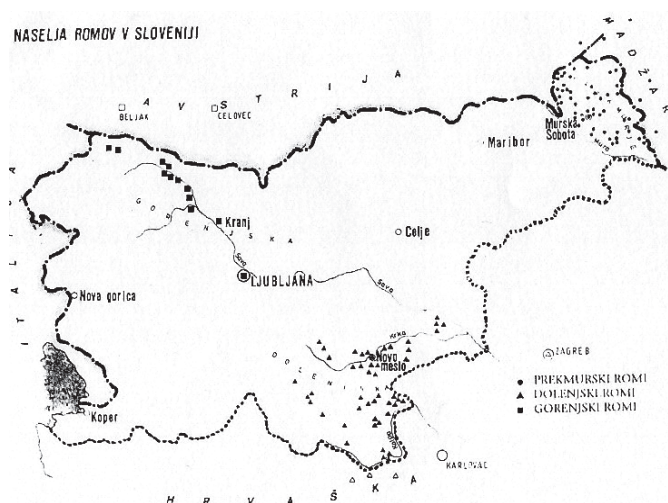
1.2. The status of Roma people in Slovenia

1.2.1. The demographic data

According to the information in the reports of the municipalities and social centres, which were gathered by the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for National Minorities, there are around 7 000 Roma; according to some unofficial information, there are 10 000 Roma people in Slovenia (Obreza 2003, 49). However, in the 2002 consensus survey only 3.246 people or 0.2% claimed to be Roma; 3 834 people defined the Roma language as their mother tongue (www.stat.si/popis2002/gradivo/2-169.pdf).

The nomads settled in the following Slovene provinces: Prekmurje, Dolenjska, Bela krajina, Posavje and partly in Gorenjska. Each group of Roma in the mentioned parts of Slovenia speaks their own Roma dialect; and the Roma are, due to their historical or traditional settlement in Slovenia, labelled as autochthonous Roma people.

Picture 1: Population of Roma in Slovenia.



Source: Štrukelj 2004, 27.

Besides autochthonous Roma there are also non-autochthonous Roma. These have in the past decades massively immigrated from the southern part of the Ex-Yugoslavia and have mostly inhabited the bigger city centres (Tancer 1994, 55).

Despite not having a native country, Roma have their individual culture and language. Most important are the preservation and development of the Roma language; due to the fact that throughout history only the oral form has been documented (Horvat 2003, 5). Nevertheless, Dr Pavla Štrukelj claims that the Roma language cannot be viewed as the combining factor which would unite the Roma in a uniform linguistic community. Quite the contrary, there are various dialects in the same country. The differences can be explained on the basis of the immigration of Roma.

In Slovenia all autochthonous groups have kept their original dialects. Therefore, we roughly have a dialect in Dolenjska, in Prekmurje and the dialect of Sinti (Štrukelj 2004, 263). However, there are also differences in these three dialects. The Roma in Bela krajina, for example, have their unique dialect.

1.2.2. Socio-economic status

The socio-economic status of Roma in Slovenia is generally poor. Their material, social, educational and occupational level is exceptionally low when compared to that of the majority population. They badly integrate in education and because of the frequent failure in this field; they fit the group of permanently unemployed; because of their low level of education. A large majority of the adult Roma is illiterate, dependant on occasional jobs and financial social support. Roma in Slovenia have no social power; they are dispersed in Roma communities and permanently marginalized. They mostly don't have basic living conditions. Rare communities are communally organized and have infrastructure which would enable normal living circumstances (Horvat 1999, 62).

Nevertheless, Roma have different socio-economic statuses in individual regions and municipalities. The highest level of development could be attributed to the Roma in Prekmurje, which mostly have the social status enabling them regular involvement of Roma children in kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools. This does not apply to the Roma in other Slovene parts, where they do not even have basic living conditions (Winkler 1999, 27).

1.2.3. Status in education

There is no special network of institutions dedicated to educating the Roma in Slovenia. Roma get education in institutions meant for the majority population. In the field of education of children they are implemented in the establishments of the school system, from kindergartens to elementary and secondary schools.

Roma children are involved in the kindergartens with educational function in three ways. The majority is integrated in the regular sections; a smaller number of children are in Roma sections or Roma kindergartens. In the following education the Roma children are enrolled in regular sections of the elementary schools. Help to Roma children in the preschool and elementary education is given by the Roma assistants, which are employed in the kindergartens and elementary schools in the regions where the Roma live. In the field of education of children the government specifically deals with and gives the schools benefits for the education of Roma (Strategies of education of the Roma in the Republic of Slovenia 2004, 11).

After the end of elementary school the Roma have all of the educational programs at their disposal, as does the majority population; but mostly in Prekmurje do the Roma actually participate, because the progress and the educational level of the Roma is somewhat higher there (Strategies of education of the Roma in the Republic of Slovenia 2004). The number of Roma which end elementary school is improving in other parts of Slovenia, but the final percentage is still low, which influences the needs of Roma for the education of adults.

In the field of the education of adults Roma are integrated in the people's universities and other establishments, which organize the education for adults. The Roma organisations or societies also play an important role in informal education of the Roma.

Winkler believes that in the last 25 years we have accomplished a great progress in integrating the Roma children in the kindergartens and schools; although we cannot be satisfied with the situation in the education of Roma. He also thinks that there are two main problems in the process of the education of Roma children. The first one is the socialisation of the children coming from different social backgrounds, with different habits and values. The second issue is the lack of knowledge of the Slovene language. In the field of education these problems receive special attention; however, the success in the current school system of the children needs to be accomplished by eliminating the language barriers and integration of the Roma language in education (Winkler 1999, 28).

1.2.4. Legal status of Roma

The Roma community in Slovenia does not have the status of a national minority; they are an ethnical community or minority, which has specific ethnical qualities: language, culture and other ethnical features.

On the level of national legislation the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia directly addresses the Roma community in the article 65, which states that the status and the special rights of the Roma community, which lives in Slovenia, is defined through law. The article 65 of the Constitution is important because of two reasons: firstly, because with this article the Roma community is determined as an ethnical group; secondly, because protection itself is guaranteed in the Constitution (Klopčič 2003, 99). Until the operation of the main law about the Roma, the local laws, based on the constitutional provision (article 65), have been used for the intent of organising the status of the members of the Roma community, which are still used today for that intent.

The Law about the Roma community in the Republic of Slovenia was passed in March 2007 and it determined the specific rights of the Roma community in Slovenia. It has been a huge step towards the assertion of specific rights of Roma, because it regulated the status of the Roma community in Slovenia; it defined the concern of the state organs and those of self-regulating local communities by realising

specific rights of the Roma communities. Besides that it also arranged the organisation of the Roma community on the national and local level as well as financing (Uradni list 2007, No. 33).

The Law about the Roma communities in the Republic of Slovenia has on the local level introduced specific working bodies for looking after the Roma community, which have been established in municipalities, where a representative of the Roma community in the town and municipality had been elected.

Provisions of the legal security of the specific rights of Roma in Slovenia are also captured in other local laws.

1.3. Intolerance towards Roma people in Europe and Slovenia through history

The Roma experienced the feudal system, developed towns, trade and craft in Europe. This was the period following the Crusades, a time of downfall of the knighthood and papacy; a period of transition from the trade of goods to monetary economy. Some authors even believe that exactly these changes and the peace, in which Europe found it, enabled the Roma to spread so quickly throughout Europe; and as nomads settled in individual lands. In the beginning the Roma were accepted with curiosity and also well-meaning pity. Later the lands wanted to get rid of them or assimilate them using force. They became the people of lower class, which were highly despised and prosecuted using various ways, using extreme brutality and cruelty. The attempts of integration of Roma present the cruellest chapter of the Roma history. This period was filled with regulations which together with fascists' ones form the most horrifying code of human gruesomeness. The integration of Roma in the civilised European society was done with the most force, by destroying them and erasing their ethnical features, which lately provide them with the foundation to be acknowledged as a nationality (Šiftar 1970, 14).

Roma were, shortly after arriving to Europe, labelled as people who bring misfortune and were prosecuted in the name of God, as states Šiftar. Because of their differences, they were not tolerated and were discriminated. The data show prosecution and enslavement of Roma already in the 14th century. The influence of the Roma people was definitely influenced by the Turkish invasion to Europe. In some historical documents there is information about the Roma help to the Turks. Due to the general adverseness of the majority population towards the Roma, it was not difficult to spread the idea that the Roma are Turkish informants (Šiftar 1970, 21).

A wave of intolerance and prosecution of the Roma was present on the Slovene territory as well. The 17th century is especially known in the history of the Indian nomads as the time of the most horrifying prosecution. The kept documents show the actual presence of the Roma in Slovenia and the convictions demonstrate the harsh conflicts with the authorities. The authorities in that time treated the Roma strictly, which is displayed in the official documents, which the Austrian authorities sent to Slovenia. One of these documents is, for example, the executioner bill from the year 1691, which testifies that the death penalty of a Rom from Kranj was carried out in Ljubljana. There are preserved two more executioner bills of the deaths of two Roma females from the years of 1723 and 1724 (Štrukelj 2004, 26).

The attitude towards the Roma is also shown by the written in the newspaper "Dolenjski list," "It is strange that in the middle of us live savages - Gypsies - without any schooling, lawless in the law and no one has mercy on them..." (Brizani 2000, 14).

In the second half of the 18th century the authorities were organising the Roma issues a bit more tolerantly and rationally. The most challenging problems for the European leaders in that time posed the Roma nomadic life style and their culture; however, individual Roma were getting employed in that period. In the time of the Marija Terezija ruling there are two important years, 1761 and 1767, for the solution of the Roma issue. In these two years the leader passed regulations to solve the problem permanently. The regulation from 1761 determined that the Roma must not be written in public documents as Roma, but as new immigrants which have been given some land in order to settle permanently. The regulation from

1767 was stricter. It prohibited the Roma the use of their mother tongue, marriage among themselves and the nomadic life style. The children were taken away from them, put in the orphanages and raised in the Christian spirit. All these regulations were profoundly harsh and forceful; they only increased the poverty and loneliness of these people. Jožef II, who continued with his mother's (Marija Terezija's) policies, wanted to achieve a faster solution of the Roma issue by additionally strengthening the law. Because he did not achieve his goal, he softened the regulations and after 1793 left the Roma to their own fate, or rather to the police authorities (Šiftar 1970, 111).

Despite everything it can be stated that the Roma led quite a peaceful life before Hitler's rise to power. Two years after taking over the reins, Hitler passed the Nurnberg law for the protection of the German bloodline. With this law the Jews and the Roma were labelled as people of lower race. Up until 1940 Roma were being individually sent to concentration camps; after that they were being sent to ghettos in groups. Until recently there was no discussion of the genocide over the Roma, because in comparison to Jews they had no publications or books to share their fate. Despite that, 3 600 000 Roma lost their lives in fascist's prosecution according to incomplete data (Šiftar 1970, 101).

After the World War II the Roma experienced a larger ethnical cleansing in the 21st century during the war on the Balkan Peninsula. In Bosna and Kosovo many were killed with the Muslims, they ended up in camps, or they still live as fugitives. They migrated to other countries, became asylum holders and due to the life in poverty, victims of various diseases. In the time of the war on Balkan many migrated to Slovenia (Brizani 2000, 17).

In the modern times there have been new forms of intolerance. There are multiple societies, for example the phenomenon of the skinheads, which spread intolerance and physical violence towards ethnical groups or minorities. The influence of the modern technology in communication enables the faster expansion of bigotry ideas and the networking of these groups in various countries (www.unionRoma.org/pueblo_in.htm).

In the past the Roma were victims of wars and conflicts in all countries. "The Roma never started Nazi-systems, wars, communist dictatorships and similar, but they were always the biggest victims in all these social forms" (Brizani 2000, 16).

Throughout history the European authorities tried to unify the Roma with the majority population. The leaders forbid their language and culture. The Roma marriages and the nomadic life style were not welcome. Despite the prosecution and the denial of the Roma culture, language and the absence of the written form of their language, all these elements have been preserved until today.

In the modern times the Roma still live in non-organised conditions and are often the victims of intolerance and discrimination. The Roma community presents one of the most marginalised groups in Europe.

2. ROMA IN BELA KRAJINA

2.1. Statistical data

The Roma, which are in the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia determined as a special community and whose status as well as special rights are defined by the law, are in larger numbers present in 20 Slovene municipalities, including all three municipalities in Bela krajina: Črnomelj, Semič and Metlika.

2.1.1. Roma communities in Bela krajina

In Bela krajina the Roma formed their homes mostly on the edge of the cities and villages in the near vicinity of the forests. In recent years individual Roma families have also moved to city or village centres.

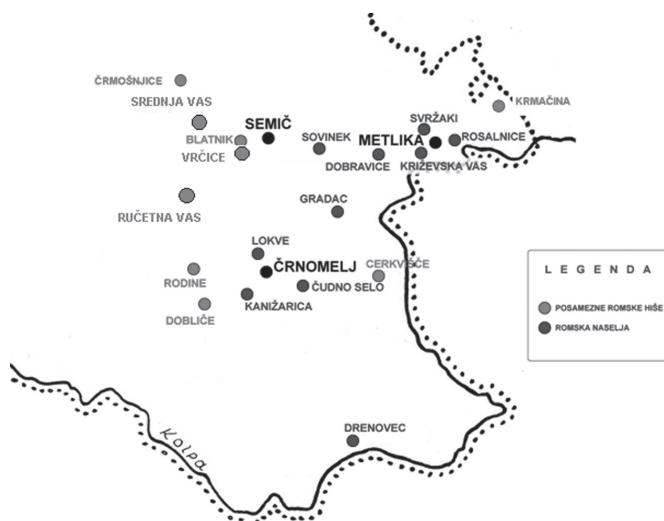
In the Municipality of Črnomelj the Roma live mostly in Roma communities on the margin of Črnomelj, where the most often form of homes are modest brick houses. A smaller number of families live in flats or houses in the city or village centres. According to the data of the Centre for Social Work Črnomelj, the Roma live in four Roma communities in Črnomelj: Lokve, Kanižarica, Čudno selo, Ručetna vas and in the block of flats in the centre. The largest Roma community in this municipality is Lokve. The communities in Črnomelj are not legal; the biggest problem presents the illegal building.

The Centre for Social Work Črnomelj gathers data about the Roma community also for the Municipality of Semič. There the Roma live in the Roma community Sovinek, in the block of flats or barracks at the end of the villages Vrčice, Srednja vas and Črmošnjice; as well as in the centre of Semič. The Roma community Sovinek is legal. The biggest issue in the community is the garbage removal, frequent family feuds and common-law relationship among relatives.

According to the data of the Centre for Social Work Metlika, the Roma live in 5 Roma communities in Metlika: Rosalnice (Boriha), Svržaki, Križevska vas, Dobravice, Gradac, on the edge of the village Krmačina and in a house of flats in the city centre of Metlika. The largest Roma community is Rosalnice (Boriha).

A bigger issue in the Roma communities in Bela krajina which have developed in the vicinity of the local roads are non-organised traffic surfaces in the communities, because almost every house has access to the local road, which is unacceptable from the side of the Directorate of the Republic of Slovenia for roads. An additional problem are non-organised sidewalks, more and more dense construction, sewage and the dumping ground for secondary raw material (*Program of measures for Roma in the Municipality of Črnomelj in the period between 2012 and 2016*).

Picture 2: Roma communities and individual houses in Bela krajina. *The bright dots present individual houses and the dark ones show the communities.*



Source: Archives ZIK, 2012.

2.1.2. The number of Roma in Bela krajina

In Bela krajina lives the autochthonous Roma population. According to the population of the local centres for social work in Bela krajina, most Roma people, 540, live in the Municipality of Črnomelj. Almost a half less, 355, live in Metlika and 212 Roma live in Semič.

According to the information of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia there were 14 694 people in Črnomelj. In the Census survey in 2002 only 85 people claimed to be of Roma nationality. Based on the information of the Centre for Social Work in Črnomelj, there were 540 Roma in the municipality in 2011, which forms 3.5% of the entire population in Municipality of Črnomelj.

Table 1: The number of Roma in their communities, Municipality of Črnomelj.

Roma community	Number of Roma
Lokve pri Črnomlju	284
Kanižarica pri Črnomlju	130
Čudno Selo	27
Drenovec pri Vinici	40
Črnomelj with surrounding villages (Rodine, Dobljče, Cerkvišče)	59
Together	540

Source: Centre for Social Work Črnomelj, 2011.

One of the reasons for that deviation of official data, when compared to the unofficial ones, could be the general acceptance of Roma in the environment; which means that the Roma defined themselves as Slovenes.

Table 2: The number of Roma in their communities, Municipality of Semič.

Roma communities	Number of Roma
Sovinek	71
Vrčice	21
Blatnik pri Črmošnjicah	14
Srednja Vas	40
Črmošnjice	20
Semič with surrounding villages	46
Together	212

Source: Centre for social work Črnomelj, 2011.

According to the information of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, there were 3 782 people in Semič in 2009; out of which there were 212 Roma in 2011, based on the data of the Centre for Social Work Črnomelj; which presents approximately 5.5% of the entire population of the municipality.

According to the information of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, there were 8 457 people in Metlika in 2009; out of which there were 335 Roma in 2011, based on the data of the Centre for Social Work Metlika; which presents approximately 3.9% of the entire population of the municipality.

Table 3: The number of Roma in their communities, Municipality of Metlika.

Roma communities	Number of Roma
Rosalnice (Boriha)	128
Svržaki	49
Križevska vas	62
Dobravice	52
Gradac	25
Metlika	12
Krmačina	7
Together	335

Source: Centre for Social Work Metlika, 2011.

The largest concentration of Roma in Metlika is in the Roma communities Rosalnice (Boriha) and Svržaki. It is characteristic for these two Roma communities that they do not move from one community to the other after marriage, which results in larger number of families. A special feature of the Roma community Rosalnice (Boriha) are also several mixed marriages between Roma and members of the majority population (Detailed description of living and social conditions of the Roma in the Municipality of Metlika 2007). The largest concentration of Roma in Bela krajina in comparison to the majority population is in the Municipality of Semič, which is probably due to the dispersion of the villages and communities in Semič.

2.1.3. The demographic features of Roma people

The principle demographic feature in the municipalities in Bela krajina and all around Slovenia is that the Roma are young, because the age group between 0-18 entails almost a half of the entire Roma population (Census, household and flats survey 2002). The majority of Roma adults still have not finished elementary school and are mostly unemployed.

According to the data of the Centre for Social Work Metlika, the Roma population in the age group 0-18 reached 48.7% of Roma in the municipality in 2010. All young members of the Roma community present potential candidates for starting their own families and building personal living spaces in the future. That is why we can presume that the currently frequent topic of illegal building or settlements will increase (Detailed description of living and social conditions of the Roma in the Municipality of Metlika 2007).

2.2. Socio-economic status of Roma people in Bela krajina

2.2.1. The education of Roma children

In Bela krajina the Roma children are included in the education through the local kindergartens and schools.

Roma children normally go to the kindergarten closest to the Roma community in which they live. In an instance of larger distance there is organised transportation for the children in presence of a professional worker of the kindergarten. There are many factors which influence the integration of the Roma children in the kindergartens, such as various living circumstances in the status of Roma, as well as education and how informed are the Roma parents. However, the integration of the Roma children in the kindergartens is important, because it helps with the elimination of the lack of knowledge of the Roma children, especially of the knowledge of the mother tongue of the majority population; that way there is a greater chance of their success in the subsequent education.

Table 4: The number of children in the first triad of the nine-year school in Bela krajina in the school year 2011/2012.

	Elementary school	Number of students in the first triad	Number of Roma	Percentage of Roma
MUNICIPALITY OF ČRNOMELJ				
1	Elementary school of Miran Jarc	124	31	25
2	Elementary school Loka	156	16	10
3	Elementary school of Commandant Stane Dragatuš	29	/	/
4	Elementary school Stari trg ob Kolpi	13	3	Do not define themselves as Roma.
5	Elementary school Vinica	50	1	2
6	Elementary school PP of Milka Šobar-Nataša	58	33	57
MUNICIPALITY OF SEMIČ				
1	Elementary school of Bela krajina Detachment Semič	91	10	11
MUNICIPALITY OF METLIKA				
1	Elementary school Metlika	221	26	12
2	Elementary school Podzemelj	46	12	26
TOGETHER		788	132	17

Source: Archives ZIK, 2012.

In the Municipality of Črnomelj the preschool Roma children are mostly enrolled in the local Kindergarten of Oton Zupančič Črnomelj. There they only had 406 children in the school year 2011/2012, from which there were also integrated 10 Roma children. The mixed Roma families normally decide to enrol the children in the integrated sections, which in general participate in the broader society well. For these Roma children there is organized a daily transportation to and from school.

A smaller number of children are enrolled in the kindergartens and the elementary schools in the Municipality of Črnomelj: Elementary school Vinica, Elementary school of Commandant Stane Dragatuš and Elementary school Stari trg ob Kolpi. There were not enrolled any Roma children in these schools in the school year 2011/2012.

In the school year 2011/2012 there was 372 children in the first triad of the nine-year school of the four elementary schools in the Municipality of Črnomelj; from which there were 4 Roma children. The largest portion of the Roma children was at the Elementary school of Milka Šobar-Nataša, a school with an adjusted program; which was 57% in the school year 2011/2012. The principle of the school explains the percentage by stating that the portion of the Roma children at the school is under the norms; and that in the last years there are less non-Roma children enrolled probably due to integration. Despite the high number of Roma children at the school, they do not have a Roma assistant employed. Because of the shorter distance between the largest Roma community Lokve and the Elementary school of Miran Jarc the percentage of Roma children in the first triad is the highest at this elementary school; and it rises up to 25%. At Elementary school of Miran Jarc and Elementary school Loka there are two Roma assistants, which are both of Roma nationalities, as part of the project Successful integration of the Roma in the education II, who is led by the People's university Kočevje. The only elementary school in municipality which has none Roma children in the first triad is Elementary school of Commandant Stane Dragatuš, because no Roma live there.

In the Municipality of Semič the Roma children are integrated in the education through Elementary school of Bela krajina Detachment Semič, where they employ an assistant for Roma, who is also of Roma nationality, through public services.

In the school year 2011/2012 there were 4 children enrolled in the kindergarten, which works within the elementary school. In the first triad of the nine-year school there were 10 children enrolled, which makes 11% of all students in the school. The Roma children have been receiving additional group assistance and an escorted transportation to and from kindergarten or school.

The special element in Semič is that the children from the Roma community Sovinek come badly groomed; that is why they are provided with bathing and washing of their clothes. The children get free school books, workbooks, other school requisites and lunch. Despite that, there are many absences from the Roma children because of the migration and other specialities in the life style of the local Roma. The children progress more slowly, they have problems paying attention and concentrating, somewhere there are present disorders of behaviour and sympathising. The most frequent reasons for failure are poor knowledge of the Slovene language, unsupportive home environment and irregular attendance. Expert services are of the opinion that the Roma children need to be involved in the preschool education, where they receive constant individual assistance and the presence of a second teacher in school to achieve greater success.

In the Report of dealing with the Roma issues in the municipality of Semič they state that besides integrating the Roma children in the preschool education, it is also significant to integrate the Roma in an elementary school for adults, including the Roma in various projects and providing them with adjusted programs (adjusted theoretical classes and co-financing of driving lessons) to get the driving license (Report of dealing with the Roma issues in Municipality of Semič 2011).

In the Municipality of Metlika the preschool children are enrolled in the Children's kindergarten Metlika. In the school year 2011/2012 there were 276 children enrolled in the kindergarten, from which there were 5 Roma children integrated into the regular sections. Metlika provides conditions for an early integration of the preschool Roma children in the organised preschool education; that is why the municipality provides funds for a half-day program, which operates for 9 months. Unfortunately, the response of the Roma parents for integration of their children is very poor (Data about the measures or programs with the goal of resolving the Roma issues, 2012).

In the school year 2011/2012 there was 26 Roma children in the first triad of the nine-year Elementary school Metlika, which is 12% of all students. At Elementary school Podzemlje there were 12 Roma children, which is 26% of all students. Elementary school Metlika employed in the same school year an assistant for Roma, as a part of the project Successful integration of Roma in education II. The assistant was of Roma nationality herself; she and an expert worker provide help to the Roma children. As a part of the same project, Elementary school Podzemelj employed an assistant for the Roma, who was not of Roma nationality. The expert workers observe quite an improvement in the field of education of the Roma children. The integration of the children in the program of elementary school is satisfying. Expert workers believe that the Roma children should participate in larger numbers in the programs of preschool education, because the lack of knowledge of the language is impacting the learning success in elementary school.

There has been a lot of effort put into the integration of Roma in kindergartens and elementary schools in Bela krajina. But there are still many who do not participate in education. Those who do are mostly unsuccessful in the early education stages.

The main issue in the early education is still a substantial drop-out rate of the Roma children. Only few manage to successfully complete elementary school or even continue the education. The majority end their school obligations with an incomplete elementary school, which means that their employment possibilities on the job market are completely closed.

2.2.2. The education of Roma adults

In Bela krajina there are various educational programs for Roma adults: people's university, the library and centres for social work. The Institute for Education and Culture Črnomelj (ZIK Črnomelj), a people's university, is the primary institution in Bela krajina for education of adults, because it offers consultancy and a whole set of educational and cultural programs. The education of Roma adults receives special attention, as it has been proved that without the support of the adults, there is no fundamental progress to be expected when educating the Roma children and adolescents.

In the last 10 years ZIK Črnomelj has vastly contributed to the improved position of the members of the Roma community in Bela krajina. Through various projects and educational programs it has strengthened the cooperation with various organisations in the area with the focus on respecting the needs and benefits of the Roma community. ZIK has in multiple ways searched for educational interests of the Roma in the field of education, offered and also carried out programs.

The method of working with the Roma is adapted to the focus group, which needs a lot of additional motivation to participate in different educational programs. The main point in working with the Roma population has been expert assistance with applying societies for public tenders, consulting with the filling in various forms, guiding them in communication with institutions and taking care of health as well as children. The education has been carried out at the seat of ZIK and in Roma communities with the Roma families. Educational programs have been co-financed by the Ministry of School and Sport as well as Municipality of Črnomelj.

In addition to the selection of general educational programs and consultancy for the Roma, ZIK Črnomelj also offers the program of elementary school for adults. In the school year 2011/2012 there were 10 Roma enrolled in the elementary school for adults in Črnomelj, Semič and Metlika. The number of students is very low when compared to the data of Roma without elementary education. For a higher number of people there probably should be more external motivation.

In Metlika some activities for Roma are organised by the Public library Metlika. Through cooperation with the Centre for Social Work Metlika they are developing the project *Roma, welcome to the library*. The goal of it is to introduce the book and the library to the Roma; as well as to gain them as regular readers or users of the library. As part of the project there are also story hours, creative workshops, puppet shows and classes for computer literacy. Last year in Metlika there were some activities for children and adults executed in the Roma community Rosalnice (Boriha) through in 2010 established Roma incubator (Data about the measures or programs with the goal of resolving the Roma issues, 2012).

In municipalities in Bela krajina with the help of local centres for social work, there is organised the program *Assistance to Roma in socialisation*, which is meant for children and adults. As a part of the program there are various learning workshops in the Roma communities.

In the following paragraphs are presented the results of research. The study was carried out as part of the project *Occupational informing and counselling for Roma*. The results demonstrate the occupational and educational interests of the Roma in Bela krajina.

ZIK Črnomelj was in the years 2003-2006 the coordinator of the project Phare 2003 – Life-long education: Occupational informing and counselling for the Roma (also called as PISR), with 9 other partners: Developmental Educational Centre Novo mesto, Centre for Education and Culture Trebnje, Public library Kočevje, People's university Krško, University for Social work Ljubljana, Institute for Ethnic Issues, Employment Service of Slovenia, Regional Office Novo mesto, Roma society Rom Črnomelj and Alianta Ljubljana. The project was co-financed by the European Union.

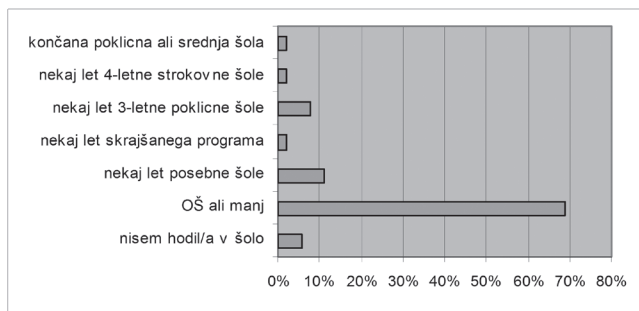
As part of the project, an overview of all studies and projects in the field of the Roma issues in Slovenia since 1995 was gathered. Then came an activity of great importance for the project; that was a research of educational and occupational interests of the Roma in Dolenjska, Bela krajina, Posavje, Kočevsko and Grosupeljsko. The survey was carried out on a sample of 774 Roma between the ages 15 and 45,

which presents 49% of the whole population in the area of the research in the selected age group. The sample was representative; because it was wide (almost half of the population) and its structure matched the population structure according to the share of females, age, educational and geographical categories.

Separately there was also made an analysis of the research of educational and occupational interests of Roma adults in Bela krajina. 238 Roma from Bela krajina participated in the survey. Based on the research, information about the self-evaluation of the literacy capabilities of the Roma in Bela krajina were obtained; which are according to the opinion of experts essential for the participation in the public life of the Roma. The average self-evaluation of literacy skills of the interviewees added up to 3.37% (on a scale from 1-5). After the comparison of the data to the opinion of the representatives of the expert public about the literacy level of the Roma adults, it was established that 21 out of 26 expert workers evaluate that the Roma have poor literacy level; meaning that they have problems with filling in forms and writing basic messages. Therefore, the Roma either misjudged their literacy, or they were not honest in their answers.

Among the interviewees was a little less than a half of those interested in participating in general educational programs (informal education), and more than a half did not wish to do the same. In the future there will need to be given more attention to the motivation the Roma, in order to get higher participation in general education; because more than a third answered that they have all the skills they need. 12% out of the 34 people stated that they do not have time to educate themselves.

Picture 3: Education of the Roma in Bela krajina. *Vertically: the first column presents those with completed vocational or secondary school; the second one presents those with a few years of a four-year technical school; the third column displays those with a few years of three-year vocational school; the next one shows those with a few years of a shortened program; the fifth column presents the Roma with some years of a special school; the sixth one displays those with an elementary school or less; the last column shows the percentage for those who have never went to school.*



Source: Žagar and Klopčič 2006, 245.

It is clear in picture 3 that the majority of the Roma in Bela krajina have elementary education or less; which is 69% or 163 people. If we take a closer look at the statistically processed data, we can conclude that in the 163 interviewees which have finished elementary school or less, there are 38% or 62 people who have finished 4 classes at the most; and there are 25% or 40 people who have ended elementary school. According to the results of the analysis of the research of the project PIRS, the lowest percentage in Bela krajina is of those who have never went to school, which is 6% or 14 people. However, this information cannot be viewed as a positive one, because it needs to be stressed that the illiteracy of the Roma is still a big obstacle in their employment. On the basis of the results it would be logical to plan activities with the goal of a larger participation of the Roma; or they should be properly

motivated to educate themselves.

The Roma in Bela krajina were also asked which occupation would they like to perform. The men mentioned jobs like a mechanic, builder, forester, professional driver and factory worker. The women gave answers like hair dresser, cleaning lady, seamstress, shopkeeper and teacher. A third of the interviewees claimed they would learn anything; and 14% or 33 people said they are not interested in anything, so they would not like to educate themselves. An important fact is the conclusion that almost a half of the participants are ready to enrol in school; however, 42% or 99 people are not willing to educate themselves.

On the basis of the research it was established that 81% of the participants are unemployed; only 10% support themselves with their own pay checks, the rest of them are dependent on the financial social security, child benefits, help of family members or additional earnings. What is interesting is the fact that 67% of people answered that they are satisfied with their status. Only a third replied that they are not pleased with their status and would like to change it. The level of satisfaction of the interviewees about their status should present the basis for consideration by the organisers of the social politics about the effectiveness of the system of the social help to the Roma families.

When asked whether they have ever been employed, 48% replied no; 3% answered they have been, but are not anymore; and 14% stated that they still are. Information displays that there needs to be additional research to find reasons for such a large share of the population which ended their employment. When asked why they stopped working, the majority answered that they were employed either for a limited time, or they became technological surplus; which means that they had the same fate as other employees or rather unemployed workers in Bela krajina.

Almost two thirds of the interviewees claimed that they are searching for work; 41% of the questioned are not looking for any employment. A quarter of the interviewees said that they are not getting work because they are uneducated; and almost an equal share expressed the opinion that their ethnicity stands in the way. Based on the answers we can conclude that despite a high level of uneducated Roma, two thirds do not see this fact as the main reason for their unemployment. Almost a third of the interviewees look for causes in the discriminatory attitude of potential employers.

The research of the project PISR displayed that the average Roma family in Bela krajina has 5 family members; which means that the general belief of large families is not correct. The survey also unveiled that 89% of the participants live in built houses, which demonstrates good living conditions. Based on the data we can assume that the Roma in Bela krajina have optimal capacities to ensure a suitable learning environment for their family members.

After the definition of the occupational and educational interests of the Roma, there were gathered the starting points for the preparation of the directions for the occupational informing and counselling for the Roma as part of the project PISR. Developed and realized was the program for training for the assignments of the Roma coordinator; there was also formed a preposition for an action plan for education of the Roma adults (Žagar 2006, 91).

In the frames of the project PISR, which had been completed in 2006, there was published a miscellany; where the work of ŽIK Črnomelj was presented in the article Learning for usability skills of the author Nada Žagar, Master of Arts, where the Roma were the focus group. The intent of the article, in which the author showcased the work with the Roma in the time period 1995-2005, was to shine a light on the meaning of the institute for the education of adults in the local area as a significant partner in the endeavour for the improvement of the status of the members of the Roma community.

2.2.3. Employment and activities with which the Roma people occupy themselves

In the past the blacksmith trade was important for the Roma in Europe. This craft is widely spread also amongst the Indian nomads, which are similar to the Roma. The Roma in Dolenjska are a part of a blacksmith family, which originates from marginal Croatian groups. The families coming from

these parts in the 19th and in the beginning of the 20th century first settled in Bela krajina and then in Dolenjska. This craft amongst the Roma has been connected to the horse trade and healing, however it is disappearing. Only some older Roma are blacksmiths (Štrukelj 2004, 111).

In the past the most frequent occupations in Bela krajina were also working in quarries and the horse trade. Women were mostly active in fortune-telling. Some Roma females in Bela krajina occupy themselves with handiwork; they make products from paper as well as birch brooms and sell these to people in the area. Begging was a widely spread way of money-making for the Roma in Dolenjska and Bela krajina. Normally begged women accompanied by children (Štrukelj 2004, 131).

Nowadays the Roma make money by picking and buying seasonal fruit. Because of the crisis, begging has started again in some places.

Based on the information given by the local offices of the Employment Service of the Republic of Slovenia, a large majority of the Roma, older than 15, are registered at a local employment service as seekers of work. The reason for many registrations is probably in the Law of Changes and replenishment of the Law for Social Protection from the year 2001, which sets the conditions under which the rightful claimant receives financial social support, which enables survival, for the time of living in the Republic of Slovenia. The condition for obtaining the financial social support, which is frequently the only income for the Roma, is registration in the records of unemployment. All recipients of the financial social support by signing the contract bind themselves to participate in various forms of education and active search for employment; otherwise the financial assistance can be taken away (Smerdu, Giodani 2003).

Employment Service Črnomelj and Metlika have the function of activating the adults in field of employment. However, the most adult Roma are without elementary school education, which means that they are practically illiterate and extremely uninteresting for the job market. That is why the role of local employment service in the education of the Roma as part of the Active Policy for Employment is to strive for higher educational level by integrating them in educational programs: this enables participation in the education of unemployed people in public programs for obtaining elementary, general, vocational, expert, and technical, or university programs.

The most often form of employment for the Roma are public services, from which there were almost no transitions to regular employment in the past. The program of public services in Črnomelj and Semič encompassed these programs:

- *Assistance in organising the Roma communities*, which was performed by the Utility services Črnomelj. 4 Roma participated;
- *Assistance to the Roma in socialisation*; 3 female Roma participated in this program: 1 at Elementary school of Bela krajina Detachment Semič, 1 at the Centre for social work Črnomelj and the last one at the Institute for education and culture Črnomelj (Employment Service Črnomelj 2012).

The *Report for solving the Roma issues in Municipality of Semič* states that there have been various programs of public services since 2007, in which the Roma have been mostly included. They stress that the material expenses for realisation of the public services are very high and they often have problems with insuring the needed financial means. They normally have problems obtaining people for carrying out the programs and besides that the Roma refuse to participate in the programs. The Roma which are employed through the public services get their frequent fines deducted from their pay checks; for the rest the fines are left unpaid or are re-qualified to prison sentences. Furthermore, the families receive high financial help and child benefits according to the number of family members; that is why they see employment as unnecessary. The municipality also states in the report that the current laws do not offer a stimulating rewards system to those who do work; because of that they are looking for additional stimulations for the Roma who get employed (financial assistance for the driving tests, priority in assigning land, higher financial support with the building of a house) (Report of dealing with the Roma issues in Municipality of Semič 2011).

In 2012 there were two programs of public services for the Roma in Metlika:

- *Assistance to the Roma in socialisation*, which was performed by the Centre for Social Work Metlika;
- *Landscaping and maintaining of public surfaces*, which was carried out by the Municipality of Metlika.

There were 7 Roma participating in public services in 2012 (Employment Service Metlika 2012).

In Metlika they are of the opinion that employment is essential in socialising the Roma, and everything else is an upgrade. The employed Roma change their social status without major assistance, which shows in maintaining the residential spaces, regular school attendance of children, personal and living hygiene. Although there is a trend of a downfall in employment, the Roma in Metlika are employed through public services. In the past years there has been a quite successful program of public services named *The Roma for Roma*; meaning that they cared for their own living environment and spaces through the public services (Detailed report of living and social conditions of the Roma in Municipality of Metlika 2007).

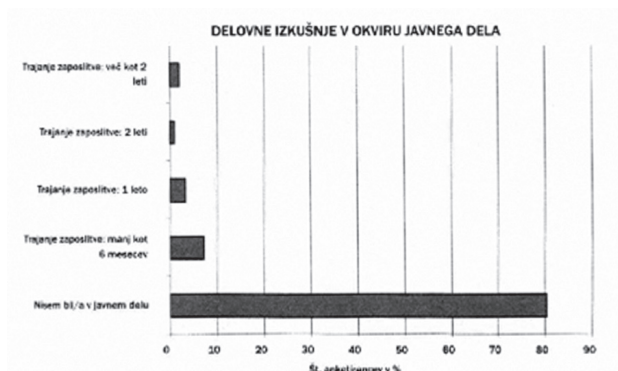
According to experiences of the employees of the local employment service, the Roma have minimal employment possibilities, because the employers are not interested in them, due to prejudice and past negative experiences. At the employment service they also stress that the Roma are mostly uninterested for work, because the pay for the job is rarely higher than the financial social support, which they receive during their unemployment period. Often the insufficient working habits influence the fact that the Roma do not persist at a job too long. The Roma women are an especially vulnerable group in the field of employment, because besides the obstacles the Roma have to face, the females also have to deal with the subordinate position in the family and the Roma community.

From 2004-2006 the Škocjan municipality performed the project *Equal: Developing partnership - Roma employment service in the wider area of Dolenjska*. There were 25 institutions participating in the project. The intent of the project was to contribute to the improvement of the social status of the Roma in Slovenia by reforming and realising the propositions for educational and employment possibilities of the Roma. As part of the project a research was performed, which explored the educational structure of potentially employable Roma, their wishes in connection to employment and about the needs of the employers for the Roma labour. The research complements the contents of the survey of occupational and educational interests of the Roma, which was carried out as a part of the project PISR.

In the research the Roma were asked about their experiences with public services and their opinion of it. Less than a fifth of the interviewees participated in the public services; more than a half of the questioned in the survey replied that they do not know anything about the public services. The interviewees see the services as a job opportunity, but simultaneously believe that these are poorly paid. The participants are bothered with the fact that there is no selection of the public services and there is no chance of regular employment (Softić and others 2007, 56).

The research also showed that most employers have not had any experience with the Roma labour; 40% of the participating employers would not employ the Roma. This fact also signals at the reality that the Roma still deal with prejudice and stereotypes on the job market. However, the unwillingness of the employers to employ the Roma can also be a reflection of their negative experiences. This is proved by the employers' answers in the research. Several employers who have employed the Roma noticed their higher absence from work. As a reason for the end of the working relationship, the majority stated indiscipline and immaturity (Strašek 2009, 86).

Picture 4: Working experiences in the public services. *The first column shows the Roma who were employed for 2 years; the next one presents those who worked for 2 years; the third column displays the Roma who worked for a year; the fourth one shows those who were employed for less than 6 months; the last column presents the Roma who have not worked in public services.*



Source: Softić and others 2007, 56.

2.2.4. Social security

The local centres for social work offer financial social support in the amount which enables survival to everyone who cannot provide means in the amount of the minimal income for themselves and their family members, due to reason they cannot control, and have also exhausted all other possibilities for obtaining the means for survival. Besides that all citizens can collect benefits for large families at the centres for social work. Due to the low level of education and poor employment possibilities the financial social assistance presents the only income for most of the Roma families (Smerdu, Giodani 2003).

The role of centres for social work, besides awarding somebody supplementary benefits, is to also motivate, or rather stimulate education of the Roma children and adults; which proceeds in the form of individual discussions.

On the basis of the report of the Centre for Social Work Črnomelj (in the following text referred to as CSD Črnomelj), where they co-financed an additional expert worker for the Roma (50% the state, 3/4 the municipality of Črnomelj, 1/4 Semič), there were 550 Roma in Črnomelj and Semič in 2011 (based on the evaluation of the CSD Črnomelj the combined number of the Roma in Črnomelj and Semič is 752 Roma) which were recipients of social benefits. In the report it is stated that the Roma families are bigger in numbers and because of this fact, the number of recipients of social benefits is higher when compared to other recipients.

The conclusion in Semič is that in the consumption of the means which the Roma receive, consultancy is of great importance; unfortunately, the Roma decline the help in this matter (Report of dealing with the Roma issues in Municipality of Semič 2007). Due to this reason, the received benefits are not used rationally.

2.2.5. Medical security

The health of the Roma population is, because of their way of life and living conditions, usually worse when compared to the majority population.

In Bela krajina the care for medical security of the Roma people is carried out by Health Centre Črnomelj and Health Centre Metlika through their medical stations and home care.

The expert workers in the field of medicine mainly stress:

- irregular responses to mandatory children vaccinations;
- doctor visits without or with a damaged, invalid health insurance card;
- because of the migration of the Roma families, the mail which informs them about vaccinations and systematic examinations of the children is regularly declined;

- unpaid additional insurance.

Besides the fact just mentioned, there are also these next issues in the medical security of the Roma:

- the majority of the population in question is illiterate and has problems with the systems of making an appointment for special examinations;
- because of poor hygiene the specialists do not like to make appointments;
- frequently there comes to disagreements with other waiting patients because the Roma do not respect the order.

(Report on dealing with the Roma issues in Municipality of Semič 2007).

In Metlika they have noticed that the medical status is very low. The most frequent diseases are that of respiratory organs, of skin and hypodermis, contagious diseases and injuries; which are mostly caused by unhygienic macro and micro environment, poor diet and an unhealthy life style (smoking, alcohol). Fertility is typical for the Roma. As the biggest problem in the field of the medical security, the municipalities see the fact that the majority of the Roma is unemployed and because of that not medically insured. The low level of awareness among the Roma about the necessity of health insurance and preventive examinations is viewed as an additional issue by the municipalities (Detailed description of living and social conditions of the Roma in the Municipality of Metlika 2007).

The health of the Roma is due to the specific features of their population, lower than in other groups of the population, dependant on the public medical security. Next to the peculiarities of the Roma culture and tradition, which is somewhere true to ancient forms of natural healing, their health is dependant also on improvements of the residential, living and hygienic conditions, employment and better social security as well on education.

In the period between October 2004 and October 2005 the Institute for Education and Culture Črnomelj was the coordinator of the project *Progress in the diet culture for protection and strengthening of the health of the Roma population* in the area of Dolenjska, Bela krajina, Posavje and Kočevsko. The goal group of the project were Roma families in 28 Roma communities in the region of municipalities: Brežice, Črnomelj, Ivančna Gorica, Grosuplje, Kočevje, Krško, Metlika, Ribnica, Semič, Šentjernej, Škocjan and Trebnje. The project was built on the principal of active cooperation of institutions: CIK Trebnje, LU Kočevje, LU Krško, RIC Novo mesto and ZIK Črnomelj. The intent of the activities performed as part of the project was:

- to make a study of the eating habits and health status of the Roma population;
- awareness of the Roma people to choose healthy food and diet;
- teaching them how to grow healthy food, and connecting various partners, as well as creating a network of partner cooperative organisation, which can contribute to keeping and strengthening of the health of the Roma.

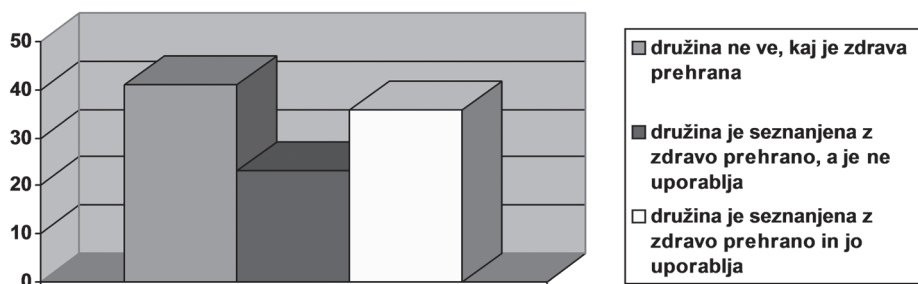
Through the activities of the project we aspired to also achieve long-term goals, like minimising regional differences in the health of the population, but stressing the health of the Roma and forming a unified strategy for improvement of the health of the Roma. On the basis of various methods of collecting data, the project was completed with the following conclusions.

Based on the gathered information from talking to experts, to the Roma people and by observing mentors in the Roma communities as well as final reports of cooperative organisations, it was possible to form the opinion that the eating habits of the Roma population in the past several years have quite changed. This was naturally assisted by their modified lifestyle, changed residential conditions and, of course, various social transfers.

In the last decades the Roma lifestyle in the fields discussed has quite reformed, although gradually. It has changed to the point where the settlements of the families here have become constant. Their diet has also been modified, because the permanent settlement enables storage of food in their homes, breeding of various domestic animals and a more regular way of diet. The residential conditions in which the Roma are living have also changed. Former most frequent form of residence, the barracks, has been almost completely replaced by built houses, which provide better living conditions and also more

qualitative diet possibilities. An important influence on the quality of life and diet of the Roma also holds the receiving of financial social and child benefits, because these mostly present the only income to the Roma. Despite some factors of improvement, majority of the Roma families live in poverty and straitened circumstances, which influences the general poor health of the Roma population (Research Progress in the diet culture for protection and strengthening of the health of the Roma population 2005).

Picture 5: Awareness of Roma population of healthy diet.



In picture 5 one can see the results of 104 informal discussions with mentors in the Roma communities. The data show that 41 visited families (first column) do not know, what healthy diet is, because they have not received sufficient information, or do not wish to know. 23 families (the second column) believe that they are familiar with good nutrition, but are not consuming it because they do not have enough knowledge to prepare such food, or they do not like vegetables and fruit. 36 families (the third column) are of the opinion that they are informed about proper diet are practicing it. Among the reasons for the consummation they often listed that it is healthy, or that they eat it due to health issues.

In a direct contact with the members of the Roma community, the mentors found only a few features of the Roma food, which are, besides cooking in a caldron, also baking meat and cake called “potica” on embers, where they in the past normally baked hedgehogs. One of the visited families also shared that in a time of disease they eat “dog” soup, which is probably prepared from the meat of a dog. Other peculiarities of the Roma kitchen were not recorded by the mentors during the observations or interviews. However, they concluded that the Roma are rather reserved when it comes to talking about their eating habits; because they are likely afraid of prejudice and stereotypes, which the majority population has towards the Roma lifestyle and diet (Research Progress in the diet culture for protection and strengthening of the health of the Roma population 2005).

2.2.6. Prevention of criminal acts

In Bela krajina the expert offices put a lot of effort also in the prevention of criminal acts. The security issue shows itself in the following fields:

- crime (estate crimes: petty thefts, breakings-in, vandalism of someone's property, possession of weapons, violence);
- public order (loud parties, shootings,...);
- safety of the traffic (driving without a license, unregistered and technically unsafe vehicles).

Other important problems:

- too long processes (the time period between the police measure and the legal sanctions is too long);

- the Roma in the institutions where they serve their sentences, do not change positively, but rather fulfil their negative behavioural patterns.

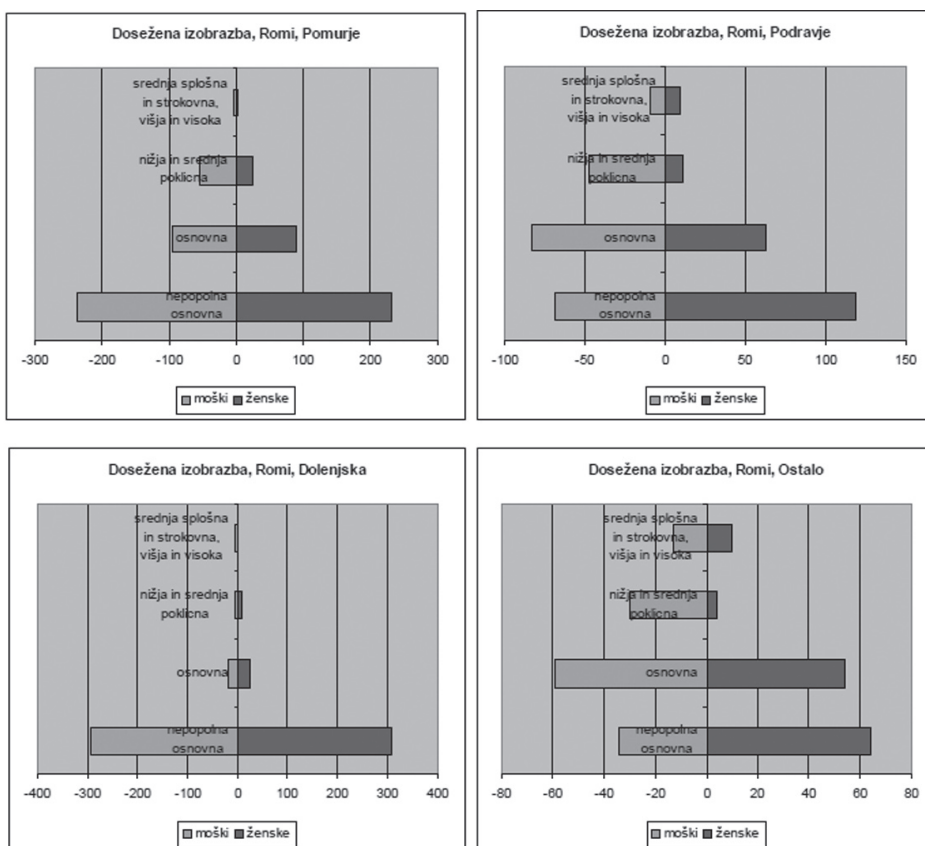
Among the Roma communities stands out Sovinek in Municipality of Semič, where the Roma are not interested in improving their life styles (Report of dealing with the Roma issues in Municipality of Semič 2007).

Those in charge of the prevention of the criminal acts in Bela krajina stress that the repressive measures will not bring the expected results. That is why they greatly invest in preventive activities and so search for more wholesome solution to the so called Roma issues.

2.2.7. A short comparison between Roma population from Bela krajina and other parts (Especially from Prekmurje) in the socio-economic field

The Roma community in Bela krajina differentiates from those in Prekmurje in the socio-economic field.

Picture 6: This graphic displays the level of education of Roma population in individual regions (Pomurje, Podravje, Dolenjska and other regions) in 2012. *Light grey presents male respondents; dark grey presents female respondents. Level of education (from bottom to the top): not completed primary school, primary school, vocational education, secondary or higher education.*



Source: Klopčič 2002, 131.

In order to improve the socio-economic status, the education is essential, because higher education enables more employment possibilities. Based on the data about the educational structure among the Roma, we can logically conclude that in Prekmurje the status of the Roma community is somewhat better; however, it is not dramatically different in comparison to the Roma in Bela krajina.

In the region of Dolenjska and Bela krajina 98.2% unemployed Roma have not finished elementary school; in Prekmurje this percentage is 90%. The highest number of retired Roma is in Prekmurje, which points at the fact that there is the highest number of regularly employed Roma in the country.

According to the information of local employment service, where the unemployed Roma are registered, some employers have a negative attitude towards employing the Roma. Despite that, they believe the main reason for high unemployment of the Roma is their extremely low educational structure.

2.3. Organisation of Roma people in Bela krajina

2.3.1. Roma societies in Bela krajina

In Slovenia the Roma communities are mostly combined in umbrella Roma organisation Association of the Roma of Slovenia (in the following paragraphs ZRS). Since 1991 this union has been actively cooperating at presenting the status of the Roma in Slovenia and has been advocating their interests on the national and international level. It combines 20 Roma communities; in the frames of the organisation there are also political and female forums as well as the forums of the Roma counsellors. The work of ZRS is crucial because it has been able to achieve numerous successes with discipline, order and persistence.

Due to disagreements with the work of ZRS, 3 Roma societies in 2007, from which 2 were from Bela krajina, exited the association and formed the Association for the Slovene Roma Communities for Dolenjska, Bela krajina and Posavje; which is seated in Črnomelj. Besides this association there are also 5 Roma societies in Bela krajina. In the Municipality of Črnomelj there are no less than 3: Roma society Rom, Cultural Roma society Vešoro and Roma society Jagori. In the Municipality of Semič there is the Roma society Roma and in Metlika there is Roma society Kham.

In the past years the societies applied for public tenders of the Ministry of Culture and tenders of individual municipalities. Based on approved projects, they have gained means for work in the cultural and sport field. Because of the lack of expert knowledge for content and financial management of the projects, the interest of the societies for project work has decreased.

Many societies in Bela krajina display partition and the lack of connectedness not only among the municipalities but also within the societies.

2.3.2. Political participation of Roma people

By accepting the changes and replenishments of the Law of the Local Self-government in 2002, the Order of the Supreme court of the Republic of Slovenia about the political participation of the Roma community on the local level which defines the right of the members of the Roma people to have at least one representative in the municipality councils in which they live, was very attention-grabbing in media.

In Bela krajina the Roma are historically settled and have next to the general voting right, which they are entitled to as Slovene citizens, an additional voting right which enables them to elect a Roma counsellor from the special Roma election claimants.

In Bela krajina the Roma counsellors were elected in all three municipalities in 2011. The Roma community or their interests are advocated on the local level by the elected representatives. However, the expert offices have established that there is still no cooperation among the Roma and the majority population. The civil parishes have not been doing enough in including the Roma in their bodies and

actions in solving the local issues. The Roma are also not connected and organised enough in the area of the municipalities in Bela krajina.

2.4. Legal status of Roma people

2.4.1. Legal norms which arrange the status of Roma people in Bela krajina

In Bela krajina the status of the Roma is managed with specific local acts or programs.

