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REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA

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VLADA REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE

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**NATIONAL PROGRAMME OF MEASURES FOR ROMA  
OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA  
FOR THE PERIOD  
2010–2015**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

A basic cornerstone of any democratic political system is respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the creation of conditions for their realisation. These rights include equality before the law, free expression of affiliation with one's nation or national community, the right to use one's language and script, prohibition of incitement to discrimination and intolerance, prohibition of incitement to violence and war, and special rights of minorities, which indicate a society's pluralism and lay the foundations for tolerance and understanding between people.

A pluralistic and democratic society not only has the obligation to respect the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of each and every member of the minority, but must also create conditions enabling members of the minority to express, maintain and develop their identity, and by creating an atmosphere of tolerance and dialogue it must allow cultural diversity to become an element that enriches, and not divides, the society.

The Government Programme of Measures to Assist Roma of 1995 and government decisions of 1999 triggered and then intensified activities for a systemic solution of numerous problems faced by Roma in order to improve their socio-economic status and enhance their integration into the Slovenian society. At the same time, the need became evident for inter-ministerial cooperation of different social entities, along with the necessity of cooperation among central and local authorities, both in planning long-term measures and in the implementation of particular programmes and projects for Roma. Intensive cooperation, in principle and as an operational means, is particularly needed in areas such as education and enhancing the employability of Roma, conservation and development of the Roma language, culture, dissemination of information and editing activity, and in enhancing their standard of living.

The Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia Act represented a giant step forward in the realisation of Article 65 of the Slovenian Constitution, defining Roma as belonging to the Slovenian and European area and society, and creating a basis for improvement of the status of the Roma community everywhere in the Republic of Slovenia. The Act defined a normative framework, but much will still have to be done for substantial and effective implementation of the rights of the Roma community. To reach this goal and in compliance with Article 6 of the above Act, the Slovenian government is adopting the National Programme for Roma for the period 2010–2015, intended to cover all areas defined in the Act, that is, all areas where measures for improving the status of Roma and affective implementation of Roma community rights are actually necessary.

The National Programme for Roma was prepared by a working group appointed by the Government. Members of the working group were representatives from competent ministries and government bodies, from certain self-managed local communities and representatives of the Roma community. The working group carried out consultations concerning individual areas covered by the Programme, always in the presence of Roma community representatives. The National Programme for Roma was discussed and approved by the Government Commission for the Protection of the Roma Ethnic Community. A nation-wide public discussion was also carried out, as well as consultations with both representative associations of municipalities, and proposals that had been put forward have been taken into consideration to the greatest possible extent.

Expressions in the male gender used for people in this Programme are perfectly neutral and apply equally to men and women.

## 2. LEGISLATION

In the Republic of Slovenia, the Roma community is a minority community recognised by the Constitution; it does not, however, have the status of a national minority, but is a minority community specially mentioned in the Constitution and granted special protection by law. It is recognised as a minority community with particular ethnic and cultural characteristics (its own language, culture and history) that may be preserved in accordance with constitutional provisions, taking into consideration the needs that the community expressly puts forward. The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia considers the Roma as a special Romany ethnic community living in Slovenia, while the Slovenian Constitution (Official Gazette RS, Nos. 33I/1991-I, 42/97, 66/00, 24/03, 69/04, 69/04, 69/04, 68/06; hereinafter: Constitution) employs the expression "Romany community". In this programme, the expression Roma (used in the relevant Act) will be used.

The legal basis for regulating the status of the Roma community in the Republic of Slovenia is Article 65 of the Constitution, which specifies that the status and special rights of the Roma community living in Slovenia are governed by law. This is the legal framework for the adoption of protective measures. The constitutional provision was realised by the adoption of the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 33/2007). Protection of the Roma community is also provided for in other laws.<sup>1</sup> Aside from legislation, care for the realisation of special rights of the Roma community and the improvement of its status is incorporated in numerous programmes, strategies and resolutions in different social areas.

### 2. 1. BASIC PROGRAMMING DOCUMENTS AND LEGISLATION

**In 1995**, the Government adopted the **Programme of Measures to Assist the Roma**, which continues to be a valid and topical document. This Programme defined the following areas of activity of government bodies and municipalities: improvement of the housing situation, creating options for education and employment, development of culture; dissemination of information and preserving ethnic identity, as well as encouraging political participation of the Roma in the local community, which undoubtedly contributes to better social and cultural integration of the Roma community in the majority environment in Slovenia; managing public and social matters; and in particular solving of problems linked to social exclusion faced by Roma in housing/living conditions, unemployment and extremely low educational level.

**In 1999**, the Government adopted a **decision** charging all bodies dealing with Roma issues in various fields with earmarking additional budget funds for this purpose. **In 2004**, after discussion of the Report on the Situation of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia, the Government adopted decisions for follow-up activities in this field, namely **decisions concerning measures to be taken in individual areas**. These measures ask that government bodies "consistently include solutions concerning Roma issues in their programmes, prepare action programmes for their implementation, as well as other programmes and measures,

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<sup>1</sup> Local Self-Government Act, Local Elections Act, Voting Rights Register Act, Organisation and Financing of Education Act, Elementary School Act, Pre-school Institutions Act, Media Act, Exercising of the Public Interest in Culture Act, Libraries Act, Promotion of Balanced Regional Development Act, Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act, Financing of Municipalities Act, Cultural Heritage Protection Act, Criminal Code of the Republic of Slovenia.

including financial measures, to assist municipalities with the autochthonous Roma population".

On 30 March 2007, the Slovenian National Assembly adopted the **Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia Act** (Official Gazette RS, No. 33/2007, hereinafter: ZRomS-1), which came into force on 28 April 2007. ZRomS-1 regulates the competences of national authorities and authorities of self-governing local communities concerning the implementation of special rights of the Roma community, the organisation of the Roma community at national and local levels, and funds for financing these activities.

In Article 6, the Act provides that for the purpose of coordinated implementation of special rights of Roma community members, the Government, in cooperation with the self-governing local communities and the Roma Community Council of the Republic of Slovenia, shall adopt a programme of measures. This programme of measures shall include, in compliance with ZRomS-1 and relevant regulations, the obligations and tasks to be carried out by competent ministries, other national authorities and authorities of self-governing local communities in compliance with Articles 4 and 5 of the same Act. Articles 4 and 5 define areas of implementing special rights of the Roma community and tasks and obligations of national authorities and authorities of self-governing local communities.

These authorities will, on the basis of a national programme, adopt detailed sectoral programmes and measures, and provide for the necessary funds earmarked in their financial plans. These sectoral plans and measures will have to be adopted within six months after the adoption of the government programme of measures.

The underlying principle of the national programme of measures is the following: the Roma community in Slovenia enjoys special status and members of this community, in order to be successfully integrated into the Slovenian society and able to assume relevant responsibilities, are granted, besides the rights and obligations accorded to all Slovenian citizens, additional rights provided by law.

In ZRomS-1, Slovenia has committed to ensuring special rights of the Roma community in the fields of education, culture, employment, territorial management and environmental protection, health and social care, information and co-decision in public matters that concern members of the Roma community (sectoral legislation), implementing regulations and regulations adopted by self-managing local communities, as well as special programmes and measures adopted by national authorities and organs of self-managed local communities.

### **3. STRATEGIC GOALS OF THE PROGRAMME OF MEASURES**

The Roma community is considered, at both national and European levels, an ethnic community facing major existential problems, and thus enjoys special status. The Roma community is a minority which in all environments is the most frequent victim of social exclusion, discrimination, segregation and poverty. Its special status also derives from the fact that this is a minority which does not have a "mother" state to care for their rights, as is the case of the Italian and Hungarian minorities in Slovenia and of Slovenian communities abroad.

Official data on the number of members of the Roma community living in Slovenia were collected during the censuses of 1991 and 2002, but they do not distinguish between Roma

residing in Slovenia permanently and those residing only temporarily. In the 2002 census<sup>2</sup>, 3,246 persons claimed to belong to the Roma community, and 3,834 persons stated that their mother tongue was the Roma language.

These are official 2002 census figures, however, different organs and non-governmental organisations in Slovenia estimate that the number of Roma living in Slovenia is between 7,000 and 10,000 (according to some estimates even 12,000), mostly in Prekmurje, Dolenjska, Bela krajina and Posavje, and in major cities such as Ljubljana, Maribor, Velenje and Celje.

In compliance with the legislation in force on the protection of personal data, ministries and other government bodies may not keep special records of persons based on national or ethnic affiliation, so the only numbers available are those gathered in official censuses under the auspices of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.

Historical background and other circumstances make for major differences within the Roma community in Slovenia, reflected in different traditions, specific ways of life, degree of socialisation and integration into the environment. Considering the difficulties faced by the Roma community in Slovenia, in particular in certain basic existential areas, this community may be defined as the category that is most exposed to discrimination on the grounds of national and ethnic origin. It is well known that vulnerable groups such as national minorities are typically the most exposed to discrimination.

Following an analysis of the situation and taking into consideration the requests of the Roma community, it has been evaluated that the community is having the hardest time in terms of living conditions, education, employment and healthcare. Consequently, these areas have been identified as priority areas requiring major attention, and effective short- and long-term measures will need to be put in place to remedy this situation. In addition to these priority areas, the Government is already paying special attention, and will continue to do so, to the preservation and development of different variations of the Roma language, culture, information and publishing activity, integration of Roma into social and political life, and to raising awareness of both majority and minority populations of the existence of discrimination and how to fight it, in particular of public servants who come into contact with members of the Roma community in their work.

The methodology of drafting measures for improving the status of the Roma community and for its more rapid and better integration into society (while preserving linguistic, cultural and other ethnic characteristics) was adopted by the inter-ministerial working group for drafting measures (appointed in compliance with government decisions No. 02401-16/2007/4 of 11 October 2007 and No. 02401-16/2007/7 of 27 December 2007) at its second meeting of 23 January 2008.

The aim and purpose of this activity is to draft a programme of measures to provide for the justified needs of the members of the Roma community, improving their living conditions in the Republic of Slovenia, enabling high-quality, rapid and easier integration into the Slovenian society, in parallel to the preservation of linguistic and cultural particularities of the Roma community in line with the needs put forward by the community itself.

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<sup>2</sup> Data of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, Census 2002. Available at [http://www.stat.si/popis2002/si/rezultati\\_slovenija\\_prebivalstvo\\_dz.htm](http://www.stat.si/popis2002/si/rezultati_slovenija_prebivalstvo_dz.htm) (25 October 2006).

The long-term intention and goals of the programme of measures is to promote development and increase mutual understanding and dialogue between members of the Roma community and of the majority population, and to promote the realisation of human and minority rights.

