

**FINAL REPORT:**

**QUALITATIVE SURVEY (FOCUS GROUPS)**

**ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ROMA**

**IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

**JULY, 2005**



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## I. Background and objectives

In February 2005, eight central European states<sup>1</sup> and a number of international institutions such as the World Bank and The Open Society Institute launched a “Decade of Roma Inclusion.” The goal of the effort is to change prejudicial attitudes and develop support for government programs, aimed at bettering the lives of Roma through better employment opportunities, access to education, health and housing.

In order to develop this support, it is first essential to understand the drivers of these attitudes and perceptions among the general population. In addition, it is crucial to develop a more systematic and deeper understanding of the Roma population in these countries so that efforts are appropriately designed and targeted.

With this purpose in mind, the World Bank has commissioned a qualitative public opinion study in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Romania to Balkan British Social Surveys AD (BBSS), an independent research firm based in Sofia, Bulgaria. BBSS provided overall methodological guidance, operational coordination and quality control on this project, as well as fieldwork in Bulgaria. Fieldwork and reporting in Romania and the Czech Republic were assigned by BBSS, respectively, to CSOP, an associate company of BBSS based in Bucharest, and to Factum Invenio, an established opinion and market research agency based in Prague.

The qualitative survey has been carried out through conducting 8 focus groups in each of the three countries concerned. Research set out to answer the following questions:

- Develop an understanding of why people think the way they do about the Roma (not just what they think about the Roma).
- Determine how to change the minds, behaviors and attitudes of people toward the Roma, and how to build support for government policies meant to support the Roma.
- Identify the obstacles that exist to acceptance of government efforts to improve the lives of Roma.
- Identify the risks and opportunities associated with different aspects of reform.
- Identify opportunities to change the views of the general public toward Roma.
- Identify the messages that resonate most with populations to change their perceptions and views.

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<sup>1</sup> Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia

- Identify the 'ambassadors of change' – those elites who can be trusted by the general public and who can act as messengers for critical messages related to Roma policy.
- Identify target audiences whose attitudes may shift more easily than others, and who may lead the way to help change perceptions.

A presentation of key findings from the group discussions carried out under this project in Czech republic follows.

## II. Methodology

### ■ Focus Groups

- 5 Focus Groups with Non-Roma citizens
- 3 Focus Groups with Roma citizens

### ■ Sample recruitment criteria:

#### Non-Roma respondents

- Mix of Age: within the range 18 – 60 years
- Mix of Gender: approximately 50% female and 50% male respondents
- Mix of Educational level according to the Czech demographic quotas
- Mix of Representatives of different income levels
- 8 respondents in each group

#### Roma respondents

- Mix of Age: within the range 18 – 60 years
- Mix of Gender: approximately 50% female and 50% male respondents
- 8 respondents in each group

### ■ Timing of fieldworks: May 30<sup>th</sup> – June 1<sup>st</sup>

- **Location:**       **Prague** (1 Roma FG, 1 non-Roma FG)  
                          **Ústí nad Labem** (2 Roma FGs, 2 non-Roma FGs)  
                          **Ostrava** (2 non-Roma FGs)

#### Comments

Group demographic composition has been achieved as planned (see Appendix A).

Concerning the emotional and behavioral responses, most of the Roma respondents acted in very pleasant and open way. They felt very happy and satisfied (and behaved accordingly) that the representatives of the majority are interested in the Roma issues, willing to get to know their problems and ready to listen to their comments, wishes and proposals what is necessary to be done and changed.

Behavioral and emotional responses of the Non-Roma respondents seemed to be much more complicated. Most of these respondents – regardless of their age – approached the Roma issue very critically and impatiently; they acted rather intolerantly toward Roma minority and didn't believe such a goal like the Roma integration could ever come true. Especially the people from areas with a high density of Roma population tended to be more disappointed and distrustful toward the Roma community. Most of them were convinced that plenty of things and activities have been already done in order to better the life situation of Roma, but with no success and effect. They rather suggested that the Roma people themselves should be responsible and support such activities and changes, because it is concerning their own life conditions.

### III. Executive summary

#### General public attitudes toward the Roma and underlying rationales and emotions

Typically, the attitudes and predominant opinions of the representatives of the Non-Roma majority population toward Roma showed a **negative emotional involvement full of rejection and criticism**. Our Non-Roma residents present in the groups perceived the Roma ethnic as a not adaptable group of the population, which, however, were **not actually interested in being integrated into the Czech society**. Instead of making an effort to integrate, **Roma tend to make universal problems**, since their community is characteristic of a high unemployment, serious crime or incidence rate of various socially pathological acts. The majority population discussing and evaluating Roma often mentioned generalized judgments and prejudices of the type „All Roma steal“ or „All Roma make problems, cannot adapt“; asked why should they think so, our Non-Roma respondents answered they had their own, negative life experience with the Roma community.

This direction in the evaluation of Roma was manifested in the written descriptions of the Non-Roma population representatives who most often associated the Roma minority with:

- **Lack of adaptation** given by their unwillingness to conform to certain, established social rules, discipline,
- **Crime**,
- **Unemployment** partially or fully caused by the unwillingness of Roma to work,
- **Aggressiveness**.

Only in the descriptions of the Roma people the participants in the groups knew from their own life, now and then – still only **exceptionally** - appeared **positive comments such as** e.g., **love of children, family, or general solidarity** among Roma.

**The dominant antipathy and aversion** of Non-Roma residents largely **stem from the fact that these people believe that the Roma minority is a major source of social, political and economic problems** that negatively affect their everyday life (many admitted their fear of being mugged or robbed by Roma) as well as general quality of life in areas, cities, towns or regions with a strong presence of the Roma minority. At the same time the unfavorable Roma situation has adverse economic consequences in particular resulting from a high unemployment rate of Roma and their total dependence on social benefits. Last but not least the Roma issues reflect badly on our country and contribute to creating a not very good reputation of the Czech Republic abroad, especially because of Roma immigration to the West perceived there as the very picture of the supposed race discrimination.

The negative attitude towards the Roma shown by the Non-Roma majority population to a great deal reflects their feeling that the government has paid enough attention to, and has spent enough money on the Roma issues without actually achieving any goals. This **absence of satisfaction makes them frustrated, with no hope and with distrust of a possible success of any new initiatives to help the Roma**, which is manifested in an often-resigned attitude of Non-Roma citizens towards the Roma issues and their resolving. Moreover, this attitude is boosted by their **conviction that Roma tend to**

**abuse the help of the government, the social benefits used and that they actually parasite on the majority population** at the cost of other Czech citizens anyway.

In the Non-Roma population's view **the major problems** of the Roma minority are: **high unemployment rate, low education, serious crime, and dependence on addictive substances and activities** among Roma, and often **critical hygienic and economic living conditions**. The representatives of the majority blamed for this situation particularly the Roma mentality and nature alone, thanks to which they live today, pay attention to the present time and to the aspects of „here and now“, and do not look in the future and have no really deep-rooted sense of discipline and order. As a big problem perceived they name a **lack of motivation among Roma to integrate into the majority population**, which is manifested, inter alia, in the sphere of education, employment or social area. However, we should bear in mind that most of those asked understood the process of integration purely in the sense of Roma adaptation to conditions and conformity with the requirements defined by the majority population, in other words, in the sense of their full assimilation.

Only **few** of the asked representatives of the majority population **admitted some responsibility of the Czech majority for the current unfavorable situation in the Roma issues in the Czech Republic**. These people spoke admitted that the approach to the Roma minority in the past was very inconsiderate, even drastic, when Roma were banned from their traveling culture and so had to give in to the staid life in towns. In other words, they were forced to completely break with their long-term life tradition, were unnaturally moved house together in the designated localities regardless of strong Roma family ties, bonds and roots. **The unawareness of life of a different culture together with the dramatic circumstances of strict assimilation of Roma** into society only **intensified their inability to include and start prospering** within the Czech society.

The above mentioned **process of the Roma assimilation going on in the 50 and in the 60s of the 20th century was not treated on the part of the majority population, either**, which was not ready to accept a different group of Roma people among themselves and approached them with a considerable reserve. In the extremes it was manifested in a tendency in the area of schools to educate Roma children in special schools, or, in the area of labor market, where Roma were typically given only hard labor, manual jobs associated with a low social status.

The question **how to approach the Roma issues today** divided those asked into two main groups. Most of them, in line with their resigned attitude towards the Roma question and distrust of its possible resolving, shared an opinion that it is the responsibility of Roma to integrate into the Czech society, to adapt to the conditions and rules of life of the majority population, that the government has done enough for them already.

By contrast, a smaller group of our Non-Roma respondents believed that the majority population in its own interest should give a helping hand to Roma, particularly, in the area of schools-education and labor market, where Roma should be given the same, equal opportunities as the others, the Non-Roma people. They also criticized the system of Roma segregation, which contributes to deepen maladaptive acts inside the Roma community and were inclined to supporting their targeted integration.



## Roma perceptions of the problems they are faced with

The survey reveals that the problems faced by the Roma can be broken down into four main categories:

- prejudices from the majority population,
- education,
- employment,
- poor socio-economic life conditions.

### Prejudices from the majority population

Most of the Roma asked complained about the attitude of the Czech Non-Roma public to the Roma minority. It is their belief that the **attitude of the Czech majority towards the Roma is full of prejudices and generalized judgments**, typically presenting Roma in an unfavorable way, in a bad light as people who refuse to work, abuse social benefits and help, are not educated and not adaptable and represent the main criminal element in our nation. These predominant and a priori opinions are subsequently encouraging the unpleasant behavior of the majority Czech population Roma experience in the everyday informal life in the acts of their „white“ fellow-citizens as well as in the formal life when in contact with the authorities or in the labor market.

The Roma asked in their collective self-reflection admit that **this picture – image in the wrong sense of the word is helped being created by some Roma**, who really live and act in line with the above-mentioned prejudices. However, they argued that the majority ignored inter-individual differences among Roma and that the maladaptive actions of one group of Roma are generalized about the entire Roma population, which they perceive as very unfair, and doing them an injustice.

The Roma asked were certain that these **prejudiced, biased opinions are do** – to a considerable extent – **further fuelled by the media** typically presenting Roma with the attributes such as crime, poverty, dirt, lack of adaptability, lack of education, etc.

**The underlying cause of this negative, rejecting attitude of the Czech majority population towards the Roma**, however, is still its generally **low tolerance towards minorities and inter-cultural differences**. Most of the asked have got some personal experience with attacks on them from their Non-Roma fellow-citizens, either unpleasant verbal comments or behavioral attacks that border on racism.

The Roma present in our groups perceived the Czech majority as little open to other cultures, minorities, and described its attitude to Roma with regard to other minorities (particularly to Vietnamese or Ukrainians) as worst and most critical. They put it in connection with the adverse historical evolution of relationships between Roma and „Non-Roma“ and also with a generally low socio-economic status of Roma. The Czech, majority population does not feel such reservations about Vietnamese and Ukrainians who come to the Czech Republic to work, are able to make enough money and prosper on the labor market.

The Roma asked **were keen on supporting the process of integration, inclusion of Roma** into the Czech population, which, in their opinion is the only possible option how to proceed in resolving the Roma question. Separation would only result in escalating the problems both among Roma people as such, and between the Roma minority and the majority population. They would welcome if the majority population showed greater willingness to accept Roma and their specificities, but, actually, do not believe much in

this change in the approach of the Czech majority towards Roma. One of the possibilities how to make this change possible could be **supporting, encouraging more information delivered to Non-Roma people about the Roma culture and characteristics of the Roma population.**

### Problems in education

The Roma asked identify low education of the Roma population as the major problem. The primary reason why is **little motivation of Roma to educate, self-improve and support the young generation in the process of education and at the same time the financially demanding support of children-students**, which represent a real problem for many poorer families that can hardly support their offspring in schools without help from the government. However, we should point out that many a time would this financial problem apply to Non-Roma families as well, but those concerned show more willingness and initiative to cope with this situation and, e.g., students from these families try to give a hand, take part time, or odd-jobs and make some money. But to take this kind of initiative into your own hands presumes a deep motivation to study, which, however, is not so obvious among Roma people.

The problem of Roma low education should be seen in a broader historical context, when in the past the large number of Roma used to go to special schools and could not get any higher education. We should bear in mind that **encouraging and supporting children to study presumes a serious input, involvement of the parents**, and we cannot expect that the process of their children education would be a top priority for the uneducated parents. Therefore, it is only **desirable for the majority to make an effort and influence Roma at large, and support their positive attitude to the matter of education** by explicitly pointing out at the importance of education, its direct link to the labor market and a more successful life prospect. However, this line cannot be built only on the ideological, but also practical basis, hands-on, so that real experience confirmed that the educated, e.g., skilled Roma would be better able to find a job than someone without education.

### Problems in employment

Discussing the labor market, the Roma asked perceived **as the biggest problem a high unemployment rate of Roma** resulting in a lower socio-economic standard of life, i.e., in their poverty. Last but not least unemployed adults are not a good role model for young Roma who are growing up in a life when it is sort of normal not to work and thus accept models that should not be followed.

The Roma asked understood that **a high unemployment rate is related to a low education and qualification of Roma, to limited job opportunities**, when many manual jobs are more likely to be given to the cheaper labor coming from the East, particularly from Slovakia, Ukraine, etc., **and also to the fact that the wages** for the job offered **often do not exceed the subsistence minimum** and so it is worthwhile for Roma to go to work.

**All the Roma asked** also confirmed that **they had been discriminated on the labor market because of being a Roma**. Most of them have experienced that they had a certain job arranged and booked by phone, but as soon as they turned up on the premises they were told in plain language that the employer was not interested in them. These experiences of Roma significantly speak for the benefit of a **need to introduce**

**clearly anti-discrimination laws on the labor market**, which would protect Roma citizens in case of hiring or firing employees against possible discrimination on the basis of their ethnic origin.

### Poor socio-economic conditions of Roma life

The last problematic area identified is closely connected to all the above aspects, as the high unemployment rate results in the low economic standard of Roma life and this makes their social-status even worse and their acceptance by the majority population even more difficult. At the same time, the socio-economically poor Roma families have no resources and often no motivation, either, to support their offspring on the road to education; **lack of education leads to limited job opportunities, which leads to low socio-economic standard of Roma life** ending in their life lived on the periphery of society. It is a vicious circle..

In the context of their adverse socio-economic circumstances of their life, Roma often pointed **out at the difficult situation in housing**, where they face problems with finding an adequate place (home), where to live at a reasonable price. In this connection we should also mention the fact making their situation even worse, i.e., that **Roma prefer large families, have loads of kids**, which naturally places greater demands both in terms of housing and resources (finance).

**The poor socio-economic conditions of their life** are also the **nursery of many direct and indirect negative, maladaptive consequences**, where the ones socially most harmful are the probably risen crime rate or risk of dependence on addictive substances (drugs) inside the Roma community.

**The above problematic areas are more or less inter-related and inter-conditioned, and so in the interests of improving the quality of the lives of Roma it is necessary to take into account all the above aspects.**

## Government policies to help the Roma: the views of non-Roma respondents

All of the Non-Roma respondents asked agreed that it would be good for the future good development of the country to resolve the Roma issues. Most of the asked representatives of the majority population, however, **were very much skeptical and doubtful when it came to the question** of possible help to the Roma, to improving their life standard and real boost to the integration **of the Roma community into the Czech society**. They argued by saying that the government had already given enough support to similar initiatives before, but every time without any real success.

Moreover, these negative, rejecting attitudes were fuelled by their strong **belief that Roma actually did not care about their real integration into the Czech society**, and alone would not do anything towards it. As a consequence, they were concerned that any other, further government support to the Roma would again be good for nothing and just a pointless waste of resources – public finance or material things. They were certain that if and when somebody is **responsible for the change in the Roma life for the better, it should be first and foremost the Roma alone**.

This attitude was absolutely confirmed by the results of the sheet „*Government spending*“, which indicated that **according to most of the** representatives of our majority population **it is not worth investing from the public budget in support to minority groups** such as, e.g., the Roma and that the government should spend fewer resources on these initiatives than before.

Among those asked there were always **few people**, who in spite of the opinion of the majority present **advocated the need to resolve the Roma issues** from top, **by the government**. When these representatives of the majority asked to define the main lines where the assistance should go to with the aim to improve the living standard of the Roma community and their integration into society, they **agreed together** with the others on **two key lines**:

- **schools / education,**
- **labor market,**

where it should be made sure that **Roma are having the same opportunities as the other Czechs**. They perceived this as the responsibility of the government, and suggested the government helped ensure equal job opportunities for the members of our Roma community (e.g., by enacting anti-discrimination laws or through positive discrimination) and support higher education of Roma children.

Those with a more open attitude to Roma also pointed out at the **unfortunate consequences of segregating the Roma community from the majority population**. According to them, this trend should stop since leading **to a deepening barrier between the Roma and the Non-Roma population and can contribute to escalating the major social-economic-political problems**.

The respondents sharing this opinion, however, were in the minority and **most of the asked were more inclined to the opposite opinion, i.e., to the phenomenon to separate Roma into specific localities** within the city, town, region or state and hoped it would be the factual solution of the Roma issues. Their alarming attitude reflected not only the above mentioned resignation and doubt about success of the effective inclusion of Roma would into our society, but also negative, rejecting mind and unwillingness to really accept Roma among themselves.

## Roma views on how the lives of Roma may be improved

The Roma asked supported the idea of integrating the Roma minority in the Czech society; however, first of all, it is necessary to change **attitudes to life of both - the Roma community on the one hand, and the majority Non-Roma population towards the Roma, on the other hand**. However, it is necessary to say that our Roma showed a lot of distrust – but also some hope – in success in this process, which largely stems from their existing experience with their life in the Czech society.