2.4.2. Passed policies and strategies to arrange the status of Roma people in Bela krajina on the local and national level

The Law of the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia determines in the article 7 that in the municipality where in line with the law which manages the local self-government, there is elected a representative of the Roma community in the local council; in the local council is formed a special working body for watching over the status of the Roma community. In the lines of the mentioned law there are these special working bodies in all 3 municipalities in Bela krajina, which monitor the status of the Roma community, give opinions and cooperate in solving possible problems.

In accordance with the *National Program of Measures for the Roma in the Republic of Slovenia for the period of 2012-2015* and with the Law on the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia, the operators of the measures must prepare and adopt detailed regional programs, in which they will specifically define the realisation of the measures they operate; and foresee the needed financial means in their financial plans. The National Program among other things defines that the self-governing local municipalities are direct operators of: 1) *the measure 4.1.2.1. on the preparation of the entire strategic framework as the basis for concrete programs and projects of managing the Roma communities and on the definition of areas of Roma communities as a part of the procedure of the preparation of the local spatial plan (Legalisation on the Roma communities)*« and 2) *the measure 4.1.2.2. on the implementation of the implied solutions, goals and assignments which have been prepared by the expert group for solving the issue of the Roma communities in the framework of preparing the local spatial plan for individual Roma communities.*« On the basis of these two measures could the local communities improve the living conditions for the members of the Roma communities, in cooperation and assistance of the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning and other ministries and government offices in charge as well.

The municipality of Črnomelj has formed the *Program of measures for the Roma in the municipality of Črnomelj 2012-2016*, in which it performs the described solutions, goals and assignments. The spatial planning and ensuring of infrastructure in the communities falls in the authority of the municipalities. Because of this, Črnomelj also prepared *Local spatial plan* (in the following mentioned as OPN), which was passed in October 2011 and it entails the management of the Roma communities. By passing the OPN, a foundation for all other concrete activities for improvement of the status of the Roma communities, like spatial and environmental management, restorations and legalisation of the Roma communities, was established. The biggest issue with the Roma communities is the construction of built objects without plans and documents, which the Roma place on private properties; that is why problems arise when trying to legalise the houses. A solution presents the possibility that the Roma gradually buy the properties on which they live. In this manner there have been some constructions legalised; however, the municipality stresses that the problems with solving the purchase of the land and the legalisation of the objects cannot be solved without willingness and cooperation of the Roma themselves (Program of measures for the Roma in the municipality of Črnomelj 2012-2016).

In the Municipality of Semič they have been carrying out the Program of solving the Roma issues since 1995 based on the agreement of the Local council of the Municipality of Semič. The program

entails: the program of legalisation and construction of the community Sovinek, program of education of the Roma children, program of education of the Roma adults, program of health security, program of cultural activity, program of preventing criminal acts and preventive work with the Roma as well as program of social work. The program is in its elementary activities consistent to the Program of measures for the Roma in Slovenia. In Semič there is the Commission for Overseeing the Status of the Roma Community in the municipality of Semič for the mandate term of 2010-2014, which has 7 articles. Its assignments are:

- overseeing and dealing with the status of the members of the Roma community in the municipality;
- dealing and giving proposals as well as initiatives for the questions which are connected to the status of the members of the Roma community and their rights;
- actively cooperating in realising the developmental program of the municipality, especially with the programs and solving questions which are connected to the status of the members of the Roma community and the developments of it in the municipality;
- dealing with questions linked to the preservation of the Roma language and culture;
- cooperating with the Roma societies and other organisations in the municipality.

(Report on dealing with Roma issues in Municipality of Semič 2011).

The municipality of Metlika in cooperation with other institutions is actively involved in solving the Roma issues. There are means assured in the budget yearly, especially for managing the living conditions. They are aware that the field of managing the spatial organisations of the Roma communities essential for the further socialisation and integration of the Roma. Metlika is in the stage of preparing a new Local spatial plan. In the preposition are defined the Roma communities; which means that they will be legalised after the passing of the proposition (data about the measures or programs with the goal of resolving the Roma issues, 2012).

2.4.3. Evaluation of the realisation of the legislation, policies and strategies in Bela krajina

We evaluate that all municipalities in Bela krajina are actively involved in solving the Roma issues; by stressing the management of communities and their infrastructure, because these are the essential condition for improving the conditions.

2.5. The relationship between the Roma people and the majority population

We can learn most about the relationship between the Roma and the majority population from the local media.

2.5.1. The status of Roma people in the local media

Bela krajina is a region on the south-east of Slovenia and is thought of as a part of Dolenjska. That is why the media in Dolenjska also cover the region of Bela krajina. The media reporting about Dolenjska and Bela krajina most frequently sum up current affairs about the Roma. These articles are mostly about the offences and conflicts.

The problems are the most frequent reason for the articles about the Roma; especially if these problems change into conflicts. By stereotyping and generalising the Roma are portrayed as culturally different (they are lazy and are supported by the social benefits), deviant (theft is supposedly their characteristic); besides that they are presented as those who are a risk for our cultural order; with this is meant only the majority population. The mostly used types of representation in the media through which the Roma enter in the media space are generalisation, stereotyping, criminalisation, the opposition between us

and them as well as problematisation (Petković, 2006).

In the Roma miscellany VIII they stressed that the media reporting about the Roma originates from the disposition that the Roma are different from the majority population. Their differences are so self-evident and definitive that they need no particular explanation. With special techniques of stereotyping and generalising the media focus on individual negative features of the Roma, like the cultural diversity, deviance and threat to the majority population (Horvat, 2006).

Although some believe that the fundamental reasons for the media reports on the Roma are the problems and conflicts; after going through the articles of the local media we concluded that they also sum up the reports of events which take part on the Day of the Roma, Roma projects, social or other activities of the Roma. However, it is true that these articles are fewer; probably because of inactiveness of the Roma in the social life.

After looking through the news which various media pass in connection to the same content or the Roma issues, one can find insufficient and subjective giving of information; and with this misleading the public. However, in principle there are no articles which would directly initiate intolerance and discrimination. Some media enable comments when publishing news on their web sites, which can be used by anyone using pseudonyms. Some commentaries are on the borderline of the hostile speech and it can be said that they express intolerance of the majority population.

The Law on Radio-television Slovenia was passed in 2005 which entails provisions of the integration of the Roma population in the media. Teja Lesjak wrote a dissertation in 2005 titled *Roma in the Slovene media and the Roma media in Slovenia*, where she concluded that the Roma community has limited access to the media. This is shown in multiple factors, like the low number of the Roma media, lack of financial means for production of the Roma shows and worse trained Roma journalists. The author explains that the Roma mostly participate in shows as informers and not as creators or hosts. Roma shows mostly fill uninteresting times in the program and are so more frequent on the radio than on television. The shows are prepared only by few radio and television frequencies with the status of special importance in the area where the Roma live; for commercial media the Roma are not market-interesting. The author also writes in her work that in some shows there are still expressed unconfirmed information and stereotypes about the Roma (Lesjak 2008, 77).

The life and work of the Roma is reported about in 2 Roma shows in the provinces of Dolenjska and Bela krajina.

The local television station TV Novo mesto-Vaš kanal prepares the Roma show *Behind the sun – Šukham*. The show is bilingual. It is made partially in the Roma production and has the status of a television program with special importance. In the show, whose author and editor is Fanika Povše Konec, presents the history, life, culture and traditions of the Roma, by focusing on Dolenjska and Bela krajina. Through the show they want to encourage the people to view the Roma more objectively and to persuade the people to demand coexistence. The show is broadcast every first Monday of the month at 17:30. Once a month viewers can also watch the re-run (Lesjak 2008, 71).

Korako angle - A step forward is the radio show which was first played in 1995. Nowadays it is broadcast at the radio station Studio D, now named Radio Aktual; which is the regional radio station of Dolenjska and Bela krajina and has a status of a radio program with a special importance. The show, which lasts 60 minutes, was for many years prepared by Lojze Bojanc, but is now run by Ema Skrt. The show can be heard every Sunday at 21:00. It is completely in Slovene. Sometimes participates the Roma journalist Bogdan Miklič, part-time member of staff at RTV Slovenia; he translates the contents from Roma to Slovene.

3. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the status of the Roma community in Slovenia and more detailed in Bela krajina has displayed that there have been passed various measures to improve the situation of the Roma on the national and local level in the past few years. Although the residential conditions in the Roma communities have been upgrading, there are no expected results in the field of higher educational level and higher employment rate in the Roma community.

The results of the analysis mostly show that stimulations which would motivate the Roma to participate in education and to reach higher level of education need to be found; because this way it would be possible to improve the status of the Roma on the employment market. The current conditions in Slovenia are obviously working in the opposite manner.

Higher educational level, higher employment rate and with this participation in the social life, the Roma population would be equated with the majority population in many elements. This would also surely minimise the prejudice and stereotypes.

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Interview with the host of the radio show Korako angle — korak naprej at the radio station Studio D/Aktual, Lojze Bojanc.

Interview with the vice-principle of the Kindergarten of Oton Zupančič Črnomelj, Milena Novak.

Interview with the principle of the Elementary school with adjusted program of Milka Šobar-Nataša, Matjaž Barič.



Prof. Dr. Ilona Tomova (Institute for Population and Human Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences – IPHS, Sofia, Bulgaria), Prof. Gian Luigi Cecchini (IGES – International Institute for Legal and Economic Studies for Development, Gorizia, Italy), Prof. Dr. Silvo Devetak (ISCOMET – Institute for Ethnic and Regional Studies, Maribor, Slovenia), Ms. Ilona Mihaieş (Euroregional Centre for Democracy, Timisoara, Romania), Prof. Ezio Benedetti, (IGES), Ms. Liliya Makaveeva (Association Integro, Razgrad, Bulgaria), Dr. Florin Moisă (Resource Centre for Roma Communities, Cluj Napoca, Romania) and Ms. Jasmina Klotčnik (ISCOMET) at the first REDUPRE kick-off meeting, March 2011, Maribor, Slovenia (from left to right).



Prof. Ilona Tomova at the presentation of the REDUPRE project at the International Roma Day' exhibition, 2011, Sofia, Bulgaria.



Public opinion survey in Razgrad, Bulgaria.



Mag. Nada Žagar (Institute for Education and Culture - ZIK, Črnomelj) is addressing the participants of the first REDUPRE workshop, December 2012, Črnomelj, Slovenia.



Mr. Janez Doltar (Municipality of Novo mesto, Slovenia) is presenting his personal experiences (first REDUPRE workshop, December 2012, Črnomelj, Slovenia).



Working atmosphere at the first REDUPRE workshop "Social economy and economic reinsertion programs for Roma: pros and cons," December 2012, Timișoara, Romania.

+	-
1 Familia - respectul față de cel în vârstă	Educația
2 Cultura/Tradiția - port, cultura - transmiterea talentului nativ. (lăutări, țene etc.) - obicei nativ	Lipsa de Comunicație - neîncredere, stereotipurile etc.
3 Schimbare - adaptabilitate prin impunerea de valori	Lenie, - plăcerea de a câștiga un ban "neînștit" <i>plăcut</i>
4 Instinctul f. ridicat de supraviețuire	Hotie, demagogie etc.

Training materials; first REDUPRE workshop, December 2012, Timișoara, Romania.

CHAPTER II

**SHORT PRESENTATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF »IN-
DEPTH INTERVIEWS« WITH LOCAL PERSONALITIES
INVOLVED IN ROMA “AFFAIRS” AND OF THE OPINION
SURVEYS OF LOCAL POPULATION REALISED WITHIN
THE REDUPRE PROJECT**

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INTRODUCTORY COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN RESULTS OF THE OPINION SURVEY REALISED IN BULGARIA, ITALY AND SLOVENIA

1. Methodological Notes

For the successful execution of the project objectives, the REDUPRE research team designed a detailed questionnaire exploring stereotypes and prejudices against Roma, social distances between them and the local non-Roma population containing predominantly five-level rating scales. The major purpose of the questionnaire was to measure various aspects concerning the representations towards the Roma. Items measuring both the old-fashioned racism and such aiming at disclosing forms of modern, symbolic and aversive racism were incorporated in the project questionnaire.

Using a preliminary structured sample, based on social-demographic data for the district of Razgrad in Bulgaria, the region Friuli Venezia Giulia in Italy and the area of Bela Krajina – Slovenia, the project teams selected and interviewed respondents who represented different social and ethnic groups. For financial reasons the number of interviewed respondents was strongly limited in number and the conducted survey should be referred to as preliminary or pilot. The number of respondents was as follows: 70 in Bulgaria (63 non-Roma and 7 Roma), 66 in Italy (56 non-Roma and 10 Roma) and 81 in Slovenia (40 non-Roma and 41 Roma).

Given the above, the presented survey results below should be referred to as comparatively conditional and they, respectively, suggest a number of reservations when it comes to interpretation. It is not by accident that we do not focus on particular numbers; the representativeness of the calculated numbers does not correspond to high scientific standards. The descriptions at hand should sound more like well-grounded hypotheses. Data were processed and analysed using the application packages STATA, version 9.2 and SPSS, version 19. In addition to the one, two and multidimensional distributions, we have also employed analytical methods to calculate tetrachoric correlation coefficient for binary variables (Edwards and Edwards 1984), the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (Spearman 1904) and the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test (Mann & Whitney 1947; Wilcoxon 1945).

In Romania, the selected respondents of non-Roma ancestry were professionals having university/college degrees. It is not surprising that their answers are quite identical and politically correct. They differ significantly from the comparative data from European Value Survey 1999 and 2008, EUREQUAL 2009, or the international survey on Roma representations (1999). They also differ very much from the data from the other three countries which conducted the project survey. It can be argued that the Romanian colleagues did not manage to measure the stereotypes, prejudices and social distances towards the Roma; de facto, they disclosed that particular population groups, i.e. highly educated professionals, provided politically correct answers to the questions. In their own words (*Euroregional Center for Democracy*):

The survey was conducted by us who are non-Roma and also representatives of an NGO that promotes democracy and equal opportunities. Before the interview, respondents asked us to make a short description of the REDUPRE project and its objectives. Afterwards, when we interviewed them, we've noticed that they were choosing those answers that were politically correct in order to prove that they

were aware of international and European laws, policies, recommendations, etc., and that they did not have any prejudices or stereotypes. It is also true that we included in the sample people who had a superior level of education because we pre-tested the questionnaire on a small number of respondents, and found that those having a poor education could not understand and answer the questions.

The survey was conducted in the West region... known as an emblem of multiculturalism and tolerance where different ethnic groups have peacefully lived together for ages. So this may be a very strong reason for similar answers.

Many respondents found the questionnaire too long or the answer options too many, and tended not to listen the answer options until the end. In other words, many proved to have a superficial approach when answering... Unfortunately, we could not correct their conduct as our job was to politely ask the questions and put down the answers.

Taking into account that our data from Romania cannot disclose the representations of the Roma in Western Romania and can only provide data from informed professional groups complying in their answers with CE recommendations on non-discrimination and politically correct speaking when it comes to a vulnerable ethnic group, we consider impossible to attempt any juxtapositions with the results from other project countries. All cases which substantially and methodologically allow incorporation of pieces of information from Romania in our analysis will be used so that we can depict the best possible and detailed picture in the four countries.

2. Social Image of the Roma

A number of items in the questionnaire were meant to construct the generalised social image of the Roma. Positive answers to five statements provided for a positive social image. These were: "Roma people contribute to the cultural diversity and richness in our country;" "they give us a good example when it comes to taking care of elderly parents;" "they teach us how to value not only the economic aspects of life but also the social ones;" "they provide us the opportunity to prove that we are a tolerant society;" and "we can be proud that the Roma people prefer to live in our country."

Positive answers to five other statements were meant to describe the negative social image of the group. These were: "Roma people create a negative image about our country;" "they are not attached to our national identity;" "they are a personification of the lack of development (counter-development) in our country;" "if there were no Roma people in the country, racism would not have been a problem" and "I feel ashamed because there are Roma people in our country."

Data show a specific ambivalence of the attitude towards the Roma in Bulgaria, Italy and Slovenia. Bulgarian respondents seem to have the most positive image about the Roma; about 1.5 times more often than the Italian and Slovenian respondents they agree with statements deriving information for a positive social image of the Roma. The group of those Bulgarians who positively responded to all five positive social image statements is two times as large as the same group of Italians; none of the Slovenian interviewees agreed with all the five statements. At the same time, the Bulgarian respondents have the largest proportion of people who agreed with statements which derive information about the negative social image the Roma. Bulgarians do not feel uneasy to openly declare their attitude, stereotypes and prejudice towards the different. To a large extent, this can be attributed to the fact that during the post-communistic period, politicians and media made the public perceive the nationalistic and racist discourses as an acceptable norm in society. Quite often, ethnocentrism and the negative attitude towards "the others" are presented as "patriotism" and in terms of hate speech Bulgarian society has yet to make steps from legislation to practice. Electronic and printed media continue to announce the ethnicity of perpetrators of crimes or people who have committed morally reproachful deeds when they are Roma or Bulgarian Turks. Both of these ethnic groups are often presented by media and politicians from political parties (represented in parliament) as a threat for the national interests in demographic,

political, social and cultural sense.

Italian respondents (and to some extent their Slovenian counterparts) have learnt that it is unacceptable to openly express negative attitudes towards a particular ethnic, religious, racial or other vulnerable group. For instance, this very project survey established that only among the Italians respondents the proportion of those who ascribed to the Roma a negative image is equal to the proportion of those who associated them with a positive image. It is hard to detect prejudices and negative attitudes towards the Roma among Italian and Slovenian respondents in case the negative feelings and stereotypes are unambiguously and openly put into words. To a higher extent than among Bulgarians, the old-fashioned racism among Italians and Slovenians has been replaced by different forms of modern racism. A survey indicator that signals for prejudices towards the Roma is the very small proportion of positive traits which the Italian and Slovenian respondents were likely to ascribe to them. Another such indicator is the relatively high proportion of those who consider that “too many” Roma people live in their countries given that the number of Roma population in Italy and Slovenia is about 0.2% – 0.5% of the total population.¹

Later, we shall specify further grounds for the following hypotheses: the process of replacing the old-fashioned racist practices with new modern versions has gathered more momentum in Italy and Slovenia than in Bulgaria, and that specific characteristics of modern racism exist in the three countries.

3. Roma Stereotypes

One of the methodological tasks of the project survey conducted in Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and Slovenia was to test which methods and scales for measuring prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination attitudes work effectively and, in particular, whether the use of methodologies based on Katz and Braley's adjective checklist can be justified at the start of the 21st century.

Results from the 1997 international study on Roma representations conducted in seven countries under the leadership of Prof Juan-Antonio Perez² show that in contrast to Western Europe the transition from old-fashioned to modern racism has considerably lagged behind in the Eastern-European countries. The majority of the respondents in Romania and Moldova (and in a less degree – in Bulgaria as well) felt comfortable with openly expressing prejudiced attitudes towards Roma. This was not the case with the representatives from the Western Europe but the change towards modern racism there was not unanimous either. The lowest degree of the old-fashioned racism was measured in Spain and France. Italians were much more inclined to express openly their prejudiced attitudes towards the Roma than Spanish, Portuguese and French respondents.

Data from the conducted project survey provide sufficient grounds to hypothesise that, for about fifteen years, Bulgarians have shortened their distance from Italians in terms of respondents' inclination to openly express negative stereotypes and prejudices. If this hypothesis is valid (please, take into account that the limited number of respondents and the regional specificity of the sampling process for our current survey might have produced a significantly distorted situation from that on national level), it is necessary to try to explain this change.

At first glance, the possible explanations can be explored in two directions: on one hand, which are the factors which have brought modern racism to Bulgaria in spite of the fact that politicians and media still widely use racist discourses to a very high extent in the country and that the financial and economic crises might have negatively affected stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination attitudes towards the

¹ More than 50% of the Slovenian respondents consider that the number of Roma people in their own country is very large. The actual situation is that about 10 thousand Roma people (0.5%) live in the country. At the same time, only 2% of the respondents believe that too many Italians and Hungarians live in Slovenia; the situation is that the number of people from these minorities also amounts to approximately 10 thousand people.

² This survey was conducted in Bulgaria, France, Italy, Moldova, Portugal, Romania and Spain.

Roma. On the other hand, it is also necessary to search for explanations of a possible increase of negative representations against the Roma in Italy for the past few years. A possible explanation could be that since 2001 the increased number of illegal Roma immigrants from Romania and Bulgaria to Italy has led to more repressive actions against them by the police, local authorities and extreme-right groups in addition to the enhanced number of prejudiced media representations of the Roma migrants. Given the above, the existing prejudices against the Roma should have been activated and open expression of negative attitudes and stereotypes towards the Roma has become more acceptable (when people see how this is being openly done by politicians and the media). Other possible explanations can be related to the role of the financial and economic crises, the increased unemployment and the restrictions of social rights in Italy which might have led to reinforced negative attitudes and stereotypes towards the Roma and increased willingness for discriminatory behaviour against them within the spirit and assertions of the Realistic Conflict Theory and Social Dominance Orientation Theory.

From methodological point of view, we recommend Allen's (1996) adjective generation technique to ascertain the content of stereotypes at a given point in time. The differences in words generated from time A to time B could indicate how stereotypes of the Roma might be changed. And when data is being interpreted, it is necessary to take into account Devine and Elliot's (1995) warning that the adjective checklist is actually measuring personal beliefs (or willingness to publicly state those beliefs) about the truth of racial/ethnic stereotypes. More techniques measuring the modern forms of expressing/covering racism should be applied.

We also used some techniques measuring the modern forms of expressing racism through a set of much contextualised items representing a stereotype. In this case, the majority of respondents from the three countries demonstrated that they share the widespread stereotypes and prejudices towards Roma people. A great deal of them were formed or strengthened by prejudiced negatively stereotyped images about the Roma which are disseminated with impunity by media and politicians. These are stereotypes like: "Roma are not law-abiding citizens and because of that they are dangerous for society;" "Rural population is a victim of thefts and violent offences committed by Roma;" "Roma embezzle social payments funds at the expense of the elderly, the disabled, the children and the single parent families;" "to a very high degree Roma people create insecurity in the public space through thefts, mendicancy, fraud and vandalism." Between half and two thirds of the respondents from the three studied countries expressed agreement with the above prejudices.

In Bulgaria, the heightened media attention to early marriages and childbirths, domestic violence and the cases when children were abandoned by their parents led to an increased stigmatisation of Roma. This is probably the major reason why Bulgarian interviewees much more often than their Slovenian and Italian counterparts express agreement with the statement "a substantial proportion of Roma are careless parents." In Bulgaria, where about 5% of the population identify themselves as Roma and experts argue that their actual proportion should be around 10%, politicians (including members of parliament) and media systematically present them as "a demographic and cultural threat for the nation." Politicians and media carelessly spread "demographic prognoses" that if high fertility is preserved among the Roma together with the current very low fertility among Bulgarians, fifty years from now Bulgarians will become minority in their own country and hundred years from now they will probably become extinct as an ethnic group. For years, media and politicians have been out of control in terms of hate-speech and even now this very type of control is rather weak and ineffective.

The most stable traits ascribed to Roma people by two-thirds of the respondents in the three countries are that Roma people violate law and order on regular basis and that they are inclined to use reproachable practices to make their living. Italians are less likely than Bulgarians and Slovenians to blame Roma people that they embezzle the social security funds.

Statistical analyses show that the higher level of education neither leads to reduction of the strength of stereotypes nor presumes readiness to openly express a negative stereotype when it comes to contextually presented stereotypes in Italy, Slovenia and Bulgaria. Furthermore, no relationship between the level of

prejudice towards the Roma and the self-affiliation with certain stratum of respondents was established. It was only in Slovenia where an association between certain level of prejudice and the affiliation with certain stratum of respondents was observed: the poorer the non-Roma respondents, the more they disagree with statements like “Roma embezzle social payments funds at the expense of the elderly, the disabled, the children and the single parent families” ($\rho=-0.44$; $p<0.01$); “To a very high degree Roma people create insecurity in the public space through thefts, mendicancy, fraud and vandalism” ($\rho=-0.35$; $p<0.05$). In Bulgaria, as well, the worse the economic situation of the non-Roma respondents, the more they disagree with the statement that “Roma embezzle social payments funds at the expense of the elderly, the disabled, the children and the single parent families” ($\rho=-0.34$; $p<0.05$). Analyses of Slovenian data established the following proportional relationship: the more respondents agree that those “who break the law should receive tougher punishments,” the more often they agree with another stereotype “usually, governmental representatives do not observe their duties and let the Roma people avoid responsibility for the violations and breaches they commit and the rest of the people are expected to pay for” ($\rho=0.42$; $p<0.05$). A relatively weak relationship was established between those Bulgarian respondents sharing strong restrictive attitudes and those who supported the statements: “a substantial proportion of the Roma are careless parents” ($\rho=0.31$; $p<0.05$) and „to a very high degree Roma people create insecurity in the public space through thefts, mendicancy, fraud and vandalism” ($\rho=0.30$; $p<0.05$). Respondents’ sex seems to have nothing to do with the level respondents agree/disagree with negative stereotypes towards the Roma. Data from Italy suggest that there might be a very weak relationship: men are more prejudiced than women towards the Roma, particularly, among the 50 plus age group.

4. Natural Creatures or a Group with Specific Culture?

Project data show that in three of the surveyed countries non-Roma people are more likely to ascribe negative than positive traits to Roma. Unexpectedly, this was not very strongly manifested among Bulgarian respondents. De facto, Italian and Slovenian respondents manifested their inclination to ascribe negative traits instead of positive more often than the Bulgarian ones on some specific topics although such a conclusion can be convincingly made only after a representative study is conducted. Confirming previous studies, the project survey clearly delineated a picture of respondents who are more likely to present Roma people as possessing more “natural” than “cultural” characteristics (Topalova 2002; Tomova 2000). This very conclusion is valid for ascribing of both positive and negative attributions. The “naturally inherited” traits were ascribed more often than the “culturally acquired.” According to the project survey data, almost four-fifths of the Bulgarian respondents compared to three fifths of the Slovenian and Italian ones, ascribed “naturally positive” traits (such as musical, free-spirited, spontaneous, intuitive and handsome) to Roma people. The proportion of respondents ascribing “negative naturalistic” attributions to Roma people (such as noisy, impulsive, instinctive, aggressive, wild and rude) are virtually the same in the Bulgarian sample, but higher in the Italian and Slovenian. More often than the Italian and Slovenian respondents, their Bulgarian counterparts ascribed culturally positive attributions to Roma people such as communicative, preserving their self-identity,³ solidarity people, smart and creative. Three-fourths of the respondents from the three countries described Roma people using culturally negative traits such as dishonest, revengeful, manipulative, malicious and shrewish/intractable. Slovenian respondents are less likely to ascribe positive cultural traits to Roma than the non-Roma respondents in Bulgaria and Italy. This is how even a classic methodology for measuring of open racism (adjective checklist) can provide interesting results showing that strong

3 We have to check out if the characteristic *preserving their own identity* preserves its positive value also when we are speaking of minority groups and especially of stigmatised group. The strong correlation between unwillingness to have Roma person as a neighbor and the belief that Roma preserve their own identity in Slovenian case is an indicator that we have to reconsider its evaluation.

prejudices towards the Roma exist even in countries whose Roma population is very limited in number and the political correct language is the official politics and media discourse.

As expected, those who steadily ascribed positive traits to Roma were much more open to them. Only one-fifth of them in the Bulgarian sample hesitated to have or did not want Roma neighbours. On the other hand, those who steadily ascribed negative traits to members of the Roma community definitely rejected to have Roma neighbours twice as often.

Between two-fifths and half of those who steadily ascribe culturally positive traits to Roma people from the Bulgarian sample are likely to explain the lifestyle differences between the two groups mostly via the discrimination against the Roma. Discrimination is the reason for lifestyle differences for almost one-fourth among those who steadily ascribe naturally negative and culturally negative traits to Roma people. The proportion of those who hesitate among them is also lower than among those who ascribe positive traits to Roma.

5. Social Distances towards the Roma

Social distances disclose negativism towards a particular group as brightly as possible. Two groups of items were designed to measure negativism towards the Roma. Half of the items explored hypothetical symbolic relationships in which Roma people and respondents had equal status/social roles: to sit right next to a Roma person in a public transport; to have Roma people living in their street; to eat in a restaurant right next to Roma people; to share an office/work place with Roma people; to be served by a Roma waiter/waitress in a restaurant; to have a roommate of Roma ancestry; to become/stay friends with Roma people and to have a child of yours married to a Roma person. There was no difference in the strength of the social distances as a whole between Roma and Non-Roma in the three countries surveyed, but there was some variety and national specificity in answering/ranging the different items. Almost all Italian respondents declared that they would accept to share a work place with Roma people compared to three fourths of Slovenians and Bulgarian respondents. Bulgarians seem more opened to the Roma in the hypothetical situations of living in the same street with them and having Roma persons as their friends, but this difference could be explained as a specific regional characteristic of the residents of Razgrad region. The hypothetical situations which presumed very close relationships (i.e. to have a child of yours married to a Roma person and to have a roommate of Roma ancestry) were rejected by the majority of the Non-Roma respondents in the three countries surveyed, *de facto* by two-thirds of them.

Here comes the question about the causes which make the Roma people unwanted neighbours for some of the residents. For now, it is hard to provide a satisfactory answer to the question at stake. It could be that different factors could explain this in each country. In Bulgaria, for example, the statistical correlation analysis we conducted showed that there existed a significant association between the unwillingness of Bulgarian respondents to have Roma neighbours and their reluctance to have people with large families as neighbours ($p=0.73$; $p<0.01$). In terms of neighbours, no other statistically significant associations were observed: the unwillingness of the Bulgarian residents in the district of Razgrad to have Roma neighbours has nothing or little to do with their unwillingness to have neighbours from other traditionally rejected groups for neighbours such as alcoholics, criminals and people inclined to conflicts. The most unwanted neighbours are the people inclined to conflicted, closely followed by the alcoholics.

The groups identified as the most unwanted neighbours in Slovenia, by analogy with Bulgaria, are the people with a criminal record, people inclined to conflicts and drug addicts. Roma are relatively rarely placed in this category, but considerably more often than people whose race, ethnicity or religion is different from that of the majority. The latter are accepted positively as neighbours with few exceptions.

In Slovenia, significant relationship between how Roma are perceived as malicious and the unwillingness of respondents to live next door to them ($\rho = 0.68$, $\alpha < 0.05$) is observed similarly. Among the possible reasons Roma to be unwanted as neighbours appear the considerable associations between the redundant perspective of neighbourhood and the opinion that the Roma are aggressive ($\rho = 1.00$, $\alpha < 0.05$) and the assumption that they stand up their identity ($\rho = 0.69$, $\alpha < 0.01$). The results are more evident than those in Bulgaria and clearly illustrate that strong negative stereotypes about Roma lie behind the reluctance of Slovenians to have them as neighbours. This demonstrates that the Roma unwillingness to “adapt” to majority is publicly unacceptable behaviour.

The other group of items was designed to measure social distances towards the Roma when they were in hierarchical symbolic relationships with the respondents. We were mostly interested in what would be the proportion of those who rejected a Roma person to hold a superior position in relation to the interviewee in eight hypothetical social situations: the respondent to have a Roma music/dancing instructor, Roma officers in the army, a Roma person to teach the respondent’s child at school, a neighbourhood police officer of Roma ancestry, a Roma person to become a judge, a Minister of Roma ancestry in the government, respondent to have a manager/supervisor of Roma ancestry and a mayor of Roma ancestry. Italian respondents tend to display a little bit shorter social distances towards the Roma in hierarchical symbolic relationships in comparison to Bulgarian and Slovenian respondents, especially on the items to have a Roma person as a mayor or Minister in the government.

Beside this Bogardus type scale, another method of measurement of social distances was used: measurement of the level of identification or differentiation from Roma people. About one third of Italians and one half of the Bulgarian and Slovenian respondents replied positively to statements like “when I think about Roma people I feel them very different from me;” “Roma people cannot be trusted or relied on;” “Roma people’s fertility behaviour resembles that of rabbits.” Approximately one fourth of the Italian respondents and a half of the Bulgarian and Slovenian respondents perceive the Roma as a threat to culture, social peace or the national security.

6. Open and Latent Racism

We attempted to ascertain whether the negative attitude towards the Roma materialises via the traditional forms of open racism or has evolved to the modern manifestations which are typical of latent racism. In the late 90s of the 20th century, the major difference between the Central and Eastern European countries and those in Western Europe could be summarised as follows: open racism manifestations towards the Roma were characteristic of the CEE countries while forms of latent racism were typical of Western Europe (Perez 2000; Topalova 2002). Project survey data allow us to hypothesise that this conclusion is still valid, but the transition towards the new forms of “modern racism” is undergoing also in CEE countries. Only about one-fourth of the Italian respondents, compared to one-third of the Slovenian and two-fifths of the Bulgarian interviewee agreed to some extent with openly racist statements like “it is hard to imagine that I can have a Roma person as a close friend,” “Roma people are parasites,” “they should be made live like the rest of the people” and “schools should have quota limiting the acceptance of more Roma children than it is admissible.” The items, measuring latent racism, such as “Roma people do not care about the education of their children,” “they are less likely to pursue self-perfection than non-Roma people,” “Roma people are less interested in politics than the non-Roma,” “they care less about the welfare of our country than the other fellow-citizens” and “they are less interested in environmental issues than the other fellow-citizens,” were approved by three-fourths of the Slovenians, two thirds of the Bulgarians and one half of the Italians that took part in the survey.

Statistical analyses of Bulgarian and Italian data show weak but statistically significant correlation between respondents’ age and the open expression of agreement with statements disclosing latent racism: the older the respondent, the greater the respondent’s inclination to agree with such statements. A similar

correlation was detected among Bulgarian respondents who agreed with openly racist statements such as: "Roma people should live in segregated areas and do not mingle with us" and "the Roma people in this country are privileged." No such significant correlation was observed in Slovenia. The higher the economic status of Bulgarian respondents, the "harder to imagine that they can have a Roma person as a close friend" and the stronger they agree that "Roma people are a menace to the Bulgarian culture." In Slovenia and Italy, a significant correlation between the aforementioned statements was not found. According to survey data from Slovenia and Bulgaria, open and latent racist statements do not appear to have gender differences. There are sufficient grounds to argue that Bulgarian women more often express than Bulgarian men prejudices, latent racism and are inclined to preserve ethnic inequalities using statements such as: "Roma people are less interested in politics than non-Roma people," "Roma people should be encouraged to take more decision-making posts/positions," "more political will and social actions are necessary in order to have the Roma people's situation improved" and "I like Roma people." Men are more likely to express openly racist statements than women, especially according to one of the items that measures it: "Roma people are parasites." Slovenian respondents' opinions concerning the statement "Roma people should be made live like the rest of the people" significantly differ in terms of sex, i.e. females more often than males disagree with the statement.

The project survey provided an opportunity to examine whether people have developed some sensitivity and feel that Roma are stigmatized and discriminated against or they prefer to explain the social differences between Roma and the non-Roma as "just" and "deserved" because of the Roma peculiarities. Three-fourths of Bulgarian and Italian respondents and two-thirds of Slovenian interviewees reckon that "employers prefer to hire employees of different ancestry but no Roma." About a half of the Bulgarian respondents and one third of the Italian and Slovenian interviewees tend to agree with this set of items: "Non-Roma treat the Roma as second hand people;" "The Roma are discriminated;" "Police officers are more likely to resort to violence towards a suspect of Roma ancestry than towards a suspect from the majority;" "Roma people are often victims of violence by extreme right political groups;" "Media often use hate speech when it comes to Roma matters." The difference could be explained both as a low sensitivity towards Roma discrimination and/or as an indicator of the higher level of racism against Roma in Bulgaria. But we are not in a position to argue that such a humiliating and unequal treatment is realised and interpreted as discrimination. Possibly, some of those who responded positively to these questions could be convinced that the unequal treatment of Roma is justified because of the actually existing deficits and shortcomings within the Roma community. The data from the qualitative survey support such a hypothesis.

The survey data show that an equal share of the Bulgarian, Italian and Slovenian respondents use to blame for the negative attitude and the discrimination against the Roma the victims themselves and not the society. About two-thirds of them are likely to find the reason for that in the "deficits" of the Roma themselves: they do not care whether the rest of the people like them and this is why they do nothing in order to change themselves in the direction expected by the macro society; they like the way they live; their behaviour is morally unacceptable and often deviant. About half of the Bulgarian and Italian respondents compared to 15% of the interviewed Slovenians accept that traits which are intrinsic to a small part of the group are being unjustly ascribed to the whole community (they agree that "only a small proportion of the Roma people beg or steal, the rest of them make their living just like everyone else" and "poor Roma are also disgusted by the dirt just like everyone else").

McConahay (1983, 1986) revealed that modern racists do not consider themselves and the society they live in to be racist because the open expressions of hatred and discrimination against the vulnerable groups diminish and because they personally don't express openly such negative feelings or feeling of superiority. Their negative attitudes toward the representatives of a stigmatised group are disguised as negative feelings toward people who violate the traditional moral and work values. Ambivalence toward marginal group's representatives is explained as a conflict between their racist feelings and their beliefs that racism and discrimination is wrong.

7. Attitude towards the Roma Integration Policies

Project survey data show that about a half of the Bulgarian, Italian and Slovenian respondents agreed with the statement that “more political will and social actions are necessary in order to have the Roma people’s situation improved” and clearly indicated the nature of these protective state actions: “social programmes for employment should be expanded so they can reach all Roma,” “more special educational programmes supporting the education of the Roma are needed” and “the government should provide more money for poverty reduction among the Roma people.”

About half of the respondents from the three countries argued that civil society should become active when it comes to support of the Roma. They agreed with the set of items such as: “we should express more solidarity when we see Roma people attempting to solve their own problems,” “the Roma people should be supported to set up organisations of their own aimed at solution of the problems within their community,” and “we should value Roma culture and provide funding for its development.”

Statistical analyses of Bulgarian and Italian data show that the younger the people, the more likely to agree with supportive governmental policies for Roma inclusion and to express solidarity with the Roma in order to reduce ethnic and social inequalities. In Slovenia, no statistically significant relationship was observed between the respondents’ age and the respondents’ vision about reduction of social inequalities and discrimination against the Roma. Respondents’ economic situation can play a major role only as an exception: the more the economic situation of Bulgarian respondents gets better, the more they will disagree with the statement that “Roma people should be supported to set up organisations of their own aimed at solution of the problems within their community.” Vice-versa in Slovenia: the more the economic situation becomes worse, the more Slovenian respondents are likely to support the establishment of Roma associations. Furthermore, Slovenian respondents seem to be more likely than any other respondents to support the statement that “we should leave Roma people to live their lives the way they like.” We could not detect any statistically significant relationships between the sex of the respondents and their attitudes about how to find solutions to problems; and between their affiliation with a stratum and their sex.

At the same time, firmly expressed convictions, by two-thirds of the Bulgarian and Slovenian respondents and about two-fifths of the Italian ones, that Roma people do not care about the education of their children and that they are lazy and embezzle the social payments funds, reveal the inner contradiction and the ambivalence towards suggested pro-Roma policies.

Policies that passively support the Roma via social payments or extended antidiscrimination legislation are even less accepted: about one third of the Italian and one-fourth of the Bulgarian and Slovenian respondents agreed with the statements that “government should provide more money for poverty reduction among the Roma people” (understood as distribution of more social payments) and that “there should be more legislative acts against discrimination and they should be applied (for instance, people who rent flats should not be allowed to turn down Roma tenants who want to rent just because of their ethnicity).”

McConahay (1983, 1986), Kinder and Sears (1981) and Sears (1988) claim that modern racists tend to resist changing the racial/ethnic status quo because they believe that pro-minority legislation and social policies violate the basic traditional values as self-reliance, hard work, obedience to the law, promotion based on personal achievements. Difficulties the implementation of Roma integration strategies face in the studied countries could be explained at least partially with the hidden modern racism both of the politicians and the majority populations there.

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ATTITUDES AND STEREOTYPES TOWARDS THE ROMA IN THE DISTRICT OF RAZGRAD, BULGARIA

In January 2012, a qualitative research involving experts (mayors and vice mayors; experts on ethnic and demographic issues; employees and managers of regional employment agencies and local employment offices; doctors, nurses and Roma health care mediators; school principals and teachers; constables and police officers form the Regional Directorate of Interior, Razgrad; members of non-governmental organizations, etc.) was conducted in the district of Razgrad (in Razgrad, Zavet, Isperih and Loznitsa municipalities). 41 experts were interviewed:

The objectives of the research were as follows:

- to identify the problems posed to the integration of Roma;
- to outline basic problems relating to the stereotyping of Roma and the consequent risk of institutional discrimination by local public administration officials.

1. Socio-economic Situation

The district of Razgrad is ethnically specific: the population consists mainly of Bulgarian Turks; the ethnic Bulgarians are the second largest community, and the Roma are the third one. A small number of Armenians, Jews, Russians and representatives of other ethnic groups live there as well. A few Roma in the district self-identify as Roma or Gypsies. The majority of them prefer to introduce themselves either as Turks or Millets, a term denoting a religious community in the Ottoman Empire. The rest of them (some Christian Roma and better educated Roma) identify themselves as Bulgarians.

According to the respondents, approximately 80% of those who are labelled as Roma/Gypsies are in the process of changing their ethnic identity. This process is supported by the majority; police officers, school principals and teachers, social workers and public administration officials think that the attempt of local “Gypsies” to present themselves and be accepted as non-Roma produces a beneficial effect because “*it brings the socio-cultural traits of local populations closer*” (an interview with the chief constable of a Regional Directorate of Interior). In their opinion, the Roma who present themselves as Turks or Bulgarians differ from those who preserve their Roma identity in some aspects:

- They are more willing to accept macro-social values and norms.
- Most of them actively seek employment. If they do not manage to find work either in the region or in the whole country, they go abroad to look for jobs; these emigrants financially support their families and parents and assist their relatives in finding temporary employment abroad.
- Only small portions of the Roma live on state benefits.
- They regularly pay their electricity, water supply and heating bills.
- The proportion of children attending primary and secondary schools gradually increases.
- The proportion of early marriages and abandoned children decreases.
- Few of them engage in criminal activities, to which their Bulgarian or Turkish neighbours fall prey.¹
- Their housing conditions are excellent and some of them, particularly those from villages where

1 Police officers, mayors, social workers and representatives of Roma NGOs estimate that in approximately 70-80% of the Roma households, at least one adult member works abroad; furthermore, over the past years the percentage of whole families emigrating to Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium, Spain, Greece and France has risen.

the Roma women commit marital fraud, live in better housing conditions as compared to Turks and Bulgarians.

All of the respondents emphasise that the Roma in Razgrad do not suffer from the social exclusion faced by members of their group living in the rest of the country. Moreover, it is widely acknowledged that the Roma community is not the only one affected by large-scale dropping out of the labour market and subsequent impoverishment. In the 1980s, Bulgarian Turks were forcibly assimilated, and their basic rights – constantly restricted. They were the first to be affected by mass unemployment and impoverishment. At the beginning of the political changes, there was a local struggle for power between the Bulgarian Socialist Party, which united a great number of ethnic Bulgarians in the region, and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms, which was the political party of Bulgarian Turks. Pursuing their party interests, politicians frequently tried to provoke distrust and hostility between the two ethnic groups and often succeeded. For a long time, the Roma who lived in the district remained “invisible;” no one was interested in their problems. At the local level, however, they were less stigmatised.

The Roma living in the district did not have their representatives in the local government until several years ago. At present, they lack effective representation as well: one expert on ethnic issues; one member of the city council in Razgrad municipality, and another one – in Zavet municipality; one mayor in the village of Vazovo, Ispernih municipality. Many Roma with a college or university degree try to conceal their ethnic identity so that it will not have a harmful effect on their career development. Many people introduced by their superiors or Roma activists as Roma work as experts and rarely as managers in local institutions although most of them do not self-identify as Roma: several doctors, nurses and health care mediators; several teachers, lawyers, engineers, social workers, economists; four police officers, one of which is in charge of a patrol; and the rest of them are police officers, etc.

The change of the political and economic systems in Bulgaria coincided with the difficult process of deindustrialisation. This resulted in a dramatic reduction in jobs. The district of Razgrad is one of the regions most severely affected by the deindustrialisation and foreign investment shortage. There is substantial emigration, dating back from 1989 and triggered by Todor Zhivkov's regime which massively drove Bulgarian Turks away. From 1989 to 1991 over one-third of the Turks left the district. After 1991 the emigration affected ethnic Bulgarians and Roma as well. **The population of the district of Razgrad declined by 36.7% during the period 1988-2011.** This decline was to a great extent a result of the emigration. Nevertheless, in 2011 the employed were barely 49.1% of working-age people (aged between 15 and 64) (National Statistical Institute 2012). At the time of the census, the percentage of registered unemployed persons in the district was 11.7%, and the percentage of the economically inactive people, a small portion of whom were students, was 39.3%. The majority of them are disheartened long-term unemployed persons who discontinue their registration with employment offices because they do not expect to be offered a job. They make a living by cultivating their land, working at seasonal and temporary jobs in Bulgaria or foreign countries or they rely on the support of another family member.

The 2011 census data showed that the Roma in the district of Razgrad (as well as Roma living in other areas of the country) were most severely affected by unemployment. Only 18.3% of those self-identifying as Roma were employed (in the rest of the country their percentage was higher – 20.6%). The employed Bulgarian Turks were 43.6%, and the employed ethnic Bulgarians – 61.5% (author's calculations based on NSI 2012 data).

2. Problems Posed to the Roma Integration in the District of Razgrad

The major problem faced by social integration is the unemployment of over half of the working-age residents of the district of Razgrad. This problem is extremely serious in the villages and towns located in the district. Unemployment has been a major problem since 1989; consequently, impoverishment has significantly affected many families.

The Roma/Milletts choose to immigrate to West European countries wherein large Turkish communities live. There they present themselves (and are accepted) as Bulgarian Turks. Many emigrants rely on local Turkish communities for employment, housing and information about their social rights in host countries. They solve many personal problems and those of their families by emigrating: employment, a higher income and a better quality of life; a higher social status without being stigmatised and perceived as Roma; opportunities to solve housing problems and financially support their old parents, etc.

Nonetheless, emigration causes various problems. The emigration of better educated, better qualified and enterprising young people divests the district of vital resources, discourages new investments and exerts a negative influence on the long-term socio-economic development. A long-term separation of spouses endangers their relationship. Children who are left at the care of their grandparents or other relatives are at risk of covert or overt dropping out of school since they are not supervised by their families. Furthermore, this negatively affects their socialisation. Their frequent travel to their parents abroad is another reason for their dropping out due to their repeated absences from school. The decrease in the number of pupils in village schools, arising from their migration, causes grave organisational problems: in some small village schools, students study in so-called “merged grades.”² School principals lay many teachers off in order to achieve “expenditure optimisation,” and the rest of them teach subjects in which they are not experts. All this adversely affects the quality of education and students’ motivation for going to school. The absence of parents and frequent travels of children abroad prevents achievement of higher levels of cover for childhood immunisation.³

The long-term unemployment, migration and seasonal or irregular nature of employment of half of the residents of the district cause pension and health insurance problems for one-third of them. Village doctors claim that over half of their Roma patients have no health insurance, and most of them have no means to cover their expenditure on medical examinations, tests and treatment as “private patients.” It limits their opportunities to use various social services and frequently leads to extreme poverty when illness or aging occurs.

There is an additional problem: some pregnant women do not have insurance. They are usually examined by general practitioners for free but have to pay for all medical examinations and tests conducted by other specialists. Many of them are not regularly examined throughout their pregnancy. This is occasionally the reason for their giving birth to disabled children. The doctor from Rakovski insists that all pregnant women in the municipality be tested for toxoplasmosis during their pregnancy because nearly all cats as well as some sheep in this region are infected and if a pregnant woman contracts such an infection, her child will be born with microcephaly or hydrocephaly.

The budget of small municipalities located in the district is rather limited due to the lack of large business establishments, underdevelopment of tourist and service industries and low employment rates

2 In the opinion of Roma activists that are also shared by police officers, in over half of the Roma households in the district one or more female members commit marital fraud against Turkish-speaking citizens of Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Sweden and other West European countries. Most of them earn a high income thus and use the money to build large houses and furnish them luxuriously, to develop a small business for male family members (they usually trade in cheap commodities imported from Turkey and Romania) or to settle in a West European country. Such activities are rarely discussed or morally condemned. Moreover, many respondents claim that they generate substantial income, which is spent mainly in Bulgaria (in the district of Razgrad in particular), and rarely result in criminal charges or convictions. Their victims as well as their fraud seem “virtual.” Accordingly, nobody sympathises with their victims.

3 A “merged grade” means that students in different grades are taught in a single classroom by one and the same teacher – for example, first- and second-grade students study together.

resulting from the crisis. This limits the opportunities for provision of services to the most vulnerable groups.

The poor education and qualifications of the majority of Roma/Milletts is frequently offered as an explanation for their disadvantaged position in the labour market as well as for their poverty. Roma's low level of education is ascribed to their cultural traits: "*They do not value education.*"

Some Roma experts point out that the poor education of children and youths in the post-communist years was attributed to the rapid **impoverishment** of the community, which was particularly widespread in the first 10-15 years of the transition period. The respondents estimate that at present approximately 20% of the Roma living in the district of Razgrad are poor. The problem is that they have many children and are not able to spend money out of their meagre family budgets on their education:

Most parents are unemployed or receive a minimum wage. Other parents are abroad, and their children live with their grandparents here. There are children who have no shoes and clothes. I can hardly ask them to buy an activity book, so that we can work. I hand out books, which belong to the school, and take them back again. Sometimes I even have problems with some usual stuff – like notebooks. We help children with whatever we can... Some time ago we received aid – notebooks, textbooks... We do our best to keep students at school. (A teacher from the village of Strazhets, Razgrad District).

Scarce means come first. Well, they constantly live on loans. As I say "loans," I mean informal loans, of course. For example, in our region they buy goods on account from shops. And they note down, note down; when they have money, they pay... (K.H., a regional expert on ethnic issues and Roma activist).

Some respondents cite **the low level of proficiency in Bulgarian** as a major educational problem, faced mainly in village and town schools:

I've noticed that some children have skipped the preschool stage of education and most of them haven't even attended a nursery ... and this impedes their school adaptation. Their frequent absences from school at the initial stage hinder their acquisition of the necessary skills. In our school, about 30% of the students are Bulgarians. The percentage of Roma children is about 30% as well. The rest of the students are Turks. I've worked with 5- and 12-grade students... it's extremely difficult. They can't understand a great deal of what is spoken to them. Their vocabulary and speaking skills are poor and I think that some of them can't understand much of what I speak during lessons. I see, though, that they are willing to go to school. They copy out everything I write on the blackboard; they're active during lessons. Even when they give wrong answers, they want to take part in the lesson, to participate in the whole learning process. (A teacher from the town of Zavet)

In some villages, where the number of children has decreased due to the **emigration of young families**, **it is difficult to organise the educational process**. Mayors try to preserve village schools; they close them down only as a last resort and send students to community or town schools. They are convinced that a closure of a school shall increase the emigration of young people. The quality of teaching in such village schools, however, usually does not cover the educational standards. The **poor education of parents, mothers in particular**, adversely affects their children's educational aspirations and learning motivation, especially those of girls. Many patriarchal families share the viewpoint that the primary social role of a woman is to be a wife and mother rather than work and aspire to personal and career development; therefore, girls do not need to go to school. Moreover, poorly educated parents are not able to help their children acquire knowledge. In Razgrad, Zavet and Isperih municipalities, teachers and Roma NGOs organise alternative courses for parents in order to teach them how to work with their children at home, motivate them to study and overcome learning difficulties. In other areas, it is relied only upon extracurricular school activities.

In some families, in which women engage in illegal activities because of mass unemployment or their "**traditional profession**" and often receive the highest income in the family, girls are also forced to leave school early since it does not prepare them for the above activities. Moreover, school may foster values which contradict the practices they follow:

Our Gypsies are the richest people in town; in the villages as well. Christian Roma are Kalderash, and

their women are pickpockets. They rarely finish school even though they are very rich. Since mainly women bring in money, much money is paid for a good female pickpocket at a wedding, especially if she is whiter and prettier... In the spring a girl was sold for BGN 50 000 in Plovdiv. If you go to their houses, you'll never believe they are Gypsies: large houses, furnished by an interior designer, shining clean. They speak pure Bulgarian without any accent... Muslims engage in "alo-alo"⁴ and get rich as well. They are richer than us and than Turks. Only few Bulgarians have furniture like theirs. Do they need to send girls to school? Even if they take up an occupation, they will never make so much money... (A school principal from the town of Zavet).

Many respondents **cite early marriages as a frequent reason for school dropping out of Roma children, girls in particular**. The majority of them, however, claim that the proportion of girls finishing grade eight as well as that of Roma students enrolling in secondary schools increase. Notwithstanding, their language and learning difficulties frequently result in their dropping out. In most schools, over half of the Roma in grade nine do not complete their secondary education.

Many respondents insist that **education is not considered a value** in Roma culture: *"They do not value education, but this is their style of living and they like it"* (a social worker from Razgrad). Some of them express even a more critical opinion: *"Regarding education – their microchip should be replaced, their way of thinking should be changed"* (a vice mayor of a municipality). Thus, the ethnocentrism of the Bulgarian education system and its failure in teaching students whose mother tongue is not the Bulgarian language, children from poor families and students with special educational needs are underestimated.

Passivity and learned helplessness are often pointed out, even by Roma activists, as the main reasons for the widespread deep poverty among some Roma living in the district of Razgrad. This conclusion is quite correct, but it should be further elaborated upon. However, an explanation is rarely provided. Instead, a punitive approach is likely to be adopted. Such an attitude may be treated as an expression of public discontent with the actual abandonment by the state of all activities, including law enforcement, as well as with the public disorder, chaos and semi-anarchy, which have been tormenting the Bulgarian society for over 20 years. Experts note that the **patriarchal traditions** of some Muslim Roma/Milletts and some Bulgarian Turks pose a problem for women's personal development and prevent them from using services. Female members of the above-mentioned ethnic groups, living in villages and towns, are frequent victims of paternalism:

I've noticed something else... Not only Roma but also some members of the Turkish community, when they come here, only the man speaks, and the woman stays behind him... I say: "Sir, please, let the woman speak." "I'll speak on her behalf." When I ask for her identity card, he reaches in his pocket and pulls out her card. She doesn't even have her ID card on her. The woman has nothing; she is not a person... They call her "a female": "I've brought "a female" (or "one female") with me." Women, on their turn, come here, to a gynaecological exam, and the complaints are their own, but they don't say a word; men speak all the time... Not all of them, not all of them. Well, only some Roma and Turks behave like this. Even when they sit down – he sits close to me, and she sits a little farther: "Man, I want to talk to her... She ... you can't explain her ailments as good as she can." "Talk to me only." ... (A medical doctor, head of Gynaecology, Multi-profile Hospital for Active Treatment, Razgrad).