**Basic strategic goals of the programme of measures:**

1. Improving the living conditions of the Roma community and arranging Roma settlements in an orderly manner
2. Improving the educational structure of Roma community members and increasing attendance of Roma children in pre-school educational programmes and compulsory educational programmes, as well as increasing the inclusion of young and adult Roma in further educational processes in compliance with the principle of life-long learning
3. Increasing employment and decreasing unemployment rates of members of the Roma community
4. Improving healthcare for members of the Roma community, in particular of women and children
5. Preserving and developing cultural, informational and editing activities of the Roma community, and endeavouring to preserve and develop different variations of the Roma language
6. Raising awareness of the majority population of the existence, culture, customs and traditions of the Roma community, and raising awareness of the minority population on their rights and obligations as citizens of the Republic of Slovenia

The programme defines priority areas and measures in compliance with these strategic goals.

**4. MEASURES AIMED AT IMPROVING THE PRESENT SITUATION**

**4.1. Priority Area No. 1: IMPROVING THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE ROMA COMMUNITY AND ARRANGING ROMA SETTLEMENTS IN AN ORDERLY MANNER**

**4.1.1. Review of the situation**

Most Roma continue to live in settlements that are isolated from the rest of the population or on the outskirts of inhabited areas, in conditions that are far below any minimum living standard. Some live in houses or flats, but most live in haphazard dwellings such as shanties, containers, trailers and the like. Only a small number of Roma live with the majority population (mostly in Prekmurje) and have attained a satisfactory level of socialisation and satisfactory integration with the environment and the society.

In general, Roma families have difficulties socialising and integrating, as their poor living conditions prevent them from doing so. In many cases they have no legal residence, as many settlements are totally illegal, built on foreign land.

Such living conditions are the source of many other issues and problems faced by the Roma community, in particular attaining an adequate educational level, professional qualifications, information, access to health and social services, access to the labour market and participation in various facets of public life.

On 1 December 2006, the Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning appointed an expert group to deal with territorial issues related to Roma settlements. The first action of the expert group was to update records on Roma settlements in Slovenia. This was done by means of a questionnaire sent by the Ministry of Public Administration to all municipalities and administrative units with Roma communities. The aim of the questionnaire was to gather and update data on Roma settlements and collect information on aspects of the housing situation of the Roma in Slovenia. The questionnaires were analysed and, although the level of accuracy left something to be desired (numerous cases of incomplete or simply false data), it was possible to obtain a relatively good picture of the present status of Roma settlements and the relevant territorial problems in Slovenia.

According to the analysis of the expert group to deal with territorial issues related to Roma settlements, the situation concerning Roma settlements in the Republic of Slovenia is the following:

- In Slovenia, there are 105 "pure" Roma settlements and about 20 to 25 smaller settlements with a considerable share of Roma population. In total, it is estimated that there are around 130 Roma settlements, with approximately 9000 inhabitants.
- Only one fourth of Roma settlements have the conditions in place for relatively rapid integration, arrangement of infrastructure and legalisation of the property situation.
- Approximately one third of settlements have realistic possibilities to develop, in the medium-term, at their present locations, after the necessary formalities have been carried out (change of land use, to begin with).
- According to available data, approximately one third will face considerable difficulties in solving housing issues in conditions of legality.
- And for approximately one tenth of settlements, relocation to another place seems to be the only, or at least the optimum, solution.

In connection with the characteristics of their settlements, such as location, appearance, architecture and public utilities, the issues faced by the Roma community are the following:

- Public utility facilities are inadequate, poor or even nonexistent.
- Living space is restricted, as settlements have very limited possibilities for growth.
- Adequate space is lacking for the performance of certain forms of economic activity.

Most Roma settlements have adequate road access. As most Roma settlements were established in the vicinity of existing roads, there are ad hoc auxiliary traffic areas. More problematic are informal traffic areas within the settlements. Because of dense land take (dense construction), the roads are too narrow, and are, additionally, burdened by deposits of secondary materials.

In certain Roma settlements the greatest problem is communal and other waste; besides, only few Roma settlements are linked to sewer systems. Sewage is a major problem, as it pollutes the local environment and is a health hazard to the residents and the neighbouring population.



These problems often create a feeling among the local population that they are being damaged in relation to the Roma community. There have already been cases when the unsuitable location and structure of Roma settlements have become sources of tension.

Detailed data on Roma settlements in terms of urban planning are contained in the report of the expert group to deal with spatial problems of Roma settlements, entitled *Territorial Issues of Roma Settlements in Slovenia*, prepared in autumn 2007.

At its third session of 29 September 2009, the Government Commission for the Protection of the Roma Ethnic Community decided to extend the mandate of the expert group to deal with territorial issues related to Roma settlements. One of the main tasks of the expert group will be to complete the analysis of the status of Roma settlements in Slovenia (a follow-up of activities carried out by relevant ministries and other government bodies in past years). First, the group will have to prepare an updated record of settlements, containing the following data: areas where there are such settlements, how the settlements were created, forms and ways of living, and development of public utilities. The expert group will continue its work and, in compliance with the projected framework of territorial development of Roma settlements, define priorities in order to remedy the unsuitable dwelling situation in these settlements.

Under the Government Programme of Measures to Assist the Roma, implemented since 1995, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning has been managing and coordinating activities to provide technical and financial assistance to municipalities with a Roma population for the preparation of territorial acts concerning the arrangement of Roma settlements.

Experience shows that, in addition to activities carried out by the Ministry, territorial issues are being successfully resolved when procedures are carried out with full transparency, in compliance with regulations, in cooperation with the interested public and in such a way as to respond to the needs of all citizens. Only in this way it is possible to ensure that the solutions are perceived as socially acceptable. Territorial issues have to be solved in a comprehensive way, and this comprehensiveness is a key element enabling the integration of the Roma community into the local environment on an equal basis. Providing adequate habitable conditions is the basis for inclusion of the Roma in educational processes, in the labour market and in social integration.

Slovenia is among those European countries that include Roma in the management of public affairs at the local level. In twenty municipalities where they have been present throughout history, members of the Roma community enjoy, besides the general right to vote granted by the Constitution to all Slovenian citizens, a special right to elect a representative to the municipal council, to be exercised in local elections. They exercise this right to representation in municipal councils in 19 of the 20 municipalities defined by law. The only municipality which has not yet realised the right of the Roma community to have a council representative is the municipality of Grosuplje. As a result, the Local Self-Government Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 94/07 – official consolidated text, 76/08 and 79/09) was amended to provide that when a municipal council does not include the election of a Roma council representative, elections must be carried out by the national voting and election committee. Thus, in January 2010, in the municipality of Grosuplje, a Roma representative was elected and appointed to the municipal council.

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Local Self-Government Act, which includes a list of municipalities where the Roma community must have a municipal council representative, other municipalities not listed in the Act may also decide to include such representation in their councils.

In Article 7, the Roma Community Act also provides that in municipalities in which representatives of the Roma community are to be elected to the city and/or municipal council (hereinafter: municipal council) in accordance with the law regulating local self-government, a special working body for monitoring the status of the Roma community must be established. Parallel to the right to representation of the Roma community in municipal councils, this Article provides that other self-governing local communities may also set up a special working body for the purposes of monitoring the status of the Roma community in applying the relevant provisions.

The Government Office for National Minorities has repeatedly requested that municipalities with a Roma population actively include Roma in all procedures concerning the preparation and implementation of regulations, programmes and measures concerning the Roma community and to make possible, in compliance with the legislation in force, either representation of the Roma community in their municipal councils or to set up a working body, including a Roma representative, for the purposes of monitoring the status of the Roma community in their municipality. The Government Office for National Minorities will continue, in close cooperation with the relevant ministries and government bodies, to encourage municipalities with a Roma population to include Roma community representatives in activities of municipal bodies.

#### **4.1.2. Measures**

##### **4.1.2.1. Setting up a comprehensive strategic framework as the basis for specific programmes and projects for arrangement of Roma settlements. Identification of areas with Roma settlements and delineation of their rehabilitation within the framework of the process of drafting an OPN plan (Legalisation of Roma Settlements)**

###### Description:

Roma settlements are a characteristic of the Slovenian territory. However, these settlements have never been subject to ongoing arrangement or controlled development. The absence of comprehensive measures and lack of investment funds, as well as the absence of a development vision, has resulted in sub-standard construction, poor public utilities, unsuitable architectural patrimony and continuous problems with people living in their neighbourhood. Under the Spatial Planning Act (ZPNačrt), municipalities must prepare municipal spatial plans (OPNs). Municipalities are encouraged to include Roma settlements in these strategic documents and to plan the rehabilitation of such settlements, which are the result of haphazard construction without professional help and totally illegal. As part of such OPNs, municipalities must set up programmes for remediating the existing situation in which they define the method for tackling specific problems (such as: land use and property, accessibility, public utilities, a timetable for carrying out individual phases of the programme, financial means, etc.).

The relevant ministries are asked to continue their activities within the scope of their competences to improve the situation of the Roma community in Slovenia through the

drafting of a comprehensive strategic framework which will serve as the basis for individual programmes and projects. This will comprise the following: realisation of pilot projects of spatial and environmental arrangements of these settlements, rehabilitation and legalisation of such settlements (construction of public utilities, establishing property relations, providing permits for development of individual areas, etc.), providing information, support and exchanges of experience among local communities representatives (mayors and municipal services) to facilitate participation in existing programmes of arrangement of Roma settlements and in programmes launched by the EU in this field.

Goals: Identification of areas with Roma settlements in municipal spatial plans (delineation of development areas and "legalisation" of existing illegal settlements)

Indicators: Number of adopted OPNs which will make legalisation and further development of Roma settlements possible

Implementing bodies: Self-managed local communities (municipalities) in cooperation with and with the assistance of the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, other competent ministries and government bodies

Implementation timetable: Municipalities must draft and adopt their OPNs in compliance with the provisions of the Spatial Planning Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 33/07), while other activities must be carried out within five years of the adoption of this instrument by the Government.