**The specific requirements of Roma** that would lead to improving their living standard then in relation to the Roma population problems defined **concerned these areas:**

- **education,**
- **employment,**
- **housing.**

## Change in attitudes in the Roma minority and in the Non-Roma majority

According to our Roma respondents, the change in Roma attitudes to life should **lead to a greater motivation to integrate into the Czech society and to activate their ambition to succeed, make something in life**. But the current trend is rather the opposite, when Roma as a rule resigned to any higher ambitions. According to our Roma respondents it is given by the absence of good, worth following role models inside the Roma community, poor socio-economic life situation, as well as by the predominantly negative, rejecting attitude of the Non-Roma society towards the Roma, which a priori positions them to the role of social outsiders.

**The support to change the Roma attitude to life** should be orientated primarily **to younger families with children**, to educate the adults – explain and underline education, its importance and link to the labor market. At the same time it would be **desired to support various activities helping Roma children** choose meaningful free time activities, showing them good role models for their life and worth following models of behavior. In other words, the kind of programs, schemes that could inspire Roma children with a good life orientation they would not necessarily have to get in their own families, but in the interests of their functioning need material protection and financial assistance from towns or government.

**A change in the way of presenting Roma in the media could contribute to turn in the attitude of the Non-Roma population to Roma**. At present, the news about the Roma community published in the media are more likely to expose all kinds of Roma misbehavior, negative aspects of their life and almost absolute absent is the news depicting Roma in a positive light. At the moment, it is possible to name the popularity of Vlastimil Horváth as an exception to the rule - a Roma man, who won the second round of an attractive contest „Czech searching for a Superstar“ and doing so nationwide highlighted the potential and quality of Roma citizens.

Also the **idea to introduce the culture, history and traditions of the Roma to the majority population**, to give them insights into their lifestyle and values gives hope to initiate a change. This goal could be achieved, e.g., by incorporating the „subject – the Roma“ into curricula for children, or by supporting and advertising various events and programs (e.g., Roma festivals) contributing to a deeper knowledge of Roma in the Czech majority population. Such efforts are drive by the idea that the unknown makes

people afraid and in this spirit a greater knowledge of the minority culture can contribute the willingness of the majority to accept it and its differences.

### Support to Roma education

**To improve education** – according to Roma – is the **way to improve the living standard of the Roma community**, as a better education implies greater opportunities on the labor market and so reduces the risk of a low socio-economic status and can also contribute to a positive change in the Roma attitude to life – it broadens their horizons and does not position them in the role of victims, but active doers.

The Roma asked were in favor of **a targeted adult education among the Roma community – explaining and underlining the importance of education and so encouraged motivation of Roma to educate, self-improve or to support their offspring in the process of schooling**. One of the options is to extend the institute of Roma assistants who visit Roma families and ideologically as well as practically support kids and parents in the road to education, or tie the success in school and Roma children attendance to school to the amount of children benefits paid to their parents, which could boost the parental motivation to support children – students in schools. The Roma asked were in favor of the system of school scholarship that would, e.g., resolve the problem of poor families, but these scholarships should be granted preferably to gifted children in general, and not according to their ethnicity.

### Support to increased employment of Roma

According to those present, to **increase the employment rate of Roma would notably contribute to their improved socio-economic living standard and to resolving many problems of the Roma community**.

Improving the level of education is one the main conditions to increasing the employment rate of Roma, which would come as a consequence of their higher professional qualifications, skills. However, it would also be possible – and in the Roma's asked desired – to introduce certain changes in the labor market regarding Roma as employees.

Bearing in mind their experience, **all our respondents were in favor of the idea to enact anti-discrimination laws** that would prevent Roma against not being hired or being fired purely because of their ethnic. They would also like to **see positive discrimination elements in the Czech labor market**, when, e.g., employers hiring Roma would have tax breaks, or, even some quotas introduced to prescribe how many per cent employees of a company must be Roma.

### Improved housing conditions of Roma

**The housing problem is one of the most burning issues today** not only inside the Roma community, but its resolving could lead, e.g., to more Roma employed, and subsequently to the improvement of their socio-economic living standard.

In relation to the process of Roma integration it is interesting to mention that **the Roma asked were very enthusiastic about the system of Roma families inclusion in houses and residential areas inhabited with Non-Roma families**. In their opinion, this solution offers an opportunity for the Non-Roma population to get to know Roma

citizens at first hand, or, make personal relationships with them and see for themselves that there exist Roma families whose life is proper, clean, and in short normal. From the position of Roma families, living inside a Non-Roma environment represents a somewhat higher social status and better inclusion in the hierarchy existing in the Roma community and not only from the prospect of the majority population.

By contrast, the **system of segregation of the Roma community and its concentrated „clearance“ to live in some designated urban localities** has many drawbacks and is **many risks-prone**, as the Roma community here loses on feedback, correction and control when it comes to the majority Non-Roma population, and there is a higher risk of an increased incidence rate of all kinds of socially-pathological phenomena (crime, drug abuse, etc.) and the so-called good Roma are more in danger to fall from their achieved living standard downwards.

### **The Decade of the Roma as seen by non-Roma and Roma**

**None** of the asked representatives of both Roma and Non-Roma population **was in much aware of the initiative: „The Decade of Roma Inclusion“**, only two Roma members have heard of its existence in the media. The reactions of the Roma present and of the majority population representatives were significantly different, but in principle agreed, as all of them were certain **that it is in the interests of the Czech nation prosperity to effectively resolve the Roma issues and integrate the Roma into the Czech society.**

### The Decade of the Roma inclusion according to Roma

The Roma in our groups unanimously highlighted the **beneficial character and usefulness of any scheme focused on improving the living standard of the Roma community**, but having experienced many activities with a similar goal going on in the past on the local, regional and national scale, were skeptical and did not believe in success of this kind of activities.

Roma were spontaneously suggested the **supporting programs primarily concerned the labor market** (employment of Roma → to improve the socio-economic living standard of Roma), **schools-education** (to boost the education level of Roma) **and the atmosphere of interpersonal relations** between the representatives of the Roma and Non-Roma population. **Help to Roma should be targeted preferably at children, at young families with children**, as these target groups are most, badly in need of help and support and there is also the greatest chance to success and effectiveness of any interventions.

Having been informed about the idea of „The Decade of Roma Inclusion“, they mentioned that the **stated goals of support are exactly telling the problematic areas of life of the Roma community**. The Roma asked believed that all the specific goals are good and desired, but perceived **employment as the too priority, followed by education and health came last**. They were more in favor of enacting anti-discrimination laws and their enforcement, which could help Roma find a job easier, and then supported the activities for the benefit of improved education of Roma children and boosting their integration into other Non-Roma peers in the school environment.

To implement this initiative would be very needed and really welcomed, but **the Roma asked did not believe much in its success and materialization in practice**. Besides, they **anticipated considerable disagreement of the majority population** and feared its negative attitude towards funding and supporting an initiative focused on improving the living situation of Roma.

The doubts of Roma about success of this program in reality were confirmed by their most inclination to the statement *„If the Decade of Roma effort is to have a positive impact on the lives of Roma here in Czech republic, we Roma will have to play a prominent role in ensuring that the goals are achieved“*. **In other words, in their opinion, if the initiative were to succeed, it would have to be the Roma alone who would have to play first and foremost role in it.**



### The Decade of the Roma inclusion according to non-Roma

The asked representatives of the Non-Roma population perceived the question of Roma community integration in society as a burning issue considering the size of Roma community and the existing adverse state of Roma affairs in the Czech Republic. **Most of them, however, were skeptical that this integration initiative could go according to plan, as in their opinion, Roma were not motivated to inclusion in the majority population.** We should not forget that these people understood the process of integration only in the sense of Roma adaptation, conformity with the living conditions of the Czech majority population, and therefore expected that the Roma community should initiate any integration efforts as such. At the same time it was their strong belief that the government has already done and keeps doing a lot for the Roma and should not primarily get so involved in resolving the Roma question any more.

Only a **minority of those asked pointed out at the alarming circumstances and fatal universal consequences of life of the Roma community and** shared an opinion **that it is about time to resolve the question of Roma integration in the Czech society,** before this problem becomes uncontrollably big and extremely serious. They build this argumentation largely on economic aspects and consequences for the state budget.

**The contents** of the initiative: „The Decade of Roma Inclusion“ seemed as well **targeted at the main problems of Roma community,** in particular, at **reducing unemployment and supporting education.** But most of our Non-Roma respondents had reservations about the individual areas suggested, as they pointed out it is **not fair to help, support only one** (in their view, problematic, on top of that) **group of our population.** They felt it was wrong, not morally right at all, to give preferential treatment to Roma and not do the same for other people, e.g., employment – offer Roma micro-loans to start businesses, or reduced price and advantages in the school environment or health care system. The findings of the groups suggest that the only **acceptable concepts** are **enacting anti-discrimination laws in the labor market, and Roma and Non-Roma children going to the same school, and/or study together.**

**The question of funding the initiative proved to be an insurmountable stumbling block to agreement:** when and if most of the representatives of the majority population were willing to recognize the meaning of this activity, they would not be willing to invest in it from the state budget, i.e., did not want to use any money of taxpayers, which applied to almost any amount. Their spontaneous reactions indicate that they perceived it as an **unfair and pointless waste of money,** which could be used in more important areas. Merely **few of them argued that this investment will pay off to the Czech nation in the long run and that the government will paradoxically even save money,** when supporting this initiative now, and not later, with some delay.

## Elements of communications strategy to build support for government policies to help the Roma

### Message concepts

At the end of the group discussion our respondents were exposed several concepts and asked to rate how persuasive they are for them: **the representatives of the majority, Non-Roma population most agreed with the meaning of the statement H:** *„Our country is on the road to prosperity. We must make sure that this prosperity is shared by all“*, which must have been contributed to by its very general formulation and sort of indisputable applicability.

This statement is persuasive for them not only because Czech citizens believe that the future of their country is very promising, but also share an opinion that all Czechs are equally responsible for the socially and politically good development of their country irrespective of their ethnic or any background. In relation to the Roma issues the inclination to this statement reminds of the already mentioned dislike of Non-Roma citizens to give preferential treatment, advantages of any form to Roma, or to excuse them.

**The statements our Non-Roma respondents were similarly strongly in favour of, i.e., scored as „somewhat persuasive“ are:**

- **C:** *„Helping the Roma is a matter of simple economics“*
- **D:** *„If there's one thing we must do, it is to help the Roma children so that they will have the opportunities to prosper in a way that our own children have.“*
- **E:** *„Helping the Roma is really about giving every person in our country the opportunity to achieve his/her potential.“*

The inclination to these statements confirmed their previous attitudes to the Roma question, which in connection with the idea to support Roma integration into the majority population show a great potential.

It seems that an originally small group of those in favor of the idea that **the problem of Roma integration into our society should be resolved now, before it has become even more serious, and economically much more demanding**, managed to convince the other speakers that they were right. The economic aspect was thus able to change opinions of the originally stubborn opponents who apparently realized the risk that the increased economic (financial) strain on the country could worsen its prospects of prosperity all the asked would like to be on the road to.

The representatives of the majority population manifested their **inclination to supporting Roma children** during the entire discussion, and explained their willingness to help Roma kids and consideration for their needs by saying that these children did not choose their fate, background, or many a time poor socio-economic living conditions, either, and so it is only fair to offer them the same opportunities to those of Non-Roma children. The orientation to children in the context of resolving the Roma issues also comes out of the belief that potential interventions stand the greatest chance to succeed just in this target group reflecting the old saying: *„Teach them when they are young“* or *„You won't teach an old dog new tricks.“*

**The persuasiveness of the statement E** is probably **corresponding with some self-reflection of the majority population and the awareness** that Roma would not always have the same opportunities to fully develop their potential as the representatives of the majority do. The problems with **unequal opportunities** historically regarded, and sadly,

many a time still regard the labor market and education, which are the areas where the representatives of the Non-Roma population manifested their most willingness to support concrete changes leading to greater integration of Roma into our society (e.g., enacting anti-discrimination laws applicable to the labor market, or, support to inclusion of Roma children in „Non-Roma) classes and schools).

**The other statements** did not encounter with any greater support, when the main reason why was that they **made people feel guilt and responsibility for oppressing and discriminating the Roma minority** they did not want to accept, since they did not believe they were justified.

**The Roma groups rating the persuasiveness of the concepts tested were most in favor of the statement: 3:** *„If the Decade of Roma effort is to have a positive impact on the lives of Roma here in Czech republic, we Roma will have to play a prominent role in ensuring that the goals are achieved”*. This inclination shows the predominant opinion of Roma that **the representatives of the Roma community should make sure that the initiative succeeds in the first place**, and suggests their determination and readiness to join this activity. At the same time this statement can also indicate doubts of Roma about the willingness and will of the majority population to change anything in the Roma situation in the sense of suspecting that unless the Roma alone would support and put through the initiative, no one else in the Czech society is likely to do so.

**The other two statements left Roma rather in doubt, and were not very convincing for them.** Referring to the first statement *„I believe the Decade of Roma effort will have a positive impact on the lives of Roma here in Czech republic, because governments have committed real resources. It's not just a talk”*, they did not believe it was realistic and true, and referring to the other one *„I believe the Decade of Roma effort will have a positive impact on the lives of Roma here in Czech republic, because of the involvement of organizations like the World Bank and the Open Society Institute“* were concerned about a big distance and detachment of the institutions named from the real problems faced by the Czech nation and its Roma minority. This attitude was apparently influenced by the lack of awareness of these institutions among the Roma asked.

### The ‘ambassadors for change’

The ambassador of change in the attitude to the Roma issues should be a **personality of the Czech political or cultural scene that is respected and held in esteem among the members of both the Roma and the majority population**. The ideal figure appears to be a person with a certain relationship to the Roma culture or generally to the sphere of inter-personal relations, the one who has accomplished some recognition in society and was not compromised by any existing public activity of his/her.

Both Roma and Non-Roma respondents faced a real problem asked to come up with a personality they would delegate to this particular job. However, their **individual nominations, short list most often included two, or, to be exact, three names:**

- **Lucie Bílá**
- **Václav Havel and his wife Dagmar.**

**Lucie Bílá, a singer with the Roma background**, was delegated to this post because of her enormous popularity inside the Czech society and success in the field of pop music. She is presented in public as a person with a steady opinion not likely to be

changed, able to fight for her truth, showing much consideration for other people and also publicly declaring her Roma background, family ties and values. Last but not least this Czech pop-music star has gained a considerable capital during her artistic career, and so could be resistant to temptations of „big and quick money“ and could conscientiously and sensibly manage the finance to help the Roma.

**The former President – Václav Havel** was named together with his wife Dagmar as a successful politician, who introduced to the Czech society and politics the humanistic ideals, awareness of personal and collective responsibility, consideration and need of massive inter-personal tolerance. Our respondents believed that this man would be able to face unfairness and unjust in society, point out at injustice, wrongdoing and anarchy and fight for a good cause. Also the fact that already today Václav Havel in the context of the Foundation of Václav and Dagmar Havel actually supports a number of useful things and activities speaks for the benefit of his nomination, as a guarantee that he would not act dishonestly and abuse his name.

### Target audiences

Within the majority, Non-Roma population we **should turn to people whose mindset does not easily give in to prejudice, and who realize the wider connections and consequences of the attitude to the Roma issues.** We can therefore expect that those more open and with more effort to effectively resolve the Roma issues in this respect will be **people with a higher** (secondary school, college or university) **education and insight into the inter-connection of social, political and economic aspects** of life of the Czech society.

In this connection we should also bear in mind that it will be **difficult to induce changes in the attitude to Roma among the residents of the cities, towns and regions where the Roma issues are** – because of a higher concentration of the Roma population there – **the alarming and critical ones**, and where they generally worsen the quality of life of people living in the respective areas.

**On the part of the Roma minority it is desired to appeal** particularly to **families with children** explaining them the need of greater integration of Roma into the Czech society, and the promise of a possible higher quality of life of their children and greater prosperity of the young Roma population. The survey reveals that the **family and future of offspring** are the core values and a top priority of the Roma population and so **could be the main quota when defining the optimum target group as well as the source of effective arguments** for a possible change in the attitude and approach to life and to society of the Roma minority.

## IV. Narrative description of results

### 1. Context: How are things going?

Opening the group, all respondents were asked to tell their opinion of the current situation in the Czech Republic and their ideas about its future direction. Specifically, they mentioned the positive trends contributing or resulting to the improved quality of life of the Czech population; however, they also described many problematic phenomena working in the opposite direction and actually lowering the quality of life in the Czech Republic.

*The word for word authentic mentions (verbatim) of respondents are in Italics; in brackets you will find whether the verbatim applies to a representative of the Roma minority (Roma) or to a representative of the majority population (non-Roma).*

#### 1.1. The direction of the country today

The representatives of the majority population and of the Roma minority alike took a distinctly ambivalent line on the issue of the Czech Republic and its direction today. **They did tend to hope in a better future of the country that in 1989 got free from the communist regime**, and now on the democratic road is aiming to become an integral part of Europe, which was demonstrated by its joining The European Union.

**However, at the same time**, considering the current, in their view, not very satisfactory situation in CR, they were slightly **sceptical that this country could realistically become more economically stable in the near future**, and would not be a „poor relative“ in Europe, that it could **ensure its people a better living standard and resolve the major problems** the Czech population faces at present (see 1.4.).