Only few members of human rights organisations and Roma activists cite unwise government decisions,

4 A general practitioner, living in the village of Rakovski, says: *We call them for immunisation; we have detailed records by age; we schedule appointments and if they do not come, we visit them. Now we have another problem. We immunise them – thus, until the second or third month – and suddenly the mother appears and tells us: "We are leaving for Germany." I give her the medical records. After that she stays a couple of months in Germany, she comes back; and we wonder what to do next – whether to continue or start from scratch. They miss some vaccinations there. If they've had others, the situation here becomes even more complicated. We have to keep an eye on them after they leave the country – whether they will return, when they will return – and after that we wonder what to do next. As in the case of a woman who left for Germany. For three years, we had been on the watch when she would return. She finally returned and didn't bring any medical records with her. Migration and toing and froing are a serious obstacle for us. They go to Belgium, to Germany... Not a long time ago, they brought measles from Kubrat. It was the first time I had ever seen measles; though I had 20 years of professional experience then. The woman was red, her eyes were red, she was all red – measles. Nobody around her got sick because they were immunised.*

institutional inaction as well as **institutional racism and discrimination** as primary reasons for the social exclusion of the group:

The State is not present in Roma neighbourhoods, particularly in ghettos... There is a good practice in the Netherlands; it's called "educational police." If a child is absent from school and he/she hasn't informed the teacher, an officer visits his/her home in the evening and asks: "What happened today? Why wasn't your teacher notified?" If the same situation constantly reoccurs, the parental rights are terminated, and the child is removed from his/her family for a month. Then the situation goes back to normal. It should be like that here, but it's not. It's the same with early marriages. It's been a pleasant surprise for me to hear that in Pavlikeni municipality, I think, there are 26 pre-litigation proceedings brought for cohabitation with a minor. If such things happen everywhere, the problem will be eliminated. (A regional expert on ethnic issues and Roma activist).

Stereotypes, stigmatisation and discrimination against Roma are quoted by some Roma activists and few other experts, usually Bulgarian Turks,⁵ as main impediments to Roma integration. They feel disappointed by the fact that a Roma origin is a major obstacle for Roma, including Roma college or university graduates, trying to find employment. In their opinion, even skilled and well-educated Roma encounter considerable difficulties in their career development if their skin is darker or they declare that they are Roma. They are convinced that many Roma children miss lessons and drop out of school early because they are rejected by their schoolmates and neglected by some teachers. They are the only experts who regard Roma's exclusion from the processes of governing and taking of decisions concerning their community as well as from the implementation of Roma integration policies and projects and their monitoring as a major problem.

Many civil servants interviewed by us share the opinion and are convinced that the Roma living in the district of Razgrad do not experience discrimination. On the contrary, in small settlements there is a sense of Roma being privileged, which is transmitted to part of the respondents from Razgrad, namely social workers.

People feel that Roma are privileged: they receive allowances, food every two months, firewood and soup kitchen coupons; other people receive nothing. This happens more frequently in small settlements. We have 4 target groups in our social welfare programme: large families, people living alone, disabled people and people receiving minimum pensions. In Isperih mainly large families took part in the programme – most of the applications were submitted by them. Oh, there were also homeless people: 7 in Razgrad municipality and over 30 in Isperih municipality. A complaint was made in Isperih that only Roma receive food in soup kitchens in winter. Our check showed that almost all of them lived in Zapad Quarter, which looked like a ghetto. 99 out of 110 applications for soup kitchen coupons were filed by Roma living in Zapad Quarter... Objectively speaking, most of those who receive monthly allowances are Roma. The majority of Roma receive child allowances whereas in other social groups the percentage is smaller because they declare higher incomes – 50% of those receiving heating allowances are Roma, the rest of them are elderly people, disabled people and people living alone... Other people notice this and discuss it... Objectively speaking, Roma are not in the most difficult situation. The situation of the elderly living alone, particularly those living in more remote villages, as well as of disabled and chronically ill people is worst. Roma take part in a lot more programs. They often don't declare their real income. Thus, they become entitled to allowances, for which people living alone or disabled people don't qualify because their income exceeds the threshold by BGN 1... This reinforces the sense that Roma are privileged... Besides, the new rich, especially those who have become rich through marriage scams and "alo-alo," are envied. This fosters a negative attitude. Though, I've been told by village mayors and policemen that people don't envy those who have become rich through "alo-alo" since they don't steal, for example, and contribute to the development of local trade. But I don't believe them...

5 Now, if these laws concerning minorities are observed as in other countries, for example, if Gypsies live here, a Gypsy chief constable should be appointed here; as well as in education, hospitals... To stimulate other people as well... (View of a medical doctor from the village of Rakovski).

There are still petty thefts. The attitude towards Roma here doesn't quite differ from that in the rest of the country, honestly speaking. (An executive director of a Regional Social Welfare Agency).

When the respondents are directly asked about the stereotypes and prejudices against Roma, most of them enumerate widespread stereotypes (thieves, liars; irresponsible, undisciplined; not conforming to social rules and norms; petty con men; living on the toil of others or at the expense of state social welfare funds, etc.). Some of them, however, make the stipulation that this characterisation does not refer to "their Roma." Others emphasise the social distance proceeding from negative stereotypes:

Anti-social elements that can by no means be socialised. They don't like working. They steal electricity, water, and we pay their bills. Prejudices like this, in general. A social burden. They are a burden on the state welfare system; and it's us who supply the welfare system by our taxes and social welfare contributions... Somehow Roma always present themselves as "second hand." (A regional expert on ethnic issues and Roma activist).

About prejudices... there is nothing on the surface. People don't openly display their attitude towards others; none of the ethnic groups; they just keep it to themselves... There is discrimination. I've told you, I also feel it; I feel it on myself... However hard we try to be tolerant of each other... About Roma: they neither want to study nor work. They hate studying... Most of the criminals are Roma. It's obvious: prisons are full of Roma. (A medical doctor, head of hospital department, Multi-profile Hospital for Active Medical Treatment, Razgrad).

They belittle them... Not complex; they think they are not complex; I don't want to use more harsh words... Yes, that's the point: the society considers that it's a group having a low standard of living, which doesn't develop. The state does nothing to encourage their development and they are actually neglected, they are left... Only during elections they become noteworthy... Something else – it's very difficult to govern them. At the moment most of them have no insurance. They are not included in the health care system. They have no health insurance... Well, their children – they do have; but since parents have no health insurance, they treat their children the same way. They rarely take them to a doctor. But when they visit a doctor, they are uncontrollable again: they run away from hospitals. When they feel a little better, they run away from the hospital and don't continue their treatment. If an acute medical condition develops to a subacute and even a chronic stage, the situation is getting worse... If I have to fish for words to describe their ethnic group – they are... independence, some sort of independence, though misunderstood. They always want to be free – no matter what happens. That's why they pay a high price... Because freedom has a price, and if you don't pay it... It's health in this case. (A medical doctor, head of pneumo-physiatric ward, Razgrad).

3. Specific Character of the Inter-ethnic Relations in the District of Razgrad

The respondents point out that most of "their Roma" are industrious, honest, responsible and neat. Most of them have become rich over the past ten years. They are more prosperous than their Turkish or Bulgarian neighbours, particularly than those living in villages. Such prosperity is attributed to their employment abroad, commercial activities or marital fraud against Turks, who are citizens of West European countries. In Razgrad they do not live in segregated localised neighbourhoods or ghettos. They live together with the other population or in neighbourhoods which do not differ from other neighbourhoods. Their children usually attend mixed schools. Offences, committed by Roma, against the person or the property of their Bulgarian or Turkish neighbours are a rare occurrence. There are rare cases of child abandonment in institutions.⁶ The Roma/Milletts regularly pay their electricity,

⁶ According to the data provided by the Executive Director of the Regional Social Welfare Agency and the head of Child Protection Department, in 2011, 23 children were abandoned in institutions in the district of Razgrad. In 1910 their number was 34, and in 2009 – 40. Social workers from the local office of the Child Protection Directorate deal with 250 cases concerning

water supply and heating bills, keep good hygiene in the neighbourhoods wherein they live and seldom participate in acts of vandalism. According to the respondents, it is due to the efforts of the local government, which has committed substantial resources to remove social and housing inequalities among the large ethnic groups in the district since the post-communist period. The local representatives of most political parties view greater social and cultural homogeneity as a condition for minimisation of conflicts and achievement of greater cohesion in the region.

All the respondents state that there are good ethnic relations in their own region and they personally “do not discriminate against people/patients/students/clients on the grounds of their ethnicity.” Most of them claim that they have close relations with their Roma colleagues, whom they greatly appreciate and frequently regard as their friends. By giving such relationships as an example, the civil servants demonstrate that they are not prejudiced against Roma. Nevertheless, their attitude might still be stereotyped and/or prejudiced against the community despite their close relations with some Roma (colleagues and friends).

Most of the Roma respondents confirm that many of their friends are Bulgarians or Turks and they have great professional relations with members of other ethnic groups. They, however, are aware that it is due to the fact that they themselves have a college or university degree and have socialised into the society, ignoring gross insults and injustice both at school and in daily life. During the interviews, the respondents unintentionally used words showing that subconsciously they did not consider Roma (clients) equals even when denying that ethnicity influenced them. The significance of status-based differences between large ethnic communities in Bulgaria is deeply rooted at a subconscious level:

I have no Roma friends: I live downtown; I have no such neighbours; I have only Roma clients. But their origin doesn't bother me. I just lower myself to their level to explain them how we can help them, to understand what exactly they expect from us and what their needs are. There are very conscientious and good people among them... (A head of department, Regional Employment Agency, Razgrad).

There are no problems in our ward. We've been working with such people⁷ for years now; regardless of their ethnicity, they receive the same treatment as other people. I'm a nurse; I follow doctors' instructions: drugs, tests, procedures; I do it for all patients. They are sick; I do whatever should be done... I generally don't associate with such people⁸ in town; I can't tell you how they feel. (A nurse in a hospital, Razgrad).

The perception of Roma as people of low social status forms invisible barriers around them and makes other people increase social distance. In Razgrad, the Roma live near the city centre in a decent neighbourhood and nearby blocks of flats together with ethnic Bulgarians and Bulgarian Turks. During the post-communist period, a great number of Turks living in those blocks sold their apartments and went abroad. Many Bulgarians did likewise. However, they did not go abroad; they built houses in the suburbs where housing conditions were much worse. The infrastructure there is poor; there is no sewage system; there are no nearby shops; they live far from health care facilities and pharmacies, from the city centre and their work places. They often complain of the inconvenience caused by their moving to the new place; however, they prefer to take this step rather than have Roma neighbours although they state that their former neighbours have never created problems.⁹ Furthermore, segregation is observed in schools. When the proportion of Roma children in the school located near these blocks of flats increased, many Bulgarian and Turkish students moved to other, “more prestigious” schools despite the efforts of the teaching staff to prevent their leaving. Furthermore, in villages the emigration of a large number of Turkish children leads to an increase in the proportion of Roma students in schools. As a result, the Turkish and the few Bulgarian students leave these schools as well.

prevention of child abandonment in institutions, domestic violence or negligence, work with foster parents and monitoring of child social care institutions.

7 Author's note: She means Roma.

8 Author's note: She again means Roma.

9 Data provided by Liliya Makaveeva, chairperson of the INTEGRO Association in Razgrad.

When Bulgarian and Turkish children attend a school with Roma students, they frequently do not sit next to Roma children and do not communicate with them at break time. In addition, sometimes teachers do not take the necessary steps to prevent such segregation. Moreover, the neglect of Roma children by some teachers further isolates them from other students:

I've been a teacher and I've constantly witnessed such covert discrimination. For example, if there is a Roma student in the classroom, teacher's silent reaction is to let him/her sit in the last row of desks. Teachers ... they focus their attention on active students and receive feedback from them... Roma children always remain in the background ... to kill time; and they've always been like this... (A NGO activist, Razgrad).

The lessening of social distance from the Roma who live in towns and villages is not met with general approval and may lead to an adverse effect: withdrawal of colleagues, neighbours and some friends, difficulties in career development or even abandonment by the family.

Here, when a Bulgarian girl married a Roma guy, her parents kicked her out of home. Now she lives at her husband's house. (A principal of a vocational school, Zavet).

The social distance from and discrimination against those who are different do not remain at intercultural or micro-group levels; they penetrate into all social relations. It is rather difficult for the majority to accept that regardless of their personal qualities, members of a low-status minority may hold positions of power. In Razgrad people hardly discuss the above-described phenomenon; it is regarded as a natural, self-explanatory situation. Only few activists openly discuss the problem, but this frequently leads to their marginalisation and social exclusion.

The respondents rarely communicated their prejudices against Roma. They negated the wide cultural diversity of the Roma community and reiterated that most Roma living in the district of Razgrad were respectable and decent people. However, the ambivalent attitude towards Roma is clearly perceived. It is manifested in various ways: in the contrasting of "our Roma" with "other Roma," who are regarded as thieves, swindlers as well as irresponsible, lazy, arrogant and aggressive people; in the contradictions existing in their description of Roma; occasionally, in the perceiving of Roma as an undifferentiated and depersonalised mass of social outsiders and refusing to view them as a normal human group consisting of various people of different social status; in the slips of the tongue revealing the enormous social distance from the members of their group; in the denial of any racial discrimination against Roma and explaining their low social status by their cultural deficiency. In this respect, the underlying assumption that the majority is tolerant because it "allows" members of minorities to enjoy some social rights is an obvious manifestation of subconscious racism. However, in "nationalising national counties" this is a widely-held attitude.

The "depriving" of a group of its positive traits is a major manifestation of the above-described ambivalent attitude. The fact that decent or successful Roma (or their actions) are considered "untypical of their group" is a frequent manifestation of this phenomenon in Razgrad. Many respondents spontaneously expressed their unwillingness to accept the Roma from their own town, who had a college or university degree, or the successful Roma from the district as Roma/Gypsies; they were usually introduced as Turks or Bulgarians. It is even denied that the neighbourhood located near the city centre, which is known as the "Roma neighbourhood, is actually Roma due to the following two reasons: first, most of its residents are not willing to be considered Roma because of the social stigma; second, the neighbourhood looks decent.

Among us, on the contrary, they are not segregated. That is, our Roma neighbourhood, as such, is not Roma, in my opinion, because people live quite well there. The conditions are very good... (A teacher in Razgrad).

The classifying of "exceptions" into separate subgroups – those of creative, talented and successful people, of "my friends" and "my neighbours," who have nothing in common with other Roma, who are only nominally Roma and whose existence does not change the image of Roma as outsiders – is a specific manifestation of the ambivalent attitude.

The ambivalence frequently occurs in the contradictory assumptions about the group as a whole. This may be exemplified by excerpts from the interviews, referring to the Roma, in which several mutually exclusive views are expressed and supported by the respondents without their being aware that they contradict each other.

Just show me an integrated Roma? Somewhere, in any society, in the whole world? Is there such a case? ... We have doctors in Razgrad that are Roma and we entirely accept them. Those who conform to all norms have no difficulties fitting in the society. I know at least two Roma like them; I've just met the first one in front of the Sanitary Inspection; he has two medical specialities; a cardiologist, he is a good general practitioner ... great. The second one – a general practitioner as well... A person that makes every effort to fit in the society, in my opinion, can't be an outcast... They ... how can some people have a better start? Well, the start is one and the same for everybody – you are born and you die. In this life, though, as far as you live, you should accomplish something; you shouldn't be like that: illiterate, skip school, constantly live on state benefits. This finally annoys other people. So, an equal start... But they are losers and it's their fault. They don't conform to any norms... (A medical doctor, head of hospital department, Razgrad).

The sensitivity of some local administration officials towards their own prejudices is rather low. The negative traits of various persons and small groups are generalised as “typical of Roma.” The marginalisation of some Roma is considered either their own fault or their personal/group choice. The difficulties posed to rapid integration form the opinion that it is impossible to achieve integration. The trend towards blaming mainly vulnerable persons and groups for social inequalities, segregation and social exclusion is a classic example of a prejudice against them.

Risk of Institutional Discrimination against the Roma Living in the District of Razgrad.

At local level, Roma are poorly represented in political structures and institutions. There are isolated cases of Roma elected as mayors in small settlements with a predominating Roma population. There are only few Roma members of city councils in municipal and regional centres. Some Roma are employed as experts on ethnic and demographic issues, health care mediators, teaching assistants or social mediators by local administrative bodies. All these jobs are low paid and offer Roma only limited opportunities to actively participate in the formulation of policies for Roma social inclusion, the monitoring of their implementation and the evaluation of their results.

The social exclusion of Roma from policy is not considered a problem by any of the respondents.

There is a popular myth in the Bulgarian society and particularly in the Roma community that over the past 15 years, huge funds have been made available to promote integration, but no steps have been taken in this direction. Notwithstanding, various projects and policies relating to Roma were actually implemented in the district of Razgrad as well as in the whole country. They, however, were fragmentary and not united by a general strategy. Furthermore, occasionally they did not entirely solve the problem they addressed; sometimes, regardless of the satisfactory results, they were abandoned due to the lack of municipal funds after their funding had run out. Moreover, these projects were often initiated by “the authority” and Roma rarely acknowledged them as their own because they were never asked whether these were the major problems they personally would solve; they were not massively included in the implementation of the projects; they did not take part in their monitoring and the evaluation of their results.

The lack of accountability for the funding provided by the state budget and various European programmes is one of the reasons for Roma assuming that the funds allocated for their integration are wasted and do not reach them. Actually, the residents of the district are not informed about the amount of sums allocated for solving different social problems of Roma as well as about the channels of their receipt; nor are they informed how these funds have been spent.

Over different time periods, various measures, policies and projects concerning the Roma community were implemented in most of the surveyed municipalities. Extracurricular activities were offered in schools having over 10-15% of Roma students whereas in others, summer schools and intercultural

training courses were organised. In some schools, Roma history and culture were thought while in others, Roma music and dances were studied as extracurricular activities. Non-governmental organisations developed a number of projects targeting mothers and children. Some schools in Zavet and Ispirih municipalities provide training courses for mothers of students. The municipalities fund the maintenance of infrastructures in Roma neighbourhoods from their own budgets.

Employment offices inform jobless Roma about all existing programmes oriented towards the long-term unemployed and enrol them on educational and vocational courses. The clerks from regional employment agencies claim that these policies have reduced the long-term unemployment among Roma. However, these programmes do not produce a long-term effect. Furthermore, the remuneration they offer is very low, which prevents the employees and their families from leaving the group of the poor. During the period 2010-2012, the wages offered by such programmes were below the minimum wage set by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Such an income does not cover the basic needs of employees, not to mention the financial support they have to provide for unemployed family members. Thus, the low payment for jobs offered by the Ministry prevents the long-term unemployed involved in the above programmes and their families from leaving the group of the extremely poor.

Much effort is invested in the improvement of the access to education as well as the quality of educational services provided for Roma children. In all surveyed municipalities, there are various measures and projects in this respect. They are aimed at keeping children at school, preventing school dropping out and overcoming the language difficulties of children whose mother tongue is not the Bulgarian language. Nonetheless, **the number of segregated Roma schools has not changed, or rather increased** due to emigration, in Razgrad and in the villages with a numerous Roma population (because when the proportion of Roma students in a school, mixed until recently, increases, Bulgarian and Turkish parents move their children to other schools); i.e. “secondary segregation of schools” is observed.

In some surveyed municipalities, different projects aiming at improving Roma’s health status and their access to quality health care services have been implemented. A project aiming to prevent and control HIV and AIDS is being carried out in Razgrad municipality. It is funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Special efforts are devoted to the screening, treatment and prevention of tuberculosis. Projects relating to family planning in Roma families and prevention of child abandonment in institutions have been developed in Razgrad and Zavet municipalities. In all surveyed municipalities, however, it has been established that **nearly half of the Roma adults have their health insurance rights suspended due to their failure to pay their social welfare contributions**. In most municipalities, general practitioners continue to examine and treat Roma patients having no health insurance. Notwithstanding these patients face greater risks in case of acute or chronic illnesses requiring hospitalisation or surgery.

The inaction of institutions with the purpose of discouraging Roma from solving their problems is a specific type of discrimination. In the district of Razgrad, it is obviously not a common phenomenon, but when it occurs, it should be treated as entirely institutional and should be solved. Here is an example:

I’ve discussed with people working in Spain that in Spain, unlike here, the real unemployment rate is quoted. It is around 20% there; here it’s much higher, but we make out to live all but better than the Spanish, Greeks... This is a state mechanism, in my opinion, so we make out that we live very well. I know a labour mediator who has been instructed not to get too occupied, not to be too active. Something of the kind: “We need Europe say “yes, they have labour mediators!” But his face reads: “Don’t be too active because unemployment rates will show their true face.” These are the facts; I’ve talked to the guy. His work is to go in the community, visit companies, be on the move, but he sits at a desk and goes nowhere. He was directly told: “Stay here!” (A Roma man, member of a city council).

In general, conditions for Roma’s integration have been created in the district of Razgrad. However, it is constantly blocked by the social stigma attached to their group and constant reproduction of negative

stereotypes about and prejudices against them by the national press, electronic media and populist and nationalistic parties at national and local level. Therefore, the improvement of the economic and educational status of some Roma and whole Roma groups usually leads to their moving into a more prestigious community or their emigration to countries wherein they will easily be accepted as Bulgarian Turks or ethnic Bulgarians. Thus, mainly the poor, the long-term unemployed, the undereducated and people having large families present themselves as Roma in the district. This reinforces the negative stereotypes and impedes the social inclusion.

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SOCIAL PATTERN OF ROMA – NON-ROMA RELATIONS AND PREVAILING STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICES AS DERIVE FROM THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS AND OPINION SURVEY REALIZED IN THE REGION FRIULI-VENEZIA-GIULIA

The present analysis tries to give a specific and a general overlook concerning the situation of Roma/Sinti communities in the chosen localities of Friuli Venezia Giulia, but also in some areas of the neighbouring Veneto to evaluate the real state of social interaction of these communities with Italians with a special focus on the major challenges in order to reduce mutual prejudices and possibly limit misunderstandings as a source of conflict between social groups.

In the framework of Redupre project activities IGES experts carried out thirty different in depth interviews to thirty different stakeholders acting within the provinces of Udine, Trieste and Gorizia in the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia and involved, at different levels, with Roma/Sinti issues in this geographical area.¹ Beside this kind of investigation, have been also conducted a hundred of field questionnaires with the aim to test and measure the presence and gravity of the identified problems in the actual surrounding and to identify local particularities in manifestation and sources of stereotypy behaviours and prejudices on the side of majority and Roma population.

The following two sections will focus on the social pattern of Roma and non-Roma relations and prevailing stereotypes and Prejudices as derived respectively from the in-depth interviews, in the first paragraph, then, we review, in the second paragraph, those that emerged from opinion surveys carried out in the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto.

1. The in-depth interviews have been executed among people and professionals who live and act in direct contact with Roma/Sinti communities and whose opinion can contribute for shaping of the socio-interactive picture of the chosen locality, and with Roma/Sinti representatives and leaders. In particular the in depth interviews involved the following sectors where stakeholders are active: health services, social services (housing and social assistance), educational sector (school system), employment services, Italian Sinti leaders and representatives, non-Italian Roma leaders and representatives, town councillors, police officers.²

The main results emerging from the in depth interviews on *health service issue* is that especially Roma have a scarce knowledge of the possibilities offered by the national health system in Friuli Venezia Giulia, and generally speaking, they are not willing to participate and, due to cultural prejudices, suspicious in respect of health services especially for what regards aspects as child vaccination, sexual diseases prevention and gynecological services. By this point of view Sinti are more informed about these issues but, at the same time, they are not willing to participate completely to offered possibilities and they are using such services just in case of extreme need and serious disease, not in a preemptive way. For what

1 The methodology used in these interviews has been shared with and defined by the other project partners with the general aim to receive more profound insight into the different socio-economic aspects concerning the Roma/Sinti communities in the chosen localities, with the more specific aim to individuate the general state of relations between the two social groups Roma and non-Roma under consideration.

2 In the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia the situation concerning Roma is generally quite different than in most part of European Union. Historically, since XV century, a consistent group, actually about 80 000 people, of Sinti people live in Italy and since 1861 some of them are fully recognized Italian citizens, despite this during the second world war they suffered – as in the rest of Europe – prosecutions and genocide by fascists and nazis, the so called “porrajmos.” See L. Piasere, *Popoli delle discariche*, Roma, Cisu ed., 1991.

concerns Italians, what emerges from different in depth interviews are quite deep prejudices in respect of both Roma and Sinti concerning hygienic conditions and sanitarian issues. Most of interviewed health workers stress that it is almost impossible to share between Roma and non-Roma health services, many Italians are not willing to go to the same physician where a Rom or a Sinti is going.³

Concerning social services, *social assistance and housing*, preliminary it must be pointed out that all the stakeholders interviewed on this issue stressed that the high level of social protection which characterized Italy since the 70's has been progressively diminished and reduced in the last few years due to global economic crisis and neo-liberistic approach of the Italian governments on social spending since 2001. Thus also the accession of Roma and Sinti to social protection is affected by such a general situation. Moreover Sinti are asking for social help just in case of extreme need and they are not willing to receive "immaterial" support rather than direct money. On the other hand, Roma are not informed at all about social help and are completely excluded from any kind of continuous support.⁴

Access to *health service*, in Friuli Venezia Giulia, is hindered by several factors. One of these is the lack of identity documents which deprives numerous Roma of welfare services. There are serious concerns about access to health-care services for Roma and Sinti living in the settlements. These services are particularly needed by children and women. The overwhelming majority of people in the settlements is not registered with a family doctor and therefore can only benefit in a limited way from health services. Moreover, some Roma did not see the advantage of obtaining formal documentation and that they only complied with the system when an immediate need arose, they, also, show a lack of trust in officialdom. However, this might also be linked to complicated and costly procedures. Another factor is discrimination in access to health care; general practitioners are not keen to work in the settlements.

In relation to *housing* problems, it should be noted that Friuli Venezia Giulia, is one of the few Italian regions to having adopted specific legislation providing for the 'protection of nomads/Gypsies/Roma/Sinti populations and their cultures,' including the "right to nomadic way to house."⁵ Regional law portrays the relationship between its objectives of protecting 'nomads and nomadism' and the construction of camps and halting sites as if it were a cause-effect relation. The popular conviction in Friuli, and more generally in Italy, that the Roma and Sinti are 'nomads' and as such prefer to live in camps, isolated from the majority population, is ratified and incorporated into the law. The outcome of this linkage is that most Roma and Sinti are forced by law and public policy to live in camps, thereby lending credence to, and reinforcing the popular images of them held by the majority population.⁶ Some settlements have been established by municipal councils, prefects, or other authorities or have been regularized after their establishment and are defined by the authorities as legal, regular, or authorized, and this is the case of Monte Sette Busi Camp, located in the Province of Udine, since the end of World War II, camp the home to a thousand of Sinti.

We want to highlight a rare case of successful integration among the inhabitants of the camp and the

3 Access to health service, in Friuli Venezia Giulia, is hindered by several factors. One of these is the lack of identity documents which deprives numerous Roma of welfare services. There are serious concerns about access to health-care services for Roma and Sinti living in the settlements. These services are particularly needed by children and women. The overwhelming majority of people in the settlements is not registered with a family doctor and therefore can only benefit in a limited way from health services. Moreover, some Roma did not see the advantage of obtaining formal documentation and that they only complied with the system when an immediate need arose, they, also, show a lack of trust in officialdom. However, this might also be linked to complicated and costly procedures. Another factor is discrimination in access to health care; general practitioners are not keen to work in the settlements.

4 Sometimes also prejudices are present in social workers dealing with Roma/Sinti communities, expressions as the following are extremely common especially among public sector: "they just want easy money!" or "they do not give anything back!;" "they just want a house and then they are destroying it, and they are not paying anything for it!"

5 L R n. 11/88, 'Norme a tutela della cultura rom nell'ambito del territorio della Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia,' BUR n.34,15.04.1988.

6 To minimize the impact of municipalities that may refuse to build a camp or halting site for Roma and Sinti in its territories, regional law explicitly reserve for the regional authorities the power to determine the territorial distribution of settlements for Roma and throughout the region. In Friuli Venezia Giulia Roma settlements varied in size from a small number of families living in one or two buildings, caravans, or huts to large settlements of around 700-800 people. The settlements also varied in their legal status.

non-Roma neighbours. In the area close to the Roma camp, in fact, there are blocks of public housing, and over the years it is created a climate of mutual trust, in which some residents of public housing even leave the windows open when they are away from home, to demonstrate a willingness to want to establish a relationship of mutual trust and confidence.

Completely different is the situation of the two unauthorized Roma settlements, located on the outskirts of Trieste, in the industrial zone of the town of Muggia. Hence the lack of basic facilities and services has meant that the municipality of Trieste has just put a project, not yet realized, of an authorized camp. This project encounters a very strong resistance on the part of the Roma population living in the two camps, which refuse to move from areas where they live to about twenty-five.⁷

Information from the interviews of carried out for this report indicate that the difficulties encountered by the Sinti do not seem to be so much that of poor and substandard housing conditions, even when they are forced to park and live in 'camps' due to lack of equipped halting sites. The major problems seem to stem from difficulties they face in obtaining permissions to use their private lands as places of residence or finding equipped halting sites where they can park their mobile homes (trailers) or caravans while they move about for work, the ordinances prohibiting them from stopping in many municipalities and the injunctions by both police and civil authorities not to settle, albeit temporarily in certain areas.⁸

Concerning *education*, the in depth interviews realized with Roma and Sinti representatives and with educational workers pointed out a common result: there are still mainly three problems concerning education and access to education of Roma/Sinti in the region. First of all school workers have big problems in dealing with parents of Roma/Sinti children, linked to communication and mutual confidence. Many children are abandoning elementary school after a few years due to combined factors of mutual misunderstanding and mutual prejudices. Secondly, Roma and Sinti generally have a significantly lower level of education than their Italian coetaneous, just 0.5% of Sinti have a higher level of education, and 0.1% a university degree. At the end there is deep cultural and sociological problem linked with the negative perception traditional Roma and Sinti culture has about schooling and education in general.⁹

Undoubtedly what emerges from the interviews is that the low level of education is affecting all the levels of integration of Roma and Sinti, primarily employment and economic situation.

Concerning the key issue of *employment*, the general results of the interviews realized with stakeholders in the employment service could be resumed as follows. First of all both Roma and Sinti are hardly discriminated, generally they have possibility to find a stable work just in few sectors as building, low level technical maintenance, solid waste management and similar. Moreover the medium average salary is 50% lower than for Italians with similar professional experience and qualifications. It is possible to conclude that for what concerns employment both Roma and Sinti are generally excluded from the labour market and they still survive with traditional methods as: begging, street performances, light housework, collecting metals, petty theft and similar. Employment is still not perceived as a value but an obligation to survive by Sinti and Roma living in Friuli Venezia Giulia.¹⁰

7 Particular is the situation of Sinti, which, unlike Roma, live in Trieste in the lone single-family houses or apartments in the city. Moreover, city of Monfalcone ordinance dating back to February, 2000, provides for the prohibition in the entire municipality (both public and private areas accessible to the general public) housing, even temporarily, in vehicles or tents of the outside spaces and areas equipped for that purpose, and involves clearing obligation within 24 hours of notification of the decision.

8 The most recurrent argument used to justify prohibition of Roma and Sinti from stopping in the territories of certain municipalities is that the same do not have equipped areas where these populations can be adequately accommodated, that is, areas provided with water, secure connection to electricity, connection to the public sewage system, toilets and baths / showers. On the basis of this lack of facilities (some ordinances go further to state that even if the municipality wanted, such facilities could not be set up within a short period), the ordinances claim that prohibition is meant to protect general public health, including that of the Roma/Sinti.

9 It is still very strong the perception that public schooling could affect the traditional familiar linkages between Roma and/or Sinti, destroying traditional cultural heritage and affecting social interaction between Roma and/or Sinti.

10 In Friuli Venezia Giulia, Roma unemployment rates are far below the 95–100 per cent levels that are often reported. Roma often understand 'employment' to mean a 'steady job' rather than the broader notion of 'income generating activities.' Despite extensive involvement in the informal economy, Roma households are heavily dependent on welfare payments and other central

Poor employability is a key feature of life for the Roma. This is due to both discriminatory practices and to the low competitiveness of Roma workers. Poor educational opportunities today guarantee poor employment prospects tomorrow.

With regard to relations with the *representatives of the Sinti* in the area, should be emphasized that it has been quite hard to find Sinti leaders willing to be interviewed within the Redupre project and willing to participate in general to the project activities.¹¹ In any case it has been possible to point out some general aspects which are linked to employment, economic situation and social exclusion and auto-exclusion.¹² Another very interesting aspect which emerged from the interviews is that Sinti are considering responsible for the worsening of their economic and social situation Roma and “their” culture, in fact all Sinti stressed that they are not as “them” In general terms it is possible to say that Sinti have a strong ethnic feeling of membership but at the same time they think that their traditions and culture are in danger, not only due to social exclusion and prejudices of Gages but also due to the presence of Roma in Italy.

If possible, IGES had more problems to interview Roma leaders and representatives, than Sinti leaders and representatives. The Roma presence in Friuli Venezia Giulia is extremely fluid and basically based on family camps rather than groups. We entered in contact with three different Roma families, one in Udine, one in Gorizia and one in Trieste, and in all of them we were able to interview the householders. The distinctive issue is that all them perceive to be discriminated and subject to prejudices, but they do not mind a lot about this, they are more scared by policemen or “violent Italians” than by social exclusion and unemployment. In any case they think that their presence in the region is temporary, so they do not understand why they should interact with Italians institutions or citizens. Another important aspect is that they were not willing to answer on questions concerning housing, employment, crime and schooling.

The interviews with *town councillors* were mainly based on political considerations concerning the presence of Roma communities in the territory of the region. Some town councillors admitted that the “Roma issue” is used by newspapers and politicians for contingent electoral purposes.¹³ It is clear that such an approach is not only counterproductive but it is also affecting the realization of durable results in housing, employment, health services, social services, education. Many of these politicians had more prejudices than the average of other interviewed stakeholders.

The interviews with *police officers* have been unexpectedly open and outspoken. All police officers dealing directly with Roma and Sinti crime acts stressed that they are not, in most cases, comparable to organized crime. They are mainly small thieves and scammers, in the last few years newspapers and public opinion were wrongfully convinced that Roma gangs were beside the violent robberies which occurred in many villas in Friuli Venezia Giulia, but it has been demonstrated how these vents were linked to organized gangs of Rumanians, rather than Serbians and Italians which had no linkage with Roma or Sinti communities. Obviously also some prejudices emerged, many police officers stated that robberies and smuggling are their way of living and that it is impossible to change this.

2. The field questionnaire has been prepared for people from different level of education, age and social groups, and it concerns the Italian’s perception, especially in region Friuli Venezia Giulia, about

government transfers (pensions, child support, etc.). Roma youth are particularly vulnerable to unemployment. They run the risk of being permanently excluded from mainstream society and falling into the underclass. Long-term unemployment has profound, negative effects on the social fabric of Roma communities of this Region.

11 Anyway, starting from this point, IGES has been able to involve and interview two Sinti representatives, 1 in Udine and 1 in Trieste. Both of them stressed that they were speaking in the name of their family and not in the name of the Sinti community they are apart of.

12 Typical expressions were for example: “*Job for us is not a value but an obligation to survive*,” “*We do not want to live as Gage*,” “*our culture is under menace and threat*” etc.

13 What has been astonishing is that no of the interviewed considered Roma or Sinti as a resource, a possibility to improve dialogue between these two worlds; the most used word was “problem”: “...this problem should be solved...”; “Roma issue is a problem for citizens...”; “EU should solve this problems...”

the conflict between Roma and Non-Roma Population. The statistical sample is composed by 100 respondents. Bearing in mind that Roma/Sinti population resident in Region Friuli Venezia Giulia is estimated to be (2012) about 2.500 people (less than 0.15% of the overall population), interviewed people are divided as follows: 80 Italian non Roma people (47.5% male and 52.5% female); 20 Italian Roma/Sinti people (150% male and 85% female).¹⁴

It is possible to affirm that generally non-Roma women between 18-44 years and non-Roma men between 18-30 years of age have significantly less prejudices towards Roma than older people. And for what concerns the non-Roma there significant differences in gender (females are generally less close to prejudices than men, but this depend also on age and education).

Obviously there are some differences in such results depending on the age, the level of education and the gender of the respondents, let us try to expose such results in a systematic way: males are generally more subject than Females to prejudices, but such a consideration is valid especially in the group M3 (age 50+), less in the groups M1 and M2; there are significant differences in the level of knowledge and consequently of stereotypes and prejudices based on age of the respondents. If we base our evaluation on the distinction between younger (groups M1, M2, F1 and F2) and older people (M3 and F3), the older the respondents are the strongest are the prejudices; for what concerns the level of education of the respondents, higher is the level of education the lower is the relevance of prejudices and stereotypes between the respondents. In any case, such a general consideration is not applicable universally to the results of the survey: there are different cases of people with lower level of education that are very opened minded towards Roma. In our opinion, in Italy, the presence of prejudices and stereotypes, more than a problem of education, is a problem of knowledge and culture; another interesting date which emerges from the survey questionnaire is that non Roma and Roma having contacts (at different levels: housing, work, school...) with each other are less subject to prejudices; many prejudices are directly linked to media campaigns and to black chronicle in newspapers describing Roma as criminals and outlaw (despite the fact that in most of the cases the respondents never had negative and direct experiences with Roma/Sinti people); few of the respondents are willing to recognize specific rights to all minorities and immigrants, they prefer to distinguish different minorities by geographical and ethnic origin. For what concerns the typical stereotypes it clearly emerges that for both gender groups (males and females) Roma/Sinti are still mainly nomads, despite the fact that it is well known nowadays *nomadism* is practiced by an exiguous minority of these individuals. In general but not as a rule, the more right oriented are the respondents the more evident are the prejudices and the stereotypes. The main stereotypes and prejudices emerging from the analysis of the survey questionnaire are the following: nomads, criminals, self excluded, lazy.

For what concerns Roma there are quite significant differences in the answers between older and younger generations: younger people are less linked to traditions and are more open to dialogue, while older people gave a lot (about 80% in some cases) of do not know answers.¹⁵

In the second part of the questionnaire the respondents faced with questions dealing with political and social perception, stereotypes and prejudices, and finally discriminatory behaviours. The results have been both worrying for Roma and non-Roma. There is a huge problem of mutual distrust, ignorance and stereotypic behaviours.¹⁶

The Roma are aware of the fact that non Roma consider them as second hand people (75%) but they shows a lot of doubts and do not know answers when they are asked to answer to questions as

14 The interviews have been executed among people who could live and act in these localities in direct contact with Roma/Sinti communities and whose opinion can contribute for shaping of the socio-interactive picture of the chosen locality, and with Roma/Sinti representatives and leaders.

15 The age of the respondents was proportionally distributed between different ages.

16 When the discussion shifted on immigration and minorities, both groups showed prejudices and discriminatory behaviors towards other minorities or immigrants (about 60%) and moreover there was the idea that the process of EU integration is not something so positive (45% of Roma and 55% non Roma). Most the Roma respondents do not have any idea concerning these issues, while many non Roma are moved by racism and prejudice (about 35%).

criminality. On the other hand, there is stable percentage of non Roma (about 35%), who are hardly against Roma presence and who are convinced that Roma are a sort of social cancer that should be eradicated. There is also a significant component of non Roma who is convinced (30%) that Roma are hardly discriminate in Italy and that this situation should change as soon as possible. For what concerns the stereotypes the main that emerged are the following: Roma are nomads (50% of non Roma), thieves (40%), lazy and dirty (45%), wild (35%), dishonest (45%), noisy (40%), musical (50%). It is clear that Roma are among the most discriminate groups, more than Muslims, drug addicts, heavy drinkers, political extremists, homosexuals and immigrants. More than 50% of non Roma would not like to have a Roma as a neighbour.

Conclusions

In the mind of 35-50% of non Roma interviewed Roma are thieves, nomads, and dangerous people. This point of view identify all the prejudices concerning the Roma population according to non-Roma people, it means that we don't know enough about the past, the present, the future and especially their needs. As already stated, there is a strong problem of mutual knowledge.¹⁷ The nomad theory is used as the justification for excluding Roma and also to reinforce the popular idea that they are not Italians and do not belong to Italy. As a matter of fact, 60% of the Roma living in Italy are Italian citizens and almost all of them are sedentary. The three most important causes for the higher poverty among the Roma people that appeared were: *social exclusion; unemployment; lower level of education*. The field questionnaire gave us the opportunity to know some of the most important causes for the higher unemployment among the Roma people according to people from North-Eastern Italy: *discrimination/racism nomads; low level of education*. During the collection of the opinion survey questionnaire, the interviewers described the most typical traits of the Roma people in: *nomad, musical, wild/rude*.

A first date which clearly emerges from the analysis of the opinion survey questionnaire is that Italians still have a scarce knowledge and strong prejudices of Roma/Sinti minorities living in the Region. The main result of such ignorance is that in the collective imagination they are joined in an indistinct condition of outlaw and illegal behaviour with a consequent social and economic marginalization. Such a marginalization in any case is not depending on Italians but on Roma/Sinti. Another important consideration, strongly linked to the previous statements, is that most of the respondents completely ignore the deep cultural, historical and social differences characterizing the different Roma/Sinti groups living in the region. By a certain point of view, it is anyway true that such stereotypes are also due to the effective behaviour of significant portions of these minorities. They still show big difficulties of integration, and, very often, they are very closed and unconfident, also for historical and practical reasons towards non Roma people, they do not consider work as a "value," but rather as an imposition of the "Gadjes," moreover many of them consider education of Roma pupils as dangerous for the preservation of their traditions, language, culture.

Concluding our analysis it is possible to state that in Italian society prejudices and stereotypes towards Roma/Sinti are still very present. The fear of the "others" is at the very origin of the different discriminations these people are suffering also in the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia. Considering, moreover, that also the Roma showed strong prejudices towards non-Roma, the problem of reciprocal knowledge and thus acceptance is at its very beginning.

17 The main problem regarding Roma and Sinti is that they still do not possess official minority status (as do other twelve minority groups living in Italy), since, according to the Italian Parliament, they are not linked to a specific part of the Italian territory and therefore cannot be recognized as a linguistic minority. The Italian government explained that: "The basic criteria for the label of 'linguistic minority' depend on the stability and duration of the settlement in a delimited area of the country, which is not the case for Roma populations."

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SOCIAL PATTERN OF ROMA – NON-ROMA RELATIONS AND PREVAILING STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICES AS DERIVE FROM THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS AND OPINION SURVEY REALIZED IN THE FOUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES OF ROMANIA

Both the in-depth interviews and the survey conducted within the frame of the REDUPRE project included a considerable number of questions that aimed to take a snapshot of the relations between the Roma and the non-Roma in the four target localities – Sântana (Arad County), Aleșd (Bihor County), Timișoara, Sânpetru Mare (Timiș County).

The in-depth interviews were conducted between 1 and 30 September 2012, on 15 Roma subjects: 2 journalists from Radio Timișoara, 3 local councillors from Sântana, Timișoara, Aleșd (1 from each county); 10 intellectuals/leaders (other than the ones earlier mentioned) from all three counties (teachers, NGO representatives, headmasters, social workers, representatives of the National Agency for Roma – West Region).

All interviewees stated they had both personal and professional contacts with the non-Roma. Yet, the latter outnumbered the former as most spoke about: their colleagues from work, university, and the meetings they had and contacts they established with public institutions, the interaction with the non-Roma community due to being representatives of the town hall.

Those who had closer contacts with the non-Roma usually mentioned their friends (one interviewee said his non-Roma friends were very surprised to find out that he was Roma as there were no visible differences between them) or neighbours (one respondent said they were the only Roma family in the block but they had good relationships with all the neighbours and even exchanged cookie recipes with some of them).

When analyzing the trend undergone by these relations during the past 10 years, four respondents considered that they have improved, three believed they are the same, one claimed to have witnessed a decline whereas three didn't answer the question.

When shifting to **prejudices**, all respondents stated that both the Roma and the non-Roma had prejudices towards each other.

Table 1: Prejudices of the non-Roma and Roma towards each other.

No.	Non-Roma towards the Roma	Roma towards the non-Roma
1.	Dirty, thieves, lazy, wretches, violent	Perverse, liars, thieves, scoundrels
2.	Commercials e.g. "When I grow up, I will become a thief.," Romanian proverbs	"Why do they need so much education if they earn so little money?"
3.	Social, cultural, economic, ethnic prejudices	Social, cultural, economic, ethnic prejudices
4.	The Roma have genetic problems regardless of their achievements	The non-Roma sees us as second-hand citizens; they will never consider us equal.
5.	The Roma have more facilities (social assistance, special places for Roma children at the high school entrance exam)	The non-Roma discriminate them regardless of their efforts to evolve, the non-Roma don't understand their ancestral traditions and, therefore, the reasons for their actions
6.	Not educated, commit many crimes, don't like to work	Not trustworthy, believe to be superior to the Roma
7.		"The Gadji think we are stupid and try to cheat us."

Another important chapter of the interview centred on **discrimination**. All respondents believed that Roma are discriminated whereas two respondents considered that non-Roma don't face unequal treatment.

However, three interviewees emphasized that the discrimination against the Roma is also fuelled by their inappropriate behaviour. The opinion was reiterated when identifying the grounds of discrimination.

The main reasons for discriminating the Roma are: poverty (4 interviewees), poor education (4), stereotypes and prejudices (3), Romany language (1), ethnic background (1), bureaucracy (1), false values (1), corruption (1), indifference (1), lack of democratic education of the non-Roma (1), lack of role models (1), not knowing / misunderstanding the history of the Roma.

One Roma journalist also believed that it was more convenient for the non-Roma to attribute negative incidents to the Roma given the overall negative image of the latter. As an edifying example, he told the story of a non-Roma police officer who asked one non-Roma culprit to declare that he was Roma just because the crimes he had committed would have been a serious stain for the majority.

One reason that applied to both Roma and non-Roma and that was mentioned by a sizeable share of interviewees was the fact that the two groups didn't know each other well enough to fully understand each other's behaviour.

When touching upon the main fields in which the Roma are discriminated, *employment* ranked first (mentioned by 6 respondents) as interviewees considered that many Roma are not hired because of their ethnic background ("On the phone they tell you they have vacancies. At the job interview, when they see that you are brunette they ask you to leave your phone number so they can call you").

Education came second because of geographical or classroom segregation ("Very often, the Roma children sit in the back of the classroom") and was closely followed by *health* (one respondent claimed there are hospitals where Roma patients are separated from the others because of their ethnic background).

One interviewee pinpointed that the Roma are also discriminated from a historical point of view and that such unequal treatment has resulted in 70% of the Roma not having a house or property deeds for their lands or houses given that the ownership law didn't apply to Roma and non-Roma alike.

Interviewees believed that the main vectors that determined the spreading of prejudices and discrimination were: mass media (given the focus on the few Roma who own palaces and luxury cars), inappropriate behaviour of the discriminated group, education, precarious financial situation, opinion leaders, mentalities, lack of assumed political decisions, racist speeches delivered by representatives of public institutions, political interests, stereotypes passed from one generation to another, the fact that the Roma and the non-Roma don't know each other well enough.

All interviewees considered that **mass media** play an extremely important role as they provide information and also create opinions. Moreover, respondents were unanimous when speaking about the tendency to negatively portray the Roma and to "hunt" scandals, sensational events or other subjects which sell despite not being in line with journalism ethics.

The same point of view was embraced by the journalists in Timișoara who claimed that "nothing will change if the non-Roma doesn't learn to walk in the mud," to set aside the grammar mistakes most Roma make, and to understand the true meaning of their words.

As it can be seen in the table below, most interviewees considered that the main vectors of change are the Roma themselves while Romanian authorities come second.

Table 2: Who can reduce prejudices against the Roma.

No.	Answer	Number of respondents
1.	The Roma themselves by changing their mentalities, going to school, closely cooperating with the non-Roma for achieving common goals, taking higher interest in the projects that directly address them, promoting the Romany culture, obeying basic hygiene requirements, knowing better the non-Roma	7
2.	Romanian authorities through a more pragmatic legal framework on minority rights, better laws against discriminatory information, measures for fighting corruption	5
3.	The non-Roma (majority)	4
4.	NGOs through civic actions aimed at improving the dialogue between the Roma and the non-Roma, information and awareness-raising campaigns	3
5.	Mass media	2
6.	The Consultative Community Council (in Sântana) including priests, teachers, police officers, headmasters, public servants etc.	1

Roma people could fight prejudices and discrimination by: understanding the importance of education and how serious a crime is, working and not begging, taking higher interest in the projects which directly address them, accepting and willing to change, cooperating with the non-Roma, raising their self-esteem, improving their education, becoming aware of their rights, promoting positive models, carrying out campaigns for fighting discrimination, taking actions for increasing the number of Roma representatives in the local and national decision-making processes.

According to four interviewees, the prejudices against the Roma have not deepened over the past 10 years because: their negative image has not been so highly promoted as before, the non-Roma have grown accustomed to this situation, many Roma left the country in search for a better life.

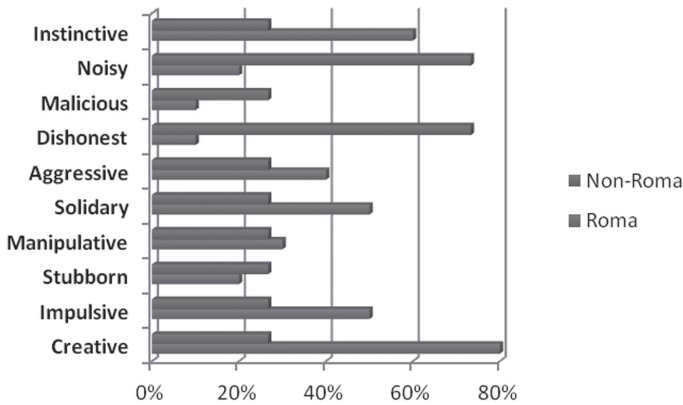
Other five interviewees stated the contrary. The main reasons for the ascending trend are: the negative image fuelled by mass media, the low standard of living of the Roma, the social and economic uncertainty in Romania, mutual distrust, the news about the Roma abroad.

Another relevant portrait of the relations between the Roma and the non-Roma in the four target localities was provided by the survey conducted on 30 Roma and 30 non-Roma respondents, between 1 October 2012 and 31 March 2013.

When being asked to choose the traits that best describe Roma people, Roma respondents pointed to creativity, musicality, intelligence, and intuitiveness as definitely accurate traits. The non-Roma respondents considered intuitiveness, intelligence, dishonesty, noisiness, and musicality to be the most prominent characteristics.

The main traits that brought a notable difference between Roma's self- and hetero-image were creativity, impulsiveness, stubbornness, manipulativeness, solidarity, aggressiveness, dishonesty, maliciousness, noisiness, instinctiveness. Non-Roma respondents considered the negative attributes in the list above mentioned to be more prominent than Roma respondents.

Figure 1: The extent to which Roma and non-Roma interviewees consider several traits of Roma people to be definitely accurate.

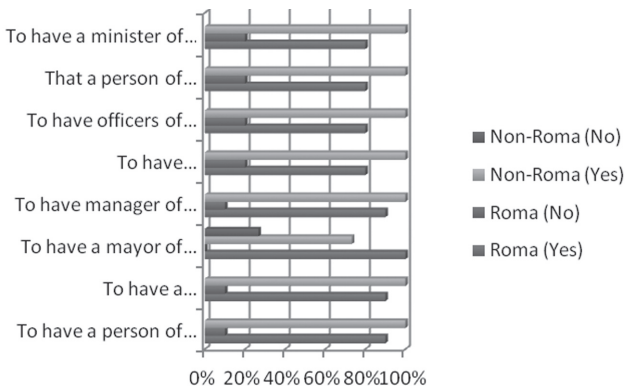


When gauging the social distance towards Roma people, all non-Roma respondents said they would not mind to have Roma neighbours, whereas 90% of Roma interviewees stated the same. When asking about the possibility of having Hungarian neighbours, all Roma and non-Roma respondents stated they would not be bothered by such a situation. Surprisingly, the social distance towards Roma appeared to be higher in the case of Roma respondents. The two most edifying examples were the fact that half of the Roma interviewees would not sit next to a Roma in a bus, and that 30% would not agree to eat in a restaurant right next to Roma people. At the opposite end of the spectrum, all non-Roma respondents were politically correct and stated they would have nothing against sitting next to a Roma in a bus, having Roma people on their street, eating in a restaurant next to Roma people, sharing their workplace with Roma people, being served by Roma waiters, having Roma roommates and friends, and having their children married to Roma people.

When shifting to the positions that could be held by Roma and to interviewees' perception of their relationships with the Roma having such positions, all Roma respondents agreed to have a Roma manager. However, respondents were more reticent in the case of Roma police officers, army officers, judges and ministers, as only 80% of the interviewees claimed they would have nothing against these positions being held by Roma people.

Again, the political correctness of non-Roma respondents was notable. There was only one exception – 26.7% of interviewees would not agree to have a Roma manager.

Figure 2: Would you agree...?



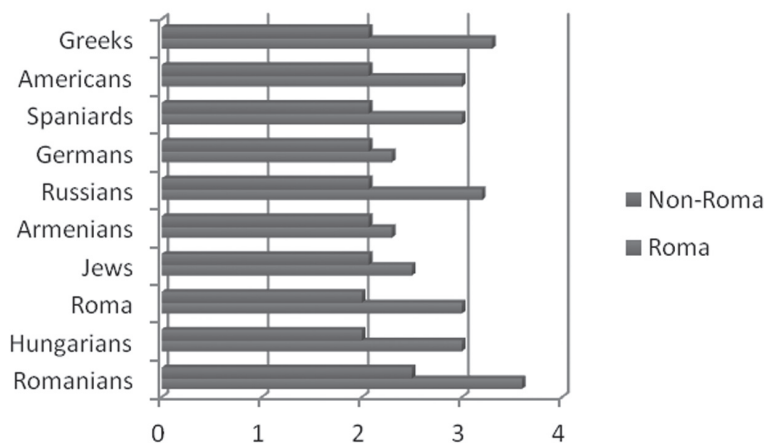
Another important set of questions referred to the life style of Roma people. At this chapter, non-Roma respondents agreed to a greater extent than Roma interviewees that most Roma beg or steal, and that Roma like the way they live their lives. The most significant discrepancy emerged when respondents were asked to express their opinions on the statement: “Roma live the way they live because they are discriminated.” 70% of Roma interviewees agreed whereas no non-Roma interviewee shared this belief.

The survey went on to analyze the perception that respondents held about Roma’s status in relation to national identity and the country’s image. Roma interviewees considered that Roma people are attached to national identity, and are not responsible for the negative image of Romania, and stated they were proud that Roma people live in Romania. Non-Roma respondents were less enthusiastic and preferred to have a rather neutral attitude towards these statements by choosing the “Neither agree, nor disagree” option.

When asked whether they liked Roma people, and whether they considered Roma people to be parasites, non-Roma respondents embraced the same neutral attitude as 73.3% neither agreed nor disagreed with the two statements. However, all of them disagreed when asked whether they considered Roma people to be very different from them.

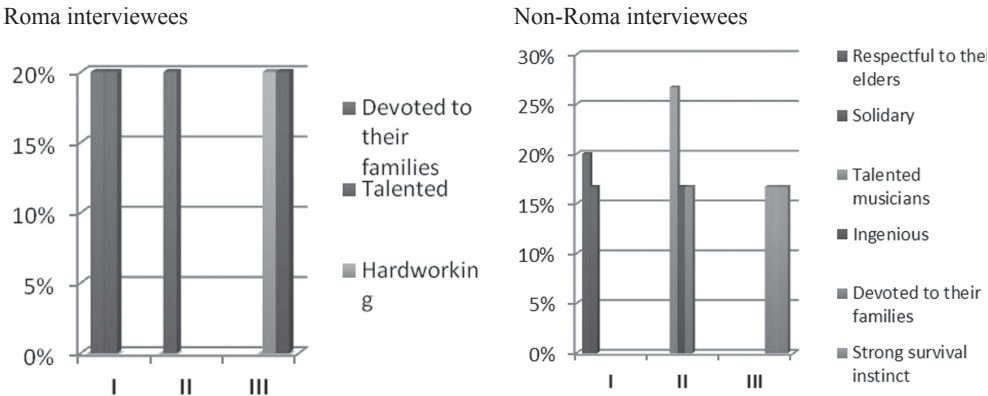
Roma interviewees showed stronger sympathy to Germans and Armenians. Their sympathy became less strong in the case of Romanians as the average number of points they attributed to Romanians, on a scale from 1 to 10 (1 = strong sympathy, 10 = strong antipathy) was 3.6. Non-Roma interviewees felt sympathy to all the ethnic groups listed. The average number of points ranged from 2, in the case of Roma and Hungarians, to 2.5, in the case of Romanians.