Funds: Not defined

Financial source: Budgets of local self-managed communities (municipalities)

#### **4.1.2.2. Implementation of solutions, goals and tasks identified by the expert group to deal with territorial issues related to Roma settlements in the process of drafting detailed municipal spatial plans (OPNs) for individual Roma settlements**

##### Description:

The expert group to deal with territorial issues related to Roma settlements, established under the auspices of the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, has identified the following key measures for arrangement of Roma settlements:

- a) Preservation of existing locations of Roma settlements where there are no formal or functional impediments
- b) Active participation of the Roma in activities aimed at improving their living conditions from various aspects (different forms of education in terms of spatial planning, which will enable Roma councillors to play an active role in the process of planning, construction and maintenance of their settlements in compliance with relevant regulations)
- c) Structural adaptation (by the Roma population themselves, assistance and commitment of local communities, provision of state funds and funds from international programmes), which will, in time, bring about better organised Roma settlements

- d) Provide for systemic assistance to the Roma community and monitor the progress achieved, and prepare a strategy of arrangement of Roma settlements (find and present cases of good practice)
- e) Encourage communication at the local level and among local and national authorities
- f) Provide assistance to local communities in their endeavours to improve the condition of the Roma community, in due account of the fact that local communities have, under the legislation in force, the primary responsibility for spatial planning and management
- g) Encourage a multiform approach (concurrent activities in the fields of education, training, social care, spatial planning and access to the labour market) in projects prepared in response to tenders

The expert group, after extensive discussion and on the basis of their expertise, has recommended as the most suitable scenario for solving the territorial issues of the Roma settlements, the structural legalisation of these settlements in phases. The expert group also defined individual measures and steps for the implementation of such a scenario:

- Spatial identification of the settlement and identification of its development options, potentialities and restrictions (Measure 4.1.2.1 – prerequisite)
- Encourage drafting of detailed municipal spatial plans (OPNs) for the area containing the Roma settlement within the framework of the process of drafting of municipal spatial plans (OPNs)
- Concurrent adoption of the OPN for arrangement of the Roma settlement and municipal spatial plan (OPN) by the municipal council
- Implementation

Goals: Comprehensive urban planning of Roma settlements in close cooperation with the Roma and the neighbouring population, resulting in improved living conditions for the Roma

Indicators: Number of adopted detailed municipal spatial plans (OPNs) for Roma settlements

Implementing bodies: Self-managed local communities (municipalities), the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, other competent ministries and government bodies

Implementation timetable: 5–10 years following the adoption of this instrument by the Government

Funds: Not defined

Financial source: Not defined

#### **4.1.2.3. Implementation of financial measures aimed at the development of areas with Roma communities**

Description:

Since 2002, in compliance with the Promotion of Balanced Regional Development Act ZSRR-1 (Official Gazette RS, No. 23/05), the Government Office for Local Self-Government

and Regional Policy has been systematically providing funds for the development of regions in Slovenia in which Roma community members live .

Goals: Setting up conditions for balanced development of the Roma community in the Republic of Slovenia

Indicators: Number of completed projects

Implementing bodies: Government Office for Local Self-Government and Regional Policy and self-managed local communities (municipalities)

Implementation timetable: Funds are provided yearly, on the basis of an assessment of relevant projects

Funds:

Year	2010	2011	2012
Euros	682,793	1,000,000	1,500,000

Financial source: Budget of the Republic of Slovenia

## **4.2. Priority Area No. 2: IMPROVING THE EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE AND ENHANCED INVOLVMENT IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES**

### **4.2.1. Review of the current situation**

On 3 February, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a recommendation on the education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe<sup>3</sup> . On 17 June 2009, the same committee adopted a new recommendation on the education of Roma and Travellers in Europe<sup>4</sup> , which is a response to new and modified conditions, in which the Council recommends that the Member States elaborate education policies and measures to address problems faced by Roma and Travellers in this field.

Recent international instruments regulating minority rights, such as the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, CETS No. 157, ratified by the Slovenian National Assembly in February 1998, set up standards that must be met by the Slovenian educational system.

In May and June 2004, the three expert councils in the field of education and training adopted a document entitled **Strategy of Education for Roma in the Republic of Slovenia** (hereinafter: Strategy), defining premises, principles, goals and basic solutions for effective inclusion of Roma in education at all levels.

The document pursues the following principles and goals in all stages of education:

- Openness of curriculum

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<sup>3</sup> Recommendation No R (2000) 4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe (adopted on 3 February 2000). Available at [http://www.coe.int/T/DG3/RomaTravellers/documentation/recommendations/reeducation20004\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/T/DG3/RomaTravellers/documentation/recommendations/reeducation20004_en.asp).

<sup>4</sup> Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the education of Roma and Travellers in Europe (adopted on 17 June 2009). Available at <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1462637>

- Autonomy and professional responsibility of educators (professional workers)
- Equal opportunities for all and due consideration of differences between children, as well as multiculturalism (respecting specificities of the Roma culture)
- Cooperation with parents
- Providing conditions that make achieving goals and educational standards possible
- In respect of adult education: Life-long learning, functionality, democracy, non-compulsory participation, diversification and dynamism, integration, active participation

The following activities defined in the Strategy have already been carried out:

- An optional subject entitled Roma culture was introduced (proposed).
- A professional standard for Roma assistants was adopted.
- Every year programmes addressing intercultural co-existence (by the Roma Union of Slovenia) are prepared and implemented.
- Educational texts (books) in the Roma language were published.
- Numerous symposia on enhanced inclusion of Roma children in education and training system were carried out.
- Training seminars for teachers are being carried out every year.
- A network was set up including all schools with Roma children in view of promoting exchanges of experience and good practice (National Education Institute – Zavod RS za šolstvo, Centre for Vocational Training – Center RS za poklicno izobraževanje).

Schools that educate Roma children enjoy special treatment and are granted special benefits by the State. The Ministry of Education and Sport grants additional funds for individual or group work with Roma children, allows for smaller classes and separately finances school canteens, textbooks, school excursions, etc. Additionally, the Ministry provided funds for research on how to encourage more effective inclusion of Roma children in the educational system and on methods of standardisation of the Roma language to serve as basis for teaching.

The Ministry of Education and Sport provides monthly funds to schools for their Roma students to be used for acquiring teaching materials and to cover costs of special activities and school trips. Textbooks for Roma children are provided by schools through their textbook funds. The Ministry of Education and Sport provides additional funds to cover part of the cost of lunches to all schools and additional funds to schools with Roma students (to cover the full cost of lunches for half of the Roma pupils). The Ministry also finances additional classes in such schools so that classes may be carried out in small groups. In the school year 2007/2008, there were 1658 Roma pupils in elementary schools. There are no classes with Roma pupils only.

Preschool Roma children are included in approximately 40 kindergartens all over Slovenia, mostly in Dolenjska, Posavje, Bela Krajina, Štajerska and Prekmurje. There are three distinct forms of inclusion of Roma children in Slovenian kindergartens. Most children are included in regular (mixed) groups, some are included in separate Roma groups, and there is one kindergarten in Slovenia with exclusively Roma children.

Tasks that have been defined in the Strategy are also being implemented within the framework of the new financial perspective of the European Social Fund (ESF) – Operational Programme for Development of Human Resources for the period 2007–2013, Priority 4: Equal opportunities and reinforcing social inclusion: equal opportunities and social inclusion among the young, in particular in education and training systems. These are, for instance,

providing for employment of Roma assistants in educational facilities, preparation of didactic materials and carrying out activities aimed at overcoming stereotypes. In the future, other measures to enhance Roma cultural and social potential will be co-financed from the ESF, for instance the development of various methods of preschool education and inclusion of children in different forms of preschool education.

The National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia has set up a group of teachers specialised in teaching Roma children.

In addition, in the area of education and training there are a large number of very active NGOs and other professional and educational institutions.

An extensive survey on educational and professional interests of the Roma has also been carried out under the above Operational Programme. The population surveyed was the active Roma population in Dolenjska, Bela Krajina, Posavje, Kočevsko and Grosupeljsko. The survey was carried out on a sample of 774 Roma aged between 15 and 45.

The project "Vocational information for the Roma" included an extensive survey on educational and professional interests of the Roma.

Goals and implementation of the project were described in an article published in the proceedings *Vocational Information for the Roma* (Poklicno informiranje in svetovanje za Rome) – PISR, 2006, Nada Žagar and Vera Klopčič editors, Črnomelj: Institute for Education and Culture [Zavod za izobraževanje in kulturo]). The article contains a detailed description of the methodology used, of the implementation of the survey and a presentation of results. The survey was carried out in October and November 2005, and the population surveyed was the active Roma population in Dolenjska, Bela Krajina, Posavje, Kočevsko and Grosupeljsko. The survey was carried out on a sample of 774 Roma aged between 15 and 45.

The survey showed that 80% of respondents did not finish elementary school, more than 90% were unemployed, and 45% expressed the wish to be included in vocational training programmes, but anticipated hindrances and difficulties. Almost one fourth of the respondents said that they had not had difficulties concerning inclusion in vocational programmes, one fifth of the respondents considered that they had all the skills they needed, and one fourth said that they lacked time for learning or training. Other answers (given by almost one fifth of the respondents) indicated impediments to learning, which may be sorted into three distinct groups: situational impediments, institutional impediments and dispositional impediments. Situational impediments are mostly: transport to school, care for other children, unsupportive environment, moonlighting (undeclared work), lack of money, poor health condition, moving from place to place and household chores. Institutional impediments are: lack of adequate premises in Roma settlements, illiteracy, poor mastery of the Slovenian language, lack of information, poor infrastructure in Roma settlements (no electricity, no water), women's role in the family, linking education to unemployment, poor trust in institutions. Dispositional impediments are: low self-image, learning difficulties, knowledge is not considered a positive value, aimlessness, fatalism, perception of one's age, comparison with role models, and being laughed at by other Roma.

The survey showed that 60% of respondents (Roma living in areas where the survey was carried out) were satisfied with their situation and did not desire either to enter training or

to be employed. This is a major challenge for both the Roma community and institutions in their endeavours for extended inclusion of the Roma in educational processes, which is a precondition for their successful integration and leaving the margins of society.

A case of good practice is the measure of the Municipality of Murska Sobota, which, at the initiative of the Roma representatives, organised a school bus for the settlement of Pušča. In the long run, this helped to raise overall school achievement and attendance. The school bus is completely financed from the municipal budget. The bus is free for Roma children, although under the Elementary School Act they would not be eligible for free rides (the Act provides for free rides in cases when the ride is longer than 4 km, while in this case the Roma settlement is 1 to 3 km from various schools).

#### **4.2.2. Measures**

##### **4.2.2.1. Inclusion of Roma assistants in the educational process**

Description:

The Strategy for enhanced inclusion of Roma students in educational processes, adopted in 2004, provides for the post of Roma assistant as an important measure for raising the school achievement and attendance of Roma children. The role of the Roma assistant is to help children overcome emotional and linguistic impediments prior to inclusion in kindergarten or school, and to act as a liaison between the kindergarten or school and the Roma community.