*Well, it would be good if it moved for the better, but I do not know, do not know, perhaps we will manage one day and our children will have a better life (non-Roma).*

*I do not think that this Republic has been developing very well. I am no economist myself, but looking 15 years back, I think that we, as the Republic had started thinking that we could do better that we really did in the end. For example, we did not manage preventing many things being unlawfully appropriated, and the politics is not very good, either (non-Roma).*

*The development in the country may be going for the better, but I will hardly live long enough to see it (non-Roma).*

*Well, when you have money, you can travel. People are less restricted here than they used to be before, the police are more mucked than before, but otherwise, it is generally better (Roma).*

*Now, it came to a standstill in our country, something has been radically improved –for instance, we can travel, on the other hand, something has become worse, like for example the employment. It is the truth that some changes are bad, and some good, but they are all lumped together (Roma).*

#### 1.2. What are you most optimistic about

**Respondents were typically not very eager to discuss the positive things in the development and current situation of the Czech Republic** but rather ready to criticize and complain about the situation their resident country happens to be in at present.

If and when they did mention any positives, both the representatives of majority and Roma minority population most **often named freedom of expression and freedom of movement** the citizens of the Czech Republic gained after the fall of the communist regime and with the onset of democracy. Those asked most appreciated that **Czechs could freely move across the border, the Czech market has become open to the outside world and the break with CR isolation offered its people new opportunities abroad**, either to travel, study or work in accordance with their ambitions. However, our respondents believe that these opportunities are priority addressing the young generation and enterprising individuals with a drive who can make the full use of this freedom.

*I am most pleased with the freedom of speech; otherwise there is not much to be optimistic about (non-Roma).*

*In contrast to communists there is a change that you can travel and work abroad – it has changed that brains can earn far more (non-Roma).*

*There are not many positives, but perhaps something is positive – you have more freedom, can go abroad with no problems at all (Roma).*

*What is good? It is good that we can work abroad, that we don't have to have any visa, once I wanted to go to Germany, now, it has improved in this sense of the word (Roma).*

### 1.3. What brings about these positive trends

The **positive changes** respondents named, i.e., the freedom of speech and movement, are brought about particularly as a **consequence of the fall of the communist regime in the Czech Republic in 1989** and its inclination to democracy. The **entry of CR into the EU in 2004** increased the freedom of movement and the free, open market.

*I am pleased that my 19-year-old daughter has more opportunities (travel, languages) than I did. Thanks to the fact that there are no communists in power, how we live in more freedom, even though it obviously has its negatives, see the unemployment (non-Roma).*

*Well, it has been brilliant since joining the EU, we don't have to wait at the border, can buy what we want to by and do not have to hunt for things under the counter as we did at the time of communists, and such things (non-Roma).*

*It is thanks to the EU (Roma).*

### 1.4. The greatest problems

The **representatives of the majority population perceived the greatest problems** faced by the Czech population **in the context of the Czech economy, health care system and strongly complained about the high unemployment rate**. According to them, the poor quality of our legislation poses a serious problem, when certain „gaps in laws“ play into the hands of foul, dodgy, unfair practices; another problem is the not enough effective and prompt work inside the Czech judiciary.

Last but not least these respondents perceived as **the major problem of the Czech nation the declining standards of morality and distorted value ladders**, which is shown not only at universal level in the form of a higher crime rate and other maladaptive manifestations (drug, alcohol abuse) but also at political level. The asked representatives of the majority population mostly did not trust the moral values and awareness of responsibility of Czech politicians, who, in their opinion, are more likely to

look after their well paid political positions and do not care much about the welfare of the nation they are supposed to serve.

Presumably, this very negativistic and distrustful attitude towards politicians became more sharp as a consequence of the scandal involving the property of the former prime minister Stanislav Gross and not transparent business activities of his wife – at the time of organizing the groups it was the latest subject people had long discussions about and the kind that brought strong aversions among Czech society.

*Well, all the time there is no money, it is the problem here. There is never enough money in the health care system, but it will hardly ever be ideal there and the high unemployment rate, mainly in some regions, it is a horror (non-Roma).*

*Problems? The rise in crime, gaps in the law – there are contradictions, the laws can be interpreted in two ways, and people abuse it (non-Roma).*

*Bad legislation – who steals millions, will be given little sentence, who steals a hundred, will be given a heavier sentence. Courts of justice are bad, they do not sentence according to what is right, but pursuant to articles, rules, but they obviously cannot be related to any small thing. There should be more sense and morality (non-Roma).*

*I should think the negative is the development of morality. In these 15 years it has taken the direction downwards, the crime has been on a rise, and people do not respect anything (non-Roma).*

The representatives of the Roma minority typically discussed the problems faced by their community and not universal ones. **According to the Roma asked, the main problems stem from the low socio-economic standard, low level of education and high unemployment rate of Roma people.**

**The Roma community faces problems in housing;** supposedly, Roma people can get an adequate apartment / house at a reasonable price only with difficulty. According to the representatives of the Roma minority there is another **problematic area as such, i.e., attitudes of the majority population**, which has a great deal of prejudice against the Roma and would discriminate them on the basis of their ethnicity in many respects e.g., in the system of schools or labour market.

*We have big problems – because of high unemployment, the highest percentage among the Roma mostly, and when they are not clever, they cannot do any business – and even if they could do business, they took away from them even the shovel and the digging jobs are done here by foreigners, Ukrainians ... they'd rather give the job to them, they are the cheap labour – it is bad, mainly for us, for the Roma (Roma).*

*To keep kids in school is difficult. When you want a better education, you cannot keep the kid in school and the assistance of the authorities is a minimum – schoolbooks, aids, and lunch... it is expensive (Roma).*

*The problem is, say, the discrimination regarding work, I myself went to apply for a job, but as soon as they can see you are a Gipsy, nobody would give you the job (Roma).*

### **1.5. Who or what is responsible**

The representatives of the majority population believed that those responsible for economic and other conceptual problems in the Czech Republic (health care system, unemployment) are primarily our politicians. Discussing the issue, they pointed out at their incompetence to propose and put through the needed legislation / amendments to laws, work effectively and do a proper, thorough job. At the same time they complained about the above mentioned declining standards of morality and low awareness of responsibility among the representatives of the Czech politics.

*The members of parliament think about people only at the very beginning, before holding a prominent job, they mean well. They are then well provided for, and we become less and less important for them (non-Roma).*

*In my opinion, in the government it is about that the politicians are only aiming to keep their posts to be able to get CZK 80,000/month. I was aiming to get to the communal politics, but the atrocities I saw there are terrible. Besides, there are officers who do not understand the industry they are in charge of at all (non-Roma).*

*When the unemployment rate is high, so it is also the government to be blamed for – when I sign myself on, it is better for me to collect unemployment benefits and be given, say, CZK 7,000 than to work 12 hours in the supermarket and make even less money there. Simply, it is a problem (non-Roma).*

*(The politicians) still do not have properly done laws, nobody knows what they can or cannot do, it should be a bit corrected. The courts of law should be more strict and work quicker (non-Roma).*

**The representatives of the Roma minority blamed** for the problems faced by this community **primarily politicians and members of local councils**, who, in their opinion, do not want to take more interest in the problems faced by the Roma. At the same time, they **complained about the attitude of the majority population** that inclines to „lump all Roma people together“, treat them with a lot of prejudice and not ready to accept the Roma community as their integral part.

*The government had done nothing for us! Some want to push something into the government, or increase the benefits and so, but, otherwise the Minister had CZK 90,000/month, over there one performance and CZK 250,000/month, he can live a nice life and would not care about the poor. My wife and I have CZK 12,000, the flat is CZK, 4,500, my children are grown up, 15,17, I took out a loan and I have CZK 6,000 to spend on food (Roma).*

*I am sorry that we all are lumped together – prejudices. It has been here for ages, society would not accept us (Roma).*

The representatives of the majority population and of the Roma community alike perceived **many problems in the background of the communist past of the Czech Republic**. In their opinion, the communist regime is responsible for the declining standards of morality of the Czech nation that now has difficulty accepting freedom in a democratic regime with all its implications. This fact is manifested not only in the dishonest behaviour of politicians or representatives of the state administration, but also in the anti-Roma mood of our society as well as in the lack of readiness of citizens to take full responsibility for their own life and not to passively count on the helping hand stretched out by the government.

*There are still the echoes of the communist society, the wild restitution was unusual, we are aiming to quickly near capitalist societies, but the reforms are very slow and bad. The men at the top follow the rule after us the deluge and hold on like grim death (non-Roma).*

*Who is responsible for these problems? The past – we were brought up in a regime that preferred certain groups, people do not know how to be honest, cheat and so (non-Roma).*

*What is wrong? How to explain it – under Communism there was work, we all had to work, who did not work, went to prison, now, it is going more downhill, because there is no work and it is all about work, money. On top of that, as a black person you have a problem to find a good job – for example, I applied for a job by phone and there was a job vacancy, they told me come to see us and then, all of a sudden, when they saw me, there was no job (Roma).*



## 1.6. Thoughts on joining the European Union

The representatives of the majority population perceived **admission of the Czech Republic to the European Union with mixed feelings**. On the one hand, they valued more freedom of movement, more opportunities for Czech residents to study, work or live abroad and open market. On the other hand, they were concerned that economically the costs on the CR membership in the EU at present and in the foreseeable future would exceed the profits from this membership, which, possibly can be profitable in the distant future. At the same time, some of those asked did not agree with the lost autonomy and independence of the Czech Republic, which, according to them, joining the Union surrendered its sovereignty and from now on must obey decisions and rulings made in Brussels.

**All respondents, however, shared an opinion that the entry of CR into the EU was the only possible choice** and opportunity how to near to the Western Europe and reduce the risk of international isolation of the country. According to them, the Czech Republic has neither the capital nor power to afford staying neutral and standing aside the events in the inter-connected, single Europe.

*It will be good for our kids to speak the language; they can make it somewhere abroad (non-Roma).*

*We did not have any other choice, we could stay the way we were, had we been independent enough, which, indeed we are not (non-Roma).*

*It must be a good thing, I think that assistance among countries will bring us something good, for the time being, I don't know I don't know, but in the future, when it gets going a bit, we could benefit from it, but for the time being, we give them more (non-Roma).*

*It has brought along loads of positive things for us – for instance, as to goods exchange, movement across the border. And it has also brought along some negatives – e.g., certain quotas, how many livestock to keep, how much to grow, etc. (non-Roma).*

## 2. Government policies and the country's resources

Before the representatives of the majority population entered the focus group room, they were asked to fill in the sheet „Government spending“ (see the Appendix B, pp. 72), and tell to what extent they agreed with the present resources the government spends on some areas, where the government should spend more resources, where about the same and where fewer resources. The issue was later discussed in the groups.

### 2.1. How should the government spend the state resources

The Table 1 shows that more than the majority of our non-Roma respondents suggested the government should spend more resources on employment, education, health care and also on supporting infrastructure, economic growth and living environment protection. Respondents voiced the same preferences in the groups.

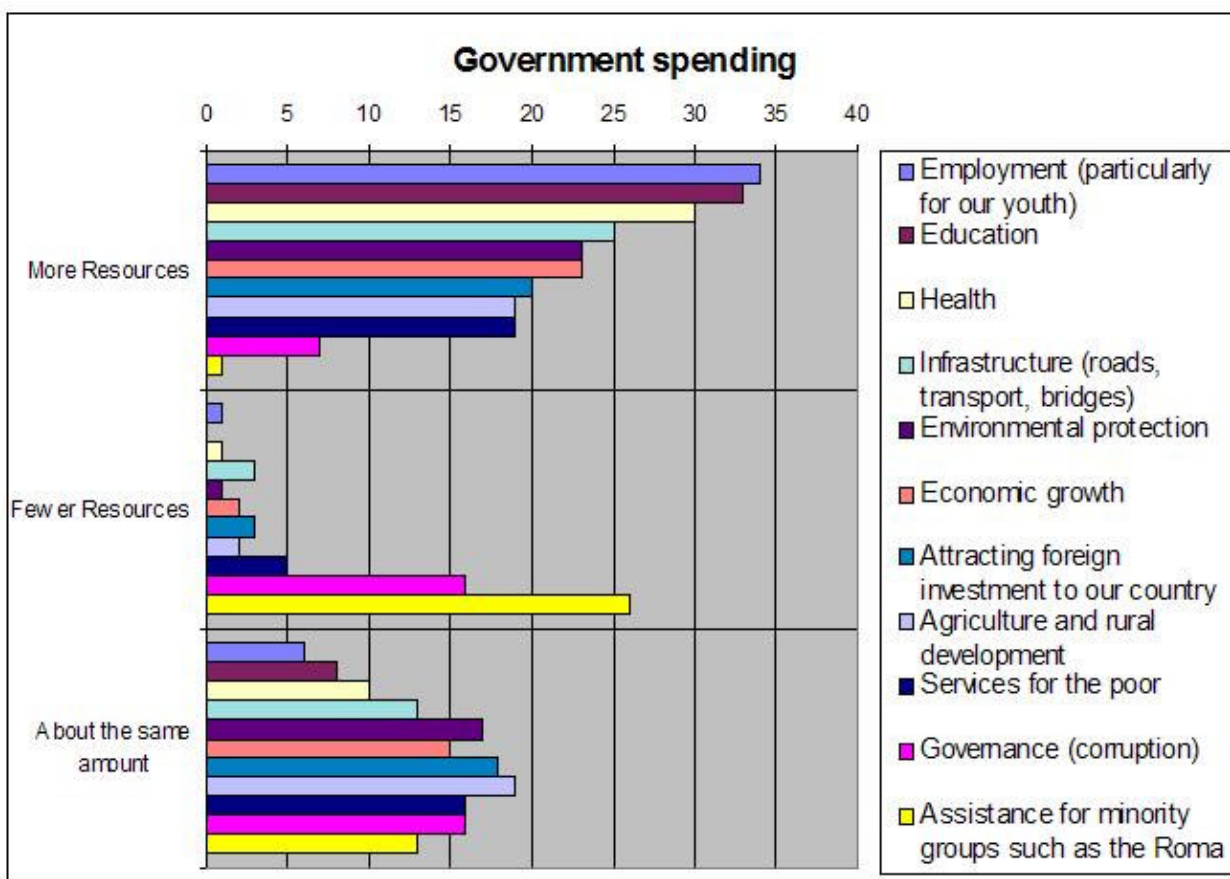


Table 1 – Government spending

*To spend more resources on our health care system, my mum is a nurse, and patients need medications and are given one blister only ... when I wanted the ultrasound I was told they would not do it that it is very expensive and supposedly not necessary (non-Roma).*

*There should be more resources spent on the health care system, those who cannot find a job, when I wanted to apply for the re-qualification course, I need something I do not know. So in the first place to support the health care system, employment and possibility to educate, self-improve. The government should also invest in security, in crime prevention (non-Roma).*

*The health care system should be improved, culture, schools, our roads. But all the time there is no money (non-Roma).*

According to respondents, the other areas – attracting foreign investors, agriculture and rural development, services for the poor, governance – deserve roughly as much interest and resources as spent on them at present.

The only exception makes the area of **support and assistance to minorities** such as, e.g., the **Roma, where** according to the asked representatives of the majority population **the government should definitely invest fewer resources**. These respondents understand these resources spent as „no return on investment“ and so pointless and typically did not believe that assistance to the Roma community could have any effect in the future.

*I do not understand why we should force money on the Roma all the time; it does not do any good anyway, as we could see many a time (non-Roma).*

*Why, it is not fair, they are given (the Roma) far more money than we, whites are given, and actually what for? (non-Roma)*

## **2.2. Do you benefit fairly from government spending**

Most respondents had an impression that **the government often does not spend** the public money in a **responsible manner and not always on the right, most needed areas**. According to them, the government should particularly spend resources on the health care system, economy and reduced unemployment. However, in the first place it should do something with legislation, make good laws and supervise the Czech judiciary for the purpose of effective control not only of the public money spent in this area but also of preventing all kinds of dodgy activity.

*The government spends money somewhere where it is not quite important, instead of supporting, say, the transportation, health care system, and rural areas. Also unemployment should be resolved, but it should be in the form of incentives, encouraging people – loads of people stay at home, as it pays off for them, children finish the compulsory school and have no interest to work, and so they are at home, they could not be bothered, are fine (non-Roma).*

*How does the government spend its money? In the wrong way. Catastrophically. Because I think that they pointlessly spend big money on something that is not essential. I think that the laws make it a little bit possible even to steal (non-Roma).*

### 3. Perceptions of ethnicity

During the group discussion the representatives of the majority population were asked to tell what it means to them to be a Czech and what are the national characteristics, values and attributes in their opinion associated with the traditional Czech character. The Roma interviewed were asked to describe in their own eyes the Roma culture, mentality and circumstances under which the Roma live within the Czech population.

#### 3.1. What does it mean to be a Czech? What makes us different from others

According to our non-Roma respondents **the typical Czech is best described in the character “Good Soldier Schweik” from the book written by Jaroslav Hašek**, who excelled in his ability to find gaps, faults and imperfections in systems and was ready to completely use them for his own benefit. This mentality enables Czechs to adapt to any conditions and circumstances, but implies their lack of ability or willingness to respect a certain order, obey rules and maintain discipline and also has the hallmarks of a calculating mind and weakness.