Figure 3: The sympathy/antipathy that interviewees show to different ethnic groups.



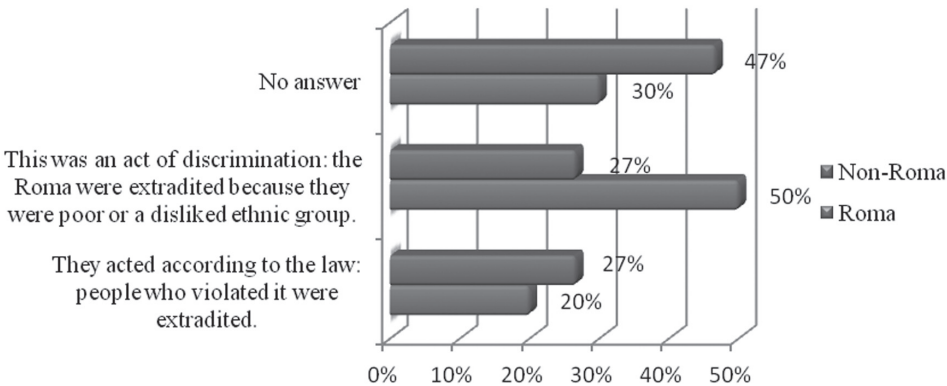
The survey went on to ask interviewees to identify the three most typical traits of Roma. Both Roma and non-Roma respondents enumerated positive characteristics. There was only one exception to the rule – dishonesty – which ranked third for 16.7% of the non-Roma. The most salient traits of the portrays painted by both Roma and non-Roma interviewees were respect for family values, and talent.

Figure 4: The three most typical traits of Roma people.



When asked about the measures taken in 2010 by the French and Italian governments, which extradited many Romanian and Bulgarian Roma, half of the Roma respondents said it was an act of discrimination. Almost half of the non-Roma interviewees preferred not to give an answer, 27% stated it was an act of discrimination, while another 27% believed that the respective governments acted according to the law.

Figure 5: Opinions on the measures taken by the French and Italian governments in 2010.



To conclude with, the in-depth interviews and the survey bring complementary perspectives on the relations between the two groups. The in-depth analysis is illustrative of Roma's perception concerning these interactions, whereas the survey juxtaposes Roma and non-Roma answers to identical questions. Both researches show that stereotypes and prejudices against the Roma exist and lead to discrimination especially in the employment, education, and health fields. The non-Roma group has the tendency to consider some negative attributes such as noisiness, dishonesty, maliciousness to be more prominent, unlike Roma respondents who place a greater emphasis on positive characteristics. The non-Roma respondents addressed by the survey display a very political correct attitude and often avoid direct, categorical answers by opting for "Neither agree, nor disagree" option (e.g. when asked whether they

like Roma, whether they consider Roma to be parasites or whether they are proud that Roma live in their country). Their political correctness may be linked to the longstanding multicultural tradition of Western Romania, to their active participation in several programs and trainings on multiculturalism, or simply to their reticence towards openly saying what they really think about Roma people for fear of being impolite or going against the tide of policies and programs centred on the inclusion of Roma.

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SOCIAL PATTERN OF ROMA – NON-ROMA RELATIONS AND PREVAILING STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICES AS DERIVE FROM THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS AND OPINION SURVEY REALIZED IN THE REGION OF BELA KRAJINA, SLOVENIA

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

1. Description of the sample

In the first year of the project implementation we have conducted the in-depth interviews with the selected representatives of the Roma community and the representatives of the public services. Performed were 21 interviews altogether; 2 of them were made with the Roma councillors in the local community councils, 8 interviews were executed with the representatives of the Roma community; 6 interviews with the representatives of the public services from the field of up-bringing and education and additionally was interviewed 1 representative from each of the following professional services: social work, employment, health, police and local self-government.

2. Methodology

When performing the interviews we have used a unified questionnaire which was the same for the representatives of the Roma community and for the public services. The questionnaire was composed from three contextual parts: general questions, questions about the position of Roma in public life and questions about prejudices and discrimination.

3. Results

On the basis of the performed interviews we came to the following results.

The interviews performed with the two Roma councillors in the local communities' councils show that they are aware of the importance of the cooperation and linkage of Roma people among themselves; however they can't define the ways to achieving this. In connection to the housing problem, have the Roma councillors exposed the problem of legalisation of the land where the Roma families had settled their modest houses and further they emphasised the importance of the infrastructural arrangement of the Roma settlements. They expressed the opinion that the local communities, where the Roma live, should settle the conditions. Both Roma councillors also exposed the opinion that within the majority population the mistrust and the rejection of the Roma can be traced. One of them sees in the recent lowering of social benefits the cause for increase of the poverty among the Roma.

All the interviewed representatives of the Roma community shared the same opinion that the Roma

people live in a bad situation. The majority found the cause for the bad situation of Roma in the recent lowering of the social benefits and in the lack of infrastructural arrangement in the Roma settlements. Some have as additional factors for bad situation exposed also low education and lack of motivation among the Roma for improvement of their own position. One person stressed that there are no role models in the Roma settlement. Some Roma were of opinion that they are treated unequally from the side of the professional agencies, public services with regard to the majority population. They have exposed the treatment in the police procedures and in health institutions. The interviewed Roma in majority of cases responded that they are cooperating well with the professional services in the field of upbringing and education and that the situation in this field has in a great extent improved. The cooperation with the employment agencies is according to their opinion not problematic, they have only stressed that the possibilities for Roma to find employment are due to existing prejudices very scarce. At the same time none of the interviewers exposed any problems in cooperation with the centres for social work. Some however exposed that the financial social subsidies are low; they have found justification for this in the new legislation and in the current crisis. One of the female Roma respondents exposed as unfounded a demand that the Roma parents should regularly send their children to school with the view to low financial social subsidies. She said that: "The state doesn't care how we live but at the same time they demand that we send our children to school. One needs money to do that." Only few of the Roma representatives were open and expressed criticism towards receiving and spending of the financial social benefits: "It is not nice that the Roma say they don't have means to survive, while at the same time they have prestigious cars in front of their houses." The interviewed Roma representatives are of opinion that they are stigmatised because of their ethnic origin, different life style and individuals, who throw bad light on the whole Roma population. Some of the representatives of the Roma community have, besides the one towards the Roma community, recognised intolerance of the majority population also towards members of ethnic communities that belong to ex-Yugoslav republics. According to the opinion of several interviewers could Roma alone contribute to the improvement of the situation, to diminishing of prejudices and intolerance by taking due care of schooling of their children and by respecting the rules of public behaviour which all would certainly improve the public opinion about the Roma.

The representatives of the public services from the field of upbringing and education have exposed the opinion that essential preconditions for successful integration of the Roma into the educational process are the integration of children into the pre-school upbringing, knowledge of the language of the majority population, stimulating domestic environment, regular frequentation of the school and integration. They have stressed that this is not achieved because the Roma parents don't invest enough efforts and besides that it is difficult to establish cooperation with them and to include them into the activities for parents. Some respondents shared the opinion that the parents, who are not sending their children to school, should be more strictly sanctioned and that more efficient mechanisms for cooperation with parents should be put in place. All the respondents shared the same view that great progress was made in the recent years with regard to the education of Roma. The children are offered additional professional assistance; the elements of Roma culture are included in particular courses. Almost all the schools in Bela krajina employ the so called "Roma assistants," who are according to the opinion of the respondents not only helpful in the educational process but are at the same time also the model of a successful individual for Roma children. The respondents are of opinion that the local community always reacts on requests for assistance for improvement of the situation in the field of education. Due to their judgement could the media and individuals in their public services encourage Roma in a way that they presented more often the positive examples of Roma who are included into education and employment.

The representatives of the public services from the fields of social work, employment, health and police share the opinion that in comparison of previous year they notice a progress that was made in cooperation between the public services and the Roma community. However they have stressed that

according to the efforts that were invested is the progress smaller than expected. One female respondent from the field of social work emphasised that the main source of living for Roma is in fact the financial social subsidy which grows bigger with the number of family members. She shared the opinion that the Roma are very well informed and that they use every possibility for additional social benefits that are available to them. The financial social benefits are rather big and they fulfil the needs of Roma for everyday life, which is according to her stand also the cause for lack of interest among Roma for education and employment. The representatives of different professional services also share the same opinion that the social subsidies are many times non-adequately spent. One female respondent from the field of employment stressed that due to the current conditions in the job market are the Roma employment opportunities but as well as the employment opportunities of the majority population rather scarce. Besides that she sees a hindrance to a greater employment of Roma in the low educational level, in prejudices of employers and in the financial social benefits, which are many times higher than are the payments for the non-qualified working posts. Another female respondent from the field of health did not notice any particular differences in the health condition of Roma and majority population. She has however exposed that in their work in the Roma settlements they pay more attention to the preventive measures and pregnancy control. The interviewed representative from the police emphasised that greater tolerance and co-existence between Roma and non-Roma population would be achieved if the Roma stopped with the acts which were disturbing for the majority population (noise, usage of firearms, thefts, settlement of others' grounds, making fires etc.).

Some Roma settlements still today don't have adequate infrastructure. In most cases are the Roma settlements in Bela krajina also illegal. Problematic are also settlements which arise along the regional roads as they have neither pavements nor public lighting. The arrangement of those are settled by the state regulation which however in the cases of illegal settlements doesn't allow infrastructural interventions was explained by the lady-mayor of the Community of Črnomelj, who as the only one of the three mayors from Bela krajina, responded to our request for an interview. The lady-mayor of Črnomelj stressed the active approach of the community towards solving of Roma issues in their community. Each year they prepare an operative plan, which in this year predominantly focuses on improvement of the conditions of living and the infrastructure arrangement in the Roma settlements. The community of Črnomelj made an attempt to solve the problem of illegal settlements in a way that they offered the Roma the grounds where they live into purchase, however only very few Roma were interested for this option. The people at the local community don't understand this lack of interest as the price for the land was set very symbolic (1 EUR/m²) and was meant to arise in Roma the pride of owing a land. The lady-mayor was of opinion that the Roma are convinced that one day they will receive the land where they live for free. They feel that after so many years of living there this land belongs to them (as was under the old legislation).

All the respondents from the professional services are of opinion that the prejudices towards Roma are present among the majority population and that they are additionally formed by the media, however not all of them agree that the Roma are subjects to discrimination in the Slovenian society.

4. Conclusion

Based on the answers from the representatives of different professional services from the fields of upbringing and education, social work, employment, health, police and local self-government, are the Roma people in the communities of Bela krajina treated equally as the majority population. The respondents from the professional services unanimously responded that the Roma are stigmatised but not discriminated. In some cases they are due to the assistance that they receive actually in a privileged position (schools). All the interviewed representatives from professional services shared the same opinion that for the improvement of the situation and development the Roma need better infrastructural

arrangement of their settlements and better education. At the same time they have emphasised that the professional services made great contribution to the better cooperation of the professional services with the Roma population by introducing special programmes, individual treatment and also by education of their own civil servants. Nevertheless they share the view that in spite of the mentioned progress, the results are with a view to the invested efforts too low. The respondents from the professional services also state that one of the most persisting prejudices in the majority population is the opinion that the Roma are entitled to higher social benefits as the other population, which is not true at all. The Roma receive social benefits to which are equally entitled also other inhabitants. It is however true that these incomes are higher in families with more members, which is often the case in Roma families. The reason for the prejudiced among the majority population about the high social benefits very probably rests also in the fact that some Roma, who receive the social benefits, are owners of expensive cars and property which is very likely connected to the illegal business that they are performing.

The successful Roma members are very often not well accepted by the rest of the Roma community. The reason for that can be found in the fact that frequently the successful Roma individuals don't want to declare themselves as Roma anymore. When performing the interviews with the representatives of the Roma community it became obvious that there are differences in the answers of Roma with education and employment and who don't live in the Roma settlements anymore and of the interviewed Roma without education, employment and who are living in the Roma settlements. The first group of Roma are of opinion that Roma should become more "civilised" and get better integrated into the wider society in all fields of social life. Their accusation towards the "non-civilised" Roma is that they don't strive enough for the better life and don't invest efforts to improve the public image of the Roma people as such. They say that such Roma think only of themselves and don't do enough also for the Roma inhabitants in the same settlements and for the Roma community as a whole. Meanwhile the second group of Roma accuse the successful Roma individuals that they reject them. The reason for this can be probably found in the envy which is often mentioned as a hindrance for sound co-existence in the Roma settlements. The answers of the Roma respondents show that predominantly they are aware about the importance of education, employment and integration for their development. However, some of them still didn't realise that they alone should take a more active stand towards improvement of their own situation or the situation of the Roma community. This can be concluded on the basis of the answers where they responded that "the others" should help them more (state, community etc.) or that "the others" are responsible that they don't have adequate infrastructure in the Roma settlements.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

1. Aims of the research

The 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 – REDUPRE" joined 10 partner organisations from Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and Slovenia in their wish to contribute with their activities towards the identification and understanding of the prejudices and stereotypes between the Roma and non-Roma population in their respective countries. In the wish to observe the prejudices and stereotypes between both social groups as accurately as possible, the partners selected in their own country a local area where the discussed problems are especially exposed. The selected local areas are Razgrad in Bulgaria, Region Friuli-Venezia-Giulia in Italy, region Banat and Crisana in Romania and area of Bela krajina in Slovenia.

As mentioned already is the essential objective of the REDUPRE project to recognise prejudices and stereotypes between the Roma and non-Roma population and to elaborate new possible theoretical and

practical models for fighting the prejudices and stereotypes in the four participating countries. For attaining of these objectives was in the REDUPRE work-plan included also the execution of the public opinion survey among the representatives of Roma and non-Roma community living in the area of Bela krajina in Slovenia. The aim of the research was thus to contribute to the identification of the appearances and sources of stereotypy behaviour and prejudices in both directions. Before the public opinion survey we have executed in-depth interviews with selected representatives from public services (education, police, centres for social work, employment institutes, local communities, health service etc.) and the representatives of the Roma community in Bela krajina. The in-depth interviews served as a tool for better determination of the existing prejudices and stereotypes among both social groups.

2. Applied methodology

With the aim in mind to achieve the comparability of results in all four countries involved, a unified questionnaire was developed, which differed in the questions that were not a subject of inter-country comparison, but referred to the acquiring of information on the characteristics of the sample (e.g. To which ethnic group do you belong, which are your political preferences et similar).

The questionnaire was constructed from two parts and included altogether 42 questions, or sets of questions. The majority of the questions were of the so called closed type and only 5 questions were of the so called open type where the respondents had the possibility to answer freely. On the majority of the questions of the closed type the respondents answered on the five-level scale (definitely agree, slightly agree, either agree nor disagree, slightly disagree, definitely disagree), some questions had an option to answer with yes or no.

The first part besides the “classical” demographic question (gender, age, education) included also questions about their economic status and living conditions. The first part included 16 questions.

The second, problem-related, part included 26 mostly sets of questions, which purpose it was to acquire information about the sort and sources of the stereotypy behaviour and prejudices between the Roma and non-Roma population in the area of Bela krajina.

The preparation of the questionnaire and its 4 national versions proceeded in the beginning and in the middle of the year 2012. In the same time also the determination of the sample was made in accordance with the objectives of the project and the possibilities in the field. Field work proceeded in November and December of 2012. It was executed in three communities: Črnomelj, Metlika and Semič.

The inquiry proceeded individually on the basis of the prepared sample. The field work was executed by the partner organisation Institute for Education and Culture Črnomelj – ZIK.

In spite of the desire that the opinion survey fulfils all the methodological requirements, it is unfortunately due to the smallness of the sample not possible to claim the full representativeness of the sample. Therefore the results acquired through the opinion survey cannot be generalised for the whole population of Bela krajina.

3. Description of the sample

81 respondents took part in the opinion survey among which 41 were representatives of the Roma community and 40 were of non-Roma original in Bela krajina. The division by gender of the non-Roma inhabitants was approximately half-half; while in the Roma population the females were predominating (approximately 2/3 of women).

The age of the respondents varies from 16 to 65 years, majority of the respondents belonged to the age group between 24 and 35 years.

With a view to the ethnic affiliation, approximately one half of the respondents declared as Roma and

the other half as Slovenes. Some respondents declared also as Croats or Serbs.

Majority of the respondents that declared as Roma left educational process until the end or by the end of the primary school. Meanwhile the majority of the Non-Roma respondents finished vocational school or general secondary school.

Great majority of the representatives of the Roma community characterised themselves as poor men or as members of the working class. The respondents ascertained that their economic status deteriorated in the last few years and at the same time predict that their economic position will not change or will even further deteriorate in the coming few years.

The respondents who declared as non-Roma ascertained, similar as the Roma representatives, that their economic position deteriorated in the last few years and at the same time predict that their economic status will not change or improve in the coming years.

The majority of members of both communities live in family houses, whereby the majority of the non-Roma population own the house or a flat where they live, while on the other side the share of Roma who are owners of the houses where they live is less than half.

4. Results

According to the main objective of the REDUPRE project and on the basis of the analysis of the public opinion is the analysis of the results elaborated from the view of comparisons between the respondents who declared representatives of Roma and those who declared as representatives of non-Roma community. Other comparisons, for e.g. according to the gender, age, education, were due to the objectives of the project less interesting and the results of these analysis are in this place not presented.

The presentation of the results is divided into four parts as follows:

- **Personality characteristics that are subscribed to Roma.** This set includes the characteristics that are subscribed to the Roma people and the differences in attribution of the personal characteristics between the Roma and non-Roma population.
- **Social distance towards the Roma.** This set endeavours to give an answer to the dilemma whether and to which extent the social distance towards the Roma people exists, which in an indirect way shows on the intolerance towards them in Bela krajina.
- **Position of Roma in the society.** In this set the social position of Roma is presented as is seen from the angle of the representatives of the Roma and non-Roma community. The most important differences in their comprehension are exposed.
- **Causes for the current position of Roma in the society.** The questionnaire tried to find answers on the burning questions about the sources for the existing situation, or where are the causes for the stereotypes and prejudices between the Roma and non-Roma population in Bela krajina.

In this place it is necessary once more to expose that due to the not sufficient representativeness of the sample only the primary statistical analysis of the results was made. Results are given on a descriptive level and are valid for the group of the respondents, whereby of course some conclusions can with a certain reservation be generalised also on the whole population of Bela krajina.

4.1. Personality characteristics that are subscribed to Roma

The characteristics that were subscribed to Roma by the respondents were tested with two questions. One of them was of the open type (please, list the three most common characteristics of Roma) while the other was of the closed type where the personality characteristics were listed and the respondents had to make a selection on a four-level scale about how relevant is a certain characteristic for Roma people.

The Roma as well as the non-Roma respondents agreed that some characteristics, as wild, free-minded, stubborn, instinctive, spontaneous, manipulative and clever are typical for Roma. Both groups agreed that the most typical characteristic of Roma is that the Roma are loud. Intuition was listed as less typical characteristic of Roma.

Opinion on other characteristics by both groups differed importantly. For e.g. the non-Roma population subscribes to Roma lesser creativity as they subscribe to themselves; further are Roma people in the opinion of non-Roma less beautiful, less sympathetic, less honest, more malicious, more revengeful, more impulsive, less communicative and less musical. On the other side, the Roma respondents believe that they are more successful in preserving of their identity as the non-Roma population.

By the question where the respondents had to list the characteristics of Roma by themselves the non-Roma respondents as the most common gave the following answers: non-conformism, violent, loud and inventive. The Roma respondents have described Roma mostly as musically talented, lazy, joyful and inventive.

The results show that Roma respondents subscribe more positive personality characteristics to Roma than the non-Roma respondents do, which, certainly, is an expected data. However, it was less expected that the non-Roma respondents subscribed to Roma consistently more those personal characteristics which belong to very negative characteristics. Roma were evaluated as very revengeful and dishonest. The positive characteristics (creativity, sympathy, beauty) were by non-Roma respondents marked less typical for Roma than they were marked by Roma respondents. The results clearly indicate the negative image of Roma among the non-Roma respondents. This conclusion is confirmed also by the answers on the second question where the respondents listed the characteristics of Roma by themselves. Deriving from the list of most important characteristics that the respondents gave on the question to list three most typical characteristics of Roma, we can conclude that the Roma have in the opinion of the non-Roma population predominantly negative personality characteristics; as are non-conformity and violence, besides that they are also loud, innovative and inert.

4.2. Social distance towards the Roma

Social distance shows the degree of opposition towards/avoidance of certain social groups and shows the existence of stereotypes and prejudices about certain social group. Still especially we were interested in the social distance towards the Roma population.

Results from the question, which tested the social distance towards different social groups, drive to the conclusion that the Roma as well as non-Roma respondents nurse high degree of distance towards different social groups. Both groups of respondents show some more tolerance only towards the alcoholics and the drug addicts. The greatest difference is in the tolerance towards the conflict persons; whereby the Roma respondents show much greater intolerance than the non-Roma respondents.

When testing the social distance towards Roma it was established that the non-Roma respondents don't avoid the non-personal contacts with the Roma; for e.g. they would sit with them in the bus or in the restaurant, they would not be opposed to being served by the Roma personnel, or to have a co-worker of Roma origin, mostly they would also not reject of the Roma would be policeman, director, offices in the army, judge or teacher of their children. However, the non-Roma respondents don't want to let the Roma enter their personal life. For e.g. they would not want to have Roma as neighbours, as roommates and they are against that their children would marry a Roma.

The answers show on great social distance towards groups which are different than we are irrespective of their ethnic affiliation. The respondents are against socialising or working with persons, who are different from them due to their ethnic, religious, and political or any other characteristic. The relation of non-Roma respondents towards the Roma doesn't differ importantly from the relation towards other different groups. The non-Roma don't oppose to contacts with Roma if they are short and non-personal in nature. Though, if the Roma wanted to enter their personal or intimate world, they would

in a majority oppose to it.

To substantiate great social distance towards Roma we can quote some more answers which show that the majority population doesn't perceive Roma as equal to them. Non-Roma respondents in a smaller degree than the Roma respondents consider that people really like Roma and when they ponder about themselves they are of opinion that the Roma people are rather different than they are. When the respondents were asked whether the Roma should live in the areas separated from others and that they should not mix with majority, 20% of the respondents agreed to it and the next one third did not oppose to this or they could not decide upon it. Interesting is also the next comparison of the relation of non-Roma respondents towards minorities in Slovenia, which show on the ethnic distance towards Roma. Although there are only a bit more than 1000 Roma out of 25 000 inhabitants and in Slovenia there are 10 000 out of 2 million inhabitants, the respondents believe that there are too many Roma in Slovenia. On the other hand, they consider that the number of Hungarians and Italians in Slovenia is not too big, although their number together exceeds 10 000. It is necessary to mention that the Italians and Hungarians don't reside in Bela krajina.

4.3. The position of Roma in the society

The respondents of the non-Roma origin in a great extent agree that the heterogeneity increases the cultural richness and that Roma contribute to the cultural diversity and richness and that Roma offer to us a possibility to show that we are a tolerant society. On the other hand the Roma respondents don't share this opinion. They are of opinion that diversity is not always something positive and that it rather causes conflict potential than increases cultural richness. At the same time they are of opinion that Roma in a lesser extent than the non-Roma respondents contributing to the cultural diversity.

The reason for the mentioned differences can be found in the different position of both groups. On one hand the Roma group, which members feel subordinated, unequal, marginalised and discriminated, and the majority group on the other hand who doesn't share these problems. To substantiate this claim we can quote some answers. The Roma respondents are clearly in difference with the non-Roma respondents of opinion that they are discriminated and that a hate speech is frequently used in public only because they are Roma; and at the same time they claim that the Slovenians treat Roma as second-level citizens, which however is recognised also by non-Roma respondents.

Differences among both groups of respondents appear also in regard to the understanding of the satisfaction of Roma with their position. Non-Roma respondents share the opinion that the Roma like the life they live and that they don't mind about the discrimination and that the Roma are reluctant to whether other people like them or not and further they believe also that the Roma much less than the non-Roma feel the repugnance about the filthiness. The Roma respondents answered quite differently to these questions. Something else can be concluded from these questions; namely that the non-Roma respondents try to subscribe to the Roma that they alone are responsible for the position in which they are.

We can find in the answers also certain falseness of the non-Roma respondents. On one hand they agree that we should respect the Romani culture and to secure resources for its development; while on the other hand they don't approve the affirmation that we should allow the Roma to live the life they want. Additional confirmation of the conclusion that considerable number of non-Roma respondents is not sincere with the opinion that the Roma culture should be respected is affirmed with their opinion that the Roma should be forced to live the life as others do.

All these points to the fact that the majority of the non-Roma respondents on the verbal level recognise the equality of Roma in the society; however on the personal level they reject them and believe that the Roma carry the responsibility for the situation in which they live and that the possible solution would be that the Roma accept the way of living of the majority population.

In the field of enforcement of the collective rights of Roma are both groups of respondents in concordance that the Roma have to have the right to establish their own associations, to publish books in their language, to produce emissions in their language in the public radio and TV and to have a representative in the bodies of local communities. Both groups in general oppose the Roma right to learn their language in public schools and they also don't agree that public inscriptions and other designations in Roma language should be erected. Differences appear in the issue of the right of Roma to their political organisation; in this sense for e.g. the non-Roma respondents disagree that the Roma could establish their own political parties or that they would have the right to the territorial autonomy; while on the other hand they would agree that the Roma would have their representative in the national parliament.

The answers show that the non-Roma respondents allow that the Roma enjoy their rights in their personal life, in the framework of their ethnic group. Yet, in public life their difference shall not be noticeable; especially they oppose the political articulation of Roma. They would tolerate the Roma representative in the parliament however such representative wouldn't bear a significant political importance anyhow.

Interesting is also recognition that also the Roma respondents oppose the learning of Roma language or to the presence of the Roma language in public (advertisements, public information boards and similar). This can nevertheless be explained with the fact that the Roma population don't want that the non-Roma learn the Roma language as in this way the majority population could break still the last defending line of their culture.

4.4. Causes for the existing position of Roma in the society

Roma in Bela krajina live in poor conditions in the vicious circle of poverty, great unemployment and low level of education; whereby it is difficult to determine what the cause is and what the consequence of the bad position of Roma. The respondents agree that the poverty is caused by great unemployment and bad education. There however are great differences among both groups in determining the causes for great unemployment. They all agree that the greatest cause for unemployment is bad education; whereby the non-Roma respondents believe that the cause lies also in unpreparedness and laziness of Roma, while on the other hand the Roma believe that they are in a large extent also the victims of discriminatory behaviour from the side of the employers. When researching the causes for bad education of Roma, the non-Roma respondents share the opinion that the greatest reason is their indifference for education; the Roma however say the reason is bad knowledge of the Slovenian language.

From the answers we can conclude that the respondents have significantly different opinion about the causes for the bad position of Roma. The non-Roma respondents see the main reason in the Roma them; they are not prepared to follow the regular educational process, they are reluctant to work; therefore they cannot avoid the poverty. The Roma respondents mention external reasons as are discrimination, lack of knowledge of the language and similar.

Just how big is the reluctance towards Roma among the non-Roma respondents can be demonstrated by the responses of some additional questions. The respondents of non-Roma origin have, for example, clearly exposed the position that the Roma are a privileged social group in Slovenia, although in fact they belong to the poorest social group. At the same time they believe that the authorities and public services are more indulgent to the Roma than to other inhabitants when it is necessary to obey the law or to pay the invoices for the public services. Further they are of opinion that the Roma very often make a living through thefts, begging and vandalism; or that the robbery is the predominant way of making a living for Roma. Roma also don't respect or they even destroy our environment and are less interested in the benefit of the local community and of the state than the majority population is. Foremost however the non Roma respondents oppose that the local and national authorities should secure more resources for the poverty reduction of Roma.

CONCLUSIONS

Results of the in-depth interviews and public opinion survey in Bela krajina clearly showed the existence of the prejudices and stereotypes towards Roma. The prejudices are deeply rooted and in many cases people are not aware of the fact that their behaviour is influenced by prejudices and stereotypes. We are facing the paradox of self-denial of prejudices e.g. I am not a racists but they are loud, dirty, not willing to work etc. People are using generalisation, e.g. "I know all of them are the same." One of the most persisting prejudices among the majority population is the conviction that the Roma are getting higher social subsidies and enjoy greater social benefits vis-à-vis non-Roma population.



Group photo of the participants of the first REDUPRE workshop in Razgrad, Bulgaria (January 2013) titled "Shorter social distances between Roma and non Roma in Razgrad region are good base for efficient Roma integration policy."



Participants of the first REDUPRE workshop in Gorizia, Italy (February 2013) for managers and members of cultural associations, sports and similar organizations and for representatives of the civil society and non-profit organizations.



Prof. Ezio Benedetti continued his discussions even during the coffee break (first REDUPRE Workshop, Gorizia, Italy in February 2013).



Role-playing game, second REDUPRE workshop, March 2013, Razgrad, Bulgaria.



Group photo after successful workshop, March 2013, Razgrad, Bulgaria.



Part of the participants of the second REDUPRE workshop for directors, representatives and employees of public policy, local government, public safety, health and social services, March 2013, Gorizia, Italy.

CHAPTER III

LESSONS AND PROPOSALS DERIVING FROM THE REDUPRE WORKSHOPS OTRGANISED IN BULGARIA, ITALY, ROMANIA AND SLOVENIA

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LESSONS AND PROPOSALS DERIVING FROM WORKSHOPS IN BULGARIA

Integro Association from Bulgaria prepared and carried out three workshops within REDUPRE project with the aim to give opportunity for identifying and debating the main stereotypes existing of each other among the Roma and non-Roma population from Razgrad region, North-East of Bulgaria.

Each of the workshops was aimed at different target group, passed under particular headline and used specific momentum to mobilize the interest of the participants.

For each workshop we developed a tailor made program including topics that meet to the highest extent the expectations of the respective target group.

To make the workshops attractive, involving and first of all learning we used variety of methods and techniques and applied the following phases of the learning process:

1st phase of experiencing, doing the activity;

2nd phase of sharing reactions and observations about what happened;

3rd phase of consideration – discussion of patterns and dynamics to insight into essence of the experience;

4th phase of generalization – discussing the models and the way in which participants have learned that there is a link with the real world;

5th phase of application – use of knowledge and changing the previous behaviour; this phase is not only a logical result of the learning process, but also a powerful tool for consolidation of new knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The most common used working forms were group work, small group work, pair work, individual work and panel discussions, while we also used methods like: presentation, discussion, role playing, simulations, self-assessment questionnaires, visualization, and case discussions.

1. Workshop for Roma and non-Roma – members of commune and local councils and other organs, leaders of local Roma organizations and of public services

This workshop was the first one we carried out in Razgrad, Bulgaria on 29-30 of January 2013. It was held under the title: "Local authorities and public services - factors for improving the social situation of Roma people." We used the momentum of planning of a regional strategy¹ for Roma integration and elaboration of municipal action plans by 6 municipalities from Razgrad region (municipality of Razgrad, Ispirih, Kubrat, Zavet, Loznitsa and Samuil) in order to address the issue of reducing stereotypes and prejudices between Roma and non Roma.

The workshop was attended by 35 participants from 6 municipalities from Razgrad region: municipal officials responsible for the ethnic minority issues, directors of the municipal departments responsible for the social activities and health care, public services and urban planning. Twelve out of all participants were Roma – 5 leaders of nongovernmental organizations from the region, 1 municipal councillor, 1 mayor of a village, 1 deputy mayor of a municipality and 4 municipal servants and health mediators.

¹ In December 2012 the National Council for cooperation on ethnic and integration issues (NCCEI) sent a letter to the regional authorities requiring by them to elaborate regional strategies and municipal action plans in response to the accepted by the Bulgarian Parliament National Strategy for Roma Integration in March 2012.

The main goal of the workshop was the formation of zero tolerance for acts of prejudiced thinking and discriminatory practices against Roma. The reasons for prejudice and discriminatory practices against Roma by non-Roma were discussed in order to improve the social condition of Roma.

We established the following workshop tasks:

1. Identifying and discussing the problems Roma face in Razgrad region and factors maintaining these problems;
2. Informing the participants about the nature of stereotypes and prejudices and their connection with the appearance of discriminatory attitudes and behaviour;
3. Discussing the dominant stereotypes in the social interaction between Roma and non-Roma and their role for ineffective Roma policies;
4. Working with the participants to identify and discuss the problems in communication and relations between Roma and non-Roma in the context of local authorities and public services;
5. Formation of poly-ethnic consciousness and training skills of the participants to work in a multicultural environment.

The following themes and topics were discussed in different sessions by the participants during the workshop:

- Identifying the stereotypes and the reasons for the problems of the Roma population;
- Nature of Roma poverty and stereotypes about it;
- Oppression and formation of internal oppression;
- Opportunities of the equality in the diversity;
- Policies for positive change in the social situation of the Roma population;
- Difficulties of professionals working on the problems of the Roma population;
- Planning activities to improve working relationships of local authorities with Roma community.

After the session for ice breaking, the workshop started with a presentation of demographic and socio-economic data on Roma. Then in small groups participants identified problems faced by Roma from Razgrad region in the fields of education, housing, health, employment and participation in the civil, political and administration structures. Later on they were asked to summarize their findings and elaborate presentations that were presented by them in front of all participants. They were given time and opportunity to compare their presentations. The participants from Roma origin were asked to work together and elaborate their presentation. The trainers presented the findings from a preliminary implemented focus group in 1 of the municipalities of Razgrad region. This focus group was implemented with the aim to provide the opinion and points of view of grassroots Roma about their main problems. An interesting finding from this exercise was that all sides – municipal and regional professionals, Roma servants and NGO leaders and grassroots Roma identified almost one and the same main problems encountered by the Roma from Razgrad region in the above mentioned fields. But there was one *essential difference*: while most of the municipal and regional professionals considered as main issue of Roma the lack of education, the Roma considered for their main issue the lack of permanent well paid job, lack of infrastructure in their neighbourhoods, lack of access to primary health care and derogation of Roma in the media and from some servants from the public administration and services.

The next session we devoted to identify the causes and factors for the problems faced by the Roma as well as to clarify who is responsible for the solving of all identified spectrum of problems. The participants distinguished between personal responsibility and responsibilities of public authorities and government institutions. It was interesting to find out that Roma participants tended to see the full responsibility of their problems with the authorities while the employees believed that Roma are responsible for their own problems. They pointed out that the main reasons for the problems of Roma often are the lack of education among Roma, the inability of Roma to follow the social norms, lack of permanence and working skills, etc.

To direct the process, here the facilitator of the workshop gave the next task to the participants. They were divided into small groups and were given a worksheet with a list of reasons for the problems in

the communication between local Roma and local authorities,² The participants were asked to look at this list of possible reasons for the problems faced by Roma and think on how these causes relate to the activities of local authorities and the delivery of public services. The facilitator invited the groups to allocate typical problems in the respective groups of the reasons.

With this task the participants were given the opportunity to demonstrate attitude and thoughts towards the seeking deficits in the skills for a multi-ethnic communication and understanding as well as toward how the group starts to go beyond the stereotypical pattern of social division into "us" and "them." After the exercise it was summed up that some of the issues, discussed and defined in the previous exercise as typical communication problems of Roma – local authorities and public services, are possible to be influenced by more than one reason or by very complicated reasons, which solution requires as most dedication and efforts of all social actors.

Then trainers consistently acquainted the participants with the results from the two studies conducted within the project - in depth study of the views of experts on Roma integration and opinion survey to test the public opinion on what they support and what no in accordance to the Roma integration. These presentations were followed by discussions and then by an exercise for identifying the nature of Roma poverty and stereotypes about it. The participants were given again a worksheet named "Horoscope of Roma poverty." Combining the knowledge and creativity, this activity addressed the problems associated with the effects of poverty as well as the life chances, from which the poor people are deprived. After work in small groups, the participants were given time and opportunity to discuss in a panel discussion questions as: What images come to mind of the participants when they think about the poor? Are these stereotypes? Do these images have enough reason? Where participants get their information from? What participants understand under the term "Roma poverty?" Is it possible some Roma to be "rich" iif they live in one country and "poor" if they live in another country? In other words, is there a relative poverty? Why some Roma are rich and others – poor in our society? Is it easy for poor Roma to break the cycle of poverty? In other words, how difficult is it for someone born in a poor family not to be poor as an adult? What opportunities there are in front of people when they are rich? What opportunities there are for the Roma when they are poor? Are poor Roma guilty of the fact that they are poor? Or is it their fate? Or is poverty due to social, political and economic factors?

The panel discussion was followed by an individual exercise "My communicative profile." The participants received a worksheet for self-assessment of each participant's ability to express respect for other people, which is an important part of effective communication.

After that in a panel discussion they discussed the main question: "How do I demonstrate that I respect the people I am serving?" The trainers gave the participants a list with communication skills they need to have when communicated with Roma people: Tolerate the ambiguities; Establishing a connection with people; Do not assess; Customize (transmitting personal nature) of the observations; Empathy; Persistence.

Also concepts for oppression, discrimination, racism were explained and discussed during the workshop.

Proposals put forward:

In the second day of the workshop the trainers assisted trainers to formulate mission, goals and main priorities & activities of the regional strategy for Roma integration. Was interesting to see how the servants tried to avoid defining goals and activities where Roma people were seen as clients of municipal/state policies and services. It was a clear indication that many of them realized notions of prejudices, stereotypes, discrimination, clientelism, empowerment and etc. Also, an important observation was that during the workshop were established some mechanisms for effective cooperation between Roma and non Roma servants.

One of the main expected outcomes from the workshop was to help the municipality representatives

² The list of reasons for the problems in communication between local Roma and local authorities: inconstant communication, emotionality, social noise, social exclusion, language differences, different views, barriers to communicating.

and regional administration to gain an insight into the Roma issues and realities so to be able to plan a realistic and need oriented regional Roma integration strategy as well as 6 municipal action plans for its realization. By the end of February the regional strategy for Roma integration of Razgrad was elaborated and accepted by the Regional council for ethnic and integration issues. Indicative for the change of understanding of many regional and municipal servants about Roma and their issues are the several followed consultations of the draft of the strategy paper with the Roma organizations from Razgrad region. Another indicator for change in the attitude of the servants and officials to the issue of Roma was that other 4 municipal authorities invited Integro Association to carry out focus groups with the Roma people from their municipalities in order to help them with need assessment as well as to be able to involve grassroots Roma in the elaboration of the local action plans for Roma integration. Last but not least indicator that trained servants were influenced by the workshop is the content of the regional strategy itself – it reflects real needs and problems of local Roma and contains Roma people proposals for activities.

Roma participated in the workshop as trainees and one of the trainers was Roma as well. This was really powerful tool for influencing the non Roma participants as they can see Roma with lots of knowledge, well educated, able to express meaningful opinion and even to teach them.

2. Workshop for Roma and non-Roma – teachers, principals, guidance counselors and Roma education community workers

The workshop was the second one of a series of workshops within REDUPRE project and was held on 1-2 March 2013 in city of Razgrad. The workshop topic was “To Get to Know Our Roma Students and Their Community” and was directed at the institutions of education from Northeast Bulgaria as well as at representatives of NGOs who work over the problems of the education of Roma children. The workshop was held in Razgrad and 30 participants in the educational process from 14 schools took part in it. Five from the participants were school principals, 22 – teachers and three guidance counselors. Two of the teachers were Roma. Along with them another 7 Roma participated in the workshop, representatives of non-government organizations working on improving the access to quality education for the Roma children. They were specialists, holders of university diplomas in different majors, and three of them work as education community workers for the improvement of communication and interaction among the school, students, their families and all institutions interested.

The main objective of the workshop was to establish the influence of prejudice and stereotypes on students from vulnerable ethnic minorities and in particular on the Roma children. Due to insufficient knowledge of Roma life and culture, a significant number of teachers develop their attitude towards Roma children under the influence of widely spread prejudice and stereotypes about Roma in the society. Very often these prejudice and stereotypes are not realized by the teachers but in all cases they are a reason for inadequate attitude towards Roma children and the use of unsuitable and non-efficient approaches and methods for work with Roma students. This, in turn, is one of the reasons the Roma students not to feel comfortable in the school environment and often and easily drop out of school. That's why we structured the workshop in such a way that the participants assisted by the facilitators themselves to find step by step the different negative prejudice and stereotypes which they have and which impede the efficient school process and as a whole the process of integration of the students from Roma origin.

To achieve the workshop objectives, we set the following targets:

- To identify and discuss by the workshop participants the existing problems in the relations between Roma and non-Roma in the local communities and school;
- To provide information about the essence of the team interaction in the condition of cultural diversity;
- To form and train skills for work in multicultural environment, for polyethnicity and to take into an

account the needs of the personality.

The workshop started with introduction of the participants as for each was set time to present their school. From these presentations it became clear that in the majority of the schools there are a significant number of Roma exceeding 50 % quite often. Similar problems in the work with Roma students were pointed out – insufficient success related to the insufficient command of Bulgarian, early drop out of school and early marriages, insufficient communication with parents, etc. After that the trainers put an interactive task whose main purpose was to reveal the tendency every one of us to put his/her thought and actions in a framework getting out of which is very difficult. Even not having preliminary conditions or limitation of solving a particular task, most of the people look for a solution within a preliminary framework made by them. The conclusion made by the trainer was that the children at school are representatives of different cultural models – ethnic, religions, regional, etc. and an identical approach can't be applied to them as well as identical requirements. It's very important to listen to, understand and guess the messages of the others and try our behaviour and attitude towards them to correspond to their expectations. Particularly in communication with Roma children it is necessary:

- To learn more about the lifestyle of the Roma family;
- Better understanding of Roma problems;
- Improvement of the communication with children from ethnic minorities – new approaches;
- To make the parents sympathetic about the way we communicate with them.

After that the workshop continued with presentation of the results from research of prejudice and stereotypes between Roma and non-Roma in the province of Razgrad and their influence on interethnic relations in the region made within REDUPRE project. The participants got familiar with the process of making the Roma image, with the ways of the forming the human prejudice and stereotypes and their influence on our attitude and actions to those who we do not accept for one of us. In the presentation were clarified a few issues about the formation of the group identity and development of relations between representatives of different groups in the society:

- People live in groups and their identity is formed within the group framework;
- When we look at something, we perceive it through our information and ideas about it, i.e. our prejudice influence the way we interpret the things;
- When we assess the failures of the people from our group we tend to excuse them with "objective conditions," but when it is about others, the reasons for their failures lie within themselves, i.e. "our people" are not guilty and terrible but "the others" are suspicious and terrible;
- The clash of interests of various groups in society creates prejudices and they target the weakest.

Deep interest caused the presentation of the mechanism of forming the learned helplessness in the Roma community and its reflection on their behaviour and relations with non-Roma and institutions – constantly putting a certain group in a situation of helplessness and impotence teaches the representatives of this group of passivity and failures attitude.

The objective of the next task was to illustrate some of the points in the presentation – the formation of group identity, a way through which some things are interpreted depending on group affiliation, influence of prejudice, etc. The task was performed in small groups as the participants were separated in three small ethnic groups – Bulgarians, Turks, Roma. The minority groups had to answer the same question – what do we want the others to know about us; what is better to be Turk/Roma; what is difficult to be Roma; what wrong impression of your ethnicity would you like to correct; your idea of the world without racism. The representatives of the majority answered other group of questions – Which are the things, typical of your group that you want us to contribute to be respected and praised; how the other side of racism badly influence on you personally and your group; what would be the advantage for your group, if there were no racism in the world and in Bulgaria Here are some of the more important conclusions from the work in the small groups: deep impression made the way of work in the groups – the group of the ethnic Bulgarians took the central position in the hall, the Turks sat by the windows and the Roma went in the farthest corner. The Bulgarians decided that it wasn't necessary to spend much time on the

task, quickly answered the questions and even didn't come to decision that will present the answers. The Turks worked hard and were concentrated and quiet and made an extensive exposition, demonstrating their pride in their ethnic origin. The Roma were noisier and most of their answers sounded as an excuse as if they wanted to convince the audience that the Roma are reliable and trustworthy. In the end the trainer made the following conclusions: The difference in the group work is another confirmation of the influence of the group identity upon the way the things are accepted and interpreted. It would be good to understand what the Roma said through their answers – we are different from the rest, don't regard us as bunch of people – we're individuals.

The first half the second day passed by presenting different case from the experience of the workshop participants and discussion about the difficulties met by them working with Roma students. In the presentation of the followed discussion all participants actively took part. On the grounds of the cases and problems presented, and issues discussed, the host generalized the main deficits existing in the education system: Passivity of institutions and lack of interinstitutional coordination; mistrust between school and community based on prejudiced thinking; intermitten communication between Roma and institutions; social isolation; emotional "noise" – language differences, cultural differences; social "noise" – "Roma have more rights," etc.

The Roma participants in the workshop contributed for the depth of the discussion that was held as they shared their own negative experience from the time when they've been pupils and students. With the arrangement that they do not aim to demonize the non-Roma teachers and students and to victimize the Roma students, they made an appeal that the teachers should be intransigent towards the acts of intolerant and discrimination attitude at school, because they prevent the students from building an awareness of active citizens, of future fellow-citizens having common interests and goals for the development of their own local community.

The last part of the workshop was related to discussing in small groups and reporting to the big group of video cases that ask the following questions:

- Is discrimination acceptable because of freedom of speech?
- Is it acceptable to expel anyone because of his ethnical origin?
- Is it acceptable to have prejudices towards the others because you yourself are a victim of harassment and mockeries?
- Is it acceptable to blame anyone in racism if he jumps the queue?
- Is it acceptable to serve food, which someone doesn't eat because of his/her religion?
- Is it acceptable the newscast to repeatedly focus on the ethnic origin of a crime's perpetrator?

During the discussion of these cases it wasn't so important to give a correct answer but the opportunity to once again focus the participants' attention to the daily expression of prejudiced and stereotypical thinking and to the fact that this expression is often unnoticed and does not become food for thought.

The workshop's impact over the participants may be illustrated with the change of their thinking for the participation in it. In the beginning the teachers and the schools' principals shared that they are interested in the workshop because of the opportunity to learn more about the Roma students' lifestyle and culture and the ways for work with their parents but later on they expressed their satisfaction from the challenge to speak frankly about their difficulties, for the stereotypes, the prejudices, the legends and the realities which they encounter every day at school with the students from different ethnical origins. *The prejudices and the stereotypes exist*, shared one of the participants at the end of the workshop and made an appeal to his colleagues: *It is more important not to bury our heads in the sand and to pretend that we do not see them, but to react – to react in such a way which the situation dictates.*

3. Workshop for Roma and non-Roma women

The 3rd REDUPRE workshop in Bulgaria was held on 8-9 of March in Razgrad and we used the International women Day March 8th that is celebrated in Bulgaria also as a Mother Day. The title of the workshop was “Mothers for a better life of their children.”

There were 25 participants from all Razgrad region in the workshop - Roma and non Roma women, at different ages, with different educational background and professions, some unemployed, some – with high incomes. We set three basic objectives for this workshop:

- To encourage the overcoming of the stereotypes of the women to each other;
- To make the women collaborators in addressing common issues of local community importance, among others discrimination as well;
- To support the friendship among the women.

For this topic we used an additional interactive method for ice breaking and raise the solidarity in the group: we started the workshop in the morning of 8th of March with a festive program prepared by children for greeting to their mothers. A Roma women organization “Karmen” and Razgrad branch of the Federation of Bulgarian Women helped us to reach and involve in the workshop mothers and grandmothers whose children we attracted to prepare the festive program.

The afternoon of the first day we devoted to identify and discuss the common values of women, especially of the mothers. In the end of the first day the topic of common issues of all families with children were discussed. In the evening women invited their peers and organized party.

In the second day morning session women identified the problems in the relations between Roma and non-Roma communities. That was the time for revealing prejudices and stereotypes to each other and discovering the hindering role of discrimination for all policies about Roma. It was impressive for us to see the negative reaction of the women after we asked them to divide for one of the tasks into three groups based on their ethnic origin – Bulgarians, Turks and Roma. It was indicative for us that we managed to consolidate the women group with the first day’s activities and they get frustrated when asked them to separate according to their ethnicity.

In the afternoon of the second day the focus was put again on the most common problems faced by all children no matter of their ethnic background. The women were introduced to information about the nature of advocacy as a tool to achieve common goals. They also had opportunity to do numerous of practical exercises to shape some advocacy skills like assessment and prioritization of common needs, formulation of messages to local authorities, identification of stakeholders, communication with media, negotiation with public authorities and etc.

To illustrate the result from this workshop we will share some of the feedbacks given by the women:

“Frankly speaking, I did not want to come to this workshop, but now I would like it not to end! I feel like I’ve discovered a new land! It is amazing to know that all we, no matter our social status, like and dream the same things for our children, for our families” – an ethnic Bulgarian women, assistant doctor.

“I always thought of Bulgarian and Turkish women, who have university degrees, go to work, earn money that they are from another world. During these two days they sat next to me, we had coffee together and they did not want me to predict their fortune! I do not know, after this meeting, if they meet me outside, whether they would know me but I will certainly say them hello. I hope, when they meet me, they won’t be ashamed and will not turn their head” – a Roma woman, pensioner.

“The most sad I became when we were told by the young Roma women here, during their presentation of their ethnic group, that they do not find much to be proud of being Roma women and that it is not really good to be a gypsy ... it’s very, very sad ...” – a Bulgarian women, accountant.

“I liked the sessions in which we had to take different roles and be at least for a while someone else ... I could feel how absurd and wrong we think sometimes, how we make hasty conclusions about someone we even do not know ... in the future I’ll think more before I create any opinion for somebody I do not know” – a Turkish woman, teacher.

“I liked the sessions when we had to take decisions together. Was really challenging ...but it is the same in the real life also – even for very important common problems we can’t overcome our differences... and we all lose because of this...” – a Bulgarian woman nurse

“I’ve always been thinking that I can speak well, fluently but actually during the role games for communication I realized how it is difficult to present in few minutes and words so important issues...,” a Bulgarian woman, unemployed.

“I understood I need to know in advance what exactly will address and what exactly will request from the mayor... never to complain when I have meetings with him but right to present the issue and make proposals!”- A Roma women, chair of Roma women NGO.

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LESSONS AND PROPOSALS EMANATING FROM WORKSHOPS IN ITALY

1. The role of associations and civil society in reducing prejudices and stereotypes between Roma and non-Roma in Italy: legal, social and economic aspects

On February 19th 2013 IGES organized the first workshop within the international project Redupre. The workshop was held within the premises of the University CIELS in Villa Ritter in Gorizia (via Brigata Pavia 140).

As Italian partner of the Redupre project IGES involved in the discussion different stakeholders from Region Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia. The 24 participants at the workshop represented the following institutions/professional sectors:

- Journalists (TV: Rai3 Regione FVG; Newspapers: Il Piccolo, Vita Nuova);
- Social and cultural religious associations (Caritas Trieste, Migrantes Diocesana Treviso, Migrantes Diocesana Gorizia);
- Social and cultural non-religious associations (Associazione per la Pace Portogruaro, Comunità di accoglienza San Martino al Campo Trieste);
- University of Trieste (4 young researchers on migrations and minorities);
- Professionals (architect dealing with social housing issues).

The workshop has been structured by the organizers in two different sections.

Section 1

In the first section IGES researchers and members described the main activities and the results achieved in the first year of the Redupre project. Resuming the results of the:

- a) Juridical and socio-economic analysis of Roma/Sinti situation in Italy;
- b) In depth interviews to major stakeholders (health services, social services, educational services, employment services, police officers, Roma/Sinti leaders, town councillors);
- c) Field interviews (120 persons interviewed, target: 18-70 y.o., different social and education situation).

The main issues which emerged are the following:

1. The lacking of a legal recognition of Roma/Sinti as minority in Italy.
2. The absence of reliable statistical data on housing, social situation, demographic situation, access to health services, access to schooling (no data no progress). There is almost a total lack of cooperation between private associations and public sector in collecting reliable data. Moreover the public bodies very often did not build any kind of networking in order to collect such data.
3. Civil and political rights are strictly linked to economic and social rights. Poverty means inequality, rights are unknown by Roma, education is the key for social and economic progress.
4. Roma hides themselves, they are aware about their diversity and discrimination.
5. The proposed analysis aims to merge socio-economic and legal aspects of the Roma/Sinti situation in Italy focusing the attention on both sides of the problem. There are about 20 different regional

laws enacted in Italy concerning different aspects of Roma/Sinti integration (employment, schooling, housing, and health) but very often there is no coordination between different regions and public sectors involved. The collection of legal and social provisions is very useful to individuate good practices and positive experiences of integration between Roma and non Roma.

6. Stereotypes are very often enforced by media campaigns due to contingent political reasons (as elections or similar).

7. The Italian situation is very particular if compared to other project areas due to the presence of “Italian” gypsies (Sinti) and “non Italian” gypsies (Roma) with different cultural traditions, history and even languages. Moreover also the legal status of these groups is different: Sinti are Italian citizens (even if they are not recognized as minority by Italian laws), while Roma are migrants mainly from western Balkans, very often they are irregular migrants, sometimes without documents (stateless persons).

8. Very often there are stereotypes and discriminatory behaviours between Italian and non Italian gypsies.

9. People between 29-60 years old are still very close to discriminatory behaviours towards Roma, women have less stereotypes and discriminatory behaviours than men, the positive element is that young people (18-27 years old) have less stereotypes and are more informed on their culture and history than older people (the main stereotypes emerged in the interviews are that Roma/Sinti are thieves).

10. Ignorance is the key of discrimination and stereotypic behaviour (perhaps most interviewed people are still convinced that Roma/Sinti in Italy are millions or that they are mainly nomads).

11. Cultural aspects of Roma/Sinti communities are mainly unknown to common people (the only exception is music).

12. Italian government enacted in 2010 a strategy for the inclusion of Roma people but there are no operative instructions (national plan) to enforce such process (this is strictly linked to points 2, 5 and 6).

13. Roma/Sinti groups are very closed communities (due to cultural and historical reasons), it is difficult to enter in contact with them for non Roma, this situation contributes to their isolation and discrimination. Roma/Sinti are afraid to lose their culture, language, traditions (school is very often perceived as an enemy for their social and cultural cohesion, this is one of the main reasons because the school dropout is very high).

14. Roma/Sinti are very proud about their traditions and culture, this approach very often brings to mutual misunderstandings concerning perhaps social housing, health services, schooling, employment (once again reciprocal knowledge could be the key to fight stereotypes).

15. Roma/Sinti are very often (especially younger generations) victims of drug or alcohol abuse. This is strictly linked to criminal activities (petty theft, scams and similar). Interesting that policemen officers very often have a clearer situation on Roma/Sinti criminality, they are the first to affirm that criminality is not a big problem, it is not organized crime, it is better defined as “surviving criminality.” The real problem are minors who are the weaker part in all this (school dropout and criminality are linked).

16. Another big problem is represented by discrimination between men and women typical in the Roma patriarchal society. The solution is not the fight the traditional structure of the Roma/Sinti families but to foster the participation of women to specific school, health and employment programmes in the respect of their tradition.