Goals: Employment of Roma assistants under the project "Successful inclusion of Roma in educational processes", financed from ESF funds, and creation of systemic conditions for employment of Roma assistants after 2013

Indicators: Number of Roma assistants in kindergartens and schools with Roma pupils

Implementing bodies: Roma Union of Slovenia, Ministry of Education and Sport

Implementation timetable: From 2008 to 2010 – Roma Union of Slovenia; from 2011 to 2012 – ESF funds (repeated call for applications); from 2013 financing from the State budget

Funds: Funds from the tender: EUR 1,593,100; after 2013 approximately EUR one million from the State budget

Financial source: European Social Fund; from 2013 on, the budget of the Republic of Slovenia

##### **4.2.2.2. Early inclusion in educational processes – setting up conditions for inclusion in preschool education**

Description:

One of the key goals of the Strategy for education of the Roma in Slovenia is inclusion of Roma children in preschool educational programmes at least two years before the beginning of elementary school, i.e. at the age of 4 at the latest. The idea behind this early inclusion is enhancing language skills (of both Roma and Slovenian languages) and socialisation of Roma



children within an educational institution capable of providing experiences and patterns that will enable easier inclusion in the school environment.

Goals: Inclusion of the maximum number of Roma children in kindergartens or other forms of preschool education that provide for learning of both Roma and Slovenian languages and equipping children with experiences and patterns to enable easier inclusion in the school environment

Indicators: Number of children included in various forms of preschool education

Implementing bodies: Public tender for co-financing of project "Enhancing social and cultural potentialities in environments with Roma communities" – Ministry of Education and Sport

Implementation timetable: ESF funds for the period 2010–2014; after 2014, funds from the State budget

Funds: Until 2014 – EUR 4,000,000, after 2014 approximately EUR one million from the State budget each year

Financial source: European Social Fund, budget of the Republic of Slovenia

#### **4.2.2.3. Creating conditions for developing confidence in schools, learning about Roma culture and removing prejudices**

##### Description:

The Strategy provides for a number of activities aimed at supporting the idea that education is something valuable and creates possibilities for development of the Roma culture within educational institutions. Learning about both cultures will contribute to better mutual understanding and help remove stereotypes.

Goals: Under this measure, a series of goals will have to be attained:

- Develop new didactic materials and equipment for teaching Roma culture
- Develop subject-related didactics for teaching Roma culture
- Continue activities of Roma language standardisation
- Provide conditions for learning about Roma culture in schools (inclusion in curricula, school projects)

Indicators: Number of didactic materials developed, inclusion of Roma culture subjects in curricula, Roma language standardisation

Implementing bodies: National Education Institute, Roma Union of Slovenia, public research institutes, Ministry of Education and Sport, Ministry of Culture, schools

Implementation timetable: Since 2008, some activities have been carried out within ESF programmes; in general, this is an ongoing task.

Funds: EUR 300,000 per year (project "Enhancing social and cultural potentialities in environments with Roma communities")

Financial source: European Social Fund, budget of the Republic of Slovenia

#### **4.2.2.4. Raising the quality of education provided to Roma children**

Description:

Quality education for Roma children is impossible without developing suitable didactic strategies and approaches. Continuous training of teachers and an exchange of good practices is paramount.

Goals: Development of didactic strategies and approaches, exchange of good practices for teaching Roma pupils, various forms of ongoing teacher training (mentor networks, study groups, seminars)

Indicators: Number of basic documents for development of didactic strategies, number of teachers included in various forms of training

Implementing bodies: National Education Institute, universities

Implementation timetable: Ongoing

Funds: EUR 200,000 per year (project "Enhancing social and cultural potentialities in environments with Roma communities")

Financial source: Budget of the Republic of Slovenia, European Social Fund

#### **4.2.2.5. Establishment of a "support for learning" network, in particular for secondary school Roma students**

Description:

It is necessary to provide adequate support for learning, as it is not enough simply to include Roma students in secondary schools; it is imperative to help them finish school. Support for learning may be provided by successful Roma students and teachers, as well as NGOs.

Goals: Creating conditions for providing different forms of support for learning

Indicators: Number of persons involved in support for learning networks, rate of success of students receiving support

Implementing bodies: Ministry of Education and Sport, self-managed local communities, Roma Academic Club

Implementation timetable: Since 2010, from European Social Fund programmes; after these programmes are concluded, from the budget of the Republic of Slovenia

Funds: Approximately EUR 500,000 per year (project "Enhancing social and cultural potentialities in environments with Roma communities")

Financial source: European Social Fund, budget of the Republic of Slovenia, budgets of self-managed local communities

### **4.3. Priority Area No. 3: DECREASING UNEMPLOYMENT RATES OF MEMBERS OF THE ROMA COMMUNITY AND ENHANCING THEIR SOCIAL INCLUSION AND ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET**

#### **4.3.1. Review of the situation**

The picture drawn by the data on unemployment among the Roma is far from rosy, however the appraisal of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs is that in the last few years there have been numerous positive developments, some of which have already borne fruit, and some promise to do so in the coming years. The first set of positive developments includes an increase in the number of employment programmes and public works programmes set up exclusively for the Roma (programmes entitled "Roma for Roma") and increased participation of Roma in the drafting of such development programmes. However, positive changes in the status of Roma in the labour market may only be the result of better education and training, and these changes can already be seen in younger generations.

Employability is a basic issue of the social integration of Roma, not only as a prerequisite for ensuring basic living conditions, but also as an essential condition for improving their overall socio-economic status.

Employability issues relating to Roma and their role in the labour market in Slovenia present certain specificities:

1. There are no detailed records on the number of unemployed Roma, since data in these records are not entered in relation to ethnic origin. Estimates can only be based on typical Roma surnames or when persons are known to the surveyor, but such data are of course distorted.
2. In September 2009, there were 2,193 Roma registered at the Employment Service of Slovenia (hereinafter: Employment Service), which is 2.5% of all registered unemployed persons in Slovenia. The number of Roma is an estimate, as only those who wish to be in the records are included.
3. Certain kinds of social benefits to which Slovenian citizens are entitled by law are only granted to unemployed persons, who must prove their status by being registered at the Employment Service. As a consequence, among those registered there are a considerable number of persons who are not actually seeking work, but are registered only for being eligible for social benefits, among them a large proportion of Roma.
4. The general picture of Roma unemployment indicates a concentration of Roma in certain areas, mostly Prekmurje and Dolenjska, which is a problem in terms of regional development. The educational structure of Roma is extremely poor – in Dolenjska, 98.2% of unemployed Roma have not completed elementary schooling, in Prekmurje 90%. Each year, the number of unemployed Roma grows, in both absolute and relative terms. According to information provided by regional employment and social services where unemployed Roma are registered, some employers are reluctant to hire Roma. However, the main reason for the high rate of unemployment among

the Roma is their extremely low educational level. This greatly reduces their options to obtain employment or to remain employed.

There are, of course, differences within the Roma community, of which a minority are already well integrated into the majority population milieu while maintaining their cultural and linguistic characteristics, while the majority of Roma continue to live secluded in their communities and have problems with integration. Non-competitiveness in the labour market pushes them farther and farther to the outskirts of society.

In recent years, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs has carried out a number of employment programmes targeted at the unemployed Roma population:

- The Roma and unemployment in Pomurje
- Equal employment opportunities for the Roma – a challenge for us all
- Project "Development of models for education and training of the Roma in view of increasing their long-term employability"
- Phare Programmes for the Roma
- Under the community initiative EQUAL, two development partnerships were financed: the Roma Employment Centre and the Roma Educational and Information Centre
- Cross-border social partnership MEDIATOR – Interreg programme III A
- Active employment policy programmes which included particular employment programmes for the Roma
- National programme of public works

The **active employment policy measures** adopted for each separate calendar year or planning period define a number of programmes and target groups of unemployed who may participate in these programmes, including Roma.

Table 1: Assessment of inclusion of Roma in active employment policy programmes in Ljubljana, Maribor, Murska Sobota, Novo mesto and Sevnica regional units in 2008 (January – December 2008).

Measure/activity/sub-activity: active employment policy measures	No. of persons included	No. of women
1.1.1. Information and motivation seminars (IMS)	82	52
1.1.2. Centre for Information and vocational counselling (CIPS)	40	18
1.1.3. Vocational orientation before inclusion	77	35
1.1.4. On professions – in a different way	6	4
1.2.1. Career counselling and assistance in job-seeking	75	40
1.2.2. Training for life success (UŽU)	2	1
1.2.3. Job-seekers club	16	10
1.3.4. Inclusion of unemployed persons in new and development projects	1	1
2.1.1. Institutional training programmes	131	50
2.1.2. National vocational qualifications (NPK) – verification and certification	4	0
2.2.1. Work test	10	1
2.2.2. On-the-job training	40	16
2.3.1. Formal education – 2007/2008	192	68
2.3.2. Project Learning for Young People (PUM)	7	5

3.1 1. Assistance in self-employment	5	1
3.1 2. Self-employment subsidy	3	0
3.2.1. Promotion of new employment for the long-term unemployed – cash social assistance beneficiaries	2	2
3.2.4. Promotion of employment for young unemployed persons	1	0
3.2.6. Assistance in employment of long-term unemployed women	1	1
4.1.1. Public works – local and national programmes	194	61
4.1.3. Promotion of employment for the long-term unemployed	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>366</b>
<b>Regular employment</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>27</b>

Source: Employment Service of Slovenia, 2009.

Active employment policy programmes implemented by the Employment Service enable Roma, on an equal footing with other unemployed persons, to train and acquire skills necessary for work; however, the difficulty resides in finding employers willing to employ them, either regularly or temporarily. Most members of the Roma community are included in programmes of institutional training and formal education (in particular, programmes to complete elementary school) and in public works programmes. These are either local or national programmes implemented in local environments and aimed at activating the unemployed, increasing their social inclusion and providing them with new skills and working abilities. Under public works programmes, Roma participate in public utilities programmes where no special skills are necessary, and in programmes aimed at fostering their socialisation and integration into the local community. Unemployed Roma are included in local and national programmes of public works without a waiting period and may therefore be included several times in a row (normally, participation in public works programmes is limited to one year). Programmes for Roma are prepared and fully funded by the Employment Service.

#### 4.3.2. Measures

##### 4.3.2.1. **Intensive inclusion of Roma in active employment policy measures in 2008–2013, with due consideration of the gender aspect**

###### Description:

The Government Active Employment Policy Programme defines measures to assist groups of persons with low employability, which include the Roma.

###### Activities:

- Definition of criteria and methods for extensive inclusion of Roma in active employment policy measures through establishing regional quotas and identifying priority groups to be involved in a specific measure
- Creation and implementation of local employment programmes for unemployed male and female Roma
- Inclusion of Roma in special programmes to prepare them for employment, which include information and motivation subjects, preparation for employment and career plans, training and assistance in job-seeking
- Creation of programmes encouraging long-term unemployed Roma to regularly take up work for shorter periods

###### Goals:

- Decrease the number of unemployed male and female Roma on a yearly basis

- Decrease the number of long-term unemployed male and female Roma on a yearly basis
- Increase the number of male and female Roma in programmes of occasional employment

Indicators: Key labour market indicators

Implementing bodies: Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Employment Service of Slovenia

Implementation timetable: 2008–2013

Funds: Funds for implementation of active employment policy programmes will be provided from funds available for each year separately.