*To schweik, it is our national characteristic that had not been there before, but many people adopted it. People used to schweik at work, they just looked for gaps everywhere (non-Roma).*

*We used to be said to have hands of gold. Now, we are tunnelers. And good thieves we are (non-Roma).*

*Cunning and hard working. We are known abroad as Czechs the cunning. The classic example of the Czech identity is electing the former director Mr Železný to EU Parliament. We forgive, forget. He is then presented abroad as the Member of Parliament, but with debts in CR and we all with him (non-Roma).*

*The Czech aims to get the max and put the min effort into it. He can bend himself, but not break. This is the worst. He wants to be fine, to dodge in and out somehow the way he can to live (non-Roma).*

*We Czechs know what to do, we have capacities, but there still must be someone above us. Before it used to be Russians, now, it will probably be the EU (non-Roma).*

Our Roma respondents mentioned about the **main attributes of the Roma community** their **great love for family and children, temperament, vivacity and liveliness**. Most of them referred **they felt great pride in their ethnic background**, even though the visible difference from the majority would occasionally mean unpleasant things they face in life, particularly, in the area of work and interpersonal relations. They are aware that some Roma are involved in crime, steal or abuse drugs, and by doing so contribute to creating a negative picture of the Roma community as such. But they disagree with the generalized attitude of the majority population, which based on individuals is building prejudices and forming judgments of the entire community.

*Why should I as a Roma woman feel different? I feel good here, I am proud that I am what I am (Roma).*

*I am proud of it and love my nation, love my kids and would not harm anyone else, as I like my own kin and so I would not like anyone to harm them (Roma).*

*My children are well brought up, they do not have everything, but are good, there are few of us who are good, and some are bad, but it is up to the parents, when you give them the basic they should have and they pass it over. Had our government helped us, we would be different (Roma).*

*People think about us that we are dirt that we steal. And that we do not bring up our children the way we should. But, viewing the news, you can rarely see there that a Roma man would be the criminal, yet they are still negative about us. When something happens, it is a Roma individual having stolen something petty, but millions are being stolen, and they do not give a damn about it (Roma).*

*In short, we have loads of children and love them; we enjoy having fun (Roma).*

### 3.2. Is our nation tolerant

The **representatives of the majority population typically believe that Czechs are a tolerant nation**, and willing to accept people of a different culture, mentality or religion. However, probing the issue in detail shows that they condition this acceptance by their absolutely accepting and obeying the rules and principles set by the majority population; in other words, they **perceive the process of minorities integration merely in the sense of their assimilation**.

According to them, there is only **one strong minority in the Czech Republic – the Roma**, but the majority population would historically not have very good experience with it. The non-Roma respondents **discussing the Roma complained about their lack of adaptability, high unemployment and crime rate**, which makes them perceived as social outcast. Apparently, the **fact that as a consequence of high unemployment Roma people are often entirely dependent on social benefits** has been a **thorn in the side of the majority population**, because respondents did not describe other minorities such as, e.g., Vietnamese or Ukrainian as problematic, and explaining why not mentioned that these people are hard working, financially independent and not sponging off the welfare state.

However, they are not very optimistic about the prospect of improving the Roma situation, and blame primarily the Roma community for it, as in their opinion, they do not have a strong enough will, effort and willingness to inclusion into Czech society.

*I think that we are either tolerant, or it is lack of interest. Simply, what we do not want to, we do not see (non-Roma).*

*We are tolerant, well, depends on what and towards whom (non-Roma).*

*We are tolerant towards the Polish minority. When they behave, we are tolerant. The Roma abuse our tolerance, it is impossible to be tolerant of them (non-Roma).*

*We probably accept, depends on whom. Look, I for example have the greatest respect for Vietnamese; they come here from the other part of the globe and are able to make money here (non-Roma).*

*Well, we treat Gipsies the way they treat us, and I think we treat them very well. In my opinion, the government acts very well, I can see the kind of money they are given, how they care for their children. I would chase them out and make them work, it is not that bad in the Ostrava region, but who take a job and get the subsistence minimum, when the likes of see the Roma have 4-5 children and have more money than I do (non-Roma).*

**The Roma asked described the Czech majority population as not very open, the one afraid of difference** and waiting for a long time and with suspicion before admitting an alien element to their ranks. Most of them alone have their own, personal experience with **rejecting attitudes, even aversions and prejudices** based on the fact that they are Roma.

**The majority population does not seem willing to accept the Roma minority** and see their good aspects / positives, and so prefers to resort to generalized prejudices and would not look for inter-individual differences and values inside the Roma community. In this sense, some members of the Roma community alone contribute to the unfavourable image of the Roma because of their bad way of life, but it is also nourished by the media, which as a rule convey a negatively tinged picture of life of the Roma community (pointing out mainly at their low education, high crime, dislike of the Roma to work, etc.).

*When somebody calls me names, I would beat him up, I go to the social services department, there is a Czech woman before me, and the clerk would talk to her for 2 hours, and I am checked out in 5 minutes*

*and off you go! They talk to me in a completely different way – according to them, the Gipsy is dirt, thief and they are the angels (Roma).*

*Some Roma have only them to blame, but there is a group of good Roma. But at first glance whites do seem to look at your character, but straight away expect that we are bad, because we are black. No one would check it, we are all lumped together and good-bye (Roma).*

*The prejudices are extremely heavy. They think about us that all Gipsies have loads of children, are on welfare, etc. And not all of them are, but they just want to see it this way (Roma).*

## 4. Attitudes toward the Roma

The dominant attitudes of the majority population towards the Roma minority were tested during the entire time of group discussions with our non-Roma respondents; moreover, they were asked to tell their attitudes and opinions of the Roma population before starting the group filling the sheet “Your thoughts on the Roma community” (see the Appendix C, pp. 73).

### 4.1. The greatest challenges / problems faced by Roma

**The main problems** the Roma minority in the Czech Republic faces **perceived** by the asked representatives of the majority population are **high unemployment, low level of education, high crime rate**, and the generally frequent **occurrence of socially pathological phenomena inside the Roma community** (drug addiction, gambling, etc.).

All the above aspects more or less reflect the fact that Roma **people** are generally a very poor **social class of the population**, and are struggling **economically**. At the same time, these problems are to some degree caused by the **Roma mentality**, as according to our non-Roma respondents Roma people do not look much in the future, and so easily get into economic, criminal, social and other problems.

*They are given money from the government for nothing, and so the first day it would be drinks, vending machines and then they have nothing to eat. They live now and today, it is hereditary, they have it in their blood (non-Roma).*

*The problem of the Roma is low education and high unemployment, they want to give birth to children at the cost of social benefits (non-Roma).*

*Poor education, no predictability, high crime, they are more loud. If they got up in the morning to go to work, they would not be so loud until early hours (non-Roma).*

*No education, children do not want to study, because their parents did not need it, so why should they do it (non-Roma).*

*I think that it is all from the time of communism. As they started being given pensions and social benefits, they went to the Labour Office to sign themselves on and half of them are on disabled pensions (non-Roma).*

According to the asked representatives of the majority population, a big problem of the Roma community is that **Roma people are not willing to constructively integrate into Czech society**, and do so, e.g., through their effort to be better educated, get a job, etc. Instead, most of them prefer abusing the welfare state system, which, considering the number of eligible Roma families, means a financial strain, put on the government.

*They are not adaptable and parasite on us. They make use of the system. But I do not say that they all do. I know a couple of brilliant Roma people, but generally perceive them negatively. Inability to inclusion, only to use the benefits (non-Roma).*

*They live only on welfare (non-Roma).*

*Personally, I perceive it as that I have more duties than rights than a Roma man does. Say, in the primary school, where the majority was the Roma population, so the 12-year-old children were already thinking about the number of children to have one day not to have to work. This is how they calculate (non-Roma).*

## 4.2. Experiences of interactive situations with Roma

**Most of the asked non-Roma respondents spoke about interactive situations with the Roma community in negative connotations.** Their rejecting attitude towards Roma people is manifested in the answers recorded in the sheet „Your thoughts on the Roma community“, as they are largely negative. These respondents most often **complained about the lack of adaptability of the Roma minority** to the rules and principles of the majority population, about the **high crime rate and aggressiveness of Roma people and about their high unemployment implying the need of state assistance/ welfare.**

Most of them explained their rejecting attitudes by **bad experience they have with Roma people in everyday life**, but it was evident that **these attitudes reflect the prejudices of the majority population against the Roma minority.** Most of the asked non-Roma respondents highly inclined to the generalized comments of the type „All Roma steal“, „All Roma cause problems“, „Roma people cannot behave“, etc. This frame of mind corresponded with their reactions to the simulated situations, when, e.g., they travel together with a Roma group by the public means of transportation, or, a Roma family is about to move into their neighbourhood. In these demonstrations respondents automatically expected the Roma co-passengers would like to steal something from them or to mug them and that the Roma family near their own home residence would be a risk to safety of their family. The more radical ones of them even declared that they would actively try to prevent the Roma family moving into their neighbourhood e.g., by initiating a rejecting petition, etc.

*Simply, they cannot, or, rather do not want to adapt, this is the problem, they are just not interested (non-Roma).*

*If a Gipsy man stood next to me at the shop, looked decent, nothing against it. But when they shout at each other across the whole store, I do not have to have the likes of them. I have a garage in an area where there are many of them, and have 4 padlocks on it, otherwise, it would not be safe, I am positive about it. I do not have to have them in my surroundings; there are only problems with them (non-Roma).*

*As to the Roma ethnic, I worked for the Matiční street within education, the children there are on loose, you should see their condition, the children had rubber wellies with no socks, in short, they were poorly dressed, at the age of 6 years would not recognize colours, are ill, with lice, there was not one child that would be somehow normal, I did get an idea how things are going among Roma people, and how they look after their children (non-Roma).*

*Suppose they wanted to move into our place, I would probably try to move house somewhere else (non-Roma).*

*Well, I would not like to live with them, either. I would not like to have Gipsies for my neighbours. My friends have some experience and from it I made a picture of what it is like (non-Roma).*

*A Gipsy in the tram? Well, I immediately grab hold of my handbag (non-Roma).*

Merely few of the asked representatives of the majority population managed to perceive inter-individual differences inside the Roma community and mentioned their good experience with individual Roma people. These respondents saw the positives of the Roma – particularly, the close and loving relationship to family, children and sense of interpersonal solidarity.

These people also **admitted the majority population's share in the unfavourable situation of Roma life**, largely due to their rejecting attitude full of prejudices, discrimination in the labour market, and/or the approach to Roma children within our school system, when in the past, many Roma children automatically went to special



schools and as a consequence were not able to get higher education or skills with more prospect of employment.

*I also know Roma people who are decent and work. I want them to work and have no time to do some dodgy things (non-Roma).*

*Well, I have Roma friends, and they are honest, decent and well brought up people and I think that in terms of characters, a lot of people could learn from them. I do not say that all of them are like that, but I know such families. Obviously, I have bad experience as well, as we had some mission in Matiční street (a problematic district in Ústí nad Labem inhabited mostly by Roma residents), and it was horrible there – drugs, alcohol, pimps, loan sharks, but there are places where there live groups of people, civilized, decent, cultured (non-Roma).*

*You know, the Roma who wants to be good and decent, he must be twice as decent as the white Czech (non-Roma).*

### 4.3. Underlying attitudes toward Roma integration

#### Do you have anything in common with the Roma?

The prevailing mindset towards the Roma minority was also manifested in the answers to the question what the majority population had in common with the Roma minority. **Most of our non-Roma respondents perceived as the only common characteristic their belonging to one state establishment, living in one geographical territory.**

*We live together in one country (non-Roma).*

*We have the same citizenship (non-Roma).*

*Well, only the citizenship (non-Roma).*

The more humane minded respondents pointed out that **Roma residents likewise the non-Roma ones are first and foremost people**, but these opinions were recorded only exceptionally.

*What do we have in common? Well, two arms, two legs ... simply, we are people, both I who am white and the Roma who is dark (non-Roma).*

In the course of the groups it was evident that **the representatives of the majority population** are slightly reluctant to **look for or find common characteristics with the not popular Roma community**. In their opinion, this community is separating itself from the Czech majority population on their own account, primarily because of their inadaptability and no discipline, lack of willingness to accept the rules and order of the majority population.

*In short, they are different, have a different culture, mentality, in short, they are different in everything (non-Roma).*

*They are different in their culture, in their acts; they are very aggressive (non-Roma).*

#### Roma compared to other minorities

The Roma minority represents the most numerous ethnic minority; our non-Roma respondents were able to name, besides the Roma, only **Vietnamese and Ukrainians**

as the national minorities living in the Czech Republic. But, according to respondents, these minorities are **different** from the **Roma particularly in their hard working, ability and willingness to work and make money through their own doing**. Respondents did not have any major reservations about the Vietnamese or Ukrainian minority, far from it, they appreciated how, especially, Vietnamese people can thrive, prosper in a foreign country and be independent, self-supporting/sufficient.

*Well, for instance, the Vietnamese, they are the bees, hard working we could envy them (non-Roma).*

*The Vietnamese are fair people, they work here. Also Ukrainians come here to work and there are no such problems with them (non-Roma).*

*Vietnamese are hard working by contrast with Roma people. They make money for themselves. But I also know some Vietnamese who sell drugs (non-Roma).*

The attitude towards the Roma versus the other minorities confirms the assumption that what the majority population holds against the Roma is their high unemployment in the first place, which is seen as a consequence of their unwillingness to work and which is putting a financial strain on the state budget.

### Do Roma want to integrate more?

**Most** of our non-Roma respondents **had their doubts that the Roma community would want to integrate more into Czech society**. That's because they believed that if Roma wanted to integrate more into the „normal society“, they could do so, as there is nothing stopping them. However, this attitude again reflects the predominant concept of integration only in the sense of the Roma assimilation irrespective of accepting the specific, cultural and other differences of the Roma ethnic.

*They do not want to, why to bother. It appears to me that they do not want to integrate, they just seem to be whining what kind of disadvantages they have, but I have an impression that they are given a helping hand everywhere, but it is still all the same (non-Roma).*

*I think that who wants to work can do so. The ones that wanted to have been integrated (non-Roma).*

*A minority from the minority wants to integrate into society (non-Roma).*

*No, I do not think that they are interested (non-Roma).*

A certain **shift can be seen in the young Roma generation** that according to the representatives of the majority population young Roma **make an effort to integrate more** than the older Roma generation. Respondents perceived this trend particularly in relation to the area of schools, education, as young Roma more often enrol normal schools and get education.

*I think that things are going for the better, in comparison to the situation 30 years ago, today they are more interested, I meet girls, students and they study secondary school with graduation, and you can see that they want to integrate more and get education (non-Roma).*

*I think that mainly the younger generation makes an effort to integrate more (non-Roma).*

*I think that the more decent ones are fairly afraid of that, but I think that they respect that they get friendly with white people (non-Roma).*

### The moral angle: are Roma treated fairly?

**Most** of the representatives of the majority population **shared an opinion that Czechs treat the Roma fairly, the way** they deserve. Some were even sure that the Czech population treats the Roma too mildly, leniently and let them be abused by the Roma.

*It is the so-called positive discrimination and it is gradually growing. I can see the problem in that when we are placed on the same baseline in the Labour office, then every time their labour privileges get in front under the circumstances of being given unemployment benefits, clothes and so on (non-Roma).*

*I think so (non-Roma).*

*I think that they are forgiven more that it is not fair to us (non-Roma).*

*We treat them perhaps too fairly (non-Roma).*

Merely **few of those asked were able to admit that the majority does not and in the past did not treat the Roma fairly every time**, and these people pointed out particularly at the drastic course of Roma assimilation in the 50s and in the 60s of 20th century and discrimination acts in the area of schools and labour market. At the same time they spoke about widespread prejudices and generalized judgments about the Roma, which make it difficult and put obstacles to their effort to constructive inclusion into society.

*I think they have it more difficult, as they must be twice as decent, clean (non-Roma).*

*Well, we do not treat them completely fairly. We must help them, they cannot get out of it on their own, and do so not only by giving them the benefits, it is good for nothing, there should be an effective state administration and I don't know, make the children allowances tied to that children would go to school (non-Roma).*

*I think that we show them that we do not want them among us – it is wrong. In my opinion we should be more tolerant, but sort it out and have the rules set for that (non-Roma).*

#### **4.4. More integration or 'separate but equal' approach?**

The question whether it is better to integrate the Roma into Czech society or to segregate them divided the representative of the majority population into two camps. The slightly **bigger group defended the alternative to isolate the Roma from the majority population**, as it would prevent the problems the Roma cause the majority population within everyday life in Czech and Moravian towns.

We should bear in mind that those **more in favour of this solution were our respondents from Ostrava and from Ústí nad Labem**, i.e., from the towns with a numerous Roma minority, where the relations between the Roma and non-Roma population are more critical.

*It is good what Slovaks did. They located them at the end of the village and let them live the way they want (non-Roma).*

*The government teaches us to be tolerant, the ordinary resident of Ostrava is of the opinion that they should be separated from society and placed in some ghetto; civil servants are of the opinion that the Roma should be integrated, but they alone will not steal from one another, they cause problems to others, the state administration is extremely burdened by that and it affects the normal service provided to citizens (non-Roma).*

*The problem is that they reproduce unnecessarily too much, as in the first Republic there used to be the so-called Roma ghettos, I do not understand why they could not exist now. They are travellers and this*

*government tries to integrate them into society. But they are different. It is alpha and omega. This government wants to make them Czech (non-Roma).*

Those defending the need of effective integration of the Roma into Czech society used the opposite arguments – in their opinion, the Roma should not be **separated**, as it **would increase the socially pathological phenomena inside the Roma community and deepen the barrier between the Roma and non-Roma people**. They shared an opinion that if the Czech majority wants the Roma to integrate more, they should let them among them and give them enough of good examples and role models of the functioning community.

In their opinion **more integration of the Roma and a more open majority population towards the Roma community** could contribute to reduce many prejudices on either party, to improve their co-existence and could also induce positive economic consequences.