Section 2

In the second section of the workshop the participants – coordinated by IGES – exposed their personal experiences with Roma/Sinti communities focusing their attention on some of the critical points emerged in the section 1.

The common approach, expressed both by religious and non-religious associations is that a simple “care” approach is not responding to the solution of problems. There should be an enhancement of reciprocity principles in the relations between Roma and non Roma.

At the end the participants devoted their attention to the elaboration of some key proposals in order to

enhance dialogue between Roma and non Roma, in the light of fighting discrimination and stereotypes through good practices or innovative approaches. The main proposals are:

- Enhance dialogue between Roma and non Roma through mediation groups and techniques, reciprocal knowledge is the key to fight stereotypes and discrimination (some concrete proposals: collect and spread the huge literature already existing concerning Roma culture and history, promote the use of Romani in public schools where significant Roma/Sinti groups are present – as perhaps provided for by the Abruzzo regional law; promote cultural events between non Roma such as music, movies, traditional festivals etc.; focus the attention especially on young people promoting the knowledge of Roma/Sinti traditions and culture).
- Enforce and promote contacts between local and national authorities, foster the attention for the public sector on both socio-economic and legal aspects of Roma/Sinti situation in Italy (collection of regional laws and administrative acts, organization of a network between different public bodies and local authorities in order to enhance the ability of the central government to overcome the lacking of reliable data and enforce a national strategy based on concrete data and issues).
- Create a regional and national network between associations and NGO's dealing with Roma/Sinti communities (territorial cooperation).
- Focus the attention of media on the real situation of Roma/Sinti camps, possible use EU funds to finance documentaries and TV/Radio programmes on Roma/Sinti traditions (programme Media+) and history (porrajmos could be one of the issues). Promote cultural, musical events and traditions between non Roma in schools, festivals, theatres.
- Legal aspects: create a network between associations and local authorities in order to promote: a) recognition of Italian citizenship to Roma children born in Italy (this is part of the wider »ius soli« campaign); b) promote a campaign to insert Roma/Sinti between recognized minorities; c) find a solution to the »stateless« Roma people.
- Fight unemployment through the creation of cooperatives between Roma/Sinti in order to foster their traditional working activities (small craft, circus, street performances and similar); use European Social Fund instrument with specific projects for Roma/Sinti communities at a regional level ensuring to young people a job qualification.

2. The role of public administration and local government in reducing prejudice and stereotypes between Roma and non-Roma in Friuli Venezia Giulia: best practices, problem profiles and proposals

On March 5, 2013 IGES organized the second workshop held as part of the international project Redupre. The workshop was held at the premises of University of Cielis Villa Ritter in Gorizia (via Pavia Brigade 140).

As Italian project partner of the Redupre project, IGES involved in discussing various stakeholders coming from Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia regions. The 16 workshop participants represented the following institutions/professional sectors:

1. Local governmental bodies (Municipality of Gorizia, Municipality of Udine, Municipality of Trieste, Province of Gorizia);
2. Public administration (State Police - Police Headquarters in Trieste and Udine, Federsanità);
3. Social and cultural associations (Caritas Trieste, Accommodation Communities San Martino in Campo from Trieste);
4. University of Trieste (4 young researchers on migration and minorities);
5. Professionals (architects who deal with issues of social housing).

The workshop has been organized in two different sections:

Section 1

In the first section of the workshop IGES researchers and collaborators have presented the main activities and results achieved in the first year of the Redupre project. Such activities have been:

- a) Socio-economic and legal analysis concerning the situation of the Roma/Sinti in Italy;
- b) Interviews with key stakeholders (health services, social services, educational services, employment services, police officers, leaders Roma/Sinti, city councillors);
- c) Field interviews (100 respondents, target: 18-70 years, different social situation and education).

The main issues which rose during such activities are as follows:

1. The lack of legal recognition of the Roma/Sinti groups as a minority in Italy.
2. The lack of reliable statistical data on housing, socio-economic, demographic situation, access to health services, access to education (no date no progress). In this sense we can say that there is an almost total lack of cooperation between private and public sector organizations in the collection of reliable data. Furthermore, public bodies very often are not able to build any type of network in order to collect such data.
3. The recognition of civil and political rights is closely linked to economic and social rights. Poverty means inequality, rights are very often ignored by Roma people, and education is the key to social and economic progress.
4. The Roma tends always to hide them, such behaviour is linked to the fact they are aware of their diversity and discrimination to which they are subject.
5. The analysis proposed aims to merge the socio-economic and legal aspects of the Roma/Sinti in Italy, focusing on both sides of the issue. There are about 20 different regional laws enacted in Italy concerning different aspects of the integration of Roma/Sinti (work, school, home, health), but very often there is no coordination between the different regions and public sectors involved. The collection of the legal and social is very useful to identify good practices and positive experiences of integration between Roma and non-Roma.
6. Stereotypes are often caused by media campaigns for contingent political reasons (such as elections or similar).
7. The Italian situation is very unique compared to other project areas due to the presence of “Gypsies Italian” (Sinti) and “non-Italian Gypsies” (Roma) with cultural traditions, history and even different languages. Moreover, even the legal status of these groups is different: the Sinti are Italian citizens (even if they are not recognized as a minority under Italian law), while the Roma migrants came mainly from the Western Balkans in the 90s, very often they are illegal immigrants, sometimes undocumented (stateless).
8. Very often there are stereotypes and discriminatory behaviours in the relations between Roma and Sinti.
9. People between 29-60 years are still very close to discriminatory behaviour against Roma, women have fewer stereotypes and discriminatory behaviours than men, the positive element is that young people (18-27 years) have fewer stereotypes and are more informed about Roma/Sinti culture and history than the elderly (an example of the main stereotypes that emerged in the field interviews are that the Roma/Sinti are thieves, dirty, nomads).
10. Ignorance is the key to discrimination and stereotypic behaviours (for example, most of the people interviewed are still convinced that Roma/Sinti living in Italy are millions or that they are mainly nomadic).
11. The cultural aspects of the Roma/Sinti are essentially unknown to the common people (the only exception is the music).
12. The Italian government has approved in 2010 a strategy for Roma inclusion, but there are no operating instructions (there is a detailed national plan) to enforce this process (this aspect is closely related to the points 2, 5 and 6).

13. The Roma/Sinti communities living in Friuli Venezia Giulia are very closed towards non Roma people (both for cultural and historical reasons), it is difficult to get in touch with them for non-Roma, this situation contributes to their isolation and discrimination. The Roma/Sinti people are afraid of losing their culture, language, traditions (the school is very often perceived as an enemy to their social and cultural cohesion, this is one of the main reasons why early school leaving is very high).

14. The Roma/Sinti are very proud of their traditions and their culture, this approach often leads to misunderstandings between themselves relating to housing, to health services, education, employment (again, mutual understanding could be a key issue to combat stereotypes).

15. Roma/Sinti is very often (especially the younger generation) victims of abuse of drugs or alcohol. This aspect is closely linked to small criminal activities (petty theft, fraud and similar). An interesting element that emerged during the discussion is that police officers often have a clearer situation on the Roma/Sinti respect to the issue of crime; they are, in fact, the first to say that crime is not a big problem between Roma, it is not possible in fact speaking of organized crime, its best definition is probably "crime to survive." The real problem are minors who are the weaker party in all of this (early school leaving and crime are connected). The participants to the workshop, in fact, agreed that only the improvement of their economic and social conditions could help fight petty crime and could foster the end of discrimination and stereotypes towards Roma/Sinti.

16. Another big issue, which will be better analyzed during the last Redupre workshop organized by IGES in Italy on April 15 2013, is the discrimination between men and women in a society which continues to be typically patriarchal. A proposed solution to this situation is not to fight against the traditional structure of Roma/Sinti families, but rather encourage women's participation in specific programs of education, health and working in accordance with their traditions and their culture.

Section 2

In the second part of the workshop the participants – coordinated by IGES – exposed their personal experiences with the communities of Roma/Sinti and their attention on some critical points raised in section 1.

The common approach expressed both by religious and secular associations and by public sector is that a simple "care" approach often does not respond to the real solution of problems, but simply puts some piece of canvas in order to cover the issues. There should be an improvement of the principles of reciprocity in relations between Roma and non-Roma

At the end of the workshop the participants have devoted their attention to the development of some key proposals to strengthen the dialogue between Roma and non-Roma, in the light of the fight against discrimination and stereotypes through good practice and innovative approaches.

The main proposals that have emerged are:

- Enhance dialogue between Roma and non-Roma groups through mediation and mediation techniques, innovative, mutual understanding is the key to combat stereotypes and discrimination (some concrete proposals: to collect and disseminate between non-roma institutions as schools and municipalities the vast literature already existing on the Roma culture and history, promote the use of Romani in public and in schools where there is a significant number of Roma/Sinti - as indeed required by Abruzzo Regional Law-, the promotion of cultural events including Roma and non-Roma like musical events, movies and documentaries, traditional festivals, focusing the attention especially on young people that promote the knowledge of the traditions and of the Roma/Sinti culture).
- Develop and promote contacts between local and national authorities, to encourage the attention of the public on both socio-economic and legal situation of the Roma/Sinti in Italy (collection of regional laws and administrative acts, organization of a network between different public bodies and local authorities in order to strengthen the capacity of central government to overcome the lack of reliable data and implement a national strategy based on concrete data for solving specific problems).

- Creation of a network of regional and national associations and NGOs working with and for Roma/Sinti (territorial cooperation).
- To focus media attention on the actual situation of the Roma/Sinti, use European funds to finance documentaries and TV/Radio programs on local traditions, culture and history of Roma/Sinti (i.e. for example through the European Media + program funds). Promote cultural, musical and traditional Roma patterns between non-Roma in schools, at festivals, theatres, etc.
- Legal issues: creating a network of associations and local authorities to promote:
 - a) The recognition of Italian citizenship to Roma children born in Italy (this is part of an already existing larger campaign called "*ius soli*," aiming to change the actual Italian citizenship law which recognize citizenship just to children born from "Italians," the so called "*ius sanguinis*" law);
 - b) Promote a campaign in media in public life to insert the Roma/Sinti among minorities recognized by law;
 - c) Find a solution to statelessness of many Roma by giving them the opportunity to regularize their position through a so called "sanatoria" (a sort of amnesty).
- Tackling unemployment through the creation of cooperatives among Roma/Sinti, in order to promote their traditional activities (small crafts, circus activities, street entertainment and the like), use tools of the European Social Fund with specific projects for the Roma/Sinti at a regional level in order to ensure young people a qualification and a specific employment.

3. Profiles of gender discrimination in Roma women dimension

On April 15th 2013 IGES organized the third workshop within the international project Redupre. The workshop was held within the premises of the University CIELS in Villa Ritter in Gorizia (via Brigata Pavia 140).

As Italian partner of the Redupre project IGES involved in the discussion different stakeholders from Region Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia. The 30 participants at the workshop represented the following institutions/professional sectors:

As an Italian project partner Redupre, IGES involved in discussing the various stakeholders involved from the Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia. The 30 workshop participants represented the following institutions/professional sectors:

1. Government (Municipality of Gorizia, Province of Gorizia, Udine Municipality, the Municipality of Vicenza – State Police, and Federsanità);
2. Group of young Roma and Sinti women;
3. Social and cultural associations (Caritas Trieste, Community Welcome to the Campo San Martino di Trieste, Adriatic Greenet, Association for Peace Committee of Portogruaro, Tertiary Women Migrants Treviso);
4. University of Triveneto (young researchers from the universities of Trieste and Venice on migration and minorities issues);
5. Professionals (architects who deal with issues of social housing).

The workshop was organized by the organizers in two different sessions:

Session 1

In the first session of IGES researchers and collaborators have presented the main activities and results achieved in the first year of the project Redupre by relating the overall picture emerged through:

- a) Socio-economic and legal analysis concerning the situation of the Roma/Sinti in Italy;
- b) Interviews with key stakeholders (health services, social services, educational services, employment services, police officers, leaders Roma/Sinti, city councillors);
- c) Field interviews (100 respondents, target: 18-70 years, different social situation and education).

The discussion focused on the detail of the issues related to the situation of “double” discrimination suffered by Roma women, as revealed by the whole period of study and research on the conditions of the Roma population in Italy.

Taking into account the testimonies of young Roma and Sinti women who attended at the workshop, the main issues raised are:

1. The relationship between ethnicity and gender is particularly complex for Roma women both within their communities and in relations with the outside world. Confronted outside of their own communities with an extremely hostile environment, they accept the role that is assigned to them by their culture, perceived as threatened. The discrimination to which women are subject, therefore, assumes significance multifactorial, resulting from the simultaneous presence of elements linked to ethnic affiliation and gender discrimination.

2. The extent of these phenomena of discrimination in various Roma communities can be analyzed in several areas: a. access to education, b. access to the labour market, c. access to health services.

- a. *Access to education*: the low level of education of Roma women is not only related to a form of discrimination outside the community (which exists but affects the same extent by males and females) as in particular the rules and traditions of many communities that require girls to leave school early (no later than age 12) to take on the traditional roles within the community (early marriage, caring for relatives, etc.). The few Roma women who manage to achieve a high level of education are doubly formed of discrimination by the majority of the population and from their group for not having respected the traditions of their community.

- b. *Access to the labour market*: in turn, is affected by the very low level of education of women, from the frequent pregnancies and the machismo of many communities which means that families do not allow women to take jobs as alternatives to those to be carried out within the community.

- c. *Regarding access to health services* have the analyses conducted during the project REDUPRE highlighted the spread of prejudice among health care or paramedical: strong prejudices still persist among healthcare professionals from the customs, traditions and model of the fertility of Roma women.

3. However, what should be emphasized in relation to the relationship stereotypical and discriminatory towards women, is that context in which discrimination against women is more accentuated seems to lie precisely within Rom communities.

4. The girls take on the roles reserved for adult women age 11: at this age in many communities, especially Roma, is expected to marry and have children. In this context, it is very difficult that they have the possibility of entering the labour market. It is certainly true that relations between men and women differ between the groups: in some communities, young Roma are becoming increasingly free to choose their wives, while in other communities, and they are the majority, even in Italy, they are still the parents of sons to choose their future in-laws: it is often “traditional” marriages contracts that are a result of a reasonable financial compensation to the families of the girls.

5. Another relevant phenomenon is the dependency of immigrant Roma women from her husband’s residence. In Italy, the tightening of the eligibility requirements for residence and work permits has affected especially the non-EU immigrant women. The legislation on family reunification in particular has led to a strengthening of the dependence of women by men, women remain bound in the context of unhappy marriages and violent, as in the case of divorce, losing the right to stay in the country and should do return to the country of origin with all the consequences.

Session 2

In the second part of the workshop participants – coordinated by IGES - have exposed their personal experiences with the communities of Roma/Sinti and their attention on some critical points raised in section 1. The common approach, expressed both in the religious associations that those secular approach is that a simple “care” often does not respond to the solution of problems. There should be an improvement of the principles of reciprocity in relations between Roma and non-Roma.

Particularly valuable to the testimony of a young Kosovar Roma woman, settled with his family in Italy, in Friuli, before, in Veneto, during the war in former Yugoslavia, which has shown in her case it was even possible to speak of a triple form of discrimination, being the young, deaf and dumb, without any form of schooling and forced into a marriage with a traditional French Roma, from whom she found the courage to escape, with the help of a non-governmental organization of Portogruaro, a city in which her family of origin is resident.

At the end the participants have devoted their attention to the development of some key proposals to strengthen the dialogue between Roma and non-Roma, in the light of the fight against discrimination and stereotypes through good practice and innovative approaches. The main proposals that have emerged are:

Enhance dialogue between Roma and non-Roma groups through mediation and mediation techniques, innovative, mutual understanding is the key to combat stereotypes and discrimination (some concrete proposals: to collect and disseminate the vast literature already exists on the Roma culture and history, promote the use of Romani in public and in schools where there is a significant number of Roma/Sinti – as indeed required by law Abruzzo Regional -, the promotion of cultural events including Roma Roma do not like music, film, festival traditional, focus especially on young people that promote the knowledge of the traditions and culture of the Roma/Sinti)

Develop and promote contacts between local and national authorities, to encourage the attention of the public on both socio-economic and legal situation of the Roma/Sinti in Italy (collection of regional laws and administrative acts, organization of a network between different public bodies and local authorities in order to strengthen the capacity of central government to overcome the lack of reliable data and implement a national strategy based on concrete data for solving specific problems)

Creation of a network of regional and national associations and NGOs working with and for Roma/Sinti (territorial cooperation)

To focus media attention on the actual situation of the Roma/Sinti, use European funds to finance documentaries and TV/Radio programs on local traditions, culture and history of Roma/Sinti (e.g. Program through the European Media +). Promote cultural, musical and traditional and non-Roma in schools, at festivals, theatres.

Legal issues: creating a network of associations and local authorities to promote: a) the recognition of Italian citizenship to children born in Italy Roma (this is part of a larger campaign “ius soli”), b) promote a campaign in media in public life to insert the Roma/Sinti among minorities recognized by law, c) find a solution to statelessness many Roma

Tackling unemployment through the creation of cooperatives among Roma/Sinti, in order to promote their traditional activities (small crafts, circus activities, street entertainment and the like), use tools of the European Social Fund with specific projects for the Roma/Sinti at the regional level in order to ensure young people a qualification specific employment

More generally, based on the year of search made by IGES for REDUPRE project and the experience of all of the participants at the workshop representing both public institutions, political and social care, the world of NGO's, religious and secular, as well as, the world of research, it appeared that an integrated policy that promotes inclusion for women ROM must necessarily take into account:

- Integration policies through employment;
- Integration policies through education;
- Integration policies through social and health services.

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LESSONS AND PROPOSALS FROM WORKSHOPS IN ROMANIA

1. Presentation of seminars in Romania

In Romania the REDUPRE training activities were organized according to the planning of activities in Timisoara (December 2012, May 2013) and Cluj Napoca (May 2013) and brought together a large variety of participants.

Discussions between the two Romanian partners, the Euroregional Center for Democracy and the Resource Center for Roma Communities led to a balanced approach of the training seminars, in which the theoretical presentations were seconded by practical exercises. We put emphasis on the participation of trainees, through role plays, small group activity, reporting to the larger group.

A series of case studies brought the trainees attention to real life situations and the opportunity to analyse with their colleagues the context of the problems and their relevance for their own area of activity and to debate them openly and without prejudice.

Several short films were presented in the seminars in order to demonstrate such case studies and to create the debate.

For the training sessions attention was given by the two partners to the quality of materials that was made available to participants. Therefore, all the presentations were send in electronic and print version, while the folders were filled with other support materials – training material, copies of relevant reports, statistics, articles, pieces of legislation etc.

The first training session took place in Timisoara (December 2012) having as general topic the “Social economy and economic reinsertion of the Roma: arguments in favour and against.” A group of 22 participants covering Roma NGOs active in Banat area, school principals, teachers, school county department, County Office for Roma – Prefecture, City Halls and Public Administration representatives, National Agency for Roma – regional offices, but also local Mass Media and other consultants participated in the seminar.

During the session an introduction to the REDUPRE project and research findings was followed by presentations of the main problems faced by Roma communities – as they were perceived viewed by the participants, the status of policies for Roma in Romania, problems, priorities and solutions for the Roma condition, issues related to economic reinsertion of Roma. Also, an important part was the issue of stereotypes and prejudices against Roma, methods for conflict mediation and resolution and some practical tools for reducing stereotypes and prejudices against Roma.

The second seminar that took place in Timisoara (May 2013) had the topic of “Roma women beyond stereotypes,” where 19 participants (14 women, 5 men) from the Roma NGOs active in Banat area, other non-Roma NGOs, school teachers, County Office for Roma – Prefecture, City Halls representatives, National Agency for Roma – regional offices and CED staff debated the challenges of the status of the Roma women today.

On the agenda of the meeting there were issues like:

- Presentation of the main public policies for Roma in Romania and the presence of Roma women in these documents;
- Statistical data on the situation of the Roma women;
- Double discrimination of Roma women – within the general population and inside the Roma community;

- The participation of Roma women in public life

The groups discussed a series of recommendations that were further discussed in the following seminar that took place also in May 2013, in Cluj Napoca.

In Cluj Napoca, the general topic of the gathering was “The situation of Roma in Romania: problems, public policy solutions and involvement of local authorities.” Again we had a large variety of participants (20), covering Roma NGOs active in the Transilvania area, Non-Roma NGOs, school mediators, health mediators, County Office for Roma – Prefecture, Public Administration structures, National Agency for Roma – regional offices, Local experts on Roma issues hired at City Hall level, but also Roma university students and RCRC and CED staff.

The focus of the meeting was on the main public policies for Roma in Romania, namely the National Roma Integration Strategy adopted in December 2011 that is now in process of being revised.

An analysis of the status of affairs in education, health, employment and housing was presented and discussions took place on the issues around these subjects. Due to the important interest of the participants, several opportunities for funding available in the next period for Roma programming were also presented by RCRC staff.

Another topic was the involvement of local authorities in solving the problems faced by Roma and for improvement of relationship between Roma and non-Roma. The discussion on recommendations continued and several ideas were recorded in relation to the Roma public policy design, implementation and evaluation.

3. Main lessons learned

The participants expressed during the workshops several ideas that constitute lessons learned:

Roma issue is a very complex issue:

- There are multi-dimensional problems;
- Roma Problems are inter-related;
- Inter-conditionality of problems makes it more difficult without an integrated approach;
- Different perspectives on the Roma issue are not sufficiently discussed and shared
- Insufficient communication flow between stakeholders;
- High social distance between Roma and non-Roma;
- Reduced social capital of Roma;
- Different perspectives on the Roma problems are not reflected in official documents, public policies;
- Diversity of Roma groups not enough known by non-Roma;
- Discrimination is a key issue for the Roma;
- Double discrimination of Roma women is still widespread;
- Low political will to deal with the Roma issue;
- Low political capacity of the Roma communities;
- Low capacity at local level – reflected in lower representation of the Roma in Local Councils, local administration etc.;
- Limited capacity of NGOs to better contribute to the improvement of the condition of Roma – knowledge, skills, resources;
- Project approach versus long term involvement of donors and implementators – leave measures at half stage of intervention.

4. Proposals

During the seminars several ideas were expressed by the participants and a large majority is encouraging the two Romanian partners of the REDUPRE project to continue the training activities, recognizing the existing need for information, knowledge and skills both for NGO members and for public administration structures.

Participants found very useful the presentation of successful experiences of other organizations, but also discussions on the sources for failures. Another relevant issue is the level of knowledge on the Roma community and its diversity; today the Roma diversity may be viewed in terms of traditional groups, level of integration in mainstream society, modernization of traditional trades, use of Romani language etc.

It was acknowledged that the level understanding of the public policy cycle as it is stated in the Romanian governmental documents is low, and it can be a tool for civil society in order to put pressure on the public administration to implement measures for the benefit of the Roma.

Also, the new concepts of social inclusion were recognized that it is still not enough understood and the social inclusion structures are still not working. The concept of social economy is still in the process of elaboration and the legislation in this area is not adopted. Participants found useful to learn more on the main advocacy tools to be used in order to promote antidiscrimination.

Having in mind the new programming period for structural funds, the participants believe that there is still need for information, knowledge and skills for project proposal writing and management. The main results of the most recent pieces of research are of high importance in order to substantiate the local, regional and national policies. Participant also mentioned the need for partnership development between the local NGOs and public administration structures and other public institutions.

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LESSONS AND PROPOSALS DERIVING FROM WORKSHOPS IN SLOVENIA

1. **REDUPRE Round table on improvement of relations between Roma and Non-Roma population in Bela krajina. Premises of the Institute for Education and Culture Črnomelj (ZIK), 19th of December 2012.**

Participants: On the event participated more than 30 representatives of Roma communities in Bela krajina and its neighbourhood, Roma councillors in local communities Councils from Bela krajina and neighbouring local communities, representatives national and local author authorities, representatives of Ombudsman office and governmental Office of equal opportunities, experts for the field of combating discrimination and journalist of local and public media.

Goals: The goal was to discuss the cases (very concretely) of stereotype and prejudices behaviour between Roma and non-Roma population in Bela krajina with special emphasis on consequences on the relation and cohabitation of Roma and non-Roma population.

The program: The program was divided into three different sessions with different contents. In the first session members of Institute for Education and Culture – ZIK presented the preliminary results of the public opinion survey conducted in Bela krajina and experts in the field of Roma issue shaped the framework of the relations among Roma and non-Roma population in Bela krajina, with the special emphasis on stereotypes and prejudices among both groups in the past and today. In the second session the of representatives of national and local authorities, representatives of Ombudsman office and governmental Office of equal opportunities expressed their views and opinions on the situation in Bela krajina and the reasons for the present situation. In the last, third session, the representatives of Roma community, non-Roma initiatives and local media presented their views and opinions regarding the state of mutual relations between Roma and non-Roma population in Bela krajina.

2. **REDUPRE seminar on the role and importance of public services to improve relations between Roma and non-Roma population in Bela krajina. Premises of the Institute for Education and Culture Črnomelj (ZIK), 13th of March 2013.**

Participants: On the seminar participated more than 35 participants form different public services (centers for social work, employment offices, schools, kindergartens, police), experts from the field of education, public administration, human rights protection, representatives of Roma non-governmental association, Roma councillors in local community councils and journalist of local and public media.

Goals: The goal was to identify which stereotypes and prejudices that are hindering the relation between Roma and non-Roma community in the field of public services.

The program: Different sets of questions were on the program. As introductory the final result of the public opinion survey conducted in Bela krajina and results of the special expert research on manifestations of nationalism in the work of public administration in Slovenia were presented to the participants. In continuation participants discussed different fields of public services where most frequently Roma are facing discrimination as consequence of stereotypes and prejudices among public servants. Special attention was dedicated to the issues of education, and particularly to the issues of

high level of Roma children in schools with adjusted teaching program, to the role of early inclusion of children in kindergartens, regular attendance of pupils, and to the importance of education on Roma culture in teaching programs in Slovenian schools. In the field of employment and social protection the discussion was orientated towards most common stereotype, which Roma are not willing to work and that are living from social subsidies only. At the end the police presented their standpoints towards the stereotype that “to be a Roma is equal to be a criminal.”

3. Round table Roma women between 8th of March and 8th of April - Role of Roma women for improving of cooperation and reducing prejudices between Roma and majority population in Bela krajina. Premises of the Institute for Education and Culture Črnomelj (ZIK), 16th of April 2013.

Participants: The seminar was attended by 43 participants, most of them Roma and non-Roma women from different sphere of public life (leaders of Roma associations, Roma writers, Roma journalist, Roma filmmakers, Roma assistants in kindergartens and elementary schools, editors of Roma public broadcast, Roma representative on local community council, employees in public services: police, primary schools, kindergartens, Roma students, etc. On the meeting participated also representatives of Project's Consortium partners from Bulgaria (Association Integro, Razgrad and Institute for Population and Human Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) and Italy (I.G.E.S. – Istituto Internazionale di Alti Studi Giuridico Economici per lo Sviluppo).

Goals: The main goal of the meeting was to present the obstacles (stereotypes and prejudices) that Roma women have to face on the way to realization of their person objectives and aspirations.

The program: The program was divided in three different sessions. At the beginning, the factual position of Roma woman in different Project countries was presented with the emphasis on Slovenian circumstances. Second session embraced the most important projects lead by Roma and non-Roma women for improving the position of Roma women in Slovenia, their results and impacts Roma and non-Roma stakeholders. In the last, central session, Roma women presented their personal experiences, their fight against stereotypes and prejudices, which they faced both within the Roma community and majority population in Slovenia. As Roma women are facing multiple discrimination a concrete proposals were made to improve position of Roma women Roma community and Slovenian society in general.

4. Main conclusions and lessons learned

Results of the in-depth interviews and public opinion survey in Bela krajina clearly showed the existence of the prejudices and stereotypes towards Roma. The prejudices are deeply rooted and in many cases people are not aware of the fact that their behaviour is influenced by prejudices and stereotypes. We are facing the paradox of self-denial of prejudices e.g. I am not a racists but they are loud, dirty, not willing to work etc. People are using generalisation, e.g. “I know all of them are the same.” One of the most persisting prejudices among the majority population is the conviction that the Roma are getting higher social subsidies and enjoy greater social benefits. In everyday life and in society at large, prejudices and stereotypes about Roma are unfortunately still widespread. Roma face discrimination in all spheres of social life, so it is necessary to undertake appropriate activities to raise awareness and inform majority, who the Roma are, and how in fact they live. The consequences of prejudices do not bear only victims of discrimination but also the wider public. Apart these, discrimination as consequence of prejudices costs a lot of money and delay of action will cost even more. The system of legal protection in Slovenia is disputed, namely there are available full legal institutions, but their effectiveness is questionable. Only the law cannot solve discrimination itself, as the concept of formal rights face limits in real life. The law only prohibits the dissemination, handling, and does not eliminate the causes of discrimination

(prejudices and stereotypes).

Several NGOs are working on the field of human rights protection with special emphasis on Roma rights protection. Long-term successful work with the most vulnerable groups on the edge of the society equipped them with the knowledge, experiences and expectations which they transform into the reports, recommendations, and suggestions to the national and local authorities. But unfortunately the appeals were frequently miss-heard and over-looked. Also reports of bodies of national importance like Ombudsman office are often ignored and even became a subject of political disputes between political elites.

Poor housing conditions of Roma is well fertilized soil for blooming of stereotypes and prejudices against Roma community. In spite of the fact that housing condition of Roma community has improved in last decades they are still facing discrimination in ever-day life, e.g. employment, education, access to other public services, because of poor living conditions (many cases even without water and electricity).

Republic of Slovenia had in last two decades invested a lot of funds, and adopted relevant measures for improving the level of education of Roma in Slovenia. In spite all the efforts the level of education among Roma did not increase significantly yet. Illiteracy is still around 13%, 2/3 of Roma do not finish primary school, only a few concluded vocational training, secondary schools or gained university education. Lack of knowledge of Slovenian language, poor housing condition and discrimination as consequence are the main reasons to blame for high and early drop-out of the school.

Roma in Slovenia are facing difficult economic situation due to high unemployment rate. Almost 95% of Roma population is unemployed. The data has deteriorated in last 2 decades what confirms that the strategies on this field were unsuccessful. Regardless the reasons for the failure, authorities must take actions which will bring Roma back to the labour market on equal basis despite hinders (poor education level, discrimination, etc.) they face. In addition, high rate of unemployment among Roma is deepening the common prejudices that Roma are unwilling to work and prefer to live on social subsidies, abusing social welfare benefits.

Social subsidies in general, not only for Roma, had increased since the reform of legislation in the beginning of the nineties. It is a common and deeply rooted stereotype among majority population that Roma are receiving higher social subsidies as other people. In spite of its falsity, the stereotype stubbornly insists and creates unnecessary tension among the population, especially now, in the time of the global economic crisis. Social workers in their work with Roma often encounter inappropriate use of social subsidies funds but with the rarely abuse of these funds, therefore some adaptation of present legislation on social subsidies are recommended.

Local Self-Government Act prescribed obligations for guaranteed seat and election of the Roma councillor in quoted local communities with traditional presence of Roma community. This contributed positively in last decade to the improvement of position of Roma community. Some local communities established also special Roma working bodies/commissions composed from Roma and non-Roma members, for proposing, developing and monitoring the policies and actions. In many cases the Roma commission acts as a moderator and mediator in escalated conflict situation as well as coordinator between different experts working groups on local level.

Several local communities have accepted Roma councillors as a compliance with legal obligations only. Roma councillors have expressed fear that are not treated equally in the decision making process with other councillors in the local communities.

Media are playing central role for addressing stereotypes and prejudices between Roma and non-Roma community, but unfortunately in many cases media are also supporting and generating the stereotypes and prejudices as well, enabling hate speech within the so called discussion forums. Journalists confirm that stereotypes and prejudices between Roma and non-Roma community are present on both sides and are deeply rooted. Toleration towards prejudiced reporting is high, especial in local media. Lack of knowledge and professionalism among journalist is also on high level. Combination of lack of knowledge of journalist and editors and high level of tolerance on so called discussion forums could

easily lead to hate speech, anti-Gypsyism and racial violence.

Workshop on the position of Roma women proved again that women are the engine, soul and the driving force of Roma society. Although discriminated within their communities and outside, squeezed between the pre-defined roles in the family and society, under the burden of prejudices and stereotypes, they have managed to take a decisive step and take responsibility for their lives, development of the family and the entire Roma community. Roma women have already achieved excellent results and strengthened their position in the mainstream society. The most positive thing is that they are ready to support all members of the Roma community, in their efforts to achieve personal success or to contribute to the community. As professionals, Roma women, assistants and educators, have been able to establish confidence among Roma children, parents and schools. So, the first conclusion of the round table should be the need for further support for projects conducted by Roma women, and encouragement of networking and promotion of activities for common actions for the emancipation and empowerment of women, within the general women's movement in Slovenia. The first initiative has already borne fruit and Roma women had contacted the Secretary of State in the Office of the President of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and asked for help and support for establishing a national wide forum for Roma women.



Ms. Tina Friedrich, young Roma leader, is stressing the importance of Romani culture for Slovenian society. Second REDUPRE seminar on the role and importance of public services to improve relations between Roma and non-Roma population in Bela krajina, March 2013, Črnomelj, Slovenia.



Second REDUPRE seminar, March 2013, Črnomelj, Slovenia.



On the occasion of the International Women's Day, participants of the workshop "8 March in discussion," March 2013, Razgrad, Bulgaria received flowers.



The workshop "8 March in discussion," March 2013, Razgrad, Bulgaria.



Participants of the REDUPRE workshop for Roma and non-Roma women, representatives of the civil society and groups involved in the fight against gender discrimination, April 2013, Gorizia, Italy.



Ms. Imelde Pellegrini is presenting the position of Roma/Sinti women in Italy. REDUPRE workshop for Roma and non-Roma women, representatives of the civil society and groups involved in the fight against gender discrimination, April 2013, Gorizia, Italy.



Prof. Silvo Devetak is addressing guests from Bulgaria and Italy (Prof. Tomova, Mr. Hasanov and Mr. Stoytchev all from Bulgaria and Mr. Palozzo from Italy), round table "Roma women between 8th of March and 8th of April – Role of Roma women for improving of cooperation and reducing prejudices between Roma and majority population, April 2013, Črnomelj, Slovenia.



Roma women discussion their role and position in Slovenia. Round table "Roma women between 8th of March and 8th of April, April 2013, Črnomelj, Slovenia.

CHAPTER IV

**THEORETICAL FRAMES BASED ON THE RESULTS OF
REDUPRE ACTIVITIES FOR ELABORATING MEANS AND
WAYS FOR REDUCING STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICES
BETWEEN ROMA AND NON-ROMA AND THUS
AMELIORATING THEIR RELATIONS AND COEXISTENCE
IN THE REGIONS WHERE THEY LIVE TOGETHER**

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THEORETICAL CONCLUSIONS EMANATING FROM THE PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES

There are no easy solutions to the problems of spreading stereotypes within Roma and non-Roma communities. The fact is that stereotypes operate at both individual and systemic levels. Therefore, anti-stereotypes strategies need to be implemented at all levels (i.e. individual, institutional and cultural). For example, previous research found that stereotyping behaviour relates to some personal characteristics of individuals such as empathy and right-wing authoritarianism; however, it also relates to more societal variables such as lack of education and local norms. Indeed, no strategy for change will be successful without significant political will and adequate support of leading structures in a respective country. The reviewed literature on Roma – non-Roma relationships suggests that the best possible strategy for combating stereotypes that exist on both sides is multi-faceted, inclusive (encompassing all relevant approaches and involving all parties affected) and developed in accordance with the specific and local circumstances of the communities for which it is intended. More specifically, a dynamic, iterative and consultative approach, using both "top-down" strategies (e.g. community or institutionally instigated action, such as advertising campaigns targeting specific actions or behaviours and 'bottom up' strategies (e.g. addressing specific stereotyping behaviours), is more likely to succeed than are replications of "one-size fits all" programmes, without due regard for local community concerns and political sensitivities around such issues as entitlement, dispossession, racism and prejudice.

Many studies, reports and other relevant documents, including those produced within the EU, suggest that it are non-Roma members who are responsible for the on-going use of anti-Roma stereotypes. However, one should be aware of the fact that at least a part of Roma behave in a way that confirms certain stereotypes that majority population holds about them (e.g. a general conviction that they are violent and that they do not want to learn or work). On the policy level, it was argued for a long time in several European countries that majority non-Roma population has to adapt itself to the Roma culture and its way of life which has to be respected and valued. It is only recently that this belief in the "goodness" of such societal model has proven to be inadequate and it has been recognized that also Roma people have to acclimatise to their "new" society and at least to learn the dominant language, accept and observe moral and legal norms that exist in certain society, etc. This means that members of both non-Roma and Roma groups have to take important steps and work together in order to change stereotypes on both sides and improve their relationships.

When trying to define and elaborate appropriate techniques and approaches aimed at improving relationship between two different ethnic and social groups as Roma and non-Roma definitely are, one should take into consideration the historical fact that predetermines the actual nature and extent of a conflict between these two groups which is rooted mostly in stereotypes and prejudices that have been present on both sides for centuries. So far research has shown that common stereotypes about Roma in Europe can be seen to have strong racial, ethnic and class bases. These three dimensions are not mutually exclusive, but rather mutually reinforcing. Indeed, the three overlap to the extent that it is impossible to be sure where the influence of one ends and the others begin. The subsequent stereotyping of Roma invoked fears and antipathy among non-Roma people alongside themes of idleness, indiscipline and depravity, themes which persist to this day. Later all these stereotypes assumed more economic and social character and the main concern is that various aspects of Roma culture and living conditions also reinforce stereotypes by limiting communication between Roma and non-Roma in European countries,

and thus contributing to a vicious circle of isolation and marginalisation. On the other hand, stereotypes, mostly those with negative connotation, also evolved within Roma communities. The latter reflect harsh conditions, suppression and ill-treatment to which the Roma in European societies have been subjected throughout the history. The truth is that poor and deficient communication between Roma and non-Roma in European countries breeds mistrust and further reinforces preconceptions and prejudice on both sides.

Some sociological studies have proven that stereotypes are responsive to new information and subsequently can be successfully changed or even reduced to some extent if dealt with properly and social perceptions made more accurate when people are motivated to do so. Several scholars and researchers have found that stereotypes may be widespread and persistent, but they are also amenable to change when people make an effort to reduce them. Thus, the first step in our endeavours to ameliorate the attitudes and beliefs of members of one group towards members of the other group shall be to ensure that measures and actions chosen seek to: eliminate false beliefs by providing correct and accurate information; to avoid “one-way” communication (both Roma and non-Roma must be given an opportunity to engage with the topic of stereotypes and to contribute their views); to provide the practical skills to empower Roma and non-Roma to speak out against stereotypes (this is of key importance if one wants to successfully fight against stereotypy behaviour of those who may assume, in the absence of dissenting voices, that their beliefs are widely shared); to invoke empathy for members of out-group on both sides; to initially point out similarities among rather than differences between Roma and non-Roma, but subsequently emphasizing cultural diversity and plurality; to focus on changing stereotypy behaviours and actions, rather than on modifying attitudes and/or beliefs, which are remarkably resistant to change (previous relevant research suggests that altering behaviour can in itself lead to altered attitudes); to offer communities sound alternative explanations to people’s justifications for their stereotypy views, emphasizing that ethnic groups are not homogenous; to obtain and have the support of clear unambiguous political leadership; to draw from a coalition of leaders from academia, sport, police, public life etc. who are committed to delivering a consistent message against stereotypy behaviours.

In line with these approaches possibly viable techniques for reducing stereotypes and prejudices between Roma and non-Roma can be proposed. Such mediation techniques should be mainly of interpersonal character in order to foster intergroup contact, consensus information and dialogue. However, in order to be fully efficient they need to be complemented with actions and measures directed towards individuals such as providing knowledge about social and cultural issues, dissonance and empathy.

In continuation we elaborate on each of these mediation methods that should form a part of a more common, general model applicable in countries with Roma population.

Individual strategies

a) Providing knowledge about social and cultural issues

This method can be in fact quite effective in undermining false or negative beliefs about target groups (members and representatives of Roma and non-Roma). Educational institutions and teaching materials have the opportunity to affect stereotypes, and hence influence inter-group relations. Efforts to teach about different cultures, and the history of different racial or ethnic groups can help build inter-group understanding if it is done in an effective and sympathetic way. The educational system (teachers, schools, textbooks) needs to also try to paint a fair and accurate picture of the conflict and the different people involved, being aware that different sides of a conflict will view what is happening very differently. Through stories, discussions, and exercises, teachers can help students (of all ages and levels) understand the complexity of the conflicts that surround them, and develop age- and situation-appropriate responses to the current conflicts in their homes, communities and nations. To the extent that classrooms contain Roma and non-Roma students, teachers can help their students learn to understand

and appreciate each other better, while protecting the safety (physical and emotional) of those on both sides. If the classroom only contains one group, reaching such intergroup understandings is harder, but still worth the effort through books and articles, discussions, TV and movies, and when available, online exercises.

Public knowledge about the history and culture of Roma is still marginal among ordinary people in all European countries. National governments and international organisations are trying to overcome segregation, stigmatisation and marginalisation of the Roma and to integrate them into society. One of the keys for integration is education of both Roma and non-Roma. An integral part of this educational process is mutual knowledge about the common history and culture of Roma and non-Roma in Europe. Mutual knowledge and understanding as well as on-going dialogue between the two different ethnic, social and cultural identities have the power to create a cultural space where an elementary respect for dignity, equality, solidarity and human rights can be learned and internalized by both Roma and non-Roma. It is also worthy to note that imparting knowledge alone cannot reduce stereotypes between Roma and non-Roma but should be accompanied by other individual tools such as creating dissonance and using empathy if one is to achieve tangible results.

b) Dissonance

Some studies revealed that evoking people's dissonance, or inconsistency between egalitarian values and negative attitudes, is a useful strategy for reducing stereotypes and prejudice (Pedersen et al. 2003, 13). Stereotypes between Roma and non-Roma can be reduced also by having participants feel dissonance (i.e. psychological inconvenience or even guilt as a result of a perceived incompatibility among their beliefs). For instance, they might see themselves as being egalitarian but also express stereotypical behaviours and/or prejudiced attitudes. This method is very useful when we have to deal with those Roma and non-Roma who outwardly endorse egalitarian principles, believe that prejudice and discrimination are bad and wrong, but still have negative feelings/attitudes towards out-group members.

c) Empathy

Some research studies (Pedersen et al. 2003, 13) indicate a strong interrelation between levels of stereotypes and empathy towards members of other racial/ethnic group (e.g. Indigenous-Australians) and that invoking empathy in bearers of stereotypes helps reduce stereotyping levels. One of the most effective methods to reduce stereotypes between Roma and non-Roma is to do this with empathy. *"Simply by taking the perspective of out-group members and "looking at the world through their eyes," in-group bias and stereotype accessibility can be significantly reduced."*¹ However, the ways for invoking empathy with a view to reducing stereotypes should be approached with a great care and by taking into account the concrete circumstances. This can be done by eliciting either parallel empathy (i.e. involved emotions such as hopelessness or anger in line with the target group) or reactive empathy (i.e. involved emotions such as compassion or sympathy) dependant of course upon various scenarios. Imagining how an out-group member feels in certain conflict situation evokes a purely empathic response, and may lead to altruistic behaviour. Yet, imagining how you personally would feel if you were in his/her shoes evokes a more complex combination of personal distress and empathy (Pedersen et al. 2003, 15). To benefit the most from the "empathy" approach both forms of perspective-takings should be used interchangeably.

Interpersonal strategies

a) Intergroup contact

The early research carried out by René Weber and Jennifer Crocker (1983, 961-977) demonstrated that stereotype change requires counter-stereotypic behaviours to be performed more frequently and by

¹ Understanding Prejudice. *The Psychology of Prejudice: An Overview*, <http://www.understandingprejudice.org/apa/english/page19.htm> (accessed 25 August 2012).

typical group members. However, when getting to know an individual group member, feelings about this member may not generalise to other members of the group. Stereotype change is only possible when a member is not treated as an exception to the rule, so this member should repeatedly remind others of his or her group membership. Building up a close relationship with an opposite-group member can result in more positive evaluations of the group as a whole. In addition, knowing that someone from your group has a member of the other group as a friend reduces negative feelings towards this group. This was shown, among others, in the studies conducted by Stephen C. Wright et al. (1997, 73-90) and Donna M. Desforjes et al. (1991, 531-544). Research also shows that people feel relatively positive about groups that live nearby, and people who have friends who are members of other groups are less prejudiced against the out-groups. Although not all stereotypes ought to be changed, contact of the right type can break down negative stereotypes. This means that stereotyping can be reduced, for example, by bringing people together. When they discover the other people are not as the stereotype, the immediate evidence creates dissonance that leads to improved thoughts about the other group.

This is especially true when people determine that they actually have things in common with people from the other side. Such things can range from enjoying the same music, hobbies, or sports, to having the same worries about children or aging parents, etc. Even when people learn that they share fear or sadness, they can begin to understand each other more. When they come to understand that the other is afraid of being hurt, or losing a loved one, just as they are, that brings people together. Such shared emotions make people seem human, while stereotypes tend to make us feel superior in some way to the person or group being stereotyped and thus typically “dehumanize” and humiliate people. Likewise, shared emotions make empathy possible, which opens the door to new forms of interaction and trust building, at least among the individuals involved. Depending on the context and other interactions, the image of the group as a whole may become more positive as well. At other times, people rationalize that their one new acquaintance is not like “the others.” But even learning that one person can deviate from the stereotype is a good start. The challenge then is to expand such transformative experiences beyond the individuals involved to larger groups, communities, and eventually whole societies. Developing such mutual understanding is the goal of many intervention efforts. Dialogue groups and problem-solving workshops are two common ways of doing this. So are joint projects such as women’s or children’s programmes, recreational and sporting programmes, medical programmes – any kind of programme that brings individuals from opposing groups together in a cooperative venture. Although they may have additional goals beyond the breaking of stereotypes, working together co-operatively can do much to break down negative images people hold of the out-group members. Once people get to know a person from “the other side,” they often will determine that the other is not nearly as bad as they originally had assumed, though sometimes they might find out they are just as bad or even worse.

Thus, the possible key to reversing stereotypes is to contradict them, in direct interactions between Roma and non-Roma people. Stereotypes can be effectively reduced by direct contact between members of different groups (Roma and non-Roma) as it is suggested by the contact hypothesis.² Our activities carried out in the frame of REDUPRE project confirmed that this most compelling social psychological model requires certain conditions under which conflicting groups should have contact with one another if one wants to reduce prevailing intergroup tensions. According to Petersen et al (2003, 15), these essential preconditions are as follows: 1.) conflicting groups must have equal status within the contact situation; 2.) there should be no competition along group lines within the contact situation; 3.) groups must seek superordinate goals within the contact situation; 4.) relevant institutional authorities must sanction the intergroup contact and must endorse a reduction in intergroup tensions.

More significantly, one should be aware of the fact that attempts to bring conflicting groups together to reduce stereotypes can easily exacerbate intergroup tensions if only one of the above-mentioned

2 The hypothesis theory (the theory that certain types of direct contact between members of hostile groups will reduce stereotyping and prejudice) is based on the principle that bringing people together who are in conflict (or where one is stereotyped by the other), will improve their relationship - as they get to understand one another, the conflict will subside.

conditions is missing. Therefore, any anti-stereotyping technique which relies upon contact between Roma and non-Roma needs to be carefully engineered and must take into consideration all relevant conditions. In addition, interventions through intergroup contacts in the case of Roma and non-Roma should target changing the negative views and stereotypy beliefs of out-group and especially in-group members and should simultaneously address both sameness and diversity of both groups' members. However, the reality is that even when contact contradicts a stereotype, this may not undermine it because some powerful mechanisms can be triggered. The fact is that stereotypes may remain unchanged because people can explain away inconsistent information, compartmentalize inconsistent information, or differentiate atypical group members. Contact situations must expose people to stereotype-inconsistent information that is repeated (thus cannot be explained away), involves many group members (thus subtyping is prevented), and comes from typical group members (thus no contrast will occur). People will evaluate out-groups more positively when a person from the in-group builds up a close relationship with an opposite-group member. However, one should bear in mind that the reduction of stereotypes and prejudice is very complex and multi-faceted process, and intergroup contact alone is not enough to be successful in this regard.

b) Providing consensus information

Our experience is that providing members of groups, Roma and non-Roma, with different "consensus" information can help reduce stereotypes on both sides. People who hold stereotypes about out-group members are more likely to believe that their negative views are shared by the wider population and that other people think the same way as them. Believing that your views are widely accepted as the 'norm' helps to justify your position. Providing bearers of stereotypes and prejudices about other ethnic group with feedback that their views about Roma or non-Roma are not shared by all can result in a decrease in negative attitudes. This is especially so if the addressees are given information regarding the views of in-group members.³

c) Dialogue

Teaching and providing Roma and non-Roma members with adequate information and knowledge are certainly useful but not sufficient on their own to efficiently change widely held stereotypes. It is more effective to have participants in anti-stereotyping methods engage in dialogue, rather than just being lectured at. For more tangible results education efforts should be complemented by continuous dialogue involving participants from both sides, i.e. Roma and non-Roma. Talking about problems and conflict situations on a regular basis may help create and maintain good relationships and better understanding among members of both ethnic groups and eventually reduce negative views and accept differences in lifestyle. It may also provide flexible proposals and creative solutions in specific and concrete situations. Such on-going and constructive dialogue can be ensured through establishing deliberative forums, dialogue platforms, round tables or other sustained forms of giving people the opportunity to intensively discuss problems and issues related to stereotypes about Roma and non-Roma.

d) Awareness raising and the role of media

Advertising and awareness raising programmes and projects cannot be regarded as a separate anti-stereotyping strategy or mechanism, but rather as a means or tool for the effective delivery of interpersonal strategies to a wide audience. Advertising and awareness raising campaigns for delivering anti-stereotypic messages may be broadly defined in order to cover as wide population as possible (using, for example, TV and radio; e.g. a well-known Roma campaign Dosta implemented in 13 CoE member countries) or more tailored (using, for example, various tools, such as particular print outlets to reach target groups).

Mass media not only can be seen as one of the major culprits for spreading and disseminating anti-Roma stereotypes in the EU member states but they can also play an important role in breaking down

3 Also, in Pedersen et al. study (2003, 17) it is stated that it has been found that providing feedback to White-American university students that their views about African-Americans were not shared by all resulted in a decrease in negative attitudes one week later. This was especially the case for those who were given information regarding the views of ingroup members.

stereotypes about Roma and non-Roma. If they characterise particular groups of people in certain ways, their viewers (or readers) are likely to do the same. So if a movie - or the motion picture industry in general – emphasizes the positive aspects of groups that contradict prevalent stereotypes, instead of characterising them negatively, they can have a significant role in building mutual understanding and are much less likely to be perpetuating negative stereotypes and making conflicts worse.⁴

A strategic priority in the EU and its member states should be to challenge negative stereotypes and prejudice on both Roma and non-Roma sides, and counter media disinformation, discriminatory practices, and populist and racist discourse. The Roma initiatives should not be one-shot, “here today, gone tomorrow” efforts, but rather have concrete and durable deliverables that leave a legacy integrated into part of a longer-term process to promote and sustain social dialogue and support ongoing communication with local Roma population. Public campaigns supported by the Roma initiatives need to combine all these components and efforts if they are to serve as a model of good practice that can be scaled-up and replicated

4 However, Pedersen et al. research (2003, 18) warns that general advertising campaigns are “*unlikely to produce significant behavioural changes, and they run the risk of producing counter-productive backlash effects in at least some sections of the community.*”

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THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REPRESENTATION OF THE SOCIETY THAT HAS LOST “ITS ROOTS” IN REAL LIFE IS THE DISJUNCTION PHENOMENON OF THE EU

Abstract

Our contribution is an analysis of the presentation in political discourses of the modern society as a multicultural one. The important problem that arises in this context is that in several modern societies and also in international relations (e.g. regional relations) the collective representation of a multicultural society is, mostly implicitly, conceived of as a collectivist multicultural one. This conception of the multicultural society is, as we will see, the cause of very serious problems in the process of political negotiations between different interest groups. The problem with the collectivist multicultural approach is that the population is imprisoned in a strait-jacket that turns out to be an important impediment for the on-going modernization of the countries and regions concerned. In this collectivist approach the different social groupings are presented as being ‘communities’ with a specific ‘culture’ and a strong collective ‘identity.’ These three concepts form what we call ‘A diabolic triangle’ from which it is sometimes very difficult to escape, both for the ‘communities’ and for the political class. Finally I will present some suggestions about the opportunities to escape from this situation that endangers the on-going construction of the European Union.

Keywords: collectivist multicultural society, collective identity, culture.

Introduction

During the last decennia in the 20th century until the present time, in many political discourses the society we live in is described as a multicultural one. These discourses show us clearly the negative consequences of the disjunction phenomenon and the urgent need to fight against it.

What do we have in mind when we refer to this disjunction phenomenon in political life? We observe a disjunction phenomenon when a collective representation becomes increasingly detached from the societal reality it pretends to reflect. Moreover, this growing distance between the collective representation and social reality is (purposefully?) ignored in order to avoid the disturbance of an existing broad political consensus.

To understand this phenomenon, we have in the first place to explain what we mean when we refer to the concept of collective representations. All of us are aware that different groups and classes within our societies have in several respects different ‘images,’ different collective representations of society. Some persons refer to our society as a class society, as an (individualist) achievement society, as a welfare society, or as a multi-ethnic society. We have to be a bit more precise. Collective representations are socially shared mental images which persons and collective entities have about the social and natural world they live in, but also about social worlds with which they do not have an immediate experience. Collective representations are mental maps, socially developed and shared types of knowledge, of emotions and of attitudes.

In many cases, those collective representations are very functional for a social unit because they help the persons concerned to orient themselves in an otherwise too complex world. They give indications about who we are and who are the Others. They offer a grip on a world that otherwise would not be understandable. But they are also an important source of confusion and misunderstanding. As we will

see later on, collective representations can mislead us in many ways.

You will not be surprised that there is a strong link between collective representations and collective identities. Collective identities are the instruments which people use to define themselves and others by applying different sets of markers. These markers express their sense of togetherness and belongingness. They imply an awareness of certain differences – real or imaginary – between them and those persons who do not belong to their ‘community’ (e.g. the concept of ‘Our national identity’).

Collective identity means that the members of a group have an awareness of certain differences that exist between them and those who do not belong to that group. So the concept of collective identity refers to imageries about social and cultural characteristics, habits and physical appearances of the Other and, consequently, of the self. This awareness of differences –real or imaginary- is connected with a consciousness of belonging to that group and of exclusion of those who do not belong. This awareness of differences and this sense of belonging may be very weak and in that case the idea of opposition to the Other may be totally absent. In many cases, however, the collective identity goes together with the idea of opposition: the types of behaviour and the values and norms of the Other are incommensurable with ‘our’ characteristics as group members. This opposition is often expressed in a stereotypical way. Such stereotypes about the Other are part of the inside-view of the members of a group, but they represent in fact, paradoxically, an outside-view on the Other. Those collective stereotypes are often far removed from the self-images of the groups that are ‘described’ by those stereotypes. Collective stereotypes are ‘frozen’ images of the Other, which are not susceptible to change when confronted with facts about the Other which are contradictory to the stereotype. Especially national stereotypes show a stubborn resistance to change and are to a high degree demonstrations of ignorance.