Financial source: Budget of the Republic of Slovenia

#### **4.3.2.2. Equal opportunities in the labour market and promotion of social inclusion for Roma community members**

Description:

This measure is carried out within the Operational Programme for Development of Human Resources 2007–2013, under development priority 4. Projects for the Roma to be carried out in the period 2007–2013 will pursue the general goals of this priority: increase social inclusion and reduce financial problems for vulnerable groups and contribute to the realisation of equal opportunities through combating all forms of discrimination. In the period 2007–2013 the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs intends to launch the following public invitations to tender:

##### **1. Public invitation to tender for promoting social entrepreneurship**

The project's objective is to encourage access to training and employment for vulnerable groups in the labour market (Roma are such a group) through development of social entrepreneurship.

Funds will be available for projects that develop market activities (sale of goods or services) and that will create jobs for vulnerable target groups. The following project activities will be co-financed:

- Creation of new and/or expansion of existing market activities
- Training of people in the target group to enable them to take up such activity
- Creation of new jobs for people in the target group

Objective: Providing financial support for 10 pilot projects that will include in their training activities at least 150 people from the target group, and will ensure no less than one year full-time employment for at least 25% of all participants in training

Indicators: Number of people from the target group included in training programmes  
Number of people from the target group with full-time employment for at least one year

Responsible bodies: Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs

Implementing bodies: Project partnerships selected in the public tender

Implementation timetable: 2009–2012

Funds: EUR 2,000,000 (of which 85% from the European Social fund and 15% from the State budget)<sup>5</sup>

Financial source: European Social Fund, budget of the Republic of Slovenia

**2. Public invitation to tender for development projects** aimed at improving employability and inclusion of vulnerable groups in the labour market (including the Roma) and ensuring equality between men and women.

Eligible for financial support will be the following:

- Projects that will extend and/or upgrade past successful practices
- Pilot projects for development and implementation of new forms of integration of target groups in the labour market, and introducing new approaches for ensuring equality between men and women

Goals: Providing financial support for up to 12 projects that will offer comprehensive solutions for fostering social inclusion and employability of vulnerable groups and ensuring equality between men and women

Indicators: Number of newly developed methods of work that aim to ensure greater employability and social inclusion  
Number of people from the target group included in programmes of motivation and training for greater social inclusion and employability of people from target groups  
Number of people from the target group who are directly or indirectly employed  
Number of new programmes for easier reconciliation of professional, family and private life  
Number of new approaches for ensuring equality between men and women

Responsible bodies: Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs

Implementing bodies: Project partnerships selected in the public tender

Implementation timetable: 2010–2014

Funds: EUR 7,000,000 (of which 85% from the European Social fund and 15% from the State budget)<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The amount of funds provided will depend on the number of projects proposed by the Roma community and later approved.

<sup>6</sup> The amount of funds provided will depend on the number of projects proposed by the Roma community and later approved.

#### **4.4. Priority Area No. 4: HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE IMPROVEMENT**

##### **4.4.1. Review of the situation**

On the basis of the Programme of Measures for Assisting Roma adopted in 1995, the following tasks have been realised:

- A special project working group was formed to address the issue of Roma healthcare; a meeting was organised with representatives of the Slovenian Roma Association and field health institutions. The group continued its work towards promoting healthy nutrition among Roma children.
- The Centre for Contagious Diseases of the Institute of Public Health of the Republic of Slovenia studied aspects of accessibility of vaccination services and gathered data for 2000 on vaccination coverage among Roma pre-school and school children. Data indicate that the share of vaccinated children (against all diseases) is drastically below the Slovenian average.
- In 2002/2003, the Pomurje Cancer Society carried out a series of five workshops for the promotion of a healthy way of life among the Roma population (village of Pušča) under the PHARE project for promotion of health in local communities. In 2005, the Pomurje Cancer Society carried out research on the Roma lifestyle under the same PHARE project.
- In 2002, the Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota, in cooperation with the Beltinci municipality and the Centre for Social Work and Roma, was successful in eradicating tuberculosis in the Beltinci Roma settlement.
- Within the framework of public tenders for co-financing programmes for protection and promotion of health in 2004 and 2005, the Ministry of Health supported the programme "Raising nutrition culture for promotion and protection of the health of Roma".
- Based on a decision of the Government, the Ministry of Health also co-financed the programme "Investment in health and development – Mura" in 2005 and 2006; the programme was carried out by the Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota. Part of this programme also covered the promotion of a healthy lifestyle among the Roma community and the minority Hungarian community.
- Institutions and services operating within the primary healthcare system (hospitals, health centres and home care services) regularly provide healthcare to the Roma community.
- The results of the study "Risk factors for non-communicable diseases in adult Roma community members" (Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota; 2007) confirmed assumptions regarding certain characteristics of the Roma community, namely that a low education level, high unemployment rate, poor social and economic situation, insufficient participation in prevention programmes and the presence of chronic diseases contribute to health inequalities in the Roma community. The study provides a basis for drafting programmes and projects to promote health and reduce health inequalities.
- An amendment to the Health Care and Health Insurance Act of 2008 grants to socially disadvantaged individuals and their family members who do not fully enjoy rights under compulsory health insurance and are eligible for financial social assistance the right to have the difference to the full value of healthcare services covered from the State budget.
- In 2009, the Ministry of Health financed a project by the Pomurje Cancer Society entitled "Roma", which is an innovative approach to promotion of health in the Roma community.



- In 2008/2009, the Ministry of Health, within the framework of a call for applications launched by the Slovenian Research Agency, co-financed the study "Assessment of the Use of Health Care Services among Roma Women and Children in Slovenia – Contribution to Reducing Health Inequalities". The results of the research will provide an expert basis for the preparation of adequate programmes for target groups.
- In 2008 in Radenci, the Ministry of Health, in cooperation with social partners, organised the first national conference "Reducing Health Inequalities among the Roma Population". In 2009, a second national conference "Health in Roma Women" was held in Novo Mesto.

In line with the development policy of the Ministry of Health and due to its importance and special nature, improvement of the health status of Roma is included in the national programme for health promotion. In cooperation with institutions and services operating within the primary healthcare system on both national and local levels, with municipalities and Roma representatives, the Ministry of Health will continue to implement special programmes and measures for improving the health status of the Roma population.

Because of its specificity, the health status of the Roma population is not in such close relation to the quality of the public health system as is the case for the majority population. Along with the characteristics of the Roma culture and tradition, their health status also depends on the improvement of their housing and living conditions, hygiene, educational level, employment rate and increased social protection. It is therefore imperative that planning and implementing relevant measures take into consideration their impact on the health status of the Roma population. Participation of all institutions and services at both national and local levels, as well as municipalities and Roma representatives in planning and implementing measures is thus paramount; in addition, it is necessary to raise public awareness of the urgency to solve problems faced by Roma in all segments of society.

An example of good practice in the area of healthcare is the "*Health promotion strategy and action plan for tackling health inequalities in the Pomurje region*"<sup>7</sup>.

The Strategy was prepared by the Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota in the context of bilateral cooperation with the Flemish Institute for Health Promotion. The overall objective of this strategic plan is to improve the state of health of the regional population and thus reduce health inequalities between regions; furthermore, the plan addresses health inequalities within the region. The programme to promote health focuses particularly on individuals and vulnerable population groups, and seeks to address health inequalities. The Strategy is based on an analysis of the current situation and regional priority tasks, and forms part of the Regional Development Programme 2007–2013, available at <http://www.zzv-ms.si>.

Roma people are one of the priority vulnerable groups covered by the plan. Objective 4.8 of the Strategy concerning promotion of a healthy lifestyle among minorities and ethnic communities defines four specific targets: (1) encouraging participation of the Roma community in addressing health issues by transferring responsibility; (2) identifying health needs of the Roma community (proposing and carrying out periodic research on the Roma lifestyle, empowering the Roma community to be able to identify their own needs); (3) raising

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<sup>7</sup> Branislava Belović, Tatjana Buzeti, Tatjana Krajnc Nikolić, Neelke Vernailen, Stephan Van den Broucke, Mojca Činč, Agata Zupančič: Strategija za krepitev zdravja in akcijski načrt za zmanjševanje neenakosti v zdravju v pomurski regiji = Health promotion strategy and action plan for tackling health inequalities in the Pomurje region. Murska Sobota: Zavod za zdravstveno varstvo; Brussels: Flemish Institute for Health Promotion, 2005.

the level of culturally appropriate health policy for the Roma community (drafting and implementing a programme of health promotion among Roma with their active participation); (4) increasing participation in preventive healthcare programmes among Roma (by including preventive health services in health programmes for Roma, and by providing training for health workers in the field of prevention activities aimed at the Roma population).

The programme has been specifically designed for the Pomurska region, but can also be used as an initiative and an example of applying a strategic planning approach to setting priorities and building strategies and objectives to develop measures to reduce health inequalities, in particular of vulnerable groups.

Since 2006, the Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota has been implementing programmes and activities aimed at reducing health inequalities among the Roma population within the annual programme for the provision of public services in the area of public health. As a member of the team working on health promotion, a Roma representative is employed by the Institute. Further to the programme (approaches in particular) for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle of Roma is the development and implementation of media activities and drafting and publishing of booklets promoting a healthy lifestyle among Roma (in both Slovenian and Romani languages).

#### **4.4.2. Measures**

##### **4.4.2.1. Promotion and protection of health of the Roma population, with a special focus on the most vulnerable groups – women and children**

###### Description:

The study "Risk factors for non-communicable diseases in adult Roma community members" (Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota; 2007) showed a higher occurrence of chronic diseases in this population, insufficient participation in prevention programmes and a greater share of individuals with risk factors for non-communicable diseases in comparison with the majority population. The study provides a basis for drafting programmes and projects to promote health and reduce health inequalities among both the Roma and Slovenian populations, and among Roma communities living in Prekmurje, Dolenjska, Posavje and Bela Krajina. Since 2006, the Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota has been implementing programmes and activities aimed at reducing health inequalities among the Roma population within the annual programme for the provision of public services in the area of public health. The Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota has adequate expertise and experience in relation to improving the state of health of the Roma; in addition, a Roma representative employed at the Institute who ensures liaising and cooperation with the Roma Union of Slovenia and Roma local communities is working on health promotion. The Institute's expertise is a guarantee of further good work and upgrading of current activities. Consequently, the Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota will be the coordinator of activities for promotion of health of the Roma population at the national level and will draw up guidelines that will serve as a basis for the Ministry of Health in setting up eventual additional measures.