*So integration into one place is not a good idea, it was found out when Chánov started being black (an area inhabited almost solely with Roma people) and things started happening there (non-Roma).*

*I disagree with the ghettos. I take the Roma for normal people, so why should we push them somewhere else, where they might not want to be? (non-Roma)*

*I think that it is necessary to invest in that, in the integration. My friends live in America and they say they used to have it the same with the blacks as we have it here with Gypsies. But they invested in them and so-so resolved the problems (non-Roma).*

*They should not be separated. It is important to learn what is most important, as people are afraid of what they do not know (non-Roma).*

## 5. Roma views on greater integration

In the groups we asked our Roma respondents to evaluate the life situation of the Roma community and name the main problems the Roma face. They were also asked to tell their views on greater integration of the Roma into society, and what makes this process more difficult or downright impossible.

### 5.1. The problems faced by Roma

#### List of problems mentioned

The **main problems faced by the Roma community** according to its representatives **are the low socio-economic living standard** of Roma residents and **high level of unemployment**; the next unsatisfactory areas are **little education** of Roma and **poor level of housing**. The Roma asked also complained about the prevailing rejecting attitude of the Czech majority that has a great deal of prejudice against them and discriminates them in the labour market.

*Work is the main problem, that there is no work; we have no money (Roma).*

*They treat white people differently than they treat us, in short, they have two different standards – social workers jump upon us and are sugar-sweet on them (Roma).*

*That they lump us all together – prejudices, it is daft and it has been like that since the past. They say like all Gypsies have loads of children, are on welfare, etc. And not all of them are (Roma).*

*Work is a problem. There is little work for the Roma. I have experienced it once, when I applied for a job – they treated me fairly and told me they did not want a Gypsy woman (Roma).*

#### Have things for Roma got better or worse in recent years?

Our Roma respondents perceived the change in life of the Roma community particularly with respect to the **fall of the communist regime in 1989**. On the one hand, this coup d'état **brought freedom** to the whole **nation**, and the Roma greatly appreciate freedom, but **it also brought a number of negative consequences for the Roma community, primarily higher unemployment and worsened economic situation** of many Roma families.

This is apparently given by the fact that the **Roma are disadvantaged in the labour market because of their lack of education and often also ethnic background**, and paradoxically also by the fact that in the democratic state order there is no legal obligation to work the way it was under communists. The Roma motivation to work, many a time for the price comparable, and even less than the money they are given on welfare is quite low.

*It is worse than it used to be under communists, mainly thanks to that there used to be work, jobs, they did not hang around, had to go out. Who did not work, went to jail (Roma).*

*You do not get a job today, they would not hire you, as they want you to be educated, have practice, etc. What to do, when you do not have it? And when you are on welfare and they offer you CZK 5,000 as your pay, so you'd rather be on welfare (Roma)*

*It is worse, mainly because of the work. We used to have work under communists, now, we can travel, but only few can afford it (Roma).*

*In my opinion, it is going for the worse in our country. When we were younger, they treated us better. Now, when walking along the street, people cast an eye over you (Roma).*

### What are the obstacles to improvement?

According to the Roma asked, the **efforts to improve the quality of life of the Roma community are complicated by little education and motivation to educate, train and self-improve** within the Roma minority, which **disadvantages Roma in the labour market**. Also the heavy financial strain resulting from the large size of typical Roma families was mentioned, but respondents only stated it as a fact and did not perceive it as a problem, but as the virtue of Roma and act of love for family, children. In the mentions of our Roma respondents we could also see much distrust of the possibility of change in the life situation of the Roma community, which makes this process more difficult.

*From my experience I know that the older generation lived in the communist style – everything used to be cheaper and they cannot get accustomed to the democracy now, economically, they think differently, and the young cannot because they have nothing to get hold of. They have no examples, but they would not get a job because they are dark (Roma).*

*I do not think that Gypsies are so poor. They are able to get money „like that“. Simply, they have many children and love them (Roma).*

*I blame communist for that, as children did not have any chance to apprenticeship, to get skilled, they placed them to special schools and did not make education possible for them, when somebody said Gipsy it had been an offence, now, we are proud of it, but did not have the chance, now we do have the chance, but have no money (Roma).*

*I think that it will be the same all the time (Roma).*

Our Roma respondents felt strong **barriers from the majority population**, which, in their opinion, does not approach the Roma in an open way, shows no will and effort to help the Roma community one way or another, far from it, and would discriminate Roma in many respects, e.g., in the labour market. In our society there still persist the **negative prejudices against the Roma**, which **worsen the perception and acceptance of the Roma by the Czech majority**. Some Roma groups contribute to building this unfavourable picture of the Roma, but it is also the media, as they typically depict Roma residents in negative colours.

*And when you view the news, so rarely would you see a Roma man as a criminal, and yet they are still negative about us, showing how we live in poverty and dirt (Roma).*

*We are not so open against southern nations; it takes a very long time before we accept someone among us. When you go to Greece, it is different there (Roma).*

*In short, they do not want us among them, it is clear. You just watch television and you will see what kind of pictures they show about us. Why, this does not apply to all Gypsies, the dirt, the poverty (Roma).*

*Czechs know us from the worse side, when you look back, the TV channel ČT1 showed the Čerminák – the black worms, dirt, poverty, it is not like that. They, when they come, they look for it, but many Roma do not live like that, we live in a solid way, but they would not show that (Roma).*

*The Czech population is not tolerant, they are afraid of everything new and are afraid of a different culture, are used to live in their own field, like the Chinese will build the wall and that's it (Roma).*

### Your expectations for the next Roma generation

**Most** of the asked Roma **looked into the future with some scepticism** – they all wished the quality of life of the Roma community would improve, but actually, did not have high hopes for this change coming true.

It seems the main task of the young Roma generation is to educate themselves and support their children in education in the interest of gaining better conditions in the labour market and a better social status. Improving the quality of life also presumes a change in the approach of the majority population towards the Roma in direction to be more open and reduce discrimination acts.

*I think that when he has some education and wants to work, so there is no problem to get a job (Roma).*

*It is bound to change once. Look at the West (Roma).*

*In my opinion, it will not change – it has been worse and worse for several years (Roma).*

*I see it negatively, and as early as now keep telling my kids, look; we live a poor life, and what is going to happen to you? Start doing something with you (Roma).*

### **5.2. Attitudes to integration**

#### The choice between more interaction / integration with non-Roma, and 'separate but equal' approach

The addressed **Roma were clearly in favour of more integration of the Roma with the Czech non-Roma** and more interaction and cooperation between them. In opposition to the model of Roma separation they spoke about that the **Roma minority needed to live together with the majority that gives them a certain order and boundaries**, life in a civilized society cannot do without. Moreover, if the Czech majority is to get along with the Roma minority, these two groups must be able to live together and get to know one another.

That is why they **strongly rejected the suggested separation of the Roma community**, even if they got the same support and assistance. According to them, isolation of the Roma community would only increase concerns and barriers between the Roma and non-Roma.

*We cannot live anywhere alone; we would kill each other (Roma).*

*We need somebody else, we cannot live on our own, without the non-Roma, we need them (Roma).*

*The more Gypsies together, the bigger a problem (Roma).*

*Suppose Roma people are isolated and have the same social benefits, would it be better? No, no, it would be no good again. If they were in the same school, they would beat each other up to death, I wish we are mixed (Roma).*

*It is said it should be like that, the more contact and mixing between Gypsies and Czechs, the more contact, the more hope for success (Roma).*

#### Obstacles to integration

The primary **obstacle to integration of the Roma is their high unemployment resulting in a low living standard and dependence on welfare**. According to our Roma respondents, often the Roma alone are responsible for this situation, as they have a handicap of little education and often low working morals as well; but the majority

population has its share in this situation because of their discrimination attitude in the labour market.

According to the asked representatives of the Roma community the effective process of the Roma integration into Czech society is also blocked by **their lack of trust in the possibility of change and the unwillingness of the majority population to help improve the quality of life of the Roma minority** and accept the Roma as their equals. The Roma asked explained their distrustful attitude by their numerous experiences with rejection and no interest of the majority population causing resignation among the Roma community.

*Simply, we are poor (Roma).*

*White people are afraid of the Roma and the Roma are afraid of the white (Roma).*

*They do not want to help; it is about the unwillingness of people (Roma).*

*Distrust – they are afraid of giving money to the Roma not to embezzle it, etc. (Roma).*

*No Gipsy would ever tell his child not to talk to the white. But the white would do it, why? (Roma)*

### Integration of Roma compared with other minority groups

The other minorities – **Vietnamese or Ukrainians** – living in the Czech Republic **do not have** - according to the asked Roma – the **problem with acceptance / no acceptance by the majority population** as the Roma do. They perceive this fact mainly in the background of the fact that these **communities are**, in comparison to the Roma, much **smaller and, above all, have money enough**, and so do not have to ask Czechs to help them.

*Why do you think that there is a different approach to other nations? Specifically, to the Vietnamese, so they have money, and I have nothing, so I stick in Czechs throat (Roma).*

*They are not as many as we are, and mainly, they are out of the woods (Roma).*



## 6. The government and the Roma

In the next section of the group discussions the representatives of the majority population discussed the issue of integrating the Roma into Czech society in terms of who could benefit from this process, who should be responsible for it and to what extent should the government, members of the majority and of the Roma minority get involved.

### 6.1. Would society benefit from helping Roma

All the asked representatives of the majority population shared an opinion that if it were possible **to resolve the problem with the Roma minority, it would contribute to improving the quality of life in the Czech Republic**. According to them, the unsatisfactory Roma question makes big problems at the social, political and economic level that could be reduced if the Roma question if effectively managed.

*The integration of the Roma into society must bring some benefit. Yes, I am sure of it, but they would have to want to integrate (non-Roma).*

*Our economy would improve (non-Roma).*

*The employment would be higher (non-Roma).*

*We have discussed that before, that the motivational scheme is missing didn't we? With the social benefits, it is not motivational, I think that helping the Roma would be good, as they are part of our nation, of our republic, and help as such the kind of long-term planned, not one-off financial, for example, but to improve their level of education (non-Roma).*

*The integration would be better, we could get along better then I guess (non-Roma).*

*I think that helping the Roma would help our society. There would be return on investment, obviously not tomorrow, but in due time, it would work (non-Roma).*

### 6.2. Who should be responsible for helping Roma

Most of the asked believed that those with the **main responsibility for improving the quality of life of the Roma and for their integration into Czech society are the members of the Roma minority alone**. These respondents did not like at all the suggestion that it would be the government's responsibility and that the government would give the Roma assistance and support.

The reason why was their opinion that the **government had already done these activities many a time in the past, but they actually have never brought much benefit** and did not do much good. That is why they saw more state subsidies / assistance for the benefit of the Roma as a pointless investment with no good outcome prospect and perceived it as unfair that the government would again pay attention only to one, on top of that, very problematic group of the population.

*Roma communities should care for that, so that it would improve (non-Roma).*

*It would certainly be good, if they were at the same level as we are, but people are tired of it. But I do not believe it, It is not realistic (non-Roma).*

*No, I would not give them anything else, it has been so much money going down the drain (non-Roma).*

**A smaller number of our non-Roma respondents shared an opinion that the government should be instrumental in improving the Roma situation**, as Roma people represent a not insignificant part of the Czech population.

At the same time they **pointed out at the danger of worsening the Roma issue**, which could have severe economic implications possible to become even more intense and widespread considering the size of the Roma community in the future. According to them, it is necessary to do something about it now and not wait to see these problems and negative implications escalating even more. These arguments seemed to have a very strong potential and able to address, even shake the respondents' belief that there should be no state assistance to the Roma at all.

*I will cost us a lot of money, but unless it has been tackled and resolved, we will pay even more in the future. Look, there are awfully many of them, they reproduce a lot, in a short while it will be a major problem, if they still do not work (non-Roma).*

*If it really were worthwhile, and, for example, the crime went down and there would not be such high unemployment among them, so it would be worthwhile (non-Roma).*

### **6.3. How generous should government help be**

All respondents were against any across-the board financial assistance, because this kind of help is most likely to be abused and not result in any positive outcome. Our respondents saw the big problem in little motivation of Roma, and so suggested the **form of help from the government should be primarily motivational, driving the Roma to a better attitude to education, work, etc.**

Asked to come up with concrete examples of such supporting, motivational schemes, they spoke about, e.g., social benefits – welfare – tied to school attendance and success of Roma children, opening a zero class in primary schools designed for Roma children where they would learn Czech and basic hygienic and social standards and rules. According to some non-Roma respondents, the Roma should also be helped in the labour market, where their chance to make it is worse than that of non-Roma citizens.

*Mainly to motivate them. It is not about giving them money; we should motivate them one way or another (non-Roma).*

*To force them to want to be helped. They only want money to be able to buy anything, but are not interested in anything else. As soon as they are to do anything, they would not do so. They know absolutely perfectly their rights, but not their duties (non-Roma).*

*To open a preparatory class for the kids, where they would learn Czech before starting attending the first class and would not unnecessarily lag behind and no one would call them names. But the main point is Roma kids went to school (non-Roma).*

*Their parents must support them. The mothers started keeping an eye on it, as they were told they would not be given the allowances. Perhaps, they would listen to that (non-Roma).*

*I think they should have advantages such as free lunch, trips. It should be a different line taken, they would not be helped by higher allowances or something like that, but there should be better designed, worked out schemes for them, not one-off initiatives (non-Roma).*

### **6.4. Should the government help Roma more than others in need**

**Most of our non-Roma respondents categorically rejected the alternative that the government should help the Roma more than others in need.** Their attitudes largely reflected their **feeling of unfair** when one group of the population would be preferred to

another, and also their **lack of trust** in effective and meaningful help to the Roma. They spoke, e.g., about young families with children, poor families or old age pensioners as the groups of the population in need of similar help from the government.

*I agree with helping them, but all should be helped the same, Roma as well as non-Roma residents (non-Roma).*

*The other groups do not have to be other communities, but poorer communities of a non-Roma type, look, for instance, the situation of families with children is as bad as that of old age pensions everybody feels sorry for (non-Roma).*

*I do not think it is possible to do more for them. The question shocks me, how to do more for them? It is the max what is being done for them now; it is hardly possible to do more. And why, actually, should we do that, look, they do not appreciate it anyway (non-Roma).*

*Children from Roma families are given money to study secondary/high schools and our children are not. We pay for it, it costs us dearly. Why one should be helped and the other not, what kind of unfair treatment is that. White poor mothers are given no money (non-Roma).*

But those defending the need to help and support the Roma pointed out at the vicious circle of problems causing other problems inside the Roma minority – no education, unemployment, crime, poverty, which, in their opinion should be stopped. Considering the large size of the Roma minority and their high potential of reproduction the government must pay much attention to the Roma community and help it pull together, get going on the road to prosperity and their full integration into society.. The sooner this process is successfully managed, the smaller and less serious social, political and primarily economic problems to face in connection with the unfavourable Roma situation.

*This is where our society is in much trouble. It is still worthwhile to spend some money on that, not to end up in a situation we cannot handle any more (non-Roma).*

*There are so many of them, and unless they all work, the whole country is in trouble (non-Roma).*

## **6.5. What about the duty of non-Roma community to help**

**Hardly any** representative of the majority population **admitted their own personal or collective responsibility** for the life situation of our Roma community, and most of them shared an opinion that **the Roma alone are responsible for the poor quality of their life.**

*We, ordinary white people have given them enough, and made every effort so that they adapted, but I cannot see any outcome of that. In short, they are not interested and make no effort (non-Roma).*

*I think that there were more steps taken by white people than those taken by Gipsies, they did not accept it, and I think they want to stay the way they are (non-Roma).*

*It is about the effort, but Gipsies would have to want to change anything (non-Roma).*

*It depends purely on them, the way they treat us we treat them (non-Roma).*

Only **exceptionally** could we hear in our non-Roma groups the **voices pointing out at the negative attitudes and prejudiced behaviour of the non-Roma population towards the Roma**, which makes the Roma situation in society even worse. These respondents also mentioned the **historically wrong treatment of the Roma**, who had been drastically forced to live in towns/cities, leave their travelling way of life, without being offered a different, for them meaningful lifestyle. According to them, the majority

population should show willingness to correct their mistakes and give the Roma a helping hand.

*Integration would be better; we should get along together more. Well, we have not exactly pampered them at all times, we should admit that (non-Roma).*

*I think we show them that we do not want them among us – it is wrong. In my opinion we should be more tolerant, but sort it out and have some rules set for this process (non-Roma).*

*The way they had been treated by communist was hardly right (non-Roma).*

## **6.6. And what about Roma self-help**

Most of the representatives of the majority population desired the main activity and initiation to improve the quality of Roma life primarily came from the members of the Roma community alone. According to them, the Roma as such should be priority interested and be ultimately responsible for this process of change in the Roma situation in CR for the better.

But great many respondents had no confidence in the willingness and effort of the Roma to change, improve anything; therefore, it is necessary to boost motivation of Roma, especially in the area of education and approach to work. In this respect there should be some help or intervention from the non-Roma community by all means, optimally targeted at young families with children, where the chance to succeed would be greatest.

*Financial assistance, but what I mean is actually make them learn Czech, math, and a foreign language. Research studies in the world reveal that the higher education, the fewer children and the higher income. T is mainly in the children, I keep telling them, give it a try, but they just look and let the children grow up loose, in short, the family and education are the grounds (non-Roma).*

*I am sure it is their own doing, their lifestyle to be blamed – little discipline. When I compare them to Vietnamese, they are bees and work, but the Roma would not even make an effort. And so it is their own fault, I think so (non-Roma).*

*Surely they need some support, they are different, but should make an effort, self-help, too (non-Roma).*

*It is their life, so they should make an effort, shouldn't they? It must be built on parents there, they were born here and so must adapt, they should make their children go to schools, to work, and so (non-Roma).*

*It should start with the children, but also adults should be led to cooperation, but I do not know how? In the first 6 years it all depends on the parents, when they do not give them the textbook, the children take no interest in school (non-Roma).*

## 7. Roma views on helping improve their lives

The representatives of the Roma minority were also asked to tell their own views on helping improve the quality of Roma lives, who should be mainly responsible and initiate this process of change, and what circumstance would prevent its happening.