Collective identities have different degrees of openness. In a democratic society we observe that in many cases there is a lot of openness. This openness enables various relations with the Other and may go together with open minded dialogues. Collectivises with closed identities are often a source of many problems in (inter-)national relations.

The multicultural/multi-ethnic society as a national problem

With the introduction of the preceding concepts we have paved the way to tackle the idea that the modern society is a multicultural/multi-ethnic one. In a certain sense, this is a true statement. Nevertheless, a lot of confusion reigns because many observers forget to distinguish between collectivist multicultural/multi-ethnic societies and individualist ones. Many political problems arise when the multi-ethnic/multicultural society is interpreted in a collectivist way. This signifies that the three concepts of culture, community and collective identity are used in political discourses in collectivist ways. This has as an important consequence that the individual identities of the minority-members are wiped out. The Diabolic Triangle is born.

This development of our societies as multicultural ones is by many politicians and social scientists regarded in a positive way. On-going modernization, they argue, inevitably implies such a development as a consequence of strongly increasing international mobility of populations. Other politicians also applaud this development but on the base of quite different arguments. People with different cultural backgrounds have the right to live in accordance with their cultural background, also when they decide to live permanently in their adopted society with a way of life that is in several important respects different from theirs. Still other politicians are strongly opposed to this conception of the multicultural society and insist on the obligation of immigrants to adjust their way of life in some important respects to the country in which they settle.

These discussions continue without paying enough attention to the fact that those persons who participate in these discussions, are in fact having quite different collective representations of modern societies.

To elucidate this situation, we will briefly explain what the kernel of the problem is according to us. Moreover, this problem is also difficult to resolve because it is connected, as we will see, with

several serious taboos. The great problem that comes to the fore in these discussions and political negotiations is that it is ignored that we are confronted with an opposition between an individualist collective representation of society on the one hand and a collectivist collective representation on the other hand.

In the political discussions which concern minorities and the integration of immigrants in society, the political participants do not stop to speak about the 'communities' of the migrants, about their 'cultures' and about their 'collective identities' as if those concepts refer to a cultural and social reality, but without providing evidence that this 'reality' really exists. This tendency is strongly reinforced by those persons who put themselves in the foreground as 'representatives' of the interests of those 'communities.' The very pertinent question is to get answers concerning the reality of the social phenomena that are described by those concepts. It may be reassuring for most politicians and public administrators to think that they are living in a rather well-coordinated society, consisting out of social classes, groups and communities that are easily identifiable. All this starts with the idea that modern society embraces several 'cultures.'

A second step is to show that one has understood the lesson that all cultures are equal and that consequently, it is not acceptable to establish a hierarchy between 'superior' and 'inferior' cultures, as we did in the 19th century and in the first part of the 20th century. All cultures having the same value, they have the right to be respected by us as such. So the immigrants with their 'culture' have the fundamental right to organize their life according to the rules of their 'culture.' But this principle of equality does not necessarily imply that the 'dominant culture' of the receiving society has to adapt to the exigencies which result from this principle as the 'representatives' of those imported 'cultures' continue to emphasize as being the fundamental right of the members of their 'community' to live according to the rules of their 'culture.' Moreover, they stress that all pressure on their 'community' to adapt to the occidental society is a sign of ethnocentrism and even of racism.

The big obstacle in these debates is the fact that the concept 'culture' is used in a holistic and deterministic way. This means that a culture is conceived as being the product of many preceding generations, a product that 'programs' the persons that are born and educated in the heart of that culture. Without elaborating this discussion, we can observe that the immigrants do not import their culture in toto, but only a local or regional variant and even that is already an exaggerated statement. Everybody makes more or less his own selection that is also strongly influenced by his or her origins in the class system and by many other elements. The result of all this is a kind of specific mixture, a 'bricolage' of culture elements. More important than that is that many immigrants and other protectors of their culture always use a conception of culture that is very traditionalistic and conservative.

In reality, every culture is constantly reinterpreted by the persons who live within it. An official policy that has as its main objective the protection of the 'culture' of a foreign minority within an occidental society, always protects a conservative conception of that 'culture' and hinders as such the adaptation of the migrants who have to organize their live durably in the country of their choice.

The image of the cultures of the minorities that has imposed itself in the political debates about the 'multicultural society,' is the false image of a closed culture that determines all the characteristics of the persons who 'belong' to this 'culture,' or who are considered by others to belong to it.

The concept 'community' is also a mystification in this context, because the persons who install themselves in our society, cannot be considered to belong to ethnic or religious communities within our society. It is rather absurd to speak about, e.g. in the Netherlands, the 'Moroccan community,' the 'Turkish community,' or the 'Surinam community.' And it is rather futile to ask the 'representatives,' the 'managers,' or the 'leaders' of these imaginary communities to endorse their responsibilities in those cases in which social problems are arising among persons who are considered to be 'members' of these 'communities.'

Arriving at our third concept, the concept of collective identity, we are confronted with the same problem that arises when we approach the concept of national identity. We will never arrive at a

consensus among the population of a nation or a country about the contents of this concept. This does not imply that the majority of the inhabitants of the country concerned do not have a sentiment of belonging to their country. When we dig a little bit deeper, it will appear that their feelings of belonging, or of having a commitment, are based on a great variety of interpretations of their national identity's significance. During the debates about the collective identity of the immigrants and their children, we can observe that the political class is quite ready to accept the idea of a plural national identity when it refers to the autochthonous inhabitants. When they are referring to the immigrant population – or to the 'allochthonous' inhabitants –, they seem to have the firm opinion that the latter have a strong collective identity in contradistinction to the autochthonous population. This is a rather puzzling attitude. What do they know about the collective identities of the immigrants as being something that is based on a consensus? This assumed strong collective identity, based on a consensus, will appear to be as fictitious as the concept of national identity, once we dig a little bit deeper.

Reducing the disjunction phenomenon and escaping from the diabolic triangle

How to describe the present disjunction between the political discussions and the reality of social life? We can analyze this situation by emphasizing that a very restricted number of concepts are being used by almost all participants in these debates. Moreover, those concepts are never clearly defined. Nevertheless, it becomes quickly evident that those concepts are being used in a holistic and collectivistic way. It is evident that the majority of arguments in these political debates are connected with the idea that it is necessary to enact effective policies in order to avoid that society's social cohesion deteriorates and that the society becomes ungovernable as a consequence of the fading away of a solid social structure.

How to escape from this Diabolic Triangle? Political discussions and dialogues concerning the integration of immigrants and their children in society should take place without any reference to the concepts of 'culture,' 'collective identity' (and 'ethnicity') and 'community,' especially when those concepts are loaded with a holistic and collectivistic meaning. Such exercises may prove to be very meaningful, as they may engender a rising conscience of the fatal disjunction between those concepts and the actual social and cultural situation. They will also stimulate a serious rethinking of the actual social and cultural reality we live in.

This task implies a consistent debunking of the concepts of culture, collective identity and community. Especially the types of closed collective identities that are constantly propagated by different religious and ideological groups in our modern society should be the object of a profound and serious scrutiny, because several types of closed collective identities can be considered as real and dangerous stumbling-blocks in our modern society. Having said this, we should bear in mind that in everyday life many persons refer to their ethnic roots, to the communities to which they belong, to their religion and to their 'culture.' But these ways of expressing themselves do not imply that it is possible and legitimate to imprison every person in a rigid collective representation that denies a person's individual autonomy, hence his or her individual choices.¹

The logical or rational result of our exercise is of course that one is forced to throw away the inadequate representation of society that is implicated by a flight into the diabolical triangle. This inadequate representation is that of a holistic multicultural society. The latter must urgently be replaced by the search for a collective representation that is more in line with the characteristics and the rules of a modern society.

1 An escape from this dilemma could be to state that the individual has a choice to opt for a 'culture' So Patrick Savidan, referring to Will Kymlicka, says that belonging to a culture is a question of choice, not one of blood or race. (Patrick Savidan, *Le multiculturalisme*.. Paris: PUF, 2009, p.105. This is a way of extremely simplifying the question. One's ethnicity, religion, culture and collective identity are certainly not a question of blood or race. But that does not imply that this means that they are the results of individual choices. Saying this would imply that one denies the role of social control, both within the social networks in which one is included and in the wider social environment.

This second task, the construction of a new collective representation of modern society, is a real challenge our society is confronted with. When we are able to accomplish this task successfully, then we will be protected against irrational policy-measures, such as the official appointment of a municipal counsellor with the task to build bridges between the different 'communities' in Rotterdam.²

These two tasks are challenges for those politicians who are capable to understand the full importance of the problem that we have broached briefly. But we should also understand that many politicians and perhaps the majority of the electorate will show a strong resistance to the idea that it is urgently necessary to change their ways of representing the society we live in. Many of them have, they think, vested interest to defend for themselves and for those who they represent, the collective representation of society according to the diabolic triangle. Moreover, a large part of the electorate, especially the less educated part of it, is comforted by this false model of society because it fits their stereotypical ways of thinking about the other.

The exposure of the present political representation of our society as an unrealistic and partly at least, irrational one, is a tough job. It is an urgent job as we must by all means avoid the development of our society as a real collectivistic multicultural society, a type of society that may be lurking just around the corner.

This conclusion also has important consequences for the public debate about the integration of foreign minorities. We referred already to the political debate that has, until now, largely failed to dismantle the void collective representation of the collectivistic multicultural society. It is true that recently the idea of the multicultural society has been pushed aside, at least in the Netherlands, but this act has not changed the ways of discussion about the minorities. The political debate is still firmly imprisoned in the diabolic triangle. This signifies that it is urgent that the political class starts a more critical and rational debate on the topic of the integration of immigrants.

The social and human sciences have as an important task before them to shrug off their conformist approach of the research in the field of immigrant and minority studies. Generally, they have neglected to study the wide gap that exists since a long time between the official collective representation of society as a collectivist multicultural one and the reality of the social and economic circumstances of the immigrants. They have been guided mainly by their questionnaires and samples and have neglected systematic direct observations of the immigrant populations. They also have been guided too much, we think, by the questions of their political and official principals of their commissioned research, questions which are also in conformance with the diabolic triangle.

Also the mass media, especially the press and the television, have restricted their task to informing the publics on what the political class was saying about the integration of immigrants and on the incidents that are related to the behaviour of immigrants (e.g. women who want to wear a veil while being in an official function, the refusal of a candidate for an official municipal function to shake hands of women). But all by all, the mass media have neglected their task to deliver critical analyses of the information they distribute to their readers and spectators.

The situation in the countries that are included in REDUPRE

After what I have said until now, you will understand that we will refrain from presenting an analysis of the complex multicultural situation in the REDUPRE-countries. Such a presentation would go against our point of view that every state, country and region presents us with its own mix of religions, of types of ethnic attachments, of community ties, and of cultural specificities. Moreover, each society, state and region is loaded with its own collective representations, being the result of its own history. The situation in Kosovo is a poignant illustration of this complexity.

What is extremely important is to be aware of the fact that this does not mean that we are inevitably

2 In the meantime, this project has been discarded by the new burgomaster of Rotterdam, Ahmed Aboutaleb, born in Maroc.

strongly determined by this heritage. It is not a fate, but we must remember that we can easily become imprisoned by our collective representations when we forget that a collective representation is only a picture of the world we live in. It is only a type of model of our society that can help us to orient us in the complex reality that surrounds us and in which we are confronted continuously with the task to handle, as individuals and as collectivities, important political and other types of problems.

A great problem arises when we forget that our leading collective representations are only instruments to orient ourselves in complex situations, not to be confounded with society as such. This means that the relations between our collective representations and this social reality must continuously be 'tested' in order to ascertain ourselves that our collective representation is not drifting too far away from what is really going on. This drifting away we call the 'disjunction phenomenon,' being the result of the fact that the political and other circles are primarily oriented to the communication problems between their major political partners and forget to analyze the relations between their collective constructs or representations of society and the complex reality to which they refer.

When we are confronted with a situation in which groups with different religious, social, economic and cultural interests withdraw on closed collective identities that refuse the right of all other persons to exist on equal terms, then the possibilities to start a real dialogue are truly absent. Such a situation leads to an endless struggle that may end by the domination of one of the parties concerned, but that will never lead to a situation of peaceful co-existence between the parties concerned.³ It is the rise of new types of Apartheid. Only an intelligent analysis of the nature of the collective representations that are at stake and of their supposed relations with 'reality,' coupled with persistent efforts to engage in a consistent and open dialogue, may open new roads that lead to peaceful democratic conditions.

Final remarks

We can conclude that both in the political discourses and in the analyses of the social sciences the significance of the collective representations as constituent factors is strongly neglected. Generally, they are considered to be epiphenomena that are the product of determining factors, such as production relations, social and cultural structures and human nature. Especially in international analyses, when national and other major systems are compared, the analysis of the important role of collective representations as factors that may facilitate, slow down and even block international changes is often left out completely. As an example of this we mention the so-called Social Quality Approach: 'Social quality is the extent to which people are able to participate in social relationships under conditions which enhance their individual well-being, capacities and potential.'⁴ This text continues: 'We want to emphasize the dynamic nature of social quality: it is not simply a matter of participation, but a form of participation in which people are able to shape their own circumstances and contribute to social development in such a way that it will further social justice, solidarity, equal value and human dignity.'⁵ It is evident that such an approach imposes the analysis of collective representations, but in spite of this necessity it is absent in this approach in spite of the fact that for such an approach, based on the efforts of the participants, democratic conditions are a primary requirement.⁶

The further development of the European Union urgently necessitates the analysis of the collective representations that may facilitate, slow down and even block this common enterprise. It becomes more evident every day during this economic crisis that also endangers the stability of the European Union. This demonstrates that the European Union is far from being only an economic and financial enterprise.

3 The analysis of Jean-Arnault Dérens of Kosovo shows this very clearly. See: Dérens, J.-D., 2005, *Construire une histoire commune? Les mémoires antagonistes du Kosovo.* Le Monde diplomatique, juillet, p.24-25. See also: Coppieters, B., 2008, *Kosovo, Abkhazie, et Ossétie du Sud. Les peuples disposent-ils deux-mêmes?.* Le Monde diplomatique, octobre, p.3.

4 Beck, W., L. van der Maesen and A. Walker, Chapter 3., 'Theoretical Foundations.' In: Maesen, L. van der, and A. Walker, eds. 2012, *Social Quality: From Theory to Social Indicators.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p.68

5 Wolfgang Beck, Laurent van der Maesen and Alan Walker, o.c, p.68-69.

6 See Berting, J. 2012, 'The Social Quality Approach in a Pluralist World,' *International Journal of Social Quality*, Volume 2, No: 2.

It is in the first place a system of trust and confidence, a system of common values that has been erected by its founding fathers as a rampart against a Europe that was almost crushed by an utterly inhuman and irrational system. This means that new candidates for partnership in this European Union must not be only evaluated according to their economic capacities, but first and foremost according to their democratic qualities. And this means not only their democratic qualities on the formal level (such as the nature of their constitution), but also by considering their democratic qualities in daily life. Are the human rights respected and are religious and ethnic minorities given the same liberties as the dominant religion and ethnic majority? At the same time, is the democratic system enough alert with respect to the rise of antidemocratic movements and networks, such as ideological and religious fundamentalists that propagate extremely closed collective identities in combination with a strong hatred of outsiders.

A democratic society also has the obligation to analyze the quality of their common collective representations. A good example is the Diabolic Triangle. A society that is dominated by this collective representation is never enough democratic, as many persons are imprisoned, as we explained, by the 'community,' the 'culture' and the 'collective identity' to which they pretend to belong. They are not really free voters. When such a situation is disclosed as an unhealthy one, does this lead to the search for a collective representation that respects the fundamentals of democratic choices? And in line with this, we can raise the question whether the democratic quality of the European Union is really satisfactory. We do not think that this is the case, the European citizens being ruled by procedures that are too vague and too opaque. Moreover, there is not enough political feedback concerning the preparation of major decisions and their final execution.

Finally, we can say that the EU is not engaged in projects that emphasize the importance of intercultural learning and of living together with many types of differences on the base of an awareness of a common ground.⁷

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IDENTIFYING AND CHANGING STEREOTYPES BETWEEN ROMA AND NON-ROMA PEOPLE

Abstract

Having shortly delineated and theoretically defined the concept of stereotypes (as collective social constructs) and stereotyping as such, the author turns to much more complex issue as to how to identify and change stereotypes about Roma, which are deeply rooted in mainstream European societies where they live and also those stereotypes that are nurtured and strictly followed by the Roma and which relate to non-Roma. The author arrives at a conclusion that today one can note several factors and conditions in European countries which still nurture and further reinforce especially anti-Roma stereotypes. According to him, the specific and carefully elaborated stereotypes-oriented policies and strategies which favour mutual education, knowledge and understanding as well as on-going contact and dialogue between the two different ethnic, social and cultural identities at both EU and member states levels are *conditio sine qua non* for the enhanced and overall Roma inclusion and integration.

Key words: stereotypes, stereotyping, collective social representations, Roma – non-Roma relationships

Introduction

Stereotypes are as old as human culture itself. They reflect ideas that groups of people hold about others who are different from them. Most stereotypes tend to make us feel superior in some way to the person or group being stereotyped. Stereotypes ignore the uniqueness of individuals by painting all members of a group with the same brush. Nowadays the number of studies on stereotypes and related topics (mainly prejudice and discrimination) has increased substantially, particularly concerning gender and ethnic issues. As a result, today we have a multitude of studies examining and giving comprehensive analyses of stereotypes and prejudice toward Afro-Americans, women, the elderly, the disabled, physically handicapped or mentally ill, fat people, LGBT, individuals with AIDS, to mention just a few of them. Such overwhelming interest in studying stereotypes and stereotyping is quite understandable given that these negative beliefs can easily lead to harmful outcomes both for the individuals, to whom stereotypes directly affect and for society at large.

In many European countries Roma people and Travellers face day-to-day discriminatory and rejecting behaviour and the climate of hostility is maintained towards them only because the mainstream population widely accepts false perceptions of this minority group branded a menace to people and their property. This age-old rejection by the public at large and frequently also by local authorities, is to a great extent, brought about by the negative images each of them holds with regard to Roma and Travellers; vague images eventually grow into active suspicion. Some 10 - 12 million Roma and Travellers are estimated to live in Europe, present in each European country, and particularly in Bulgaria, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Serbia, Hungary, Turkey, Albania, Greece, Spain, France, Slovenia and Italy. They are amongst the most deprived of all communities, facing daily discrimination, harassment and racial insults, living in extreme poverty and exclusion from the normal life that other people take for granted – going to school, seeing the doctor, applying for a job or having decent housing. Past efforts to help them have not brought the hoped-for results, and although laws do exist in Europe, they all too often fail to make an impact on the daily lives of Roma families. Such bleak picture of Romani people situation in Europe is a consequence of long-lasting stereotypes and

prejudices accompanying the members of this ethnic minority for centuries. To understand them properly, first we need to have a look at their creation and evolution.

The article aims at presenting and analysing social stereotypes that prevail within both Roma and non-Roma communities in different countries in Europe. A particular emphasis is placed on examining the possibilities and measures for reducing such collective representations. However, in order to be able to discuss the stereotypes about Roma and non-Roma more in detail, it is first necessary to elucidate the concept of stereotype and stereotyping by focusing on stereotypes defined as collective (social) representations. Therefore, in continuation, I centralise myself mainly on this aspect of the social and cultural reality.

Stereotypes as collective (social) constructs

An important question is whether all socially constructed images are stereotypes. Most certainly not but it is astonishing that so many beliefs are wrongly labelled as stereotypes. Some authors, including Berting, Glăveanu and Hofman (Berting 2012, 13-14; Glăveanu 2007; Hofman 2004, 249-250), are of opinion that stereotypes are only those beliefs that surpass the individual level. In other words, stereotypes can be described as “collective constructs” and particularly the subtype of “shared constructs.” According to Glăveanu *“as shared constructs stereotypes gain validity only when group members share similar perceptions”* (Glăveanu 2007). Glăveanu is further of belief that *“genuine stereotypes are beliefs shared by groups and refer to members of another group/category”* (Glăveanu 2007).

A proper understanding of the concept of stereotype requires deeper insight into the link that exists between stereotypes as collective images and reality and, in particular, conditions on which this link is based. In my view, the most valuable and the clearest explanation of this question has been given by distinguished professor Jan Berting (2012, 19-23) in his most recent treatise on collective representations. After thorough discussion and analysis of this problematic issue he has arrived at some relevant and substantial conclusions and findings. For instance, he has discovered that in daily communication and relationship as social beings we are confronted with various types of collective representations and that in this context several theories, models and paradigms are closely tied to the empirical world. These outcomes coincide with the position of most of the natural sciences, whereas in most other cases the relation between collective representations and social reality is much more equivocal or even totally absent. Also, when the collective representations refer to an empirical reality, this reality is much less stable and much more versatile than in the natural sciences. Consequently, several collective representations are rather close to reality, even though they can never correspond to the reality. The other types of collective representations are further removed from this reality or are just pictures in our head without any real empirical references.

Following these findings and explanations professor Berting (2012, 23) defines collective representations as: shared mental images (in some cases also shared conviction or belief), which persons and collective entities have about the social and natural reality they live in, but also about social worlds with which they do not have an immediate experience.

He also claims that *“often collective representations refer to imaginary worlds or to worlds that we cannot perceive empirically.”* According to him, collective representations can be seen as *“mental maps of the social scene”* or *“systematic ways of perceiving the outside world”* (2012, 25). As such they are conscious constructions. Although collective representations sometimes pose serious problems in intergroup relations, they can be very instrumental for a given social entity, since they are, in the first place, means by which individuals and groups orient themselves in an otherwise extremely complex and incomprehensible world. Professor Berting (2012, 24) is convinced that stereotypes as collective representations *“give indications about who we are and who are the others.”* However, they can also lead to confusions, disorientations and distortions. What is more, they can serve (to political leaders for example) as instruments of manipulation, delusion and deceit.

In his recent discussion about collective representations professor Berting gives particular attention to

the social stereotypes, which can refer, among other, to racial and ethnic groups. I share his opinion that “collective stereotypes are inside us” and thus they are actually “pictures in our head” (Berting 2012, 83). I also agree with him and other scholars that, in this context, stereotypes can be connected with positive and negative attitudes towards other people, communities and groups to which they refer. According to professor Berting (2012, 83), the social stereotypes are implanted in our heads in the process of growing up in a specific society and in a specific social milieu together with the language that we learned at home, in school and in the social networks in which we participated.

As we shall see below stereotypes about Roma and non-Roma carry mostly racial and ethnic connotations. Thus, for the purposes of this article, they are looked at from the perspective of collective social stereotypes as explained above.

Identifying stereotypes between Roma and non-Roma

Stereotypes about Roma

Despite some positive stereotypes (e.g. Roma have a natural talent for music), the stereotypes about Roma are overwhelmingly negative. The dominant groups in Eastern Europe regard Roma as uneducated, uninterested in school and work, conniving, dirty, and lazy. Identification of a Roma is made in the first place by physical appearance (e.g. dark skin and hair), smell (e.g. they are dirty and stink), attire (e.g. women wear the traditional Kaldarashi costume with multiple colourful aprons and hair separated in braids decorated with coins) or language spoken (*Romanes*, the language spoken by Roma in Eastern Europe). Nowadays images about Roma and Travellers include several criminal stereotypes: they are regarded as beggars, thieves, swindlers, pickpockets, trespassers, rowdies, dirty, immoral, con-man, trickster. In addition, they are considered unsocial, social misfits, dishonest, lazy, work-shy, layabouts and parasitic deviants. Based on the stereotype that Roma children are unteachable, they are often refused admission and are sent to schools meant for mentally disabled. Many people see Roma as riff-raffs (social marginals) living on the edge of town, as idlers ill-disciplined and in general they have been deemed lawless, depraved and irreligious. The same stereotypes about Roma find expression in the terms employed in many languages and their popular slangs.

In most countries whatever term is used to designate Roma and Travellers in general is pejorative, tinged with disparagement and carrying the full negative weight of the group image. Roma and Travellers are often accused of living outside the most basic rules, but the fact is that their rules are not known by outsiders, and certainly not recognised (Liégeois 1994, 190). Opinion polls show that the prejudice and stereotypes about Roma which form the kernel of popular imagery are universal and ubiquitous these days. As a general rule, people interviewed have little tolerance for contact of any kind between themselves and Roma, who are seen as outside the pale of their lives and their culture, and as very peculiar. The urge to make nomads settle down is still very strong. The settled person sometimes recognises his own refusal to accept Roma and Travellers, but never admits to actively rejecting them (Liégeois 1994, 191).

Today, the following stereotypes about Roma are widespread in European societies: “Gypsies steal,” “Gypsies are mentally handicapped, they spread diseases and don’t like school,” “The Gypsies live off other people’s backs,” “Gypsies are work-shy parasites worthy only of contempt,” “Gypsies are antisocial and destroy their dwellings,” “Gypsies have bad manners – they are all fiddlers and brawlers,” “Gypsies like to live in isolation and they are united among themselves, unlike us (members of mainstream population),” “Gypsies do not want to be integrated or to work or to live in a civilized way like us (members of mainstream population),” “The Gypsies are damaging the image of our country in Europe,” etc. Recurring themes regarding Roma in most European countries are stealing, refusing to work, and having too many children, atrocious personal hygiene and bad personal finance management. The text given below comprises a great number of most common stereotypes about Roma which are nowadays to be found in European countries.

Roma are freedom loving, easy going, and carefree nomads, wearing colourful clothes and lots of golden jewellery. They are passionate dancers, gifted artisans, and great musicians. Their women are beautiful and seductive like Georges Bizet's Carmen or Esmeralda from the 'Hunchback of Notre Dame.' They tell fortune and can curse you if you do not give them any money. They are poor and beg. They do nothing to improve their own situation and steal geese and chickens. They prefer to live on welfare than to work. They have more children than they can feed and clothe. One day they will probably "out-baby" the majority population. Girls get married at a very early age; the men beat their wives and exploit their children. At night they dance around camp fires and sometimes they steal babies in order to sell them. They do not have a religion, are dirty, and a burden to society. They do not want to integrate and marginalize themselves. They are most happy when they are away from non-Roma. They do not want to be citizens of the country they live in and whenever they migrate, they ruin the reputation of the country that they have come from. They like to live close to trash dumps and their houses are very dirty. They are afraid of water, allergic to soap, and do not know how to use a water toilet. They are a source of disease. They do not know how to read and write, and somehow are not interested in learning it or in going to school. They must be mentally deficient. Maybe they are not even human beings. They live in huge family groups and do not mind to share one room with ten people. They are greedy and never satisfied. They are lazy and untrustworthy. They are genetically predestined to become thieves and drug dealers. And anyway, the term 'Roma' is just an invention and they are actually called Gypsies or Tsigani.¹

Many of afore-mentioned stereotypes about Roma have proved to be unrealistic. For instance, there is no evidence to suggest that perceptions regarding idleness when it comes to education and employment are true and studies from Hungary suggest the contrary, that given a supportive environment Roma students are no less motivated than other students. Also, the survey data indicate that Roma actively seek employment. In Bulgaria in 1997, 46 per cent of Roma reported that they were looking for a job, in comparison with 19 per cent of the total unemployed population. In Romania, 35 per cent of unemployed Roma had looked for employment during the previous week, in comparison with 15 per cent of the total population. Similar results were found for Hungary (Ringold 2000, 16, 26). In reality, poverty nowadays is often due to the fact that Roma have been left out of the post-communist political and economic transitions. Still today, they are discriminated and often excluded from the school system; they face discrimination when seeking for a job, and in many countries they are segregated in geographically isolated settlements. In some cases they are victims of institutional discrimination, for example when their situation excludes them from the social protection benefits. As a consequence, many Roma today are trapped in a vicious circle of poverty and social exclusion which cannot be considered only their own fault.

Stereotypes about non-Roma

On the other hand, Roma define them as distinct and different from "Gadje." The word "Gadjo/Gadji"² is commonly used within Roma communities to indicate non-Roma man/woman and, unlike the term "Gypsy" does not carry a pejorative or offensive meaning. A Gadjo man or Gadji woman is a person who does not have Romanipen (i.e. Romani spirit, Romani essence, Romani Code and willingness to follow the Romani Code, self-perception as a member of Romani society and willingness to be such a

1 Is this a stereotype? A tool for fighting stereotypes towards Roma, Roma campaign Dosta, <http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravel-ers/source/documents/toolstereotypesEN.pdf> (accessed 24 August 2012).

2 "The word Gadjo comes from Sanskrit (gadjjha) and basically it meant a civilian, a non-warrior; when the Rajputs and their followers left India to become the Roma in Asia. Roma were warriors, Gadje were civilians, domestics belonging to non-military castes. Today, Gadjo is a parallel of goy among the Jewish people, somebody who is not of your own group. It is simply a word used to define a person who is not a member of the Roma nation. It is not pejorative in the sense of "Gypsy." If somebody wants to say a man was killed in an accident, Romani has no general word for man; Roma have to say the victim was a Rom or a Gadjo." Sijercic, H., 1999. The Right-Hand Path. *Patrin Web Journal*, <http://www.reocities.com/~patrin/righthandpath.htm> (accessed 25 August 2012).

member, set of “Romani” strains etc., all as part of the whole). Usually this is a person who is not ethnic Roma, but an ethnic Roma may be considered as a Gadje if he/she has no Romanipen. At the same time, Gadjo is also one of Romani philosophical terms. Roma of the Western Europe and Americas often interpret gadjos as “impure” people because they think that only following Romani Code (i.e. a set of rules regulating relationships inside the Romani community and set limits for customs, behaviour and other aspects of Romani life) may make a person be “pure.” This helps to explain how Roma have maintained a separate and unique identity across centuries, despite repeated pressures for their integration. In this context, the following text is quite interesting:

I found the strangest contradiction among the Roma was their talk of the Gadje when they did not want to be stereotyped as Gypsy. Despite their progressive attitude in the areas of literature, rights and the domestic situation, the Roma with whom I was able to meet, still seemed to hold an innate prejudice against the Gadje world. I can hardly blame them considering the difficulties they’ve faced in gaining rights in the European community, but I found myself offended when they referred to me as Gadje. The Gadje is the ‘other’ to the Roma, the Outsiders and Interlopers. By remained separate from us, the Roma had managed to do what Hitler and his Holocaust had attempted to do for the German people: create a pure race. By not mingling with the Gadje the Roma were able to keep their blood ‘pure,’ and their culture has remained intact, despite centuries of persecution. But what had been their protection in the early days of Europe, had now become their handicap. While at first, being separated helped keep the Roma within Roma culture, that same separateness had alienated them from the rest of Europe and any benefit they may have gained by learning the outsider’s ways. When they called me a Gadje, my first thought was that they had just slighted me, and I frowned. I tried to explain that I was just as offended by their discrimination and stereotype of me as a Gadje as they were by others’ stereotypes of them as Gypsy. They all said that when they called me Gadje, it was not meant to offend, but rather as a marker of what I was ‘other-than-Roma.’³

It is obvious that Roma people have also developed certain stereotypes about the non-Roma, the Gadje. Authors that studied Roma found that the Roma often view the Gadje “*negatively as oppressive, domineering, source of trouble, easy victims of Gypsy cunning, or sometimes positively as trustworthy, but most significantly, the Gadje are considered impure because they do not respect the Gypsy code of hygiene—marimé*” (Gabor 2007, 279). This distinction continues to impact the integration of Roma into society at large, their participation in civil society, and their use of public services.

Strategies and tools for changing stereotypes between Roma and non-Roma

A significant feature of social stereotypes is that they, as collective images in our head that have only a weak link with the observable reality, are extremely resistant to changes despite information that contradicts them. Mostly “*such information is interpreted as an exception to the general rule, as an incident, etc.*” (Berting 2012, 84). Two attributes of stereotyped attitudes which are closely related to each other and are to be found especially in the early stage of research and scholarly work on stereotypes (Lippmann 1922, 99; Rokeach 1948, 261) are those of persistence and rigidity. The majority of stereotypes about Roma have practically maintained their original purport in different societies for centuries.

Professor Berting (2012, 84) states that this resistance to change is also due to the fact that the stereotypes “*facilitate the communication between the members of the in-group, being a sort of short-hand description of the “Other(s).”*” He points out that social stereotypes are to be considered “*collective representations of a specific type*” and “*in many cases these collective representations can be conceived of as elements that are very resistant to change within a more encompassing collective representation*” (Berting 2012, 84). On the other hand, “*it is also possible that a collective representation of a society*

3 Brianne Spicer, A., Breaking Carmen, Roma Women in a Modern World, <http://www.angelfire.com/cantina/ihaveseen/bripaper.html> (24 August 2012).

as a whole is in fact a social stereotype, resistant to change and with only shallow connections with the reality it pretends to represent" (Berting 2012, 84).

Many researches and studies on stereotypes suggest that stereotypes are learned at an early age and can thus be stubbornly resistant to change. *"Even when people encounter a stereotyped group member who violates the group stereotype, they often continue to maintain the stereotype by splitting it into subtypes. For example, when encountering a Jewish philanthropist, people with anti-Semitic stereotypes may distinguish philanthropic Jews from "money-hungry Jews" by creating a subtype for "good Jews."* *As a result of subtyping, stereotypes become impervious to disconfirming evidence.*"⁴ Professor Jan Berting and Dr. Christiane Villain-Gandossi are of opinion that stereotypes may become, under specific circumstances, less outspoken and less frequently used, while it is much more difficult to change or reduce them.⁵ This is particularly true of social stereotypes as it is described above. Yet all is not lost. Some studies and researches (including the one carried out by Jennifer Crocker and Renee Weber in 1983)⁶ indicate that stereotypes are responsive to new information and subsequently can be successfully changed or even reduced to some extent if dealt with properly and social perceptions made more accurate when people are motivated to do so. Several scholars and researchers have found that stereotypes may be widespread and persistent, but they are also amenable to change when people make an effort to reduce them.⁷

In the light of these findings one can presuppose that also (social) stereotyping between Roma and non-Roma can be reduced, though it is not always easy to identify the most appropriate method or a combination of two or more approaches which could lead to effective results in specific circumstances.

In line with the approaches outlined above and based on previously conducted research, studies and experiments (e.g. Allport 1954, Peters 1971, Pate 1981 and 1988, Byrnes and Kiger 1990 and 1992, Gadamer 1993, Batson, Early, and Salvarani 1997, Pettigrew 1998 and 2000, Levy 1999, Finlay and Stephan 2000, Batterham 2001, Duckitt 2001, Son Hing, Li, and Zanna 2002, Pedersen et al. 2003), possibly viable strategies for reducing stereotypes between Roma and non-Roma can be identified. These strategies are generally to be divided into two categories: a) individual strategies and b) interpersonal strategies. The former include actions and measures directed towards individuals such as providing knowledge about social and cultural issues, dissonance and empathy, whereas the latter foster intergroup contact, consensus information, dialogue and advertising and awareness-raising campaigns (the appropriateness and the prospects of the said anti-stereotyping strategies for the success in eliminating – or at the very least modifying – stereotypy beliefs and attitudes in Roma – non-Roma relationships are more thoroughly discussed in Foreword to the present chapter).

Conclusion

To varying degrees Roma communities have remained insular and separate from the rest of society. While some Roma communities have integrated to a great extent (e.g. Roma community in Prekmurje,

4 Understanding Prejudice. *The Psychology of Prejudice: An Overview*, <http://www.understandingprejudice.org/apa/english/page19.htm> (accessed 25 August 2012).

5 Email consultations with Prof. Berting and Dr. Villain-Gandossi in March 2012.

6 Authors proposed three models of stereotype change which predict different response patterns and are to be chosen dependant on concrete conditions such as the size of samples: *"the bookkeeping model in which each instance of stereotype-relevant information is used to gradually modify the stereotype, the conversion model in which stereotypes change radically in response to dramatic or salient instances, and the subtyping model in which new stereotypic structures are developed to accommodate instances not easily assimilated by existing stereotypes."* (Crocker and Weber 1983, 459).

7 In a study on the effects of counter-stereotypic imagery, for example, Irene Blair and her colleagues found that implicit gender stereotypes declined after people spent a few minutes imagining a strong woman. Likewise, Nilanjana Dasgupta and Anthony Greenwald found that pro-White biases on the Implicit Association Test declined after people were exposed to pictures of admired Black Americans and disliked White Americans (e.g. Bill Cosby and Timothy McVeigh). Still another study found that implicit and explicit anti-Black biases were reduced after students took a semester-long course on prejudice and conflict. Understanding Prejudice. *The Psychology of Prejudice: An Overview*, <http://www.understandingprejudice.org/apa/english/page19.htm> (accessed 25 August 2012).

Slovenia), other traditional Roma communities and extended families are close-knit, providing both security and protection from the outside world. In some cases, this division between the worlds of Roma and Gadje (non-Roma) has reinforced stereotypes and mistrust on both sides, and has contributed to the exclusion of some communities. Roma may therefore be reluctant to participate fully in education because of fear of losing their cultural identity. This dynamic likely influences other aspects of life, including employment preferences and use of health services. Conversely, the distance between Roma and non-Roma communities causes mistrust and misunderstanding, especially among non-Roma and contributes to negative stereotyping and discrimination. Lack of integration and participation of Roma people in civic life, as well as the poverty of many Roma communities, contributes to resentment, as Roma are perceived by mainstream society as dependent on social assistance and regular consumers of scarce state resources (Ringold 2000, 7-8).

To sum up, so far research has shown that common stereotypes about Roma in Europe can be seen to have strong racial, ethnic and class bases. These three dimensions are not mutually exclusive, but rather mutually reinforcing. Indeed, the three overlap to the extent that it is impossible to be sure where the influence of one ends and the others begin. The subsequent stereotyping of Roma invoked fears and antipathy among non-Roma people alongside themes of idleness, indiscipline and depravity, themes which persist to this day. Later all these stereotypes assumed more economic and social character and the main concern is that various aspects of Roma culture and living conditions also reinforce stereotypes by limiting communication between Roma and non-Roma in European countries, and thus contributing to a vicious circle of isolation and marginalisation. On the other hand, stereotypes, mostly those with negative connotation, also evolved within Roma communities. The latter reflect harsh conditions, suppression and ill-treatment to which the Roma in European societies have been subjected throughout the history and the truth is that poor and deficient communication between Roma and non-Roma in European countries breeds mistrust and further reinforces preconceptions and prejudice on both sides. Still, our experience and also the reviews being done in this article tell us that it is possible effectively and efficiently to deal with stereotypes and prejudices between Roma and non-Roma population if one takes into consideration and implements a range of different strategies (as described above) aimed at their elimination.

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BROADENING THE UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF PREJUDICES AND STEREOTYPES BETWEEN ROMA AND NON- ROMA: HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

Abstract

This article addresses main issues of creation, conservation and development of negative attitudes towards Roma in Europe, from historical and comparative perspective. Prejudices inherited from the past, certainly affect the understanding of the present situation and hinder the social inclusion of Roma. Today, rejection, discrimination and exclusion of Roma population are manifested as violence, racist attacks, hate speech and stigmatization of Roma. The author considers that lack of knowledge of the historical situation of Roma and lack of respect for their culture and tradition characterize perceptions of the majority about the Roma community. Stigma of Roma as a group living on the margins of society, in the vicinity of the crime and other illegal business, although created in the past, is still alive and is expressed in media and public discourse. However, the most worrying is ignorance of the Roma genocide during World War II, as the worst crime committed against these people. Alarming fact is that pejorative words about the Roma were expressed even in the process of installation of monuments or memorial sites for commemoration of victims of the Roma genocide. Despite the fact that there is a significant number of EU projects for Roma inclusion, the author presumes, that prejudices and stereotypes create major obstacles to their success. Positive development could be foreseen in the fact, that the adopted international documents configure obligations for States to improve situation of Roma, especially by implementing non-discriminatory treatment for all individuals and by granting a minority status for Roma communities living in particular countries.

Key words: AntiGypsism, Roma culture, prejudices, social inclusion, discrimination

General remarks

AntiGypsism, Romaphobia and antiziganism are just different names for description of the same social phenomena – rejection, discrimination and exclusion of Roma population in Europe.¹ Relevant international institutions addressed these issues in several international instruments and are strongly committed to combat and eliminate prejudices and stereotypes against Roma as the most discriminated, most numerous and the poorest European minority.² However, international monitoring bodies and NGO's report that significant number of Roma face unacceptable levels of poverty, exclusion and discrimination which hamper their integration in society. The most worrying thing is that in everyday life negative attitudes still prevail in public discourse on Roma; stereotypes and prejudices often override good intentions in political commitments and generate conflicts, rejection by the majority population, and even provoke violent racist attacks against Roma throughout Europe.

Despite the fact that Roma have lived in Europe for at least six or seven centuries, majority population does

1 *ECRI General Policy Recommendation N°13 on combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma*, defines *Anti-Gypsyism* as "a specific form of racism, an ideology founded on racial superiority, form of dehumanisation and institutional racism nurtured by historical discrimination, which is expressed, among others, by violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatisation and the most blatant kind of discrimination."

2 In the text we use term "Roma" as the most common used term in European international instruments. The term "Roma" used at the Council of Europe refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.

not know enough about the Roma culture and language, and in some cases is not even aware that Roma traditionally live in the country. In a number of discussions on the situation of the Roma, scholars are still searching for the answers to the questions about the reasons why Roma left their homeland, and why were they so reluctant to settle down and accept the rules of the majority population, preferring to travel from place to place. Romani legends explain the reasons for the nomadic way of life, including stories about conflicts within the Roma community in the archaic homeland, which caused that a part of the community had to leave and start an eternal journey.³ Some legends follow romantic interpretation that the Roma follow the sun and as the sun constantly moves, they had to move, too. In the eyes of the majority, the Roma differ from the others because of their nomadic way of life, associated with the structural problems of poverty, and not because of the ethnic or cultural dimensions of their identity.

Historical overview / Roma and Gadže

A prevailing approach in Europe in the past, particularly in the Western and Central Europe, was that authorities are obliged to solve the »Gypsy problem, change their nomadic lifestyle and force them to work.«⁴ Their lifestyle was often defined as »Vagrancy and begging,« automatically associated with criminal offences, e.g. with "gypsy style burglaries" begging and smuggling.⁵ The only chance of social integration of individuals, members of the Roma community in the Habsburg Monarchy and the Austro-Hungarian Empire was enforced assimilation and termination of language, culture and cessation of a travelling lifestyle.⁶ The use of Roma language in public space was strictly prohibited also in Spain.

Scholars agree that situation was better in the territories within the Ottoman Empire, where Roma were allowed to keep their culture, language and tradition.⁷ The Roma researcher, scientist and director of the Roma Museum in Belgrade, Dragoljub Acković explains:

*"the Roma have inhabited the Southeast Balkans for the past dozen centuries. Since their arrival, the political and cultural situation of this nation has mainly been good. We are able to make this claim with certainty, since a number of documents dating from the time of Turkish rule in this region testify that the Roma nurtured their material and cultural values freely without any hindrance by the Turkish occupiers."*⁸

During the World War II, persecution of the Roma escalated to Nazi crimes aiming at complete destruction of Roma population and over half a million Roma were killed as victims of the Roma genocide /Romani Porrajmos/. Many of them were deported to forced labour or concentration camps, particularly to Auschwitz-Birkenau and Jasenovac. Only in the last decade of the twentieth century they have been officially recognized as victims of the holocaust and obtained the right to compensation like other victims of the Nazi regime. According to the *European Parliament's Resolution on the situation of Roma in the European Union (2005)*, the Romani Holocaust deserves full recognition and condemnation, commensurate with the gravity of Nazi crimes, designed to physically eliminate the Roma of Europe.

Activities related to the installation of monuments to commemorate the victims of the Roma genocide

3 Courthiade, M., (2003) pp 171-186.

4 As a researcher at the Institute for Ethnic Studies in Ljubljana, I had unique opportunity to work in the Historical Archives in Novo mesto and Maribor and to collect original quotations from historical sources, which are reflected in this paper. Cited documents from the Historical archive in Novo mesto were reprinted in publication: Novak-Lukanovič, Sonja (eds.). Klopčič, Vera (eds): Romi na Slovenskem, Ljubljana: Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, Razprave in gradivo 25, Ljubljana, 1991.

5 For more information see: Angus Fraser: *The Gypsies*, pp 171-176.

6 During the reign of the Empress Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II, numerous regulations banning nomadism were adopted. Decree issued on 9 October 1783 in the Section no. 8 prohibits the use of the Gypsy language, under penalty of 24 penalty strokes in the event of violation. Source: Djurdjica Petrović (2000): *Cigani u Sreću u XVIII veku*, pp. 21-23.

7 See: Barany, Z., (2002) *The East European Gypsies/Regime Change, Marginality, and Ethnopolitics*, Cambridge University Press, pp 91-96.

8 Dragoljub Acković, *Djelem, djelem, -tradicionalna kultura Roma u Srbiji*, p.37.

unfortunately show how long and difficult is the path to recognition and full respect for the Roma victims in practice. There were often complications even with the very notion of the name of Roma people. The Israeli sculptor Dani Karavan, who built the Roma and Sinti Holocaust memorial site in Berlin, explains in the interview *The Roma Holocaust memorial that wasn't built in a day* /Sep.14, 2012/, that German authorities insisted to use notion „Zigeuner” and Roma and Sinti organisations had to fight more than 12 years for the use of the notion „Roma and Sinti.” Karavan said: »The whole attitude here was one of scorn. Why spend any money on this? What for? It's just gypsies.«⁹

Different perceptions of identity

The Romani language early attracted interest in Europe, mostly in a form of a “distance,” academic research of the grammar, lexical fond and comparative studies, not entering in the complex situation of the Roma people. Fraser refers to the explanation of Friedrich Pott, who wrote in his foreword to the book *Die Zigeuner in Europa und Asien*, 1844- 1845, that he produced it without ever having had more personal experience of Gypsies than a fleeting glimpse of a few individuals. The 1860s and 1870s were bountiful years for studies of Romani, many written in German. Towering above all others was Franz Miklosich, at the University of Vienna, who was by then able to speak of having at his disposal »abundant, almost over abundant material from all countries where Gypsies live« (Fraser 1995: 197-198).

Franc Miklošič comprehensively studied the dialects of the Romani language in Europe and established network of informers from twelve countries in different regions of Europe, aimed to collect data on all varieties of the Roma language, and argued that the ancient homeland of the Roma is located in northern India. Miklošič wrote about this in a separate chapter »Indian homeland of gypsies and time of their departure from India.«¹⁰

On the other side, the reality of the Roma life was cruel, difficult, on the edge of survival. Roma were stigmatized as a group, which is mainly engaged in the illegal business and organized crime in many European countries. Stigmatization is still present and reflected in terminology used. For example, German-Slovenian dictionary published in 1980 adds the word »cigan (gypsy)« to the translation of the word »gauner« as synonym to the word *thief* (Tomšič 1980:277). Such approach is unfortunately widespread worldwide. In September 2012, Canadian journalist Ezra Levant on his Sun News Network TV show, *The Source*, referred to Roma people as »a culture synonymous with swindlers ... one of the central characteristics of that culture is that their chief economy is theft and begging.«¹¹

Another group of stereotypical perceptions of the majority of the population about Roma are benevolent stereotypes, admiring free, unburdened, spontaneous and dynamic Romani life, full of music and dance and is reflected mainly in the artistic works, literature, film production and paintings. In the monograph about the Roma in the literature and arts, Romani scientist and poet Dr. Rajko Djurić from Belgrade, has presented more than a hundred writers and artists (among them Cervantes, Lorca and Picasso) and artworks from different European countries, who were inspired by the Romani way of life. In 2010 he was awarded by the Institute of Culture in Madrid for his contribution to the literature and Roma culture at the European Conference on Roma in Cordoba.¹²

Due to historical exclusion from mainstream community, Roma created a parallel world /*Romano them*/ where the basic attitude toward the sense of the life reflected in the expression that it is more important *to be* than *to have*. Established system of values /*Romanipen*/ contains specific rules of behaviour, respect for hierarchy, and regulates communication within the community. In this way, they maintained

9 <http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/week-s-end/the-roma-holocaust-memorial-that-wasn-t-built-in-a-day-1.464974>.

10 Miklosich, Franz (1872): *Über die mundarten und die wanderungen der zigeuner Europa's*, Wien. His overall work in this field contains 12 volumes (800 pages).

11 While the broadcaster, Sun News, apologized at the time and attempted to distance itself from the remarks, Levant has remained quiet until 18 March 2013, when he publicly apologized for the racist statements <http://www2.macleans.ca/2013/03/18/ezra-levant-apologizes-for-roma-comments-and-faces-his-boss-on-air/>.

12 <http://www.vesti-online.com/Scena/Kultura/49331/Spanska-nagrada-za-Rajka-Durica>, 30. 04. 2010.

internal cohesion and built a shield against the hostile attitudes of the majority population. Even in modern times, it gives them a certain air of mystery, which was always attractive for artists, especially in music, film and literature.

Notwithstanding the considerable differences within the Roma community, the non-Roma are labelled as *Gadže* in all varieties of the Romani language and for communication with *Gadže* different rules should be applied. On-going persecution and marginalization of Roma caused growing distrust towards any measures of the authorities among members of the Roma community. Consequently, distrust was also transmitted to those members of the Roma community who had accepted the values and lifestyle of the majority nation and they were excluded from the Roma community.

European nation, national or linguistic minority?

In the last decades of the 20th century, the issue of self-determination of Roma as Europeans / a nation without territory has emerged. The first World Roma Congress, held in 1971 (April 8-12) in London, represents a turning point in ethnic mobilization of Roma at international level. The first day of the Congress – April 8 – was set to be the international Roma holiday / World Day of Roma. They defined the symbols of their nation – the hymn (the song »*Djelem, djelem*«), the flag (three colours – green, blue and red, with a circle/wheel as a Roma symbol in the middle) and set the name *Roma*, denoting their common ethnic affiliation. The congress participants particularly stated that they do not strive for a uniform state (*Romanistan*), but for the national unity and respect of the Roma nation at national and international level as a nation without territory.

Leaders from the first generation of Roma activists promoted ideas of ethnic kinship and common origin of Roma and emphasized the importance of the Romany language as a cohesive element of the Roma identity. The perception of the identity of the Roma people as a “Roma nation” has been further developed on the international level, particularly within the activities of the International Romani Parliament /IRU¹³ and European Roma and Travellers Forum/ERTF¹⁴. From the historical and comparative perspective, the Roma movement established itself internationally as a protector of the rights of Roma in the most serious violations of human rights and undertook a similar role as a kin states in the cases of other minorities. Roma organisations also promptly react in the cases of the hate speech, insults and underestimation of the Roma in media.

The beginnings of the protection of Roma in international documents

After the year 1989, minority issues have again become an important factor of international relations and some international documents addressed also the specific position of the Roma as a vulnerable group. Terminology used in international documents illustrates the complex perceptions of the Roma identity. In the beginnings of the nineties Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation 1203, and defined *Gypsies as a true European minority*¹⁵ and thereby for the first time highlighted a contribution of Roma culture to European cultural heritage and cultural wealth of our continent. Particularly important for the improvement and elimination of prejudices against Roma was the adoption of the Document of the Copenhagen meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the OSCE in 1990. In Article 40 the Copenhagen Document, inter alia, underlines: “*The participating States clearly and unequivocally condemn totalitarianism, racial and ethnic hatred, anti-semitism, xenophobia and discrimination against anyone as well as persecution on religious and ideological*

13 In the mid-eighties International Roma Parliament formally obtained consultative status within the United Nations.

14 European Roma and Travelers Forum/ ERTF was established as a permanent consultative body forum within the Council of Europe in 2004.

15 Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, *Recommendation 1203/1993*, General observations / A special place among the minorities is reserved for Gypsies. Living scattered all over Europe, not having a country to call their own, they are a true European minority, but one that does not fit into the definitions of national or linguistic minorities.

grounds. In this context they also recognize the particular problem of Roma (gypsies)."

According to the fact, that a great majority of Roma live in the States in Central Europe, the Central European Initiative Instrument (CEI Instrument) for the Protection of Minority Rights (1994) devoted a special article (Article 7) for the improvement of status of the Roma in the region, which combines efforts for social integration and action for elimination of prejudices: "*States recognize the particular problem of Roma (gypsies). They undertake to adopt all the administrative or educational measures as foreseen in the present Instrument, in order to preserve and to develop the identity of Roma, to facilitate specific measures for the social integration of persons belonging to Roma (gypsies) and to eliminate all forms of intolerance against such persons.*"¹⁶

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted *Recommendation 1557 (2002) on the legal situation of the Roma in Europe*, where specific features of the position of Roma are underlined. The recommendation *inter alia* calls upon the states to regulate the legal status of the Roma; to elaborate and implement specific programs to improve the integration of Roma as individuals and Romany communities as minority groups into society and to ensure their participation in decision-making processes at all levels; to strengthen the systematic and regular monitoring process of the implementation of recommendations and specific programs aimed to improve the legal situation and the living conditions of Romany individuals and communities.

Status of Roma in Instruments of the Council of Europe

The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities does not contain a definition of the term "national minority." Thus it offers a possibility for inclusion of the Roma within the groups, which are protected under the FCNM. Several states explicitly mentioned the Roma in their declarations contained in the instruments of ratification. Some of them, e.g. Germany, underline, that in Germany, only those Roma having the German citizenship should be treated as members of national or ethnic minorities.¹⁷ Although this issue was discussed also in Slovenia, the Declaration of the Republic of Slovenia did not follow that approach. The adopted Declaration does not make such a distinction between citizens and non-citizens.¹⁸ Another important instrument is the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Particularly important is recognition of the Romani language as cultural wealth, protection against discriminatory treatment and promotion of mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country, guaranteed by the principles in the part II in Article 7.¹⁹ In accordance with the possibilities offered by the Charter, countries undertook various approaches in regulating the protection of the Roma language(s) and application of the provisions. Terminology used in the national reports covers different linguistic situations of Roma language(s) and use notions such as Romani, Romani Chib, Romanes, Romany or Roma language(s).

Perspectives for the future

In accordance with the consensus developed at the European level, that integration of Roma and improvement of their unfavourable social status is a common European goal and obligation, numerous documents and strategies on vision of joint activity were adopted. International EU funded projects

16 Minorities and the Central European Initiative: on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the CEI Instrument for the Protection of Minority Rights (1994-2004). Slovenian CEI Presidency, 2004, p 24.

17 "The Framework Convention will also be applied to members of the ethnic groups traditionally resident in Germany, the Frisians of German citizenship and the Sinti and of Roma of German citizenship." The Declaration contained in a letter from the Permanent Representative of Germany, May 1995.

18 »In accordance with the Constitution and internal legislation, the provisions of the Framework Convention shall apply also to the members of the Roma community, who live in the Republic of Slovenia«. The Declaration contained in a Note Verbale from the Permanent Representation of Slovenia, March 1998.

19 Explanatory report /para 37/: Part II can more easily be applied to non-territorial languages, but only *mutatis mutandis* and on the terms set out in Article 7, paragraph 5.

primarily focus on improving the socio-economic situation of the Roma, which are extremely poor, and on elimination of prejudices and exclusion. At a high level meeting in June 2003 in Budapest, the international "Decade for the inclusion of Roma" was proclaimed and additional funds were allocated for programs and projects, particularly in the field of education, employment, housing, health and social service and elimination of prejudice and discrimination.