###### Goals:

(1) Developing appropriate approaches and programmes for promotion of health of the Roma population and for particularly vulnerable groups within this population, in due consideration of their cultural and linguistic peculiarities; implementing successful programmes in all

areas with Roma population. Implementation of programmes in other areas will be coordinated by the relevant institutes of public health.

(2) Setting up a programme of activities aimed at enhancing health within the Roma population in cooperation with operators that, under the auspices of the Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota, develop adequate approaches and programmes, provide professional assistance to other institutes of public health and relevant institutions concerning implementation of such programmes, provide continuous training to health workers and other staff working with Roma, coordinate activities for promoting the health of the whole Roma population, and draw up guidelines for the Ministry of Health.

Indicators:

- Preparation of a programme of activities and establishment of a working group for promotion of health among the Roma
- Implementation of such programmes for health promotion

In the long run:

- Positive trends concerning risk factors for non-communicable diseases and increased use of health services among Roma population
- Improved health status indicators of the Roma population

Implementing bodies: Ministry of Health, Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota with partner institutes of public health from regions with a Roma population, and other bodies and operators

Implementation timetable: In 2009, the Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota carried out activities in the project *Reducing Health Inequalities* under its annual work programme. The programme will continue in the following years. The programme will be extended, and a working group has been established and tasked with developing approaches and programmes for health promotion. New programmes will be implemented and continuously carried out in areas with a Roma population.

Funds: Envisaged funds for extension of the programme *Reducing Health Inequalities* amount to EUR 120,000 per year, and will be granted yearly on the basis of the programme proposed by the Institute for Public Health Murska Sobota.

Financial source: Budget of the Republic of Slovenia

**4.4.2.2. Conferences and consultations on the health of Roma and support of cross-border cooperation in this field**

Description:

Long-term, continuous and expertise-backed activities are needed to improve healthcare and reduce health inequalities in the Roma community. An important form of training, acquisition of adequate skills and knowledge concerning appreciation and understanding of Roma culture is cross-border conferences, consultations and meetings among representative border regions.

These meetings and national conferences will be carried out under the auspices of the Ministry of Health. Implementing bodies will see to it that these activities are alternatively held in all regions with a Roma population.

Goals: (1) Raise awareness among the expert and general public, as well as among Roma, concerning Roma health issues  
(2) Organise training for medical staff in order to improve their capabilities

Indicators: Conferences and meetings held

Implementing bodies: Ministry of Health, Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota, Roma Union of Slovenia, Council of the Roma Community of the Republic of Slovenia

Implementation timetable: Starting in 2008, a conference on Roma health, a national consultation, a regional meeting of experts or a cross-border meeting of experts will be held every year.

Funds: Funds earmarked annually in the State budget

Financial source: Budget of the Republic of Slovenia

#### **4.5. Priority Area No. 5: PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF VARIATIONS OF THE ROMA LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND INFORMATION AND PUBLISHING ACTIVITIES**

##### **4.5.1. Review of the situation**

The Ministry of Culture (MK) has been creating bases for cultural activities of the Roma community in accordance with Article 65 of the Constitution. Following the needs that were expressly put forward by members of the Roma community, it ensures their involvement in measures dedicated to them. Since 2004, activities aimed at the Roma community have been carried out by the Division for Minority Cultural Rights and the Development of Cultural Diversity (hereafter: Division), which has developed manifold normative, organisational and financial instruments, advocating for a coherent policy that now already includes three programmes: a *special programme*, dedicated to protect specific rights of the Roma and involving positive discrimination; an *integration programme* for their inclusion in cultural and art programmes by public and other institutions; and a *European programme*, aiming to fill gaps in training and employment programmes for the Roma in the cultural sphere.

The Exercising of the Public Interest in Culture Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 96/02; hereinafter: ZUJIK) expressly stipulates in Article 65 that the State shall finance programmes or projects specifically dedicated to the Roma community.

Every year, Roma associations underline the problem of covering the rent costs for premises due to a lack of earmarked funds in the specific programme of the MK. Although they can apply for a contribution to space-related costs and rentals (and are required to substantiate such requests, explaining options for using public culture infrastructure in accordance with

Articles 74 and 75 of the ZUJIK), the funds available are usually not sufficient to cover such costs. The Act lays down in Articles 74–79 that premises may be rented to users operating in the area of culture and determines the obligations of operators or users of public culture facilities, change of use, transfer for no consideration (without payment), eligible use and costs for the premises. Regretfully, the above articles are not yet being implemented to the desired extent. Efforts will have to be directed to developing measures to allow cultural associations to use facilities in compliance with these articles. This will permit access to infrastructure for Roma associations, and consequently their cultural activity, and contribute to better social inclusion of Roma in cultural life, as well as their integration locally. Moreover, they will be encouraged in their creativity, and the quality of their cultural production will be improved.

Also problematic for the Roma is insufficient human resources: most Roma associations are headed by members who are not qualified for administrative tasks and accounting, which was revealed by an audit of their financial documentation in 2009.

Another difficulty is co-financing of projects from other sources, in particular from municipal budgets, which has still not come to life. So far, only the Municipality of Novo Mesto has co-financed several Roma community cultural projects. One of the reasons may be that Roma operators lack qualified human resources for fund-raising.

The Ministry of Culture supports Roma cultural activities with a **special programme**. Roma projects have been included in this programme since 1993. At first, projects were prepared and filed by the Association of Slovenian Cultural Organisations, after 1997 also by the Roma Union of Slovenia (formerly called the Association of Roma Societies in Slovenia/*Zveza romskih društev Slovenije*); after 2000, Roma associations started to apply for projects independently (subject to satisfying the relevant requirements); since 2006, it has been possible for individual authors/performers from the Roma community to apply on their own if they have acquired the status of "self-employed professional in the field of culture".

More projects are being financed from year to year.<sup>8</sup> Within the specific programme of the Ministry of Culture, the following activities of the Roma community are supported: publishing and editing, cultural animation, activities for maintaining the Roma language, international cooperation of Roma people, mutual cultural cooperation of various minority ethnic groups, presentations of Roma cultural activities and problems in Slovenia and beyond, events, lectures, seminars, etc.

Only a few cultural projects were included in the **integration programme** of the Ministry of culture, or financed as part of this **programme** – only seven to date.<sup>9</sup>

Two Roma media organisations, founded by the Roma Association of Slovenia, are registered in the Media Register at the Media Directorate: Radio Romic (radio) and Romano Them/Roma World (print). The Media Directorate has launched a call for applications for co-

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<sup>8</sup> From only one project financed in 1993, the number rose to six projects in 1996 and reached 26 to 36 projects during the time from 1998 to 2005, while in 2009 there were as many as 60 projects financed.

<sup>9</sup> Concerts on the occasion of World Roma Day at the Cankarjev Dom Cultural Centre in Ljubljana (in 2002, 2003, 2004), release of a CD recorded live at the concert and *Roma Suite I* by Traje Brizani (in 2004), release of a CD by the RD (Roma Society) Amala (in 2005), the project "Roma people invited to the library" in Metlika (in 2005), and the guest appearance of violoncellist Bernard Brizani at the international festival in Minnesota (in 2007).

financing programme content, which includes some Roma-related topics. In 2007, TV IDEA KANAL co-financed television programmes on the topic of Roma horizons. Within the scope of media-covered Roma integration, in the coming years some solutions could also be developed as part of the national media service.

Since 1996, the costs of cultural animation have been financed through the specific programme, supporting one to two cultural animators every year.<sup>10</sup>

Funds earmarked by the Ministry of Culture for Roma community projects in the field of culture, as well as the number of projects and applicants have been increasing from year to year, along with the amount of funds being applied for. Therefore, co-financing of all (or at least the majority) of these projects is still not possible. For example, in 2007 the amount of requested funds was 2.8 times the amount available and in 2009, 4.1 times more.

The Ministry of Culture does not differentiate between autochthonous and non-autochthonous Roma, and this has been an ongoing source of complaints on the part of international organisations. On the other hand, a positive feature is a development-oriented system (conditions and services for art practitioners), and the care for a coherent policy within the Ministry of Culture in areas concerning the Roma community. It should also be mentioned that the special programme includes services such as consultation, professional assistance and assessment of MK services. Within the MK special programme, the number of applications, co-financed entities (associations and other NGOs) and projects has grown every year, and there has been a steady expansion of activities. In 2009, 60 projects, proposed by 18 entities, were co-financed.

Some Roma associations apply for funds for cultural projects directly, outside the Roma Union of Slovenia. Tender conditions now make this possible, as this enables application by a larger variety of individuals and organisations. Since 2006, the special programme has permitted direct applications by Roma artists, making it even more development-oriented. In 2006, a special measure was introduced: a weekly open-door day of the Head of the Sector, intended for artists. Also in 2006, the commission for cultural activities of special groups in the Republic of Slovenia decided to invite individuals of legal persons to their sessions in cases where it was evident that additional explanations were necessary.

Technical services of the Division for Minority Cultural Rights provide, in addition to operations linked to financial instruments, counselling and assistance in implementing cultural activities. The counselling project, set up in 2000, uses an andragogical approach and has been continuously implemented and upgraded. Until now, assistance was provided with applications, filling in forms, drafting projects, fulfilling contractual obligations, realisation of activities and monitoring. The results are encouraging: more and more applications are well done, more and more Roma associations wish to apply directly and acquire necessary skills to understand MK procedures (almost every year projects are 100% realised), and certain projects are growing and advancing to more sophisticated levels. Continuous information activities are being carried out (on possibilities of financing, application procedures, how to prepare and complete dossiers, payment dates, etc.). All information is available on the MK website (in particular, calls for applications, financing procedures, tables showing financed

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<sup>10</sup> One cultural animator operates within the Roma Union of Slovenia. The animator is in charge of animation for all groups and individuals of the Roma Community; his work covers organisation, editorial work, preparation of programmes/schedules, directing, etc. The other animator operates within the Roma Society Romano Vozo Velenje and has been applying for the specific MK programmes since 2005.

projects and programmes), while information is also being disseminated through meetings with counsellors, e-mails and counselling programmes.

Project providers are invited to include comments, praise, opinions and ideas in their reports submitted to the Ministry of Culture; these are then gathered in the Ministry's annual report and sent to all providers within the context of cooperation between the Ministry and Roma community providers of cultural activities.

Additionally, Roma documents received are systematically stored and processed in the MK INDOK Centre at Metelkova 4 in Ljubljana (books, newspapers, video and audio recordings, etc.) and are available through the COBISS system. Representatives of various organisations who have had the opportunity to examine these materials have expressed their appreciation of the initiative and selection of materials. The staff of the also participate in events organised by the Roma Union of Slovenia and Roma associations and artists.