### 7.1. Should the government help the Roma

Our **Roma** respondents in line with the named main problematic areas **desired help and support, assistance from the government in the area of labour market and education**, which could consequently help improve their economic living standard including the question of housing.

The Roma asked wanted the government to **tackle high unemployment** inside the Roma community, or, to take definite steps of the type: introducing positive discrimination for the employers of Roma or anti-discrimination measures / laws in the labour market. They built this desire on their numerous experiences when they did not get the job for the reason of their ethnic background.

*You know, it would be good if the business that would employ the Roma had some tax relief or something like that, so that they would just select, hire us (Roma).*

*I have encountered with that, that I was applying for a job by phone, told I could get it, but then they did not want me when they saw I was black. It should not be like that. Now, it was in the Občanské Judo (Civic Judo – a TV reporting programme), they showed them there; they were made to pay for discrimination (Roma).*

*I have the same experience with it, we all do I guess (Roma).*

*I would ask our President to help us find a job (Roma).*

However, at the same time they were aware that **they alone, the Roma have a serious handicap** in the **labour market, i.e., their low education level**, which reduced their job opportunities and possibilities to make it in better, higher-ranked job positions. That is why the **support, assistance** to the Roma community should be directed to the **area of education**; yet the Roma alone admitted that there is little motivation among them in this respect, and that they are actually not very convinced about the importance and meaning of education. Discussing the issue, they suggested – likewise their non-Roma counterparts – **supporting the parents, making them turn their children towards education**, e.g., by tying social benefits (welfare) to school attendance and success, or, by educating/informing them about the link between education and better labour prospects.

*I would look at children, so that children were better off than we are, every Roma will tell you that it is first and foremost about our children, so that the young had a flat or house, children (Roma).*

*How to help it? Well, it starts in the schools. They should support them. They should help the one who is clever; for instance, give them some financial assistance to study (Roma).*

*To support, help children to get education (Roma).*

*You know what, the mother should, say, be given her welfare on condition her child attends school and has good results. You would be surprised to see what kind of effort she would make then (Roma).*

*For instance, the social workers could visit families and keep telling them how important it is to get education, to study, and tell so to the parents who do not realize as they alone, for instance, have no school at all and so (Roma).*

*It is good, but something should be done with the businesses, when they employed the Roma, they should pay less tax or something like that (Roma).*

The big problem faced by the Roma is also a **great deal of prejudice from the majority population the politicians could help eliminate**, when they, for example, pointed out at the good points of the Roma minority, show their interest in their culture, tradition and current problems, etc. This could be a good example for the other Czech community, which otherwise looks at the Roma with suspicion and disdain.

*I would ask our President to support us, show his trust in us (Roma).*

*To give us the chance. To spread the Roma's better reputation (Roma).*

*Only very few schools, if any, have in the curriculum the Roma community, history, they take no interest in that (Roma).*

## **7.2. The obstacles to more government help**

**The main obstacle** why the government cannot help more in improving life of the Roma minority **perceived** by its representatives is a **shortage of funds, resources in the Czech Republic**. However, they do believe the **Roma issue is not that hot and attractive among our top politicians** to make anyone willing to really tackle the problem. According to them, this attitude is corresponding with the general attitude of the majority population, which has a tendency to disregard the problems faced by the Roma community.

*Well, there is no money, you can see it everywhere around (Roma).*

*But they do not want to help us anyhow anyway (Roma).*

*They all just promise, mainly before the elections, but you know it: they do not keep their promises (Roma).*

*Lack of trust – they are afraid of giving the Roma money not to misuse it (Roma).*

## **7.3. Roma expectations of help from the local authorities**

The Roma asked **expected from their local authorities, civil servants and council members particularly help in the area of housing**; they complained about a shortage of suitable flats or houses at a reasonable cost they could afford. They appeal, e.g., to officers not to automatically give council flats to Roma families in the housing estates inhabited largely by the Roma, but enabled them to integrate more, e.g., by giving them council flats in non-Roma areas, houses.

*I wish we were given some good flat or house, they keep pushing us to live in Předlice (an area densely populated by the Roma in Ústí nad Labem), but we do not want to live there (Roma).*

*The council should not make differences between Roma and non-Roma. I went to apply for a flat, but as soon as they saw us, it went all wrong. They were afraid we would not pay (Roma).*

*Many places to rent are good, but when you say you are the Roma, they so no. The real estate agent already does so –would not let the Roma rent the flat (Roma).*

*I think that many people apply for a flat and they do not help us. There should be less bureaucratic. They keep referring us from one place to another and probably hope we would lose interest in due time (Roma).*

**They also asked for support to local Roma associations involved in, e.g., organizing free time activities of Roma youth** for the purpose of preventing the onset and progress of delinquent behaviour. According to them, Roma initiatives exist in many towns/cities to work with Roma children, organize daily and weekend programmes for them and doing so protect them against inactivity, hanging around and facing the risk to become addicted to drugs, do crime, etc.

These **associations** also organize various Roma festivals, which can contribute to informing the non-Roma population in a more detail about the Roma mentality, culture, which could help with the successful process of Roma integration. However, they need **financial resources from the council, and/or from the government** to be able to do this activity and as a rule do not have enough funds.

*It is different here, because there is multi-culture, you teach children there culture, train them in everything, hygiene and so. Everything for the future, they know they should not make a mess in streets, but the council should see it this way, should they not, and when you apply, you are given little money (Roma).*

*For example, an organization such as ours would deserve support. We are in an organization, and do a lot for the Roma, we take children, drag them from the streets, not to take drugs, and so, but you know, that's the point, why would you take care of 100 children, be responsible for them, why? When you have nothing for it, we have been doing it for free for years, why we are not paid for what we do, it does not matter to us whether it is Saturday or Sunday, the main point is that children are not in the street, why are we not supported by anyone? (Roma)*

*The initiative comes out of our own mind! But we cannot make ends meet, it is about money, CZK 200,000 is peanuts, mockery! You have water, power, computers to pay for, and there is nothing for the children from that, we are still circling around money (Roma).*

#### **7.4. Expectations of self-help by the Roma community**

Discussing self-help activities, the **Roma primarily appeal to solidarity among their own people**. They would like to eliminate the kind of situations when a Roma alone makes the living situation of other Roma worse, such as, e.g., when he wants a very high rent in his house, or, a Roma businessman would not pay his Roma employees the wages they are entitled to. Presumably, more solidarity could also include eliminating loan sharks among the Roma, which, especially, in poor Roma districts is really thriving and often leads to a drastic fall in the living standard of many Roma families.

*We can help ourselves, our family, our neighbours, boost our spirit, but it is not possible otherwise (Roma).  
To help one another (Roma).*

*You want to help some Roma, but some would wave their hand saying it is not worth doing anyway without any higher support you cannot do anything (Roma).*

*For instance, the Roma that arrived here from Moravia, rents were put together, these houses built by others, so they sold them to the bastards that ask for such a high rent (Roma).*

*Or, for instance, in the business, one businessman gave jobs to all Roma, and the businessman was a Roma man himself, but helped them (Roma).*

The Roma asked would also like to see the **Roma parents being a good example, role model for their children and support them on the road to education**. However, according to them, many a time would this step be hardly possible because of low education of the parents alone, their distrust of importance of education and from that resulting little motivation to bring children to education. Last but not least, for poor families it is often financially difficult to keep children in school, but this aspect in

comparison with their little motivation within the process of education appears secondary only. It seems that in this respect the Roma community could not do without some educational, information delivering help initiated by the Czech majority.

*We had a school, and there were high truancy rates, and so the local council came up with a good idea, when the child studies well, and the mum shows he is not a truant, so the Roma mum will be given another CZK 500 on top of the benefits and so it has worked there like that for two years now! (Roma)*

*The parents have an influence on us, the king is father who can smack me even now, at my age. Mainly from the family the help should come out of (Roma).*

*The education. When the Gipsy is education, he can keep at the top (Roma).*

*The main point here is to bring the child in his own family to the education. Because when he can see, e.g., his father in the pub, his mother is smoking over there, so he can see it and would not make any effort. It is in the parents (Roma).*

*I think that if in the higher schools they opened one class only for them, it would be better. They would not be so scared. And, or, there could also be the poorer from other families (Roma).*

### 7.5. Respondents' advice to their own community

**The most frequent advice** of our Roma respondents to their own community **was directed to support morality, self-confidence and activities of the Roma.** According to them, many Roma citizens due to the unfavourable acceptance by the majority population and not enough motivation given up hope of a better tomorrow and make no effort to do anything for their own benefit.

The not motivated Roma can easily fall to the „bottom of society“, are dependent on state assistance and often incline to various socio-pathological behaviour. These Roma people contribute to the unfavourable picture of the Roma community maintained in the mind of the Czech majority; on the other hand, the Roma asked also believed that unless the Roma alone made an effort to change anything, improve, no change in the quality of Roma life would materialize.

*To be aware that we are dark and that we should be proud of it that we are dark, we are like soldiers, when the soldier comes among a hundred of people, he is visible. When we do evil, 100 pairs of eyes see the evil, when we do good, we will live better. The media do wrong to the Roma, they show the dirt and so and Czechs will blow it up (Roma).*

*We expected more, but the Roma do not live, the Roma survive, as they have no motivation for the future, they have no finance, no reason to save up (Roma).*

*There should be more effort (Roma).*

*To be patient and keep trying. Well, when you want something, you can do it (Roma).*

*To try to prove that they can do it. So that the difference is slowly dying away. To get rid of the fear (Roma).*

### 7.6. What role for Roma leaders

The mentions of our Roma respondents indicated that **at present there is no Roma personality, leader to be recognized by all member of the Roma community across the Czech Republic.** The Roma kings, there are two at the moment, are supposedly not very trusted and do not have much authority.

*We do not trust them, the kings (Roma).*



*As soon as they get to the top, they are concerned only about their own income, to stick to their own gravy train (Roma).*

*Well, we used to have our own, Roma king, but he kicked the bucket. Now, there is a mess in that (Roma).*

*The king did not do anything for us. The deputy did not do anything, either, he had a pension, and he lived like a lord, the king of ours, and where did he come from? (Roma)*

According to respondents, Roma associations at the local level are more likely to work out of the Roma's initiative, which is focused on work with Roma children, support Roma culture, etc. Our respondents perceived their work as very useful.

Generally, the **Roma would expect and want from their leaders to effectively stand up for support to Roma employment, to boost morals inside the Roma community and also highlighted and spread the good reputation of Roma** within the majority population.

*They should support employment or do something for children in schools. For many children go out, are in the street and start taking drugs there. And so some interest groups, activities, there should be more clubs for the youth (Roma).*

*So that the Roma became a bit recognized here – that we are not so bad.*

*We had a festival now. They sometimes think that it is just some dance, but it is not about that only, it is about that the children get in a collective, stick together and do not end up in the street, do not fall, that you can keep an eye on them, so that they would not take drugs, etc., like a Roma activist I would not stand up for the Roma 100%, but would do so 95 % jo (Roma).*

## 8. The Decade of the Roma Inclusion

Both the Roma and non-Roma respondents were later in the group discussion introduced the idea and programme of the Decade of the Roma Inclusion; it was important to see their reactions to this initiative to support the quality of life of the Roma community.

### 8.1. Spontaneous and prompted awareness of the Decade

**Hardly any of the asked respondents – Roma and non-Roma alike – was informed about the project the Decade of the Roma Inclusion;** merely two out of the representatives of the Roma minority knew a little bit about it from the media, but nothing in detail.

*I have heard of some programme, maybe from the EU, that they spend money, about 150 million on education of Roma children or something like that (Roma).*

*I have read about it – that it should be for a longer time period. But I did not know at all what it is about (Roma).*

*No, no, I hear about it for the first time (Roma).*

*It is not telling me anything (non-Roma).*

*No, I have not heard of it, what it is about? (non-Roma).*

### 8.2. Is the Decade necessary?

**All the representatives of the majority population agreed that the Czech society would benefit from the improved situation of the Roma;** the following burning issues in need of improvement were mentioned in this respect: high unemployment among the Roma putting a financial strain on the state budget, unsatisfactory atmosphere of interpersonal relations between the majority and minority Roma population and high crime among the Roma community.

However, at the same time they could not hide certain **scepticism and lack of trust in success and effectiveness of any activity focused on helping the Roma** and improving the quality of their life, since it was their belief that the Roma are not determined, do not want and are not motivated to change anything in their lives for the better.

*I am sure that something should be done with it, but I do not know at all what could motivate them (non-Roma).*

*Well, there is certain scepticism; you should not be surprised (non-Roma).*

*I would probably give it a try (non-Roma).*

*I think it would be very nice and wish them all the best, but they themselves should want to integrate in the first place. And I am pessimistic about it (non-Roma).*

*Let the initiative go ahead, but let it be made public that it is an initiative not funded by us, tax-payers. Advertising, 100% participation, a huge effect, first three weeks, then it will be dying away (non-Roma).*

*I have doubts whether the initiative does not cover what has been done until now (non-Roma).*

*Let it be put in there, but I do not believe it would help; I believe it only about 10 %, and 90 % believe it would not help. I would be for, let them be included into our society and then something can be done (non-Roma).*

### 8.3. How will the non-Roma community react?

The asked **Roma presumed this initiative to support and help the Roma would be met with fierce opposition and disagreement among the majority population**, and the main reason why would be the consequently increased resources spent from the state budget for the benefit of the Roma community, which, according to them, the majority population does not like very much. Moreover, the suggested points implying the preferential treatment of Roma children to non-Roma made them expect that the majority would complain about the unfair approach favouring one group of the population at the cost of the other.

*It would be brilliant, for instance, the first point about schools, but I am afraid, the majority might become mad (Roma).*

*They would not accept it, but on the other hand, when they want to change it one way or another, something must be done for it, or not (Roma).*

*Czechs would probably take it like that some would think it is good, and some would not give a shit about us. But I am sure they would not want to spend money on that, they would hardly do that (Roma).*

*Some will be for and some against. They will look at it unfavourably (Roma).*

*They would say to themselves that it is not fair. They would say to themselves that they will have to give it out of their own pocket (Roma).*

### 8.4. Would the Decade help / hurt our country

Due to their prevailing distrust that this initiative could succeed, our **non-Roma respondents perceived**, in particular, its negative aspects, i.e., **a financially costly scheme and a strain put on the state budget**. The reactions of most respondents indicated their huge **dislike of helping the Roma**, reasoned by frequent negative experience with the Roma minority in the past, which, according to them, typically only abused the helping acts from the side of the majority.

*Everybody has the same chances, let it be equal. Why something for them again (for the Roma)? Why should we talk them into going to school or why? They won't go there anyway, because they do not want to! And we, the idiots, will pay for it again (non-Roma).*

*I would be against; it will be good for nothing anyway (non-Roma).*

*I am against, either. The Republic needs money for other things (non-Roma).*

*If the amount is higher or lower, it is not worthwhile; there are more important areas (non-Roma).*

The **respondents** who were **more open towards helping and supporting the Roma mentioned** that this **initiative in practice would help the Roma population very much, and subsequently the whole Czech Republic**. In their opinion, the initiative is targeted at the key problematic areas of the Roma community – education, employment, health care, where they should be helped and the ultimate changes are undoubtedly most acute. But the group of these advocates was in a minority against the rejecting, negative reactions in the group.

*I think it is good; it concerns education and all painful issues related to the Roma (non-Roma).*

*It seems good to me. I am sure it is worthwhile doing something with it, this way it is a real problem with the Roma (non-Roma).*

*In fifty years it will not be possible to live here, something must be done with it. There will be more of them than us (non-Roma).*

## 8.5. Will something positive come out of it

The asked Roma were enthusiastic about the contents of the scheme the **Decade of Roma Inclusion**; in their opinion, it **exactly described and tackles the problems of the Roma**. They had high hopes especially of the possibility to increase employment and improve the living standard of Roma citizens. They also places a great stress on the area of education, where, according to them, is much room for improvement, since the lack of Roma education is actually their disadvantage in the labour market and contributes to the situation when the Roma are offered only less paid jobs with a low social status or cannot get any job at all.

Our Roma respondents did not see the **pluses** resulting from success of this effort only on the part of the Roma minority, but generally, **in the context of the entire Czech society**. According to them, the improved living situation of Roma could **positively influence**, above all, **interpersonal relations and mean a greater success of Roma in the labour market and in society in general**.

*It would be necessary to start from little children. Yes (Roma).*

*If it came out like that, it would be brilliant, it would be fantastic (Roma).*

*Yes. The money would be returned to them hundred times, in a couple of years (Roma).*

*It is inter-related, had the children had the schools, they would find a job far easier, and they would also be more self-confident and would not let others hold them down (Roma).*

The reactions of our Roma respondents also suggested that **the Roma alone did not believe much that this effort could actually go ahead**. Their scepticism was driven primarily by their frequent attitude full of resignation or even apathy regarding possible changes for the better, concern about being rejected and that the majority population would ignore this effort; they were also afraid the money designated to helping the Roma would be embezzled and used for something else. Therefore, they wanted an honest, impeccable and trustworthy person as a head of this effort.