In fact, the majority of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe live a predominantly sedentary way of life in ghettoised locations on the outskirts of towns and villages, in poverty; their huts are dark, damp, non-hygienic, and without running water, toilets, or bathrooms. Due to the low level of education and lack of professional skills, the majority of the Roma in Central and Eastern Europe are unemployed. Unfortunately, exclusive dependence on social benefits as the only way of survival is strengthening the barriers and mutual prejudices between Roma and non-Roma, pushing them back in the segregation and ghettos.²⁰

As noted in the *ECRI General Policy Recommendation N°13 on combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma*, persisting prejudices against Roma lead to discrimination. The effectiveness of strategies, programs or action plans aimed at improving the situation and the integration of the Roma, be it at international, national or local level, can be significantly reinforced by resolute action to combat anti-Gypsyism and action to improve the trust between Roma and the wider community. The ECRI Recommendation underlined the specific role and responsibility of media and journalists in addressing stereotypes and prejudice towards Roma.²¹

The activities taking place on the international scene encourage changes on the political and institutional levels of regulation in individual states of East and Central Europe, and inspire them to recognize importance of compensation for historical injustice towards Roma as a precondition for social inclusion. In terms of legal and political status of the Roma at international level, noticeable positive trend is that the Roma should be treated as a national or ethnic minority, not anymore as amorphous group or a socially disadvantaged community of second-class citizens. In the light of the commitments in quoted documents, it is important that authorities take concrete steps and efforts to promotion of effective participation of Roma. Lots of measures at the governmental and local level were taken to improve their situation, but unfortunately there has been only limited success in the fight against prejudices.

Detailed analysis of results of opinion polls indicates that the main reason for the increasing anti-Gypsyism and racist violence against Roma in Europe is lack of respect and knowledge about their culture and historical persecution. Here, the further activities and awareness raising projects are inevitable. Only in this way can we achieve a broader understanding of the profound long-lasting consequences of social exclusion and persecution of Roma in the past, which culminated in the plans of the Nazi regime, designed to physically eliminate Roma people in Europe.

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20 This issue was addressed in special study of the UNDP «Avoiding the Dependency Trap» in 2002. Study is available on the web site <http://roma.undp.sk>.

21 Accordingly, special section is devoted to this item, inter alia recommending States to: combat anti-Gypsyism expressed in the media while acknowledging the principle of their editorial independence (para 10), condemn all public discourse which publicly incites direct or indirect discrimination, hatred or violence against Roma (para 15) and encourage monitoring system of expressions of anti-Gypsyism on the Internet and ensure effective prosecution (para 16).

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SOCIAL INCLUSION AND PUBLIC POLICIES FOR ROMA - FROM GOOD INTENTIONS TO REALITY

After 23 years from the 1989 political changes, Romania is still not reaching a significant level of economic and democratic progress, with effects over the most disadvantaged population, one of them being the Roma. Starting 2007, Romania become full member of the European Union, but still in process of modernization of administrative structures, understanding and implementing democracy, creating antidiscrimination structures, adopting difficult economic measures, etc.

The Roma have been an intense debated topic of discussion over the last 20 years both in Romania, as well as internationally. While these analyses of strategies, policies and programmes have been many, those who have engaged with this body of literature are aware of the need for a systematic attempt at data gathering regarding the Roma and the need for improving the coherence of programmatic documents pertaining to this group in Romanian society. At the same time, the inconsistency and poor sustainability of outputs of implemented policies, programmes and projects aimed at the social inclusion of the Roma make the case for the proposition of a different paradigm.

In 2001 a first strategic document for the improvement of the situation of the Roma was adopted by the Romanian Government,¹ and more than ten years after the adoption of the first public policy for Roma, the results are still to be seen.

In 2011, a decade after, has the Romanian government placed the adoption of a new strategy on the public agenda, intended to improve the situation of this ethnic group. The new policy document called "*The Strategy of the Government of Romania for the Inclusion of Romanian Citizens Belonging to the Roma Minority for the Period 2012-2020*" replaces previous Roma strategies mentioned.

This adoption of the new strategy has happened once more not as a result of the government's interests, but at the request of the European Union. Through a communication of the Commission addressing the European Parliament, the Council, the European Social and Economic Committee and the Committee of the Regions, entitled "An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020," the EU has created a new legal framework for the adoption of national strategies aimed at the social integration of the Roma.

The approach of the Romanian power structure towards the Roma issue did not change during the last decade, the majority of policy documents referred to the Roma as being a social problem and the measures to be taken was associated to poverty alleviation. More recently, starting with 2005, the social inclusion concept gathered the attention of government and official documents adopted were elaborated around combating social exclusion, which means, again, in majority of cases, poverty alleviation.

Today, the EU Framework Strategy for Roma is asking the EU member states to ensure that national, regional and local integration policies focus on Roma in a clear and specific way, and address the needs of Roma with explicit measures to prevent and compensate for disadvantages they face. In fact, the EU Framework Strategy for Roma became the pushing factor that will bring about the long desired change of the status-quo of the Roma.

¹ The *Strategy of the Romanian Government for the Improvement of the Roma Situation*, adopted through Government decision no. 430/2001 and later amended by Government Decision no. 522/2006.

Social inclusion – Romania in an European context

The building of an inclusive society is vital for the achievement of the European Unions' objectives of durable economic development, the qualitative and quantitative improvement of paid work and greater social cohesion. During the pre-accession period, the concept of social inclusion automatically became a readily used Romanian concept, but void of content since the definition to be found in the Romanian thesaurus appears to have little to do with the ways in which this concept is understood in policy documents.

The Romanian language might, nevertheless, offer a better understanding of the term as inclusion is defined as the "action of inclusion and its result; encapsulation, engulfing." At the same time, public and private bodies in the social domain have started using another concept, that of *social exclusion*, through which a better understanding of the notion of social inclusion might be attempted.

As it has been defined in a variety of EU documents, *social exclusion is a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the margins of society and are not allowed to fully participate due to their poverty, lack of basic skills, and lack of access to life-long learning or as a result of discrimination.* The outcome of social exclusion is individuals' inability to access jobs, decent incomes, education and other training opportunities, as well as social and community activities. Socially excluded citizens have reduced access to power and decision-making bodies and, as a result, often feel powerless and unable to take charge of the decisions that affect their lives daily. The concept of social exclusion offers a framework for understanding and analysing complex interdependencies between complex life circumstances, social problems and social categories.

Social exclusion may affect individuals, groups of citizens and entire communities and has become, in many European member states, the basis for public policy development and the elaboration of programmes for social development and social services in an attempt to break vicious cycles of various social disadvantages through the effective use of and development of social capital, through excluded groups' and communities' capacity building.

Theories of social exclusion focus on the difficulties, barriers that obstruct the improvement of disadvantaged groups' circumstances and that further perpetuate social inequalities. Exclusion, even if it focuses attention to the analysis of the most disadvantaged groups in society, is a widely accepted concept in the literature without pejorative connotations and meanings (Ladanyi and Szelenyi, 2006, 10). Social exclusion is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Economically excluded citizens do not have access to jobs, to incomes and material resources to function appropriately in society. At the same time, the socially excluded interiorise the distance they feel towards other groups, a distance that may be measured through the level of residential segregation, the probability of belonging to the same social networks, the incidence of intermarrying and degrees of interaction within social organisations (Ladanyi and Szelenyi, 2006, 11).

The social exclusion of the Roma population is an extremely complex phenomenon and the socio-economic disadvantages are often coupled, for all vulnerable groups, with prejudice, wide social distancing, the low incidence of social relations among the different groups and a very low capacity to influence. It should be noted that social exclusion may be regarded as an indicator of social development, reflective of widely shared values and norms at any given point in time. Someone marrying a person of another ethnicity may be regarded as progressive, without prejudices against a particular society, but at the same time may generate, for instance, the exclusion of his/her spouse from his/her own family and community. Such experiences are still common among traditional Roma, who avoid couples that marry without the agreement of the two families and who may be excluded from their native communities, with all communication blocked. To be disadvantaged may mean a variety of different practices in different societies, at different points in time.

Social progress does not necessarily take place at the same time for all members of societies and, as a result, one will always be able to discern social norms pervasive among certain groups in society,

but not shared by others although norms shared by a majority will enjoy prominence. Technological progress and the explosion in communication technology have brought about new facets of social exclusion. Groups that have limited access to resources are extremely affected, their handicap growing exponentially when compared to their better educated peers, with access to more resources etc., a phenomenon called the “digital divide.”

Approaches to social inclusion – policy goals and achievements in Romania over the last decade

Rapid changes in contemporary society have led to the abandonment of classic modes of production and we are entering an age of permanent risk. As a result, there is a need for new approaches in which the welfare state’s main goal should be the management of risk and the transfer of responsibility from the state to the individual. Therefore there is a need to enhance individual capacity for economic survival with outcomes that need to still be discussed and evaluated, especially for groups considered to be vulnerable.

At a conceptual level, a more or less coherent preoccupation for social inclusion may be identified in the Romanian context, as well, as early as the early 1990’s. However, the actual implementation of concerns formulated in policy is more recent. 2003 was in this regard a decisive year when, at the request of the EU, Romania initiated the elaboration of and in 2005 adopted the first document addressing the issue of inclusion: the Joint Inclusion Memorandum. This strategic and pivotal document identified the key problems and challenges that vulnerable groups in Romania faced, as well as the directions for action that needed to be taken. In order to ensure the coherence of all policy initiatives aimed at social inclusion, Government decision No. 1217/2006 was adopted, the focus of which was the creation of the mechanisms for the promotion of social inclusion in Romania and outlines the different levels of government responsibility, central and county-level.

The elaboration of the mechanisms for social inclusion in Romania had been slow, taking almost ten years (1995: The National Council for Combating Poverty) until 2005-2006, when Romania’s pre-accession preparations required the formulation of a complex mechanism regarding social inclusion. This mechanism of social inclusion in Romania is a complex structure of vertical and horizontal connections, but its efficacy and efficiency remains to be demonstrated as so far only national strategies regarding inclusion² and reports void of data about the inclusion of different vulnerable groups have been issued. While there is institutional capacity to put into motion this complex mechanism of social inclusion, in the context of fiscal austerity that has brought restraint in social spending and limits to social and medical services, the introduction of additional insurance for services considered unessential and the allocation of services for programmes of social inclusion are likely to remain limited. A brief review of the Ministry of Labour’s “Set of indicators of social inclusion in 2010” suggests that data collected was generic, referring to the entire population and more specific references are made to populations of different development regions, urban and rural areas, for men and women and “other” differences, but no specific data is provided concerning the Roma population.

Public policies targeting the Roma issue – theoretical perspectives and the actual situation

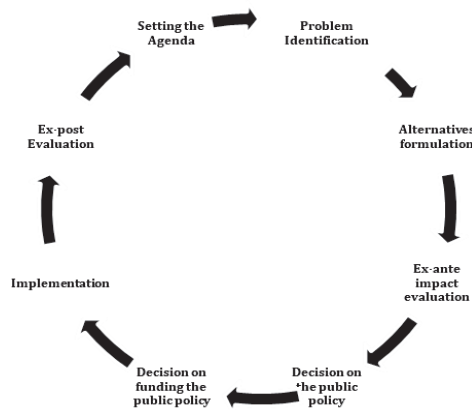
The Romanian government has legislated, through recent normative acts,³ a new approach to the reform of the policy-making process at central level in an attempt to improve the quality of governance and the management of public policies.

2 See <http://www.mmuncii.ro/ro/634-view.html> for a variety of statistical data and reports.

3 See http://www.sgg.ro/index.php?politici_publice_legislatie, Public policy section, for a comprehensive list of all legally binding documents in force.

The idea of modelling the elaboration process of public policies was first introduced by Harold Lasswell in the paper entitled “*The Decision Process: Seven Categories of Functional Analysis*” (1956). His model proposed seven stages that formed the basis for the development, in the 1960’s and 1970’s, of a body of literature focussing on different policy-making models. It may be stated that today the model of the public policy cycle is a conventional one – agenda setting, the formulation of policy, the decision-making process, its implementation and its evaluation. In essence, all policy-making models have at their core a problem-solving model, a rational decision-making model. Any decision-making process should be based on a comprehensive analysis of problems and aims, followed by the collection and analysis of information and the formulation of the best alternatives to attain the goals set (Jann, Wegrich, 2007, p. 44). It may be noticed that these distinct steps have a certain chronology and this process is characterised by entries – *inputs* (*financial resources, human resources, materials used*) and exits – *outputs* (*the products: goods and services that result from the intervention and which are relevant for attaining the goals*). Outputs in turn become inputs for the ensuing stages in the elaboration of the policies (Jann, Wegrich, 2007, p. 44).

This leads to the policy-making cycle, one that may be perpetual Jann and Wegrich (2007, p. 44) believe that this model is still a simplistic and ideal model and in most instances in the observable world, public policies are rarely grounded in comprehensive analyses and end up, instead, modified, reformulated, adapted, changes that do not always correspond with the policy-making cycle. Moreover, the implementation of public policy may produce undesired outputs in other fields of public policy.



Source: Methods used in planning of public policies and evaluation of impact, Bucharest 2006 (http://www.sgg.ro/index.php?politici_publice_documente)

According to Romanian governmental documents (Briggs, Petersone, Smits, 2006, p. 16), public policies follow a complete cycle made up of four stages: agenda setting, policy formulation, decision-making and implementation. At a closer look, there are a series of smaller steps within each of these stages that need to be followed in order to complete the cycle. For example, after the agenda setting stage the formulation of policy implies the identification of the problem, the formulation of alternatives and an ex-ante evaluation of likely outcomes. After the formulation of the policy, the political decision-making process is followed by a decision-making process concerning its financing. The actual implementation stage is concluded by an ex-post evaluation of the policy’s outcomes.

According to the “Strategy for the improvement of the system of public policy elaboration, coordination and planning in central public administration” (Annex to HG 870/2006), there are three different public policy documents: (1) the strategy; (2) the plan; (3) public policy proposals.

The strategy (HG 870/2006) is public policies document with a medium- and long-term perspective, in essence the Cabinet's policy towards a particular policy domain that requires a wide breadth of decisions to be made. A strategy-type policy document is necessary when a new policy is formulated or when a set of policies concerning a particular field of government activity is subjected to substantial change. Strategies generally target a well-defined sectorial domain and they must be interlinked with national frameworks and, in a particular systematic fashion, should demonstrate how the national goals and objectives through the identification of sectorial interventions should be realised (Grimwood, Sics, Tulea, 2009).

The plan is a document that operationalizes the implementation process of public policies and may be formulated after the adoption of a strategy or public policy proposal. Depending on the time frame considered, there may be short-term plans – specific, – as well as medium- and long-term plans – more general in character.

The public policy proposal is the document the implementation of which is aimed to actually address specific public problems. Since the discussion is about public problems, a variety of methods to address these may exist, methods generated by various factors, including economic, legal, resources-related, religious, environmental and not least political ideological factors. Given its high complexity, public policy proposals have judicial implications, meaning that they may lead to the adoption, modification or annulment of existing legislation.

At the European level, numerous programmatic documents have been promoted and adopted, among which the „2020 EU Strategy” which aims for *intelligent, durable growth that favours social inclusion*, the reduction of economic and social marginalization of the Roma minority, who are the most numerous ethnic minority without a state at the European level. For the European Union, the situation of the Roma minority is a significant challenge as concerns both the majority perspective, and the Roma perspective. The EU framework for the national strategies to integrate the Roma by 2020 is a communication-type document of the European Commission to the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Council and the Committee of the Regions,⁴ which urges the member states to adopt or further develop national strategies to integrate the Roma.

Clear and specific policies are demanded to meet the needs of the Roma through explicit measures that prevent and compensate for the disadvantages they are confronted with. Such policies adopted as national strategies of Roma integration should meet the objectives of the EU to integrate the Roma and they will have to be supported from national funds and funds of the European Union, as well as other sources, while solutions must be identified for the more effective use of the structural and cohesion funds of the EU. Progress monitoring mechanisms are also being considered to inform about the attainment of results in Roma integration. Similar to the Decade of Roma Inclusion, the frame proposed by the EU targets the major domains of integration: *access to education, employment, medical services and housing*.

The *Strategy of the Romanian Government for the Inclusion of Romanian Citizens who are Members of the Roma Minority for the period 2011-2020* was adopted (**published in the Official Gazette Part I No. 6 of 4 January 2012, GD 1.221/2011**) somewhat in a hurry and without keeping in mind the remarks and comments made by civil society. The document which was developed by the government is a continuation of the *Strategy of the Romanian Government for the Improvement of the Roma Situation*, adopted through Government decision No. 430/2001 and later amended by Government Decision No. 522/2006, regarding the approval of the Romanian Government's Strategy for the improvement of the Roma situation, with subsequent modifications and completions. The document acknowledges the need for vision as concerns the Roma minority in Romania both in terms of public policies and in terms of the institutional framework for the implementation of such policies, and this vision should be based on

4 Communication No. 8727/6 April 2011 of the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – EU Framework for the national strategies of Roma integration up to 2020.

authentic and sustained political will which takes into account the challenges that emerge from the new context in which Romania is, i.e. a member state of the European Union.

The Strategy in the form that it was adopted and shared with the European Commission does not meet the standards for strategy-type public policy documents. Given the lack of coherence of the Strategy document, the listed plans of measures/actions are inadequate and they also do not fit with the existing standards of elaboration of *plans* as public policy documents.

Ten years after the adoption of the first strategy for the improvement of the Roma situation, progress is still insignificant, and the adoption of programmatic documents that reiterate the weaknesses of the previous public policy documents is not an approach that meets the spirit or the letter of domestic and international documents that Romania committed to when it joined the European Union.

In the consultation process, the government did not prove pro-active; they generated a document that raises serious doubt as concerns authentic political will for positive fundamental change in the situation of the Roma. In the process of developing the Strategy, good participation of the Roma civil society would have added to the relevance of the priority actions, the objectives and activities planned. Especially in the domestic and international economic context, threatened by countries' financial incapacity, the economic crisis, unemployment, etc., failure to take into account the potential for growth and economic contribution of the Roma communities is evident.

From this perspective, the correct solution would have been to review the text of the Strategy and use expertise from the governmental structures, especially the Department for Public Policies of the Government's Secretariat General to develop an adequate Strategy according to the existing governmental public policy standard. The evaluation of the national strategies in April 2012 did contribute to a certain extent to exert the pressure of the European Commission to mobilizing government resources and to have a review of the document.

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THE MAIN JURIDICAL ISSUES CONCERNING ROMA/SINTI COMMUNITIES IN ITALY: NO RECOGNITION-NO PROGRESS

Abstract

This article aims to individuate the main juridical issues concerning the Roma and Sinti presence in Italy. The main juridical issue concerns the failed recognition of Roma within the historic and linguistic minorities recognized by Law No. 482/1999. Moreover the heterogeneity of Roma and Sinti communities in Italy does not help to develop a comprehensive approach towards this community. The author believes that the conditions of degradation are somehow linked to the legal status of the Roma in Italy. This article will try to merge the legal situation of Roma in Italy with the rise of anti-Roma sentiments that led to the violence and countermeasures adopted by the Italian Government since July 2008 to end of 2011. The conclusions are that despite the fact that on February 2012 the Italian government finally adopted a National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma people the legal status of Roma people in Italy is still controversial and problematic, stated that the major legal loophole has not yet been solved: Roma are still not recognized as minority.

Keywords: Roma and Sinti – discrimination – minorities – integration - inclusion

Preliminary considerations

This article tackles with one of the most sensitive nodes concerning the situation of Roma and Sinti communities in Italy: the absence of a legal recognition of these ethnic groups within the Italian legal system. The constitutional principles and the Law No. 482/1999 recognize some specific rights to minorities intended, by the law, as historical linguistic minorities but no recognition and consequently no rights are recognized to the Roma and Sinti communities living in Italy. This situation, unique in Europe, hardly affects the possibility for Roma people to exit from the vicious circle of camps, unemployment, school drop-out, social and economic exclusion and consequently discrimination and stereotypes affecting these communities. The article tries to give some practical suggestions in order to change this situation, focusing its attention on the fundamental role the central government – stated that it often preferred to close both eyes to the tragic situation of Roma in Italy, preferring to leave to local authorities, especially Regions, this burden – should have in this process.

Italy has ratified most human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Social Charter and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. As a member of the European Union Italy is also a member of the Charter of Fundamental Rights¹ of Nice and the Treaty on European Union and therefore committed to the implementation of Directive 2000/43 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. Recently, Italy has also made a commitment to implement the European Commission's Communication 173/2011 by the National Strategy for Inclusion of Roma,

¹ The Art. 21 (Non discrimination) of the Charter establishes that "Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited" See: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf.

Sinti and Caminanti of 2012 (National Strategy).² However, Roma are not recognized as minority and they continue to be heavily discriminated against.

The Roma communities in Italy are very heterogeneous,³ but all equally victims of prejudice, isolated and discriminated against. We believe that the conditions of degradation are somehow linked to the legal status of the Roma in Italy, they live in a sort of legal limbo which fosters discriminatory behaviours and prejudices, they are invisible and annoying and thus they tend to accept their condition of exclusion and they tend to self-exclude themselves deciding not to have contacts with the non-Roma.⁴ Moreover, most of the reports of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and documents of international organizations consulted refer to the Roma in general, without distinguishing between citizens, the EU and non-EU immigrants.

This article will try to merge the legal situation of Roma in Italy with the rise of anti-Roma sentiments that led to the violence and countermeasures adopted by the Italian Government since July 2008, the concern expressed by European and international organizations for the treatment of Roma and finally the adoption of the National Strategy of April 5, 2012 in the framework of the EU initiatives for the Integration of the Roma. Finally we will try to suggest strategies to end discrimination, to ensure the integration of the Roma and the full application of international standards for the protection of human rights.

Before starting the legal analysis it is necessary, first of all, to stress some particular aspects of the Roma in Italy. There are no precise data on the presence of Roma in Italy, because the national census does not provide information on belonging to linguistic minorities or ethnic groups, and because there are no fixed criteria for classifying persons or groups as Roma or Sinti.⁵ Official statistics count 110 000 – 120 000 Rom, of which about 70 000 Italian citizens⁶, but in 1995 Minority Rights Group International has estimated 90 000 to 110 000. In 2012, the document of the National Strategy has indicated a presence between 170 000 and 180 000 persons. Most foreign Roma come from Romania, a member of the EU since 2007⁷ and Bulgaria. Then there are the non-EU, i.e. about 90 000 Balkan Roma arrived in Italy in the 90's following the breakup of the former Yugoslavia.⁸ There are several doubts about the accuracy of numerical data on the presence of Roma in Italy that would be the result of progressive additions made by the authorities, activists and scholars who have followed the biggest arrivals of Roma in the country.⁹

2 http://www.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/22/0251_STRATEGIA_ITALIANA_ROM_PER_MESSA_ON_LINE.pdf.

3 Piasere, L., *I Rom d'Europa: una storia moderna*, Bari, 2009.

4 As researchers and experts we experimented this situation also within the Redupre project. It has been, in fact, almost impossible to involve non Italian Roma within the activities of the project, most of them feared expulsion or were truly convinced that me and my colleagues within the project were just masked policemen ready to arrest or even beat them. The situation with Italian Sinti has been a little bit easier, but also in this case the involvement of these communities within the project activities has not been immediate and completely satisfactory. See also: Piasere, L., *Popoli delle discariche: saggi di antropologia zingara*, CISU, 2005, p. 121; Scalia, G.M., *Le Comunità "sprovviste di territorio"*, *I Rom, i Sinti e i Camminanti in Italia*, Ministry of Interiors, Department for Civil Freedoms and Immigration, Italy, 2006, p. 21.

5 Commission for integration policies of migrants, *Second Report on the integration of immigrants in Italy*, Department of Social Affairs, Roma, December, 13 2000.

6 Ibid.

7 Rumanians in Italy are about 560000, about 50000 are Roma (<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2007/11/08/italy17280.htm>).

8 Strategia Nazionale per l'Inclusione di Roma, Sinti e Caminanti, *cit.*, p. 13.

9 The Ngo OsservAzione points out that the authorities often refer to these data: this is not proof of their objectivity, but it makes them socially and politically relevant. OsservAzione, *Cittadinanze Imperfette*, Roma, 2006, p. 26. It should be pointed out that the main distinction between the groups of Roma in Italy is based on criteria of a legal nature, or on the Italian citizenship. Part of the Roma outside the EU, usually from the former Yugoslavia, is in fact stateless, because without valid documents proving their identity. Unlikely these can also become stateless in law, because at the time of submission of the application for recognition of the status of statelessness should produce the certificate of residence and the residence permit, and often they do not have these documents. Some are able to obtain the right to asylum or a residence permit for humanitarian reasons. Then there are the Roma born in Italy, living in the fields, but who are unable to obtain Italian citizenship at the age of 18 because they have no documents certifying their residence in Italy for 18 years. Recently the National Strategy (Strategia Nazionale per l'Inclusione di Roma, Sinti e Caminanti, *cit.*, p. 99) stressed the need to examine the issues related to the legal recognition of the Roma from

On the second hand, another important premise concerns the fact that Roma are commonly called “gypsies” or “nomads.” The first term has a clear negative connotation, while the second – applied equally to all Roma – is based on the erroneous assumption that they are nomads. Historically nomadism was mirroring the economic survival of the group and a defence mechanism against the hostility of the non-Roma, but in 1994 the authorities reported that well over 51.4% were sedentary.¹⁰

The label “nomads” is used to legitimate marginalization: the authorities support their nomadic lifestyle as a reference image and recognize it as a fundamental trait of Roma culture¹¹, thus supporting the construction of camps and settlements. It should be stressed that, in the document of the National Strategy the Italian authorities themselves recognize that nomadism in identifying a salient cultural trait of Roma communities is outdated and erroneous, and that the term “nomadism” does not reflect the actual situation.¹²

Finally, for what concerns the role of International organizations we can recall some recent statements and warnings addressed to Italy on Roma issue. In its Concluding Observations on Situation of Human Rights in Italy the UN Human Rights Committee has stated its concern about the policy of camps.¹³ The Advisory Committee for the Framework Convention has expressed concern about the fact that “the integration model is still mainly based on the camps model isolated from the rest of Italian society.”¹⁴ Similar concerns were expressed by the Committee for the Elimination of racial Discrimination, which has called on Italy to act firmly against measures denying residence, and avoid placement of Roma in inhabited areas¹⁵ and by the Council of Europe Commission on Human Rights.¹⁶

Constitutional and legal rules on equality, non-discrimination and minorities

Article 3 of the Italian Constitution guarantees equality of all citizens, “without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion, personal and social conditions.”

The implementation of the principle of equality is based on the Chapter IV of the Consolidated Law on Immigration (TU), which regulates and consolidates into one text on immigration, the status and treatment of foreigners. Although aimed primarily to immigrants, the section on discrimination is also applicable to the Italians. Article 43 defines discrimination as any behaviour that, directly or indirectly, causes a distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, national or ethnic origin, religion, and which has the purpose or effect of impairing the recognition, the enjoyment and exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or

the former Yugoslavia and the definition of routes and administrative and diplomatic solutions to overcome the problem of the statelessness in fact of these persons.

10 Ministry of Interiors, Central office for the problems of border areas and ethnic minorities, *First Report on the State of minorities in Italy*, 1994 p. 374.

11 Council of Europe, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention (ACFC), *Second report submitted by Italy*, ACFC/SR/II(2004)006, 14 May 2004, p. 12.

12 Sigona, F., Locating ‘The Gypsy Problem.’ *The Roma in Italy: Stereotyping, Labelling and ‘Nomad Camps,’* in Journal of Ethnic and Migration studies, 31(4), 2005, pp. 741-756, at 746; Piasere, L. cit., 2005; Strategia Nazionale d’Inclusione dei Rom, dei Sinti e dei Caminanti, cit., p.4.

13 U.N. Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee: Italy, CCPR/C/ITA/CO/5, 24 April 2006.

14 Council of Europe, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention, *Second Opinion on Italy*, ACFC/INF/OP/II(2005)003, 24 February 2005. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe noted that Italy should take “appropriate measures ... to ensure that the Roma are offered housing in quantity and of sufficient quality to their particular needs” and condemned the forced evictions of Roma who live in camps. Appendix to Resolution ResChS(2006)4 Information provided by the Permanent Representative of Italy during consideration by the Committee of Ministers of the report transmitted by the European Committee of Social Rights concerning Collective complaint No. 27/2004.

15 U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Concluding observations: Italy, CERD/C/304/Add.68, 7 Aprile 1999, par. 11 e U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Concluding observations: Italy, CERD/C/ITA/CO/15, 16 Maggio 2008, par. 14.

16 Council of Europe, Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, Report by Mr Alvaro Gil-Robles, Commissioner for Human Rights, On his visit to Italy, 10-17 June 2005, for the attention of the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly, CommDH(2005)9, Strasbourg 14 Dicembre 2005, par. 210-212.

any other field of public life. Article 44 provides that victims of discrimination may have recourse to end the prohibited conduct and be compensated for the damages, but the burden of proof remains to the victim.¹⁷ Discrimination and hatred based on race and ethnicity, nationality and religion are also condemned by the Law 205/93 (Mancino Law), which recognizes them as a special aggravating circumstance in crimes.

The protection afforded is reinforced by the EU Directive 2000/43, which reiterates the principle of equality, regardless of race and ethnicity, and that has been implemented in Italy by Legislative Decree 215/2003. The decree does not provide for any form of positive action ('affirmative action'), legitimate according to the Italian constitutional system, in view of the principle of effective equality laid down in Article 3 (2) of the Constitution. The affirmative action is in any case provided for in Article 5 of the Directive.

Article 6 of the Constitution states that "The Republic protects linguistic minorities by means of special provisions," but does not specify whether this protection should be granted through a framework law or different sizes for each minority. It is, moreover, notable that the Italian law, including the Constitution, makes no mention of ethnic or religious minorities.

The Constitution adopted as the primary protection of minorities the territorial autonomy of the regions where minorities reside. In other words, autonomy is considered one of the best security tools: the more developed is the autonomous government, more protection is ensured to minorities, because even if they are small groups at a national level they can have a greater impact at the local level, where they become numerically significant.¹⁸ Protection is therefore usually more effective for territorially compact minorities, especially if they live in areas bordering other states, while it is inadequate for groups throughout the national territory¹⁹ (such as Roma).

The differences between the various minorities are particularly evident: Italy is at the same time a country with a very advanced system of protection of (some) minorities and one in which others can be completely assimilated and disappear.²⁰ The reasons for this are mostly of economic nature: some positive rights as those of a linguistic nature are very expensive for the state. In terms of law, some regions have broader spectrum standards. In terms of protection actually provided, some minorities enjoy greater protection (and you can therefore talk about "strong" or "weak" minorities).²¹

The law No. 482/1999 "Rules on the protection of linguistic and historical minorities" (or framework law) was adopted in 1999 as a pre-requisite for the implementation of the Framework Convention.²² The aim is to implement the regulatory framework established by Article 6 of the Constitution and other international instruments on the protection of minorities, including the Framework Convention.²³

They are therefore protected all linguistic minorities historically present on the Italian territory, but not the new (i.e. immigrant groups), whose protection continues to be a problem. In fact, the law of 22 July 1998 (rules for immigrants) does not establish that immigrants can have rights as minorities.²⁴ In addition, there is no protection at all of the Roma minority, although it is present in Italy since the fifteenth century. Protected minorities are identified with the territory. The rights attached to minority

17 See Simoni, A., *Sicurezza, legalità e lo spettro degli "zingari"*, in Reser, No. 107 (2008), pp. 28-29. See also Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, European Roma Rights Centre, Open Society Institute et. al, *Security a la Italiana*, July 2008, p. 9.

18 Palermo, F., *Le minoranze linguistiche in Italia dopo la legge generale di tutela*, in *Quo vadis Romania? – Zeitschrift für eine aktuelle Romanistik*, 2004, pp. 35-46.

19 Ibid.

20 Palermo, F., *A Never-Ending Story? The Italian Draft Bill on the Protection of Linguistic Minorities*, in Trifunovska, S., (ed.), *Minority Rights in Europe: European Minorities and Languages*, The Hague, 2000, pp. 55-66.

21 The Constitutional Court thus stated in its judgment No. 312 of 1983, the need for a framework law, in particular to ensure a minimum standard of protection for smaller minorities.

22 ACFC Second report submitted by Italy, p. 4.

23 Article 2 states that in fact: "In implementation of Article 6 of the Constitution and in harmony with the general principles established by the European and international protection the Republic protect the language and culture of the Albanian, Catalan, German, Greek, Slovenian and Croatian people and those speaking French, Franco-Provençal, Friulian, Ladin, Occitan and Sardinian."

24 Palermo, F., *cit.*, 2000, p. 65.

status are not considered personal but “local.” Therefore the membership of a person to a minority language can result in special rights only in connection with the land the minority live in and only after the official recognition of the status minority by the State.²⁵ In fact, Article 6 of the Constitution does not differentiate between minorities and territorial minorities scattered throughout the territory of the State or “new” minorities result of immigration.

The legal condition of Roma and Sinti in Italy: no recognition-no progress

Since there is no universally accepted definition of minority in international law,²⁶ when the Italian parliament adopted the Law No. 482 it applied, to determine the groups to recognize, the criteria that at that time were considered appropriate, first of all, the link with a specific territory, which resulted in the exclusion of the Roma minority by those recognized. This means that, *de facto*, Roma do not have a specific legal status in Italy. They are present in Italy for over 600 years, as a group they share the same ethnic background, they all speak Romani, which is recognized by various international organizations and by linguists as a minority language, they have a strong cultural identity, and they are recognized by their culture, for their social and historical background, but not for the geographic origins and citizenship.

Although these characteristics are easily recognizable, the government discussing the Framework Law in 1999 did not consider it appropriate to include the Roma in the field of law enforcement. Contrary to previous proposals for legislation such as that of 1992, and contrary to the proposal from the same Framework Law,²⁷ this does not recognize linguistic and historical minorities if they are not linked to a specific territory.

Although the authorities have admitted the need for a comprehensive policy that allows the full integration of the Roma, when the Framework Law was discussed, many doubts have been raised whether to recognize them as a minority. The main question was the type of minority that they would have been, and the identification of individual beneficiaries of specific rights that should be guaranteed and protected as members.²⁸ In addition, the Roma who live in Italy do not always meet the necessary elements for Citizenship and often find it difficult to demonstrate a stable residence, factors which in any case would be insufficient to recognize the status of individual members of a minority protected under Article 6 of the Constitution. Finally, the Roma in Italy are rarely linked to a territory, especially from the political point of view: thus do not meet the criterion of territoriality required to ensure the protection of minorities in the absence of recognition as a minority, which would guarantee them special rights, the Roma have just rights as individuals and citizens.²⁹

The fact that Roma have not been included among the recognized minorities and that the Romani has been excluded from the application of Article 2 of the Framework Law has caused much debate at the time of the ratification of the Framework Convention.³⁰ In his first report to the Advisory Committee Italy cites “gypsies” as a minority with no connection to any area in particular and highlights the existence of different regional laws aimed at their regional protection.³¹ But it is a matter of fact that

25 Ibid., p. 55.

26 See Packer, J., On the Definition of Minorities, in Packer, J., Myntti, K., (eds.), *The Protection of Ethnic and Linguistic minorities in Europe*, Institute for Human Rights, Ebo/Turku, 1993, pp. 23-65.

27 See First Report on minorities in Italy, *cit.*, 1994, p. 361.

28 U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Thirteenth periodic reports, Italy, CERD/C/406/ADD.1, 17 Ottobre 2000, par. 232.

29 Strategia Nazionale d’Inclusione dei Rom, dei Sinti e dei Caminanti, *cit.*, p. 18.

30 The majority of States that ratified the Framework Convention – and Italy too – include Roma in the scope of the act. See CoE, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, Legal Situation of the Roma in Europe, Report, 19 April 2002.

31 Council of Europe, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention, Report submitted by Italy, ACFC/SR(1999)007, 3 May 1999, p. 34. The Consultative Committee noted that the subsequent reports do not contain any detailed information on Roma minority. See Council of Europe, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention, Opinion on Italy, ACFC/INF/OP/

these laws are not enough to ensure the full protection of the Roma groups. Moreover, their main goal is the creation of areas for the camps.³² The need for legislation and, in general, a system of protection that are less fragmented and localized, however, is allowed by the national authorities themselves, as is clear from the document of the National Strategy.

The exclusion of the Roma by law framework and the absence of specific legislation to protect their identity and culture at the national level have had the further consequence of their lack of participation in political and social life of the country.³³

In the past, the House of Representatives has proposed a specific Law for the Roma: "Rules on the protection of the Gypsy minority," which dealt directly with issues related to Roma groups. This would guarantee a number of rights, such as protection of cultural identity.³⁴ The intention of including the Roma among minorities recognized by the Framework Law have been expressed also in May 2006, when it was said that: "... A bill for a comprehensive strategy at the national level on all issues affecting the Roma, Sinti and Travellers is being prepared by the relevant ministries and hopefully it will be approved within a short time As a result, the community of Roma, Sinti and Travellers will be included, between the historical minorities."³⁵ Similar intentions were expressed in the comments of the Italian government also after the concluding observations of the UN Human Rights Committee to the periodic report submitted by Italy.³⁶

Well, several years and several governments later that commitment has not yet been retained, mainly because³⁷: "... There appears to be no real desire among the main political forces [...] to develop a specific legal instrument to protect the language, culture and identity of these people, as demonstrated by the fact that the above legislative proposals have not been adopted by Parliament."³⁸

The result of this situation is a broadening of the refusal to recognize the Roma Italian those rights that are normally guaranteed to citizens, or, in the case of foreign Roma, the rights normally granted to foreign nationals. We do not have the space to analyze in a deep manner the emergency measures adopted in 2007-2008 by the Italian government against Roma,³⁹ but what must be remembered is that in May 2008, following early elections, the new government led by Silvio Berlusconi entered in force. For the first time in Italy, during the election campaign one of the competing coalitions fit the program

I(2002)007, 14 Settembre 2001, par. 12.

32 Marta, C., *Le Politiche per i Rom e Sinti in Italia*, in Commissione per le Politiche di Integrazione, Dipartimento per gli Affari Sociali, Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, *Rom e Sinti: un'integrazione possibile. Italia ed Europa a confronto*, Napoli, 2000, pp. 23-24.

33 ACFC (2005), par. 142.

34 U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Fifteenth periodic reports, Italy, CERD/C/ITA/15, 29 Marzo 2006, par. 172.

35 Appendix to Resolution ResChS (2006) 4.

36 U.N. Human Rights Committee, Comments by the Government of Italy, CCPR/C/ITA/CO/5/Add.1, 19 February 2007, p. 7.

37 Strategia Nazionale d'Inclusione dei Rom, dei Sinti e dei Caminanti, *cit.*, p. 7.

38 ACFC (2005), par. 31. Similar concern has been also expressed by the U.N. Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). See CERD (2008), par. 12. It is interesting to note the CERD's opinions have been published a few days before the enactment by the government of the legislative decrees of emergency that hit in a particular way Roma.

39 On October 31, 2007, the government adopted the emergency decree no. 181/2007, "Urgent provisions on expulsion from the national territory for reasons of public security." Entered into force on November 2, 2007, and repealed on January 2, 2008, this provided the opportunity to practice the immediate expulsion of citizens of EU countries. Following a brutal murder committed by a Romanian Roma, the decree gave the local prefects the authority to expel EU citizens considered a threat to public order, even in the absence of a thorough investigation. Though intended for all EU citizens, it was clear that the main target of the decree were Romanians Roma. On December 29, 2007, the Government issued his decree no. 249, "Urgent measures on deportations and removals for terrorism and for reasons of public security." As stated by a number of NGO's this decree further distorts public perceptions, confusing immigration with international terrorism and other extreme threats to public security (ERRC, *cit.* 2008, p. 12). A series of "Security Agreements" signed as of November 2007 in Naples, Rome, Milan and other major cities providing for the forced expulsion of thousands of Roma from their houses (Italy has been repeatedly condemned for these policies of forced and collective expulsions, see Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Memorandum by Thomas Hammarberg Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe Following his visit to Italy on 19-20 June 2008, Strasbourg, 28 Luglio 2008 CommDH(2008)18, par. 39. See also European Court of Human Rights, appeals no. 57574/00 and 57575/00, Sulejmanovic & others and Sejdic & Sulejmanovic v. Italy, 8 November 2002) and the creation of a task force of police officers to limit security risks for the inhabitants (to be understood as non-Roma) of the areas around the new camps.

of political repression in the presence of unauthorized nomad⁴⁰ The government centered its policy towards the Roma on the fear of the Italians against immigrants in general, and on security, exasperating the minds with constant anti-Roma statements receiving ample space in the national media,⁴¹ and that helped reproduce negative stereotypes. The security package approved shortly after the election was intended to reduce illegal immigration and to expel undesired foreigners⁴² also through the dismantling of nomad camps.

On 21 May 2008 the new government approved a decree called “Declaration of a state of emergency in relation to nomad settlements in the regions of Campania, Lazio and Lombardy.” The state of emergency was due to the presence of nomads in urban areas, and the fact that their residence for the precarious conditions, was due to serious social alarm with repercussions for public order and safety of residents. Although initially the decree was referring to illegal immigrants outside the EU in general, in this case it was clear that the main target were Roma.⁴³

The state of emergency was supposed to last until May 31, 2009, but was subsequently extended until December 31, 2010 and also to the regions of Piedmont and Veneto, and then again until December 31, 2011. In order to adopt the decree, the Berlusconi government was based on Law 225/92 which deals with emergency situations caused by natural disasters, and enables public authorities to derogate from the rules and regulations applied under normal conditions, but that does not mention of situations resulting from the coexistence of different ethnic groups, in practice, the Roma were treated as a natural disaster, and their mere presence was indicated as a cause of emergency.⁴⁴

On June 6, 2008, the government announced its intention to conduct a census in the camps, complete with a collection of fingerprints of the inhabitants. It was not immediately clear that this would be a classic census, because it would be carried out by the police and not by ISTAT. In addition, the surveyed were asked to state nationality, religion and ethnicity. Article 8 (1) of Council Directive 95/46/EC on the protection of personal data says that in the absence of specific rules that allow it and indicate the specific objectives, procedures and safeguards to prevent misuse of the data.⁴⁵

In our opinion there are serious doubts about the legality of these measures adopted by the government, even for what concerns the legal basis for the declaration of a State of emergency. In fact, according to Article 15 of the ECHR, because a State can declare a state of emergency that allows derogation of rules of domestic and international law only if there is a serious risk to the life of the nation (or even just parts of it), which in this case is at least questionable.

In June 2010 the European Committee for Social Rights, considering a class action against Italy, has established that the tones of racism and xenophobia against Roma by politicians cause a violation of Article E (non-discrimination) and of Article 19 (1) of the Charter.⁴⁶

Finally, 16 November 2011, the Council of State with ruling No. 6050 declared illegal the decree of 2008 which established the state of emergency previously declared, thus making invalid the appointment of special commissioners for the emergency and the acts they have adopted. The judgment also confirms the illegitimacy of the power to proceed to the identification of the inhabitants of the camps. In practice, the decision of the Council of State concludes these series of events. The events of recent years show that Italy has breached its international commitments regarding the protection of minorities and protection against discrimination, either through the non-application of national legislation and international law, It should however be stressed that the government headed by Mario Monti till April 2013 has filed an

40 See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5sH84Ne3jcA>.

41 ERRC, *cit.*, 2008, p. 15.

42 Kubosova, L., *EU gives blessing for Italy's Roma fingerprint scheme*, EU Observer, 5 September 2008.

43 COHRE et al., *cit.*, 2008, p. 17.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 18. Even the European Parliament expressed concern for the reference at the Law no. 225/1992. See *Resolution of the EP on the ethnic census of Roma in Italy*, P6_TA(2008)0361, 10 July 2008.

45 *Ibid.*

46 European Committee of Social Rights, Decision on the merits, *COHRE v. Italy*, Complaint 58/2009, 25 Giugno 2010, par. 136-140.

appeal in the Supreme Court against the judgment of the Council of State - ironically, just at the time when, in the European Union, the Member States were committed to adopting a National Strategy Inclusion of the Roma.

Conclusions

Despite the fact that on February 2012 the Italian government finally adopted a National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma people responding to the request made by the European Commission in the Communication No. 173 adopted on April 2011,⁴⁷ the legal status of Roma people in Italy is still controversial and problematic, stated that the major legal loophole has not yet been solved: Roma are still not recognized as minority.

In the document, the authorities recognize the need to adopt an inter-ministerial approach and that can overcome definitively the emergency phase that has so far characterized the policies and regulations designed to Roma.⁴⁸ The overall objective of the National Strategy is to promote “equality treatment and the economic and social inclusion of the Roma, Sinti and Travellers in society, to ensure a lasting and sustainable improvement of their living conditions,” render effective and permanent empowerment and participation in the political and social life of the country as well as the enjoyment of the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and international conventions ratified by Italy.

Before the European Commission, the Italian authorities have admitted that the issue of Roma inclusion cannot be certainly deal with a fragmented regulatory system such as that in force and through the adoption of emergency decrees that effectively result in violations of national and international law, especially in the field of human rights, nor without concerted political action and which also includes forward-looking dialogue with Roma communities, and between them and the majority society. These are the same authorities that express the intention to commit to officially recognize the Roma minority, in order to then offer a range of special rights of minorities which they normally enjoy, and to emphasize that in any case it is essential to ensure the full implementation and enforcement of fundamental rights, without any discrimination, even for members of the Roma community residing in Italy. It remains to be seen if the minimum targets that Italy has set itself for the first two years will be achieved.

It is a matter of fact that till today the Italian government did not enacted and adopted the National Action Plan foreseen by the strategy in order to realize the principles stated in the document through an active participation of central government, local authorities, civil society and Roma organizations to the definition of a practical plan of intervention.

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⁴⁷ This act confirms that the inclusion of the Roma is a top priority of the European Union, despite the economic and financial crisis. The Commission took the view that the adoption of national strategies (which vary depending on the size of each country and the consistency of the Roma population that resides there) of inclusion can contribute effectively to change the living conditions of these populations. It also underlined the importance of the fight against discrimination and the protection of fundamental rights and the need to create National Contact Points to coordinate the development and implementation of the strategy. In particular, the Commission has identified 5 key areas to promote the full inclusion of the Roma: education, employment, health care and housing and essential services. European Commission, *Communication of the Commission, EU Framework for the National Strategies of Inclusion of Roma till 2020*, COM(2011) 173, 5 Aprile 2011. UE COM(2011) 173.

⁴⁸ Strategia Nazionale d’Inclusione dei Rom, dei Sinti e dei Caminanti, *cit.*, p. 3.

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DOUBLE DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS ROMA SINTI WOMEN IN ITALY: JURIDICAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES

Summary

The present work illustrates the situation of double and multiple-discrimination to which Romani and Sinti women in Italy are subjected. It aims to analyze the various areas in which the phenomenon of multiple-discrimination occurs, starting from the perspective of access to education and to the access to the labour market. All this, profiling the multiple level of gender discrimination which is carried out both, within the community of belonging and within the non-Roma majority community by emphasizing as the acceptance of traditional roles, on one hand, related to the patriarchal structure, and the lack implementation of international treaty rules on the protection of the fundamental rights of women belonging to minorities in Italy, a real form subordination by their husbands and the men of the family.

Key words: double discrimination, Roma-Sinti women, traditional women role

The increasing and alarming human rights violations committed against Roma women and ethnic minorities, as well as how to ensure the full enjoyment of their rights, are prominent themes in recent years in various fields.

Although there is an increasing body of documents and publications, the human rights of women within some minority groups have remained under-documented; the voices of women from minority groups are still largely ignored.¹

‘Double’ or multiple - discrimination is evident from the experiences of women belonging to minority groups living in Italy; the experiences of Romani women constitute a prime example of how multiple discrimination affects the lives of women from minority groups *differently*.² Despite a growing body of documentation available on racial discrimination, violence and violations of the Roma’s social rights, still remain largely undocumented the rights of Romani women, both as women and as Romani women.³

1 “Race, ethnicity, gender, or class, are often seen as separate spheres of experience which determine social, economic and political dynamics of oppression. [But] if we just look at racism as a simple issue of dominance of one group over another (on the grounds of ethnic and cultural superiority), then we ignore the complex dynamics of racism. We tend to ignore the structural manifestations which are embedded in the current world order and socio-economic infrastructures. Most importantly we ignore the gendered and layered nature of racism and the many ways in which this impacts on the lives of women in the world.” Patel, I., ‘What the Hell is Intersectionality?’, in *NAWO UPDATE*, Issue No. 23 New Year, 2002, p.12 of 22.

2 Multiple discrimination is the intersection of sex and other identity based attributes or circumstances has been recognized by many of the treaty bodies, that have recognized the intersection of sex and other forms of discrimination on the grounds of colour, language, religion, political and other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status, such as age, ethnicity, disability, marital, refugee or migrant. See, e.g., ICESCR, General Comment No. 3 (1990), The Nature of States Parties Obligations (Art. 2, para. 1), UN Doc. E/ 1991/23, para. 5; ICESCR, General Comment No. 5 (1994), Persons with disabilities, UN Doc. HRI/ GEN/ 1/ Rev.6, paras. 19 and 31; CEDAW, General Recommendation No. 18 (1991), Disabled Women, UN Doc. HRI/ GEN/ 1/Rev.7; CEDAW, Concluding observations on Sweden, UN Doc. A/56/38(Part II), para. 334 (the Committee has called on governments to adopt legislation for residence permits for individuals who have a well-founded fear of being persecuted on the basis of gender/sex, particularly in cases of discrimination against women). See, further, W.Vandenhoe, *Non-Discrimination and Equality in the View of the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies* (intersentia, Antwerpen, 2005), fns.443, 444, 445, 446. CERD, General Recommendation XXVII (2000), Discrimination against Roma, UN Doc. A/55/ 18, Annex V, para. 6.

3 The challenge, in terms of documentation of specific experience of discrimination of Romani women, is increased by the fact that Roma people are very protective of their identity and may be suspicious of any study undertaken by ‘gadje’ or non-Roma.

As Roma community in Europe has been estimated at over 10 million people, and it is the largest ethnic/cultural minority in Europe, there are approximately 150 000 Roma and Sinti living in Italy, and about half of whom are Italian citizens, while 20-25% are from European Union countries, chiefly Romania, and the remainder from the countries of the former Yugoslavia. Some Roma and Sinti have lived in Italy since the 15th century. New waves of Roma from Central and Eastern Europe have moved to Italy for decades, and there are Roma from the former Yugoslavia who have been living in Italy for up to 40 years and have become Italian citizens.

During the wars of the 1990s, a new wave of Roma from the former Yugoslavia migrated to Italy, often seeking political asylum. Some, but not all, Romani asylum applicants were successful: there is a large population of Romani refugees living in Italy, while others are at risk of deportation due to a lack of documents or employment, despite having resided in Italy for more than 30 years. There are also stateless Roma in Italy whose status is extremely precarious. Roma from Romania have been migrating in increasing numbers to Italy over approximately the past 10 years. The lifting of the visa regime in 2002 and the January 2007 accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU have led to increased movement of Roma from these countries to Italy.⁴

Generally, it should be noted that, cultural and historical differences between the Roma and Sinti sub-communities living in Italy, have a strong impact on the legal status, opportunities and quality of life of these people, such differences, also have a significant effect on Roma/Sinti level of integration in the national community, although most of them suffer the same discrimination throughout Europe, in access to employment, education, medical care and housing.

In Italy, in the present case, the relationship between ethnicity and gender is particularly complex for Roma women both, within their communities and, in relations with the outside world. Confronted outside of their own communities with an extremely hostile environment, Roma and Sinti women come to accept the role that is assigned to them by the traditional culture, perceived as threatened. The discrimination to which they are subject, therefore, assumes a valence even more accentuated and multifactorial, resulting from the simultaneous presence of elements linked to ethnic affiliation and gender discrimination.

The magnitude of these phenomena of discrimination against Roma women can be analyzed in various areas, including the access to education, the access to the labour market, and the access to health services.

From the perspective of access to education should be emphasized that the low level of education of Roma women is not only related to a form of discrimination outside the community -which exists to the same extent, but affects males and females- as in particular, the rules and traditions of many communities that require girls to leave school early - no later than age 12 - to assume the traditional roles within the community, early marriage, caring for relatives, etc.⁵ The few Roma women who manage to achieve a high level of education are subjected to a double form of discrimination: by the majority of the population and from their own group for not having respected the traditions of their community.⁶

4 The most recent national survey (Italian Senate, 2011) quotes an average of nearly 140 000 according to a 2006 estimate of the Ministry of the Interior (Ministero Interni, 2006) and a range between 130 000 and 170 000 in 2010, according to a catholic organization involved in the fight against poverty (Comunità di Sant'Egidio), the national association of Italian municipalities (ANCI) and two non-governmental organisations (NGO) of Roma, Sinti and other nomad groups (UNIRSI – Unione Nazionale dei Rom e dei Sinti in Italia; Opera Nomadi). Another survey (Ministero del lavoro, 2010) quotes estimates of between 130 000 and 150 000 Roma and Sinti (nearly 70 000 Italians) while adding useful clues on age: 45.5% aged less than 16 years (e.g. between 59 000 and 68 000 persons) and 2% to 3% aged over sixty (e.g. between 2 500 and 4 000 persons), as a combined results of high birth rates and low life expectancies.

5 Romani women bear a lot of responsibility for the preservation of a Romani culture and identity, both as women and as child-bearers. The debate on whether their role within their community should be redefined is therefore deeply entangled with the issue of the identity of Roma in general. Any attempt to change such a role can sometimes be seen as 'giving away' the Romani identity, especially in a historical context where Roma have suffered at best prejudice and at worst extermination.

6 Research conducted by Save the Children in Italy indicated that 14% of Romani women are illiterate. Of 88 respondents during research for this submission, 74 provided information about educational attainment levels: 22 (30%) never attended school; 12

Access to the labour market, in turn, is affected by the very low level of education of women, from the frequent pregnancies and the machismo of many communities which means that families do not allow women to take jobs as alternatives to those they carry out inside the community.⁷

Article 4 of the Italian Constitution protects the right to work for all citizens and requires the Republic to create the conditions to enable citizens to exercise this right. Employment is a key area for Romani women's emancipation and well-being.⁸ According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, only 7.6% of native-born women in Italy were unemployed in 2007.⁹ Working in the informal sector Roma women do not have access to employment benefits, pension systems, job security or other benefits. Most also do additional informal side work, such as collecting iron and scrap metal with their husbands or selling clothes in markets.

Concerning access to health services the analysis conducted during the project REDUPRE, highlighted the spread of prejudice among health care or paramedical: strong prejudices still persist among healthcare professionals from the customs, traditions and model of the fertility of Roma women.

As result of interviews conducted with doctors and medical staff within of the project is REDUPRE, which to date, with regard to the care of the woman, the main assistance covered accompaniment during pregnancy. The populations of Roma camps have a fertility rate double the rest of the local population. Combined with pregnancies were followed in recent years voluntary interruptions of pregnancy - the abortion rate is three times higher than the rest of the local population. In terms of disease prevention for women, for the early diagnosis of cervical cancer screening pap tests was carried out, but, starting from 2009, following of the Act on the complaint of illegal immigrants, there was a slight decline in attendance, recovered, however, through the relationship of trust established earlier. On access to health services by the Roma women, it is necessary also to take into account specific and concrete problems,¹⁰ bearing in mind that also the housing situation affects even the medical treatment of a preventive nature.

In Italy, Romani women are subjected to discriminatory treatment when accessing or attempting to access health-care, and they are more often in situations in which they would suffer such treatment than Romani men because they are most often the primary caregivers in Romani families.¹¹

However, what should be emphasized that stereotypical and discriminatory relationship towards women, in Italy, in which discrimination against women is more accentuated seems to lie precisely within Roma communities' context. Above all, woman has a marginal role within the traditional family, which, in most communities of Roma and Sinti in Italy, is fully patriarchal: traditionally man represents the family and takes care of the 'external relations,' while the woman's role is primarily to take care of home and family and has the responsibility to transmit the Roma culture and traditions to the next generation.