Every year, a public procedure is initiated for the selection of Roma community cultural projects (either a public tender or a public call for applications – in the last 3 years). When a procedure is launched, the counsellor notifies all (potential) providers that have already worked with the Directorate, enabling the information to reach as many Roma providers as possible, and offers all the necessary assistance. The public call (request for proposals) for the selection of cultural projects for the Roma community in Slovenia in 2010, which will be financed in 2009 by the Republic of Slovenia with budgetary funds earmarked for cultural activities, was published on 6 November 2009 in the Official Gazette RS, No. 89, and on the website of the Ministry of Culture.

The new EU Programme for Culture is also a new opportunity for Roma. Initial activities under this programme include counselling potential participants in public tenders and drafting standards for preparation and carrying out relevant public procedures. European funding will be available for activities that in the past had been under-supported within the special programme (The European Commission has earmarked almost EUR 10 million for the period up to 2013) for training and employment of Roma in the field of cultural activities.

In 2008 and 2009, the Directorate published two calls for applications for development projects to improve the employability of vulnerable social groups in the field of culture and support their social inclusion. The selected projects are being financed from the European Social Fund under the Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007–2013 (Increased employability of vulnerable groups in the field of culture and support for their social inclusion) and from the budget of the Republic of Slovenia.

Immediately prior to launching a call for applications, the Directorate carries out several activities: first, it prepares a workshop on how to apply, and then, after the selection of providers has been made, a workshop is set up on how to prepare and submit requests for payment.

A positive development in the field of information activities for the Roma community is the *production of radio and television broadcasts for Roma*. These have been broadcast for several years by local radio and television stations and lately also as part of the *Slovenian national radio and television programming*: since December 2007, the weekly Roma show "Naše poti – Amare Droma" has been broadcast on RA SLO 1, and since 23 March 2008, the

fortnightly 15-minute show "So Vakeres? – Kaj govoriš?", prepared by Roma authors, has also been broadcast on national television.

The *Roma Information Centre* – ROMIC has been functioning under the auspices of the Roma Union of Slovenia since 2003. It successfully applied in the most recent public tender issued by the Post and Electronic Communications Agency of the Republic of Slovenia (Decision on initiation of a public tender on the assignment of radio frequencies for the provision of broadcasting, Official Gazette RS, No. 118/2007) and was assigned a local radio frequency for the Murska Sobota area (97.6 MHz).

#### **4.5.2. Measures**

##### **4.5.2.1. Creating conditions for the protection of special rights of Roma community members (special programme)**

The Ministry of Culture will continue implementing the special programme for the protection of special rights of the Roma community by taking into account the circumstances in which this community lives. It will do so with a balance between supporting their identity and their own development-oriented projects.

Because of the particularity of the situation in which Roma community members participate in the field of culture (no cultural infrastructure, a relatively small number of professionals in this field, etc.), the Ministry of Culture will provide, through adequate operators, professional assistance and counselling to all entities that request such services. The counselling programme will be carried out transparently, will use an andragogical approach and will be continuously assessed and upgraded. Details of the public call for proposals will be published and available in the usual manner. The Ministry of Culture will, prior to deciding on projects proposed by the Roma community, ask the Council of the Roma Community for their opinion, which will then be presented and discussed at a meeting of the commission for cultural activities of special groups in the Republic of Slovenia.

Goals: Creating conditions for protection of special rights of Roma community members

Indicators: Drafting a special annual programme of projects

Implementing bodies: Ministry of Culture

Implementation timetable: A public call for proposals within the special programme is normally launched at the end of a year for the following year.

Funds: Funds are earmarked in the budget of the Republic of Slovenia under item 6423. Additional funds from municipal budgets would be necessary, provided at the request of the Public Fund for Cultural Activities, in the amount of 50% of the amount earmarked in the State budget (State budget funds for 2010 amount to EUR 87,583; an additional sum of EUR 43,792 from municipal budgets is necessary).

Financial source: Co-financing of projects from other sources, in particular from municipalities, has still not come to life; municipalities will be



encouraged to provide funds, in particular to cover costs related to premises and regular activities of Roma associations.

#### **4.5.2.2. Monitoring and promotion of integration of Roma cultural activities (integration programme)**

Description:

The objective of these measures is to make wider social integration and demarginalisation possible, and to enhance the quality of life of all persons in the cultural field. Once a year (as part of reporting on the implementation of the National Programme for Culture), information on the inclusion of Roma programmes in other Ministry of Culture programmes, as well as within the wider framework of culture infrastructure will be gathered and analysed (programmes on music, media, protection of cultural heritage, etc.). This is also one of the priority tasks defined in the National Programme for Culture. At the same time, information concerning implementation of the ZUJIK, in particular Articles 74 to 79, and data on regional amateur cultural activities will be gathered. Providers of cultural activities in this field will propose and prepare reasoned recommendations for cooperation and integration, with the aim of achieving positive trends of integration. In particular this is necessary in the field of protection of cultural heritage as part of cultural diversity, considering that in compliance with a series of international instruments protection of cultural heritage diversity is an obligation of the State. Prior to launching the programme and in order to define the timetable of development, it is paramount to consult the Council of the Roma Community and obtain their opinion concerning past progress, their perception of the situation and development needs.

Goals: Monitoring and promoting the integration of Roma cultural activities

Indicators: List of projects integrated into Ministry of Culture programmes in various fields

Implementing bodies: Ministry of Culture, Public Fund for Cultural Activities (a representative of the Fund is always invited to participate in meetings of the commission for cultural activities of special groups in the Republic of Slovenia), Ministry of Public Administration (simplifying application processes, training seminars for both majority and minority populations)

Implementation timetable: The extent of integration will be ascertained each year. Public calls for applications and public tenders in fields covered by the Ministry of Culture are carried out throughout the year.

Funds: Additional funds should be earmarked for reaching the goal of integration and used for fields where the criteria for quality integration are being met. At this point it is impossible to predict in which fields arts practitioners from minority communities will produce outstanding achievements.

Financial source: Budget of the Republic of Slovenia

#### **4.5.2.3. Creating conditions for training and employing Roma in the field of culture, in due consideration of the gender aspect**

Description:

As the Roma community, like other minority communities, has a shortage of culture professionals and artists, funds offered by EU Structural Funds for training and employment (and for self-employment) of Roma and other people engaged in preservation and development of Roma culture are most welcome. Support is offered for those projects which, within the framework of a specific cultural activity, will provide training and jobs for Roma and others engaged in Roma cultural activities, in particular vital staff. The Division is already carrying out this programme in cooperation with the competent internal organisational unit of the Ministry of Culture, with a coordinator at the interministerial level, within the framework of the public call for applications for the selection of development projects to improve the employability of vulnerable social groups in the field of culture and support their social inclusion. A series of workshops has already been carried out with the aim of enabling potential operators to participate in the programme and benefit from funds available to vulnerable groups, including Roma.

Goals: Creating conditions necessary for training-employment programmes

Indicators: Prepared plan of drawing down ESF funds

Implementing bodies: Ministry of Culture, Government Office for Local Self-Government and Regional Policy, Roma Union of Slovenia

Implementation timetable: The first public call was launched in 2008; in 2009 a call was launched for the period 2009–2010, and a third call was launched in February 2010.

Funds: From EU Structural Funds and from the budget of the Republic of Slovenia (in the amount of EUR 1,600,000 from each source for two-year tenders); no additional funds are needed.

Financial source: European Social Fund, budget of the Republic of Slovenia

**4.5.2.4. Provision of special services for authors, artists and professionals working in the field of Roma culture**

Description:

For many years now, the Division has been particularly supportive of individuals who, though their creative work, professionalism and artistic activity, have promoted the cultural progress of minority groups. Since 2006, the Head of the Division for Minority Cultural Rights and the Division's legal counsellor have set Wednesday as a regular open-door day (relevant information is published on the website of the Ministry of Culture and is disseminated orally on various occasions). This initiative offers the possibility of a systemic collection of opinions, proposals, initiatives and ideas on measures and programmes devised for Roma, discussion of problems arising in the creative process and presentation of options for promotion and presentation of work done, as well as for legal counselling to Roma on their cultural rights. As a result, recommendations are prepared on how to improve dissemination and promotion of Roma cultural achievements with a view to enhancing integration of the Roma community. The idea is being studied of reshaping the measure so that it could be implemented by an

external provider with ESF funds within the framework of the priority initiative "Improve the employability of vulnerable social groups in the field of culture and support their social inclusion".

Goals: Overcoming inequalities in starting cultural activities

Indicators: Review of special services provided with the aim of creating positive discrimination

Implementing body: Ministry of Culture

Implementation timetable: Ongoing

Funds: The measure has already been partly implemented by the Division; in the coming years, counselling could be provided as a separate service by a special, adequately qualified provider paid from ESF funds. No additional funds for these projects are necessary, as projects proposed by the above providers are financed from the three programmes implemented by the Division.

Financial source: European Social Fund, budget of the Republic of Slovenia

## **4.6. Priority Area No. 6: AWARENESS RAISING AND COMBATING DISCRIMINATION**

### **4.6.1. Review of the situation**

Discrimination continues to be an issue in our society, and members of the Roma community continue to be an easy target. The most common reasons for discrimination are stereotypes and prejudice, lack of information on discriminated social groups, fear of the unknown and aspirations to overcome one's own feelings of inferiority. A consequence of discrimination is marginalisation and social exclusion of certain social groups, which may be reproduced from generation to generation. This negatively affects not only the discriminated individual or group, but also society as a whole, as it creates inequalities within the society and weakens it.

Today, it is imperative to act in order to eliminate prejudices and stereotypes concerning Roma. In autumn 2008, the Republic of Slovenia initiated the awareness-raising campaign "Enough! Let's eliminate prejudice, get acquainted with Roma". The campaign activities are coordinated by the Government Office for National Minorities in cooperation with the Council of Europe Information Office in Slovenia. In 2009, the Government Office for National Minorities carried out the following activities:

- The Government Office for National Minorities carried out activities of the campaign Enough! at all major events organised during the Slovenian Presidency of the EU, in particular at the conference on education for Roma held in May 2009 at Brdo pri Kranju, the roundtable on the position of minorities in Slovenia and Slovenes living outside the Republic of Slovenia (held in June 2009), and at the opening event of the Council of Europe project "European Path of Roma Culture and Inheritance" (October 2009, Lendava and Kamenci).