*It would have to be in the hands of honest people (Roma).*

*We would not see any money from it anyway, it would all get lost. No trust in this sense is working (Roma).*

*I wish it went ahead! I doubt it a little bit that someone would really help us (Roma).*

*You live with that nothing has been changed here for a long time, so why should it be different all of a sudden? In my opinion, it will be more bureaucracy, and nothing will change. Until now, it has all been on paper, „all talk and no action“ (Roma).*

## 8.6. Willingness to support the Decade

The openness and interest in supporting the effort the Decade of Roma Inclusion was met – among most of our non-Roma respondents – with **unwillingness to financially contribute to this scheme out of the state budget**. They understood this investment as non-returnable, as they did not believe it would succeed; as a max they would be willing to vote for the lowest planned amount spent on these activities worth EUR 1 – 2 million, which was not considered that much in the context of the whole state budget.

*When the EU pays for it, I vote for, but I still think it will go out of our pockets and I would not fancy that very much indeed (non-Roma).*

*Suppose the effort costs EUR 1 – 2 mil per annum, what do you think about it? It is nto that much, so I would vote for (non-Roma).*

*Well, most of them do not make any effort, so it is pointlessly wasted money (non-Roma).*

*The CZK 5 million per month is not that much, actually, in essence it is nothing, so why not (non-Roma).*

*I am definitely against, let them find sponsors, let them invest in the effort out of whatever they want to, let them find businessmen, I would not give them a dime for that. It won't be any good anyway (non-Roma).*

**Few representatives of the majority population supported this effort even when presumably financially costly**, and these respondents in favour of this effort did not consider its amount much. Their arguments were primarily **the economic danger, threat the Czech Republic would face, unless the government does not effectively resolve the Roma issue as fast as possible**. According to them the economic costs – resources spent on supporting the Roma community that is highly unemployed, under-educated and at the same time very numerous and keeps growing in the size, can become only higher and higher every year, and so this progressive trend should be stopped.

*I am for this effort. It is not that much money (non-Roma).*

*I would go for a compromise – try it in the first year and see what are the benefits. And if nothing changed, so I would not give them anything any more (non-Roma).*

*I would agree with it. The sum is not that huge (non-Roma).*

*I am for the effort to be motivational. Not to only give them money (non-Roma).*

*If it were really worthwhile, and the crime rate went down, so it would be worth. It would definitely be an investment in the future; it concerns the generational problem (non-Roma).*

*The point is to see the results, the outcome, but it is definitely needed (non-Roma).*

**The willingness of our Roma respondents to support this effort and take an active part** in its supporting **was very strong** at the level of declaring it. They spoke about that they would like to participate in this effort, as it would be directed towards the improvement of their lives.

*Yes, I would like to help it (Roma).*

*I would go for it non-stop, if only I knew that it is good for something, if I could see some good results (Roma).*

*If the Roma knew, it would help us, they would rush for it (Roma).*

*If I saw it would be good, so I would help it, surely would, it is about us (Roma).*

*It is not a bad idea, I would try to contact them, if I knew it would help our kids, I surely would (Roma).*

## **8.7. Attitudes to specific objectives**

Our Roma and non-Roma respondents in their follow up discussion regarding the presentation of the effort: the Decade of Roma Inclusion told their views on fairness, justification and usefulness of supporting and helping the Roma in the context of the suggested areas: education, employment and health care.

### Education

According to the representatives of the majority population the **low education** among the Roma **poses the major problem of the Roma community**, which is partially causing a number of other problems such as unemployment, low economic living

standard, crime and unwillingness of the Roma to take constructive steps for the benefit of their own community. And so the area of schools should come first when considering how to support the Roma minority.

Most of our non-Roma respondents stood up for Roma children having equal opportunities in the educational system in our country and were consistently integrated into normal schools with other Czech children.

But, most of them were also **against the idea of bringing any relief to Roma children** – reduced price for preschool programs / books / transport / school lunch, loans so Roma youth could attend university – **purely because of their ethnic background**, as they believed it was unfair to other non-Roma students.

*Exactly because it is speaking about the Roma there, if it were about advantages given to poorer families, then I would be for it, but as long as it is only about the Roma, the majority would not agree with it. Not only the Roma have problems, so why to be so servile to them? (non-Roma)*

*Surely, it would surely pay off for the education (non-Roma).*

*It was not right at all that the children were pushed to go to special schools, this way nothing much could come out of them, even when they are not stupid. This must be changed, so that the little Gipsies had the same conditions as our children (non-Roma).*

*Reduced price for lunch, books? To give benefits in kind is also a possibility, the flow of money would be stopped; maybe it would be good (non-Roma).*

*Now, they have education to do just digging jobs, it is a vicious circle. They do not want to study, why should we bring everything to them straight under their nose? (non-Roma)*

*How come white children would not have it? My education cost my parents a great deal of money, it is worse every year and it is about a lot of money. It is absolutely unfair (non-Roma).*

The representatives of the majority population perceived as a **big problem the unwillingness of Roma citizens to educate, self-improve and support their children in education**, and so suggested motivating the Roma and Roma parents by certain schemes conceived as motivational in the style to tie social benefits to success and attendance of Roma children to school, or, to educate, inform them about the link between education level and labour market. These activities could be priority targeted at young Roma families with children, where the majority can see greatest hope to success and effectiveness of any interventions.

*They are not more stupid, but cannot cope, because every body is negative about them and because they have a completely different background at home than other children, it is essentially based on education, on the way children are brought up, and if this scheme helped only 10 %, it would be better straight away, because the next generations would be better and better (non-Roma).*

*Well, only if the mother is under control that the child goes to school and studies, e.g., she could be given some extra money in the social welfare department ... well, we might be able to motivate them through money (non-Roma).*

*It must start in families, the parents alone should be interested in that their child is in school, studies, they should know that he could then find a job easier and so. Unless the parents keep an eye on that, the children will not learn that on their own (non-Roma)*

**The representatives of the Roma minority** to some degree identified themselves with the majority when they **admitted that the Roma are not always determined enough and motivated to supporting their children in education**. The Roma often don't believe it is useful and beneficial to be educated, which is many a time given by their little education and also their lack of awareness that the better education implied the

better job opportunities in the labour market. Likewise the representatives of the majority they were in favour of support being primarily targeted at young Roma families.

*It depends on mother, doesn't it? They would behave in life the way they saw it, or were brought up at home (Roma).*

*We can see it at work: you will not re-educate young people, a young family with a little child, you can re-educate the child, you can see it, it is better, you can give a talking to the young, we take the young mother aside and advise her what to do, and how, and it starts like that (Roma).*

*They should be supported in schools, these young people can learn better (Roma).*

*Well, well, something good for the young, it depends on the kind of approach we take to that. And also when some do not enjoy it, to force them there and they should not make an excuse that the child says that he is as stupid as his father (Roma).*

*I think that the poor would really need it, but so that they really study, they will surely introduce that once quarterly the mother must go to the social welfare and come up with the document that the child is zero truant (Roma).*

The asked Roma also declared that **it is often difficult for poor Roma to support their children in studying out of financial reasons**. That is why they liked the proposed concepts of financial assistance to Roma pupils and students that could help solve out this problem. At the same time, however, they expected the majority would be dead against it, as, according to them, they would disagree with supporting Roma children and not supporting their children likewise.

*It is difficult for us, the Roma to keep the children in school. When you want a better education, you cannot keep the child in the school, and assistance from the authorities is a minimum – textbooks and aids, lunches... it is very expensive (Roma).*

*When the parents work for some minimum wages and one of them is a pensioner, it does not exist they could keep the child in school, it is just not possible, and when you apply for benefits, you are given the minimum. We would definitely need help here, and so would our children (Roma)*

*It would be brilliant, but with the school programs, textbooks and so for free, the majority would not approve of it, they would reproach us for that until we die (Roma).*

## Employment

Most of the representatives of the majority population were willing to admit that **the Roma apparently have greater problems in the area of labour market to get a good and adequately remunerated job** than the non-Roma part of the population. Some of them were ready to blame the Roma alone for that, their little education, lax approach to work and low working morals; the others were ready to admit the majority population had its share in it, as they approached the Roma with many prejudices.

Our non-Roma respondents therefore were in favour of the **proposition to enact anti-discrimination in the labour market so that the Roma were given equal opportunities**. But some of them believed similar regulations have already been embedded in the Czech legislation and were also concerned about the risk these measures would be more considerably abused by the Roma and anticipated, e.g., situations when the employer fired the Roma because of not being happy with his job performance, and the Roma concerned could later sue him for discrimination.

*It usually works this way, that it is the Roma discrimination at work (non-Roma).*

*They should have some protection, to have the same conditions in the labour market (non-Roma).*

*The second point about the discrimination is good, but I do not agree with the first one (non-Roma).  
It seems to me that such measures already exist in our country, that the legislation has been here and that it will suffice (non-Roma)  
It is a pointlessly over-saturated legislation. I do not like it. I can employ who ever I want in my business. He will then go to sue me that I sacked him that I am like the racist (non-Roma).  
I am for enacting these laws. When someone wants to work, he should be allowed to (non-Roma).*

**The Roma asked were also in favour of enacting anti-discrimination laws in the labour market**, as the overwhelming majority of them have got prior experience with being rejected in the workplace because of their ethnic background. To consistently obey such rules could considerably improve the quality of Roma lives thanks to higher employment, and subsequently a better economic standard of Roma families.

*Well, actually we have been discussing it before, that it should be done. We all know the situation when you are promised a job by phone, but suddenly, they are not interested in you when you turn up and are black (Roma).*

*It is a way to improve it, but no one would sign it for you that you are the Roma and that is why you were not given the job, it is a problem to prove him a liar (Roma).*

*It is all right by phone, but as soon as they can see you, the job is gone (Roma).*

*It would definitely help. The laws here are very bad (Roma).*

*It would be really good. If they made it more strict and it worked. So that when the Roma has not the education, he at least was given a chance to make a living (Roma).*

*I agree with it, too. It would be good (Roma).*

**The Roma and non-Roma respondents alike agreed in their views on loans for Roma to start businesses.** Most of those asked believe that similar micro-loans already exist in the Czech Republic and anyone can apply for them, and so it is not necessary to separate the Roma in this respect and make an extra offer just for them. Moreover, the representatives of the majority were concerned about the risk of abusing these micro loans, particularly as a consequence of the difficult control system whether the money is used for the right purposes and whether the money borrowed is being paid of.

*I would not believe micro loans much, it would require a perfect control system (non-Roma).*

*I would give it to them, but on condition that it is like it used to years ago – the invoice and the bank would pay for the things you purchased. But perhaps it normally works like that for all people (non-Roma).*

*So you believe there is a big risk it would be abused? Yeah, I am sure about it. I mainly cannot imagine how to control it. They should get the appropriate business education to know what to do, to know the accounting or book keeping system (non-Roma).*

*This already works in the labour office; you are given some not re-payable loan (non-Roma).*

*They can draw this point already. We have the same terms and conditions (non--Roma).*

*The loans for the Roma? I'd rather not risk it (Roma).*

*When you start a business, it should not be different for Czechs and for Roma., but simply who wants to work, so he can, or if he wants to, he can do business (Roma).*

*They can do so now, there is not need to do anything special for the Gipsy (Roma).*

## Health

**The proposition to give free vaccines for Roma children was met with an ambivalent reception**, which applies to our Roma as well as non-Roma respondents.



**Most representatives of the Czech majority strongly rejected this concept as unfair to the other, non-Roma population.** But some of them pointed out at the poor hygienic standards in the Roma community, which could be, through the school environment, transmitted further on, to the population. For this reason, the minority of the representatives of the majority supported it.

**Some of the asked Roma were positive about this objective,** but their reactions indicate that they feel **it is a pleasant, value added bonus rather than they would perceive vaccines for Roma children as a top priority and these vaccines would pose a big problems for the Roma.** On the other hand, the same reasons made the other Roma asked negative about this idea and they perceived it as a redundant, too much value added benefit the majority would not be given.

*No, absolutely not, we must purchase them and they would get them for free? (non-Roma)*

*Well, Gipsies usually live only in a mess and come to school with that and the whole class will have it (non-Roma).*

*I am against it on principle. It should apply to the poor generally (non-Roma).*

*I will tell something. Don't we want a bit much? (Roma)*

*To give it all who need it. Not only the Roma would have sick children (Roma).*

*Well, vitamins should be for free, in Slovakia everyone is given it ever year, you receive an envelope, but it is not like that here (Roma).*

*It would be a luxury for us against white people. The vaccine will not save you (Roma).*

Having discussed the objective, our respondents were asked to arrange in a **hierarchy the areas tested** in terms of their importance, acute nature and how needed to improve the living conditions of the Roma community.

The **representatives of the majority population shared an opinion that the top priority is education followed by employment and health care.** The **representatives of the Roma community most preferred employment, education came second and health care was the third,** least burning problem.

*Well, the education is first. When they are educated, a number of problems would be resolved straight away (non-Roma).*

*The education is probably what matters most; we should pay most attention to this area (non-Roma).*

*Employment, education and health care, we can all agree on this ladder (Roma).*

*When there is no money, there can be no education; the work is most needed (Roma).*

*When the government does not help the Roma, mainly with this employment. When something happens anywhere, they would immediately spend money on that, but no one would give anything to us. I wish they gave us something, so that we can cope with the situation, we most need work, jobs (Roma).*

## 9. Voices to Trust

At the end of the group discussion we asked our respondents who could represent the effort the Decade of Roma Inclusion, to be in contact with the media and due to their authority also the promise and guarantee the resources are spent for the right purpose.

Our respondents agreed that **it should be a trustworthy personality and recognized by the majority population as well as by the Roma community.**

Asked about who would be the right candidate, they **most often named Lucie Bílá** – a popular female singer with the Roma background, **and the former Czech president Václav Havel and his wife Dagmar**. These personalities meet the required conditions: are universally recognized and respected, financially well secure and so our respondents believed they would manage resources prudently, responsibly and not with the aim to cash in on the project. Moreover, Lucie Bílá and the Havel married couple have been involved in charity on their own, have long experience and are determined to support various beneficial activities.

*Václav Havel, he always means well and thinks about other people (non-Roma).*

*I would vote for him, too. It was the first name that came to my mind (non-Roma).*

*Maybe Lucie Bílá, she has a great influence, is articulate (non-Roma)*

*Lucka Bílá for example, she could do it, she has given a lot to people (Roma).*

*I have always believed in Havel, but it is a shame, he had become president, he did not have much time then (Roma).*

Respondents **rather individually named various figures of the Czech political or cultural scene**. The representatives of the majority population mentioned, e.g., actresses: **Jiřina Jirásková and Veronika Žilková**, actors **Vladimír Čech, Marek Eben** or **president Václav Klaus**. The Roma asked pointed out at the recognized Roma representatives or associations, e.g., **the Roma activist from Ústí nad Labem – Mr. Jan Husák**, the Roma association from Ústí nad Labem organizing **Jeketane** (together in Roma language) festivals or the **King of Olah Roma**.

The **proposed personalities had typically a close relationship to family values** (children, etc.) **or to the Roma community** and our respondents attributed them **high moral qualities**. It seems that the individual nominations were also strongly tied to liking, sympathy and good experience (personal or mentioned by others) of respondents with the personality concerned.

*I know him, Jan Husák, he is assistant to Lord Mayor, here from Ústí, he is a university-educated man. Or, in short, someone like that, both Roma and we may believe him (non-Roma).*

*Our President. Even though probably not, he is too busy (non-Roma).*

*A representative of culture, some famous personality, say, Mrs. Jiřina Jirásková, who works for UNICEF (non-Roma).*

*I would trust Veronika Žilková, because she has many children and good relationship to children. She adopted a Roma child. Vladimír Čech has adopted children, too. He is likeable, has charisma (non-Roma).*

*The cultural organization – Jeketane – it is our Roma association in Ústí nad Labem, we do a lot of things, so we could also participate in this activity (Roma).*

*And what about the King of Olah Roma? Seriously, I don't know much about him, if he is okay (Roma).*

*Or Mr. Jan Husák, what do you think? He understand everything well (Roma).*

## 10. Message concepts

At the end of the groups our respondents were handed out sheets with some statements and asked to use the scale 1 – 10 and rate them, when 1 = a totally not persuasive statement and 10 = an extremely persuasive statement.

### 10.1. Messages targeted at non-Roma

The table below shows the average results of rating the statements by the groups of the representatives of the majority population:

Concept	Statement	Average value
A	In order to become a real part of Europe, we must take care of the people in our country who have been most discriminated against. <b>It is a true sign of a modern country.</b>	5,03
B	<b>Helping the Roma advance and integrate is, quite simply, the right thing to do.</b> This is an issue of human rights. We are an unjust society if we continue to treat them in the way that they've been treated here.	5,23
C	<b>Helping the Roma is a matter of simple economics.</b> All taxpayers will continue to pay more in the future if we don't do something now to truly help educate the Roma and move them out of lives of poverty, it will cost us and our children more in the long run.	6,38
D	If there's one thing we must do, <b>it is to help the Roma children so that they will have the opportunities to prosper in a way that our own children have.</b>	6,60
E	Helping the Roma is really about <b>giving every person in our country the opportunity to achieve his/her potential.</b> This is the true meaning of freedom and the fall of the wall.	6,03
F	The way the Roma <b>have been treated in this country is simply wrong.</b> It makes me ashamed and I want it to change.	2,80
G	<b>Having a large minority population like the Roma living in such abject poverty and experiencing constant discrimination reflects badly on our country.</b> I think our country can do better.	4,33
H	Our country is on the road to prosperity. <b>We must make sure that this prosperity is shared by all.</b>	9,05

**The statement H was most liked among our non-Roma respondents**, as it **agrees with their hopes for the better future of the Czech Republic**, and also **presumes activity and initiation of all people**, across the population. Respondents perceive this statement as very general, did not automatically relate it to the Roma issue.