Gender roles is dominated by patriarchal norms: here in Italy, in most Roma and Sinti communities, the

(16%) did not complete primary I education (school years 1-5); 11 (15%) completed primary I education; 9 (12%) started but did not complete primary II education (school years 6-8); 11 (15%) completed primary II education; 6 (8%) started but did not complete secondary education (school years 9-13); 1 (1%) completed secondary education; and 2 (3%) enrolled in university but did not finish. See, Save the Children Italia, *Studio sulla salute materno infantile nelle comunit  Rom. Il caso di Roma* (2008), available at: http://www.savethechildren.it/IT/Tool/Pubblicazioni/Related?id_object=47&id_category=35.

7 The roles of men and women are clearly divided along patriarchal structures: whilst legal and customary norms deprive Romani women of their rights, they are still expected to fulfill traditional functions such as maintaining the household in order and looking after the children.

8 See: http://www.senato.it/documenti/repository/istituzione/costituzione_inglese.pdf.

9 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Country statistical profile: Italy 2010*, available at: www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/country-statistical-profile-italy_20752288-table-ita.

10 In general, women have difficulty accept invasive medical treatments, such as eggs and lavender; ova, because they prefer oral therapies (even though, when you do this their effectiveness and less harm local therapy, tend to accept the latter), the lavenders, because they there are often within camps public baths that made therapies gynecological particularly difficult.

11 In 2008, Save the Children Italy reported that 70% of Romani women did not have access to health care as guaranteed by the National Health Service due to their legal status, lack of information about their rights and misinformation about how to access to health-care services. Save the Children, *La salute delle madri Rom*, available at: http://www.savethechildren.it/IT/Tool/Pubblicazioni/Related?id_object=47&id_category=35.

roles of men and women are still clearly divided along patriarchal structures: whilst legal and customary norms deprive Romani women of their rights they are still expected to fulfil traditional functions such as maintaining the household in order and looking after the children. In some cases they may also be the main breadwinners, although unemployment rates for women are particularly high.

The girls assume roles reserved for adult women at the age of 11 years: at this age in many communities is expected to marry and have several children. In this context, it is very difficult that they have the possibility of entering the labour market. Although it is certainly true that relations between men and women differ between the groups: in some communities, especially those living in the north of Italy, in fact young Sinti, in some cases, are becoming increasingly free to choose their wives, while in other communities, they are still the parents of sons to choose their future in-laws: it is often marriages 'traditional' contracts that are a result of a reasonable financial compensation to the families of the girls.

Having no legal force, these marriages leave completely devoid of rights and support the girls in case of separation; this is especially dramatic if there are children. Divorces and separations are very rare and the girls are in a particular disadvantage since the father usually gets custody of the children from the community who are then cared for by paternal grandmothers. Children can also stay with their mothers, but the decision is nevertheless taken by fathers. This seems to be the main reason why women avoid leaving their husbands even in very difficult family situations in which women are victims of domestic violence.

From the analysis emerges a so strongly patriarchal structure, in many cases, leads to the subordination of women and the social acceptance of domestic violence as a natural part of the family dynamic.¹² With the emphasis on difficulties in the case of single women: widows, separated and single mothers, escaped from situations of violence, which are faced with situations of serious economic deprivation and also exposes them to the risk of being exploited heavily in criminal activities or more simply in the black market and illegal.

In Italy, there is a strong dependency of Roma immigrants women from the residence permit of their own husband. The tightening of the eligibility requirements for residency and work permits has affected especially the non-EU immigrant women. The legislation on family reunification, in particular, has led to a strengthening of the dependence of women by men, women remain bound in the context of unhappy marriages and violent, as in the case of divorce, losing the right to stay in the country and should do return to the country of origin with all the consequences.

Even the law relating to eligibility for social benefits is linked permanent residence and citizenship. The stay in Italy, in fact, depends on obtaining a work permit and temporary stay is renewed only if the person is in possession of an employment contract. It is a norm that penalizes especially women, who usually work in low-paid and non-regulated sectors, such as domestic work, and the black economy and at risk of losing the right to temporary residence due to difficulties in demonstrating a continuous regular employment. In Italy there are exceptions only for women illegal immigrants during pregnancy, and for women victims of trafficking in human beings.

12 Many Romani women that reported experiences of domestic violence justified the violent acts of their husbands. Domestic violence is often perceived to be less important than problems faced by the family as a whole such as substandard housing, forced evictions or employment discrimination. Many Romani women who suffer domestic violence do not seek help from competent institutions fearing State intervention against them due to their unregistered marriage, age, legal status, living conditions and ethnic discrimination. Other reported barriers included: fear of losing parental rights; lack of information on shelters/services for domestic violence (reported by half of the respondents); lack of economic independence; traditional role of women requiring them to tolerate male aggression within the family; and emotional attachment to their abusive partner. See Carlotta Saletti Salza, *Dalla Tutela al Genocidio? Le adozioni dei minori rom e sinti in Italia (1985/2005)* (Rome: CISU, Roma), 2010.

Conclusions

The main objective of this article was to highlight some of the experiences of multiple- discrimination that Romani women suffer that relate in particular to issues of gender.

The social context of racial discrimination cannot be separated from the debate about Romani women's rights. In the context of racism and xenophobia, as well as social discrimination and extreme deprivation, Romani women are particularly vulnerable to the increase of violence from both members of the '*gadje*' communities and members of their own communities. Currently, there are no concrete legal or policy measures to eliminate intersecting forms of discrimination against Italian and migrant Romani women in Italy. Information provided by the Italian government on the situation of Romani women is scarce due to the lack of data disaggregated by gender and ethnicity. As a result, State authorities are limited in their ability to identify measure and provide solutions to the current problems, some of which are based on erroneous stereotypes and widespread discrimination. However, despite such a lack of disaggregated data, in relation to gender, and the current lack of a National Plan for the inclusion of Roma and Sinti, which seeks to overcome the current situation multiple-discrimination towards Roma women: first of all because women, then because Roma, both, from the majority community and by Roma/Sinti community of belonging, it is necessary an integrated policy that takes into account the different aspects of collective life in which such discrimination of Romani women is expressed. Namely, there is a need to rethink in an inclusive manner the integration policies through employment, through education and finally through the health and social services. The distance of the Roma women from the labour market would seem to be too broad because the normal labour market policies may be able to fill them: it is therefore necessary to promote specific programs geared to identify and overcome barriers to work that Roma women encounter. Increasing employment of the Roma women population is obviously a long-term goal and can only be achieved through an integrated program of raising the level of education and simultaneous reduction of the attractiveness from access to social benefits, with the promotion of active policies rather than passive support policies, identifying the most effective especially if inter-connected not only with the welfare system, but also with education and housing policies.

Even the private sector must do its part by promoting pathways to integration of Roma women working in projects of Corporate Social Responsibility, with targeted incentives to employers who employ Roma women and information campaigns to create a work environment free from social discrimination.

We agree with the idea of supporting projects of self-employment among Romani women, helping them to integrate their expertise in the formal labour; in some Italian regions, as in the case of Sardinia, there are good experiences of enhancement of their native language and cultural competence where Roma women are involved as translators or mediators in the health sector, or statutory, or by offering them incentives for the production of cultural products, including food, arts and crafts. Experiences of enhancement of informal knowledge, which through a series of vocational training have become formal knowledge, where the Roma women have posed as mediators between their communities and the non-Roma, giving excellent results in terms of improving the mutual trust between local institutions and Roma population. Coming to the issue of integration policies through education, there is to emphasize that the issue of education in Italy, it is generally addressed in terms of school desegregation through inclusion programs aimed at increasing the average level of education of children and young people, avoiding the creation of separate classes, considering the participation in the normal school life a prerequisite for effective social integration. To support access to the school and the education of Roma children Italian government allocates resources, which are still too scarce, to promote training programs for staff education and the promotion of informal education projects.

If there are programs aimed at supporting inclusive education of children, albeit with very limited budgets, are much less widespread, school programs and educational services aimed at Roma adult women.

In the field of active policies through education, a good practice is represented by the experience of the

Veneto region, where there has been the constitution, in order to ensure the right and duty to the study of the Roma, of a inter-institutional technical committee responsible for: help with specific information channels, aimed at families, the regular registration according to the deadlines required by law; enable training courses aimed at those who belong to the “school system” (school administrators, teachers, support staff and administrative) in order to raise awareness and adequate professional qualification; collect and/or develop best practices and strategies relating to the acceptance and facilitation of learning the Italian language and subject content; develop rules for the dissemination of the materials produced in workshops, conferences, seminars with the support of the Provincial School, School Office of the Directorate for the Veneto and the Faculty of Primary Education, (which has the task of training future teachers), with the active participation of the family and Roma representatives.

Finally, with regard to integration policies through social and health services, we can put emphasis on different possible lines of intervention aimed at developing a greater “Inclusion health” of Roma and Sinti women:

- a) The mediation in access to health care: it is seen in many local experiences that through the active involvement of women mediators, especially in the healthcare facility, it is possible increase mutual trust, to facilitate communication between health personnel and patients Roma;
- b) Training of doctors: activation of training programs for doctors and nurses to focus on the fight against discrimination and in-depth programs of cultural specificities of Roma communities;
- c) Preventive initiatives and promotion of healthy lifestyles in Roma camps: these initiatives, promoting the mutual expectations, can facilitate access to health care by those who do not normally would access. Many experiences in this regard, have been made in recent years in Italy, with the support of the local health authorities and NGOs. In Rome, for example, has also been initiated in a number of Roma camps, creating on the spot centers for basic health care and social care services with special attention to children, with the support of ASL and Opera Association Nomads, through cultural Roma women mediators trained for this purpose. The innovative element is the great involvement of Roma women as the main interlocutors between their communities and health and social workers. The training aimed at deepening the knowledge of Roma culture and their needs was a prerequisite to gain the trust and commitment of Roma people.

The inclusion and the effective protection of Roma women human rights should be encouraged through a strategy of “patient” interventions, in different areas of policies above mentioned. Italy need a cab policy direction, to know how to control, a multi-dimensional nature process; it is necessary the adoption of a global vision with multi-intervention actions to ensures better durability and effectiveness of policies of inclusion and protection of the most disadvantaged population just as Roma women are. Good results had showed those projects that provide for the establishment of networks of intervention between the public and private sectors, as in the case of the access to health and social services improves where there are medical clinics dedicated or at least specialized in cross-cultural medicine and immigration, and the involvement of neighbouring local populations is crucial to any project being placed in the, nevertheless, remain in the background matters in respect of which should be an open debate and without bias: invisibility registry and the participation of whom interventions are definitely elements on which further work is needed.

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IN SPITE OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS IN LAST YEARS ARE ROMA IN SLOVENIA VICTIMS OF SYSTEMATIC DISCRIMINATION

The destiny of life provides every man in the world with time and space in which he is born and along with his family and surroundings creates his human dignity and desire for self-realisation. It is evidenced by historical records concerning Roma people that our ancestors were looking for a place in the world where they would be accepted and understood.

Our ancestors found their home in present-day Slovenian country some hundred years ago – written sources about Roma in the territory of Slovenia dates back to the 14th century, which actually suggests that Roma ethnic community in Slovenia is very old. The position of Roma community is often marked by poverty and by all the elements of social exclusion.

The Republic of Slovenia recognized to Roma community this status at the normative level and pledged itself to contribute to the improvement of historically determined position of Roma by granting special rights to Roma community at constitutional level (Article 65 of Slovenian constitution) and by adopting the Roma Community Act and the National action programme of Slovenian government for Roma for the period 2012-2015.

Notwithstanding some improvements and achievements in recent years Roma in Slovenia are still victims of systematic discrimination in access to education, employment and, in particular, to housing. Although we were provided with certain rights, the remnants of our isolation from society and from economic life will be reflecting and preventing our social integration for a long time.

We live in a time of profound social, economic and cultural changes. The Roma hardly cope with the challenges posed by the needs of contemporary society. However, one cannot generalize as there are considerable differences among the Roma living in Slovenia which are based on a different way of life and tradition and especially on the level of their socialisation and integration into society.

In particular, the cultural marginalization of Roma is most outstanding. So far involvement of Roma representatives in decision-making mechanisms at both state and local levels has proven to be inadequate. In the same vein, the integration of Roma children into the education system has been inadequate but is gradually improving. Roma are probably the most equal with majority population in the area of social protection – the most common form of exclusion is rejecting neighbourly coexistence, meeting, gathering and keeping company with each other.

This portrayal of exclusion indicates that Roma man has his home (albeit this home in a certain settlement is small and modest) but this man does not have wider home, i.e. homeland, where he could strike deep cultural roots. If he is not welcome in a wider community and is thus excluded from it, he is, at least to some extent, a “foreigner,” an “immigrant” which means “not one of us.” Such exclusion or at least distancing of Roma from the midst of majority population is bound to have deeper bases, which include prejudices and stereotypes.

Stereotypes play a crucial role in the everyday adaptation to social environment, while, at the same time, they distort reality, particularly the image of people, what they really are – unique, different and changeable individuals.

Although we find the present economic situation of Roma quite bad which calls for supporting programmes, it is nevertheless necessary to draw attention to the pitfalls of dealing with a particular ethnic group only within the social discourse. The current discourse victimizes Roma and treats them as passive recipients of social transfers and is aimed at their normalization and assimilation.

The ultimate goal of the discourse on the Roma as a social problem is their proletarianization, i.e. assimilation through a satisfactory command of the language, the completion of schooling and employment in precarious areas of work such as cleaning and construction. Many Roma have achieved this kind of assimilation, but this has not solved the problem. Maybe it has solved some problems of the country, city or municipality because such Roma are not recipients of social subsidies and now they live on the verge of legality. In the Association of the Roma Councillors of Slovenia we have developed the view that in addition to social supporting programmes it is necessary to introduce and deploy also a discourse on the political rights of Roma as a national minority. In the discourse on the political rights of Roma we see the completion and alternative to the existing discourse about Roma as a social problem. The struggle for political recognition not only expresses a claim for confirmation of the collective cultural identity but also expressly calls for the elimination of inequality as far as the access to resources is concerned.

Every nation and every community has its own themes that need to be deciphered and understood. It is also necessary to understand problems that the Roma community encounters in everyday life and the impact of their exclusion from the core of the social and economic life on each of them individually. To normalize the situation of Roma it is essential to focus on the key issues that really pinch Roma people and require changes particularly in the fields of housing, education, employment and a higher quality of personal and community life. Thus, in the education system segregation must be replaced by integration since only in this way it is possible to overcome the employment problems and consequently value on the labour market can be significantly increased. This can then provide much better starting position on the labour market. Such process provides an individual with financial resources what is in fact beneficial for reducing social transfers and for finding appropriate solutions for the problems relating to infrastructure.

So, the key issue of social inclusion and integration of Roma is their successfulness in education. As a matter of fact, it is a must that in every Roma community at least some Roma have completed secondary or vocational education. Only then will be open real opportunities for the development of social entrepreneurship in the Roma communities. We are pleased to mention that the Roma academic club was established a few years ago and it brings together young educated Roma who have a good potential to "occupy the seats at the managerial table of Roma development."

Coexistence of people holding different views is still not easy but on the contrary - it may even be difficult. Indeed, we live in a world that is often in conflict with the generally accepted principles, conventions and beliefs; on the one hand, we take into consideration cultural differences, on the other hand, it is of frequent occurrence that we need to deny them, at least partially, if we want to live together. However, we have to always keep in mind that neither political nor scholarly or public discussion is directed towards the division of "us and others" or "on our and their side," otherwise compulsive thoughts about homogeneous groups may become prevailing and it becomes impossible to think about intercultural dialogue and coexistence because such thinking does not allow for the division of people into homogeneous groups and categories.

Challenges and ways of integration of Roma lie in the recognition of existing diversity and in enabling Roma to find their equal status and place in a multi-ethnic society. The integration policy should therefore aim to prevent discrimination, social isolation and marginalization as well as compelling assimilation of Roma.

Each of us is responsible for what they do, but also for what they do not do. If we do not show tolerance, understanding and respect for ourselves and our neighbours, how we will then show tolerance for other people around us? People somehow accept Roma as members of society and are tolerant to them – but only as long as they do not have to deal with them or have closer or everyday contact with them. What are the reasons for this kind of thinking? Are we to blame Roma themselves? Is this perhaps media's fault? Are we to put the blame on people for fear of being different? The truth is probably somewhere in between. Each of us in their own way contributes to the negative image of Roma – also the Roma

themselves.

Thus, the same question arises again and again, namely the question of what the possible solutions are. Indeed, the measures that provide Roma with possibilities to preserve their own culture, identity and language are extremely important as are measures for creating conditions and circumstances for equal opportunities of Roma community. Besides, we need to give Roma the opportunity to successfully integrate into the society. Equally significant are the programmes supporting Roma in arranging their living conditions, education issues, etc. Roma children should be encouraged and motivated to become educated citizens as this will ensure them means for their living and thus also much better life. But the truth is that also Roma themselves will need to pull their weight. Maybe this will help create a closer link between Roma and other population. However, whatever programme or measure, even if precisely elaborated and detailed will not help if there is no willingness for different way of thinking, for accepting different people and for a higher level of patience.

The more we will try to look at the others with an “open mind” and focus on a person as an individual the less important it will be to us where the person comes from and what colour his/her skin is.

Are respect, mutual understanding and common life of Roma and the rest of population in the future just an illusion or they may become a reality?

“ALL THINGS ARE DIFFICULT BEFORE THEY BECOME SIMPLE”

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PREJUDICE OR EXPERIENCE IN THE LIGHT OF THE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE ROMA?

In this report I will present the view of experience when it comes to prejudice; the prejudice that the majority population has against the Roma people as well as the opposite (prejudice of the Roma people against the majority population). I will limit myself to and focus on the area of Bela krajina, on the question of accessibility of education, and the attitude towards the learning of the Roma adults. I will test the statements of some speakers and writers that there is a discrimination of the Roma in Slovenia, because they lack the accessibility to education. My findings are based on the methods of observing, interviewing and of the usage of written sources; namely two researches which were conducted by the Institute for Education and Culture Črnomelj (ZIK Črnomelj) among the members of the Roma and of the majority population.

The first research¹ from 2005 concentrated on the educational and occupational interests of the Roma people. It was based on the presumption that the in average low level of education of the Roma is connected with their unemployment; that the members of the Roma community are not motivated enough for education, vocational training and search for regular employment; and that the members of the Roma community are mostly illiterate or functionally illiterate; that is why they have a limited access to information about the possibilities of education and employment. The most important goals of the research were to determine the educational and occupational needs as well as the interests of the members of the Roma.

Due to the fact that the researches had started off with the assumption that the Roma are mostly functionally illiterate, there was developed an evolitional instrumentation for the process of the research. This was a reminder for a guided conversation in the form of a structured interview.

There was chosen a population of working Roma between the ages of 15 and 45 for the needs of the research; the number of which in the area of Dolenjska, Bela krajina, Posavje, Kočevsko and Grosupeljsko was 1 630, according to the data of the centres for social work. The research was carried out on a sample of 774 Roma people, which presented 49% of the entire population in the area of the research in the chosen age category. The sample was representative because it was wide in its range (almost half of the population) and its structure matched the structure of the population in regards to the percentage of women and age, educational as well as geographical categories.

The research determined that there were 80% of people among the interviewees with unfinished elementary school; more than 90% were unemployed; 45% displayed interest for integration in the occupational education, however, they feared many obstacles and problems.

Among other things, the interviewees were asked, where they see problems for the fact that they cannot integrate into the learning programs; or what kind of issues had they experienced in the past. Almost a quarter of the interviewees (23%) answered that they have no problems when it comes to integrating; a fifth (21%) responded that they know everything they need; a quarter (25%) determined that they do not have time for learning. 6 % of the questioned do not wish to partake in education, because they do not prefer a mixed group (they did not want to be in a group with others). 6% of the people came to the

¹ Source: Occupational informing and counselling for Roma – PISR, miscellany of the project, Institute for Education and Culture Črnomelj (ZIK Črnomelj), 2006.

conclusion that there are no programs which they would be interested in. In other answers (which were given by almost a fifth or 19% of the interviewees) the Roma pointed out the issues in learning, which can be put into three larger categories: situational, institutional and dispositional.

Situational issues

The Roma people often name the unorganised transportation from their homes to the larger educational centre as an obstacle for integration in an elementary school. They saw another obstacle in the care for children. The Roma females leave a regular elementary school soon and decide to become young mothers; which generally happens before the Roma girl becomes of age. Nowadays, the Roma females have more children, for which they want to take care themselves and do not trust their partners to do it. The next situational issue definitely presents the non-motivational environment in which the Roma youth lives. To the majority of the members of the Roma community knowledge does not represent a value; they do not expect that education will contribute to the improvement of their status. Furthermore, those who go to school are mocked and underestimated.

The Roma obtain a specific part of their assets by working illegally. They have realised that it is more lucrative for them to gather iron, or do some other jobs, rather than going to school. When the Roma gather mushrooms, chestnuts or herbs, which are cyclic or seasonal, they do not attend school. Because the Roma homes are small and are inhibited by large families, there is no room for appropriate space and learning area for school activities. Poor social conditions, the lack of money and unemployment are the following issues which are seen by the Roma as reasons for their poor integration in schools. The Roma adults are mostly uneducated; that is why parents cannot help their children with the school assignments; they do not offer their children various possibilities for informal learning, which is consequently one of the reasons for the failure of their children.

The representatives of the expert public who have worked with the Roma were interviewed as part of the same research. They concluded that the transportation cannot be an issue for the regular school attendance of the Roma children and adults. All Roma families have their own transportation; often they also have more than one car or other vehicles in the same household. The transportation costs to school are financed by the employment service, which refers the Roma as unemployed people to education as part of the programs of active policy of employment. When it comes to the care of children in the period of integration in schools, the young Roma families could organise the care by coming to an agreement between partners, the parents of the child, because they are mostly unemployed. Due to the fact that the Roma live in large families with branched family ties, where there are multiple generations in the same household, there is a possibility for babysitting by potential participants of the education for adults. The educational organisations also offered a day care for the children for the time when the parents are partaking in education and vocational training; however, the Roma parents declined the offer.

Institutional issues

The elementary education for youth and adults is performed in larger towns where there are material and personnel conditions, mostly in the rooms of the regular elementary schools which are normally in the distance of several kilometres from the Romani communities. Because the Roma state non-organised transportation to school as one of the issues, we could also consider the physical shortening of the distance of education for the Roma participants and establish an elementary school for adults in the Roma communities. Due to the fact there are no appropriate spaces in the Roma settlements, it would be beneficial to plan with the institutions in charge to organise and ensure the built of an appropriate facility which would be used for the execution of the educational, cultural and other social activities.

Dispositional issues

Among the most deeply rooted problems for the integration into education are definitely the low self-image of the Roma, the poor appreciation of knowledge and the lack of goals. The Roma perception of aging differs from that of the majority population, because the Roma feel old soon after reaching thirty years; especially when it comes to partaking in schools. They do not appreciate their abilities. They state that they have experienced several failures and uncomfortable situations; that is why, they expect it to continue. The Roma do not view their children as competent or intelligent; due to this fact, they do not expect for their children to be successful in school. The Roma express doubt about the benefits of schooling, because they are convinced they will not get a job because of their ethnicity.

The research PISR displayed that 60% of the Roma in the area interviewed are satisfied with their status and do not want to be neither educated nor employed. This was certainly a challenge for the Roma and the experts in the efforts for larger participation of the Roma in education as an essential condition for their successful integration and solution of the marginal position in society.

The second research,² which was performed by the Institute for Education and Culture Črnomelj (ZIK Črnomelj) in 2007, in the European year of equal opportunity for all – titled *Accepting the differences – a step to a fair society*, which was meant for the definition of possible forms of discrimination and ways of prevention. We wanted to determine the opinions, evaluations and points of view of the interviewees about the current status in the society; which pertains to the possible forms of discrimination of various groups defined by special personal circumstances.

The goal of the research was to sensitise multiple publics about the issues of unequal treatment and to stress the meaning of tolerance as well as mutual dialog. We started off with the assumption that the discrimination in Slovenia is based on six circumstances: sex, age, national or ethnic origin, religious beliefs, disability and sexual orientation.

The research included 209 representatives of authorities in Slovenia; that is 112 leading employers and 97 leading politicians. Among the interviewees there were also representatives of potentially discriminated groups (women, the Roma, elderly, disabled people, homosexuals). The research was performed throughout Slovenia.

The first conclusion was that the answers in both groups (employers and politicians) moved in the limits of socially acceptable as well as expected consensus about the principal prohibition and unacceptability of discrimination on the basis of six personal circumstances.

The main conclusions of the research demonstrated that both included groups (employers and politicians) expressed the opinion that the most discriminated people are the homosexuals and the least frequent discrimination is the sexual one. Both stated that in second place of the six circumstances is the age discrimination. The third, fourth and fifth place are occupied by the possible forms of discrimination according to nationality, religion or disability; between which there were no significant differences.

The results of the research according to the personal circumstances of national and ethnic belonging showed that the employers listed several essential reasons for the unemployment of the Roma, such as: lack of motivation, working habits and reliability by the Roma people, their lack of education and working experiences as well as unsuitable national social politics which encourages the Roma to be inactive on the employment market. From these answers we concluded that the majority of the employers are not interested in employing the Roma people because they see too many issues in it.

The research PISR was the first in Slovenia to be made on such a large sample of the participating Roma (774 interviewees), which gives it credibility and believability. Based on the research it was established that the Roma are not motivated for education and vocational training because they believe there are too many issues for integration. Several institutions (schools, organisations for education of adults, centres

2 Source: *Accepting the differences – a step to a fair society*, research as part of the European year of equal opportunity for all, Institute for Education and Culture Črnomelj (ZIK Črnomelj), 2007.

for social work, offices for employment services, municipalities) have responded to those issues with various forms of encouragement.

The organisations for the education of adults had formed a special expert approach, in which they first determined the educational needs of the Roma people; then they organised and executed programs in which the Roma wanted to participate. They increased the access to education by executing the programs in the Roma communities, in the Roma families. The organisations made adjustments so that the education was carried out for a smaller number of people, normally for the members of a family. The reason for the almost individual approach was the unwillingness of the Roma people to be in the same group with the Roma they do not have positive relationships with. This status increased expenses of the education and decreased the possibility of collective learning and cooperation among the Roma as well as the representatives of the majority population.

The integration in education is voluntary, especially when it comes to informal education of adults. When it comes to integration to the elementary schools for adults, there is also an outside motivation, especially from the side of the centres for social work and the office for employment services in the frameworks of active politics of employment. In these examples there is noted a larger absence of the Roma and a poorer motivation for participation. The attendees often do not come to learning meetings; they avoid the classes with various excuses; they do not see the point of education. Some Roma state that it makes no sense going to school because they earn more money otherwise.

Education for Roma participants is free; the executing organisations acquire the funds mostly through public tenders of the state offices and through European funding. The majority of the Roma often evaluate that the investing into education and vocational training is unnecessary and pointless; the Roma believe that it would be better to give the money directly to them and so they would be able to spend it more usefully.

The research PISR displayed that 45% of the interviewees express interest for participation in education. They decided for the traditionally male (auto mechanic, driver, forest worker) and female occupations (cook, hair dresser, seamstress, cleaning lady, clerk). When the executor of the research, Institute for Education and Culture Črnomelj (ZIK Črnomelj), based on the results offered participation in the mentioned programs, it was established that the interest was only on the declarative level.

Out of 360 people who expressed vocational interest for the mentioned occupations, only two actually participated in the program for a clerk. It needs to be stressed that a direct participation in a vocational education at first was not possible, because the majority of interviewees did not have a finished elementary school, which is a condition for enrolling into a vocational or technical school.

As an executive organisation, ZIK offered the attendees to first participate in an elementary school and later on in the chosen occupation. However, there were only two people interested in it. Due to the fact that all participants were unemployed, the schooling fees would have been free, their transportation expenses would have been reimbursed, a small scholarship and a certain amount of money for books and essentials for classes would have been given. This stimulation was offered by the Employment Service of Slovenia for unemployed people without a primary occupation. This prerogative has in the past years been limited to the acquisitions of the elementary school for adults.

The status we are describing is based on experience and statements from the Roma participants. It is provable, because every new research can test and confirm it. When it comes to experience which originate from the mutual cooperation between the members of the majority population and of the Roma, we are not discussing prejudice but reality. Naturally, the prejudice is based on unproven and unfounded points of view; which is not the case here. Years of coexistence of the members of the majority and of the Roma population result in the fact that people know each other; however, this does not mean, they get along and have respect for each other, unfortunately.

They (majority and the Roma population) do not condone each other's way of thinking and doing, because they evaluate each other's behaviour with their personal criteria and standards. Normally, we do not find any improvement of perception among the members of the majority population about the

Roma and vice versa; specific patterns of behaviour and actions are resistant to change, which mainly contributes to an even wider gap between the majority population and the Roma.

In the regular elementary school or the elementary school for adults in Bela krajina there are divisions formed where the classes are attended by the members of the majority population as well as the Roma. They both receive knowledge and experience about the other's culture through coexistence; which limits the prejudice in the sense of judgments we express about a person or nation without truly knowing them. When the children are classmates and their parents meet on different school-related occasions, they all get specific information which are based on actual starting points and do not allow any room for speculation as well as unconfirmed situations.

The Roma adults are of the opinion that education and knowledge do not present the path to employment and quality life for them; while the members of the majority population evaluate the schooling of their children and adults as the most important elements of success in life. The attitude towards school and education in both groups has its own background which is interrelated with tradition, experience and beliefs.

The access to education is equal for the members of the majority population as well as the Roma; at least when it comes to dealing with situational and institutional obstacles. They both have comparable conditions in regards to the distance of the school buildings and the physical accessibility. School transportation is organised for all children of parents with lower income, regardless if they are members of the majority or the Roma population. There is an identical situation in school where they are all taken care of when it comes to school books, supplies and student meals. The teachers are normally well prepared for working with all children, regardless of their culture.

The Roma children have a different stand point when it comes to overcoming dispositional obstacles. It needs to be understood in this context that the roots of failure in school among the Roma children are complex and need an expert approach: additional learning aid, counselling, informing and motivating. The experience of the school guidance offices, the teachers and the organisers of the education for adults demonstrate that all expert approaches do not have the results we would wish for or would be expected. The Roma children still leave school early; they rarely finish elementary school; they have experience with premature parenthood; they are unemployed and socially dependent. They do not perceive the education and knowledge as a solution for their social passiveness.

Is this simple conclusion the basis for the negative attitude towards the Roma, which is independent from experience? Can we still talk about prejudice if we have come to certain realisations and conclusions through experience? Can the prejudice be equated with reality, with descriptive perceptions?

Regardless of our understanding of the prejudice in connection to the conclusions from the experience, our attention should be directed to the search of possibilities for improvement of the status. Independently from how we describe the view of the education of the Roma, we can see their normally low education and a low motivation to change that fact. Experiences show that the lower the education of people, the less they are eager to change and participate in education. This pattern is passed on their children, who do not receive support to achieve higher goals.

In the everyday life and in the coexistence of the majority population as well as the Roma it seems that only one group (the members of the majority population) wants there to be changes in the education of the Roma. Various institutions, establishments and non-governmental organisations are executing different programs and projects with the intent of encouraging the Roma families to enrol their children in kindergartens and later on in schools. On second hand, the Roma are of the opinion that these endeavours are a nuisance and that their way of life, a different value system and perception of priorities are invaded.

At this point we face a challenge – who values whether the Roma are educated? Creating a critical distance from this question offers answers which are logical and predictable. Despite that, the supporters of the discrimination of the Roma do not understand these arguments or do not wish to do so.

If we start off with the Allport's hierarchically arranged levels of expressing prejudice, we can conclude

that in the environment which we are describing, we can sense the first two levels: gossiping and avoiding. The members of the majority population label the Roma as lazy people, who live well from the social benefits. The Roma describe the members of the majority population as the ones responsible for their bad position. That kind of opinion on each side causes a situation of avoiding each other, because both sides believe that they have no mutual interests to connect them. If we simplify, this status can be compared with two next-door neighbours who know each other but do not get along.

Discrimination in the sense of a different treatment is not present in the field of education. Children and adults have the same access to the kindergarten, school and education for adults; moreover, the Roma children and adults receive more substantial stimulations than the majority population for participation in education.

The most misunderstandings, wrong interpretations and the most frequent occurrences of bending of the truth are found with those who theorise about the prejudice and the discrimination based on information which they obtain from secondary sources. Here are meant speakers and writers who are active from a distance; who has never talked to the Roma; who have never socialised with the Roma; who have never visited the Roma in their authentic environment; who have never cooperated with the Roma. Despite that, these people vehemently teach the members of the majority population and the Roma how to coexist and to overcome “prejudice.” This patronising attitude is humiliating for both, the majority and the Roma population. The media contribution is not unambiguous. It is dependant from the governing trend of showing negative news; that is why, the informing about the positive events is more of an exception than a rule.

Prejudice can only be dealt with knowledge, experience and information. From here on we do not talk about prejudice, but about discoveries with reasons and consequences as ways of solution and improvement.



Participant of the seminar "The situation of the Roma in Romania: problems, public policy solutions and involvement of local authorities," May 2013, Cluj Napoca, Romania.



Dr. Florin Moisă is giving his presentation on the workshop "Roma women beyond stereotypes," May 2013, Timisoara, Romania.



Prof. Devetak's opening speech at the REDUPRE concluding workshop, May 2013, Maribor, Slovenia.



Prof. Ilona Tomova speaks about most urgent Roma issues in Bulgaria. REDUPRE concluding workshop, May 2013, Maribor, Slovenia.



"Romanian team" at the REDUPRE concluding workshop. Dr. Florin Moisă, Ms. Ilona Mihaieș and Ms. Ana Leu (from left to right).



Prof. Antonietta Piacquadio (International Institute for Legal and Economic Studies for Development, Gorizia, Italy) speaks about multiple discrimination of Roma women in Italy. REDUPRE concluding workshop, May 2013, Maribor, Slovenia.



Representatives of Slovenian Roma. Janja Rošer, President of the Roma Community Council and her assistant Ms. Nataša Horvat and Jožek Horvat – Muc, President of Roma Association of Slovenia (from left to right). REDUPRE concluding workshop, May 2013, Maribor, Slovenia.

CHAPTER V

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

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 characteristics 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, by focusing on the fight against the buyers and brokers of votes, all legal measures to eradicate once and for all the vicious practice for buying Roma votes during elections. 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 20 000 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 No. 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,
- Favours 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*¹ 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 2009:² 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.

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 document³ 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

1 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.

2 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.

3 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.

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 sensitive data for clear statistical purposes.⁴ 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.

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

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.

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 provid-

- ing 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.

PRESENTATION OF THE REDUPRE CONSORTIUM

REDUPRE Consortium coordinator:

ISCOMET – Institute for Ethnic and Regional Studies, Maribor, Slovenia; www.iscomet.org

REDUPRE Consortium members:

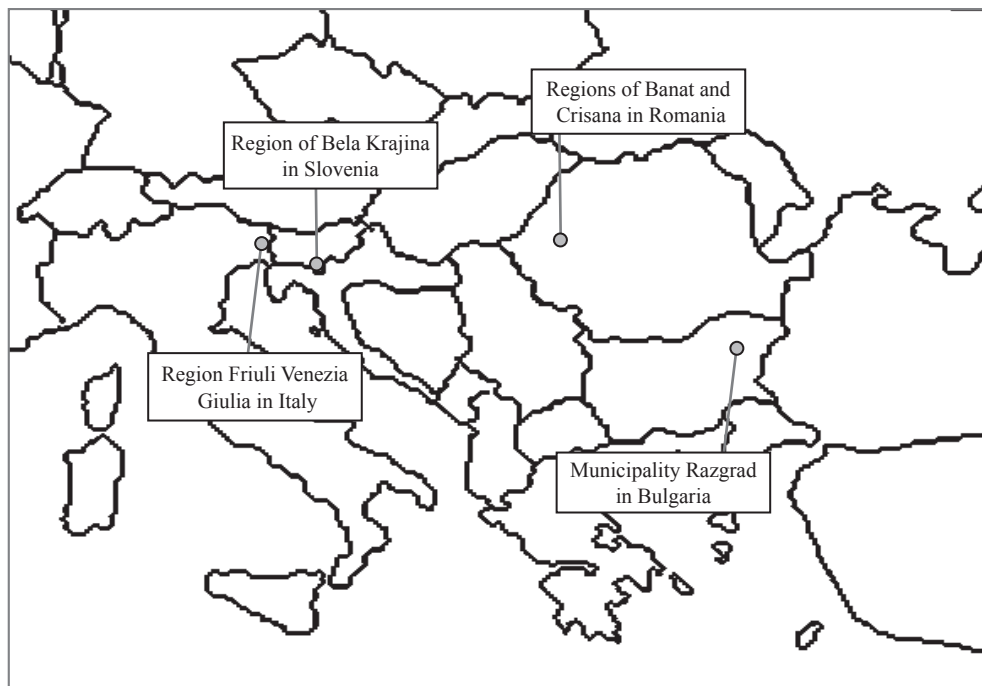
- Institute for Population and Human Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences – IPHS, Sofia, Bulgaria; www.bas.bg
- Association Integro, Razgrad, Bulgaria; www.integrobg.org
- Euroregional Centre for Democracy, Timisoara, Romania; www.regionalnet.org
- Resource Centre for Roma Communities, Cluj Napoca, Romania; www.romacenter.ro
- International Institute for Legal and Economic Studies for Development, Gorizia, Italy
- Assoziatione Them Romano ONLUS, Lanciano, Italy;
www.assoziazionethemromano.it
- ECERS – European Centre for Ethnic, Regional and Sociological Studies, University of Maribor, Slovenia
- Association of the Roma Councillors of Slovenia, Cankova, Slovenia
- Institute for Education and Culture, Črnomelj, Slovenia; www.zik-crnomelj.eu

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE REDUPRE PROJECT COULD BE OBTAINED FROM:

ISCOMET - Institute for Ethnic and Regional Studies ISCOMET and
International Scientific Conference Minorities for Europe of Tomorrow
NGO enjoying a participatory status with the Council of Europe
Pupinova ulica 6, SI-2000 Maribor, Slovenia
Phone: +386 (0)2 250 04 40
E-mail: iscomet@siol.net
Web-pages: www.iscomet.org and www.project-redupre.eu

APPENDICES

LOCATIONS OF THE REALISATION OF THE REDUPRE PROJECT



Source of Map: <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/geography/europe/outlinemap/> (21/5/2013).

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION IN BULGARIA, ITALY, ROMANIA AND SLOVENIA

BULGARIA

Table 1: Ethnic structure of population in Bulgaria, 2011.

Country	Number of people who voluntarily responded to the ethnic identification question	Ethnicity				No ethnic iden- tification
Municipality		Bulgarian	Turkish	Roma	Other	
District						
Bulgaria	6680980	5664624	588318	325343	49304	53391
%	100.00	84.79	8.81	4.87	0.74	0.80
Town of Razgrad	47215	30660	14296	1549	264	446
%	100.00	64.94	30.28	3.28	0.56	0.94
District of Razgrad	114475	49229	57261	5719	702	1564
%	100.00	43.00	50.02	5.00	0.61	1.37

Source: Author's calculations based on National Statistical Institute Census 2011 data available: <http://www.nsi.bg/census2011/index.php>.

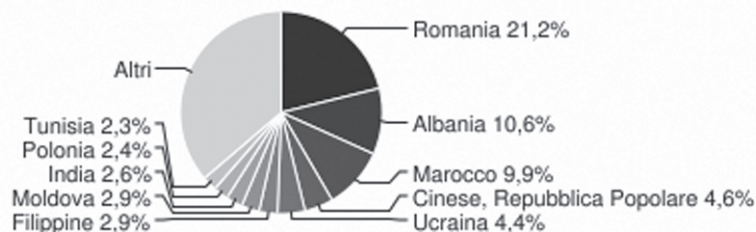
ITALY

Ethnic structure of population in Italy

Considering that the Italian census since 1948 does not provide for the indication of ethnic belonging for respondents (DPR n. 124/2009 and L. n. 11/1977), the below data are not official and have been elaborated from different sources of the Ministry of Interior and Istat.

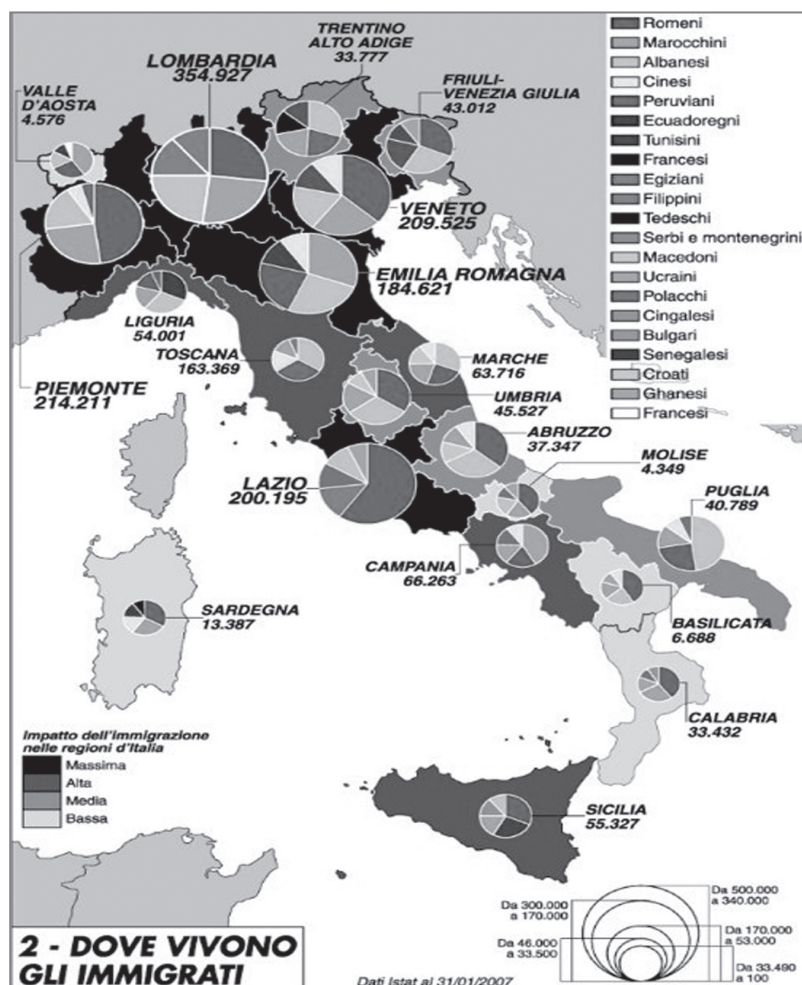
This aspect is strictly related to the issue “no data-no progress” if related to the Roma-Sinti condition in Italy. Considering this, the data below are mainly related with the origin of immigrants in Italy and not to the ethnic composition of the Italian population.

Diagram: 1 Countries of origin of immigrants living in Italy (7.5% of the total population, i.e. 4 570 317).



Source: <http://www.tuttitalia.it/statistiche/cittadini-stranieri-2011/>

Diagram 2: Distribution and main countries of origin of immigrants sorted by region.



Source: Istat 2007.

ROMANIA

Diagram 3: Roma population by county in the West region of Romania.

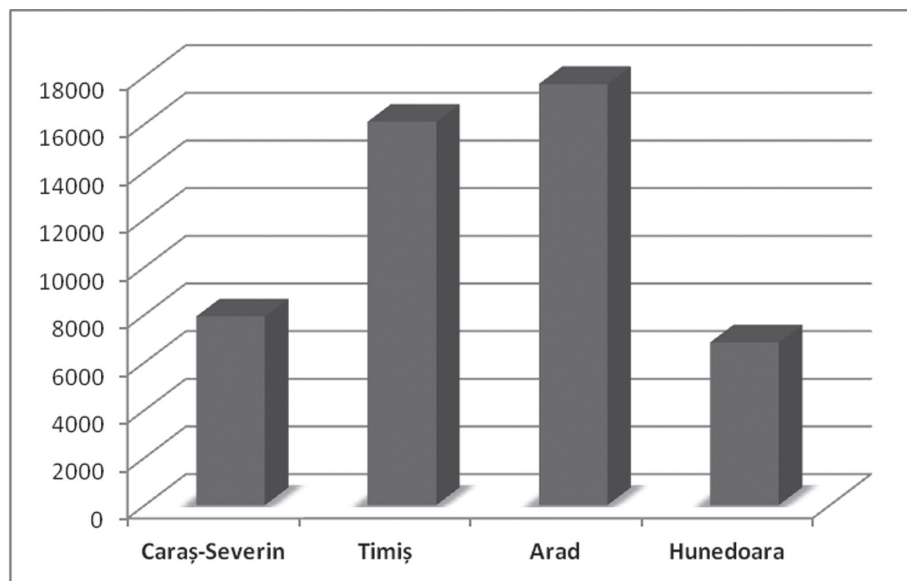


Diagram 4: Roma population by county in the North-West region of Romania.

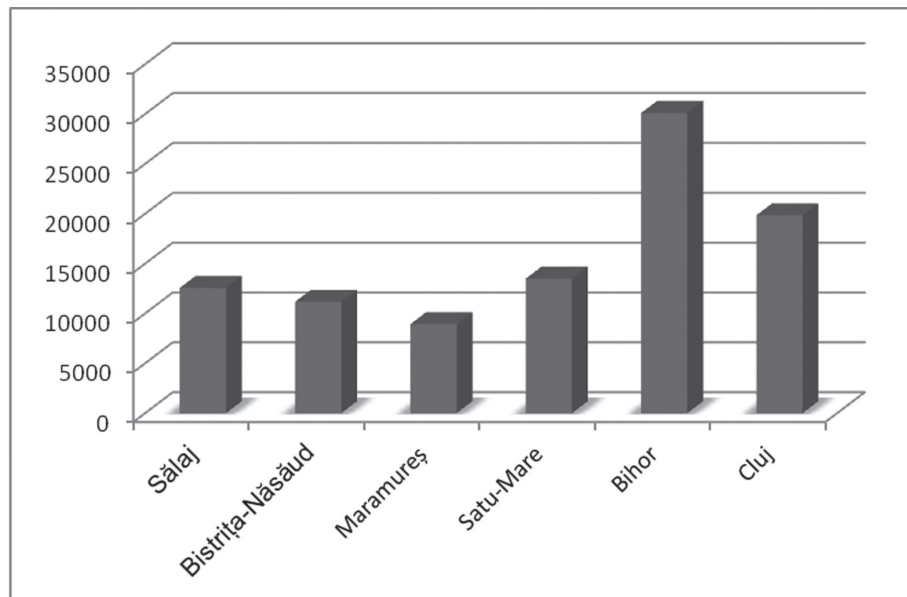


Diagram 5: Population by ethnic group in Timișoara.

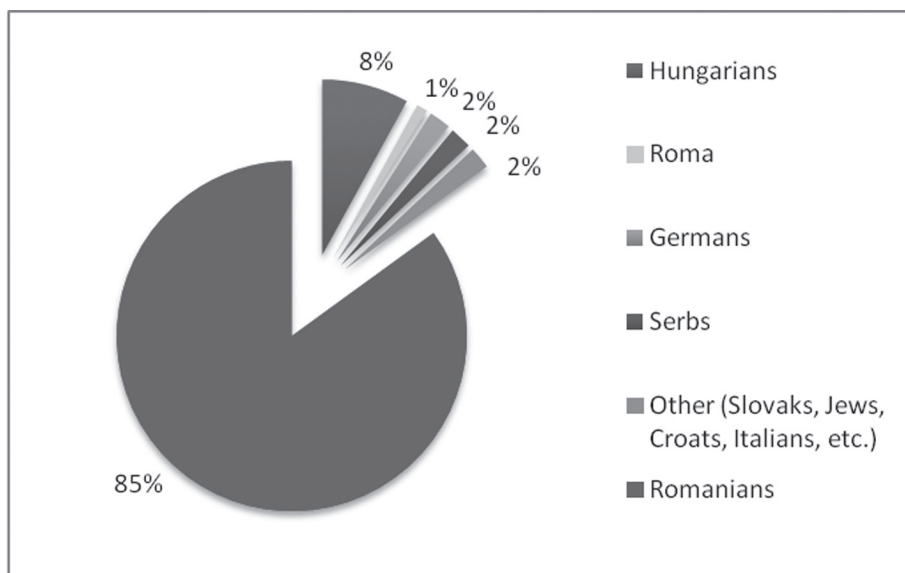


Diagram 6: Population by ethnic group in Sânpetru Mare.

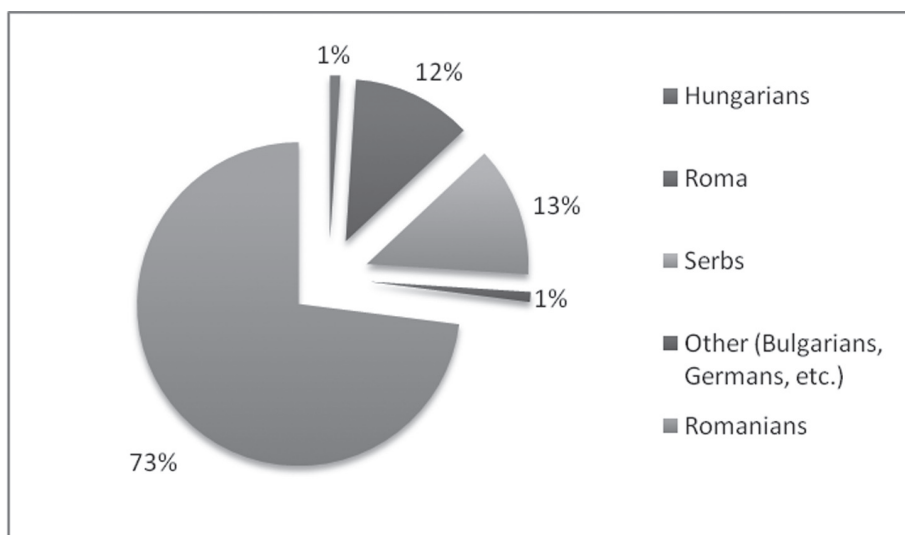


Diagram 7: Population by ethnic group in Sântana.

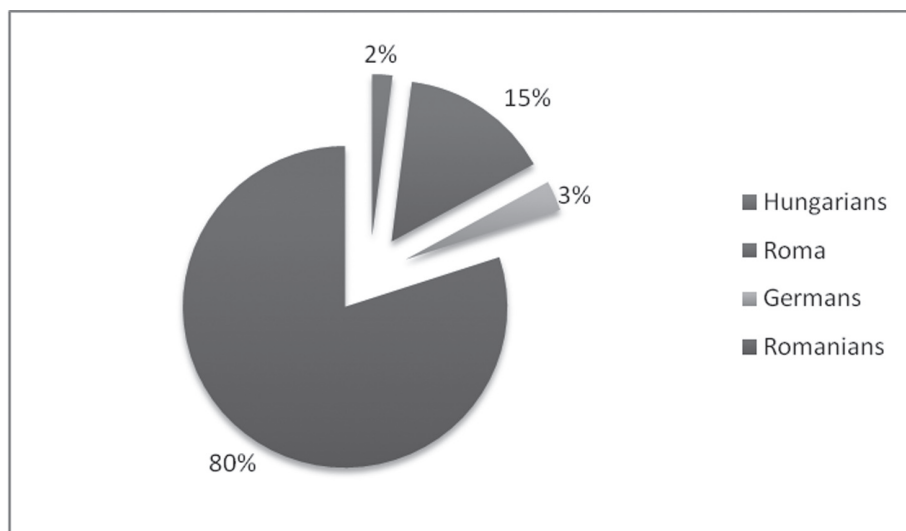
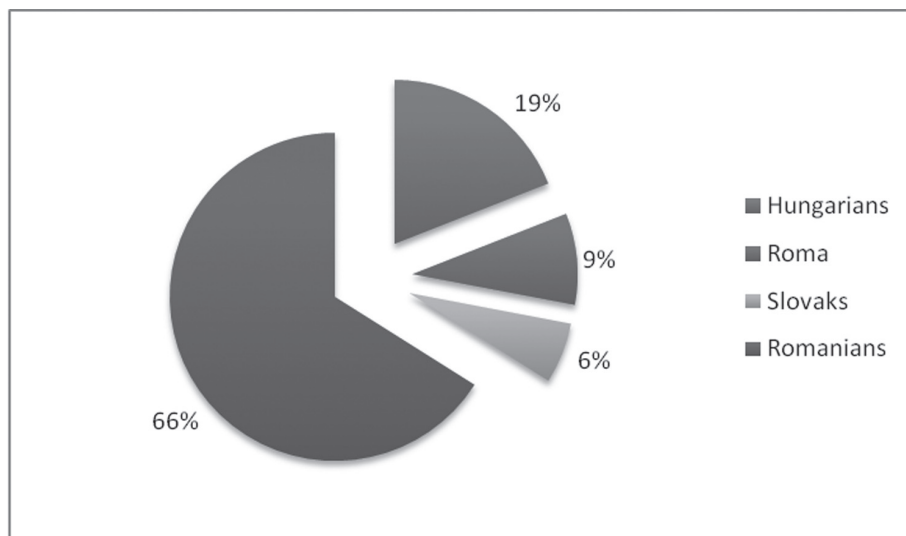


Diagram 8: Population by ethnic group in Aleșd.



SLOVENIA

Table 2: Population in Slovenia by national adherence; census in years 1953, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2002.

Year	1953	1961	1971 ^b	1981 ^b	1991 ^b	2002
National adherence	Number					
Total	1466425	1591523	1679051	1838381	1913355	1964036
Nationally defined						
Slovenians	1415448	1522248	1578963	1668623	1689657	1631363
Italians	854	3072	2987	2138	2959	2258
Hungarians	11019	10498	8943	8777	8000	6243
Roma	1663	158	951	1393	2259	3246
Albanians	169	282	1266	1933	3534	6186
Austrians	289	254	266	146	126	181
Bulgarians	49	180	138	103	168	138
Bosniaks ^{c)}	...	...	...	...	...	21542
Czech	807	584	442	423	315	273
Montenegrins	1356	1384	1950	3175	4339	2667
Greeks	24	50	24	15	21	54
Croats	17978	31429	41556	53882	52876	35642
Jews	15	21	72	9	37	28
Macedonians	640	1009	1572	3227	4371	3972
Muslims ^{d)}	1617	465	3197	13339	26577	10467
Germans	1617	732	400	309	298	499
Poles	275	222	191	200	196	140
Romanians	41	48	41	93	115	122
Russians	593	295	297	189	167	451
Russins ^{e)}	46	384	66	54	57	40
Slovaks	60	71	75	139	139	216
Serbs	11225	13609	20209	41695	47401	38964
Turks	68	135	52	86	142	259
Ukrainian ^{f)}	...	...	138	190	210	470
Vlachs	9	6	4	16	37	13
Others	352	449	293	526	1021	1548
Nationally undefined						
Defined as Yugoslavian	-	2784	6616	25615	12075	527
Defined as Bosnians ^{g)}	...	...	...	...	...	8062
Regionally defined	-	-	2652	3932	5187	1467
Others ^{h)}	-	-	3012	2853	8716	12085
No answer	...	...	...	...	...	48588
Unknown	211	1154	2678	5301	42355	126325

Source: Statistic office of RS, Census, 2002 www.stat.si/eng/index.asp.