- In 2009, within the framework of the Enough! campaign, a series of meetings, roundtables and cultural events – some under the patronage of the campaign – were carried out, as well as numerous competitions. Noteworthy are: the month of Roma culture *Romano čhon* and the Slovene-Romani musical *Glass Apple* (Stekleno jabolko). Several competitions were held – one was launched to select a slogan for the project "Let's say something nice about Roma" – and the six best slogans were then broadcast by local radio stations. In 2009, the Slovenian Communication Office launched a public call for applications to co-finance communication and educational activities on EU affairs, which included a special lot on *awareness raising and combating prejudices against Roma*, and to finance NGO activities in this field, which had to promote the objectives of the Enough! campaign. Activities under the campaign were also carried out in other venues, such as the Student Arena, Young Volunteers' Festival, Rock Otočec, weeks of culture, summer camps for Roma and other young people, etc.
- Campaign materials were distributed at all relevant events: leaflets, posters, CDs with a Roma adaptation of the EU anthem (*Music Beyond Prejudice*), manuals, bags with the campaign logo, etc.
- In November 2009, the Enough! campaign entered primary schools – a letter was sent to all principals (signed by the Minister of Education and Sport and the Director of the Government Office for National Minorities) inviting them to include in their regular work activities intended to promote and disseminate the objectives of the campaign among young people with the aim of reducing prejudice and eliminating stereotypes.
- In 2009, the famous entertainers Murat&Jose, who sing about how important it is to respect diversity, became ambassadors of the campaign. In this capacity they participated in campaign events, in particular those addressing young people.
- Particularly active are members of the Roma community, who organised a great number of events on the issue of how to reduce intolerance towards the Roma community. The Roma Information Centre (ROMIC) prepared the campaign song *Enough! – Hejrin!* with the basic message of the campaign – enough prejudice, let's open our hearts, let's accept one another, each individual must contribute to better coexistence and a decent living for all. The song will be broadcast by all Slovenian radio stations and will be one of the trademarks of the campaign.

The Government Office for Nationalities will continue to carry out activities addressing the issue of discrimination and intolerance against Roma under the campaign and beyond.

Experience in working with the Roma population indicates that efforts of national authorities and municipalities do not produce good results if Roma are not actively included in these activities. The Roma themselves thus become more and more aware of the fact that without their active participation and better organisation it will be impossible to improve their status. The Government Office for Nationalities has continuously participated in activities aimed at inclusion of Roma councillors in local self-government and provided funds for training and education programmes for those Roma representatives who participated in elections to municipal councils and were actually elected, and for Roma activists. In the period 2002–2006, funds were earmarked for this purpose. The last such training course for Roma councillors and activists was carried out in March 2007 in Murska Sobota. Still, the need for organised training for all Roma councillors and activists persists, and adequate measures will have to be taken.

It is, of course, extremely important to train Roma councillors and activists for their work in municipal councils and associations, in relation with national bodies and otherwise, but it is equally important to prepare and train those public servants who in their daily work have contact with members of the Roma community. In this context, education is focused on understanding and overcoming discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes. A fine example of good practice is the training of policemen for work in a multicultural community. In 2003 and 2004, in the Policy Academy project "*Policing in a multiethnic community*", an intensive training programme was carried out for staff from police directorates of Ljubljana, Krško, Novo mesto, Maribor and Murska Sobota. Training was focused on issues linked to working with Roma. The objective of such training courses is to make policemen aware of their own prejudices against a certain group or individual and the negative impact such prejudices have on their professionalism, to introduce them to Roma culture and traditions, understand the importance of an adequate approach, evaluate ways of management of security events and understand the importance of dialogue. Activities continued after the termination of the project and have since become an ongoing form of preventive police work in areas with multicultural communities. All training activities are being carried out *in loco*, in areas with Roma communities. Roma councillors and other representatives of the Roma population participate actively in such training events. Their aim is not only to enhance police competence, but primarily to establish dialogue with the community. The results are manifold: fewer offences, fewer occasions when policemen were unable to carry out relevant procedures, more offences and crimes reported by Roma themselves and joint management – within individual competences – of complex security events that might, were they not resolved in a timely manner, become serious crimes.

A follow-up of the above training courses was an introductory course in the Roma language (40 lessons) and a project of informing inhabitants of certain Roma settlements about legislative provisions concerning typical offences in certain areas and thus causing discomfort to the neighbouring population. A total of 47 policemen voluntarily participated in a course in Romani, the Roma dialect spoken in Dolenjska, carried out jointly by the Police and the Roma Union of Slovenia. Training courses are ongoing and have become a continuous form of work. In past years, more than 600 policemen have participated in this training.

These trainings were organised and carried out in close cooperation among representatives of the Institute for Ethnic Studies, the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman, Amnesty International of Slovenia and, in particular, representatives of the Roma Union of Slovenia and Roma councillors.

## **4.6.2. Measures**

### **4.6.2.1. Activities aimed at preventing discrimination and eliminating prejudice and stereotypes concerning Roma**

#### Description:

Prejudice against and stereotypes of Roma are, unfortunately, still very much present in contemporary society. They are as powerful as they are wrong. The Roma are confronted with discrimination in all facets of social life, and it is therefore imperative to put in place appropriate activities to raise awareness and the level of information of who the Roma really are. Activities are being devised that will enable individuals to recognise their own prejudices and stereotypes concerning Roma. Special attention will, of course, be devoted to young people.

In November 2008, the Republic of Slovenia joined a campaign jointly launched by the European Commission and the Council of Europe under the motto: *Let's eliminate prejudice, get acquainted with Roma*. In Slovenia, the campaign is coordinated by the Government Office for Nationalities in close cooperation with the Council of Europe Information Office in Slovenia, the Roma community and non-governmental organisations. A number of activities have already been carried out and materials have been prepared (leaflets, posters, manual, etc.) and distributed among the target public. Combating discrimination is not an isolated battle, but a war, and therefore campaign activities will continue to be carried out during the whole period covered by the National Programme of Measures for Roma.

Goals: Targeted activities aimed at informing the public, and in particular young people, about prejudice and stereotypes concerning Roma

Indicators: Number of activities carried out, number of participants in individual activities, questionnaires

Implementing bodies: Government Office for National Minorities in cooperation with the Roma community, NGOs and other competent institutions

Implementation timetable: Ongoing from 2010

Funds: Approximately EUR 40,000 per year

Financial source: Budget of the Republic of Slovenia

#### **4.6.2.2. Training of Roma community representatives in self-managed local community councils (Roma councillors), associations and other organisations (Roma activists)**

Description:

The Roma Community Council of the Republic of Slovenia will, in close cooperation with the competent national authorities, coordinate and carry out introductory training sessions for Roma community representatives in self-managed local community councils (Roma councillors), associations and other organisations (Roma activists) on areas covered by individual national bodies (for instance, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning will organise training courses on basic elements of spatial planning). These courses will be prepared and carried out in close cooperation with all national bodies and relevant institutions. This training will introduce Roma participants to legislation and procedures in particular fields, and will familiarise them with their rights and obligations. The aim of such training is to enhance the capacity of Roma community representatives to actively participate in local self-managed community councils and enable prominent Roma representatives (representatives of associations and other organisations – Roma activists) to play a more active role in promoting the interests of the Roma population in all areas relevant to the community.

Goals: Carry out at least five training courses every year

Indicators: Number of courses carried out, number of participants, questionnaires

Implementing bodies: Roma Community Council of the Republic of Slovenia, Roma Union of Slovenia in cooperation with the competent national authorities and other professional bodies, and professionals with expertise in relevant fields

Implementation timetable: Ongoing from 2010

Funds: Annual earmarked budget funds

Financial source: Budget of the Republic of Slovenia

#### **4.6.2.3. Training of public administration and judicial personnel who come into contact with members of the Roma community in their work**

Description:

In order to establish a partnership with the Roma community and constructive dialogue between partners in a certain area, it is imperative to overcome certain stereotypes and prejudices rooted in the minds of the majority population, in particular prejudices of public servants in public administration services and in judicial authorities, who, in their everyday work, encounter members of the Roma community. The aim of this training is to confront public servants in public administration and courts with their own stereotypes and prejudices, and teach them a proper approach to the Roma population, train them to recognise and overcome stereotypes and *idéés reçues*, and teach them how to control the conflict situations they come across in their work. During these training courses, public administration and court personnel will be exposed to subjects such as combating racial discrimination, protection of human rights, history and cultural diversity of Roma community members in Slovenia, and elements of the Roma language (various Roma dialects). These training courses, with the participation of both the police and representatives of Roma community, have been successfully carried out for several years now by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Goals: Carry out at least five training courses every year

Indicators: Number of courses carried out, number of participants, questionnaires

Implementing bodies: Government Office for National Minorities (coordination of training) in cooperation with the Roma community and professionals with expertise in this field

Implementation timetable: Ongoing from 2010

Funds: Annual earmarked budget funds

Financial source: Budget of the Republic of Slovenia

## **5. MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF MEASURES**

Implementation of the National Programme of Measures for Roma will be systematically monitored: each year an assessment of measures will be carried out and, if necessary, modifications and amendments to the document will be proposed.

Pursuant to the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia Act, implementation of the National Programme of Measures for Roma will be monitored by the already appointed special government working commission. In compliance with Article 6 of ZRomS-1, the Government, at its 16<sup>th</sup> session, adopted Decision No. 09501-2/2009/3 (Government Decision Amending Decision No. 09501-2/2009/3) establishing and appointing the Government Commission for the Protection of the Roma Ethnic Community. The Commission has 16 members (8 representatives of national authorities, 4 representatives of the Roma Community Council of the Republic of Slovenia and 4 representatives of self-governing local communities in which representatives of the Roma community are elected to the city and/or municipal council). The Commission is chaired by the Minister of Education and Sport, while administrative affairs are conducted by the Government Office for National Minorities.

The tasks of the Commission are to:

- monitor the implementation of the National Programme of Measures provided for in the first paragraph of Article 6 of the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 33/2007);
- monitor the implementation of constitutional obligations and statutory provisions of the Republic of Slovenia relating to the protection of the Roma community;
- draft proposals and initiatives for the protection of the Roma community aimed at defining the official position of the Government and individual ministries;
- exchange opinions between representatives of the Roma community, self-managed local communities and state authorities on all issues relating to the status of the Roma community;
- discuss topical issues concerning the exercise of special rights of the Roma community.

The Commission adopted its rules of procedure, which were confirmed by the Government with Decision No. 09501-5/2009/6 of 14 July 2009.

Based on reports from individual state authorities and self-governing local communities where representatives of the Roma communities are elected to municipal councils, the Roma Community Council and other state authorities in accordance with the law governing local self-government, the Commission must prepare a report on implementation of the National Programme of Measures on an annual basis and submit it to the Government. The Government must, pursuant to Article 4, paragraph 4 of the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia Act report once a year to the National Assembly on the implementation of statutory obligations concerning the Roma community.