*We all must agree on that, but it does not have to do much in common with the Roma, I guess (non-Roma).*

*Everybody should want that (non-Roma).*

*All people should be equal, so we all should share it (non-Roma).*

*In my opinion, all people would not make the same effort – it is the castle in the air, but it should be like that (non-Roma).*

*You cannot disagree with that. Not to have different yardstick for people (non-Roma).*

**The rating of the statement D** was on average in the range **rather persuasive**, when this result confirmed their prior **tendency to support and help especially Roma children**, as respondents believe that any intervention can best succeed in this part of the Roma community. According to them, children deserve support, inter alia, for the reason that they did not select their life situation and did not cause it.

*It cannot be sorted out without children, it is necessary to focus on them, problems will grow and grow, and the problem will be bigger (non-Roma).*

*I rated it five, as I think so. But halfway – they have it and when they want to they will have the chance. They have same opportunities (non-Roma).*

*It is not the fault of children and they should have hope for the better future (non-Roma).*

*I rated ten, as I think the children should be at the same level as we are, the „white“ (non-Roma).*

*They do not have that; if only because they do not have educated parents, so do not have that. To have the parents work, send children to the school, disinfect the flat (non-Roma).*

*The children cannot be blamed for that, that they have such parents (non-Roma).*

The average rating of the **statement C** indicates that it was **fairly persuasive**. It suggests the **effectiveness of argumentation of the original advocates of this idea**, who managed winning more respondents to be with them; these respondents together with them realized that **unless the government resolves the Roma issue now, the costs related to the Roma issue would only increase in the future**.

*In fifty years it will not be possible to live here, something must be done with it. There will be more of them than us (non-Roma).*

*Yeah, it is about money, it is serious (non-Roma).*

*I rated nine, it is the same we have discussed here before. If the investment succeeded, it would cost the next generation less (non-Roma).*

*The problem will be worse and worse over the years, it should be tackled now, or, it will be a catastrophe (non-Roma).*

The last statement, the persuasiveness of which was rated above the average, was the **statement E**. Respondents **agreed with the declared need of equal rights for all citizens**, but at the same time most often immediately, in the same breath, added that it is their belief that the Roma had the same rights as the Czech majority. Their benevolent rating of the statement E can thus in much be regarded as the rating of the human rights equality ideal.

*It is a bit over the top, an ideal (non-Roma).*

*I think so. To give every person a chance (non-Roma).*

*They have the opportunity. I don't know what else to give them. All the time there is help the Roma, but the Roma have been helped for such a long time. And they are still helped. Why? All people should be helped, but specifically, no one cares about Vietnamese, they work, behave, their kids go to school, they speak perfect Czech, why, it is Czech-Slovak-Hungarian the language the Roma speak. And how come they do not have the same opportunities? They do (non-Roma).*

*Everybody should have the same opportunities (non-Roma).*

*If they are given more money so they have better conditions. But they might have worse conditions in something else, say, in the family background. To direct it to the families, a non-financial help. To give them money, say, for some social worker that would look after the children for them (non-Roma).*

The average rating of the **statement B** was only mildly over the average value. This neutrality, or, **inability to make up their mind one-way or the other, reflected the doubts** our respondents had when discussing this statement. On the one hand, they **were sure the government had already paid a lot of attention to the Roma issue and spent huge resources there, but face-to-face reality they admitted the interventions did not reach the target, failed.**

*Because they do not accept the help, they have been helped a lot, and there is no response (non-Roma).*

*No response from them, but maybe, it was done in a wrong way, when helping them (non-Roma).*

*I believe our society is max fair, just and tolerant to the issue we have been discussing here and in the year 2005 it cannot be done any better (non-Roma).*

*I think the behaviour with them (their treatment) is not against human rights (non-Roma).*

*I almost agree. It is also the stick. The anti-discrimination measures (non-Roma).*

*We are not fair, just, if we were just, they would be hard working for long. We are unjust to ourselves (non-Roma).*

*The Roma understand it completely differently, they think we are unjust and we think they are unjust (non-Roma).*

The average value of rating the **statement A** is right in the middle of the evaluation scale. Respondents again spoke about the **ideal, the need to eliminate discrimination in modern, democratic countries.** But they did not relate the statement about the unfortunate, sinister phenomenon - discrimination – explicitly and purely to the Roma, but to a number of disadvantaged groups of the population.

*I do not think it is only the Roma, I think there are people who are even worse off than them (non-Roma).*

*It is persuasive, how it is generally, about discrimination (non-Roma).*

*I think that some discriminated groups are helped and it is taken as a sign of certain humanity and it is the road to become an integral part of Europe. For example, the disabled, physically or mentally handicapped people. It is generally persuasive (non-Roma).*

*I think that we are discriminated in favour of the Roma, so the citizens. I thought, for example, women who want to find a job and are over forty, and they are discriminated (non-Roma).*

*If it concerns the Roma, so it is for me heavily unpersuasive. Those heavily discriminated were, for example, English pilots and such people (non-Roma).*

*Other minorities are very discriminated, Poles, Blacks, Ukrainians. Ukrainians here are mostly illegally, taking our money and not paying any tax (non-Roma).*

The **statement G** appears rather unpersuasive to our respondents. They were aware that the Czech Republic has often been criticized because of the Roma issue, but the **did not perceive the argument about the Roma living in abject poverty and experiencing constant discrimination** as justified.

*Who lives in such abject poverty? It is their own doing; life is what you make it (non-Roma).*

*It reflects badly on our country, but I absolutely disagree with that the Roma live in poverty. The situation here is not that bad (non-Roma).*

*It is a wrong question. They are not subjected to constant discrimination; they do not live in abject poverty (non-Roma).*

*I think they when they live in poverty, it is their own fault, not of our country. I do not want to live in poverty and so I work (non-Roma).*

*Never in my life would I say that they live in „abject“ poverty, it is an utter nonsense (non-Roma).*

*Who has not come to contact with them ever can say they are poor things, but the one who lives next to them, would like to drown them (non-Roma).*

*It is a bad picture of our country and our country can do better (non-Roma).*

*I disagree with that; it is no discrimination, no bad picture. They are poor, but discrimination is in their own hands (non-Roma).*

*Why no Vietnamese would ever say in public, on TV, that he is discriminated, I have never heard that (non-Roma).*

*The social welfare department would not give money our people and take the children away if they do not look after them, but when the Roma has used up, spent the money in three days on drink and have nothing to live on then, it is not the government, the country to be blamed for. They have their problems everywhere, also in France, but the Roma, when they see it is being written about in our newspapers, they take it up and keep complaining everywhere they can (non-Roma).*

The **statement F was least persuasive** for our respondents, as it **disagreed with their prevailing belief that the Czech society has been treating the Roma minority members fairly and decently**, even giving them preferential treatment in many directions at the cost of the non-Roma population. Respondents typically did not want to accept any responsibility or feel any guilt about the unfavourable situation inside the Roma community.

*Because if I had a black face, and went to find a job, I would not find it and could be the same as now (non-Roma).*

*Only few go complaining that they did not get it (non-Roma).*

*I am ashamed but don't know how I could contribute to change it (non-Roma).*

*I think I treat them right (non-Roma).*

*I am ashamed of that, but it is not in my power to change it (non-Roma).*

*I am not ashamed of it. You tread very carefully with them (non-Roma).*

*It is totally daft. The way they treat us, well, it is a horror, and we behave the same. They are the ones who should be ashamed (non-Roma).*

*I disagree with it. In Ostrava we feel discriminated, now, I would not go through Vítkovice any more, I would not walk in the street at six, it is about fear to live with the Roma in the proximity (non-Roma).*

## 10.2. Messages targeted at Roma

The table below shows the average values the Roma respondents used rating the statements exposed:

Concept	Statement	Average value
1	I believe the Decade of Roma effort will have a positive impact on the lives of Roma here in Czech republic, because governments have committed real resources. It's not just 'talk.'	4,4
2	I believe the Decade of Roma effort will have a positive impact on the lives of Roma here in Czech republic, because of the involvement of organizations like the World Bank and the Open Society Institute.	4,3
3	If the Decade of Roma effort is to have a positive impact on the lives of Roma here in Czech republic, we Roma will have to play a prominent role in ensuring that the goals are achieved.	7,0

The Roma asked **rated the statement 3 as most persuasive**; this statement suggests the need to involve the Roma in the effort The Decade of Roma Inclusion for the purpose of being able to effectively achieve the goals defined. The Roma were aware that it **is in their own interest to improve the quality of Roma lives and so would like to participate in the process**.

*In order the effort is successful, the Roma alone must be actively involved in the project, yes, definitely (Roma).*

*I do not think we will be so competent to manage that, but we must get involved, why, it is about us (Roma).*

*I cannot see any reason why we should not go for it? Who else should do it? (Roma)*

The average values recorded for the **statement 1** indicate that our **Roma respondents did not trust this statement much**. They explained their attitude pointing out at the repeated disappointment, when many schemes in the past did set fantastic goals and declared good prospects for the life of the Roma minority, but most of these activities actually failed in the end of the day and there was no change for the better, nothing positive achieved.

*I believe it about half-half. Because of all bad experience from the past – nothing has ever been changed anyway (Roma).*

*Bad experience, I believe it only when I can see it in reality (Roma).*

*When I see the outcome, then I will start to believe it. It sounds good, but I do not know. When I cannot see any outcome, it is hard (Roma).*

The **statement 2 was not very persuasive** for our Roma respondents, either, which they explained largely by the fact that **the world institutions named are too distant from the reality of the Czech Roma people**. Their distrustful attitude was also formed as a consequence of their **little awareness of these organization** and lack of information about the scope of their activity and interest.

*It is perhaps too high; these institutions would hardly be interested in the Roma. Why should the top bank be interested in the Roma? (Roma)*

*There are more countries and each of them will make an effort to get money for their own community. And the bigger the country, the bigger chance (Roma).*

*Well, when it is world, it sounds good (Roma).*

*Well, we say to trust but check out. It would need control, a lot of control and I do not know if these institutions can ensure that. I hardly know anything about them (Roma).*

*What kind of world bank? (Roma)*



## V. Listings

### a) The greatest problems we face here in Czech republic according to non-Roma

The greatest problems we face in CR	Noted
Economics	4x
Health care system	4x
Unemployment	4x
Educational system	2x
Ecology	3x
Minorities Inclusion	2x
Legislature	2x
Drug abuses	1x
High crime rate	3x
Politicians with no moral values	3x

### b) The greatest problems we face here in Czech republic according to Roma

The greatest problems we face in CR	Noted
Poor economical life standard	3x
Low rate of education	3x
Unemployment	3x
Housing	2x
Prejudices from the majority population	2x
Discrimination	2x
Racism	1x

### c) What are you most optimistic about in Czech republic according to non-Roma

What is the most optimistic in CR?	Noted
Freedom	4x
Free market	4x
Membership within EU	2x
Nothing	2x

**d) What are you most optimistic about in Czech republic according to Roma**

<b>What is the most optimistic in CR?</b>	<b>Noted</b>
Freedom	2x
Free market	2x
Free traveling	2x
Better and wider opportunities for Roma children	1x

**e) The greatest challenges / problems that the Roma face in Czech republic according to non-Roma**

<b>The greatest challenges / problems of Roma</b>	<b>Noted</b>
Low educational level	5x
High crime rate	5x
Inadaptability or low motivation to include into the Czech society	5x
Unemployment	5x
Roma families have too many children (a big financial demand)	3x
Laziness	2x
Segregation Roma people into a dense communities	2x
Prejudices from the major population	2x
They live just "here and now", take not future into account	2x
Drugs abuses	2x
They lost their traditional roots	1x

**f) The greatest challenges / problems that the Roma face in Czech republic according to Roma**

<b>The greatest challenges / problems of Roma</b>	<b>Noted</b>
Unemployment	3x
Poor economical life standard	3x
Prejudices from the majority population	2x
Low education level	2x
Housing	2x
Racism	1x
Discrimination within the labor market	1x
Low motivation of Roma people to aim more for bettering their life situation (education, housing, labor market etc.)	1x
Distrust of Czech majority towards Roma people	1x

**g) Who should be responsible for improving the lives of the Roma according to non-Roma**

<b>Responsibility for improving the lives of Roma</b>	<b>Noted</b>
Roma community itself	4x
Government	3x
Czech majority as well (to accept them more)	2x
Roma associations	1x
Municipal board	1x

**h) Prominent and respected Roma leaders**

<b>Prominent and respected Roma leaders</b>	<b>Noted</b>
Lucie Bílá – Czech pop singer	5x
Local association Jeketane (Ústí nad Labem)	3x
Jan Husák – well-known Roma representatives from Ústí nad Labem	2x
Roma king	1x

**i) Respected / trustworthy non-Roma leaders in our country**

<b>Respected non-Roma leaders</b>	<b>Noted</b>
Václav Havel – former Czech president	4x
Dagmar Havlová – wife of former president	2x
Jiřina Jirásková – actress (works for UNICEF)	1x
Veronika Žilková – actress	1x
Marek Eben – Czech actor and musician	1x
Václav Klaus – Czech president	1x

**j) Prominent leaders you do not trust**

<b>Prominent leaders you do not trust</b>	<b>Noted</b>
Václav Klaus – Czech president (too busy)	1x
Politicians	2x
Zdeněk Škromach – Minister of social affairs	1x

This issue hasn't been discussed in detail.

## VI. Appendices

### Appendix A: Schedule and composition of focus groups

<b>No. 1: FG with Roma respondents</b>			
<b>Ústí nad Labem</b>			
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Profession</b>
M	28	Primary education	Unemployed
F	19	Primary education	On maternity leave
M	24	Primary education	Disability pensioner
F	21	Primary education	Housewife
F	43	Primary education	Cleaning woman
F	56	Primary education	Factory worker
M	54	Secondary education	Unemployed
F	52	Primary education	Housewife

<b>No. 2: FG with Roma respondents</b>			
<b>Ústí nad Labem</b>			
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Profession</b>
M	36	Secondary education	Hooper
M	51	Secondary education	Disability pensioner
M	28	Secondary education	Social worker
F	56	Secondary education	Schoolmistress
F	56	Secondary education	Unskilled cookery laborer
F	21	Secondary education	Receptionist
F	36	Secondary education	Social worker
M	59	Primary education	Retired

<b>No. 3: FG with Non-Roma respondents</b>			
<b>Ústí nad Labem</b>			
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Profession</b>
M	58	Secondary education	Entrepreneur – electronics
M	52	Secondary education	Officer
M	47	University education	Control auditor
F	44	Secondary education	Laboratory assistant
M	25	Secondary education	Unemployed
F	24	University education	Senior student
M	20	Secondary education	Car mechanic
F	38	Secondary education	Controller within the public transportation

<b>No. 4: FG with Non-Roma respondents</b>			
<b>Ústí nad Labem</b>			
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Profession</b>
M	18	Primary education	Secondary student
M	28	University education	Environment protection
F	59	University education	Pharmacist
F	35	Secondary education	Nurse
F	23	University education	Primary teacher
M	56	Secondary education	Electrician
M	48	Secondary education	Electrical fitter
M	40	Secondary education	Driver

<b>No. 5: FG with Roma respondents</b>			
<b>Praha</b>			
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Profession</b>
M	62	Secondary education	Retired
F	24	Secondary education	Disability pensioner
F	25	Secondary education	Baker
F	46	Secondary education	Officer
F	18	Primary education	Student – confectioner
F	28	Secondary education	On maternity leave
M	40	Secondary education	Unemployed
M	28	Secondary education	Builder

<b>No. 6: FG with Non-Roma respondents</b>			
<b>Praha</b>			
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Profession</b>
M	33	Secondary education	Zoologist
F	52	Secondary education	Officer in an estate agency
F	41	Secondary education	Cashier
F	18	Primary education	Student
M	29	Secondary education	Shop assistant
M	49	Secondary education	Officer
M	59	University education	Hairdressing saloon owner
F	31	University education	Officer

<b>No. 7: FG with Non-Roma respondents</b>			
<b>Ostrava</b>			
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Profession</b>
F	46	Secondary education	Invoice clerk
F	47	Secondary education	Shop assistant
F	26	University education	On maternity leave
M	27	University education	Salesman
F	24	University education	Unemployed
M	19	Secondary education	Student
F	60	Primary education	Shop assistant
M	52	Primary education	Technician

<b>No. 8: FG with Non-Roma respondents</b>			
<b>Ostrava</b>			
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Profession</b>
M	26	Higher education	Entrepreneur
M	55	Secondary education	Driver
F	28	Secondary education	Post-woman
M	20	Primary education	Unemployed
M	25	Secondary education	Environmental protection
F	39	Secondary education	Schoolmistress
M	50	Secondary education	Schoolmaster
F	56	Secondary education	Shop assistant

## Appendix B: Table on “Government spending”

Do you think the government should spend *more* resources, *fewer* resources, or just about the same amount of resources on the following (choose only one per area of work):

Please return to your moderator!

	More Resources	Fewer Resources	About the same amount
1. Agriculture and rural development			
2. Health			
3. Infrastructure (roads, transport, bridges)			
4. Attracting foreign investment to our country			
5. Services for the poor			
6. Environmental protection			
7. Assistance for minority groups such as the Roma			
8. Education			
9. Governance (corruption)			
10. Economic growth			
11. Employment (particularly for our youth)			



### Appendix C: Table on “Your thoughts on the Roma community”

Please write down words that best describe for you the Roma community (no more than 3 words).

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Please write down a few words or phrases that best describe for you Roma that you know (no more than 3).

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_